

# The Believers Rule of Life

By William Huntington

## *PREFACE*

**W**ILLIAM HUNTINGTON was born on February 2, 1745, near Cranbrook, Kent, England. He died on July 1, 1813, in his sixty-ninth year. Of Huntington's description of his sweet blessed deliverance into gospel liberty, J. C. Philpot says: "We have read some of the finest productions of human eloquence, in both ancient and modern languages, and therefore we know what we assert when we declare that, in our judgment, the description . . .; apart from the experience there described, as a mere piece of eloquence, is one of the grandest and most beautiful pieces of writing that has ever come under our eye." Well might our author say: "Oh happy year! happy day! blessed minute! Sacred spot! Yea, rather blessed be my Redeemer, who 'delivered my soul from death, and mine eyes from bears, and my feet from falling.'" "God raises up such men as John Bunyan and William Huntington but once in a century." -William Romaine. Dr. Henry Cole, translator of the Works of Luther and Calvin, after referring to Huntington as "that great and blessed servant of the Most High," says, "I believe he bore and left in Britain the greatest and most glorious testimony to the power of God's salvation that ever was borne or left therein." A. J. Baxter, editor of the Gospel Advocate, wrote: "There are hundreds who will both speak and write with respect of such men of God as Owen, Bunyan, Romaine, Barridge and Newton, who would recoil at the mention of the name of Huntington. And why? Because his conduct was less consistent than they? No, but because, in depth, closeness, and discrimination of vital realities he excelled them all; and was therefore the least comprehended, 1 Cor. 2:15. (Thomas Wright in Life of Huntington.) (-T. Rutt in Foreword to Kingdom of Heaven Taken by Prayer, by William Huntington)

## **QUOTES OF WILLIAM HUNTINGTON**

"Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" The liberty which Peter here alludes to is the liberty of the Holy Spirit, which God had given them, which Paul calls the law of the Spirit of life, which made him free from the law of sin and death; and "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty," (2 Cor.3:17) for, as David says, the Spirit of God is a free Spirit. (Psa. 2:12) The rule that Peter gives them is faith, which purifies the heart. The unbearable yoke that they were going to tempt God with, by galling the neck of the disciples, was first, the needfulness of circumcision; Secondly, a command to keep the law of Moses; and it is called tempting God, because it was a reflection cast upon His work who had purified their hearts by faith, and sent His Spirit to govern and lead them into all truth; as if the Holy Spirit was not sufficient to make them obedient, nor God's purifying their hearts a sufficient purification, nor faith a sufficient rule, without yoking them with the killing letter as the only rule of life. The law obeyed, and disarmed of its curse, is in the heart of the Mediator, who is Judge of quick and dead, and therefore keeps the keys of hell and of death. The believer is under the law of faith to Christ; and they that are His have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts; such are delivered from the law; and against such there is no law; and sin is not imputed where there is no law. I do insist upon it that, if a believer be brought to the law of Moses, to be under it in any other sense, sin stares him in the face, wrath works in his heart, his enmity is stirred up, bondage seizes him, and despondency or despair will sink him, unless the law of the Spirit of life makes him free from the law of sin and death.

--William Huntington

---

# The Believers Rule of Life

By William Huntington

*(Condensed from "The Rule and Riddle." Published in 1811 by T. Bensley, London)*

Dear Sir,

I received the packet which you directed to me, consisting of your very long epistle, of a circular in print, and of a sermon on the promises of God. I read your epistle without offence, as I believe you meant well, which I gather from your politeness, civil treatment, and cautious way of expressing yourself; such a letter I have never received from any person who has thought proper to expose or oppose me, as a maintainer of licentious doctrines. Their letters have generally been filled with the scurrility of Billingsgate, and without any truth fairly stated; which has only served to convince me that such persons are without Christ, and have no hope in the world.

Was it in my power, I would address you as a gentleman of sense and a scholar, for both appear in your affectionate epistle, but I have neither politeness nor learning, as it is now called, yet will give you the best answer I am capable of, in the language of Scripture.

If I know anything of my own heart, I can truly assert, that I wish all that fear God to know what He hath done for my soul; and, in declaring it, I desire to speak as the oracles of God; and to live up to what I preach, as far as grace shall enable me while in this body of death! and I wish some of our zealous advocates for Moses would do the same, by letting their light shine before me that others might see as well as hear of their good works; seeing it is not the hearers nor the contenders for the law that are just before God; but the doers of the law shall be justified.

That the ten commandments are the believer's only rule of life, was insisted upon by the first person that I ever disputed with on that subject; which he endeavoured to enforce and prove by Paul's quoting part of it in his epistle to the Romans, which church he supposed to consist of saints only, by Paul's addressing them as the beloved of God called to be saints, of considering that hypocrites, wise virgins and foolish ones, are to go and grow together as tares and wheat until harvest. And on the account of this mixture it is that the killing letter and the promise of life must go together, the promises are to the heirs of promise; and "we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law." I asked a gentleman which of the commandments he meant? And he replied, "Those in the 20th chapter of Exodus." And if those ten commandments are the believer's rule, the other parts of Scripture, one would think, might be dispensed with by the believer; for, if that law be his only rule of life, what can he want more? Though, by and by, there is not the command to love God in that chapter.

### **RULE OF THE ANCIENT SAINTS**

If the ten commandments in the letter be the believer's only rule, Abel, who obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts, had no rule to go by, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, (Gen. 5:22) and "was translated that he should not see death, for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." (Heb 11:5); yet he had no rule of life. Noah the just, who took warning of God, prepared an ark, condemned the world, and became heir of an everlasting righteousness, was without rule. Abraham, the friend of God, and the father of the faithful, and heir of the world, must walk at an uncertainty also. Melchisedek, king of righteousness, and king of peace, priest of the Most High God; after whose order Christ is a priest forever and ever, had no rule for his order. Yea, all the antediluvian and post diluvian saints, down to the time of the

children of Israel's compassing the Mount Sinai, must be left to walk and to worship at random; for, if the letter of the law, or the ten commandments delivered at Sinai, be the believer's only rule of life, it is clear they were without that rule. Yet they were not without law to God, for they feared Him, loved Him, and walked with Him; and saw Him at a distance and embraced Him, were united to Him, and became one spirit with Him.

I have sometimes wondered why these ancient saints should be set forth with the encomiums of being God's friends, walking with Him, obtaining witness that they were righteous, obtaining promises, obtaining good report, as strangers and pilgrims upon earth, of whom the world was not worthy, seeking an heavenly country, and a city that hath foundations, despising all worldly pleasure, self, and honour, leaving their own house, home, and country, without any desire to return thither; and why we should be commended to go forth by the footsteps of this flock, and be said to be compassed about with this cloud of witnesses, and be directed to follow those who through faith and practice now inherit the promises; when we know that if they were on earth, in this refined age, they would be ranked among the worst of Antinomians.

It is strange that the believer is not commanded to look to Moses the law giver, and to the bondwoman that is under the law, instead of looking to Abraham our father, and to Sarah that bare us, whom God called alone, and blessed and increased. (Isaiah 51:2). Paul would have us tread in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham, the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to him, or to his seed, through the law, Rom. 4:12,13; and yet affirms, that as many as are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. And this promised blessing, and promised heirship, was given to Abraham, and to his seed, four hundred and thirty years before the law, or before our only rule of life was given.

What rule had those glorious pilgrims to walk by, who obtained so good a report, or so good a testimony from God? Paul tells us that Abel offered to God, and obtained witness that he was righteous by faith; then faith was his rule of walk; and Noah condemned the world by faith; then faith was his rule of judgment. "By faith Abraham, when he was called, went out not knowing whither he went," then faith was his rule, by which he took his journey, though he knew not whither, and his obedience was the obedience of faith. But if he had been favoured with our only rule of life, he might have known whither he was going, and not have gone in ignorance, and his obedience would have been the obedience of the law instead of faith. But Paul will have it that all Abraham's children are in the same strait that their father was, for they walk by faith, not by sight. But if the letter of the law be the only rule that the believer is to walk and live by, then he walks by sight, not by faith; he looks at the things that are seen, not at the things that are not seen. If it is by faith that Moses saw Him who is invisible, then by faith we must look at the things that are not seen, which are eternal.

### **FAITH AS A RULE OF LIFE**

Paul says, "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him;" then faith must be the rule of his coming. "We have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; then faith is the rule of our approach to God. "The just shall live by his faith;" then faith is the just man's rule of life. "We walk by faith, not by sight;" then faith is our rule of walk. "Thou standest by faith," says Paul; then faith is the rule of the believer's standing. "Whatever ye shall ask believing, ye shall receive," says Christ; then faith is the rule of that branch of worship. By faith Enoch had this testimony, that he pleased God; "but without faith it is impossible to please Him;" then faith is a rule that God approves of, and is pleased with. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin;" then faith is a

perfect rule of holiness. "All that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses;" then faith is our rule of righteousness. It is by faith we overcome the world to lay hold on eternal life, is to fight the good fight of faith, according to Paul; "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith;" then faith was the rule of his warfare, and the rule of his race, and it was the grace of God that made Paul obedient to that rule. "We have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith;" that is, by Christ we have received grace to save our souls, and apostleship to be of use to the church, not as a reward of our obedience, but to furnish us with power to make us obedient to the faith, among all nations for His name, Rom. 1:5; then faith is the rule of apostolic obedience; for it cannot be called receiving grace for obedience to the faith if faith be not the gracious man's rule of obedience.

Paul counts all things but dung that he may win Christ, and be found in Him; not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ; and tells us to walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing. You take this rule of Paul's to be his pressing forward, or any of his attainments, it is answered, by faith he pressed forward, and by faith he attained; or else his pressing and attaining had been nothing but sin, for whatsoever is not of faith, according to Paul's doctrine, is sin.

By faith Christ dwells in our hearts, and by faith we dwell in Him; and "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature," which is Christ formed within us: "and as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." Faith is the rule of life according to the revealed will of God in Christ Jesus; "and this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

(Jn. 5:40) Thus faith, appears to be the believer's rule of life. according to the will of God in Christ Jesus; and the letter of the law is the bond-childrens' rule of life; he that doth these things shall live in them. Let him do according to this rule and he shall live. The law is not the rule of believing, but of doing; the law is not of faith but of works, and the man that doth them shall live in them. (Gal. 3:12)

If to see the Son, and believe on Him, entitles us to everlasting life according to God's will, then faith must be the rule of that life; and one would think that if "he that liveth and believeth shall never die," faith must be a safe rule to live by.

### **THE LAW NOT OF FAITH BUT OF WORKS**

I have sometimes thought that, if the letter of the law in the twentieth chapter of Exodus be the believer's only rule of life, he would be sorely put to his shifts when the devil sets a troop of Arians, Socinians, or Sabellians at him; he would find these words, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." This rule would hardly set him right. It is by faith that we apprehend Christ; it is by faith we lay hold of Him, as the hope set before us. (Heb. 6:18) It is by Christ that we believe in God. 1 Pet. 1:21; and we receive the promise of the Spirit through faith, (Gal. 3:14). By this rule we come to a saving knowledge of the Trinity; for the eye of faith is a light by which we see what is the fellowship of the mystery, Eph. 3:9. Without the assurance of understanding there will be no true acknowledgement of the mystery of God the Holy Ghost, and of the Father and of Christ, Col. 2:2. The Ten Commandments will never guide a man into this mystery, nor set him right if he errs in it.

In your epistle, Sir, you tell me that, if I do not enforce the law as the believer's rule of life, I must in some sense make it void. I think I have sufficiently proved that Paul's rule of life and walk was faith; and he



asks, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." Paul insists upon it that faith worketh by love, and tells us that "love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." (Rom. 13:10) If this doctrine be the fulfilling of the law, it cannot make it void.

The sermon that you were so kind to send me is pregnant with a deal of scholastic unscriptural logic, little better than nonsense, which may serve to display the worldly wisdom of the author, and excite the admiration of unenlightened people. But any spiritual person will easily perceive that he knows little or nothing of the killing letter of the law, or of the spiritual power of the gospel.

The law, as the believer's rule of life, he endeavours to enforce from the fitness of things, which are phrases that stand for anything or nothing, just as the author pleases. But he does not satisfy me concerning the things that fit. God grant he may not go out of the world with this confusion in his heart! if he does, it is to be feared that he will find the ministration of death, and his carnal mind, when they come to grip one another in a dying hour, will not fit so easy as he imagines. Paul delighted in the law of God after the inward man, Rom. 7:22. And, according to Paul, the law of God and the inward man are things that will fit; a new heart and a new spirit are things that join well; a sense of God's love to us, and a pure love to Him, brings about an union that fits sweetly. "Believe," says the Savior, "that I am in you and you in me;" and when Christ crucified and a broken heart come together, they are things that fit exactly as the branch and the vine, or as the foundation with the super structure. And if the author of this sermon dies a stranger to the fitness of these things, as he seems to be at present, it had been good for him if he had never been born. Persons who are strangers to an union with Christ by the Spirit know nothing savingly of the spiritual fitness of things; they may make a

noise about the law just to blind folks, but they bring forth no more fruit to God's glory than a branch that is not in the vine. (Jn. 15:4).

### **LOOK TO CHRIST-NOT THE LAW**

A friend of mine once asked a certain divine in London what he thought of the law as the believer's only rule of life? He replied, "The believer must look with one eye to Christ, and with the other to the law." But he brought no more proof from the word of God than this author has, who attempts to prove it by the fitness of things. My friend replied, "Then every believer must squint." However, there is no call for squinting in this matter; Christ says, "Look unto me, and be saved, all ye ends of the earth;" and adds, "I will keep that man in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on me " and Paul tells us to "run the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." Looking with one eye to the law, and with the other to Christ, is erring from wisdom's rule of direction; which is, "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established."

### **THE LETTER ALONE NOT SUFFICIENT TO LIFE**

The printed letter that you sent me is a discord upon the same string I perceive; but the author will never be able to prove from the Scriptures of truth, that the Ten Commandments in the letter are called the rule of life. He tells us that it is implied; this brings to my mind an old woman, who had been long contending for this letter rule, being asked to give a reason of the hope that was in her; on suspicion of her having none, replied "You will find my experience in such a verse of Jeremiah's prophecy," hinting that it was implied there. Which served to convince the inquirer that she had no hope but what stood on the paper. I suppose all the experience of the devil is implied in four texts of Scripture: one says; he is cursed above all cattle; another, that he believes and trembles; another that he is cast down

to hell and another, that he is "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." But the devil has another experience beside this; which will stick close to him, and be like a thousand hells within him, when every letter of Scripture text will be burnt up. When the killing letter has slain the reprobate, it has done its office; the living Word that abides forever, which is in the hand of the Spirit, and which dwells in the saints of God, will be settled in heaven, and abide forever there.

The professor must have Christ in him the hope of glory if ever he arrives safe to the happy enjoyment of God in heaven. People, who have no hope but in the written letter of Scripture, will find that the flood of wrath and the final conflagration will leave them without an anchor in that storm; and I am persuaded that the believer's rule of life must be found in his heart also, if ever he lives with God in heaven.

If the believer's rule be implied in the Ten Commandments according to this gentleman, I believe it would be there long enough before he would find it out. To put on the Lord Jesus and walk in Him, to put off the old man daily, and to put on the new man, which is created in righteousness and true holiness; to follow Christ in the Spirit; to deny self, and take up the cross daily to stand fast in gospel liberty, and not be entangled with the yoke of bondage; to renounce all confidence in the flesh, and rejoice in Christ Jesus; to hate one's own life, or be unworthy of the Savior; to walk in the Spirit, in order to escape the fulfilling of the lusts of the flesh; to know that the strength of sin is the law, and that it is the ministration of death and condemnation; are things that, if they are implied in the ten commandments, would lay there, concealed from the believer, to all eternity, if the mystery of faith had not revealed them, or the gospel, that brings life and immortality to light, had not brought them to light also. "When Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart." By the law is the knowledge of

sin, but it brings not the path of life to light, that is the new and living way, (Heb. 10:20) and is revealed from another quarter; "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

### **NOT WITHOUT LAW TO GOD**

I cannot find it in my heart to criticize the reasons that you assign; because you have not addressed me, as some have, with insolence and lies, but you seem as desirous of information as you are to inform me, or set me right; therefore without taking your letter to pieces, I will endeavour to make it appear, that the believer in his liberty is in no sense of the word an outlaw, nor yet without law; for he is in no wise excluded from any benefit that arises from the law, and yet he is not under the law, but under grace. (Rom. 6:14).

Paul says, "To them that are without law I became as without law, being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ." Hence it appears that the believer is not without law to God. And, as long as I have made it my study to consider the believer's laws, I will endeavour to bring them forth, and set them in as fair a light as I am capable of, and see whether they amount to what is called Antinomianism, or whether they amount to real divinity; because Paul says, we do not make void the law through faith. Wisdom affirms, "Who so despises the word shall be destroyed; but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded;" and then tells us that "the law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death," Prov. 13:13,14. Let it be observed that Wisdom's wise man, who is always opposed to the fool is, in New Testament language, the believer, who is opposed to the infidel; and this law is emphatically called the law of the wise! which is the same as the household of faith, being their law in particular, as belonging to none else; and it is called a fountain of life.

## **THE KILLING LETTER-NOT THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE**

A fountain is supplied from its own spring, yields its contents to supply the poor and needy when they seek water and there is none elsewhere, and their tongue faileth for thirst, that they may drink and not famish, or die by famishing. So this law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death. Can this law of the wise be the Ten Commandments, which are affirmed by some to be the believer's only rule of life? I trow not. Paul tells us the letter killeth, 2 Cor. 3:6; that it is the law of death, Rom. 7:2; that the law worketh wrath, (Rom. 4:15); and is the ministration of death and condemnation, (2 Cor: 4:7,9) nor does our faith in Christ alter the nature of the law, or make it to us what it was not before. It is the yoke of bondage, and gendereth to bondage still; hence we are exhorted to stand fast in our liberty, and not be entangled again with that yoke of bondage, Gal. 5:1. It still retains its binding nature, even to the believer, and will entangle him again if he looks to it for help.

This rule of life, as some term it, is still a killing letter, hence God declares that, "we are delivered from the law, that being dead, wherein we were held, that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter," Rom. 7:6. If the law be a killing letter, and the law of death, it cannot be a fountain of life; by which the wise man departs from the snares of death. We know that sin is a transgression of the law, and that where there is no law there is no transgression; and that death is the sentence of the law; if so, the commandments are the snares that hold the sinner in the arms of death. The first snare that entangles a thief is the law; and if he is left to the mercy of that, it will serve him as the spider does the fly in the web, never let him go till it has killed him; it is a killing letter, and so all will find it that weave the spider's web, no web can be woven that will cover the soul on that loom; the commandment is exceeding broad. Nor can we suppose that our calling the ministration of

condemnation the rule of life will alter this matter, or turn a killing letter into a living fountain; for that law gives no life, therefore it can be no part of this law of the wise. "Had there been a law given that could have given life, verily righteousness should have come by the law." This law of the wise, that is, a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death, is what Paul calls the ministration of the Spirit opposed to the ministration of death, 2 Cor. 3:9. Solomon's fountain of life is Paul's ministration of the Spirit; and what Solomon calls the snares of death is Paul's law of death. The wise man's law of life is the same as the living water that the Savior gives, that is in the believer as a well of water springing up into everlasting life. (Jn. 4:14)

Blessed be God forever, it is a fountain of life indeed by which the poor believing sinner departs from the snares of death, and that for ever more; or, to speak in the apostle's language, "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death;" that is, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ has made me free from the law of sin that works in my members, and to the law of Moses, which is the ministration of death. We may call this law of the wise the believer's only rule of life, without talking nonsense.

### **WHY IT IS CALLED THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT**

But perhaps my unknown friend may ask why this dispensation of the Spirit is called a law? To which I answer, first, because of its binding power; the cords of everlasting love, the bond of peace, and the girdle of truth, will hold the soul faster than all the lifeless commandments in the world, whether they be from heaven or of men. Secondly, it is called a law, because of its constraining power; "the love of Christ constrains me," says Paul; it is a powerful constraint from evil, and mightily influences the mind to that which is good. Thirdly, Because of the obedience it produces; the blessed Giver of this law circumcises our hearts, that we may love the Lord our God with all our heart and

with all our soul, that we may live, Deut. 30:6. It produces the fruits of the Spirit, which is evangelical obedience; we are taught of God to love one another by the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, which is attended with filial fear that keeps us from departing from God, Jer. 32:40. God directs our work in truth by it, Isa. 61:8; and works our works in us, Isa. 26:12; he works in us an inclining and moving power, "both to will and to do of his own good pleasure," Phil 2:13. Well may this be called the law of the Spirit, when it produces such spiritual obedience; well may the desire of the righteous when it comes be called a Tree of Life, Prov. 13:12; seeing it produces love, joy, peace, meekness, temperance, etc.

This law of the wise is called a fountain, because it plays all its productions high enough to reach the spring from whence it is supplied; evangelical obedience springing from the Spirit of life and love, directed to the glory of God as the believer's chief end, makes the assembly of the saints like a garden enclosed, a spring shut up, or a fountain sealed, S.O.S. 4:12. This law of the Spirit of life produces more real obedience to God in one hour than ever hath been produced by all the rules that have been drawn by human wisdom from killing snares. This law of the wise is Christ's yoke that is easy, and it is his burden that is light, Matt. 11:29,30. Those souls that are under this are "the circumcision that worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." God wrote this law on our hearts and in our minds does He put it, (Jer. 31:33).

This is the law that goes forth of Zion, not from Sinai, and is the word of the Lord that went from Jerusalem, (Micah 4:2); and those that receive it are the people "that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus," Rev. 14:12. By this law are the servants of God warned, and in keeping this there is great reward, for charity abideth forever, Psa. 19:11. This is the holy commandment delivered unto us, from which legions have continually departed, 2 Pet. 2:21; because it

was only delivered to them in the letter of it, not put into them as a fountain of life. Hence they begin in the Spirit, or with the dispensation of the gospel, and end in the flesh, or under the killing letter.

The law of the wise may be called a fountain of life, because it quickens the dead soul, and raises it to a lively hope; it produces that life which the law promised but could not give because we could give it no obedience; but this law enables a soul to live unto God, to live by the faith of the Son of God; it produces a lively motion toward God; it is attended with life and peace, and enables us to love God that we may live eternally with Him.

Thus, Sir, the believer is not without law to God, for God has written His law in his heart, and he is under this law to Christ as his eternal Head, King, and Ruler. And I think this is speaking as the oracles of God, and preaching it is doing the work of an evangelist, and making full proof of the ministry, much better than telling poor blind souls to look with one eye to Christ, who is our life, and the other to the law, which is death; and it is better than bringing rules of life from a law which is the strength of sin; or telling people that the rule of life is implied in the killing letter; or that it appears from the fitness of things; when we know that a living soul serving God in the oldness of the letter are things that can fit in no better than has darkness and light; the eye of faith the blinding veil; perfect liberty and a yoke of bondage; real love and a gendering to fear; a display of mercy and a revelation of wrath; one working friendship and the other the motions of sin and vengeance. Are these the things that will fit; or what is the fitness that rises from them? I should like to hear the author again on this matter.

### **DO NOT MAKE VOID THE LAW THROUGH FAITH**

In order to convince my friend further that we do not make void the law through faith, or represent the believer without law to God, I will



fetch in another law, which is not properly distinct from, but a branch of this that has been considered; and it is a branch that debases the proud boaster, cuts up the self-righteous, discovers the fool, lays the legalist in the dust, exposes the blind guide, furnishes the spiritual soldier of Christ with weapons against him, and secures the whole glory of salvation to God, to whom it belongs, and to whom it must be given without reserve.

By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified, for by the law is the knowledge of sin; but now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God, to declare at this time His righteousness, that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law; of works? Nay, but by the law of faith." But what doth Paul mean by the law of faith? Does he mean the gospel, which is sometimes called faith, as Paul, who persecuted the saints in times past, is said now to preach the faith? No; for the gospel is the revelation and explanation of the covenant of promise; and all the blessings of it are the free gifts of God; Christ the covenant head, the Spirit of promise, everlasting righteousness, everlasting salvation, life, and glory, are all the gifts of God, held forth in unconditional promises, which are all yea and amen, to the glory of God, and our everlasting salvation.

As all these things come freely from God, from the, better covenant, a covenant of promise, made with Christ, and with His seed in Him and are purely free in their fountain, in their administration and bestowed on a God-honouring and hell-deserving people, irrespective of any

work, worth, or worthiness in them, there can be nothing like a law in it, that is, there is nothing that binds with rigor to obedience or that threatens damnation for non-performance; there is nothing in it that sets a man to work for life, reckoning the reward to be of debt; for God gives grace to make us obedient to the faith, and by grace he preserveth and rewardeth the faithful. The Lord gives both grace and glory, and will display the riches of His grace in glory by Christ Jesus: yea, even the kingdom itself is given of God in His good pleasure. Therefore I presume that the word of faith dwelling richly in us, the spirit of faith working powerfully, and the grace of faith working by love, purifying the heart, holding an imputed righteousness, and giving Christ a residence within us, is Paul's law of faith. For it is not hearing the gospel, nor imbibing a speculative knowledge of it, that will exclude boasting; but the word, and grace of faith when powerfully applied to the heart, will stop the sinner's mouth, and forever silence him upon that head.

### **WHY IT IS CALLED THE LAW OF FAITH**

If you ask why Paul calls this law the law of faith? answer, because faith works by love, which is the fulfilling of the law, which is the end of the commandment, and lays hold of Christ, who is the end of the law; and puts on an everlasting righteousness adequate to the law; because it is Christ's obedience thereto, and because he that believes hath everlasting life, which was the greatest thing that the law ever promised, and which that law could never give; and because the believer has the Spirit of holiness, as the law is holy; by faith he is a just man, as the law is just; a good man, as the law is good; a spiritual man, as the law is spiritual: and thus "the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Rom. 8:4. I will show my friend that I have yet to speak on the saints' behalf; on the subject of their being not without law to God.

## **DIFFERENCE IN THE TWO MIRRORS**

As Paul divides the believer from the infidel, and divides the law between them also, applying the law of faith to the believer, and the law of works to the infidel, declaring "that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law;" and those that are under the law are under sin, and under the curse, Gal. 3:22; 10; so James divides the hearer from the doer. He tells us that "God of his own will begat us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures," and then he tells us to be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving ourselves. By doing He means the works or fruits of faith; "Show me," saith he, "thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works;" and then adds: "For if any be a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass, for he beholds himself and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was."

Here James compares the gospel preached to a glass, the light of which reflecting upon the sinner's conscience makes manifest the state of his soul; as Paul speaks: "but we all with open face beholding as in a glass;" so here the sinner hates the light, and goeth his way; he will come no more to it; this glass has shown, and the light of it has reproved his deeds, therefore, he hates it, and goeth his way into the world again, and so hardens his heart and sears his conscience, until all is forgotten, and then he sinks into a deeper security; or, as the text saith, "he straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." Jas. 1:25. Here is a law of perfect liberty, or a perfect law of liberty, to be looked into, and to be continued in if a man will be blessed in his deed.

## **THE LAW OF LIBERTY**

If my friend asks what this law of liberty is, I will endeavour to show him. It is taken from the law of release, when the jubilee trumpet was to be sounded, and liberty to be proclaimed according to the tenor of the law. "If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years shall he serve, and in the seventh he shall go free for nothing. If he came in by himself he shall go out by himself; if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him." Every poor elect sinner is like this Hebrew servant, he has sold himself for nought (Isa. 42:3); and is the servant of sin, and under the dominion of the law - two hard masters indeed, who show no favour; he that is under the dominion of sin is also under the law of death; he that is delivered from the power of sin, is delivered from the law also, as the apostle intimates, "sin shall not have dominion over you;" but why? "because you are not under the law, (which is the strength of sin) but under grace," which reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. In this state of servitude the sinner lies till the great trumpet is blown, Isa. 27:13; and the joyful sound reaches his ears, Psa. 89:15; by which Christ preached deliverance to captives, and sets at liberty those that are bruised with this yoke of hard service, (Luke 4:18).

## **THE PERFECT LAW SETS FREE**

When the Hebrew servant's liberty was proclaimed, he was delivered from his master, from the command of his master, from the threatening of his master, and from the service of his master, he was a free man; he shall, says God, go out free; and yet this man, that went out at the year of jubilee, is, says God, my servant, Lev. 25:49. So the believing sinner is delivered from the law, that being dead, Rom. 7:6; from the command of the law, for the letter killeth; from the curse of the law, Gal. 3:13; and from the service of the law, for he shall "serve in the newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the

letter." Rom. 7:6. He is a free man: "if the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed;" and yet he that is this free man is Christ's servant, 1 Cor. 7:22; for though he is not under the law, yet he is not without law to God, but under this law of liberty to Christ, who has made him free indeed, and he that looks into this law of liberty, and continues in it shall be blessed in his deed.

No doubt but many of the mercenary Hebrew masters were grieved at this law of liberty; they were galled and chafed in their minds to see their slaves go out free. Hence we read that Zedekiah made a covenant with all the people at Jerusalem to proclaim liberty to their servants unjustly detained: that every man should let his man servant or maid servant, being an Hebrew or Hebrewess, go free that they should not serve themselves of them. When the princes and people heard of this covenant of the kings, they obeyed it, and let their servants go free; "but afterwards they turned, and caused the servants and handmaids, whom they had let go free, to return, and brought them into subjection for servants and for handmaids."

"I made a covenant with your fathers, says God, that when the servant had served six years ye shall let him go free, and you had now turned and done right in my sight, in proclaiming liberty; and ye had made a covenant before me, in the house which is called by my name, but ye returned and polluted my name, by causing every man and maid servant whom he had set at liberty at their pleasure to return, and brought them into subjection. Therefore, thus saith the Lord, Ye have not hearkened unto me in proclaiming liberty; - behold, I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the Lord, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine, and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth." (read Jeremiah 34)

"He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity," says John, Rev. 13:10; and so it was here, the masters hated the Lord's release; they

refused to break the yoke, therefore God put their necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, Jer. 27:8; and left them in his service three score and ten years, and then proclaimed a jubilee to them, which they were glad to hear of as their poor servants had been before; as it is written, "when the Lord turned the captivity of Zion we were like them that dream." But the deliverance that God proclaimed to them was more than a dream, though that was better than they had formerly proclaimed to their servants. God's release of them was real, which filled their mouth with laughter, and their tongues with singing, insomuch, that the heathens said the Lord hath done great things for them (Psa. 127:1, 2)

These mercenary masters are lively figures of many of our preachers; and it is with allusion to them that the inspired penmen often speak of false apostles and deceitful workers, who under the vail of the law, and the influence of the devil transformed, call the everlasting gospel Anti-nomianism the preachers of it Anti-nomians, the powerful operations of the Spirit of it enthusiasm, and the liberty of it licentiousness; as if the word, Spirit, grace, and ministers of the Lord, were the only instruments of Satan; and graceless men the only infallible preachers of holiness, who under a false show of it tempt God; bring forth the old yoke; lead the saints into bondage; pervert their way; and set their hearts to fretting against the Lord, Prov. 19:3. Of this number are some; I may say legions, for there are many that go from our universities and academies, who have no other qualifications for the ministry, authority in it, credentials for it, right to live by it, or to claim the honour of it, than that which is of men; they are ministers of men and by men. And among all the mysteries that puzzle the wise this is none of the least, that men of worldly wisdom, which God calls foolishness. (1 Cor. 3:19); and wise and prudent men, from whom he has hid the mysteries of His kingdom, Matt. 11:25; should be able with the help of that wisdom that is earthly, sensual, and devilish. (Jas. 3

15); to turn carnal men into ministers of the Spirit, spiritual lords, divines, and doctors of divinity. But so it is, if we may credit all that we hear; but how it is done must remain a mystery, until he that has promised to reveal the mystery of iniquity reveal this also as a main branch of it.

### **TEACHERS OF LAW PROMISE LIBERTY WHILE THEY ARE SERVANTS OF CORRUPTION**

And who set these men to keep to themselves teachers is also as great a mystery. I know Paul bids Timothy commit his doctrine to faithful men, that they might be able to teach others; but to turn infidels into faithful men and divines is another thing. Paul speaks of some in his days that acted as the Hebrew masters did by their servants, who proclaimed liberty to them, and subjected them to servitude again; and calls them "false brethren, unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage to whom we gave place by subjection, no not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel, (or the freedom that Christ has promised to them that receive the truth (Jn. 8:32); might continue with you." (Gal. 2:4, 5). And what was the bondage that these spies, who came in privily, brought in unexpectedly, wanted to bring in? Why they wanted to subject them to the command of the law, which genders to bondage, by telling them that they were under the law as a rule of life. "There rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, that it was needful to circumcise them, (the believing Gentiles), and to command them to keep the law of Moses." (Act.15:15)

Here is the command to the believers, they were to keep the law of Moses; to which Peter answers, "God which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by

faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" The liberty which Peter here alludes to is the liberty of the Holy Ghost, which God had given them, which Paul calls the law of the Spirit of life, which made him free from the law of sin and death; and "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty," 2 Cor. 3:17, for, as David says, the Spirit of God is a free Spirit, Psa. 51:12. The rule that Peter gives them is faith, which purifies the heart.

The unbearable yoke that they were going to tempt God with, by galling the neck of the disciples, was first, the needfulness of circumcision: Secondly, a command to keep the law of Moses; and it is called tempting God, because it was a reflection cast upon His work who had purified their hearts by faith, and sent His spirit to govern and lead them into all truth, as if the Holy Ghost was not sufficient to make them obedient, nor God's purifying their hearts a sufficient purification, nor faith a sufficient rule, without yoking them with the killing letter as the only rule of life. And as it was then, so it is now; every man that refuses to tempt God, and that will not bring forth this yoke, and that does not affirm that the killing letter is the living man's only rule of life, is an Antinomian, a licentious person, a man in errors, one that makes void the law; and is cried down by every blind watchman, though they cannot bring one text to prove that the believer is under the law as a rule of life nor one text that calls Moses' law the believer's rule of life; nor one text from God's book to overthrow this doctrine, this everlasting gospel: Paul says, they know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

If it be urged that the command, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, is still a yoke upon the believer's neck; it is answered, the believer is not under the law, but under grace; not an heir of wrath, nor of the commandments, but an heir of promise and he is to take the commandment to the promise, which belongs to the better



covenant; and he will find that God has promised to circumcise his heart, and that he shall love the Lord that he may live. Paul makes a difference between the commandment and Christ, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, and therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee," is in a promise, and is better than a command: they shall love me is safer and better than do love me; it comes from the better covenant, established upon better promises than conditional ones, and is sure to all the chosen seed.

### **A BETTER COVENANT**

I have considered Solomon's conclusion of the whole matter, "Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man," and have deliberately considered all that you have drawn from the text; and I have likewise considered Paul's comment on Solomon's words, which differs much from yours. "Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned; from which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say nor whereof they affirm," 1 Tim. 1:5-7. What Solomon calls the conclusion of the whole matter, Paul calls the end of the commandment, James calls the perfect law of liberty; Peter calls the gift of the Holy Ghost and of purifying faith; which is the Savior's easy yoke and springing well; which is Paul's law of the Spirit of life; Solomon's law of the wise; the prophets' law that went forth out of Zion; the apostles' law of faith; Peter's holy commandment delivered unto us; and that the end of the commandment, which is charity, out of an heart purified by faith, attended with a good conscience, which all turn from who end in the flesh, and give themselves up to vain jangling, or to talking about things which they understand not.

### **WHATSOEVER IS NOT OF FAITH IS SIN**

If my friend objects, and enforces the commands of Christ on hearing the word, attending the Lord's supper, etc., it is answered, the Spirit shall lead them into all truth. And if the Spirit leads them not, it is serving in the oldness of the letter, contrary to the apostles doctrine, which he received not of men, nor was he taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ, Gal. 1:12. And if purifying faith be not the rule of the believer's actions or obedience to the commands of Christ, and if he be not fully persuaded by the Spirit of faith in his own mind, his works are sin; "whatsoever is not of faith is sin;" to the unbelieving there is nothing pure, their mind and conscience is defiled, (Titus 1:5); nor does their obedience spring from that charity which is the end of the commandment, out of a pure heart, of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned; but is a swerving from it. This is gospel that can never be overthrown; gospel which God has and ever will set His seal to; gospel which no hypocrite ever knew in the power thereof; gospel that shall never pass away, even when heaven and earth are both removed.

It will be expected that my unknown friend will send me in his answer to this, from the word of God, an account of the bad effects, licentious practices and libertinism, that this doctrine has produced in the saints of God; and likewise an account from Scripture of the superior holiness, fruitfulness, or usefullness, that has demonstrated itself in those who have tempted God, putting the commanding yoke of the law upon the disciples' necks; or, as Paul says, swerved from this end of the commandment, which is charity out of a pure heart, to the study and practice of vain jangling, or desiring to be teachers of the law, knowing neither what they say nor whereof they affirm.

It is not to be wondered at that men love or desire to be teachers of the law; the letter is more superficial, it lays nearer home, and is within the compass of nature. But as for this mystery, to an unenlightened, unquickened, uninspired, unrenewed minister of the

letter, it is too profound a depth, the natural man receives it not, nor can he know it, because it is spiritually discerned, and by the saints powerfully felt; but it will ever be a parable in the mouth of fools, Prov. 26:7. These are the great things of God's law, and they are accounted a strange thing, Hos. 8:12. It contains the weighty matters of the law, judgment, mercy, faith, and the love of God, and teaches a man to do the lesser matters in faith, and under the constraining power of the Spirit of love and of a sound mind; sound in the faith, and inspired with love, which will make a man obedient unto death; "love is strong as death;" and so those saints found it who "loved not their lives unto the death," Rev. 12:11. I come now to another branch of this perfect law of liberty. which is to be continued in, if a man will be blessed in his deed.

### **DEAD TO THE LAW BY THE BODY OF CHRIST**

"Know ye not, brethren (for I speak to them that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead she is loosed from the law of her husband, so then if while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." (Rom. 7:14).

If Paul has any meaning I think it amounts to this, that the law has the same dominion over the sinner, that expects life or help from it by his own obedience to the rules of it, as the husband has over his wife by the law of marriage; and the law communicates bondage to the soul; which the soul naturally genders to, until the soul be pregnant with

horror, despair, and misery, just as a man communicates seed to a wife, who brings forth a still-born or dead child, which is the worst of labours without any heir to satisfy the husband, as Paul aims to prove. "For, when we were in the flesh, the motions of sin, which: were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death, Rom. 7:5. But when God tells the poor sinner, who is so fond of being Moses' disciple, that "Moses my servant is dead;" and the soul is quickened to feel and enlightened to see that the law is a killing letter, the law of death, and ministration of condemnation; and that the soul can bring forth no fruit to God under its gendering bondage, no fruit but fruit unto death or dead works; the soul seeing a dead husband, and a dead law, that cannot give life, the soul is loosed from that law; nor is it an adulteress, nor an Antinomian, though it be married to another man. For that law has no more power over such a soul than the corpse of Anna's husband had over her, who had been a widow upwards of forty years, and had lived with an husband but seven years from her virginity, and was then waiting to be married to the consolation of Israel. (Luke 2:36)

The way that the soul gets released from that law is by the body of Christ. The soul that sees that the law cursed the Savior as well as the sinner, and that the Lord died under the law; that it was the law of death to the Savior as well as to the sinner; and, finding Christ raised from the dead, it goes after him and unites with Him, and is begotten to a lively hope by His resurrection from the dead; and Christ formed in the soul the hope of glory is an incorruptible seed indeed, a precious fruit. Such are no adulteresses though they be married to another man. Nor do they deserve the name of licentious Antinomians, seeing the Holy Ghost affirmeth that this is done that they may bring forth fruit unto God, Rom. 7:4; namely, the fruits of the Spirit. If the rigorous husband of a poor simple woman be dead, according to Paul's doctrine, one would think that he could command her person, and beat

her back no more; and that the other man whom she had married had got the sole and whole command of her; I am sure he has by the laws of God, and by the covenant of wedlock, or else I know not who would marry a widow to have her hunted with the commands of a ghost.

However, if the killing commandments of the dead husband be the believer's rule of life, who is espoused to Christ by faith, this is the case; Moses, the Lord's servant, has still the command and dominion over the bride the Lamb's wife, Rev. 21:3. And notwithstanding his being dead, as God affirms, yet he must manage the household of faith, and give the only rule of life to the queen, although she be exalted to stand at the right hand of the king in gold of Ophir, Psa. 45:9. If she be at the right hand of the king, they do her much wrong who place her at the foot of a servant; one would think that, as he was not permitted to go into the promised land, though he fain would, which was but a faith type of heaven, he could never have such power over the house or church of Christ, which is so often emphatically called heaven.

We are under the law as the rule of life, say some; then the law of liberty is far from being perfect. One would think that souls espoused to Christ, and married to Him, that they should bring forth fruit unto God, were under no law but that of the husband; or, as Paul says, under the law to Christ. And I am sure it is so with souls wedded to Moses, he has the whole command of them, for they are without the spiritual law of life altogether: and surely the second husband has as much right as the first; if we allow this man to be worthy of as much, Paul says, he is counted worthy of more glory than Moses. inasmuch as he who hath builded the house, as Jacob built the house of Israel by Rachel and Leah, Ruth 4:11, is worthy of more honour than the house. (Heb. 3:3)

It is clear that all the fruit brought forth under Moses was but dead works, or fruit unto death; therefore he built no house or household but that of the bond woman, who is affirmed to be desolate; and with respect to God, she is said to have no husband, Gal. 4:27; and therefore all her offspring are a bastard race of dead children, dead in trespasses and sins, which are sunk into the synagogue of Satan instead of a righteous nation, called the living, that are to rise up and praise Christ. (Isa. 38:19) Hence we learn that souls under the law wedded to Moses are not God's wife; they bring forth fruit unto death, not unto God; they are free from righteousness. God says, I am not their husband; Moses has full command of them, though he accuses them day and night; and Christ Himself always sends such souls to the law, that they may not marry another while the first husband lives. But when an accusing Moses, and his killing law, have executed their sentence of death on the soul, it is then dead; and if Christ quickens it and enlightens it, and it flies, as Ruth did, to His skirt, if He spreads His skirt over it, it is a time of love, and if He enters into a marriage covenant with such a soul, it becomes His own, Ezek. 16:8. He has the whole command of such, and the full possession of them; He has married the soul that was in a state of widowhood, and says thy Maker is thy Husband; thou shalt remember the reproach of thy widowhood no more. Thus He marries the widow, discharges her debts, redeems the mortgaged inheritance, raises up the name of the dead upon it and does worthily in Ephratah, and is famous in Bethlehem, Ruth 4:11.

Paul tells us that he was dead to the law; "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." He tells us that when the commandment came sin revived, and he dies; that sin took occasion by the commandment, deceived him, and by it slew him, Rom 7:11. One would think that, when a law has apprehended a transgressor, arraigned him, tried him, cast him, condemned him, executed him, and buried him, he was got out of the reach of that rule of life. Paul

says the law came to him, it apprehended him, sin revived, he would be found guilty; it took an occasion by the law to expose him to death, deceived him, with respect to all hopes in it, and slew him by the sentence of it; that he was dead and buried with Christ, or planted together with Him in the likeness of His death. If so, one would have thought that it had done with him.

But according to some, this killing letter, or moral law, has never done with the believer; they would make it like the Popish law, which makes a believer in Christ a heretic; condemns him, curses him with bell, book, and candle, and burns him to ashes, and yet pursues him still; if he goes to purgatory, it follows him; if to heaven, it holds the keys of that; and at the judgment day there can be no favour or mercy without Popish absolution. So some handle the law of Moses; though it kills a man and he is crucified, dead, buried, and risen again through the operation of God; yet the commandment that came, which deceived and slew him is still his only rule of life; it is still binding, and if he goes into heaven itself it pursues him, for the very angels round the throne are governed by it, as some affirm which is strange, as God's voice, whether in the law or in the gospel, is declared to be to the sons of men. (Prov. 8:4)

It has been a puzzling matter to me to find out what this is that appears in Moses' ministry, with respect to success, that makes people so eager to copy after him. "He fed the people forty years in the wilderness it is true, but he was so far from exceeding the apostles and evangelists in success, with respect to conversion work, that he declares "the Lord has not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear unto this day," Deut. 29:4; and calls them a perverse generation, a nation void of counsel, and children in whom is no faith, Deut. 32:20. And we know that their carcasses fell in unbelief twenty thousand together. Yea, and the Jews for rejecting of Christ and cleaving to Moses were destroyed by infinite numbers, and with an

infinite destruction; and a Pharisee, who is the greatest advocate for the law, is farther from the kingdom of God than publicans and harlots; and if Moses be but read the veil is upon their hearts, nor can it be taken away till they turn to the Lord.

No fruits are brought forth under the law but wild grapes, wild figs, untimely fruits, dead works, mercenary and eye service, and fruits unto death; and all spring from the base principles of slavish fear; done to get a name or to be seen of men, to merit heaven, and bring God in debt to them; their works spring from the fear of a condemned criminal, which is the worst of roots, and are directed to self, the worst of ends; hence Israel is said to be an empty vine, not united to Christ the true Vine, therefore He brings forth fruit to himself (Hos. 10:8); and instead of bringing forth fruit to himself he must deny himself daily.

### **THE SPIRIT AND GRACE OF GOD THAT TEACHES**

With respect to its usefulness to instruct the children of God, it may be answered, believers are not without teachers; the Lord their God teaches them to profit, Isa. 48:7; to love Him, Deut. 30:6. Yea, and they are taught of God to love one another, 1 Thess. 4:9. Christ, the great prophet of the church, teaches them also. It is not now, remember the law of Moses my servant, but it is "this is my beloved Son, hear ye Him." "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children." The Spirit of God, "the anointing which ye have received of Him, abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you (if he be a minister of the letter, or one that brings rules of life from the snares of death; - but, as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is true, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him," 1 Jn. 2:27.

The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lust, and to live soberly, righteously, and



godly in this present world, Titus 2:11,12. The believer's own reins, when God tries him, instruct him in the night season, Psa. 16:7. "The heart of the wise, (being a new heart, which contains a new spirit), teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips." Thus the children of God are not without teachers, nor yet without divine and infallible teachers. And I would to God that the saints would attend a little more to their divine teaching, they would not stumble upon the dark mountains, be tossed about with every blind guide and wind of doctrine, and go hood-winked, groping for the wall at noonday, as numbers of them do. But alas! instead of searching the Scriptures, as they are commanded to do, which are able to make them wise to salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus, they load their shelves, and stuff their heads with the notions of what are called the fathers; when, if they would try them by God's standard, they would find that not one half of their notions would stand the touchstone of God's word. If believers were to go to the great infallible Head and Prophet of the church by humble prayer, they would find their judgment better informed, their thoughts more established, and their hearts more firmly fixed, than ever they will be by reading a thousand folio volumes of such mongrel divinity, dashed with whole bowls of popery; where you may hunt for seven years and never find one page that can, in the strictest sense, be called the everlasting gospel.

There are libraries, consisting chiefly of ancient books that cost fifty thousand pounds, and I would not go fifty steps to call them all my own if stripped of that despised book called the Bible, and a few more that I could name, which were written by our own divines. I am fully persuaded that every believer may get divinity more pure from adulteration, more powerful, more satisfactory, more establishing, by humble prayer to Christ Jesus, in one hour, than ever he will get from all those authors that are called the fathers, who were as blind as bats, and their writings as full of confusion as a gentleman's garret is full of

lumber. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

It is when men get cold to God, dead to study, powerless and faithless in prayer; shy of the Lord; at a distance from His throne, and beneath heavenly mindedness, and void of heavenly meditation; that they fly to these fathers instead of flying to the Father of eternity, where wisdom, mercy, and comfort may be got; for He is "the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort;" and I know that he will withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly, Psa. 84:11.

### **NOW SERVE IN NEWNESS OF SPIRIT**

As to the letter of the commandments being an infallible rule of direction, is answered thus; they lead to the unity of God; that law prohibits idol worship and all covetousness, and commands love to the neighbour; but we are neither to serve God nor worship God in the oldness of the letter; He will be worshiped in Spirit and in truth, and served in the newness of the Spirit also; it is He that caused the light to shine out of darkness, that shines into our hearts, and gives us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. God's worship, and God's service, are to be performed under the Spirit's influence; "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Although the law forbids covetousness, the power of it will never make any man hate it; "the law is weak through the flesh;" the law of unfeigned faith, that works by love out of a pure conscience, will make a man hate covetousness. "Pray for us," says Paul, "for we trust we have a good conscience in all things, willing to live honestly."

### **NOT WITHOUT DIRECTION AND A DIRECTOR**

God has not left His people without sufficient directions nor yet without a director. "In all thy ways acknowledge God, and He shall direct thy

paths." Wisdom is profitable to direct; "I will direct their work in truth, says God; "and I will make an everlasting covenant with them," Isa. 61:8. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye. Be ye not as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding," Psa. 32:8,9. "I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight: these things will I do unto them and not forsake them."

Sending the citizens of Zion to Sinai for rules of life and direction, is a contempt of Mount Zion, and of the heavenly Jerusalem, to which the Spirit of God leads all believers, (Heb. 12:22) and is no less a contempt of the King of saints, whom God hath set on that most holy hill. Making the letter the only rule of life, is sending the saints wrong, for as much as the Lord hath said unto them, they shall henceforth return no more that way, Deut. 17:16. They have compassed that mount long enough, Deut. 2:2,3. Moses is dead and buried, Josh. 1:2. Joshua is to take the lead. It is bewitching the people; (Gal. 3:1) it is sending them to the old yoke of bondage, Gal. 5:1; which is a contempt of the Savior's yoke. (Matt. 11:29) It is turning back upon grace; it is abusing their liberty; it is making Christ of none effect to them, Gal. 5:4; and that should profit them nothing. (Gal. 5:2)

Elijah, who traveled forty days into the wilderness in order to go to Horeb, instead of going to Mount Zion, was asked twice, by way of reproof, first in a storm, and then by a still voice, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" 1 Kings 29:9,13; which was attended with an earthquake, whirlwind, and a fire; God would not take him to heaven from that mount, though he requested to die there; that is not the new and living way, Heb. 10:20; he must go back to the Holy Land, over the river Jordan again, and into the plains of Jericho, where

Joshua, typical of our Captain, first took the lead, before the fiery chariot appeared to take him to heaven, 2 Kings 2:11.

Nor can sending living souls to a killing letter for rules of life be any way promotive of fruitfulness. There can be no fruit brought forth to God's glory without an union, by the Spirit of love, to Christ the living Vine: the branch cannot bear fruit of itself. No good fruit till the corrupt tree be made good by grace; "make the tree good and his fruit will be good; a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit." No good works without faith; "whatsoever is not of faith is sin:" no honest labours without love: no spiritual fruits without the Spirit of God produce them; no works done acceptable to God, unless He works in us both to will and to do them.

### **BOUNDS OF THE CHURCH NOT REMOVED**

Nor does this doctrine remove the bounds of the church, nor leave her without her enclosures, unless it can be proved that God's putting His laws in their hearts, and writing them in their minds giving them a new heart and a new spirit; putting His fear within them, and promising they shall not depart from Him; holding them in His hand so that the gates of hell cannot prevail against them; causing them to walk in His statutes, to keep His judgments and do them; being a wall of fire round about them, placing salvation for walls and bulwarks, and keeping them by His mighty power through faith, can be called removing the bounds and taking away the enclosures of the church; and I think it is a pity that such a dispensation of super abounding grace, the ministration of God's eternal Spirit, should find no more favour in the eyes of poor miserable sinners, nor any better name than that of Antinomianism. For my part, I believe it will go by another name at the restitution of all things; for, if Christ restores all things, He will doubtless restore His own gospel to its proper name.

As for correcting unruly Christians by the law, I believe the saints' law written on the fleshly tables of every believing heart by the Spirit of God; and that Christ dwells in them by faith; and that He keeps His royal court in Mount Zion for all His friends, as He is crowned King there; but, as for Sinai, it is His court of judicature; He appears there as the Judge of all. We are to apprehend the unruly, and keep them to the royal court, and to the bar of equity; and appeal, as Paul did, to God and to conscience in God's sight: and when the unruly feels the force of faithful reproof, backed with the Scriptures of truth, and seconded by his own conscience, it will be more mortifying and humbling to him than flogging him with the scourges that can be brought from the ministration of death. This never brought a sinner to Christ, nor restored a backslider; it is with the cords of love that God leads a soul to the Savior; and by the same is the backslider restored. "I will heal their backslidings; I will love them freely."

Your enforcing the command to love God, calling it the believer's rule, that must ever remain binding, is not speaking as the oracles of God. We know that the law commands us to love God; and we have received favours enough to bring us in debtors so to do; but the carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to that law, nor can be. There is nothing that the law demands but what the gospel gives; and there is nothing that the law commands that it helps us to perform, nor does it afford strength, life, love, holiness, mercy, inclination or power to enable us to give it its due.

I know we are commanded to walk in love as Christ has loved us; but we must settle things on their own proper basis. The end of the commandment is charity; but where do we get this charity or love? Why it is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. It is given, is from ,the covenant of promise, not from the covenant of works; if salvation be of grace in every part, it is no more of works in any part. Love is the basis of a covenant of grace; "I have

loved thee with an everlasting love;" the gift of Christ is the wonderful effect of it; "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." It is with lovingkindness that God draws us to Christ; "no man can come unto Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him." Love is the bond of the everlasting covenant; "My lovingkindness I will not utterly take from him, nor suffer My faithfulness to fail." Love is the bond of eternal union between Christ and His church: Thou, O Father, hast loved them as thou hast loved Me, Jn. 17:23. Love is the bond of heartfelt union between the Lord and us; "he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him: " and it is called the love of God perfected in us, not our love, which is of the law; for it is said not that we loved God, but that He loved us.

### **DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE LOVE OF GOD AND THE LAW OF WRATH**

Who ever sent men to preach, who can make no difference between the law that worketh wrath, and love which casteth out fear; which the law genders; no difference between the killing letter and the bond of the everlasting covenant? Let love stand upon its own bottom, fix it not on the letter of the law. The law reveals the wrath to come; it is God's magazine which contains all the treasures of hail reserved against the day of battle and war, Job. 38:22. And who could ever have thought that the only rule of life for believers could be brought from the ministration of condemnation, (2 Cor. 8:93) the snares of death (Prov. 13:14), the voice of words (Heb. 12:19); the law that worketh wrath, Rom. 4:15; the killing letter 2 Cor. 3:6; the law that is against us. (Col. 2:14) The adversary that delivers us to the judge to be cast into prison; (Matt. 5:26) a law that furnishes the sinner with an accuser before God Jn. 5 45; that is contrary to us Col. 2:14; that cursed the Savior Himself, though innocent Gal. 3:13; because He undertook for His friends. A fiery law (Deut. 33:2); a fire kindled in God's anger; Deut. 32:29; seven thunders that are to utter their

voices Rev. 10:3; a shower of snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest Psa. 11:6; a fire that shall burn to the lowest hell (Deut. 32 22). But so it is; and every preacher that does not bind this grievous yoke upon men's shoulders; that does not turn aside to vain jangling; that refuses to tempt God by putting this yoke upon the disciples' necks, which none are able to bear; is an erroneous man; a man of a bad spirit: one that makes void the law; and is, as I have been often called a stinking Antinomian. God be merciful to such men! I have no other glass to view them in but the Scriptures of truth and my own experience. And as God liveth, I do believe if fifteen out of twenty of our present ministers were to see themselves as I see them in the light of God's word, that they would wish they had never been born; curse the day in which they took upon them the office of the ministry, and wish it to be blotted out from the number of the months (Job 3:6). But alas! ALAS! there are none who think themselves sufficient for these things but those of no understanding! A blind man knows not how to go to the city (Eccl. 19:15). A blind man beholdeth not the way of the vineyards. (Job. 24:18)

## **DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COVENANT OF LAW AND COVENANT OF GRACE**

My friends may well ask, What is my sin? What have I done? Seeing some cry one thing and some another, the assemblies are confused, and no account given of the cause of this concourse; and I can give none, unless it be for this one voice that I cried among them; touching the law, I said it is not the believer's rule of life. And this I do insist upon, that bondage, hardness of heart, revealed wrath, enmity against God, desperation, curses of hell and damnation, are the best things that men can fetch from the killing letter of the law of Moses; whether the man be a believer or an infidel it matters not. The law will pursue the believer if he goes there, Christ alone is his Refuge; it will entangle the believer, and yoke him again if he looks for help there. The law is

not of faith, but of works; it is not of believing, but of doing: "he that doth these things shall live in them," is the language to the end of the chapter. Works are works. and grace is grace, the one is a covenant of works, the other a covenant of grace; one was given by Moses, the other came by Jesus Christ.

The covenant of works was made with man; it belongs to Adam, and all his children in the flesh that bear his image; the covenant of grace was made with Christ, and all His seed in Him. The one is established upon unconditional promises, the other upon the conditions of dead man's performances; and who would call this law the believer's only rule of life? he is to walk and live by faith; he is to worship and serve God in the newness of the Spirit, not in the oldness of the letter; he is to walk in love as Christ hath loved him. And it is pain that faith worketh by love, and is attended with divine life, which are all the gifts of God in Christ Jesus; they are received from His fullness, and wrought in us, and are no less than the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which make us free from the law of sin and death.

If faith, life, holiness, and love, come from the law of the Spirit, why are they ingrafted upon the killing letter? and why is the believer sent forth to fetch his rule of life from that law which was once his death warrant? why this confusion: why this turning things upside down? The man that has got the law of the Spirit of life in him is the man to whom the Lord speaks by His Son. He speaks not to the believer out of the cloudy pillar, nor out of thick darkness. He has spoken to us in these last days by His Son; and it is to the believer that He thus speaks: "Hearken unto Me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is My law." A believer is a righteous man, made so by imputation; and the law is not made for the righteous, but for the lawless and disobedient, (1 Tim. 1:9). God speaks to the children of the flesh in the law. "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law." But the saints are not



under the law, but under grace, Rom. 6:14. The law is a yoke of bondage for bond children, a covenant of works for proud work mongers, and a ministration of condemnation, to curse them for their pride and evil works.

As to what David says of the law being perfect, converting the soul, and of its being a light to his feet and a lamp to his path, it is soon answered. The killing letter never turning a soul from darkness to light, from the love of sin to love God with all his heart; which is attended with faith, repentance, and godly sorrow, which flows from a sense of God's love to him in Christ Jesus; all which come from the covenant of grace. Faith is a coming to Christ, and the love that faith works by draws his heart as he goes; and both these are the free gift of God. Christ did not furnish Saul with these spiritual weapons, which are mighty through God to pull down strong holds from the killing letter. I send thee Paul to turn sinners from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in Me, Acts 26:10.

The brightest light that shines in the law comes from the eye of offended Justice; it was the flames of wrath that the law was given at first; it was added because of transgression, and it is in that awful light that sinners see their own condemnation, as Saul and Balaam saw their own future destruction; and it is in that light that sinners will see their endless misery, who are said to lift up their eyes in hell; but that light discovers not the path of life, which is called the path of the just. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God shines in the face of Jesus Christ, who is the true Light, and the everlasting light of all His people; he that believeth in Me, says the Savior, shall not abide in darkness.

David was not without the law of faith; he tells you he believed, therefore hath he spoken; nor was he without the law of the Spirit of life, as appears by his prayer; "Take not thy Spirit from me." It was in this law that he saw wonders; as for the Ten Commandments, he prayed that God would not enter into judgment with his servant under them, for he knew the commandments were exceeding broad. If the commandments afford such a deal of light to our feet, how comes it that our present advocates for them are so exceeding blind? by them it appears that Paul's assertions are true, that the vail remains untaken away in reading the Old Testament, I am bold therefore to affirm, sir, that David and you have two different meanings.

With respect to what you have heard about my speaking lightly of the law, I believe you will find, in this my answer to yours, all that I have ever said about it; and you must judge for yourself whether I have spoken the language of Scripture or not. If I have to lay the blame where it ought to be laid; "if any man consent not to the wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, he is proud knowing nothing.

However, as I am determined to publish this answer to yours, my accusers will have a fair opportunity to attack the doctrine. I have advanced on the ground of truth: I have fled to none of those poor shifts called implications and the fitness of things; I have used no weapons but those that I believe to be spiritual. They cannot have a fairer opportunity, nor a fairer field to meet me on, nor a smaller number to engage. If this be Antinomianism, let them muster all their forces against it, prove it to be so, and overthrow it. I am open to conviction; my conscience is not seared, nor am I past feeling; and, if I cannot defend it by God's word, I will fly to no other shifts; and therefore I hope my opponents will not puzzle my brains with St. Basil, St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, Herman Witsius, and saint nobody knows who. Jesus I know; but who are these? For my part, I have not a

single doubt but God will enable me to defend this doctrine; for I know it is the doctrine that He applied to me, and set my soul at liberty by. And as I am the Antinomian, according to their accusations, it lies with them to overthrow it, and prove their charge; and, if upon trial it be found to be the everlasting gospel, then "let them hear and say, it is truth," Isa. 43 9; and acknowledge that for the truth's sake I have suffered reproach.

### **LEGAL BONDAGE AND GOSPEL LIBERTY CANNOT STAND TOGETHER**

If the law of works be binding to the saints as some affirm, then James' law of liberty is not perfect, nor can we be blessed in our deeds by continuing in that. If the law of works be binding, then the law of the Spirit of life did not make Paul free from the law of death, unless it can be proved, that legal bondage and gospel liberty can stand together. If the believer be under the law as a rule of life, then he is under the law and under grace both at once; which Paul says he is not; he is not under the law, but under grace. If he be under the law as a rule of life, he has got Peter's unbearable yoke and Christ's easy yoke both on his neck at one time.

The man that makes the killing letter his rule walks by sight, not by faith, he looks at the things that are seen, not at the things which are not seen. He serves in the oldness of the letter, not in the newness of the Spirit; he worships God in the letter, not in Spirit and in truth; nor is he free indeed. I know the law will bring a man into bondage notwithstanding his grace, if he stands not fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made him free; nor does the law of the wise, as a fountain of life, cause a man to depart from the snares of death; or, as the Savior says, pass from death to life by faith, because the believer, according to them, is still under the snares of death; he is still under the law of death as his only rule of life.

This is called preaching the gospel, doing the work of an evangelist, being a minister of the Spirit, making full proof of the ministry; and every man that cannot turn the law that worketh wrath into a law of love; that cannot bring the living fruits of the Spirit out of the killing letter; that cannot turn the snares of death into rules of life, is an erroneous man and an Antinomian. Welcome reproach! welcome names! welcome Antinomian! These names bring no guilt on the conscience; they stop not up the new and living way between God and the soul; they seal not up God's book, nor bind the spirit-of liberty.

### **JUMBLING THE TWO COVENANTS**

Election secures every minister in his station, and all the success that shall attend his labours. It has been observed that those, who have been the most forward at lampooning me for an Antinomian, have been the greatest novices in divinity; and, while they have been contending for the law as the only rule of life, they have preached the greatest confusion, discovered the greatest ignorance of the nature of the law, and have evidently appeared in the strongest bondage: "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity;" he that binds grievous burdens on other men's shoulders goes a sure way to load his own back.

No wonder that legions are flocking back to Sinai; it is a proof that the law is not dead to them, nor they to it; they begun in the Spirit before they had been killed by the letter. Their first husband, it is to be feared, is not dead, therefore they are not loosed from that law: and being adulteresses, the first husband has taken them up and brought them back, not being loosed from their old bond of wedlock, nor favoured with a writing of divorcement; therefore, as a wife of the first covenant, the eloped Lo-ruhamah is brought back, Hos. 1:6; Hos. 2-1,2; but Hephzibah, the Lord's delight, whom He has espoused to

Himself, if she goes back, will return again to her first husband, saying, It was better with me then than it is now.

Consider, Sir, and see if there be anything that you want to make you holy or happy that does not come from the law of the Spirit of life; and whether any of these things come from the law of works; whether mercy, grace, hope, or help comes from that quarter: and take heed that you do not jumble these two covenants together. One is a covenant of works, the other of grace; one is the law of death, the other the law of life; bond children are under the law; free children are under grace; they that are under grace are under the blessing, those under the law are under the curse; one are the heirs of promise, the other heirs of wrath; one are children of God, the other are children of the devil. The free-born children receive the inheritance freely, the bond children work to earn it. "The gift of God is eternal life," "the wages of sin is death." And in order to clear the doctrine from the charge of Antinomianism, I will inquire what this law of the Spirit of life produces, for we are told that the gospel brings forth fruit, Col. 1:6. Paul says, "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law."

Now let us see what the law of the wise, which Solomon calls a fountain of life, produces. I think we shall find the same things springing from this fountain as comes from Paul's law of the Spirit: Solomon says wisdom loves them that love her; and that love is better than a house full of sacrifices; and that, "if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be condemned."

Here is what Paul calls the first fruit of the Spirit, the next is joy; "the heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy." Peace; "wisdom's ways are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Longsuffering; "the patient in spirit is better than

the proud in spirit." Gentleness; "be not hasty to go out of his sight; stand not in the evil thing." Goodness; "the upright shall have good things in possession." Faith; "in the fear of the Lord is strong confidence, and His children shall have a place of refuge." Meekness; "Surely he scorneth the scorners, but he giveth grace to the lowly." Temperance; "the righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul." Thus the fruits of Paul's law of the Spirit are the same as those that spring from Solomon's law of the wise, which he calls a fountain of life: and remember the gospel is called the ministration of the Spirit, and the law is the ministration of the letter; "the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." Solomon's fountain of life is supplied from God in covenant, who tells us that all his springs are in Zion; therefore it is vain to expect help from Sinai. The law of the Spirit will remain what it is, notwithstanding men's legality; and the ministration of the letter will remain what it is, notwithstanding man's faith and love, one will ever give life, and the other will ever give death: the one will ever produce freedom, and the other will ever gender to bondage.

### **GRACE - NOT LAW MAKES THE BELIEVER WHAT HE IS**

Those that have felt the bondage, wrath, terrors, and death, that the law works, will prize their liberty, and take heed how they approach that blackness and darkness again; but those that never felt its power can play with it as with a bird, for they are alive without it. It is vain that ministers send men to Sinai in order to promote holiness: "the works of the flesh are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness." And will sending men to the law destroy these? Nay, says Paul, these are the motions of sin, which are by the law that works in our members to bring forth fruit unto death, Rom. 7:5. Nor was the law manifested to destroy these works of the devil, but to make them

appear exceeding sinful; nor does the law weaken sin but aggravate it; for "the strength of sin is the law."

It is grace that makes the believer what he is, nor will the law ever make him better. Those that came privily in to spy out the apostles' liberty that they might bring them into bondage, (Gal. 2:4) agree exactly with you in sentiment; for if the law be binding to the believer, and he be under it as a rule of life, it is the same as what they enforced; namely, "it was needful to circumcise them, and command them to keep the law of Moses." They said this was needful; you say the believer is under this necessity: they called it keeping the law of Moses; and you call the law of Moses the believer's rule of life.

There is no more difference between your assertions and theirs than there is between my two eyes. If you object that it is circumcision only that is called the yoke that was unbearable; it is answered they were circumcised at eight days old, therefore the fathers could give very little account of the unbearable pain of it. The yoke consisted in this; "he that is circumcised is a debtor to do the whole law:" "Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God" is what is meant. Submitting to circumcision is rejecting Christ, who was a Minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers. And submitting to the yoke of keeping the law of Moses is rejecting Christ's yoke, which consists of faith and love in the Spirit. The yoke therefore is this, it is needful to circumcise the believers, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. (Acts 15:5) And you say the law is binding, and that the believer is under the law as his rule of life; you might just as well have stuck to the old text, for it amounts exactly to the same, nor doth your different way of expression alter the matter. Their need of keeping the law of Moses is your binding law as a rule of life; it is the spirit of legal bondage that obliges and binds you; and it was the same

that influenced those who made it needful; different names make no alteration in the things.

Those men tempted God by putting that yoke on the saints, and subverted their souls by saying ye must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses, to whom God gave no such commandment, Acts 15:10-24; and they do no less than tempt God and subvert the souls of believers, who tell them the law is binding, and that they are under it as a rule of life, for God has given them no such commandment. Nor can men expect that the broad seal of heaven should attend a ministry that tempts God and subverts the souls of His saints, when it is expressly said that it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to the apostles, to lay on them no such burden. However, this is the way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death, Prov. 14:12; it is turning people from grace to works; from the liberty of the Spirit to the bondage of the law; from the law of the Spirit of life to the law of death. Liberty and bondage, grace and works, Christ's yoke and the yoke of Moses, the true light and the old veil, death and life, can never stand together, one must give way; grace shall reign, and Moses must be subject.

If a believer be a new creature, has a new heart, a new spirit, walks in the new and living way, and must serve God in the newness of the Spirit, and walk in newness of life, old things must be done away: and if old things are done away, the yoke of bondage is included among them, which Paul calls the law of death, or else the apostle's assertion, cannot stand good; "therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new;" and he that sits upon the throne says, behold I create all things new. God has granted us "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He hath consecrated (or new made) for us through the veil, that is to say his flesh." Take heed, sir, that you despise not this new and living way; it is the old way that



you contend for at present, which is stopped up; it is hedged about with thorns, namely, the curses of the law; and so poor sinners will find it, when like Balaam, they fall before that terrible sword of God that turns every way to keep the way of the tree of life, Gen. 3:24; none will ever get to God that old way; the sword that keeps the way of life destroys all thieves and robbers that climb up any other way, or dare to look through, or gaze, where God has fixed his bounds, Exod. 19:21-23.

### **THE LAW IS GOOD BUT JUSTIFIES NONE**

I know the law is holy, just, and good, because it defends a holy, just, and good God, and will certainly cut off and destroy forever every adversary that is found under it; but though the law is holy, yet it sanctifies none; it is just, but it justifies none; it is good but it imparts no goodness to men; God is our Justifier and Sanctifier, and Christ is our righteousness and sanctification. God's goodness to us comes by grace; severity comes by the law; "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity, but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness; otherwise thou also shall be cut off," with the sword furbished at that armory. It is the fiery law that gives the sword of justice its flaming edge; "where there is no law, there is no transgression;" sin is the transgression of the law, and the law is the transgressor's adversary that makes his crimes appear exceeding sinful, and delivers him to the judge: here lies its power; "the strength of sin is the law." But with respect to our obedience, its lending us any help, pardoning of us, justifying of us, it is weak through the flesh, Rom. 8:3.

I would to God, Sir, that you would pray a little more over your Bible, or ask wisdom of God. When Paul says, "the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin," he does not mean thereby that spiritual life, spiritual health, spiritual help, or strength, is communicated from

thence. The law gives neither righteousness, life, hope, help, nor strength. The law is strong to destroy, but never was mighty to save, nor is help laid upon that. It is called spiritual, because it reaches to the thoughts of men's hearts, and curses them for a lascivious look as being adultery itself, (Matt. 5:28); for anger is murder in the abstract, 1 Jn. 3:15; yea, if a man break one command, he is guilty of all, James 2:10. It casts him for every idle word; for all that is more than yea, or nay; it brings him into judgment; and both heaven and earth shall pass away before one jot or tittle of that law shall fail, Luke 16:17.

It is called spiritual, because it reached to spirits; yea, to the wicked souls of men and devils also, for they are under one curse; it reveals wrath, spiritual death, damnation, and everlasting destruction, both to the bodies and souls of all them who die under it; and it will hold all rebellious spirits, whether men or devils, in the prison of hell till they can pay the very last mite, Luke 12:59; which will be effected when lying in gaol can be called paying of debts. God says, this fiery law, which is a revelation of wrath kindled in His anger, shall burn to the lowest hell. Christ, our Passover, was roasted in that fire, and it made His heart like wax, it melted in the midst of His bowels, Psa. 22:14; therefore take heed that thou attempt not to turn that ministration of death into rules of life. Cleave close to Him that is a hiding place from that north wind, and a covert from that tempest, Isa. 32:2. In Christ Jesus thou shalt find refuge when God makes the wicked as a fiery wheel, and persecutes them with all these storms, Psa. 73:13-15; but no where else.

If this handling the law lawfully, and holding forth the word of life, as a faithful steward of the manifold grace of God; if this be rightly dividing the word of truth: if it be giving to each his portion in due season, a portion to seven and also to eight; if it be doing the work of an evangelist; if it be preaching the gospel according to Christ's

command; if it be handling the word faithfully, as a minister of the Spirit; if it be acting like a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, being approved of God; in short, if this be preaching the mystery of faith, then where are legions of our present preachers got? and if this be the pure, unmixed, unadulterated gospel of Christ, what are nine parts of ten of the doctrine that is delivered in our days under that name? And if this is error and antinomianism, then what is gospel?

I understand your hint, Sir, those speak it more plain who call me in public a stinking Antinomian; and this doctrine antinomianism which leads to licentiousness. And I wish they would speak it plainer still; then they would appear in their proper colours, and be less capable of deceiving the simple. They must either prove this doctrine to be error, instead of truth, licentious antinomianism, instead of gospel, or else acknowledge that calumny amounts to this in the sight of God; that, instead of walking in the Spirit, and delivering people from fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, it leads them into it; that, instead of the grace of God teaching men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, it encourages ungodliness, and a licentious way of living; and instead of the law of the Spirit making men free from the law of sin and death, that it leads them into sin, the wages of which is death.

This is their reproach, and this is the meaning of it in the sight of God; and it is plain to a spiritual mind where this reproach falls; namely, on that God who is gracious and merciful; on that Savior by whom grace and truth came, as if He was the minister of sin; and upon the Spirit of grace, who gives the law of faith, and who is the real Giver of the law of life, it being emphatically called by the apostle his law, or the law of the Spirit of life. This, Sir, borders upon the unpardonable sin, it is trifling with the fold of infinite wisdom, (Eph. 3:10) and with the greatest dispensation that ever heaven revealed to men, 2 Cor. 3:8. It is making free with the spiritual court, from which there is no appeal;

it is sinning against the last condescending lawgiver that ever appeared in this lower world.

The Holy Ghost gives that law of the wise that is the fountain of life; He gives the law of faith that excludes all boasting. The Holy Ghost is the Giver of the law of life, that takes men from the law of sin and the snares of death. It is this Lawgiver that brings every blessing from heaven, testifies of Christ, and glorifies Him on His throne; whose kingdom stands not in word, or in rules of life drawn from the letter of Moses' law, but in power, "in righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost." To do despite to the Spirit of grace is treading under foot of the Son of God whom the Spirit testifies of. Heb. 10:29. Sin against Him, the Savior that saves to the uttermost, says, it shall never be forgiven, neither in this world nor in the world to come, Matt. 12:31, 32.

O Sir, keep your distance, drop no such hints here; "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: because they said He hath an unclean spirit;" and those that declare the law of the Spirit of life leads to licentiousness say little better; for they charge Him with the devil's works though they do not call Him in express terms an unclean spirit. It is a bold, daring, presumptuous, perilous step; it is spiritual wickedness in the worst sense; it is leaving sin at the foot of a Lawgiver that shed no blood; it is committing rebellion against Him that will by no means clear the guilty, Exod. 34:7; it is doing despite on the bounds of the most sacred enclosure; it is venturing on the most dangerous spot of ground in all the holy land. Sins against God the Father in the law are pardoned; he that speaketh a word against the Son of man it shall be forgiven him; but he that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness. He will by no means, no not by the blood of Christ, pardon those that are guilty of the sin unto death, 1 Jn. 5:16.

## **NO GOOD EFFECTS BY PREACHING LAW**

I have watched narrowly to see what good effects this doctrine of yours produces among those where it is perpetually enforced, and I can see nothing produced to make me fall in love with it, unless it be blindness, confusion, feigned humility, and struggling under bondage; being influenced with malice against the gospel; calling everything that tends to make poor sinners free and happy, Antinomianism, not knowing what they say, but taking it from their teachers. The saints are a people that God has formed for Himself to show forth His praise. If he has created them anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, which He hath before ordained, that we should walk in them. It is therefore their new creation in Christ Jesus, and their abiding in Him, as the branch doth in the vine, that produces these good works which they are to walk in. As they received Christ Jesus the Lord, so they are to walk in Him Every saint must acknowledge as Paul, that, "by the grace of God I am what I am."

If grace makes them what they are, sending them to the law will never mend this work, nor make the subjects of this workmanship better; God's work is perfect, nothing can be added to it by the wisdom of men nor by the law of Moses; "The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did." The church is subject to Christ; subject to the civil power where they live; and subject to one another: but not subject to Moses, nor to his law; they are no longer under a schoolmaster, Gal. 3:25; no longer under tutors and governors, (Gal. 4:2) they are not under the law but under grace. When the false brethren came in to spy out the apostles' liberty, that they might bring them into bondage; telling them that they must keep the law of Moses, we gave place to them by subjection, no, not for an hour, says Paul; nor did we reject the truth and admit their yoke of bondage, no, we gave place not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. (Gal. 2:4,5)

My friend will be ready to say, the way to heaven is a difficult way to find; and I answer it is so, because there is a ditch so close to it, which many fall into, being led by false preachers, deceitful workers, and blind guides, who turn from the truth that came by Jesus Christ, and get groping about Mount Sinai for help, till the old vail and the god of this world blind their eyes; and when they have lost sight of the puzzling mystery of the gospel, for such it is to unconverted men, then they think they see everything in the letter of the law and in themselves, and so become vain in their imaginations, their foolish hearts being darkened, they then follow vain jangling, and make shipwreck of faith, lampoon the power of religion, become haters of those that are good, deceiving themselves and deceiving others, till they get desperate against the truth, and it becomes a vexation only to understand the report of the gospel, but the path of the just hath the light of God's countenance upon it; he that walks and lives by faith is in the narrow way that leadeth unto life, Matt. 7:14; for the just man shall live by his faith, and he shall walk in newness of life. This is wisdom's way, "a path which no fowler knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen. The lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it." Christ is the way as well as the truth and the life; to live and walk by the faith of Him is to walk safely indeed. "In this way of righteousness is life, and in the pathway thereof there is no death." Though this way appears narrow and difficult, yet the poor believing sinner, who is nothing in himself, but looks to his Savior for all, though he be a fool, he shall not err in this way: the Lord has promised to guide him and uphold him; and I will, says God, lead them "in a straight way Wherein they shall not stumble; for I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn." (Jer. 31:9)

The bad use that ungodly men may make of the truth of the Christian's liberty in the Spirit is not to silence spiritual ministers, Christ's yoke must be brought forth; the children of God must be fed;

the gospel must be preached; the saints' liberty must be shewed, and they cautioned not to abuse it, and counselled to stand fast in it; notwithstanding the villainy of those that come in privily to spy it out. Ungodly men will abuse the most High God, and even the Bible itself; therefore no wonder if they abuse the sermons or writings of His servants. The impenitent infidel, whose mind and conscience both are defiled; to whom there is nothing clean; who are condemned already, and under the wrath of God. will turn everything to bane.

But are we to muzzle the truth, yoke the saints of God with Moses' law, and call the snares of death rules of life, to please them? No, this is putting stumbling blocks before the eyes of the blind, and making men stumble at the law, Mal. 2:8; this is not declaring the whole counsel of God; this is not leaving the work with the Lord, who has power over all flesh, that He may give eternal life to as many as are ordained to it. We are not to make such men as these the objects of our fear in the pulpit, nor keep back God's word from His people on account of their abusing it: they call the Master Himself Beelzebub; and what can be expected from such men but sin? Ministers are a savor of death unto death to them, and are sent to preach the gospel for a witness against them; and their desperate wickedness against the gospel serves to shew us that they were before of old ordained to this condemnation, Jude 4.

I have considered the text you refer me to, "if ye love Me, keep My commandments" and I find His commandments are joyous, not grievous for the commands are that we should believe on Him and love one another. But those that call the law the believer's rule of life, and me an Antinomian, show but very little of this love. He keeps the Savior's commandments who receives the word in an honest and good heart, and keeps it, such receive the word with power in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance such and only such keep the word of Christ's promise, and He will keep them from the hour of temptation,

Rev. 3:10. He that keeps the Lord's commandments is united to Him by the bond of love in the Spirit; he that keepeth His commandment dwelleth in Him and he in Him. He that is a stranger to this union alive without the law, alive to sin and dead to God for "hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us."

I have had a world of legal duties formerly pressed upon me, and I know what effect such preaching had and I see the same in others that fear God. It serves to nurse the pride of those that know nothing of the power of godliness. I have heard misers, persecutors, and hypocrites, applaud and admire the doctrine, but they have been dreadfully exasperated at some who are called Antinomians, if they have happened to enforce the necessity of the Spirit's assistance in the performing of these things, and of their being done in faith. Men may lead people as much as they please with moral, relative, and church duties but if they spring not from union with the true vine; if not performed with the influence of the Spirit of God; if they are not done in faith, and with an eye to God's glory they amount to nothing more than the works of the flesh, or dead works while the legal performer is as proud as Satan himself and, by resting in these things, is further from God's kingdom than publicans or harlots.

A devil transformed into an angel of light is more dangerous than when he comes in character that is, as an accuser, a thief, or a robber, nor does Satan do the seeking sinner so much hurt when he throws him down and rends him, Mark 9:20, as he does when he points us to legal preachers, or ministers of the letter, crying out "these men are the servants of the most high God, that shew unto us the way of salvation," Acts 16:17. He was as much a devil when he promised this world and the glory of it to Christ as he was when he wished him to throw Himself from the pinnacle of the temple, Luke 4:9.



Satan sometimes turns reformer in times of danger when the gospel makes a stir in his territories; then is the time that he fires the zeal and increases the numbers of moral preachers; he knows what the law can do. . . . "The law worketh wrath, for where no law is there is no transgression." consequently no transgressors. He knows that "the strength of sin is the law," better than we do and he knows that those who are under the law of death are under the law of sin, hence it is that he never stirs men up to reproach, revile, belie, scandalize, or persecute, a graceless preacher of moral duties; for it is by the instrumentality of such men that he has brought thousands to his dark dominions: by such preachers as these the devil keeps both the pulpit and the pew; he stirs up the preacher to blind the people, and the people to applaud their blind guide and thus the god of this world holds both the leader and the led. When he stirred up the Jewish priests to reject Christ, and cast out His disciples, he became head ranger both of the temple and the synagogue.

The doctrine that routs the devil consists in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost telling Zion that the King is come. When the disciples preached this the Savior saw "Satan as lightning fall from heaven." He cast abroad the rage of his wrath and set the world in a blaze. This sort of preachers are the only adversaries that the devil has got, he gains ground by the others. He was very high bringing over the whole church of Galatia by the instrumentality of moral preaching. If God does not uphold His people with His free Spirit, Psa. 51:12, I much question if any other yoke will do when trials come on. For my part, I never found any doctrine that would beget souls to God, keep them alive, make their minds heavenly, their conversation pure, keep their consciences tender, or make their lives exemplary, but that of enforcing regeneration, or a spiritual birth, justification by faith, union and fellowship with Christ by love; and a walk in the testimony and liberty of the Holy Ghost.

However, this I can say, that the religion that God has taught me has been sufficient to make me industrious and willing to live honestly and I must declare, and will with my dying breath, that I never knew what happiness and peace, rest, quietude, comfort, joy, or pleasure, meant until Jesus Christ appeared to my soul: in Him I have seen the perfection of all beauty: I have felt Him to be the foundation of all real happiness: the light of His countenance, and the anticipation of His love, is the quintessence of all that is called pleasure and to have Him is to be possessed of an immortal, incorruptible, undefiled, and never-fading inheritance which has so crucified me to this world, and the pleasures of it, that I have just as much desire to return to it again as Abraham had to return to Ur of the Chaldees, when God had promised to be his shield and everlasting reward in the land of Canaan.

Whatever the law of God enforces the Spirit of God impresses the mind with, and leaves the impression as legible upon the fleshly tables of the believer's heart, as ever He did on the two tables of stone, 2 Cor. 3:3. The devil is never more to be suspected than when he appears in a pulpit in a large wig and long bands, with a grave countenance, an audible voice, ambiguous speech, zeal mixed with candor, enforcing moral virtue, and bringing in Christ as an example, but not as the root of the matter, nor yet enforcing the need of His Spirit, nor of union with Him.

### **EVILS OF PREACHING LAW**

These things, and a few zealous strokes at the power of religion, under the name of enthusiasm, and a candid application of those blind and bond children who cannot see through their mask, have been of very great use to the devil, because it has served to stumble the faithful and establish the Pharisee. Such as these have sent my soul bleeding home many a time swaddled with the spirit of bondage and sin has taken occasion by the commandment, until the corruption of my heart

and carnal enmity have been stirred up against God, my mind begloomed with horror, and terrors have driven my feet; wrath then seemed to pursue me, Christ and comfort were gone, my sins, that had been long pardoned, came afresh to my remembrance and my heart was filled with hard thoughts of the Savior, the devil suggesting that Christ had left me, and was become my enemy, as a proof of which, he was now pursuing me with fire and sword. But, when the Lord again appeared and delivered me, I saw the bondage was from the law, not from the Savior, and that it was the devil pursuing me, not the Lord. I could then see the difference between the tempter and my great Deliverer. And all this was communicated to my soul from the pulpit, and that by the devil himself in a large wig and a long band.

### **THE LAW WORKS WRATH AND JUDGMENT**

Christ calls the scribes, notwithstanding their long robes, a generation of vipers and says they were of their father the devil, and his works they did, in binding grievous burdens on men's shoulders, which they never touched, though others laboured hard under them. If Satan can get preachers to obscure the gospel and enforce the law, he knows the old vail will gather on the minds of the people and when a man is blinded you may lead him anywhere and he shall never know the want of a leader while Satan can furnish the world with blind guides: for it is by these men that he leads them into the ditch.

Such preaching drives many poor distressed souls from all religion; they hear of nothing but wrath and duty and the more they labour the worse they get, and then they shake off all, and are glad to get out so, and such become the greatest enemies to religion afterwards: and the instruments of all this mischief are legal preachers for without Christ man can do nothing, Jn. 15:5. It is looking to Jesus that enlightens us, abiding in the cleft of the rock that shelters us from Satan's rage. Souls flying here are compared to doves flying to their windows, where

they are sure of light but going to the law is going to blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and to the burning fire, Heb 12:18; which pursues the sinner. Satan is not displeased at man's dressing up the law, calling it the believer's rule of life, the law of love, the law of kindness, etc. He knows the law is the snare of death, that has entangled all the prey which that artful fowler has caught. This law is the sinner's adversary that entangles him in his sin, and delivers him to the judge; and the just judge delivers him by the law to the tormentors. (Matt. 18:34) Are there souls in hell? it was the law that cast them, condemned them, and fixed them there. Are they holden with the cords of their sin? the strength of those cords is the law, 1 Cor. 15:55. Are they under the curse? then they are under the law. (Gal. 3:10) Are they under the dominion of eternal death? They received it from the law, which is the ministration of death, 2 Cor. 3:7.

Are their souls boiling with desperate indignation against God? The motions of sin are by the law. Are they under the wrath of God? the law worketh wrath, Rom. 4:15. Are they in utter darkness? it came from the law, which is blackness and darkness, Heb. 12:18. Are they in hell fire? they received it from the fiery law, Deut. 33:2. Can they never come out of the bottomless pit? the immutable sentence of the law is the gulf fixed; let the law be repealed, and nothing can detain the prisoner; but not a jot or tittle of the law can fail, therefore no jail delivery can ever take place; what God doth, it is done forever. The devil has not a greater friend in this world than a blind legal preacher; nor the children of God a greater enemy. I have sorely felt the effects of such a ministry; and I know where such ministers are, better than they do themselves. Those that are spiritual, says Paul, judge all things, but themselves are judges of no man. (1 Cor. 2:15)

### **THE SAINTS' ALL-SUFFICIENT RULE**

If the covenant of grace does not afford the believer a rule of life, it must be very deficient; however, Paul could bring a rule from thence sufficient for the believer to live by, walk by, worship by, and converse by. God's sovereign will is man's rule; and to the saints God makes known the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which runs thus: "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." This mystery is called by way of distinction from the law, God's good will toward men which brings peace upon earth, and glory to God in the highest, Luke 2:14; and it is the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush. Deut. 33:16. When this is revealed to men's hearts by the Holy Ghost it is called the mystery of faith in a pure conscience, 1 Tim. 3:9; and this is the saints' All sufficient rule; by faith the just man is to live; by faith, and not by sight, is the just man to walk; in the Spirit, not in the letter, is the just man to serve; in Spirit and in truth to worship; he that is faithful unto death shall have a crown of life; the end of faith is salvation of the soul.

Let the law be what it may, and aim at what it please, "the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned;" he that swerves from this turns aside to vain jangling; knows not what he says, nor whereof he affirms. God tells us to hold faith and a good conscience, which some having put away, concerning faith have made ship wreck, 1 Tim. 1:16,19. Let men bring what rules they please from the law; let them drive their flocks with that storm as much as they can; I know the real believer, though he be not to make haste, in one sense, will hasten his escape from that stormy wind and tempest, for he knows that whatsoever is not a fruit of the Spirit is a work of the flesh; whatever service be performed, if not done under the influence of the Spirit of life, it is a dead work; and if not done in faith it is sin; for "whatsoever is not of faith is sin:" for

"without faith it is impossible to please God." We read of ministers of the Spirit and ministers of the letter; and if there be any such things as ministers, and a ministration of the Spirit, I think these things belong to that ministration, and to preach them is doing the work of an evangelist, and making full proof of the gospel ministry.

No man ever heard me say or hint a syllable against the goodness of the law; the law is good, and it works death in us by that which is good, Rom. 7:13. I suppose no nation hath more wholesome laws than this; and I believe no nation under heaven of its size sends more criminals out of the world by a halter. There are heathen nations destitute of such wholesome laws that do not execute half the number of felons that we do. Be so kind, Sir, as to send me word what the law requires that this better testament does not furnish a believer with; when the imperfection or deficiency of this law of the Spirit is made to appear, we shall be able to justify the conduct of those who send numbers that have begun in the Spirit to the law to be made perfect by the flesh. This must be done, or else we shall conclude that this doctrine, of allowing the believer no rule of life but the law, is no better, in the language of the Holy Ghost, than witchcraft.

### **SEEKING PERFECTION BY THE LAW IS FOOLISH**

"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth! This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh? These people did not intend to give up the Savior, they were only going to help Him; they did not intend to cast off the Spirit, they were only going to perfect that which was lacking in His work; they had begun in the Spirit, and were going to the law to be made perfect. Ah! says Paul, the law belongs to the children of the flesh; to them it speaks; the works of it are the works of the flesh. Your perfection from

thence will be only perfection in the flesh, and where you go for perfection there you must go for righteousness. Christ is our righteousness and sanctification too; go to the law for one, and you must go to the law for the other; by going for perfection there that yoke will entangle you again, and bring you into bondage. God makes us perfect by the Spirit, which unites to and makes us one with Christ, in whom we are complete. These poor souls were coming to be circumcised, and take the law on them as a rule of life, in order to perfect the Spirit's work. These preachers, Paul says, bewitched them, zealously affected them; yea, they would have excluded them from Christ, that they might affect them: "ye are fallen from grace," says Paul. "Christ shall profit you nothing."

Peter on the mount of transfiguration did not intend to exclude the Savior when he said, "Let us make three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias; when Moses and Elias heard, they withdrew, as all good servants ought to do. "And a voice came out of the cloud saying, This is My beloved Son, hear Him." Moses resigned his office to the Mediator of the better testament, who is the end of the law for righteousness, to whom Moses had borne witness. And Elias withdrew also, and left the Savior in His prophetic office, as that great prophet to whom all the prophets gave witness; and I believe that Jesus, in the highest sense, was Elias that was to come. And it is said that, suddenly when the disciples had looked round about, that is, after Moses and Elias, "they saw no man any more save Jesus only with themselves," Mark 9:8; and He is sufficient; and it is a thousand pities that we have so many in our days who are fetching Moses in again; but they will get neither peace nor good works from him, but rather confusion. The Master and the servant must not be coupled together; they are not co-masters; co-rulers, co-yokers, co-mediators, co-builders, co-lawgivers, co-husbands, nor co-sovereigns.

"The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

There are several of our present divines who, notwithstanding their zeal for Moses, and desire to copy after him, do not at all imitate him in this point; he kept the blessing pointed out two different mountains for the blessing and the curse; and different men were named and appointed for each work; these were typical of ministers of the Spirit, and those of the letter; Simeon, Levi, Juda, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin, shall stand on mount Gerizim to bless; and Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali, shall stand on mount Ebal to curse, Deut. 27:12, 13. Zion and Sinai must be kept apart; they are two different mountains, and two different cities are founded on them: "For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children." (Gal. 4:15) And woe be to that man that is found a citizen of this bond city in the great day! Tyre, Nineveh, Babylon the literal, and Babylon the mystical, may one day understand the awful allegory, when they will be found to belong to the city of destruction, Isa. 19:18.

But God hath built His city on the mountain of eternal election. He hath laid this everlasting foundation there, His foundation is in that holy mountain. "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." Psa. 87:2. God hath founded this city Himself, and the poor of His people shall trust in it, Isa. 14:32. He hath appointed salvation to be her walls and bulwarks; He is known in her palaces for a refuge; His dwelling place is in Zion; He hath chosen her, she is to be His rest forever: here will He dwell; for He has desired it. He will abundantly bless her provision and satisfy her poor with bread. He will clothe her priests with salvation, and her saints shall shout aloud for joy, Psa. 132:13-16.



It was this city that Abraham and Isaac had in view, they kept it in the eye of their faith, and it made them forget their own country and their native home; they sought a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, Heb. 11:10. Upon mount Zion God hath commanded the blessing, even life for evermore. To this mountain Jacob looked when he was on his death bed, and knew that God's eternal love was the bounds of this city, and that all his blessings came from thence. "The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills." This is Solomon's little city with few men in it, which the great king came to beseige with great bulwarks, which the poor wise man by his wisdom delivered, who is so little regarded for his great deliverance. (Ecc. 9:14-16) This is the only city of refuge under the gospel; and it is near to flee into, and it is a little one; but God will never destroy it, nor the lot of His inheritance who become citizens of it.

### **THE LAW THAT GOES FORTH OF ZION**

Zion's laws are in the heart of Zion's King; the law of faith, the perfect law of liberty, and the law of the Spirit of life, go forth from thence: "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem," Isa. 2:3. And as for them that say, "Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from us; He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision." The throne of grace is in Zion; "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered; for the mount Zion shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call." This is our comfort, that God will never depart from this city; for "the name of the city from that day shall be, the Lord is there," Ezek. 48:35. From this city God sends help to His people; they are strengthened out of Zion: and it is against this city that all our blind legal watchmen are levelling their vain janglings; but all that fight against mount Zion and

her munition, and all that distress her, shall be as the dream of a night vision, Isa. 29:7. The Highest Himself shall establish her; "God shall help her, and that right early! she shall never be moved; not one of her stakes shall ever be removed, nor any of her cords ever be broken," Isa 33:20.

## **THE TWO WAYS COMPARED**

To Mrs. R. J. at B- N-D:

I received my sister's kind epistle; and have considered her numberless complaints, and the difficulty of her way. "That which is crooked cannot be made straight, and that which is wanting cannot be numbered," says Solomon.

If thou aim at holiness by the law, remember thou must be perfect in the flesh as well as spirit. The law is perfect; it will allow of no infirmities, no evil thoughts, no adulterous looks, no anger nor evil tempers, no fire to be kindled on the Sabbath day; not speaking thy own words, nor thinking of thy own thoughts on that day; thy neighbour must be loved as thyself; half thy goods must be given to the poor; one coat of the two must go to them that have none; and then there is no getting to heaven but by taking up the cross, and following Jesus. No man shall ever stand the test of that law without a pure love to God, divine life in Christ, holiness by the Spirit, and an everlasting righteousness from the God of his salvation.

When you come to London again we will compare notes together, and see which has gained most by trading; until which time, pursue your present path, and I will pursue mine. Make the law your only rule of life; read it, keep your eyes upon it, and live by it; and I will pray that I may be kept dead to the law, and alive unto God; that I may be crucified with Christ, and yet live; yet not I, but that Christ may live in me. If you make the law your rule of life, you are alive to the law, and

walk in the law. And if Christ lives in me, I shall be kept alive unto God, and walk in newness of life.

Go you on with the commandments, and I will go on with the promises. Make the law your rule of walk, and I will pray God to perform His promise in me; for God hath said, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them." Thus you go on by the law, and I by the gospel. Do you perform your duty, and I will plead my privileges. Act thou as an industrious servant, and by God's grace, I will act an affectionate son. Be thou obedient to the law, and I will pray for grace for obedience to the faith. Live thou in the fear of thy master, and I will endeavour to honour my heavenly Father.

Make the law thy only rule of action, and act accordingly; and I will depend upon God to work in me both to will and to do of His own good pleasure; yea, to fulfill all the good pleasure of His will in me, and the work of faith with power.

Make the law your only rule of conversation. Speak of the commandments "when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way! when thou liest down and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thine heart, and upon thy gates; that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children; in the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give them as the days of heaven upon the earth." And I will pray God to create the fruit of my lips; to give me a mouth and wisdom that all my enemies shall not be able to gainsay or resist; and that it may not be me that speaks, but that the Spirit of my heavenly Father may speak in me and then my conversation will be with power, and my words seasoned with salt, ministering grace. Thus runs the promise, and the excellency and the power is of God; and, if God performs His promises to me He will have all the glory; and, thou perform thy task,

thou hast whereof to glory, but not before God, wherever thou dost before men.

Let the ministers of the letter bind the grievous burdens upon your shoulders that you cannot possibly bear, and I will cast my burdens on the Lord, who has promised to sustain me. Be thou careful to observe all the grievousness which they prescribe, and I will cast all my care upon Him that careth for me. Walk thou by sight, and I by faith; walk thou in the letter, and I in the Spirit. Look thou to the commandments, and I will look to Jesus.

They that say this doctrine opens a door to all licentiousness know not what they say. You saw nothing like that in me; and those that are setting the law perpetually before your eyes, and enforcing holiness from that, in order to blind your mind, and prejudice your soul against the truth and the preachers of it, give you no other proof of their superior holiness than what you hear from their mouth. There is no more power in their discourses, no more savor in their conversation, no more knowledge of the word, no more experience of grace, no more prevalency with God in prayer, no more circumspection before men, nor conscientiousness toward God, than appears in some that are called Antinomians; nor half so much. Men who have nothing to recommend them either in heart or life, must do all by the sound of a trumpet. He that laboured more abundantly than they all, and much more to the purpose, said, "It is not I but the grace of God that was with me." But we have some in our day who tell us they fetch all their comfort from their holiness, and their holiness from the law; and I believe them, for they seem to have no fellowship with the God of comfort, nor experience of the Holy Ghost.

Cleave thou to the Savior, and depend on His grace; and when these fail, then try the law. The way to Sinai is broader than the way to Zion; the path is the most beaten, and there are the greatest number

of travelers. It is easier to get law than gospel; and a throne of judgment is more accessible than a throne of grace. We have legions of unconverted preachers of the letter, for that is all their stock. With the letter, a great noise, and a fair show in the flesh, they deceive the simple. The mystery of faith is a puzzling thing to an unexperienced heart and an unenlightened head; when they attempt this they only betray their ignorance. The gentleman was right; "And without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" and if he has no holiness but what he gets from the law, he will never see the Lord with acceptance; for "Except a man be born again (of the Holy Spirit) he cannot see (much less enter) the kingdom of God." The kingdom of God is in power: regeneration enlightens us into it, and gives us a sensible enjoyment of it; for it stands in righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost; nothing of which comes to us from the law.

If enforcing the law as the only rule of life, and setting it before thee as the only standard of holiness, be accompanied with power; if it produce love to God and man; if it promotes true holiness; if it refreshes the new man, and clothes the soul with humility and self-loathing; if it endears Christ, and strengthens faith; if it produces spiritual life and peace; if it enlightens the eyes, enlarges the heart; weans from the world, purifies the soul, encourages diligence, and makes God, His way and worship, the delight of thy soul,-thou mayest well bear with them; for these things come from God, and do accompany salvation. But I know there is nothing of all this attends such preaching; and this letter of yours is a sufficient proof of it. I have set before my sister the law and the gospel, commandments and promises, life and death, a blessing and a curse. If ,thou cleave to the letter of the law, and make that thy rule of life, walk, and action, and conversation; then thy obedience will be the obedience of the law, not of faith; they will be thy fruits, not the fruits of the Spirit.

## **THE WORD LAW DEFINED**

By the law you work, by the gospel God works in me. You produce fruit in obedience to the letter; in Christ is my fruit found. You work by the law; by the gospel God works my works in me. By the law you must make a new heart, and a new spirit; by the gospel God creates me anew in Christ.

Thou dost not seem to understand what the scriptures mean by the word, law. Sometimes in the Old Testament it means the whole scriptures, as the New Testament was not then written: though the substance of it laid in the unaccomplished prophecies, the promises, and the ceremonial law, which was the gospel of the Jewish church; for, "Unto them was the gospel preached as well as unto us; but the word did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." Even the promise made to Abraham is sometimes called a law: "He hath remembered his covenant forever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations. Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel an everlasting covenant; saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance." This covenant is the covenant of grace. The oath secures the inheritance given to Abraham by promise; and the law was given four hundred and thirty years after. This is manifestly the law of faith; for as many as are of faith are heirs of this promise, secured by this oath, and shall enjoy the inheritance, for they are blessed with faithful Abraham. In this covenant of promise, or law of faith, the Psalmist believed; "I believed, therefore have I spoken."

## **CONCLUSION**

The term "practical holiness" I do not understand. One half of the pompous phrases that now creep into pulpits will not bear the balance of common sense. Holiness can neither be fetched from the law of Moses, nor from a carnal heart; nor is it a thing to be put in practice

by freewill, or an arm of flesh. There is none supremely holy but One; that is, God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Christ is the Holy One of His people; and they who are purged from sin by His blood, sanctified by His Spirit, in covenant, in favour, and in spiritual union, with Him, are complete in Him, their Head; who is made of God unto them righteousness and sanctification. Such are new creatures, created in righteousness and true holiness; and it is God, and none else, who humbles them, and sanctifies them. "He chastens us for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness." Such persons are holy people; they walk in union with Christ, as the only way; and under the influence of the Spirit as they live; they receive a supply of the Spirit of Christ as they stand in need, live in the fear of God, walk humbly with Him, and labour, to keep a conscience void of offence toward Him. All who are destitute of this, and strangers to it, have no more real holiness than Satan himself; it is only an outward show, which the scriptures call washing the platter, whitening the wall or painting the sepulcher.

The law obeyed and disarmed of its curse, is in the heart of the Mediator, who is Judge of quick and dead, and therefore keeps the keys of hell and of death. The believer is under the law of faith to Christ; and they that are His have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts; such are delivered from the law; and against such there is no law; and sin is not imputed where there is no law. I do insist upon it that if a believer be brought to the law of Moses, to be under it in any other sense, sin stares him in the face, wrath works in his heart, his enmity is stirred up, bondage seizes him, and dependency or despair will sink him, unless the law of the Spirit of life make him free from the law of sin and death.

THE END