

The  
**TRUE BOUNDS**  
of  
**Christian Freedom**

Or a Treatise in which  
THE RIGHTS OF THE LAW  
are vindicated,  
THE LIBERTIES OF GRACE  
are maintained;

And the several recent Opinions  
against the Law are examined and confuted.

By  
**Samuel Bolton D.D.**

Late Master of Christ's College  
in Cambridge.

To which is annexed a Discourse of the Learned *John Cameron*,  
touching the three-fold Covenant of God with Man.

*1Pet. 2.16, As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of  
maliciousness, but as the servants of God.*

*Originally published 1645*

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**1656**

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## Editor's Preface

A perennial issue is the relationship between works and grace. Does salvation by grace, and not by works (Eph 2.8-9), lead to an indifference to the Law and obedience? When does our obedience to the Moral Law, fall into legalism? Or when does our Christian freedom lead us into license? Bolton addresses all this and more, as he explores the bounds of our Christian freedom.

We refer to this issue generally as *the Law and the Gospel*. What does this book add to the discussion? I think the answer is found in how Bolton folds our practice into Covenant Theology. He was impressed by John Cameron's work, *The Three-fold Covenant*. Bolton translated it from the Latin, and appended it to this book. However, Cameron was a student of the Saumur school of theology — four-point Calvinists (Amyraldians). Those who subscribe to the Westminster Confession might now be tempted to toss aside this book. But first, consider that Bolton himself attended the Westminster Assembly in 1643. The WCF (1646) says of the Covenants, Chap. 7,

2. The first covenant made with man was a **Covenant of Works**, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.
3. Man by his fall having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the **Covenant of Grace**: wherein he freely offered unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him that they may be saved...
5. This covenant was *differently administered* in the time of the **Law** and in the time of the **Gospel**: **Under the Law** it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all fore-signifying Christ to come...
6. **Under the Gospel**, when Christ the substance was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed are the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper... ***There are not, therefore, two Covenants of Grace differing in substance, but one and the same under various dispensations.***

Bolton admitted, as did Cameron, that there are only two covenants: *Works* prior to the fall, and *Grace* thereafter. However, the nature of the administration of the Covenant of Grace in the Old Testament is so distinctive from the New Testament, that rather than describe it as one covenant "variously dispensed," as the Westminster Confession has it, Cameron described the OT covenant as different from, but *subservient* to the NT covenant, making God's covenant with man, a *Three-fold Covenant* (see Bolton's summary of it in Chapter 1, under Objection 2).

That, perhaps, is what makes this book a valuable addition to the discussion. It's not to promote the Saumur school, nor Amyraldianism. It's an insight into how *works* under the Law, are juxtaposed to *faith* under Grace. The covenant under the Law not only revealed sin, but it also required works as part of the covenant, even if only as signs of grace, and even though *grace and mercy* were its issue. Moreover, that OT covenant was followed by a "New Covenant" in Christ's blood (Mat 26.28), received by *faith alone*. Now, what's the best way to describe all this? By one Covenant of Grace, *variously dispensed*? Or by two related *gracious* covenants, where the first, requiring works imperfectly performed by men, was subservient to the second, where those same works were perfectly performed by Christ? (Mat 5.17) It's the same covenantal relationship between God and Man, *variously described by men*, just as it was *variously dispensed by God*.

Bolton wrote this in 1645, the year prior to the Westminster Confession being adopted. It's good to remember that deriving theology from Scripture is a *process*. Bolton embeds some one-liners that juxtapose the Law and the Gospel in a memorable way. "The Law condemns sin in the faithful, though it cannot condemn the faithful for sin... We're not under its *curse*, but we're still under its *commands*." They were the hidden "easter eggs" of his day, little delights along the way. Enjoy.

**William H. Gross**

March 2020

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## Biographical Sketch

### From A Puritan's Mind

<http://www.apuritansmind.com/puritan-favorites/samuel-bolton-1606-1654/>

SAMUEL BOLTON, D.D. (1606-1654), divine and scholar, who has been wrongly identified both with a son and a brother of Robert Bolton, B.D., was born in London in 1606, and educated at Christ's College, Cambridge (LE NEVE, *Fasti*, ed. Hanly, iii. 690, 607).



In 1643 he was chosen one of the Westminster assembly of divines to replace Jeremiah Burroughs, who died in November 1646.

It is stated that he was successively minister of St. Martin's, Ludgate Street, of St. Saviour's, Southwark, and of St. Andrew's, Holborn. He was appointed, on the death of Dr. Bainbrigge in 1646, master of Christ's College, Cambridge, and served as vice-chancellor of the university in 1651. Although with 'no ministerial charge' he 'preached gratuitously every Lord's day for many years.'

It is believed that it was this Samuel Bolton who, in 1648, attended the Earl of Holland upon the scaffold (Whitelocke, *Mem.* p. 387). He died, after a long illness, Oct. 15, 1654. In his will he gave orders that he was to be "interred as a private Christian, and not with the outward pomp of a doctor; because he hoped to rise in the day of judgment and appear before God, not as a doctor, but as a humble Christian." Dr. Calamy preached his funeral sermon.

## To the Christian Reader

You are not, I conceive, such a stranger to these times, that you don't know that just as God has communicated many truths, so Satan has sought to vent many errors. By this he labored to prejudice and weaken the reception of the one, if he could not prevail to entertain the other. Indeed, it is his best season for merchandizing; at such a time he finds the most peddlers. And in the heat of the Market, while men are buying truths, he may hope to push some of his own wares. That he may make them more vendible, he seeks to pass them off as honorable *notions*, and not stick to *language* — insinuating them into your heart as spiritual conceptions, even as truth itself.

He has walked a long time as a prince of darkness; and because he can no longer deceive in that shape, he now transforms himself into an angel of light. <sup>2Cor 11.14</sup> He went a long time bare-faced, and was successful. When he was discovered, he put on a mask, under which he has walked many generations. And that being taken off also, he now dissembles the very visage of truth. Of all errors, none are more seductive than those which are handed to men under the notion of FREE GRACE; and none are more destructive. They are poison in the *heart*, poison in the *fountain*. I need not tell you how many errors of this kind have been vented and entertained. For reducing those who are carried away, establishing those who stagger, and building up those who are in some measure settled in the truth, the following treatise is now printed, having first been preached, through the long and earnest importunities of many friends.

The subject on which *this* Discourse is founded is the same which is made the foundation of *theirs*, so that it might be evidenced to all, whose super-structure most resembles the foundation. The Discourse itself is partly *doctrinal*, in which the received truth is laid down and confirmed; partly *controversial*, in which the contrary opinions are examined and confuted. First, I say, *examined*. And we have given them a fair trial, being willing to hear the utmost they could say. This examination lies in six queries:

### Six Queries:

Query 1. Whether this is any part of our freedom by Christ: to be freed from the Law.

Query 2. Whether this is any part of our freedom by Christ: to be free from all punishments or chastisements for sin.

Query 3. Whether this may consist with our Christian freedom: to be tied to our duty because God has commanded it.

Query 4. Whether the freemen of Christ may not sin themselves into bondage again.

Query 5. Whether this may consist with our Christian freedom: to do our duties with a respect to the recompense of reward.

Query 6. Whether this is part of our freedom by Christ: to be freed from obedience to men.

These are the main inquiries in which you must also read the contrary Doctrines which are now held forth by many, as plainly confuted and friendly debated. In this work, my main end has been to convince the *judgment*, not to irritate the *affections*, lest while I sought to be helpful to grace, I might be serviceable to sin; and while I endeavored to cherish men's holiness, I would but draw out men's corruptions, and so run in vain. And therefore I have desired to deal with *things*, more than *persons*; and to reveal errors by *arguments*, rather than by *names*. And it is my earnest desire that what is here made obvious to your eye, the God of truth would make evident to your heart; and give to you and me sound judgment, that we may be able to discern about things that differ, guide us in the ways of faith and obedience, enable us to serve Him while we live, smile upon us when we die, and after death take us to Himself. This is all I can desire for myself, and the least I will desire for you; I who am,

April 23, 1645

*Yours in the service of Christ,  
to advance faith and obedience.*  
SAMUEL BOLTON.

The  
**TRUE BOUNDS**  
of  
Christian Freedom

Joh 8.36 — *If the Son therefore makes you free, you shall be free indeed.*

**The Freedom of the Saints**

**The Coherence of the Text**

It is set down as a part of the sufferings of Christ, Heb 12.3, that he endured the contradiction of sinners. And among all the chapters in the Gospel, there is none that sets down so great a part of the sufferings of Christ in this kind, as Joh 8.12-59, which is the end of the chapter. Almost every verse shows you how the Jews set the pride of their obstinate and rebellious wills against his divine and infinite wisdom. There was nothing that Christ could say, that their rebellious hearts didn't cavil<sup>1</sup> at it, and thwart, and contradict him in it. Yet there were some among them whom the word had better effects on. You see in verse 30 that though there were many contradictors, yet some were worked upon; some *believed*. Christ directs himself to those in particular, by way of caution and encouragement, and tells them that if they continued in his Word, they would know the truth; yes, and the truth would make them free.

Upon this the Jews answered (not those who believed, as it appears by verse 37, for the same persons who thus answered sought to kill him), *We are Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man; how can you say then, we shall be made free?* Christ might have turned this impudent cavil on them, by having them review their former state under the Egyptians, and the Babylonians, and their present condition under the Romans. But bypassing their corporal bondage, he proves them to be in spiritual and soul-bondage to sin: verse 34, *He who commits sin, is the servant of sin, and you commit sin*. Having shown them their present sinful condition, he then tells them what their future doom will be: they must be cast out of the house. Though they were now in the Church of God, yet they would not continue in it. They must be cast out, as the Apostle says in Gal 4.30: *Cast out the bondwoman and her son*. And he proves this by setting down the condition of a servant and a son: *the servant does not abide in the house forever, but the son abides forever*, Joh 8.35. And yet he does not leave them here under their sad doom, but propounds to them a way to *prevent* it, and that is by endeavoring *to get free*. And then he sets down the means by which this freedom may be obtained; and that is by the *Son*. Though the work is difficult, yet he that abides in the house forever, he that is the Son, can effect it. *For if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.*

**The Doctrines Laid Down**

And thus I have carried you down to my text, and shown what these words have respect to, and the dependence they have upon the former words. We will now come to look upon it as entire of itself. *If the Son makes you free* —

In this you may observe an antecedent, and a consequent; or first, a supposition — *if the Son makes you free*; secondly, a concession — then *you shall be free indeed*. But allow me to branch out, in these four particulars:

First, here we have a benefit expressed: Freedom. *If the Son makes you **free***.

Secondly, we have the qualities of the freedom: it is a true and real freedom; *free **indeed***.

Thirdly, we have the subject of it, which surely are believers: *if the Son makes **you** free*.

Fourthly, we have the author of it, Christ: *if the **Son** makes you free*.

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<sup>1</sup> *Cavil*: raise trivial objections to something.



That which is expressed, and that which is implied, would afford four conclusions:

1. That every man by *nature*, and in the *state of nature*, is in **bondage**.
2. That there are some who are set **free** from this bondage.
3. That those who are set free, are set free by **Christ**.
4. That those whom Christ has set free, are free **indeed**.

### The Main Doctrine Propounded

I will not speak distinctly to all these which I have propounded; it will not suit so well my design in this work. The first doctrine might challenge something, by way of introduction to what will follow; and it might be serviceable to set off and command this high privilege of spiritual freedom. Contraries enlighten one another. Something of *heaven* might be known from *hell*, and something of the excellence of our spiritual *freedom*, from the consideration of our natural *bondage*, 1. to **sin**; 2. to **Satan**; and 3. to the **Law**. All of which is first, a *soul*-bondage; and that is a universal bondage; secondly, a *cruel* bondage; thirdly, a *willing* bondage; fourthly, a bondage out of which we are *unable* to redeem ourselves by price, or deliver ourselves by power.<sup>1</sup>

But we will let this first doctrine go for the present; and what I might say about it here, I will reserve to some application. The other four I will sum up into this one doctrine.

**Doctrine:** *There is a true and real freedom which Christ has purchased, and into which he has instated all those who are true believers.*

In this, you have the whole text. The benefit is freedom — the quality of it is true and real; the subjects of it are true believers; and the author of it is Christ. *If the Son makes you free*, then... All of which leads to this one conclusion: *that there is a true and real freedom*.

Now, in the prosecution of this, we will endeavor to do the following three things, and so arrive at the answer to those queries which induced me to enter upon this discourse:

1. We will show you the *Nature* of it.
2. We will show you the *Quality* of this freedom spoken of here.
3. We will reveal the *Parts* of it.

And we will do this briefly, so that we may come that which I have chiefly intended.

#### 1. The Nature of this Freedom

For the **nature** of it, what is the kind freedom of which Christ speaks here, and into which He instates believers. To clarify this, it is needful to say that there are *four* kinds of freedom: *Natural*; *Political*; *Sensual*; and *Spiritual*.

**First**, a *natural* freedom, is such a freedom that exists in everything by nature; everything in nature enjoys a natural freedom; but it is not spoken of this.

**Secondly**, there is a *political* freedom, which is the freedom of some nation, some state, some commonwealth and corporation; and the Jews thought Christ spoke of this. They were Abraham's seed, and therefore free; but Christ did *not* speak of this.

**Thirdly**, there is a *corrupt* and *sinful* freedom, which we express under the word *Libertinism*; the Apostle sets it down in Gal 5.13, *Brothers, you are called to liberty, but do not use liberty as an occasion for the flesh*; that is, as an occasion to sin. This is fearful, to turn the *grace* of God into *wantonness*. These are the ones of whom the Apostle speaks in Jude 1.4, *There are certain men who crept in unawares, who were from old ordained to condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness*.

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<sup>1</sup> This inability seems to contradict our willingness — i.e., even if *unwilling*, we remain *unable* to escape. And yet Scripture is clear, "You were not willing." (Mat 23.37) — WHG

Perhaps, he reasoned with them (Rom 6.1), that they might *abound* in sin because God has *abounded* in grace — which was fearful, and not the reasoning of a child of God. And the Apostle speaks of the same sort of men in 1Pet 2.16, *As free, not using your liberty as a cloak for maliciousness* — that is, a pretense or color to sin — *but as the servants of God*, etc. It is evil to sin, to do any act of maliciousness, but much more to *cloak* it, to cover it; and much more again, to make Christian *liberty* the *cloak* of sin; that is most damnable. To make religion, to make the truth of God, to make Christian liberty so dearly purchased, into a cloak or a pretense for sin; or to take occasion by it to *sin*— this is a fearful sin.

But Christ does not speak of that here. This is our *bondage*, not our *freedom*, as I will show you.

**Fourthly**, there is a *spiritual* and heavenly freedom; a freedom *purchased* by Christ, *revealed* in the Gospel, *conveyed* to the Saints, as the great *dowry* of Christ to his Church and Spouse.

There are two great things that Christ has entrusted into the hands of His church. First, *Christian faith*. Secondly, *Christian liberty*. And just as we are to contend earnestly for the maintenance of the faith, as the Apostle says in Jude 1.3, so also for the maintenance of Christian *liberty*, against all its oppugners<sup>1</sup> and underminers. Gal 5.1 *Stand fast in the liberty with which Christ made you free*. And much like this, is the Apostle's saying, *You were bought with a price; do not become the slaves of men*, 1Cor 7.23. But more about this later.

In general, then, I say the freedom into which Christ has initiated believers, is a *spiritual*, a *divine* freedom; a freedom in opposition to our *former bondage*. Clearly understood, this would reveal what our freedom is. We come now to the second.

## 2. The Quality of this Freedom

Secondly, what is the *quality* of this freedom?

There is one *quality* in the text (it is *real*). I will but add two more to it (*universal* and *constant*).

First, it is a *real* freedom, not an imaginary, not a fancied freedom — there are too many who imagine themselves free, but are really in bondage. But this is no imaginary freedom; it is a freedom *indeed*, a true and real freedom. Those whom the son makes free, are *free indeed*.

Secondly, it is a *universal* freedom, a freedom which leaves us in no part of bondage; looking at whatever was any part of our bondage before, we are freed from it in our liberty now. But we must take heed of mistaking any part of our *liberty* for our *bondage*, or of our *bondage* for our *liberty* — too many do, as I will show later.

We were *then* in bondage to Satan, to sin, to the law, to wrath, to death, to hell, etc. It is a universal freedom — universal in respect to all persons, all believers; and universal in respect to its parts. We are free from all that was, or is in any way, *part* of our bondage. We are free from Satan, from sin, from the law, etc., as I will show shortly.

Thirdly, it is a *constant* freedom. You are instated into a condition of freedom, a *state* of freedom, as you were in a *state* of bondage before.

If ever the Lord's *Jubilee* was proclaimed and pronounced in the soul, you will never more hear of a *return to bondage*.<sup>Lev 25.10-13</sup> You will never more return into bondage to Satan; never more come under bondage to the Law, etc.

And Christ implies this in Joh 8.35, *The servant does not abide in the house forever, but the Son abides forever*. The Apostle expresses this contrast by allusion, in Gal 4.22. The children of the bondwoman, and those of the free; the heirs of the promise, and the servants of the law. The one must be cast out, says Paul. And so says Christ here, *The servant does not abide in the house*

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<sup>1</sup> Those who challenge the accuracy, integrity, or propriety of it.

*forever*; they shall not inherit; *but the Son abides in the house forever*; they shall inherit; they shall enjoy a perpetual freedom, never again to return to bondage.

### **3. The Parts of this Freedom – Privative and Positive**

We come now to the third thing propounded, the **parts** of this freedom.

Before I come to tell you what the parts of our Christian freedom are, I must tell you that freedom in general is divided into these two branches: First, *inchoate* freedom.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, *consummate* freedom. That is, the freedom we enjoy *on the way*, and secondly, the freedom *of our Father's house*. The one is in *Grace* (here), the other is in *Glory* (there).

We will speak chiefly to the first: the freedom of the *Saints* here in *Grace*, which is our *inchoate* freedom; and we will briefly lay down the two parts of it:

- 1) Privative (what we are freed *from*).
- 2) Positive (what we are freed *to*).

***We will begin with the first part – Privative.***

#### ***1) First, We are freed from Satan.***

I say, believers are freed from Satan. Christ has seized us and delivered us out of Satan's hands. We were prisoners to Satan, even in his chains; but *Christ* has delivered us. This is set down by way of a parable in Luk 11.21-22. *When the strong man keeps the house, all is in peace. But when a stronger comes, he will rob him of his armor in which he trusted*, etc. But plainly in Heb 2.14, *Christ came into the world, that through death, he might destroy him who had the power of death, the devil*.

Christ freed us from the wrath of God by purchase, but freed us from the devil by strong hands. Indeed, he bought us out of the hand of his Father's justice by price; but he delivers us from Satan as he delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt — not by price, but by power; not by purchase, but by a strong hand. And this is the first.

#### ***2) Secondly, we are freed from sin.***

It is said there are three things in sin: 1. the *guilt* of sin; 2. the *dominion* of sin; 3. the *defilement* of sin. I will only speak to two of them, as follows.

##### **FIRST, CHRIST HAS FREED US FROM THE GUILT OF SIN.**

Indeed, from the guilt of *all* sins, which appears in these two things: **i.** That none of our sins shall condemn us; **ii.** That none of our sins shall bring any fruits of wrath upon us.

**i.** That none of our sins shall be able to condemn us. Christ interposes himself between us and wrath, so that none shall be able to condemn us, Rom 8.1, *There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ*. Christ himself will as soon be called to account for your sin, as you; if you have an interest in him,<sup>2</sup> sin will never condemn you, for Christ has satisfied for sin.

It would not be justice for God to require the payment of Christ — indeed to receive the *full satisfaction* of Christ, and to still require *anything* from you. <sup>3</sup> This is what God did: *He laid on him the iniquity of us all*, Isa 53.6. And this is what Christ has done: he paid God till He said he had enough; He was *fully* satisfied, *fully* contented: *This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*, Mat 3.17 — in whom I am fully satisfied and appeased. So the Apostle says in 2Cor 5.19, *God was, in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself*, etc. He was paying Himself out of the blood, scourges, and sufferings of Christ; and in that, Christ made a full payment. Hence Christ

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<sup>1</sup> *Inchoate*: only partly in existence, or partly realized; imperfectly formed.

<sup>2</sup> If you are united to Christ by faith, so as to become a child of God, and co-heir of the Kingdom with Him.

<sup>3</sup> That would be double indemnity, exacting the same payment (punishment) twice.

says in Joh 16.7-10, *I send my Spirit, and he shall convict the world, as of sin, so of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you shall see me no more*; that is, you will see me no more in this kind; you will never see me again as a *sufferer*, as a *satisfier* for God's Justice for sin; I am done with this. Indeed, we would have seen Christ again if he had not satisfied Justice; if the guilt of but one of those sins he bore, had lain on him unsatisfied; it would have held him under the *chains* of death, the *power* of the grave, forever. He could never have *risen*, much less *ascended* and gone to the Father. He would not have answered Justice to the full.

And therefore the Apostle makes a challenge. He sets the death of Christ against whatever sin, Satan, Justice, or the Law can say. Rom 8.33-34, *Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is the one that condemns? It is Christ who died, indeed, who is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us*. He does not say, *Who shall accuse*, but *who shall condemn*. Indeed, we may have accusers enough — Sin, Satan, Conscience, etc. — but none can condemn us; the issues of life and death are not in their hand. And as none of our sins will condemn us, so none of our sins will put us into a *state* of condemnation; moreover, none of our sins will ever put us under the curse, under wrath again. And that brings up the second.

ii. None of our sins will bring any fruit of wrath upon us. We are freed from all miseries, calamities, afflictions, and punishments which are yet the fruits of *sin* — as they may be conceived to be fruits of *wrath*, or have *wrath* in them.<sup>1</sup>

If you take away the body, the shadow must be removed; sin is the body, and punishment is the shadow that attends and follows it. Take away sin, and the punishments are also taken away; all God's dispensations are in mercy:

1. For eternal punishments. All agree, those can never lay hold of any of those whom Christ has freed from sin — those whom he has justified.
2. For other punishments that have part of eternal punishments in them — anything of the nature of wrath — we are *freed* from those.
3. And from all those that bear any relation or subordination to any eternal punishment, from these believers are certainly freed forever.

I grant that God afflicts those whose sin He yet pardons. But there is a great deal of difference, both in the hand from which they come, the person who bears them, the grounds of inflicting, and the ends that God aims at, in afflicting them on us, as I will show later.

God does not afflict His people for sin.

*First*, because afflictions are part of the curse for sin, He cannot afflict us; so we all agree.

*Secondly*, they would be payments for the satisfaction for sin, as if God's justice were not fully enough satisfied for sin in Christ, and He left something for us to bear in a way of satisfaction. So the Papists say (and therefore they do penance and punish themselves); *but we do not*.

*Thirdly*, God does not afflict His people for sin, as afflictions are the mere fruits of sin, and thus part of the curse. Afflictions upon wicked men are merely a penal part of the curse. There is nothing medicinal in them. They are the effects of mere vindictive justice, and not of fatherly mercy, etc. But afflictions on the godly, these are *medicinal*, to cure us of sin.

And this is the First. *Christ has freed us from the guilt of sin*, by which we can understand nothing else, but that wrath is that punishment which is due to sin — temporal, spiritual, eternal. And,

1. We agree God has freed us from eternal punishments.

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<sup>1</sup> That is, these things may come upon believers in a fallen world. But they are not the result of God's wrath against us for our sins; for in Christ, they have been removed from us, *as far as the east is from the west*, Psa 103.12.

2. And so we must conclude that we are freed from *spiritual* punishments as they relate to the *eternal*.
3. We are freed from *temporal* punishments, so far as they relate either to *spiritual* or *eternal* punishments, or as they have anything of wrath in them.

God has thoughts of love in all He does to his people. The *ground* of his dealings with us, is love; though the *occasion* may be sin, the *manner* of his dealings is love; and the *end* of his dealings is love.

1. Our good here is to make us partakers of His *holiness*, as the Apostle says. <sup>Heb 12.10</sup>
2. Our glory hereafter is to make us partakers of His *glory*. <sup>1Pet 5.10</sup>

But now, it is not so in God's punishment of wicked men. It is neither the *ground* love, nor the *manner* love, nor the *end* love. All His dealings with them in this kind, are parts of the curse, and parts of their demerits for sin.

And that is the first particular branch — *He has freed us from the guilt of sin.*

#### SECONDLY, CHRIST HAS FREED US FROM THE DOMINION OF SIN.

Rom 6.14, *Sin shall not have dominion over you. Why? for He says, You are not under the law, but under grace.* Indeed, while we were under the law, sin had full dominion. It not only had possession in us, but dominion over us. And that dominion was a voluntary, a willing, a free subjection and resignation of ourselves to the motions and services of sin. Then we went down stream, wind, and tide; there was both the *power* of lust, and lustful *inclinations* to carry us (this was the tide; the other was the wind).

But now, being under *grace*, a covenant of grace, *interested* in Christ, and set free by him, we are freed from the dominion and *power* of sin, though we still have the *presence*. Indeed, the stirrings and workings of corruption give us many a sad heart and wet eye. Yet Christ has thus far freed us from sin, that it shall not have dominion. There may be the *turbulence*, but not the *prevalence* of sin. There may be the stirrings of corruption, as it was said of Carthage, that Rome was more troubled with it when half destroyed, than when whole. So a godly man may be more troubled with sin when it is conquered, than when it reigned. You will still hear of its workings; but they are *checked* workings — workings *for life*, rather than *from life*. They are not such uncontrolled workings as formerly. Sin is under command; indeed, it may gain the advantage, and have *tyranny* in the soul, but it will never more have *sovereignty*. I say, it may get into the throne and play the tyrant, but it shall never more be king. It shall never more reign; you shall never yield a voluntary, willing obedience to sin. Sin is conquered, even though it still exists in you.

Saint Augustine put man under four conditions: *before the law*, we neither fought nor strived against sin; *under the law* we fight, but we are overcome; *under grace* we fight and conquer; but *in heaven* all is conquest, and there is no more combat unto all eternity. It is our happiness here in grace, that there is a *conquest*, even though daily combat. We fight, but we get the victory; sin shall never more have dominion over us. Those sins that were kings, are now captives in us; those that were on the throne, are now in chains. And what a mercy this is; whereas others are under the authoritative commands of every passion, of every lust; every sin has command over them; no temptation comes that does not conquer. A sinful heart stands ready to entertain every sin. If it comes on with power, the heart is taken captive *at its pleasure*, and *with pleasure*.

But you are free from it; sin is broken in the tempting. Sin is not allowed in the understanding; the soul is not willing allow sin, *as sin*, under any notion — there is no closing with it in the will, no embracing of it in the affections; the workings of sin are broken and wounded, etc. You will never again be *willing* captives to sin. You may be captives, but never *subjects*; sin may *tyrannize*, but never *reign*. The reign of sin characterizes a soul under the power of sin, and under a state of sin. But sin *dies* rather than *lives* in you. As you know, a man who lives sickly, a man who is

consumed daily, is said to die rather than to live — to live implies gaining strength, and sin does not. Sin is in a consumption,<sup>1</sup> dying daily.

It is dead *judicially*; Christ has sentenced it. Christ has condemned sin in the flesh, Rom 8.3. It had its death blow in the death of Christ.<sup>2</sup> And it is dying *actually*, as did the House of Saul. It is decreasing every day. Only, God has chosen to put sin to a lingering death, a death upon the Cross, for the greater punishment of sin, that it might *sensim mori* (die slowly); and for the further *humiliation* of Saints, that they might be put upon the *exercise* of prayer, and cast upon the *hold* of their faith, and *exercise* their faith for the daily breaking of the power of sin and corruption in them. And so much serves for the second — *Christ has freed us from sin.*

### **3) Thirdly, Christ has freed us from the Law.**

That is another part of our freedom by Christ — we are freed from the Law, Rom 7.6: *We are delivered from the Law, that being dead to it, we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.* Gal 2.19, *Through the law I am dead to the law, that I might live to God.* Gal 5.18, *If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.* Rom 6.14, *You are not under the law, but under Grace.*

And this is another part of our freedom by Christ; we are free from the law. But what this means, we will show at large.

1. We are freed from the *Ceremonial Law*, it was a *yoke which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear*, Act 15.10. But this is not all; it is but a small part of our freedom.

2. We are freed from the *Moral Law* — first, as a *Covenant*, say our divines. It would save a great deal of trouble to say that we are freed from the law as a *condition*, and upon obedience to it, we expected life. But instead, take it in these words, “we are freed from the law as a *covenant*.” The inquiry will then be, *What covenant is it?*

- 1) Some would have it a Covenant of *Works*, and yet they would not have it opposed to the Covenant of *Grace*.
- 2) Some would have it a Covenant of *Grace*, but more legally dispensed.
- 3) Some would have it a *mixed* Covenant, mixed of the covenants of *Nature*, and of *Grace*.
- 4) Some, again, would have it a *Subservient* Covenant — a covenant given to them in a way of subservience to the Gospel and Grace.
- 5) And others would have it no covenant at all, but rather a repetition of the Covenant of Works made with man in his innocence; and that God, in giving the Law, only repeated the covenant under which we stood, and still stand, till we come over to Christ.

And God did this with merciful purposes, to drive us out of ourselves, and to bring us over to Christ — as the Apostle seems to say when he demands this question in Gal 3.18-19, *But if the inheritance is not by the law, ...why then serve the law?* The Apostle answers, *the law was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come*; that is, it was added to the Promise, to *reveal transgressions*, to make sin and wrath appear, to *sentence* and *humble* us for sin. Rom 7.7 In short, He did this to make us see the *terms* under which we stood, so that we might be brought out of ourselves, and brought over to Christ — that we might expect nothing from the Law related to *life*, nor from our obedience to it, but all is from Christ, who is our righteousness and peace.

I will not debate these things in this place; I have referred it to another place. I only say that the Scripture does not seem to hold that it was the *repetition* of a Covenant, but that it was *itself* a

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<sup>1</sup> “Consumption” was a form of tuberculosis, involving the lungs, with progressive wasting of the body. Sin in a believer, is wasting away day by day. Its deeds are being *put to death by the Spirit*, that we may live (Rom 8.13).

<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, John Owen wrote *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* in 1647, two years after Bolton’s work.

covenant. In Exo 19.4-6, <sup>1</sup> and expressly in Deu 4.13, it says, *And the Lord declared to you His **Covenant** which he commanded you to perform; even the Ten Commandments, and He wrote them on two tablets of stone.*

So you see that it is called a *Covenant* in express terms. And it is generally laid down by divines as one part of our freedom by Christ, to be free from the law *as a covenant*. And therefore I conceive that they don't understand it to be a Covenant of *Grace* that is only legally dispensed. This is because it would then be better said that we are free from the *legal administrations* of it, than from the thing itself. Rather, they conceive it to be a Covenant of *Works* — yet not of life and death, such that we would stand or fall upon our obedience or disobedience to it. So it would be *opposite to Grace*, and could in no way be consistent with it. So it would say that God is contrary to Himself, and repents of His own mercy, seeing that he had given the Promise 430 years before, and the Law was added to the promise. <sup>Gal 3.17</sup> And therefore, it cannot be conceived that it was *opposite* to it. This would not be an *addition* to it, but the *destruction* of the Promise.

Besides, it is said to be given into the hands of a Mediator, which a Covenant of *Works*, so understood, would not allow. That will not bear with a Mediator, as I will show at large afterward. So, when they say that the Law was a Covenant of Works, they don't mean that it was a Covenant of *life* and *death*; for then it would be opposite to Grace. Rather, it was such a Covenant of Works that it might, in the *dispensation* of it, conflict with Grace. And though it stood upon opposite terms to Grace, as the Apostle shows in many places in his epistle to the Romans, I will name but one, Rom 10.5-6: *Moses describes the righteousness of the law, that the man who does those things shall live by them; but the righteousness which is of faith speaks in this way... (verse 9), That if you confess the Lord Jesus with your mouth, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved.*

Though it stood upon *opposite terms* to Grace, yet the law had its *subservient ends* to it, as the Apostle shows in *Galatians*, third chapter, in many places. Take but one verse, Gal 3.21, where the Apostle says, *Is the Law against the promises? God forbid!* He implies that, though it stood upon opposite terms, yet it had its *subservient ends* to the Promise, and Covenant of Grace. If this is their meaning, whether it would be better expressed, for distinction's sake, by some other word, I leave it to you to determine.

We will now return to the first particular laid down, concerning the *Moral Law*, which is that,

#### 1. WE ARE FREED FROM THE LAW AS A COVENANT.

It is the distinction which is usually laid down in answer to the objections against the *obligations* of the law. The law may be considered as a *Rule*, and as a *Covenant*. When you read that the Law is *still in force*, it is to be understood of the Law as a *Rule*, and not as a *Covenant*. Again, when you read that the Law is *abrogated*, and that you are freed from the Law, it is to be understood of the Law as a *Covenant*, and not as a *Rule*. Yet in all this, it is not expressed what Covenant it is. The Apostle calls it the *Old Covenant*, Heb 8.13, under which they lived, and from which we are freed. It could never give you *life*; it will not now inflict *death* on you. You are dead to it, and it is now dead to you. You have an expression in Rom 7.1-2, *The law has dominion over a man so long as he lives*. And Paul's argument is this: *for the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband, so long as he lives; but if her husband is dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband*, etc.

Among other interpretations which might be set down, I will only suggest this one, which is yet submitted to better judgment: by nature or covenant, the law is your husband. You are under

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<sup>1</sup> Exo 19:4-6: “You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. <sup>5</sup> ‘Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and **keep My covenant**, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. <sup>6</sup> ‘And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.”

subjection to it, as though looking to be *justified* and *saved* by your *subjection* to it. Till the law as a covenant (or as a husband) is dead to you, and you to it (for the Apostle makes them both one, verse 4), you will never look for righteousness and life in another. Till the law kills you, and you are dead to it, you will look for righteousness and life in obedience to it. But once the law has killed you, and shown you that it is dead to you, and can do you no good — and you are dead to it, and can expect nothing from it — *then* you will look for *life* in Christ alone.

And this was the Apostle's case: he was once someone who expected (as well he might) as much good from the law and his obedience to it, as any man. Rom 7.9-11, *Once I was alive*, he says, *without the law*; that is, without the knowledge of the law. But he says, *When the commandment came, then sin revived and I died, and the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death*; that is, I found that instead of *saving* me, it *killed* me. It gave death instead of life. *For*, he says, *sin taking occasion by the law, deceived me, and by it killed me*; that is, the law came in with an enlightening, convicting, accusing, condemning power, and laid me on my back; it clean killed me. I say, I could expect nothing *there*, nothing from it *as a covenant*. And as the law was now dead to him, and could afford nothing to him, so he was now dead to the law, and expected nothing from it afterward, as he says in Gal 2.19: *Through the law, I am dead to the law, that I might live to God*. That is, the law having now slain me, I am forever dead to it; I expect nothing from it as a covenant; *all my life is in Christ*. I look now to live by another. *Through the law* — that is, through the convicting, enlightening, condemning, killing power of it — I see that it is dead to me, and I to it; and I can expect nothing from it, that is, as a *covenant of life and death*. It is dead to me, and I to it, and I look for all from Christ.

This much suffices to be spoken about the first point: *we are freed from the Law as a Covenant*. We will speak more largely of this in the Answer to the Queries. We will come to other branches of our Christian freedom from the Law, which will hang upon this: if it we look at it as a Covenant of life and death.

## 2. SECONDLY, WE ARE FREED FROM THE MALEDICTIONS AND CURSES OF THE LAW.

The Law requires two things of those who are under it. Either you should *obey* the precepts, which was impossible to do in that strictness and rigidity of the law commanded of them, Galatians 3; or you should *bear the penalties* of the law, which are insupportable. Either you must *obey* the commands of the law, or *suffer* the curses of the law. Either *do* God's will, or *suffer* God's will, in forfeitures of soul and body. And those who are under the Law, as a covenant, are in that sad dilemma. Joh 3.18, *He that does not believe, is condemned already; ...the wrath of God abides on him* (v. 36), and therefore he must be under the Curse of the Law.

But now, those who are believers are freed from the law, as a covenant of life and death. And therefore, they are free from curses and maledictions of the Law; the law has nothing to do with them as touching their *eternal* state and condition.

Hence the Apostle says in Rom 8.1, *There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ*; that is, to those who are not under the law.

If you were indeed under the law as a covenant, there would be condemnation, and nothing else but condemnation. Though the law is not able to save you, it is yet able to condemn you; though it is not able to bestow the blessing, it can yet pour the curse upon you. Gal 3.10, *As many as are of the works of the law* — that is, under the law as a covenant that looks for life and justification thereby — *they are under the curse*. And he uses this argument: *For it is written, Cursed is he that does not obey in all things*, declaring that he *must* be “under the curse.” This is because it is not possible to obey in all things. And to fail in any, means that you are left under the curse.



So that I say, if you were under the law, the law would be able to *condemn* you; though it cannot *save* you, Rom 8.3.<sup>1</sup>

But now, being in Christ, Christ freed you from the curses of the law, by bearing this curse for you. As the Apostle said in Gal 3.13, *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, by being made a curse for us*. He says not only *bearing* the curse for us, but by being *made* a curse for us. *For it is written, Cursed is everyone who hangs on the tree*. And here is another benefit that flows from it: you are freed from the law as a Covenant, and also from the *curse* of the Law. The Law cannot pass sentence on you; it cannot condemn you: 1. you are not to be tried in that court; and 2. Christ has satisfied the Law to the full.

And this privilege is not only for the *present*, but *forever*. Even if you were to sin, the law cannot pronounce the curse on you, because you are not under the law; because you are freed from the curse of the law; and the curse can never take hold on you. A man will never be afraid of any *obligation* which is made void, the sin torn off, the writing defaced — indeed, it is not only cancelled and crossed, but torn in pieces. Why God has thus dealt with the law as to believers, touching its obligation to the curse, and its power to sentence and condemn, the Apostle tells us in Col 2.14: *He has blotted out the handwriting of ordinances* (list of charges) *that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross*. By *handwriting of ordinances*, I don't conceive is meant the *Ceremonial* Law alone, but the *Moral* Law too, so far as it was against us; so far as it bound us over to the curse. And the Apostle's gradation is observable here: *he has blotted out*. But lest this is not enough, lest anyone say, *It is not so blotted out that it may not be read*, he therefore adds, *He has taken it away*. And lest this not be enough either, lest someone says, *Yes, but it will be found again, and a fresh lawsuit begun*, he therefore adds, *He has nailed it to his cross*; he has torn it in pieces, never to be put together again. The law will never have anything to show for the sins of believers. Indeed, it has black bills, bloody indictments against those who are under it; but it will never have anything to produce against you who have an interest in *Christ*. I say of them, as the Apostle says in another sense, *against such there is no law*; there is no law to *justify* them, so there is no law to *condemn* them.

The Apostle plainly shows this in Rom 8.34, *Who is he that condemns? It is Christ who died*. He sets the death of Christ against all charges that can be brought. And it is evident,

*First*, that court cannot condemn because that court is itself condemned; its curses, judgements, and sentences are made invalid and of no power. Men who are condemned have a *tongue*, but no *voice*. So here, though the Law has a tongue to still accuse, yet it has no power to condemn; it cannot fasten condemnation on you.

*Secondly*, that court cannot condemn you because you are not under it as a court; you are not under the Law as a covenant of life and death. If you are in Christ, you are under a Covenant of Grace.

*Thirdly*, that court cannot condemn you because you are not under its condemnation; you are under its *conduct* of it, but not under its *curses*; you are under its precepts (though not as the Law holds them out on these terms, *do this and live*), but you are not under its penalty.

*Fourthly*, again, that court cannot condemn you because Christ in our person and stead, was condemned by it, that we might be freed. Gal 3.13, *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*. It may condemn sin in us, but it cannot condemn us for sin.

*Fifthly*, that court cannot condemn, because you have *appealed* from it. You see this in the Publican. He was arrested, dragged into the Court of justice, sentenced, and condemned. But this doesn't take place, because he makes an appeal: *God, be merciful to me, a sinner*. He flees

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<sup>1</sup> Rom 8:3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh.

to Christ; and the text says, *He went away justified*. So that court (provided your appeal is just) cannot condemn, because you have appealed to the Court of *Mercy*.

Indeed, there are many who make a false appeal: they appeal in part, but not wholly — they trust partly in Christ, and partly in themselves. Many who appeal to Christ for *salvation*, do not appeal to him for *sanctification*. This is false.

Many appeal to Christ *before* they are cast into the former Court — before they are *humbled*, convicted, and condemned in the law.<sup>1</sup>

You may read in the poor *Publican*, what kind of appeal will do you good. He seems a man cast into and condemned in the Court of the Law; and thereupon he makes his appeal to Christ in the Gospel. Read the words. It is said of him that, *He stood afar off, and would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven; but beat his breast, saying, God be merciful to me, a sinner*. Here was a three-fold demeanor, and it corresponds to a three-fold affection in him. First, *he stood afar off*; this corresponds to his fear and consternation. *He would not so much as lift up his eyes*; this corresponds to his shame and confusion. *He beat his breast*; this corresponds to his sorrow and compunction. And being thus cast down, he then appeals, *God be merciful to me, a sinner*.

In brief then, if your appeal is to be right, and one that will do you good. **1.** It must be a *total*, not a *partial* appeal. You must not come to Christ only for some relief, but for *all*; Christ must have the honor of all. **2.** It must be an appeal for *grace* as well as *mercy*; for sanctification as well as salvation — to be made *holy* by Christ. **3.** It must be the appeal of a man humbled and convicted in himself. No man appeals to *another* Court, till he has first been convicted and condemned in the former. So here, we cannot appeal to Christ, till we are first convicted and condemned by Moses, as the Apostle shows in Rom 3.9, *We have proved both Jews and Gentiles to be all under sin. As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one; there is none that understands, none that seeks after God*.

*There* is the indictment, and the accusation of the law. And in verse 19 you have the sentence, or judgment upon it. There the Apostle tells you the reason why the Law says this: it is that *every mouth might be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God*. When the law has accused us, when it has sentenced us, stopped our mouths, and we become guilty — *now* the sinner comes to make this appeal from the Law as a Covenant, to Christ as a Savior. He looks for nothing from *justice*, but for all from *mercy*.

And having thus appealed, the Law has no more to do with him. He is not under the *sentence*, the penalties of the law — he is out of its reach. The law can take no hold of him for condemnation; he has fled to Christ; he has taken sanctuary in Him.

And what a privilege this is, that you are free from the curses and penalties of the law. If the law threatens, Christ promises; if the law curses, Christ blesses. This is a high privilege: if God lets but one spark of His wrath as a displeasure, fall upon your consciences for sin, you would then know what a mercy it is to be thus freed.

### 3. THIRDLY, WE ARE FREED FROM THE INDICTMENTS AND ACCUSATIONS OF THE LAW.

Rom 8.33, *Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?* One might think this is a strange question, *Who shall?* — why none will lay to their charge.

1) **Satan**, he is ready to lay things to their charge; he is called, Rev 12.10, *the accuser of the saints, night and day*; he is the great *Calumniator*,<sup>2</sup> ever preferring<sup>3</sup> Bills of Indictment against the saints. Sometimes he accuses God to man, as you see he did with our first parents. There he

<sup>1</sup> Not first being convicted of their sin, their faith in Christ is not for salvation, but for bread (Joh 6.26-27).

<sup>2</sup> *Calumniator*: one who attacks the reputation of another by slander or libel.

<sup>3</sup> In the Law, a *preferment* is the act of making an accusation.

charged God with envy of His creatures, as if He had forbidden them that tree because they should not be wise enough. And you see how ordinary it is with him, either to accuse God's *mercy*, when he tells them they may sin and yet God will be merciful; or His *justice*, that if they sin, there is no mercy for them. As Satan stretches God's justice above the bounds of the Gospel, so he stretches God's mercy above the bounds of His truth.

And as he accuses God to man, so he accuses man to God. Either,

1. By way of complaint, as you see with Joshua, in Zec 3.1-4. <sup>1</sup> And thus he is ever laying crimes and preferring Bills against the saints. So that in all his temptations we may say, as the man said to Joab when he asked why he didn't kill Absalom: *You yourself heard what the King commanded, that Absalom should not be hurt; and if I had done this thing, you yourself would have been the first to accuse me to the King*, 2Sam 18.12-13. So may we answer Satan: You yourself know that God has *forbidden* this thing; and if I had done it, would you not have been the first to *accuse me to God*? This is Stan's way. He is first a *tempter* to draw us to sin, and then an *accuser* to accuse us to God for sinning.

2. Or by way of suspicious conjecture, as with Job. God *commends* him; Satan *condemns* him, as if he knew Job better than God himself. Indeed, though he could not condemn Job's actions, yet he would quarrel with his *affections*. Surely, whatever his actions are, Job's intentions are not good, which was as much as telling God He was deceived in Job: *For certainly, whatever You think of Job, yet he doesn't serve you for nothing. He is a mercenary fellow, one who serves you for love of bodily blessings. You have heaped reward and favors on him, and have made a hedge around him — fenced him in your favors, so that nothing can annoy him.* <sup>2</sup> So you see, there are those who will lay to the charge of God's people. Satan will accuse.

But now, Satan cannot condemn; the issues of life and death are not in his hands, nor will his accusation have a place with God against us. A man who is condemned himself, although he has a voice, he has no power. His testimony is invalid against others, etc. Satan is a condemned wretch, and all his accusations have no place with God against the Saints. You see in Joshua, that though his accusation was true, and Joshua was in his filthy garments, yet God would not accept it. Zec 3.2, *The Lord rebuke you, O Satan. Is this not a brand plucked out of the fire?*

2) Yes, but not only Satan — **wicked men** may accuse us too; sometimes unjustly, of sins *committed but forgiven*; and in this, they show their malice and lack of charity, not forgetting what God has forgiven. Sometimes unjustly, of things *they never did*; as when Potiphar's wife accused Joseph of unchastity, because he would not be unchaste. And David complains, *they laid to his charge the things he never did*; the same in Daniel. <sup>3</sup> But none can condemn us.

3) Yes, but not only Satan and wicked men, but **conscience** itself may lay things to our charge. If conscience may accuse, then how can we say, *Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect*? Conscience, I say, may accuse,

- i. Sometimes bringing true light;
- ii. Sometimes bringing false information;
- iii. Sometimes returning old Bills that are cancelled, and crossed off long ago.

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<sup>1</sup> Zec 3:1 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him. <sup>2</sup> And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! *Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?*" <sup>3</sup> Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel. <sup>4</sup> Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, "Take away the filthy garments from him." And to him He said, "See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes."

<sup>2</sup> Job 1.9-10.

<sup>3</sup> 1Sam 24.9 KJV; Dan 13.43 DRA.

**i.** In the first, we are to listen to the accusations of conscience when it charges us *truly*. Conscience accused Joseph's brothers when they were entreated to evil in Egypt. It tells them, *You were truly guilty of the wrong done to Joseph.* <sup>Gen 42.21</sup> So with David, after he numbered the people, *his heart struck him.* <sup>2Sam 24.10</sup> Conscience was not a *bridle* before, and so it was now a *whip*; it was not a *curb* before, and therefore it is now a *scourge*. He didn't listen to the warnings, and therefore he feels the lashings of conscience. And when conscience justly accuses, when it comes in with evidence according to the Word, we must hear; for then *God speaks*. If a dial is not set by the sun, it doesn't matter what it says; but if it goes by the sun, we must listen to it. So too, if Conscience doesn't speak according to the Word, we needn't mind its accusations. But if it speaks according to evidence there, it is good to listen to it.

**ii.** Sometimes Conscience brings in *false information*. It will perhaps tell you that things are sin, which are not sin. So here it is an *erroneous* conscience; we need not hear it.

**iii.** Sometimes it will bring in old cases, answered and satisfied long ago. Then it is a *quarrelsome* conscience. Conscience in this case is a contentious troublesome fellow at Law; and God will deal with it as an honest Judge does with such a contentious quarrelsome fellow. He tosses it all out of Court, as matters not worth hearing, or things that have been settled long ago. These accusations will not take hold of the soul. In this case, I may say, when conscience condemns, God is greater than conscience, to acquit and absolve the soul.

**iv.** Yes, but there is a *fourth*, which is ready to lay to the charge of God's people, and that is the *Law*. The Law may accuse, etc. How then is it said, *Who can lay anything to the charge of God's people?* And if the Law may accuse, how can we be said to be *free* from the indictments and accusations of the Law?

I answer that if we speak of sins pardoned, then neither Conscience, nor Satan, nor the Law has any right to accuse the people of God. God has justified, and who then shall accuse?

Indeed, while we are *under* the Law, *before faith*, we are under the accusations, judgments, and sentences of the Law. The Law not only accuses us, but the sentence and curse take hold of us:

1. It accuses us, Joh 5.45. As Christ told those who would not believe him, but looked for justification by the law, *Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one who will accuse you, even Moses in whom you trust.* The Law which they looked to be justified by, would accuse them.
2. It not only accuses us, but sentences us; yes, and the sentence as a curse takes hold of us, Joh 3.18, *He who does not believe is condemned already.* And verse 36, *He who does not believe, the wrath of God abides on him.*

So that, while you are under the Law, *before faith* and an interest in Christ, the Law not only accuses, but the Law condemns.

But now, for those who *do* have an interest in Christ,

1. The Law cannot accuse them of sin *before* Grace, because they are pardoned; and this accusation is made void.
2. The Law cannot accuse them of sin *after* Grace, nor of sin after pardon. They are not under the accusations, arrests, or sentences of the Law.

**1.** I say, the Law cannot so accuse us of sin, as to call us into that Court, as the word signifies. Rom 8.33, *Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's Elect?* Or rather, *Who shall call into Court?* The word not only signifies to accuse, but in *ius vocare*, the right to call into Court. So neither the Law, Justice, Conscience, nor Satan, can accuse us so as to call us into Court — the Court of the Law. For we are (when believers) freed from it as a Court, as a Covenant, and so we are freed from its judgments, sentences, condemnations, curses, and accusations. If it sends any

of its officers out to accuse us, and attach us for sin, we may refuse to obey, to come in and appear because we are to be tried by *another* Court; we are to be tried by the *Gospel*. And if God's people, when they have sinned, go to the right Court, they might sooner get sorrow for sin, and assurance of the pardon of sin; they would find more *sorrow*, and less *horror* for sin.

2. When I say we are freed from the accusations of the Law, I mean from its accusations as *subordinate* to condemnation. There is a two-fold accusation:

*First*, an accusation to *conviction* and *humiliation* for sin.

*Secondly*, an accusation to sentence and condemnation for sin. The Law *accuses*, and it *condemns* also; all the accusations of the Law, to those who are under the law, are *subordinate* to sentence, judgment, and condemnation for sin. The Law accuses and also condemns all those under it. But all the accusations against the godly for sin, are subordinate to *conviction* for sin, and *humiliation* for it; and so they are subordinate to life and salvation also. And thus I conceive that the Law may accuse those who are yet the *Freemen* of Christ. It may reveal to them how far they come short of the glory of God, how far they have erred and wandered from the paths of righteousness, etc., and accuse them for it — but this accusation is for humiliation, not condemnation. We will show later that either this must be so, or else you must deny that the Law is a Rule.

**Queries** — But here, two queries are propounded by others:

(1) Whether the Law may justly accuse us, seeing that we are not under it.

In brief I answer, we are not under its *curses*, but we are under its *commands*; we are not under the Law for *judgment*, but we are under the Law for *conduct*. So far as we do not walk according to it as a Rule, it has an accusing power, even though we are taken out of its condemning power. There is no further power left in the Law, than for our good, our humiliation, our edification. And this is only a power for our good, and our furtherance in Grace.

(2) Whether the Law is just in its accusation of us, seeing that we do not sin.

And that is founded upon the former. If it is true that we are freed from the law as a Rule, or as a Direction of Life (to be so set free, would not be a part of our freedom, but our bondage), then our breaches of the law are not sin. If there is no law for us, then we do not sin in breaking it, any more than we would if we broke the laws of Spain, or any other nation, which is not a law for us in England (as some seem to exemplify this).

We will show later, the invalidity and dangers of these two queries. In the meantime, I must tell you that the Law in its *directive* power remains for us. And this must be plain from Gal 3.17, *The Law was given 430 years after the Promise*.

**Argument 1.** If the Law was given 430 years after the Promise, then it is either as a *Covenant*, or as a *Rule*.

**Ans.** It could not be given as a Covenant, for then God would be contrary to Himself, first in giving a Covenant of *Grace*, and then of *Works*. Therefore, He gave it as a *Rule*, to reveal to us — after justification by the Promise — a Rule of walking with God as to all manner of pleasing.

**Argument 2.** What is part of our *Bondage* can never be said to be part of our *Freedom*; or what is part of our *Holiness* can never be said to be part of our *Bondage*.

**Ans.** But conformity to the Law, and subjection to the Law of God, is part of our holiness. Therefore it can never be said to be part of our Bondage. Indeed, there is a *two-fold subjection*: the subjection of a son, and of a slave. We are freed from the one (the subjection of a slave), for this was part of our *Bondage*; but not from the other (the subjection of a son), for it is part of our *Freedom*. But I will not anticipate my Discourse. We will come to speak of this at large in our following Discourses.

#### 4. FOURTHLY, WE ARE FREED FROM THE RIGOR OF OBEDIENCE REQUIRED IN THE LAW.

We are not freed from *exact* obedience, but from that *rigor* of obedience which the Law required for salvation.

**First**, the Law did not command *difficult*, but *impossible* things of us. It laid a *yoke* upon us which we could not bear; and it would not, nor could it, give us the least assistance and concurrence. The Scribes and Pharisees *laid heavy yokes and burdens on men's shoulders, but would not touch them with one of their fingers*.<sup>1</sup> So too, the Law laid heavy yokes upon us, but it does not give us the least assistance and concurrence of strength for doing it. *Iubet, sed non iuvat* — it commands, but gives no strength, no *Grace*. And therefore divines have compared this rigor in the Law, to the bondage of Israel under Pharaoh, who required the tally of brick, but afforded no straw. So the Law requires the full tally; it abates nothing in the command, but it gives no assistance and concurrence for doing it. It answers us there, as the priests answered Judas, *See to it*.<sup>Mat 27.4</sup>

But now in the Gospel, we are freed from impossibilities; here *omnia possibilis*, all things are possible — not in respect to the law, but in respect to God, who has undertaken *to work all our works in us, and for us*.<sup>Isa 26.12</sup> Chrysostom blessed God, that *what God required of him, He had given to him*.<sup>1Cor 4.7</sup> Indeed, the works of the Gospel are as great as any works of the Law, and greater; e.g., *to believe*, is a greater work than to do all the duties of the Law. But God has given us much strength; we have *Communion* with the power and strength of Christ. As *without* Christ we can do nothing, so *with* Christ we will be able to do all things; a weak Christian, and a strong Christ, will be able to do all. Nothing will be too hard for that man who has the strength of Christ to enable him, and the Spirit of Christ to work with him. If God commands the works of an angel, and gives the strength of an angel, all will be even. The works commanded may be difficult in respect to divine *imposition*, but they are easy in respect to divine *cooperation*. The Law was a spiritual law; but the Gospel is the Law of the Spirit, Rom 8.2,<sup>2</sup> and therefore it enables us to do, what it commands to be done. Take one instance, Rom 6.12. The Spirit enjoins that we *not let sin reign in our mortal bodies*. There is the command. Now read verse 14, *Sin shall have no dominion in your mortal bodies*. There is the promise; and he alleges this reason: *for you are not under the Law, but under Grace* — as though he said, if you had been under the *Law*, you could not have expected such assistance; but you are under *grace*, and therefore you shall have that power.

**Secondly**, this was the rigor of the Law: that the law required obedience *in our own persons*. It would not allow anyone else to do or work for us; nor anyone to help us in doing it. We are now freed from this rigor, and God will accept our obedience by another. There was a *two-fold debt* that we owed to God. 1. The debt of *sin*. 2. The debt of *service*. These two, the debts of sin and service, were both transacted upon Christ; and he has fulfilled all righteousness, *legis & crucis*, for us.<sup>3</sup> Hence we are said to be *complete in Christ*,<sup>Col 2.10</sup> though we are imperfect in ourselves.

**Thirdly**, this was the rigor of the law: that it required personal obedience to be *universal, actual* — yes, and with all rigor. If you failed in one tittle, you were gone forever. Gal 3.10, *Cursed is he who does not obey everything written in the books of the Law, to do it*. Here is required *obedience*; *personal* obedience; *universal* obedience; and that universal, is *actual* — indeed, so constant and perpetual, that if he failed in one tittle, at any time, he comes under the curse. All your desires, all your endeavors, would not serve the turn. If you failed in the least tittle, you were gone forever; no *repentance*, no *tears*, no *prayers*, no *future* care, would make it end. Though the *Gospel* allows for repentance, the *Law* will not allow it. It looks for *exact* obedience to every tittle. God has freed you from this rigid obedience. And God is pleased for *universal actual obedience*, to accept universal *by* actual obedience, Psal 119.6, *Even in respect to all His commandments*.

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<sup>1</sup> Or “lift a finger to help them,” Mat 23.4.

<sup>2</sup> Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

<sup>3</sup> *Legis & crucis*: the law and the cross, or obedience to the Law and atonement for sin.

Even if there is failing in *action*, where there is truth of *affection*, God can accept it. In the Gospel, God accepts *affections* for *actions*, *endeavors* for *performances*, *desire* for *ability*.

**Here is all:** a Christian is made up of desires, mournings, thirstings, and bewailings. *Oh that my ways were directed;* <sup>Psa 119.5</sup> and *Oh miserable man that I am!* <sup>Rom 7.24</sup> Here is Gospel perfection. Adam's want was more *will* than power; ours is more *power* than will; there is a *will* to do, but it lacks *power* to do. Not that the will is perfect. For, as we cannot *do* the things we *would* do, for there is flesh in our members, so we cannot *will* the things we *should* will, for there is flesh in our wills. Yet I say, the failing of God's people is more for lack of power, than lack of will. There is a will to do, but we lack power to do it. As the Apostle says in Rom 7.18, *To will is present with me, etc., but how to perform what is good, I do not find.*

God has mercy for *can-nots*, but not for *will-nots*. God can distinguish between *weakness* and *wickedness*. While you are under the law, this weakness is your wickedness, a sinful weakness; and therefore God hates it. Under the Gospel, He doesn't look at the *weakness* of Saints as their *wickedness*; and therefore He pities them. Sin makes those who are under the Law, the objects of God's *hatred*. Sin in a believer makes him the object of God's *pity*. Men, you know, hate poison in a toad, but pity in a man. In the one it is their nature; in the other their disease. Sin in a wicked man is like poison in a toad; God hates it *and* him; it's his nature. But sin in a child, is like poison in a man. God pities him. He pities the Saints for sin and infirmities, but He hates the wicked. It is the one's disease, and the other's nature.

**Fourthly**, this was again the rigor of the Law, that it enforced itself on the Conscience with threat and with terror. But now the Gospel comes over the wise, with beseeches and love. *I beseech you, brothers, by the mercies of God*, Rom 12.1. In the Gospel, the Spirit is *not a spirit of bondage and fear, but a spirit of power and love*, as you see in Rom 8.15; 2Tim 1.7. The Law urges obedience upon pain of eternal death, Deu 27.16; Gal 3.10; and it enforces it by terror. But the Gospel is enforced by sweetness and love; all terror is gone. The book of the Law was placed between the cherubim, and upon the Mercy-seat, to tell us who are under the Gospel, that every law now comes to the Saints from the Mercy-seat.

All rigor is now gone, and nothing but sweetness is the motive to it, and the principle of your obedience. This is the love of Christ which constrains, as the Apostle says in 2Cor 5.14. And nothing is more powerful than Love; things impossible to others, are easy to those who love. Love knows no difficulties. *My yoke is easy, my burden is light.* <sup>Mat 11.30</sup> Love is an affection that is not to be posed with duties or difficulties to the person beloved. Jacob served a hard apprenticeship for Rachel; and yet the text says, *He considered the time little, because he loved her.* <sup>Gen 29.20</sup> Love shortens time and facilitates labor. When Achilles was asked what enterprises he found the easiest of all that he had undertaken in his life, he answered, those which he undertook for a friend. <sup>1</sup> This is the spirit which God implants in His children — not a spirit of fear, but a spirit of love. This is the spring of all their actions; it makes those things which otherwise would be tasks and burdens, refreshments and delights. A godly man *takes in* whatever concerns his happiness by *faith*, and *lays out* whatever concerns his duty by *love*. Faith and love are the all of a Christian. The Apostle says so in Gal 5.6, *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which works by love.* Faith, like Mary, sits at the feet of Christ to hear his Word, and love, like Martha, compasses him about with service. Faith is the great *receiver*, and Love is the great *disburser*. We take in all by Faith, and lay out all by Love. This is another privilege believers enjoy. They are freed from the rigor of the Law. There are some more which, because I would hasten, I will but name.

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<sup>1</sup> Homer's *Iliad*.

Believers are not only freed from Satan, sin, and the Law; but they are *freed from obedience to men*. We have no lords over us; men are our brothers; *our Lord and Master is in Heaven*. We find in Scripture a double charge: 1. Not to usurp mastership. 2. Not to undergo servitude.

*First, not to usurp mastership.* You have it in Mat 23.8, 10: *Do not be called Rabbi, for one is your Teacher, even Christ, and all you are brothers. Neither be called Masters, for one is your Master, even Christ, etc.*

*Secondly, not to undergo servitude.* 1Cor 7.23, *You were bought with a price; do not be the servants of men*. But the meaning is that we are not to acknowledge any as our supreme master. Nor are we to give men our faith and consciences; nor enthrall our judgments to the sentences, definitions, or determinations of any man or men on earth — because this would be to make men the Masters of our Faith, which the Apostle so much abhorred. 2Cor 1.24, *We are not masters of your faith, but helpers of your joy.*

There are two-fold masters: 1. Masters according to the *flesh*, and 2. Masters according to the *spirit*. The first you read of in Eph 6.5, *Servants, be obedient to your Masters according to the flesh*; the second we read of in Mat 23.9-10, *Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven; for One is your Master, the Christ*. We are to be obedient to our masters according to the flesh, only so far as it pertains to the *outward* man, in all *outward* things. But as to our souls and consciences, just as we have no fathers, so we have no masters on earth, only our Master and Father which is in heaven. And in this sense, Christ says that we must not *absolutely* yield ourselves to be ruled by the will of any, nor enslave our judgments, and submit our faith and consciences to any power besides Christ. It would be high usurpation for anyone to *require* it; it is to enter on Christ's *Royal Prerogative*. And it is no less iniquity for us to *render* it. So much will serve for the fourth branch. I may speak more of it when we come to *Query One*.

***Fifthly***, we are *freed from death*. There is a three-fold death. First, a *spiritual* death, the death of the soul in the body. Secondly, a *natural* death, the death of the body from the soul. Thirdly, an *eternal* death, the death of the soul and body forever. Two of these you do not doubt; the question is about the second, the *natural* death, of which I will say no more than this:

*First*, that it is only the body that dies, the lesser part; and our dust and bones are last united to the Son of God. <sup>1Cor 15.42</sup>

Secondly, you are freed from death as a *curse*. The nature of death is taken away, and therefore the name is changed; it is called but *sleep*, and a sleep in Christ, and a gathering to our fathers, a change, a departing. Death is the godly man's wish, the wicked man's fear. Aristippus,<sup>1</sup> being asked in a storm, why he did not fear as much as others, answered there are great odds that they feared the torments due to a bad life; but he expected the rewards due to a good life.

*Thirdly*, this is another part of our freedom from death, that we will not die till the best time. Indeed, none will die till God's time. What David said to his enemies, so any man may say: *My times are in Your hands*. <sup>Psa 31.15</sup> But this is not *everyone's* best time: you may die with Belshazzar, carousing; <sup>Dan 5-</sup> with Ananias and Sapphira, lying; <sup>Act 5.1-10</sup> with the nobleman unbelieving; <sup>Mat 19.22</sup> with Julian, blaspheming.<sup>2</sup> But this is the privilege of *Saints*: that they will not die till the *best* time — not till that time when, if they were but rightly informed, they would desire to die.

Men cut down weeds at any time; but they will not cut down their corn till the *best* time. You are God's husbandry.<sup>3</sup> The Apostle says you are His wheat; and when you are ripe, when you have

<sup>1</sup> Aristippus of Cyrene (435-356 BC) — Greek epicurean philosopher; pupil of Socrates. The story is taken from Aulus Gellius' *The Attic Nights* (177 AD). Epictetus the stoic, caught in a storm at sea, had Aristippus answer this for him.

<sup>2</sup> Known as *Julian the Apostate*, emperor of Rome and enemy of the Church (ruled 361-363).

<sup>3</sup> Here *husbandry* means household, what God cultivates, rather than the act of cultivating. The word *husbandry* comes from "house-bondry" — the management of the household, including vineyard and farm. We are God's household.



done your work, then and not till then, you will be gathered into your Master's Garner.<sup>1</sup> So much for the fifth.

**Sixthly**, we will be freed from the Grave, and this comes under our consummate freedom. We will but touch on this. We will be freed from the Grave — I will give you this in three conclusions.

*Conclusion 1 – how our bodies will arise.*

*First*, they will arise *perfect* bodies, free from sickness and all imperfections.

*Secondly*, they will arise *spiritual* bodies, 1Cor 15.44. This must not be understood in regard to substance, but in regard to qualities.

*Thirdly*, they will arise *immortal* bodies, never more to die.

*Fourthly*, they will arise *glorious* bodies. Each one will be filled with brightness and splendor, shining as the Sun in the Firmament, Dan 12.3; Mat 13.43.

*Conclusion 2 – how our bodies will be transformed.*

The same bodies will arise, the same soul will be united to the same individual body again. And this is a mystery, for philosophers dreamed of a transformation of bodies, or bodies transformed into new shapes, and a transmigration of souls, or souls fitting into new bodies. But they could not apprehend the truth of this *resurrection* of the body: that the same individual identical body, after it is *corrupted* into water, *consumed* by fire, *converted* into earth, *vanished* into air, indeed *eaten up* by fish, and those fish eaten by men — it was above them to think this same individual and identical body would rise again. When Paul disputed this point at Athens, the great epicurean philosophers laughed at him. *What will this babbler say?* <sup>Act 17.18</sup> They looked at this as babbling. But the Scriptures tell us that we *shall see him with these same eyes*, Job 19.27. And it suits God's justice, that the same bodies which have sinned, or suffered, will be punished, or rewarded.

*Conclusion 3 – how our bodies will be finally raised.*

The soul and body will never more be parted, to all eternity. When you die you will be freed by death, from death. After this *union*, there will never more be *separation*.

Thus I am done with the PRIVATE part of our freedom, what we are freed *from*.

**We will now address the second part – Positive.**

I should now say something to the Positive part of our freedom, what we are freed to. I will name but a few particulars.

**First**, we are freed from a state of *wrath*, to a state of *mercy*, Eph 2.3-6.

**Secondly**, we are freed from a state of *condemnation*, to a state of *justification*, Rom 5.1, 9. Before you were under the condemnation *of the Law* because you had sinned, and *of the Gospel* because you didn't believe. But now there is no condemnation, not one condemnation, Rom 8.1. The Law cannot condemn you, because you have *appealed*. The Gospel cannot, because you believe God condemned sin in Christ, <sup>Rom 8.3</sup> that He might justify the sinner by Christ, and cast out condemnation forever; and so it will bear.

**Thirdly**, we are freed from a state of *enmity*, to a state of *friendship*. *And you who were enemies, God has reconciled*, Col 1.21.

**Fourthly**, we are freed from a state of *death*, to a state of *life*. *You who were dead in your trespasses and sins, He has made alive*, Col 2.13.

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<sup>1</sup> Garner: granary or storehouse.

**Fifthly**, we are freed from a state of *slavery*, to a state of *service*. *He has redeemed us from our enemies, that we might serve Him*, Luk 1.74. Therefore God discharged *the debt of sin*; that we might render him *the debt of service*. He freed us from our bonds of *misery*, that we might take on the engagements of *duty*. The Apostle infers this after all the benefits expressed by Christ. *Therefore brothers, we are debtors*, Rom 8.12. And whoever doesn't think service is his freedom, doesn't think sin is his bondage, and therefore he is still in bondage.

**Sixthly**, we are freed from a state of *bondage* — a spirit of *slavery* in service — to a spirit of *sonship* and *liberty* in service. As by his blood he redeemed us from being slaves, so by his obedience and Spirit, he has redeemed us to be sons. Now, you are drawn to service, not with *CORDS* of fear, but with the *BANDS* of love; not out of *compulsion* of conscience, but a *propensity* of Nature. As the *love* of God towards us was the spring of all His *actions* towards us, so our *love* towards God is the rise of all our *obedience* to Him.

**Seventhly**, in a word (for we cannot name all), we are freed from *death and hell*, to *life and Glory*. Heaven is your *portion*, your *inheritance*, your *Mansion-house*. It was *made* for you, and you for it. It was *prepared* for you, and you for it; you are *vessels prepared for glory*, Rom 9.23. And this is called the *glorious liberty of the sons of God*, Rom 8.21.

To tell you what you are freed from, and what you shall enjoy hereafter — to take you to the top of Nebo, and show you all this Canaan <sup>Deu 34.1</sup> — would make you willing to lay down your bodies there, and to go enjoy it. I say, to open this privilege a little, which is still far above man to do — *Eye has not seen, no ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God has reserved for us*, 1Cor 2.9 — and to see all that is spoken of Grace, and therefore what is Glory — if we could but *begin* to open this to you, it would be just enough to put you up to heaven while you are here upon earth.

It is called the *New Jerusalem, Glory, our Master's Joy, our Father's House, Kingdom, Kingdom of Glory, Heaven, Light, Life, Eternal life*. Look at but that one place, 2Cor 4.17, *For our light afflictions which are but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*. It is one of the nearest expressions we have of glory, the weight of glory, exceeding weight of glory, more exceeding weight of glory, a far more exceeding weight of glory, indeed, a far more exceeding and *eternal* weight of glory — and this is the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

But we must close this, because I would not willingly keep you from that which is the chief thing I intended in the Discourse.

## The Application of this Freedom

Joh 8.36.

*If the Son therefore makes you free,  
you shall be free indeed.*

Thus, as briefly as the largeness and concerns of the subject would allow us, we have finished those three general points which we proposed in the handling of this Doctrine (the *nature*, *quality*, and *parts* of Christian freedom). I would now come to the *application* of what I have said. And the largeness of the subject would afford much for comfort and for caution — for the direction and encouragement of the people of God. But I have other work to do first.

This text, Joh 8.36, is the main basis upon which this Doctrine of Christian Freedom is built. And in this regard, many have endeavored to build their own superstructures on hay and stubble, which the foundation will never bear. I say, in this regard, there are so many opinions which plead patronage from this Doctrine, that I conceive it is my great work to vindicate so excellent a Doctrine as this, of Christian Freedom, from those false (if I may say, *licentious*) doctrines which are fastened and fathered upon it. And also to show you that neither this Doctrine, nor yet this text, will countenance or contribute any strength to those positions and opinions which they would seem to deduce from, and build upon it.

The work is great, for I am to deal with the greatest *knots* in the practical part of Divinity. And men's judgments are various. Scripture is pleaded on all hands. The more difficult the work, the greater the need of your prayers, that the Father of Light would go before us, and by His own light, lead and guide us *into the ways of all truth*.<sup>Joh 16.13</sup>

In confidence of this, we will venture to launch into these deeps, and fall to the examination and trial of those doctrines which are deduced from, and would seem to be built upon this text.

The first doctrine and the main one that they would seem to build upon this text, is that *believers are freed from the Law*.<sup>1</sup> And this will be the first Query we will propound and examine.

**Query 1.** *Whether this is any part of our freedom by Christ: to be freed from the Law?* I set it down in this largeness and width, but I will gradually fall into the closer handling of it.

**Ans.** For the answer to this in general, as it is propounded, we must confess that we are not without some places in Scripture which declare the law to be *abrogated*.<sup>2</sup> Nor again, are we without some that speak of it as *yet in force*. We will give you a taste of some of them.

### 1. Scripture: Is the Law Abrogated?

We will begin with those texts that seem to speak of its abrogation.

Jer 31.31-33, *Behold, the days come, says the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, <sup>32</sup> Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which my covenant they broke, although I was a husband to them, says the Lord. <sup>33</sup> But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, says the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

Rom 7.1-3, *Do you not know, brothers (for I speak to those who know the Lord), how the Lord has dominion over a man as long as he lives? <sup>2</sup> For the woman which has a husband, is bound by the law to husband so long as he lives; but if her husband is dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.<sup>3</sup> So then, if while her husband lives, she is married to another man, she*

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<sup>1</sup> Bolton has said that we're freed from the Law as a Covenant of life and death (*works*), but not as a Rule of life.

<sup>2</sup> *Abrogated*: that is, abolished or revoked.

*shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband is dead, she is free from that law, so that she is not an adulteress, though she is married to another man.*

And that the Apostle is speaking of the *Moral Law* here, is evident from verse 3. And to prove that we are freed from it, see verse 6, etc. <sup>1</sup> See also,

Rom 6.14, *Do not let sin reign, for you are not under the law.*

Gal 3.19, 24, *The law was added, because of transgression till the Seed came. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*

Gal 4.4-5, *Christ was made under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law, etc.*

Rom 8.2, *For the law of the spirit of life has made me free from the law of sin and death, etc.*

Gal 5.18, *But if you are led by the Spirit, you are no longer under the Law.*

Rom 10.4, *Christ is the end of the Law, etc.*

1Tim 1.8-9, *The law is good if used lawfully; but the law is not made for the righteous, etc.*

So that, you see there seems to be a great deal of strength in the Scripture to prove the abrogation of the Law, that we are dead to the Law, freed from the Law, no longer under the Law. These Scriptures we will deal with afterwards. For the present, I only name them to let you see the strength which the Scriptures seem to hold out for the first opinion, the abrogation of the Law.

## **2. Scripture: Is the Law still in force?**

Now secondly, there are some Scriptures, again, which seem to uphold the Law, and say that the Law is still in force. I say, some which seem to speak to the *obligation* of it, just as the others spoke to the *abrogation* of it.

Rom 3.31, *Do we make void the Law through faith? God forbid! Indeed, we establish the Law.*

This seems to be contrary to the former. The other seems to speak of the abrogation, and this of the establishment and obligation of the Law. So,

Mat 5.17, *Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law, till all is fulfilled, etc.*

Upon these various texts, men have grounded their variety of opinions for the Abrogation of, and our Obligation to the Law. There is no question but that Scripture speaks truth in both; they are the words of truth; and though they seems here to be like the accusers of Christ, one never speaks like the other, yet if we were able to find the meaning, we would find them to be like Nathan and Bathsheba, both saying the same things. <sup>1</sup>Kng 1.11-14

Now, for finding out the truth under these seeming contrarieties, and for the answer to the Query, lest we beat the air and spend our breath to no purpose, it will be necessary to ask two things.

1) What is meant by the Law?

2) In what senses is this word used in Scripture?

And when this is done, a way will be opened to clarifying the truth, and answering the Queries.

### **1) What is meant by this word Law?**

Passing by others, the word which is frequently used for the *Law* in the Old Testament, is *Torah*. This is derived from another word which signifies *to throw darts*. And a second signification is to teach, to instruct, to admonish. And so, it is used for any doctrine or instruction which teaches, informs, or directs us, as in Pro 13.14: *The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the*

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<sup>1</sup> Rom 7:6 But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

*snare of death*. Here, *Law* is taken in a large sense, for any doctrine or direction which proceeds from the wise. So it is in Pro 3.1, and 4.2. <sup>1</sup>

In the New Testament, the word *Law* is derived from another word which means to distribute; because the Law distributes, or renders to God and man their due.

In brief, this word *Law*, in its natural signification, both in the Old and New Testaments, signifies any doctrine, instruction, law, ordinance, or statute, divine or human, which teaches, directs, commands, or binds men to *any duty* which they owe to God or man. So much for the first.

## **2) In what senses is this word Law used?**

I won't trouble you with all the ways it is accepted. I will only name some of the chief ones.

1) It is sometimes taken for the Scriptures of the Old Testament, the Books of Moses, Psalms, and Prophets. This is how the Jews understood it in Joh 12.34, *We have heard out of the Law, that Christ abides forever*. So too in Joh 15.25, *This comes to pass, that the word might be fulfilled which was written in their Law, They hated me without a cause* (Psa 35.19). You have the same in 1Cor 14.21, where the Apostle, repeating the words of Isaiah 28.11, says *it is written in the Law*.

2) It is sometimes taken for the whole Word of God, Promises, and Precepts. Psa 19.7, *The Law of God is perfect, converting the soul*. You know that *conversion* speaks of the Promise; neither justification nor sanctification are the fruits of the Law alone. The Law *commands*, but it gives no *Grace*. So that, either the Law means the *Promise* too, or else conversion does not mean *regeneration*.

3) It is sometimes taken for the five books of Moses. Gal 3.21, *If there had been a Law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the Law*. Joh 1.45, *We found him of whom Moses wrote in the Law*. Luk 24.44, *All must be fulfilled that is written in the Law of Moses* — meaning the five books of Moses, Gal 4.21. <sup>2</sup>

4) It is taken for the Pedagogy of Moses in his four last Books. Joh 5.46, *Had you believed Moses, you would have believed me; for he wrote of me*. Josh 1.7-8. <sup>3</sup>

5) Sometimes for the *Moral Law* alone, the *Decalogue*, Rom 7.7, 14, 21. <sup>4</sup>

6) Sometimes for the *Ceremonial Law*, Luk 16.16. <sup>5</sup>

7) Sometimes for all the Laws: Moral, Ceremonial, and Judicial.<sup>6</sup> Joh 1.17. *The Law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ*. Grace is in opposition to the *Moral Law*; Truth in opposition to the *Ceremonial Law*, which was but a shadow of Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> Pro 3:1 My son, do not forget my law, But let your heart keep my commands. Pro 4:2 For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law.

<sup>2</sup> Gal 4:21 Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?

<sup>3</sup> Jos 1:7 "Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. <sup>8</sup> This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it," etc.

<sup>4</sup> *That is, the Ten Commandments*. Rom 7:7 What shall we say then? *Is the law sin?* Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet." Rom 7:14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. Rom 7:21 I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good.

<sup>5</sup> Luk 16:16 "The law and the prophets *were* until John.

<sup>6</sup> *Judicial* meaning *Civil Law*.

Now, the controversy lies in this last one. The law is taken for the Moral, Judicial, *and* Ceremonial Law. And yet in two of them, we find clearer agreement; the great difficulty concerns the *Moral*.

**First**, for the *Ceremonial* Law. This was an appendix to the first Tablet of the Moral Law. It is an Ordinance containing precepts of worship for the Jews when they were in their infancy. And that was,

- 1) To keep them under hope.
- 2) To preserve them from will-worship.
- 3) To be a wall of separation between them and the Gentiles.

And all agree that this Law is abrogated both in truth and in fact.

**Secondly**, for the *Judicial* Law. This was an appendix to the second Tablet; it was an Ordinance containing precepts concerning the government of the people in *Civil* things.

- 1) That there might a rule of common and public *equity*.
- 2) That they might be *distinguished* from others.
- 3) That the government of Christ might be typified.

And so far as this was typical of Christ, so far it ceased. But what is of common and general equity still remains in force. It is a maxim, *Those judgments which are common and natural, are moral and perpetual*. But we find few dissenters in these two. All the controversy will be in the third.

**Thirdly**, for the *Moral* Law. This is scattered throughout the whole Bible, and summed up in the Decalogue. For substance, it contains those things which are good and holy, and agreeable to the will of God, being the *image* of the Divine will, a *beam* of His holiness — *the sum of which is love to God, love to man*.

## 1. Is Christian Freedom, Freedom from the Moral Law?

And now, here is one of the great disputes these days: Whether this Law is abrogated; or to hold to the Query, *Whether believers are freed from the Moral Law*. All agree that we are freed from the curses and maledictions; from the indictments and accusations; from the coactions and irritations, etc., and other particulars which we named before. But the question is, if you would have it in plain terms:

### **Query 1. Are believers freed from obedience to the Moral Law; or from the Moral Law as a Rule of obedience?**

There are some who positively or peremptorily affirm that we are freed from the Law as a *Rule*, and we are not, since Christ, tied to the obedience of it.

Others say it still remains in force as a Rule of Obedience, though it is *abolished* in other respects. We are still under the *conduct* and commands of the Law, though not under the *curses* and penalties of it.

Others say, again, that we are freed from the law as given by *Moses*, and are only tied to the obedience of it as it is given by *Christ*. And though they are subject to those commands, and that Law which Moses gave, yet not as he gave it, but as Christ renews it; and as it comes out of the hand, and from the authority of Christ. Joh 13.34, *A new commandment I give you, that you love one another*. This is a commandment, for Christ is both a Savior and a Lord; and it is a new one — not that it didn't exist before; but because it is now *renewed*, and we have it immediately from the hands of Christ. I will not dislike this much; I acknowledge the Moral Law as a Rule of obedience and of Christian walking; and there will be no falling out, whether you take it as promulgated by Moses, or as handed to you and renewed by Christ.

Indeed, the Law as it is considered as a *Rule*, can no more be *abolished* or changed, than the nature of good and evil can be abolished and changed. The substance of the Law is the sum of doctrine concerning *piety* towards God, *charity* towards our neighbors, *temperance* and sobriety towards ourselves. And for the substance of it, it is Moral and Eternal, and cannot be abrogated. We grant the circumstances, that they were but temporary and changeable, and we now have nothing to do with the *Promulgator*, Moses; nor the *place*, Mount Sinai; nor the *time*, fifty days after they came out of Egypt; nor yet that it was *written* on Tablets of stone, *delivered* with thunder and lightning, etc. We don't look to *Sinai* the hill of bondage, but to *Zion* the mountain of Grace. And we take the Law as the Image of the divine Will of God, which we desire to obey, but from which we do not expect life and favor, nor fear death and rigor.

And this, I conceive, is the concurrent opinion of all Divines. The Law is *abrogated* in respect to its power to justify or condemn; but it still remains in force to direct us in our *lives*. It condemns sin in the faithful, though it cannot condemn the faithful for sin. Far be that profane opinion from us, to take away the Law as a Rule, which is an *inflexible* rule of living. By teaching, admonishing, chiding, and reproving, it prepares us for every good work, as Calvin says.

The Law is void for its *damnatory* power, not its *directory* power; we are not under its *curse*, but we are still under its *commands*.

Another. The *Moral* Law is perpetual and *immutable*. This is an everlasting truth, that the creature is bound to worship and *obey* his Creator; and he is bound all the more, as he has received greater benefits. We confess that, to be free from obedience, is to be servants to sin. <sup>Rom 6.16</sup> But we will speak more largely to these things in the following discourse.

### **Two Propositions Opposing Abrogation of the Moral Law**

And therefore, against that opinion which holds forth the abrogation of the *Moral* Law, and says that we are freed from obedience to it, I will lay down and endeavor to make good these *two propositions*, which will serve to fully answer the Query, and *refute* it. The propositions are these.

1. That the Law, for the substance of it (for we don't speak of its circumstances and accessories) remains as a Rule of walking for the people of God.
2. That there was no end or use for which the Law was given, that might not be consistent with Grace, and serviceable to the advancement of the Covenant of Grace.

If these two can be made good, those doctrines of the abrogation of the Moral Law, and freedom from the Moral Law, will fall to the ground. We will begin with the first.

### **1. The Moral Law remains in force as a Rule of walking.**

The Law, in the substance of it, remains in force as a rule of walking for the people of God. I will not need to stay long on this, for the second position being made good, holds forth and establishes this also. By *the Law*, you know is meant the *Moral Law*, comprehended in the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments. By the *substance* of it, I mean the things commanded and forbidden, which are morally good and evil, and cannot be changed or abolished. For what is the law in the substance of it, but that law of nature engraved in the heart of man in Innocency? <sup>1</sup> And what was that, but the *express Idea*, or representation of God's own image? It is a beam of His own holiness, which cannot be changed or abolished, any more than the nature of good and evil. And I am now to prove that the Law, thus considered in the substance of it, remains an unchangeable *Rule* of walking for believers.

In this proof, to say nothing of single authorities which might be alleged, almost as many as men, we have a *cloud* of witnesses if we look at the concordant Confessions of Christian and Reformed Churches. The Swiss Church has this in its **Helvetic** Confession: *Thus far the Law of God is abrogated, in that it does not have power to condemn believers, etc. Notwithstanding, we do not disdainingly reject the law, but condemn as heresies those which are taught against the Law, that it is not a rule of walking.* <sup>2</sup>

The **French** Church has this: *We believe all the figures of the law to be taken away by the coming of Christ, although the truth and substance of them continue to us in Him, and are fulfilled to us in Him; but the doctrine of the Law is used in them both to confirm our life; and also that we may be more confirmed in the Promises of the Gospel.* <sup>3</sup> And the Belgic Confession is agreeable to this. <sup>4</sup>

The Church of **Wittenberg**: *We acknowledge the Law of God, whose abridgement is in the Decalogue, to commend the best, most just and perfect works, and man to be bound to obey the moral precepts of the Decalogue. Neither are those precepts which are contained in the Apostles' writing a new law, but are branches of the old Law. Another: It is needful to teach men that they must not only obey the Law, but also how this obedience pleases God.*

The **Scottish** Church: *We do not think we are so free by liberty, as if we owed no obedience to the Law; we confess the contrary.* <sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Innocency*: the state of Adam in the Garden, prior to the fall.

<sup>2</sup> **Helvetic Confession** 1556, *Article 12: How far the law is abrogated*. The law of God is therefore abrogated to the extent that it no longer condemns us, nor works wrath in us. For we are under grace and not under the law. Moreover, Christ has fulfilled all the figures of the law. Hence, with the coming of the body, the shadows ceased, so that in Christ we now have the truth and all fulness. But yet we do not on that account contemptuously reject the law.

<sup>3</sup> **French Confession** 1559, *Article 23*.

<sup>4</sup> **Belgic Confession**, *Article 25: The Fulfillment of the Law* — We believe that the ceremonies and symbols of the law have ended with the coming of Christ, and that all foreshadowings have come to an end, so that the use of them ought to be abolished among Christians. Yet the truth and substance of these things remain for us in Jesus Christ, in whom they have been fulfilled. Nevertheless, we continue to use the witnesses drawn from the law and prophets to confirm us in the gospel and to regulate our lives with full integrity for the glory of God, according to his will.

<sup>5</sup> **Scottish Confession** 1560, *Article 15*.



And **our Church** holds out the same: *Although the Law given of God by Moses, in regard to the Rites and Ceremonies, does not bind Christians, neither is any, although a Christian, loosed from obedience to the commandments which are called moral.*<sup>1</sup>

To these might be added many more. But it may be that all these are of no authority; they have no power with them. For indeed, if these things are not evinced out of the word of God, they will have no power with us. We reverence them and their writings, but we must not *jurare in verba* (swear by their words) — nor build our faith upon them as a sure foundation. This is against our Christian liberty, to be enslaved to the judgements of any. *To the Law and the Testimony, if they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.* Isa 8.20

We will therefore give you some proofs out of the Word, and then draw them into arguments, or draw arguments from them. Mat 5.17-18, *Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets. I have not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall not pass from the Law till all is fulfilled.* The place seems to be very full and very plain for the continuance of, and our obligation to the Law. And yet there are corrupt readings of these words, and sinister interpretations. Some would have it understood to mean that Christ would not abolish the Law till he had fulfilled it. Indeed, he was *the end of the law*, as the Apostle says in Rom 10.4 — but it is *finis perficiens, non interficiens* — the perfecting and consummating end, not the destroying and abolishing end of it. The Law had an end of perfection and consummation in Christ, not an end of destruction and abolition. You see here that Christ gives a stricter exposition of the law, and vindicates it from the corrupt glosses of the Pharisees. This surely speaks to the continuance, not to the abrogation of it. And agreeable to this place, is that of the Apostle, which uses the same language. Rom 3.31, *Do we make void the Law through Faith? God forbid! Indeed, we establish the Law.* How? Not for justification, for so Faith makes it void; but as a rule of obedience, and so Faith will establish it. The Apostle tells us *that the Law is holy, just, and good*, and he delighted in the Law of God, etc., Rom 7.12, 22. Indeed, *with his mind he served the Law of God*, Rom 7.25. So Jas 2.8, *If you fulfill the royal law of liberty, you do well.* In verse 11 he shows what that law was: the Decalogue of the Moral Law. 1Joh 2.4, *He that says I know Him and does not keep His commandments is a liar.* 1Joh 3.4, *Sin is the transgression of the Law.*

Now then, since Christ, who is the best expounder of the Law, so largely strengthens and confirms the Law — witness his Sermon on the Mount, and Mar 10.19<sup>2</sup> — since faith does not supplant, but strengthens the law; since the Apostle so often presses and urges the duties commanded in the law; since Paul acknowledges he served the law of God in his mind, and that he was under the law to Christ, 1Cor 9.21, I may warrantably conclude this: *That the Law, for the substance of it, still remains a Rule of life for the people of God.* But to all this, give me leave to use these arguments.

ARGUMENT 1 – IF THE LAW WAS EVER A RULE OF WALKING, IT IS *STILL* A RULE.

**Arg. 1.** If *ever* the law was a Rule of walking, then it is *still* a rule of walking. This is clear: either it is still a rule, or we must show some time when it was abrogated. But there can be no time shown in which it was abrogated. *Ergo*,

If it was any time, it was in the time of the Gospel, by Christ and his Apostles; but it was not abrogated by Christ or his Apostles; therefore, it was not in the time of the Gospel.

If Christ and his Apostles commanded the same things which the law requires; and if they forbid and condemned the same things that the Law forbids and condemns; then they did not abrogate the Law, but strengthened and confirmed it, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> **The Thirty-Nine Articles** 1571, Article 7.

<sup>2</sup> Mar 10.19 “You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness,’ ‘Do not defraud,’ ‘Honor your father and your mother.’”

And they did this, as did Christ, as you can see in Mat 5.19, *He that breaks the least of these commandments and teaches men to do so, shall be least in the kingdom of heaven; but he that teaches and observes them, shall be called — not legal preachers — but great in the kingdom of heaven.*

Now, in that Christ himself expounded and established the Law by his Word and Authority, as in Matthew chapters 5-7, it shows us the continuance of the Law. For had it been utterly abolished, he would rather have declared against it, or allowed it to die of itself. He would not have vindicated it, and restored it to its purity, from the glosses of the Pharisees. Such doings clearly speak to the continuance of, and our obligation to the Law.

As with Christ, so with the Apostles. Instead of abolishing, they established it in their doctrine, frequently urging the duties of the law to the churches and people of God. Rom 12.19, *Dearly beloved, do not avenge yourselves. Why? For it is written, Vengeance is mine.* Also Rom 13.8-10. There the Apostle repeats the Commandments of the second tablet — not to repeal or reverse any, but to confirm them as a Rule of walking for the Saints. And he comprehends them all in this: *You shall love your neighbor as yourself, for love is the fulfilling of the Law.* So also 1The 4.3, 6, *This is the will of God, that you abstain from fornication; that no man go beyond and defraud his brother; because the Lord is the avenger of all such.* The same is found in Eph 6.1, *Children, obey your parents.* And he presses this duty from authority of the precept, and persuades us to it from the graciousness of the promise: *for this is the first commandment with promise* (v. 2). And just as full and plain is that saying of the Apostle in Rom 3.31, *Do we abrogate the Law? No, we establish it by faith.* Though it carries another sense, yet it bears this one also, that though we set aside the law as a point of *justification*, yet we establish it as rule of Christian conduct.

And there are some learned and holy divines who tell us that those threats and comminations <sup>1</sup> which we have in the Gospel — e.g., Mat 3.10, *The ax is laid to the root of the tree; every tree which does not produce good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire;* Mat 5.22, *Whoever says to his brother, You fool, shall be in danger of hellfire;* and in other places — they tell us that the comminations and threatenings in the New Testament are not of the *nature* of the Gospel, but are the *confirmation* of the Law; they plainly demonstrate to us the continuance of the law under Grace. You may read the author in the place cited, <sup>2</sup> where he distinguishes the Gospel into the *Doctrine* of the Gospel, and the *Grace* of the Gospel — into the preaching of the Gospel by Christ and the Apostles, and the law of faith or the spirit of life in Christ. The preaching or doctrine of the Gospel, he tells us, contains two things: *first*, the promise of Grace; and *secondly*, the confirmation of the law. He shows that all those comminations and threats we read of in the New Testament, are in no way of the nature of the *Gospel*, properly called. Rather, they are the confirmation of the *Law*, and declare that the continuance of it now under the Gospel, is an exact rule of a Christian's walk and obedience.

This much might satisfy to clear the First Argument, indeed, the confirmation of the proposition itself, if our adversaries would be satisfied. We will hear what they say, therefore, and answer it; and then proceed to the rest of the arguments.

**Objection.** Some say, Though it is a rule, yet it is a rule at our liberty whether to obey it or not. It is not a *binding* rule.

And there are several opinions about this.

1. Some say that it binds us no further than as we are creatures — not as we are *Christians*, but as we are *creatures*. But why then are they not bound? I hope they are creatures as well as Christians.

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<sup>1</sup> *Commination*: a threat of divine punishment or vengeance.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Chamier, French Protestant (1565-1621).

2. Others say it binds the *flesh*, but not the *spirit*; it binds the unregenerate part, but not the regenerate to obedience, for that is free.<sup>1</sup> Here a dangerous gap is opened to all licentiousness: witness the opinions of David George,<sup>2</sup> and the Valentinians.<sup>3</sup>

3. Others say that it is not a binding rule at all; believers are no more under the law than England is under the laws of Spain — we are no more bound to obedience to the Law, than any man is bound to obedience of the laws of another commonwealth. It would overthrow Christian liberty.

Now, if this is true, it strikes down all. If it is rule, but not a *binding* rule (a rule binding us to obedience), it will be of little use. And therefore, we will remove this cavil before we go any further, and show you that the Law is a binding Rule, and that it binds Christians, not as *men*, but as *Christians*. And I will produce but five Arguments for the proof of this. They are managed by another; I will only strengthen them with some additions.

### ***Five Arguments for the Law as a Binding Rule***

1. That which being observed causes the consciences of regenerate men to *excuse* them, or being transgressed *accuses* them, binds the conscience; for that is what it means to bind the conscience. And the Law of God indeed causes the consciences of the regenerate to *excuse* if observed, and to *accuse* if transgressed. *Ergo*, the Law binds the conscience.

2. That which has power to say to the conscience of the regenerate Christian, this ought to be done, and that ought *not* to be done, binds the conscience. And indeed, the Law of God has this power, etc. *Ergo*, even though it cannot say this should not be done on pain of *damnation*, or on pain of the *curse*; or this should be done in reference to justification, or life, etc. — it still shows it should to be done as it is good and pleasing to God; and it should not be done, as it is displeasing to Him.

3. That authority by which the Apostles urged Christians to their duty, binds the conscience to obedience. And indeed the Apostles used the authority of the Law to provoke Christians to do their duty. *Ergo*... Eph 6.1-2, *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right; honor your father and your mother, etc.*

4. If the Law of God does *not* bind the conscience of a regenerate man to obedience, then whatever he does which is commanded in the Law, he does *more than* his duty, and so he *merits*; and if he is guilty of *will-worship*, he *sins*. Col 2.23 But in truth, if he is bound in obedience to the Law, then he is not guilty of will-worship, nor does he merit. Luk 17.10, *When you have done all that is commanded, say that you are unprofitable servants; we have done what it was our duty to do.*

5. Either the Law binds the conscience of Christians to obedience, or else they do not sin in breaching it. But indeed, they do sin in breaching it. 1Joh 3.4, *Sin is the transgression of the Law*. *Ergo*, the transgression of the Law is sin. Or take it this way:

If Christians are bound not to sin, then they are bound to keep the law. And indeed, Christians are bound not to sin. *Ergo*... I know the consequent will be denied, that although Christians are bound not to sin, it does not follow that they are bound to keep the Law. I will prove it thus:

If whoever breaks the Law sins, then Christians are bound, if not to sin, then to keep the Law. And whoever breaks the Law *does* sin. So the Apostle says, 1Joh 3.4, *Sin is the transgression of the Law*. *Ergo*...

And now being driven against the wall, they have no way to maintain the former error, except by another. And that is to tell us plainly that believers do not sin: be in Christ, and sin if you can. But

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<sup>1</sup> *Regenerate*: made alive (enabled) by the Spirit; born again (Joh 3.7; 1Pet 1.17, 23).

<sup>2</sup> Referring to the Familist movement, or Family of Love, founded in the Netherlands by David George (c. 1540).

<sup>3</sup> Valentinians were Gnostics of the 2nd century; they claimed the God of the Old Testament was the *Demiurge*, the imperfect creator of the material world; and so they preached Platonic *dualism*.

you see that the Apostle tells them they sin in saying so, 1Joh 1.8, *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us*. Indeed, *we make Him a liar* (v. 10). ‘If we say’ — means it applies to Apostles as well as others. For there is no man who does not sin, except Christ, Joh 8.46. And *we all offend in many things*, Jas 3.2.

But if this does not hold, then they say that God sees no sin in those who are believers. But what is this? It is *one* thing to sin, and *another* for God not to see sin. Indeed, He does not see sin either to condemn believers for sin, nor to approve or allow sin in believers. ‘He does not see sin;’ that is, He will not see sin to *impute* it to us, when we are in Christ.

But if this will not hold, they say that, though they sin, and though God sees it (for He sees all and brings all to judgment), they say God is *not displeased* with the sins of believers. Certainly perfect good must forever hate that which is perfect evil; and the nearer it is to Him, the more God hates it. In a *wicked* man, God hates both sin and sinner; but here, in *believers*, He hates the sin, though He pities and loves the poor sinner, etc. He is *displeased* with sin, even though He pardons sin in Christ.

But we will follow this no longer. This much will suffice for the proof and vindication of the first Argument.

ARGUMENT 2 – IF SINS ARE STILL SINS, THE LAW IS STILL IN FORCE AS A RULE.

**Arg. 2.** If the same sins are condemned and forbidden *after* Christ, which were sins *before* Christ, then the Law is still in force with respect to a Rule of obedience. And indeed, the same sins are still forbidden, etc. That which was sin *then*, is sin *now*. I speak of sin against the Moral Law, and therefore the Law is still in force for believers, as a *Rule* of obedience.

ARGUMENT 3 – IF THE SAME DUTIES APPLY TO BELIEVERS, THE LAW REMAINS A RULE

**Arg. 3.** If the same duties which were enjoined in the *Law*, are commanded of believers under the *Gospel*, then the Law still remains a Rule of direction and obedience, etc. Indeed, there are the same duties commanded under the Gospel, which were enjoined in the Law, as I have shown at large. Rom 13.9-10, 1Pet 2.17, To love God, fear God, etc. Obedience to parents, Eph 6.1. And therefore the Law still remains a Rule of obedience under the Gospel.

ARGUMENT 4 – IF THE LAW IS PART OF OUR HOLINESS, THE LAW IS STILL IN FORCE.

**Arg. 4.** If the things commanded in the Law are part of our holiness, and conformity to God, and this conformity to the Law is required of us, then the Law is still in force. Indeed, the things commanded are part of our holiness, and conformity to the Law is required of us. *Ergo...*

I suppose it is granted that the things commanded of us are part of our holiness; and it is easy to prove that this conformity to the Law is required of us. What we are to aspire to, and labor and endeavor after, both in our affections and actions — our principles and practices — *that* surely is required of us. But indeed we are to thus aspire to this conformity to the Law of God, and endeavor after it in our affections and actions. *Ergo...*

1. That we are to aspire to it in our affections, take but Rom 7.22, 25, where the Apostle shows you that he delights in the Law of God; and he serves the Law in his mind. Indeed, it was his purpose, aim, desire, and endeavor of heart to be made conformable to that Law, which he says is *holy, just, and good* (v. 12). Though he fell short of it, yet he aspired after it; this shows that we are to aspire to it in our affections.

2. And it is just as plain that we are to endeavor after conformity to it in our actions. Take them both together. Psal 119.4-6, *You have commanded us to keep your precepts diligently. Oh that my ways were directed to keep your statutes. Then I will not be ashamed when I have respect for all Your commandments*. He had respect for them in his heart and affections; and he endeavors after

conformity to them in life and actions. And thus it was his duty, because God commanded it. *You have commanded us to keep Your precepts. Oh that my heart were directed to keep Your statutes.*

ARGUMENT 5 – THE LAW BEING HOLY, JUST, AND GOOD, WE CANNOT BE FREED FROM IT.

**Arg. 5.** To be freed from obedience to the Law cannot be part of our freedom by Christ, because the Law is holy, just, and good. And surely it is not part of our freedom to be freed from what is holy, just, and good. I will give it to you in the following form.

That which is not part of our bondage, cannot be part of our freedom. But obedience and subjection to the Moral Law was never part of our *bondage*, in that sense which I have shown. Ergo, it cannot be part of our *freedom*.

I will prove that it was never part of our bondage.

That which is part of our glory, cannot be part of our bondage. Obedience and conformity to the Law, in both principle and practice, are part of our glory. *Ergo*, they cannot be part of our bondage.

Again, that which is part of our freedom, cannot be said to be part of our bondage. But to obey the Law is part of our freedom, as you read in the first chapter of Luke, 1.74-75, *That being delivered from the hand of our enemies, we might serve Him in righteousness and holiness all the days of our life*. I will proceed no further with this. You see it plain enough, that the Law in the substance of it, remains a Rule of walking or of obedience, for those who are in Christ. We will give you two or three applications, and come to the Second Proposition.

#### APPLICATIONS

**1. Against the Papists** – This may then serve to blame the Papists for their unjust charge against us, that we make *this* a part of our Christian liberty: to be exempted from all law; to live as we please; and that we are not bound to the obedience of any law in conscience before God. We appeal to all Reformed Churches in the Christian world, whether any of them ever held such an opinion as this, it is the concurrent opinion of all Reformed Churches, that Christians are subject to the rule and the direction, to the authority and obligation, of the Moral Law.

We preach obedience to the Law, but not as the Papists do. They preach obedience to justification, and we preach justification that we may obey.

We cry down works in opposition to Grace in justification; and we cry up obedience as the fruits of Grace in sanctification. Whoever doesn't walk in obedience, is a stranger to Christ; and whoever rests in his obedience, doesn't know Christ. Indeed, many are still too much like the Jews. God set up Law as a Rule of *walking*, and they looked for *justification* by it. Such poor men are like oxen in the yoke; they draw, and toil, and spend their strength (who does more than those who think to merit by it). And when they have done their labor, they are fattened up for slaughter. So these, when they have endeavored hard after their own righteousness, perish in their just condemnation. Luther fitly calls these men the *devil's martyrs*. They suffer much, and take great pains to go to hell. The Apostle tells them what to expect. Gal 3.10, *Those who under the works of the Law, are under its curse* (that is, who are under the works of the Law for justification). And he gives the reason: because *cursed is whoever doesn't do all things written in the Book of the Law*.

Those men seek life in death, who seek righteousness in sin. And alas, we are all too apt to do it. It is hard to do *all* righteousness and rest in *none*; hard to be *in duties* in respect to performance, and *out of duties* in respect to dependence. We are apt to weave a web of righteousness of our own; to spin a thread of our own by which to climb to heaven. Otherwise, what need is there for so many exhortations and admonitions to do all righteousness, but rest in none? The Scripture does not use beetles to kill flies; nor cut straws with wedges of iron; nor spend many admonitions and exhortations where there is no need.

Alas, there are thousands in the world who make a Christ of their works; and there is their undoing. They look for righteousness and acceptance more in the *Precept* than in the *Promise*, in the *Law* than in the *Gospel*, in *working* than in *believing*, and so they miscarry. And there is some touch of this in all of us. Otherwise we wouldn't be so up and down in our comforts and believing as we still are — so cast down with every weakness. We should be *all* in Christ in our weak performances, and *nothing* in ourselves in our strong performances.

**2. Against the Antinomians.** This blames those who are called *antinomians*. As the Papists do, antinomians set up the Law for *Justification*, and so they cry down the Law for *Sanctification*. We say that we are freed from the *curses*; they would have us freed from the *conduct*, from the commands of the Law. We say we are freed from the *penalties*; but they would abolish the *Precepts*, etc. They tell us we make a false mixture of Christ and Moses, and that we mingle Law and Gospel. Let understanding men judge how unjustly this charge is made against us. We cry down the Law in point of *Justification*; but we set it up as a Rule of *Sanctification*. The Law sends us to the Gospel, that we may be justified; and the Gospel sends us to the Law to inquire what our duty is, now that we are justified. Whatever they say of the Law, though they cast contempt and disgrace on it, and upon those who preach it, you see that for the substance of it, it is the image of God, a beam of His holiness. The things that are commanded and forbidden, are things that are *morally* and therefore *eternally* good and evil. Things that are *positively* good or evil, are alterable by the one who commanded them. But those things which are *morally* good or evil, God can no more alter them than He can make good evil, or evil good.

Whatever was morally good *then*, is morally good *now*, and to be pursued and followed. Whatever was morally evil then, is morally evil now, and to be shunned and avoided. We have a Gospel Rule which turns us to the obedience of the Law. You see the Rule in Phi 4.8, *Whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report — if there is any virtue, if there is any praise, think of these things*. And I hope the Law is among this number. The Apostle tells us that the Law is holy, just, and good; certainly there is nothing commanded that is not good. If we are to learn from the ant, the *pismire*, from brute beasts, from inanimate things, then certainly much more are we to learn from the Law, which is the image of God *in man*, and the will of God *for man*. We have nothing to do with Moses. Nor do we look to Sinai, the *hill* of bondage, but to Zion, the *mountain* of Grace. We take the Law to be the eternal Rule of God's will, and we desire to conform ourselves to it, and breathe out with David, *Oh that my ways were directed to keep Your statutes!* Certainly the Law and the Gospel help one another; *they lend one another the hand*.<sup>1</sup>

**The Law is subservient to the Gospel.** This is to convict and humble us. And the Gospel enables us to obey the Law. The Law sends us to the Gospel for Justification; the Gospel sends us to the Law to frame our conduct. And our obedience to the Law is nothing but the expression of our thankfulness to God, who has so freely justified us. Luk 1.74, *That being redeemed, we might serve Him without fear*. Though our service was not the motive or impulsive cause of God's redeeming us, yet it is the end of our redemption. The Apostle shows this at large in Romans chapter 6. And it is the *Application* he makes of the *Doctrine of Free Justification* in Rom 8.12, *Therefore, brothers, we are debtors*. If Christ has freed you from the penalties, how should you subject yourselves to the precepts? If He has delivered you from the curses, how should you study the commands? If He paid our debt of *sin*, certainly we owe a debt of *service*.

This was the great end of our redemption: he redeemed us from *bondage* to *freedom*, from *slavery* to *service*. That which Christ has redeemed us *to*, he cannot be said to redeem us *from*. And he has redeemed us *to* service; therefore he cannot be said to redeem us *from* service. Indeed, he has

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499-1562).

freed us from the *manner* of our obedience, but not from the *matter* of our obedience. We now obey, but it is from other *principles*, by other *strength*, and to other *ends*, than we obeyed before.

**The principles of obedience differ.** The principles of obedience before were *legal* and *servile*; now they are *filial* and *evangelical*. As the Law was *given with evangelical purposes*, so it is *kept with evangelical principles* — principles of Faith, Love, and Delight — which causes the soul to obey, and facilitates all this obedience. The Love of Christ *constrains* us, 2Cor 5.14; and yet the obedience is *free*. Love knows no difficulties; things that are impossible for others, are yet easy for those who love.

**The grounds of obedience differ.** Before the ground was *fear*; now it is *love*. The strength before was our own; now we have communion with the strength of Christ. Joh 3.21: our works are said to be *wrought in God* by union with Him, and by communion with Him — as we can do nothing without him, so we can do all things through Him who strengthens us. <sup>Phi 4.13</sup> And he has promised this strength. Deu 26.18, *The Lord has proclaimed that you are His people, as He promised; and that you should keep all His commandments*. He tells us in Isa 26.12, that *He works all our works in us, and for us* — all the required works of Grace *in us*, and of duty *for us*.

**The ends of obedience differ.** Before, the ends were for justification and life. Now they are for *other ends*: to glorify God, dignify the Gospel, declare our sincerity, express our thankfulness. Before, we obeyed only out of compulsion of conscience; now it is out of a propensity of nature which, so far as it works, it works to God — as naturally as stones fall downward, or sparks fly upward.

Thus you see how we preach the Law, not in *opposition*, but in *subordination* to the Gospel. This we will show at large afterward.

**3. All believers should judge from, and maintain the Law.** In the last place, let me exhort you all to judge about the Law rightly; and then let it be your care to maintain it. Don't let Moses take the place of Christ; and yet, make a right use of Moses. When works and obedience come in the right place, then it is holy, just, and good. But if we use it as our *life*, then we trample the blood of Christ underfoot, and make his life and death in vain. Let the servant follow the Master; let Moses follow Christ; let the Law follow Grace; let obedience follow faith; and then all will act out their proper and designed parts. You know what Zacharias says, Luk 1.74, *You were redeemed that you might serve*, that you might live to Him who died for you. Reason from mercy to *duty*, not from mercy to *liberty*. Oh beware that the great things of Christ don't make you careless! Take heed of abusing Mercy.

It would be a sad thing if we abused the Grace of Christ. The Justice of God prevails with others. Oh, but God would have His heart, His mercy, prevail with you. Rom 12.1, *I beseech you, through the mercies of God, offer up your souls and bodies a living sacrifice*. Saints' reasonings are from engagements of *mercy*, to enlargements in *duty*. 2Cor 7.1, *Having such precious promises, let us purge ourselves from all corruption of flesh and spirit*. None but venomous spirits will spider-like suck poison from such sweets, draw such consequents from mercy, as may be encouragements to sin. It would be a sad thing,

1. If we were slacker and more sluggish — if what should *quicken* our hands, *slackens* them — as when a man says in his heart, *Christ died; I need not pray so much; Christ has done all, therefore I need do nothing*. This should *strengthen*, but does it instead *weaken* your engagements? This should heighten, and does it *lessen* your engagements? This should quicken, and does it *deadens* your hearts? It should inflame, and does it *cool* your spirits? What a sad thing this is. But worse,

2. If from mercy, we were to draw arguments to sin. Will that which should be the greatest curb, become a spur? Rom 6.1, *Shall we sin because Grace abounds? There is mercy with You that you may be feared*, says the psalmist; <sup>Psa 130.4</sup> not that I may sin, but *serve*. You whom the Law has sent to the *Gospel*, let the Gospel send you back to the *Law*. Study now your duty. Abundance of mercy

calls for an abundance of duty. If God had not abounded in mercy, what would have become of us? And has He abounded in mercy? Oh, then let us abound in duty; obey for *God's* sake who gives His Son; for *Christ's* sake who has given himself, that you might give yourselves to God. Obey for *faith's* sake, which is dead without obedience. <sup>Jas 2.26</sup> It is the cry of faith, *Give me children, or I die.* <sup>Gen 30.1</sup> Obey for *profession's* sake; adorn the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

What a shame that it should be said of us, that faith cannot do what infidelity is able to do! What will Turks and Mohammedans say, *Ecce quales sunt qui Christum colunt!* 'Behold, these are the servants of the crucified God!' They profess Christ, and yet they will swear, and sin against Christ. What will Papists say? 'These are those who preach faith, yet are strangers to obedience, and live in sin.' Rom 8.4, *Let the righteousness of the Law be fulfilled in us, not walking after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* The Law is a Royal Law. Jas 2.8, *If you observe the royal law according to the Scripture, says James, you do well.* It is a *Royal Law*; live royally above the rank of men, in obedience. 2Cor 6.1, *Do not receive the Grace of God in vain.* If you don't receive it in vain, you will have *power* to will, and *power* to do; you will prize Grace, and walk thankfully. It was wittily said by someone, and there is some truth in it:

"Live as though there were no Gospel; die as though there were no Law; pass the time of this life in the wilderness of this world, under the conduct of Moses; but let none but Joshua bring you over to Canaan, the Promised Land." <sup>1</sup>

It agrees thus far with Scripture, that Moses was a man of the Law. He gave the Law, and he is often taken for the Law: Luk 16.29, *They have Moses and the Prophets.* Joh 5.45, *And there is one who will condemn you, even Moses, in whom you trust.* Joshua was a type of Christ; his name signifies as much. He was called *Jesus*, Heb 4.8. <sup>2</sup> *If Jesus* (that is, Joshua) *could have given them rest...* Moses must lead the children of Israel through the wilderness; but Joshua must bring them into Canaan. So while you are in the wilderness of this world, you must walk under the conduct of Moses; you must live in obedience to the Law. And yet it is not *Moses*, but *Joshua*, not *works* but *Faith*, not *obedience*, but *Christ*, that must bring you into Canaan. Do what you can while you *live*; but be sure to *die* upon Christ's account.

This much will serve for the first Proposition that *the substance of the Law is a Rule of obedience for the people of God, and that to which they are to confirm their lives and walk now, under the Gospel.*

And we have proved this by Scriptures, by a cloud of witnesses, the concordant testimony of some, and the might of all the Reformed Churches. We have strengthened this by many arguments, and given you some Applications of it.

## ***Second Proposition***

We have now come to the Second Proposition which we laid down in answer to the Query, *Are believers freed from obedience to the Moral Law; or from the Moral Law as a Rule of obedience?* It will be the knottier of the two. But if we are able to make it good, it will at once *vindicate* the Law, and strike down those many *erroneous* opinions that are afoot against it. The proposition is this:

### ***2. There was no end or use for the Law, which is inconsistent with Grace.***

There was no end or use for which the Law was given, that might not be consistent with Grace, and serviceable to the advancement of the Covenant of Grace.

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<sup>1</sup> Theodore Beza (1519-1605), *The Royal Law*.

<sup>2</sup> KJV; the Greek in all manuscripts is phonetically *Jesus* (Ἰησοῦς), not Joshua, as modern translations have it.



This I hope you will see made good; and then you will see *Gospel* in the *Law*, and that the *Law* is not what men make it out to be, opposite to the Gospel and Grace. Rather, it is consistent with Grace, and it is serviceable to the advancement of Grace.

Now, in prosecuting this, we will observe this method:

1. We will show you the chief and principal ends for which the *Law* was promulgated, or given.
2. We will show you how those ends may consist with Grace, and be serviceable to the advancement of the Covenant of Grace, and therefore may remain under Grace.
3. We will answer those objections which may be made against this proposition.
4. We will, in a few words, sum it all up in some brief applications.

#### 1. THE PRINCIPAL ENDS OF THE LAW

My first work is to sum up the chief and principal ends for which the *Law* was promulgated, or given. There were two main ends: 1. *Political*; and 2. *Theological*, or Divine.

1. The first, the **Political** use of it, the Apostle seems to hint at in 1Tim 1.8-9, *Knowing this, that the Law was not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient; for the ungodly and for sinners; for the unholy and profane; for murderers of fathers and mothers, and for manslayers.* That is, it was made for them, if not as their *Rule*, then as their *punishment*. This is the political use of the *Law*.

2. A second great end is **Theological**, or Divine. And the Divine end and use of the *Law* is two-fold.

- 1) In those who are *to be* justified.
- 2) In those who *are* justified.

1) In those who are *to be* justified (or the use the *Law* has in reference to *justification*).

First, it is to *reveal* sin.

Secondly, to *humble* them for sin; and by that, to drive them to Christ.

2) In those who *are* justified.

First, it is a doctrine to direct us to our duties.

Secondly, as a mirror to reveal our defects, so that we might be kept humble, and flee to Christ where there is mercy to cover, and Grace to cure all sin.

Thirdly, as a restrainer and corrector of sin.

Fourthly, as a reprover of sin, 2Tim 3.16.<sup>1</sup>

For the present, I will but expand somewhat on these principles and main ends for which the *Law* was promulgated.

**1. To restrain transgression;** to set bounds and banks to the cursed nature of fallen men, not only by revealing *sin*, but the *wrath of God* — tribulation and anguish for every soul who does evil (Rom 2.8-9).<sup>2</sup> We read in Gal 3.19 that *the Law was added because of transgression*. Jerome and Chrysostom understand this to be about the *restraint* of transgression. The *Law* may *restrain* sinners, though it cannot *renew* sinners; it may *inhibit* and *bridle* sin, though it cannot *heal* and *cure* it. Before God gave the *Law*, sin had a more perfect reign because of the darkness of men's understandings, and the security of their hearts.<sup>3</sup> Rom 5.13-14, *Death reigned*, and so sin, *from*

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<sup>1</sup> 2Tim 3:16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

<sup>2</sup> Rom 2:8-9 But to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness: indignation and wrath, <sup>9</sup> tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek;

<sup>3</sup> That is, having no law to reveal their sin and its penalty, they felt safe (secure) in their sinful conduct. Yet Scripture is clear, they were without excuse (Rom 1.20-2.3).

*Adam to Moses*, as the Apostle shows. And therefore God might give the Law to reveal not only that they sinned in those courses in which they walked, but to reveal to them also, that heavy wrath of God which they draw down upon themselves by sin. The Law might work so far as to restrain men in their course of sin, and to hinder sin so that it could not have so complete and uncontrolled a dominion and reign in the soul, even though it still reigned. For restraining Grace does not conquer sin, though it does suppress and keep it down. Yet sin would not have so full, so complete, so uncontrolled a dominion in the soul, for the sinner would be in fear; and that would serve to *restrain* men in the ways of sin, though not to *renew* the sinner.

If God had not given a severe and terrible law against sin, such is the vileness of men's spirits, that they would have acted out all villainy. The Devil would not only have *reigned*, but *raged* in all the sons of men. And therefore, as we do with mad beasts, wolves, or lions, etc., we bind them in chains, so that they may not do that mischief which their inclinations carry them to. So the Law chains up the wickedness of the hearts of men, that they dare not fulfill those lustful inclinations which are in their hearts to do.

And blessed be God that there is this fear upon the spirits of wicked men. Otherwise there would be no living in the world. One man would be a devil to another; every man would be a Cain to his brother, an Ammon to his sister, an Absalom to his father, a Saul to himself, a Judas to his master. For what one man does, all men would do, were it not for restraint upon their spirits. Naturally, sin is past both sense and shame. There would be no wall, no stay, no bank or bounds to sin. Every man would be like a devil to another, and therefore we have cause to bless God, that He has given a law to restrain transgressions — that if men will not be so *good* as they should be, yet they might be restrained, and not be so *bad* as they would be. Were it not for this, and that awe that God has cast upon the spirits of wicked men by the Law, there would be no safety: the fields, the streets, your houses, your beds, would have been filled with blood, uncleanness, murder, rape, incest, adultery, and all mischiefs.

Therefore, if there were no law, *You shall not murder*, men would make every passion a stab; if no law, *You shall not steal*, men would think theft, conspiracy, cheating, and oppression, to be good policy, and the best life would be *ex rapto vivere*, to live on other men's sweat; <sup>1</sup> if no law, *You shall not commit adultery*, men would defile their neighbor's bed, and commit all wickedness.

God has therefore given a law to set bounds and banks to defend us against the incursions and breaches that sin would make upon us. The One who sets bounds and banks to the raging Sea, which otherwise would overflow the land, also sets bounds and banks to men's sins and sinful affections. It is no less wonder that the deluge of lust and corruption in men doesn't overflow all banks, than that the Sea doesn't overflow us. But He that sets bounds to the one, also bounds and restrains the other. That's the first end or purpose of the Law.

**2. To reveal transgressions.** The Law was given to discover and reveal transgressions. And that, I conceive, is the proper meaning of Gal 3.19, *The Law was added, because of transgressions*; it is chiefly that the Law might be *instar speculi* (like a mirror), to reveal and discover sin. And so the Apostle says in Rom 7.7, *Is the Law sin? God forbid! No*, he says, *I would not have known lust, unless the Law had said, You shall not covet*. And the Apostle also seems to say this in Rom 5.20, *The Law entered that the offense might abound*; that is, that sin might appear exceedingly sinful.

This is another end, that God gave the Law to open, reveal, and convict the soul of sin. And this was with reference to the promise of grace and mercy. And therefore God gave the Law *after* the Promise, to reveal sin and to awaken the conscience, and to drive men out of themselves, and bring them over to Christ. Before He gave the Law, men were secure and careless; they didn't

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<sup>1</sup> Literally, *to live by rapine*: to despoil a country by rape and pillaging.

esteem the Promise and the salvation that the promise offered; they didn't see the *necessity* of it. And therefore God gave the Law to reveal sin; and by that, to reveal our need of the Promise, so that the Promise and Grace might be advanced. In giving the Law, God but pursued the purpose of mercy that He had in giving the Promise, by taking a course to make His Gospel worthy of all acceptance. Thus, when we were convicted of sin, we might look for and *prize* a Savior when we were stung by the fiery Serpent. And in this, God but pursued the design of His own Grace.

**3. To humble men for sin.** The Law was given to humble men for sin, and this is a fruit of the former end. Rom 3.19-20, *Now we know whatever the Law says, it says to those who are under the Law, that every mouth might be stopped, and all the world might become guilty*; that is, be sensible of their own guilt. For we were no less guilty before; but now, by the Law, men are made sensible of their own guilt. For the Apostle says, Rom 3.20, *By the Law is the knowledge of sin, etc.* So in Rom 4.15, *Where there is no law, there is no transgression*; that is, no transgression appears where there is no law to reveal it; or no transgression will be charged upon the conscience, where there is no law to reveal sin. And this seems to be excellently set out in Rom 5.13-14, *Until the Law, sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed where there is no Law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, etc.*

The meaning is that there was no less sin, or guilt, or death *before* the Law, than *after*. Sin reigned and death reigned over all the sons of men, and it reigned all the more, because it reigned in the dark. There was no law given by which to discover and reveal it to them, and to help to charge sin upon them. And so he says, *Sin is not imputed where there is no Law*; that is, though sin and death reigned, yet men were secure and careless; and having no law to reveal sin to them, they didn't charge their hearts with sin; they didn't impute sin to themselves. And therefore God renewed the law, and promulgated the Law at Mount Sinai, to reveal and impute sin to men, to *charge* them with sin.

I will give it to you in this similitude. Suppose a debtor owed a great sum of money to a creditor, and the creditor, out of mere mercy, promised to forgive him all the debt. And yet, after this, the creditor sent officers to attach and arrest the debtor. One would surely think this man is contrary to himself; he has renounced his former promises, and repents of nothing. He only desires that his mercy might be more conspicuous and advanced in the *thoughts* of the debtor. And therefore he allows the debtor to be brought to these extremities, so that mercy might appear more clearly, and the debtor might be more thankful.

The case is the same between God and us. We are deeply indebted to God; and God made a promise of mercy to Abraham, and to us in him. But men were secure and careless. And though they were guilty of sin, and liable to death, yet being without a Law to evidence sin and death to their consciences, they could not see that it was such a mercy as it was, to have a pardon. Thereupon God published by Moses, a severe and terrible law, to discover, accuse, and condemn us for sin — not that He intended the sentence to take hold (for then God would be contrary to Himself); but that hereby our guilt being made evident, and our mouths stopped, we might fall down and acknowledge the greatness and riches of free grace and mercy. And thus it was in Job 33.16-31.<sup>1</sup> And Gal 3.22, *The Scriptures confined all under sin, that the promise by faith, etc. might be given to those who believe.*

**4. As a direction of life.** The Law was given for a direction of life, a rule of walking for believers. I showed you this at large in the former Proposition. The Law was a Rule of walking. Though the *burden* of the Law was taken away, it was not taken away as to *obedience*. If it were needful, I might pursue strengthening this for you.

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<sup>1</sup> Job 33.23-26 "If there is a messenger for him, A mediator, one among a thousand, To show man His uprightness, <sup>24</sup> Then He is gracious to him, and says, 'Deliver him from going down to the Pit; I have found a ransom;' <sup>25</sup> His flesh shall be young like a child's, He shall return to the days of his youth. <sup>26</sup> He shall pray to God, and He will delight in him.

The Moral Law is perpetual and *immutable*; it is an everlasting truth. The creature is bound to worship and obey his Creator, and bound that much more as he has received greater benefits. This is a truth as clear as light. And surely to be free from obedience, is to be servants to sin, as I have shown at large.

**5. As a mirror for our duties.** The Law was given not only as a director for duties, but as a mirror to discover their imperfections, so that we might be *kept humble* and vile in our own eyes; and that we might live more *out* of ourselves, and more *in* Christ; that we might *flee to Christ* on all occasions, as a defiled man flees to the Fountain to be washed and cleansed — to the one in whom there is *Mercy* to cover, and *Grace* to cure all our infirmities.

**6. To reprove and correct sin.** The Law was given as a reprover and corrector of sin, even to the Saints — I say, to discipline and reprove them for it. 2Tim 3.16, *All Scripture is profitable for doctrine and reproof*. And this part of Scripture is especially for these ends: to be *instar verberis* (like a scourge), to correct and chastise wantonness, to reprove and correct for sin.

**7. To spur us on to our duties.** The Law was given to be a spur to quicken us to our duties. The flesh is sluggish, and the Law is *instar stimuli* (like a spur) — of the nature of a spur or goad to quicken us in the ways of obedience.

And so you see the first thing, the ends for which the Law was given.

## 2. HOW THOSE ENDS MAY CONSIST WITH GRACE.

I am now to show you that there was no end for which the Law was given, that might not be consistent with Grace, and serviceable to the Covenant of Grace; and therefore the Law may remain under Grace.

**1. The Law was given to restrain transgressions**, and it has the same use now. It takes its place to restrain wicked men in sin, though it has no power to renew and change them. Fear may restrain, though it cannot rescue men. Fear may suppress sin, though faith alone conquers and overcomes sin, etc.

The Law may *chain* up the wolf, but the Gospel *changed* the wolfish nature. The one *stops* the stream, the other *heals* the fountain. The one *restrains* the practices, the other *renews* the principles. And who doesn't see this ordinary fruit of the law of God now? It was the saying of a holy man, <sup>1</sup> that our Cain has not killed his brother Abel; that our Ammon has not deflowered his sister Tamar; that our Reuben has not gone to his father's couch; that our Absalom has not conspired in the death of his father. It is because God restrains them, that the law was therefore added; and it is for this use that it therefore continues to restrain wicked men: to set bounds and banks to the rage of men's lustful hearts.

**2. The Law was given to discover and reveal transgressions**, and this might stand with Grace — indeed, it serves to *advance* grace and it still continues for this end, even to discover and reveal transgressions to us, to make sin and misery appear, and by that, to awaken the conscience to flee to Christ. Hence the Apostle says in Gal 3.19, *For what does the Law serve?* Why, he says, *it was added because of transgression, till the Seed would come, to whom the Promise was made*. Some take "seed" here for the faithful, and make this the meaning: that so long as there are any to be brought to Christ, there will be a use for the Law to reveal sin, in both the *unregenerate*, that they may flee to Christ, and in those who are *renewed*, that they may learn to cast their faith, hope, and expectation on Him still. But whether that interpretation will hold or not, this holds firm: that the Law *remains* for this use, to reveal sin to us.

Rom 4.15, *Where there is no law, there is no transgression*; that is, none is discovered; where there is no law to discover sin, sin does not appear. So Rom 5.20, *The Law entered that the offense*

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<sup>1</sup> Probably Chamier again (per marginal note).

*might abound, not only to discover sin, but to make it appear exceedingly sinful.* And the Apostle's words put this beyond all question. Rom 7.7, *I would not have known sin, except by the law*, which was the revealer of sin to him. And in verse 13, *But sin, that it might appear sin, was working death in me by that which is good, so that sin, by the commandment, might appear exceedingly sinful.*

So that, you see the Law still remains in this use, to reveal sin to us. I would not have known concupiscence, nor any other sin, if the Law had not said, *You shall not covet*. And it does this *after* Grace too. That which was sin *before*, is sin *now*. Grace does not alter the nature of sin, though it does free us from the fruits and condemnation of it.

**3. It was added to humble us for sin.** And this also consists with Grace; and it still remains in that use, though this is denied by some. Sin is the great ground of humiliation. And that which is a mirror to discover sin, must upon discovery of it, humble the soul for it.

For this you may read Rom 3.19-20, Gal 3.22. In this regard, it may be said that the Law is not against the promise. Gal 3.21, *Is the Law against the promise? God forbid! But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise, through faith, might be given to those who believe.* Mark that the Apostle says the law is not against the promise; for those *affirmative* questions are the strongest negations. And he shows why it is not against promise: because it is subservient to the promise. Why is that? He shows it is because it confines us under sin; that is, it humbles us, and convicts us of sin, so that the promise might be given. Hence it is said in verse 24, *The Law is our schoolmaster (tutor) to bring us to Christ*. He speaks of the same law of which he spoke earlier, which seems by verse 22, to be the Moral Law. And how is this the schoolmaster, if it is not by lashing us, humbling us for sin, and driving us to Christ? Or if we allow it was the Ceremonial Law which was said to be the Schoolmaster, the Moral Law was yet the rod. The Master does little without the Rod, nor the Ceremonial, unless the Moral Law drove them to the Ceremonial, which was then a figure of Christ, as it now drives us to Christ in truth.

And thus the Law still remains an instrument in the hands of the Spirit to reveal sin to us, and to humble us for it, so that we might come to Christ. If the avenger of blood had not followed the murderer, he would never have gone to the cities of refuge. If God did not humble us, we would never go to Christ. An offer of Christ and pardon, before men are humbled, is worth nothing. By this men do as those who were invited to the Supper; they made light of it. So they make light of a pardon, of the blood of Christ. But once God has revealed sin, when the law has come upon us as it did upon Paul, with an accusing, convicting, humbling, killing power — Oh *then* Christ is precious! The promise is precious; the blood of Christ is precious. And I conceive this was the main end that God gave the Law after the promise: to *advance* the promise. Men would not have known the *sweetness* of Christ, if they had not tasted of the *bitterness* of sin.

**4. The Law was given for a direction of life.** And so it still remains, as I have fully proved to you.

Though we are sons, and are willing to obey, yet we must learn how to actuate this willing disposition. I say, though we are sons, and guided by the Spirit, and in our love to God we are ready for all services, we still need the Word to *be a light to our feet, and a lantern to our paths*.<sup>1</sup> God has made you sons, and He has given you an inheritance. And now he gives you a Rule to walk by, that you might express your thankfulness to Him for His rich mercy. Your obedience is not the cause and ground of His adoption of you; it is the expression of your thankfulness and the duty you owe to God who has adopted you. God therefore did not give the Rule, and afterward the Promise — but first the Promise, and then the Rule. This was to reveal that our obedience was not the *ground* of our acceptance, but a *declaration* of our thankfulness to God, who has accepted us.

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<sup>1</sup> Psa 119.105.

So that, as it remains a Rule of walking, it is yet *in Christ*. And it must be our Rule *in Christ*; we must obey by the strength *of Christ*; we must begin our obedience *from Christ*. We are not to work for our own interest, but we are to get an interest in Christ, so that we may work.<sup>1</sup>

The Law, say some of our Divines, was given with evangelical *purposes*; that is, with purposes subservient to the Gospel. And I say it must be obeyed with evangelical *principles*, principles from Christ. The Law only *shows* us what is good; it gives us no *power* to do it. It is *lex spiritualis*, a spiritual Law — holy, just, and good; but it is not *lex spiritus*, the law of the Spirit. This is in Christ alone. Rom 8.2, *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death*. The Law *shows* you what is holy, but it cannot *make* you holy. While it is a rule *without* us,<sup>2</sup> it cannot make us holy — it must be a rule *within* us.

The Law is a *principle* within us first, and then a *pattern* without us. We are not made holy by *imitation*, but by *implantation*. But that principle within, sends you there as to the rule without, after which you should confirm your lives without. Once the Law is your *principle*, it then becomes your *pattern*.

**5. The Law was given as a mirror** to discover your imperfections of duty; and that mirror remains. There you see the imperfections of your duties, of your graces, and your obedience. And by that, you are kept close to Christ; you are kept humble. This casts you out of yourself, and casts you upon the hold of Christ and the Promises.

And thus, in brief, you have seen these two things propounded; it is done. You have seen the main ends and uses for which the Law was set up. You have seen how these ends were not only consistent with Grace, but might be serviceable to the advancement of Grace.

### **Objection 1: If the Law is a covenant, it is inconsistent with Grace**

We now come to the third thing propounded, which is to answer Objections. And then we will close this first and main Query with some Application.

**Obj. 1.** We read that the Law was set up as a Covenant; and in that use, it certainly could not stand with Grace. Therefore, there were *some* ends and uses for which the Law was given, that are not consistent with Grace.

Now, the following places seem to declare that the Law was set up as a Covenant.

Exo 19.5, *Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my Covenant, then you shall be a peculiar people.*

And more plainly,

Deu 4.13, *And the Lord declared to you his Covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even Ten Commandments; and He wrote them upon two tablets of stone.*

Jer 31.31-33, Behold the days come, says the Lord, that I will make a new Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, not according to the Covenant I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the Land of Egypt. But this shall be the Covenant: I will put my laws into their hearts.

So also in Heb 8.7-9, *For if the first Covenant had been faultless, then there would have been no place for another.*

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<sup>1</sup> Chamier, *Lex Royal*, cap. 3. l.15, Tom 5.

<sup>2</sup> Here, “without” means outside of ourselves, externally.

These places seem to say very plainly, that the Law was given as a Covenant of Works to the Jews. And as a Covenant of Works, it could not consist with Grace. And therefore there were some ends for which the Law was set up, which were not consistent with Grace.

Now then, for clarifying these places, divines have laid down various distinctions of covenants. Some have set down these three: a covenant of nature, a covenant of grace, and a mixed covenant consisting of nature *and* grace. Others set down these:

1. *Foedus natura*, the Covenant of Nature, or that which God made with man in Innocency.
2. *Foedus promissii*, which some call the Covenant of the Promise, or others call the Covenant of Grace. This was made with Adam after his fall, in these words, *The seed of the woman shall break the Serpent's head*. It was renewed with Abraham in Genesis 15, but more clearly in Gen 22.18, *In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed*. And this is the same in substance as the covenant of Grace.
3. *Foedus operis*, the Covenant of Works, which was made with the Jews, as they interpret these places: Exo 19.5, and Deu 4.13 (above).

Others again made these three covenants:

1. *Foedus naturae*. The Covenant of Nature made with Adam.
2. *Foedus gratiae*. The Covenant of Grace made with us in Christ.
3. *Foedus subserviens*. Or the subservient covenant, which they say was the covenant made here with the Jews, merely in a way of subservience to the Covenant of Grace in Christ. It was a *preparing* covenant, to make way for the advancement of *Grace in Christ*, which is now gone as a covenant, though the subservience of it still remains.

Still others say that there were never more than two covenants made with man, one of *Works*, the other of *Grace*. The first was in Innocency, the other after the fall. Yet this covenant of Grace was *legally* dispensed to the Jews, so that it seems to be nothing but the repetition of the Covenant of Works. In regard to the *legal dispensations* of that covenant under the Law, it is called a Covenant of Works; under the Gospel, in regard to the *clearer manifestations* of it, it is called a Covenant of Grace. These were not *two distinct* covenants, but one and the same covenant variously dispensed.<sup>1</sup> And to show that the Law could not be properly taken as a Covenant of Works, I will give but these arguments:

### ***Nine Arguments Why the Law is not a Covenant of Works***

**Arg. 1.** I conceive that it cannot be said to be a Covenant of Works by which a holy God is married to a faithful people. But by this covenant, God was married to such a people (Jer 31.31-33). And therefore it could not be a Covenant of Works.

**Arg. 2.** That can never be said to be a Covenant of Works, which had mercy in it toward sinful men; but this covenant did: it was set up with merciful purposes, with subservience to the Gospel, as the Apostle shows at large in Galatians chap. 3. *Ergo...*

**Arg. 3.** If the Law were given as a Covenant of Works, then it would be opposite and contrary to the Promise. But the Apostle shows that this is not so. Gal 3.21, *Is the Law against the promise? God forbid!* But if it were set up as a Covenant of Works, then it would be diametrically opposite to it. For *if it is of works, then it is not of grace*.<sup>Rom 11.6</sup> *Ergo...*

**Arg. 4.** That can never be a Covenant of Works which was added to the Covenant of Grace. But the Apostle shows that the Law was added to the Promise, Gal 3.19. Now, if it had been added as a *covenant*, then it would overthrow the nature of the Promise; it was so added that the Promise

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<sup>1</sup> Or, "variously administered." This is the language of the *Westminster Confession*, 1646, chap. 7, pars. 5-6.

might be preserved. If *anything* of works was here, it would clean overturn Grace, and overthrow the nature of the Promise. Therefore, it was not added as a *covenant*, nor as an *ingredient* of the Promise — as if we had been justified partly by *working*, partly by *believing*. For that overthrows the freeness of the Promise. *If it is of works, then it is not of grace*. Rather, it was added by way of *subservience* to the Promise. As the Apostle says, *it was added because of transgressions*. It was so added to the Promise, or Covenant of Grace, as to help and advance it, not to subvert and destroy it. And therefore it could not be added as a Covenant of Works.

**Arg. 5.** The fifth argument may be taken from Ga. 3.17, where the Apostle shows that the Law, *which was 430 years after the Promise, could not disannul or make the Promise of no effect*. But if God had set up the Law as a covenant, it would have disannulled the Promise. Indeed, it would also have declared God changeable, which cannot be. So says the Apostle in Gal 3.20, *God is one*. He is the same in His grace and purpose to sinners; though by giving the Law *after* the Promise, He seems to repent of His former mercy; and by this, to cancel or repeal what He had done. Yet it is no such matter. *God is one*; He is the same in all. This covenant was established by oath (Heb 6.17-18). And when God swears, He cannot repent of it (Psa 110.4). Now, if God set this up as a covenant *after* he had given the Promise, this would either have shown mutability in God's will, or contradiction in his acts, which cannot be. And therefore it could not be a Covenant of Works.

**Arg. 6.** If it were God's purpose to give life and salvation to the lost sons of men by a Covenant of Grace, then he never set up the Law as a Covenant of Works for that end. But this was his purpose, etc., as the Apostle says in Gal 3.18, *If the inheritance is by the Law, then it is not by the Promise; but God gave it Abraham by promise*. It was as if he had said, It was never God's end to give life by the Law, for He had given it by another way before; namely, by a promise. Therefore, He never intended *this* to be the way.

**Arg. 7.** If the Law were a Covenant of Works, then the Jews were under a different covenant than us, and so none were saved. The Apostle again says, Act 15.11, *We believe, through the grace of Christ, to be saved, even as they* (κακεῖνοι). Otherwise they are under both a Covenant of Works, and a Covenant of Grace. But they could not be; these are utterly inconsistent. *Ergo...*

**Arg. 8.** God never appointed anything for an end to which the thing appointed is unserviceable and unsuitable. But the Law was utterly unserviceable and unsuitable to this end: to give *life* and *salvation*. The Apostle tells us that the Law could not do it. Rom 8.3. <sup>1</sup> Gal 3.21, *If there had been a law given that could have given life*; this implies it could not do it; and therefore God never set it up for that purpose.

**Arg. 9.** It could never suit with God's heart toward sinners, to give a Covenant of Works after the fall, because man could do nothing; Eph 2.1, he was *dead in his trespasses and sins*. Besides, it was contrary to the nature of a covenant; man was impotent, <sup>Rom 5.6</sup> and could not stand as a party in covenant with God.

Besides, if you but consider the *nature* of a Covenant of Works, you will plainly see it is impossible for the Law to be such a covenant.

1. The Covenant of Works is a covenant between two friends.<sup>2</sup> It is a covenant of friendship; but God could not make such a covenant with fallen man. We were enemies; we were guilty

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<sup>1</sup> Rom 8:3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh.

<sup>2</sup> That is, it is an amicable covenant between *equals*, mutually agreed to, where both parties are capable of fulfilling their part of the covenant. Adam was capable only prior to the fall; he was incapable afterwards; all his faculties were corrupted by sin. He and his progeny were then of a sin nature, born in bondage to sin, sons of Hagar the bondwoman (Gal 4.24-25); incapable of seeing the kingdom (Joh 3.3-5); or understanding the things of God (1Cor 2.114); or pleasing God (Rom 8.8, Heb 11.6); or hearing Christ's call (Joh 8.43); or accepting the truth (Joh 14.17); or of coming to Jesus (Joh 6.44); or saying 'Jesus is Lord' (1Cor 12.3); or believing the Bible (Joh 12.39-40). — WHG



sinner; and therefore a covenant of friendship could not be made. Indeed, there might be a Covenant of *Grace* made with him, for that is a covenant of *reconciliation*; and such a covenant might be made with enemies. But there could not be a Covenant of *Works* made, for that is a covenant between friends; and we were not friends after the fall.

2. The Covenant of Works was a covenant in which each party had his work. It was a *conditional* covenant; we each had something to do, if we expected to get what was promised. But now, God could not make such a covenant with man after his fall, because man was *not able* to comply with the lowest terms, to perform the meanest condition. And therefore,
3. The Covenant of Works was covenant that was in no way capable of *renovation*; once you broke it, you were gone forever. But now this covenant which God made with men was capable of *renewing*, and they frequently renewed their covenant with God.

And therefore, this could not be a Covenant of Works. So, by what has been said, you can plainly see that the covenant God made with the Jews, could not be a Covenant of Works.

### **Objection 2: There is no Middle Covenant between Works and Grace**

But you may say it was a *covenant*, and so it is called. And if it was a covenant, then it was either a Covenant of Works, or a Covenant of Grace, or else *datur tertium*, there is some *third*, some *middle* covenant. But there is no middle covenant; nor is it a Covenant of Grace; and therefore it *must* be a Covenant of Works.

**Ans:** If by a *third* covenant, is meant a *middle* covenant, consisting partly of works, and partly of grace — which the Jews were under, and by which they were favored — I utterly deny any such covenant. For no such covenant was ever made with fallen man, nor can there be any middle ground between works and grace. The Apostle says plainly that *if of works, then not of grace*. If they had done anything in relation to life, however small, and even if the Gospel had been able to do the rest, it would have been a Covenant of Works, and utterly inconsistent with Grace. For Grace can in no way be called *grace*, if it is not in *every way* grace. If there was anything of man's *bringing*, which was not of God's *bestowing*, however small, it would overturn the nature of grace, and make of works, that which is of grace. If a man were to ask but a penny from us to purchase a kingdom, even if he were to give us the rest, that penny would keep it from being a mere gift and grace. So it is here. And therefore, I cannot allow that there is a middle covenant.

**There are two other opinions** which I will propound for your thoughts. (1) Some think it is neither a Covenant of Works, nor of Grace, but a *third covenant*, distinct from both. (2) Others think it is a Covenant of Grace, but more legally dispensed.

**(1) A Third Covenant.** There are some who think it is a third covenant, a manuductory,<sup>1</sup> preparatory, or subservient covenant. It is a covenant, I say, that was given by way of subservience to the Covenant of Grace, to better advance and set up the Covenant of Grace. Those who hold this view, say there are three distinct covenants which God made with mankind: a Covenant of *Nature*, a Covenant of *Grace*, and a *Subservient Covenant*.

1. The *Covenant of Nature* was that by which God required, as the Creator of a creature, perfect obedience to all His commandments — with a promise of a blessed life in Paradise if he obeyed; and threatening eternal death if he disobeyed. And it was to this end: to declare how virtue pleased Him, and sin displeased Him.
2. The *Covenant of Grace* is that by which He promises pardon and forgiveness of sins, and eternal life, by the blood of Christ, to all those who would embrace him; and this is to declare the riches of His mercy.

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<sup>1</sup> *Manuduction*: guiding by the hand; a means of guidance; direction, or instruction.

3. The *Subservient Covenant*, is called the *Old Covenant*, by which God required obedience of the Israelites to the Moral, Ceremonial, and Judicial Laws, upon the promise of all blessing in possessing Canaan, and threatening curses and miseries to those who broke it; and it was to this end: that He might raise up their hearts to the expectation of the Messiah to come.

And this subservient or Old Covenant, is that which God struck with the people of Israel in Mount Sinai, to prepare them to faith, and to inflame them with the desire of the Promise, and the coming of Christ, and to be, as it were, a bridle of restraint — to inhibit them from sin, till that time that He would send the Spirit of Adoption into their hearts, and govern them with a freer spirit.

This Covenant of which the Moral Law is said to be a part, and which is called here the Subservient Covenant, under which the Jews lived, is shown at large (by the named author) <sup>1</sup> to be a third and distinct Covenant, between the Covenant of Nature, and the Covenant of Grace. And whoever has recourse to his treatise, will see that he lays down both the agreements and differences it has from the covenant of Grace, and that of Nature. In that regard, it may be that this treatise hasn't been observed by all, and many don't know of its author. And others, if they had it, could make no use of it, nor receive any benefit by it. For their sakes chiefly, I will lay down not all, but the *main* heads of agreement and difference that this subservient covenant has with the Covenant of Nature and Grace. We will first show you its agreements and disagreements with the Covenant of Nature.

The agreements are these:

1. In both these covenants, one covenanting party is God, the other is man.
2. Both have a condition annexed to them.
3. The condition in general is the same: *Do this and live*.
4. The promise in general is the same too: Paradise and Canaan.

These are the agreements. We now show you their disagreements.

1. The Covenant of Nature was made with all men; this Subservient Covenant with Israel alone.
2. The Covenant of Nature brings us to Christ, but not directly by itself, only obliquely and *per accidens* (incidentally). But the Old Covenant, or subservient covenant, properly and *per se*, brings us to Christ; for it was the true and proper scope which God aimed at in giving it.

“God did not make the *Covenant of Nature* with man, that being burdened with the weight of it, he would go to Christ. In giving it, God aimed at this: to have what was His due from man. But in this *Subservient Covenant*, God requires His right for no other end than that man, being convinced of his weakness and impotency, might flee to Christ.”

3. The Covenant of Nature was made with man, that by it, men might be carried on sweetly in obedience, for it was engraved on their hearts. But the Subservient Covenant was made that men might be *compelled* to obedience; for it naturally gives birth to bondage (Gal 4.24).
4. The Covenant of Nature was to be eternal; this subservient covenant was but for a time.
5. The Covenant of Nature had no respect to the restraint of outward sins, either in its principal or lesser uses; but the Old Covenant, in its lesser use, did have respect to them (Exo 20.20).
6. The Covenant of Nature was *engraved* on the heart; but the other *written* on tablets of stone.
7. The Covenant of Nature was made with Adam in Paradise; this Subservient Covenant was made in Mount Sinai.
8. The Covenant of Nature had no Mediator; but this Subservient Covenant had a mediator, in Moses.
9. The one was made with *perfect* man; the other with a part of *fallen* mankind.

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<sup>1</sup> The author was John Cameron, a Scottish theologian (1579-1625). His treatise is appended to the end of this book. Those adopting the *Subservient Covenant*, rejected the Westminster formulation. They were considered *Amyraldians* (four-point Calvinists). Today, Meredith Kline would be among them. – WHG

And these are the main agreements and differences between the Covenant of Nature, and this Subservient Covenant. We will now show you the differences and agreements that it has with the Covenant of Grace.

1. They agree that God is the Author of both.
2. Both are contracted with fallen man.
3. Both reveal sin.
4. Both bring to Christ.
5. Both are contracted by a Mediator.
6. In both, life is promised.

They differ in that,

1. In the Subservient Covenant, God is considered as *condemning* sin, and *approving* alone of *righteousness*. But in the Covenant of Grace, God is considered as *pardoning* sin, and *renewing holiness* in us.
2. They differ in the stipulation, or condition; the condition in the Old Covenant was this: *Do this and live*; in the New Covenant it is, *Believe and you shall be saved*, etc.
3. They differ in the Antiquity. The Promise was more ancient than the Law. It is said *the Law was added to the Promise*, and that was 430 years after the Promise was given, Gal 3.17.
4. The Subservient Covenant restrains with *coaction* and *servility*; but the Covenant of Grace by a *willing* and child-like *inclination* of Spirit, by greater freeness and naturalness of soul.
5. In the subservient covenant, the Spirit of *Bondage* is given; but in the Covenant of Grace, the Spirit of *Adoption*.
6. The Old Covenant *terrified* the conscience; this one *comforts* it.
7. The object of the Old Covenant was man *asleep*, or rather, *dead* in sin; the object of the other is man *awakened*, and *humbled* for sin.
8. The one shows the way of *service*, but gives no strength to *serve*; this both *shows the way*, and *gives the power*.
9. Both promise life; but the one is in *Canaan*, and the other is in *Heaven*.

Thus you see the first opinion of the two; it seems a *rational* opinion, though it lacks the number of maintainers. The *reasoning* in this opinion seems to be this: the Law is said to be a covenant, as I have shown in various Scriptures; and if so, it is either a Covenant of Works, or of Grace, or some third covenant. But it is not a Covenant of Works, nor a Covenant of Grace; *Ergo*, it is some third Covenant.

**1. It is not a Covenant of Works.** I have shown that at large, because a *former* covenant was made, a Covenant of Grace; and this covenant was added to it — not in a way of *opposition*, but *subservience*. Besides, this broken covenant was capable of renovation, which a Covenant of Works is not capable of. And besides that, when they had broken this one, they were not cast out by it, but had the liberty to appeal from the Law to the Gospel, from God's Justice offended, to God's Mercy pardoning and covering — as you see they frequently did, when they implored mercy and pardon for His name's sake. *For Your name's sake forgive*, <sup>Dan 9.19</sup> and *for Your name's sake cover*. <sup>Psa 25.11</sup> Under such expositions, Christ was darkly foreshadowed.

Again, if it was a *concluding* covenant of life and death, they could have had no mercy, no pardon; they would necessarily have perished. But the Apostle speaks against that. Act 15.11, *We believe through the grace of Christ, to be saved even as they were*. Indeed, it would then have been utterly inconsistent with the Covenant of Grace. Then there would have been some ends and uses for which the Law was promulgated, which could not stand with the Promise and the Covenant of Grace, but were utterly destructive to them. But I have shown you there were no such ends. And therefore it must be concluded that it was such a covenant under which they stood, that notwithstanding, they stood under a Covenant of Grace; and therefore it could not

be a Covenant of Works. This seems to be the reason for the opinion against the first: that though it is called a covenant, it could not be a Covenant of Works. And if it is a covenant, then it must either be a Covenant of Grace, or some third covenant. Now,

**2. It is not a Covenant of Grace.** This is because our divines generally reckon that one part of our freedom that we have by Christ, is to be freed from the Law as a covenant. And if the Law was a Covenant of Grace, only more legally dispensed, and under more legal administrations, then it seems better to say that we are freed from the legal administrations of it, than to say we are freed from it as a covenant. And therefore, by their saying we are freed from it as a covenant, they cannot possibly hold it to be a Covenant of Grace. I only propound to you the *reason* that this opinion is held.

**If it is neither a Covenant of Works, nor a Covenant of Grace, then it must of necessity be a third covenant.** And yet, this is such a covenant that it does not stand in opposition to Grace, nor is it inconsistent with the Covenant of Grace. For then God would have contradicted Himself, overthrown His own purpose, and repented of His own promise which He had given before. And therefore it is called a *Subservient Covenant*. Though it stands upon opposite terms, it has its subservient ends to the Covenant of Grace. And it was given by way of subservience to the Gospel, and the fuller revelation of the Covenant of Grace. It was temporary; and it had respect to Canaan and God's blessing there, upon obedience to it. It did not have respect to heaven, for that was promised by another covenant which God made with them before He entered this one. And this is the reason that this first opinion holds forth, which I modestly desire to propound, not yet seeing in what it may be injurious to holiness, or disagreeable to the mind of God in Scripture.

**(2) There is a second opinion: a Covenant of Grace more legally dispensed.** I find the greatest number of most holy and learned divines to concur in this: that though the Law is called a covenant, it was not a Covenant of Works for salvation. Nor was it a third covenant distinct from Works and Grace. Rather, it was the *same* covenant (as to its nature and kind) under which we stand in the Gospel, under the Covenant of Grace — though more *legally dispensed* to the Jews. And it did not differ in substance from the Covenant of Grace, except in *degrees*, say some; or in its *economy* and *external administration*, say others. The Jews were under infancy, and therefore under *pedagogy* (tutelage). <sup>Gal 3:24</sup> In this regard, the Covenant of Grace under the Law is called *foedus vetus*, or the Old Covenant; and under the Gospel, *foedus novum*, or the New Covenant, Heb 8:8. The one was called *Old*, the other *New*, not because the one was before the other — for the Law was added to the Promise 430 years after; and therefore the Promise came *before* the Law. But it is called *Old*, because those administrations had now grown old and decayed. They were near to vanishing, ready to disappear, and were to give way to newer and more excellent administrations. That old one was more obscurely administered, shadowed, and darkened with shadows; this new one was easier and more delightful; *that* one, in respect to its legal administrations, gave birth to bondage; *this* one to Son-like freedom — as you may clearly see in Col 2:17; Heb 10:1; Gal 3:24; Gal 4:1-3, etc.

Hence, one faith. The New and Old Covenant, the Covenant of Works (as Alsted calls the Law) <sup>1</sup> and this of Grace — the covenant of the Law and Gospel — are not parallel distinctions. For both covenants are covenants of Grace, differing only in the economy and varying administrations of them. They were the same covenant as to nature and kind. This is alleged in Luk 1:72-75, *To perform the mercy promised to our forefathers, and to remember His holy covenant*. And what was that? You see in verse 74, that it was the same as ours as to its substance. *That He would grant to us, that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of our life*.

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<sup>1</sup> Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588-1638), *At contra Chamier*, 131.3.c. sec. 10.

I will give you, for brevity, the full draught <sup>1</sup> of the thoughts of those who maintain this second opinion, in these five particulars:

1. There was never any more than two covenants made with mankind, which held out life and salvation. The first was the Covenant of Works, in Innocency; the other is the Covenant of Grace, after the fall.
2. There was never but one way of salvation since the fall, and that was by the Covenant of Grace. God never set up another Covenant of Works since the fall. He now puts us to *believe* for our life, without *working*.
3. All Adam's posterity still lie under the Covenant of Works, as Adam left them after his fall, till they come over to Jesus Christ.
4. The Law was never given as a Covenant of Works, but was added to the Promise by way of subservience to the Covenant of Grace.
5. Though the Law was given with merciful purposes, and subservient to the Covenant of Grace, yet it seems to come *handed* to us, as though it were the repetition of another Covenant of Works under which we stand.

Or rather, the Covenant of Grace under the Old Testament seems to be so *legally* represented, as if it were still a Covenant of Works to us. And it is worth our observation, to see how the Covenant of Grace, like the Sun in the firmament, has risen up to further and further clearness. From Adam to Moses it was very dark and obscure; from Moses to the time of the Prophets the light began to appear. After the Prophets, when John began his ministry, then the light was more clearly revealed. Under the ministry of Christ, who revealed the bosom counsels of his Father, there were clearer and more glorious manifestations of it. After Christ's resurrection, and the sending of the Spirit, the book only clasped before, was now fully *opened*, that he who runs might read it. <sup>2</sup> Thus some have called the Covenant of Grace *before* Christ, *foedus promissi*, the Covenant of *Promise*. And now, under the Gospel, it is the Covenant of Grace in respect to the full clarity and ample revelation of it. The shadows which obscured it before have been taken away; and the whole platform of God's design of saving man by mere grace is so clearly revealed, that he who runs may read it.

**Objection 3: If the Law opposes the terms of Grace, it must be of Works.**

That which stood upon *opposite* terms to the Covenant of Grace, cannot be said to be a Covenant of Grace, nor yet *subservient* to the Covenant of Grace, but must be a Covenant of Works. But the Law stood upon opposite terms to the Covenant of Grace. *Ergo...* <sup>3</sup>

**Ans.** It is manifest that it stood upon opposite terms — the one commanding *doing*, the other *believing* — if you consult these places: Lev 18,4-5, *You shall keep my statutes and my judgments, which if a man does, he shall live in them.* Eze 20.11, *I gave them my statutes which, if a man does them, he shall live in them.* Gal 3.12, *The Law is not of faith, but he that does them shall live in them.*

But these verse may be *eluded*: he shall live *in* them, but He does not say he shall live *by* them.<sup>4</sup> We live *in* obedience, but we do not live *by* obedience. There is a great difference between them.

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<sup>1</sup> That is, a complete summary.

<sup>2</sup> Hab 2.2, Then the LORD said: "Write the vision And make it plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it.

<sup>3</sup> Chamier's objection.

<sup>4</sup> Gal 3.12, "live in them," uses the Greek *en* (in). It is sometimes translated "by" as in the NKJ. Paul was contrasting those who live by faith, with those who live by the works of the Law. Bolton isn't denying this; he's simply reasserting what he said before, that the Moral Law still directs the Christian walk, but obedience to it will not obtain justification.

Therefore, lest this be put off, see it more plainly in Rom 2.13, *For it is not the hearers of the Law, but the doers of the Law who shall be justified*. The Apostle shows in verses 21 and 22, that he speaks here of the Moral Law. So too in Rom 10.5-6, *For Moses describes the righteousness which is of the Law* (yet he does not say “which is **by** the Law), *that the man who does these things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of Faith speaks thus: whoever believes on him shall not be ashamed*, verse 11. So that you see by these places, that the Law seems to stand on opposite terms to Grace. And this is the objection which you see I have raised to the height. And if this is cleared, then all is done.

Now, against these I might oppose various other Scriptures which seem to speak against it. Such as Gal 3.11, *But it is evident that no man is justified by the Law, for the just shall live by Faith*. Again, Gal 3.21, *If there had been a law given that could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the Law*. That is, if the Law had been able to justify or save **any** man, it would have saved **all** men; and God would never have sent Christ. But see Gal 2.16, *by the works of the Law no flesh living shall be justified*. Gal 3.10, *Whoever is under the works of the Law, is under the curse*. And if whoever looks for life by obedience to the Law, is under the curse, then surely God did not set this up with the end that we would have life by obedience to it. Rom 5.20, *The Law entered that sin might abound*, says the Apostle. And if the Law was given to show the wideness, or the greatness of sin, then surely it was not that we would be justified by obedience to it. Besides, *it was given 430 years after the Promise*. Gal 3.17 God gave the promise of life and justification before, to *Faith*. If He had afterward given the Law so that we would have life by *working*, then God would have been *contrary* to Himself, *changeable* in His purpose, and would have *repented* of His former mercy. But it was not *this*; and therefore it was not the *other*.

Besides, God could not expect that we would *do*, so that we might have life, because we were to have life *before* we could do. Christ says, Joh 15.5, *Without me you can do nothing*. We have no life outside of Christ; he is our life. 1Joh 5.12, *He that has the son has life, and he that does not have the Son does not have life*. And dead men cannot work; we could not *do* that we might *live*, seeing that we were made *alive*, that we might *do*.

Again, God never *purposed* life upon obedience, because He had *decreed* another way to confer life upon men. You see this plainly in Gal 3.11, where the Apostle debates the same thing. *But it is evident that no man is justified by the Law*. Why? How is that evident? *Because*, he says, *the just shall live by faith*. It is as if he had said, God has decreed another way to life; and therefore surely the former way is *not* the way to life.

### ***Six Particulars Why the Law does not oppose the terms of Grace***

Yet you may say, It seems as if the Law required us to *do*, and promised life for *doing*. And if so, certainly the Law stands on opposite terms to Grace; and therefore it can neither be a Covenant of Grace, nor subservient to it. And if they don't stand on opposite terms, then how are we to understand this: *Do this and live*? For reconciling this opposition, and unfolding the meaning of *Do this and live*, I will lay down six or seven particulars to be considered.

1. *Do this and live*, not only refers to the Moral Law, but the Ceremonial also (as in Lev 18.4-5), which was their Gospel. This is especially so if you look at Ceremony, *not* as it is an appendix to the Moral Law, but as it carries a typical relation to Christ; and as every lamb slain pointed to Christ, and says, *Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world*. Joh 1.29 The Gospel was darkly administered and foreshadowed by the Ceremony.
2. This was not spoken of the Law abstractly and separately considered, but of the Law and Promise *jointly*; not of the Law *exclusively*, but of the Law *inclusively*, as including the Promise, as having the Promise involved with it.
3. He does not bid them to *do and live by doing*, but to *do and live in doing*. We may live in obedience, even though we do not and cannot live by it, till we have life. That is not by *doing*,

but by *believing*. As Christ says, *You would not come to me that you might have life.* <sup>Joh 5.40</sup> That was not by works, but by grace. *If there had been a law given that could have given life* — either life that we might obey, or life upon our obedience — then *truly, righteousness would have been by the Law.* <sup>Gal 3.21</sup>

4. Some think that after God had given the promise of life, and offered life upon believing, He repeated the Covenant of Works in the Law. This was to give man a choice whether he would now be saved by *working*, or by *believing*. And this was to empty them of themselves, and answer their thoughts, that perhaps they were able to come to life by obedience. Therefore God puts them to the test; and lest they think that any wrong was done to them, He repeats the former covenant. He gives them a choice, as it were, whether to be saved by *working*, or by *believing* — so that when they were convinced of their own impotency, they might better see, admire, adore, and advance the mercy of God, who has given a Promise, and sent a Christ to save those who were not able to do anything towards their own salvation.

5. Others think that *Do this and live*, refers only to a temporal and prosperous life in the Land of Canaan. If they would conform to that Law which God had given them, and obey Him in his commands, then they would live, and live prosperously, in the Land of Canaan which He had given them. He would bless their basket and store, etc. <sup>Deu 28.17-18</sup>

6. There is another interpretation. *Do this and live*, though it was spoken to them immediately, it was not terminatively; rather, it was spoken through them *to Christ*, who has fulfilled all righteousness for us, and purchased life by his own obedience.

Some of these I reject, and I can fully embrace none of them. I merely propound this variety. I will give you my own thoughts of it in brief.

I grant that in the external view of them (whatever it is *in truth*) the Law and Gospel do seem to stand upon opposite terms. Yet these opposite terms on which the Law seems to stand, had their subservient ends to Christ and Grace. For all of this was but to awaken men, and convince them of their own impotency — to humble them for it, and drive them to Christ. If indeed we look at the Law *separately*, it seems to stand upon opposite terms. We may answer the question which the Apostle asks, and yet himself concludes, *Is the Law against the Promises? God forbid!* We may say yes, *separately* it is against the Promises, insofar as it says, *Do this and live. For if it is of works, then it is not of grace.* And therefore, we must interpret “*Do this and live*,” in such a way that we do *not* make it against the Promise.

Now again I say, if you look at the law *separately*, it thus stands upon opposite terms to, and is against, the Promise. But if you look at it *relatively*, in respect to the Promise, these opposite terms have their subservient ends to the Promise and Grace. And that comes about by convincing us of our own impotency and weakness, that we might go over to Christ and the Promise, for life. I showed you this was the difference between the covenant made with man in Innocency, and what God requires in the Law. In the former, God did not require obedience, that man being burdened with the weight of his work, would go to Christ. Rather, there God aimed to have that which was His due from man. But now, in the Law, God requires His right for no other end than that man, being convinced of his impotency, might flee to Christ. And therefore, *Do this and live* is against the Promise. Yet, if you look at the end for which God said so, which is to reveal our weakness, to humble us for it, and to drive us out of ourselves — you will see *sweet agreements* and *subservience* to the Promise.

There is a seeming contradiction of Jerome’s, which is true on both parts, “Cursed is he that says, ‘God commands impossibilities.’ And cursed is he that says the Law is possible.” This seems strange. Did God command the Law, and yet the Law is impossible? It is *true*; this is *so*. And therefore, God did not command the Law with the expectation that we would fulfill it. We were

not able to obey it, nor is it able to help us, as you see both in Rom 8.3. <sup>1</sup> But God commanded the Law — God says, *Do this and live* — to reveal to us our impotency and weakness, and to stir our hearts to look to Christ who has fulfilled all righteousness for us, both *legis & crucis*. <sup>2</sup> He has undergone the penalties, and obeyed the precepts; he has borne our curses and done our services.

The course that Christ takes with the young man is very observable, and it fully proves what I have said to you. You may read it in Mat 19.16-22. *Good Master*, he says, *what must I do that I may inherit eternal life?* Here was his question. You see Christ's answer at the end of verse 17. *If you would enter into life, keep the commandments*. This was a strange answer. Was the Law a way to life? Why then did Christ come into the world? Or, was the young man able to keep it? That is impossible, Rom 8.3. And doesn't the Apostle say, *Whoever is under the works of the Law, is under the curse*, because *cursed is he that does not obey in all things in the Book of the Law*. And *that* is impossible. This was therefore a strange answer that Christ gave to his question. He does not say, as he does in other places, *If you would enter into life, believe*; but here he says, *keep the commandments*. Yet, if you look now at the person to whom Christ spoke, and the end for which he spoke, you will see the meaning: the person was a proud justiciary (a judicial officer), one who swelled in a fleshly opinion that he had kept the whole Law, and therefore he should be saved by it, as he says afterward. *All this I have kept from my youth*. And therefore, Christ sets him to the Law, not as an instrument of justification — for he answered the same question another way in Joh 6.28-29.<sup>3</sup> Rather, he sets him to the Law as a *mirror* to reveal his imperfections, so that being convinced of his impotency, and being humbled for it, he might come over to Christ for life and salvation.

When men would be their own saviors, when they look for righteousness by the Law, Christ bids them go and keep the commandments, *servanda mandata*; and this is to humble them, and to bring them to himself. But once men are humbled and broken in the sight of sin, without mention of the Law at all, He comforts them with the free promise of Grace. Then he says, *Come to me all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will ease you*; <sup>Mat 11.28</sup> and, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to preach liberty to the captives*, etc. <sup>Luk 4.18</sup>

So then, to conclude, I conceive the opposition between the Law and the Gospel was chiefly of men's own making. They should have been driven to Christ by it, but they expected life in obedience to it. And this was their great error and mistake. It was as hard to bring them away from seeking life by their own righteousness and obedience to the Law, as to force the Sun from the sky. I don't think they imagined righteousness by the Moral Law alone. For there they could not help but see they were cast off and gone. But it was by the Ceremonial Law along with the Moral, for God had given them these laws, and often said, *Do this and live*. Therefore, they thought that by subjection to these, they would have life. And what they lacked in the Moral Law, they made up for in the Ceremonial Law. They would do something that the Moral Law commanded, and go to the Ceremonial Law for what they could not do — not that *all* did so; yet many of them did. But this was far from God's end. It was their own error and mistake.

The Apostle seems to imply this in Rom 10.3-4, *They have a zeal for God, but without knowledge. For being ignorant, they have not submitted to the righteousness of God, but went about establishing a righteousness of their own*; — “they went about it” but could not attain it. All this was but setting a dead man on his feet; and this arose from their ignorance, their error and mistake. They did as poor ignorant souls do with us: we bid them to pray; we bid them to obey, to do their duties; and thus, all these poor souls do, they do to obtain justification by them. They spin

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<sup>1</sup> Rom 8.3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin.

<sup>2</sup> *Legis & crucis*: the law and the cross, or obedience to the Law and atonement for sin.

<sup>3</sup> Joh 6:28-29 Then they said to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?” <sup>29</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”



a thread of their own righteousness to clothe themselves with it all. Poor souls can think of nothing but *working* themselves to life. When they are troubled, they must lick themselves whole. When wounded, they run to the salve of duties, and the firearms of performance; and *Christ* is neglected. It is so hard to be *in* duty in respect to *performance*, and *out* of duty in respect to *dependence*. This is a thing beyond their reach, to *do* all righteousness, and yet to *rest* in none but Christ's. *Domine memorabor justitiae tuae folius*; Lord I will make mention of your righteousness alone, and that is mine too; for *Christ is made to me wisdom, righteousness, etc.* (1Cor 1.30).

And thus I have answered the first great Query, and those objections that depended on it. And I may lay down these two propositions as firm **conclusions**:

1. That the Law, for the substance of it, remains as a Rule of obedience for the people of God, and that to which they are to conform their walking under the Gospel.
2. That there was no end or use for which the Law was given, that might not be consistent with Grace, and serviceable to the advancement of the Covenant of Grace.

## 2. Correction for Sin Remains

### Query 2: Are Christians freed from all punishments and chastisements for sin?

I now come to the second Query, *whether this is any part of our freedom by Christ: to be free from all punishments and chastisements for sin.*

#### **Scriptural Evidence – Lev 26.41-42**

**Ans.** If we consult with the Scriptures, they seem to hold this out to us: that God's people, those whose sins are pardoned, may yet bear chastisements for sin. It is plain that they have been under the rod, under the corrections and chastisements of God; Abraham, David, Moses, and all were. And the Apostle tells us, Heb 12.6-8, *If we are not chastised, we are bastards and not sons, for He scourges every son He receives.* That these corrections have been inflicted on them for sin, the Scripture seems to affirm in Lam 3.39-40, *Why does a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sin? Let us search,* etc. Micah 1.5, *All this is for the wickedness of Jacob, and for the sin of Israel.* Of the Church it says, Mic 7.9, *She will bear the indignation of the Lord, because she had sinned against Him.* Indeed, it is laid down as a precedent condition, going before God's removal of calamities from them, that they were to humble themselves for sin, and turn from sin, before God delivered them (2Chr 7.14). Lev 26.41-42, *If their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and if they accept the punishment for their iniquity* — That is, if they would lie down in the dust and own their punishment, and say that their sins deserved it, and acknowledge God's Justice in afflicting them, *then He would remember his Covenant* and help them.

And all this you see was done by the Princes of Israel, when they were punished by the hand of Shishak. 2Chr 12.6, *They humbled themselves under the mighty hand of God, and said, the Lord is righteous;* that is, He justly afflicts us for our sin that we committed. So this proves that they were punished for their sins. For if they were to humble themselves for sin under affliction, if they were to justify God in His dealings with them, then surely God afflicted them for sin.

#### **Objection 1. This was spoken of the whole Church, not individuals.**

But now, against this it will be said that this was spoken of the whole Church, and not of those alone who were ungodly.

#### **Scriptural Evidence – Num 20.12**

**Ans.** I grant that it was spoken to the whole Church. Yet the godly themselves were to do the same duties as the ungodly. They were not to be exempted; they were to humble themselves for sin, as you see Daniel and Ezra did. And if that sin was not the cause, and those calamities were not inflicted on them for sin, then they would have affirmed an untruth. For to humble themselves for sin as the cause why God's hand was against them, and to accept the punishment for their iniquity, and to declare God is righteous in it — if God did *not* chastise them for sin — that was certainly to affirm an untruth, which cannot be allowed.

Even admitting this, that it was spoken of the whole Church, we have passages to evidence that God has punished his own people for sin, such as His dear ones, Moses and Aaron. They were shut out of Canaan. <sup>1</sup> God would not allow them to enter into the Land of Promise; and this was a great affliction. If you look at Num 20.12, you will see that this was for sin, because they didn't sanctify God at the waters of Meribah. As He tells them, *Because you did not believe, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring the Congregation into the Land.*

So too with David, of whom God professes that he was a man after His own heart. Yet you see how God chastised him — his child dies; the sword would not depart from his house; his own son rose up against him. These were great calamities. And if you look at 2Sam 12.10, you will see the cause

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<sup>1</sup> Num 20.24; Deu 34.4.

of this was his sin, his murder and adultery. *Now therefore the sword shall never depart from you house because you have despised me, and taken the wife of Uriah to be your wife.*

**Objection 2. These were under the Old Testament, a different covenant.**

But now, against this it may be said these were examples under the Old Testament, and therefore they will not prove the argument, for they were under a different covenant than the godly now.

**Ans.** I told you in the answer to the former question, that some divines distinguished a three-fold covenant: a Covenant of Nature, a Covenant of Grace, and a Subservient Covenant which last made with the Jews in Sinai. It was contained in the Moral, Ceremonial, and Judicial laws — a covenant which, though it stood upon opposite terms, yet it had its subservient ends to the Covenant of Grace. It was a covenant which God made with Israel when they were to enter into Canaan, and chiefly respected their good or evil in it. In this covenant, God promised blessings upon obedience, and threatened calamities and judgments on them if they disobeyed. You see these largely annexed to it in Deuteronomy chapters 28 and 29. And all this was by way of subservience to the Covenant of Grace — so that, when they saw they were neither able to obtain life, nor outward mercies, nor stave off death and temporal evils by obedience to it, they might look for the promise of grace, and long for the Messiah, and expect all these upon better grounds.

And they all entered into this covenant with God, and bound it with an oath and a curse, as you see in Deu 29.12, 19. For His part, God engaged Himself to bless them in the Land of Canaan where they went, if they obeyed His commands. And He threatened to punish them there if they did not obey Him. They subscribed to all of this, as you see there, and bound it with an oath and a curse. And therefore, some interpret these words, *Do this and live*, only in respect to their well-being in the Land of Canaan, and in this life.

I read a story of the Sadducees, who you know denied the resurrection <sup>Luk 20.27</sup> and consequently, I suppose, the immortality of the soul. They were men skillful in the Law, and observant of it, even though they held this great error. Upon consideration of this, someone demanded of them why they kept the Commandments, seeing that they denied the resurrection. They answered that it might go well with them in this life; that they might inherit temporal blessings by obedience to it. I won't say that they served the end of the Law in this, for certainly God gave the Law for higher ends than that. But I may say this, that maybe they served the end of it better than those who asked the question. Maybe those who asked the question, kept the Law for justification. You read of such a spirit in them, Rom 10.3-4. <sup>1</sup> There were some who looked to be *justified* by obedience to it. And that was further from God's end in giving it, than to keep the Law that it might go well with them *in this life*. For the first, there is not one tittle in the Book of God; but for this second one, there seems to be much.

You may read of something to this purpose in the fifth Commandment. *Honor your father your mother, that your days may be long in the land where you go to possess.* And something of it in the second Commandment; and a great deal more in Deu 26.16-19; and in the whole of Deu 28 — though under these *temporals*, *spiritual* things were shadowed and apprehended by those who were spiritual.

It is true, the things that were commanded and forbidden were morally good and evil; and so they were of perpetual observance. Yet the terms on which they seem to be commanded, and forbidden, and obeyed, are gone. These were prosperities and calamities, good or evil, in the land which God gave them. And upon this, they are still said to *break* God's covenant upon disobedience, which could not be the Covenant of Grace, for that is not broken. It is an *everlasting* covenant, like that

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<sup>1</sup> Rom 10:3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. <sup>4</sup> For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

of the waters of Noah (Isa 54.9). <sup>1</sup> A covenant that shall not be broken, does not depend upon our walking and obedience; it is not made upon our good behavior. Obedience might be its *end*, but not the *ground* or motives God had in making it. Nor could it be a Covenant of Works regarding life and salvation; for that being broken, it is not capable of renovation and renewing. Rather, it is spoken of this *Subservient* Covenant which God made with them, and under which they stood.

I only suggest this. I don't see any dangers that it leads us into; yet I am not peremptory in it. <sup>2</sup> But I admit this (which is still the greatest advantage that can be given to them), that the Jews were under a *different* covenant. And it was such a covenant as to be expressed in this way: God promised and bestowed *temporal* good upon them for their obedience; and He threatened and inflicted *temporal* evils upon them for their disobedience. And yet they were under a Covenant of Grace as well as we. Surely all grant that. And the Apostle speaks of it plainly in Act 15.11, *We hope through the grace of Christ, to be saved as well as they, κάκεινος (likewise)*.

There were some who were God's *choice* people, who were not only *under*, but *in* this Covenant of Grace, who yet were chastised and afflicted for sin: Moses, David, Hezekiah (Isa 38.17). <sup>3</sup> And therefore this will not be of moment to overthrow this proposition that *God afflicts His own people for sin*. Even though it is granted that they were under a different covenant, that covenant was not a Covenant of Works, as I have shown. Notwithstanding *this* covenant, they were under the Covenant of Grace *also*. Yet they were His children, His choice ones, and they were afflicted for sin. And therefore, notwithstanding this, the proposition is firm, that *God afflicts his people, his children, for sin*.

Now to take away the occasion of that simple cavil, that these instances are alleged out of the Old Testament, and therefore prove nothing. I am far from allowing any such exceptions, because they are full of danger, and lead you onto more rocks than you can yet discern. The *Harmony* of Scripture must be preserved. It is one way to discover truth in doubtful points — and it is the work of the Ministers of the Gospel, it is their *great* work, to discover and preserve the harmony of them; and not to make one piece of Scripture quarrel and clash against another. Certainly there is sweet harmony and agreement between the Old and New Testaments. God is the same in both. And if we had wisdom, we would see their mutualness, subserviencies, and agreements, even in those places that seem opposite.

But, so that you may not have, or rather *take* an occasion for exception, we will go from the Old down to the New Testament, and see if the same proposition is not confirmed there also. I think we will find them both to speak with one language on this point.

### ***Comparing Correction for Sin in the Old and New Testaments***

1Cor 11.30. The Apostle having told them before, of the fearful sin of profaning the Lord's Table, and unworthily partaking of this ordinance, he tells them at last, that even if they didn't take notice of it, this was still the great cause of that sickness, weakness, and death which God had inflicted on them, and now reigned among them. *For this cause* (unworthily partaking) *many are weak and sickly among you, and many have fallen asleep*. Can you have a clearer verse? Here affliction and punishment are set down; here the *sin* is set down; and lest all of this not be enough, he tells them, for *this* sin, comes *this* punishment. *For this cause, many are sick...*

### **Objection 3. It is spoken only to unworthy partakers.**

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<sup>1</sup> Isa 54:9 "For this is like the waters of Noah to Me; For as I have sworn That the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth, So have I sworn That I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you.

<sup>2</sup> *Peremptory*: putting an end to all debate.

<sup>3</sup> Being not only *under*, but *in* the Covenant, alludes to Rom 9.6, *Not all Israel [the nation] is Israel [the elect]*. Yet even the elect are chastised. Isa 38:17 Indeed *it was* for *my own* peace *That* I had great bitterness; But You have lovingly *delivered* my soul from the pit of corruption, For You have cast all my sins behind Your back.

But you may say, this wasn't spoken of God's people; those of whom this is spoken were *unworthy* partakers of the sacraments. But God's people *cannot* be unworthy partakers of it. *Ergo...*

**Ans. 1.** For the answer to this, we must know there is a two-fold unworthiness: (1) The unworthiness of the person; and (2) The unworthiness of our present disposition.

(1) The unworthiness of the *person* is when a man comes without his wedding garment, <sup>Mat 22.11-13</sup> unjustified and unsanctified. And God's people cannot be thus unworthy; this is unworthiness of our *state*.

(2) There is unworthiness of our present *disposition*, or the *manner* of our partaking, when we do not come with those present dispositions and affections which are required for such an ordinance. There may be *habitual* preparation, and yet a lack of *actual* preparation which lies in examination, in the excitation of our graces, as the Apostle speaks, 1Cor 11.28: *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat, etc.* The lack of this, may make a man an unworthy receiver. This may be seen in the prayer of Hezekiah, 2Chr 30.18-19: *Good Lord, pardon everyone who prepares his heart to seek the God of his fathers, though he is not prepared according to the preparation of the Sanctuary.*

**Ans. 2.** But secondly, you may that they were God's people, in verse 32, *You are chastened by the Lord, that you may not be condemned with the world.*

It was not a *punishment*, but a *chastisement*. It is a phrase peculiar to Saints, and the end is that they may not be condemned with the world. So you can see that this place speaks plainly enough.

Let us see further. Look at Rom 8.10, *If Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin.* This is where the Apostle shows that death is the *effect* of sin; and though you are in Christ, you must still die because of sin, for sin brings death, etc. <sup>1</sup> And also look at Heb 11.6-8, *He scourges every son whom He receives; what son is he, whom He does not chastise?* And why does He chastise them? Because they are sons? That cannot be the reason; it is because they are *sinners*; it is correction, though not forever; and yet here it surely implies offense. So too in 1Pet 4.17, *Judgment must begin at the House of God.* Rev 2.12-16, where it is said to the Angel of the *Church of Pergamum*, about whom God gives this *testimony*: that he had kept the name of Christ, and had not denied the Faith of Christ, and yet there were some sins among them. God bid them to repent of them, *lest He come against them.* He shows their sins would bring calamity if they did not repent. Look at 1Cor 10.5-12. Verse 7, *Let us not be idolaters as some of them were,* etc. Verse 11, *All these things happened to them for examples and admonitions to us.* And why would these be admonitions to us, if not that we must not share with them in the *same strokes*, if we went on with them in the *same sins*.

Thus I have given you a taste of some places that seem to hold out this truth firmly to us, that *God's people may be chastised for sin*, or that *God chastises His people for sin*.

### **Various Cavils**

Now we will come to draw out their strength, and see if they are able to stand out against the strength and clearness of this truth. We will first begin with some of their cavils, which are their forlorn hope; and then we will come to the main body of their Arguments. We will leave a reserve of strength to come up after all, and make the Victory of Truth more complete and perfect.

First, to begin with their cavils.

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<sup>1</sup> **Rom 6:4** Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. **Gal 2:19** For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. <sup>20</sup> I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

CAVIL 1. GOD DOES NOT AFFLICT HIS PEOPLE *FOR* SIN, BUT CHASTISES THEM *FROM* SIN.

God, they say, does not afflict His people *for* sin, but chastises them *from* sin. The father does not give his child medicine to make him sick, but to take away bad humors,<sup>1</sup> to prevent or remove diseases.

**Ans.** Now, I call this a mere cavil. <sup>2</sup> Afflictions respect both time past, and time to come. God both afflicts His people *for* sin, and chastises them (to use their phrase) *from* sin. The father not only corrects his child to make him beware of the same fault, but for the fault already committed; to being him to repentance and sorrow for it; and to work out that disposition in him. To use their own similitude, he gives the child medicine not to increase his bad humors, but to remove them. We grant this, and we say, God *does* chastise *for* sin — not to increase sin, but to *remove* sin. And yet we say, because bad humors are the cause, he gives the child medicine; for if there were no bad humors, there would be no need of medicine. So too, sin is the cause of the affliction; if there were no sin, there might be no affliction. And if the father may give medicine for purging out bad humors before they break out, then much more to *correct* them, and *cure* them when they do break out.

So if God may afflict men for purging out a sinful disposition, then much more may He correct them for breaking out of this disposition. Indeed, their mistake here is that they look at afflictions merely as *medicine*, which you see still doesn't stand them in good stead. Afflictions are medicines *and* rods; they are thus called *rods* (as in Mic 6.9; Job 9.34; Lam 3.1) to correct us for sin committed; and *medicines* to prevent sin to come. Or if you look at them as medicine only, medicine has a double use: (1) for our present distemper, to purge that out (and so afflictions are medicine *for* sin); and (2) for our future health, to recover and regain it (and so afflictions are medicines *from* sin).

CAVIL 2: YOU CONFOUND THE *CAUSE* OF CHASTISEMENT, WITH THE *OCCASION* OF IT.

But, you say, we confound things, and put for a *cause* what is only an *occasion* for chastising. God may take an occasion from sin to chastise His people, when their sin is not the *cause* for which they are chastised. For instance, David's sin of numbering the people, upon which God brought a pestilence upon Israel. David's sin was not the cause of it; *Israel's* sin was the cause, and David's sin was but the occasion for it. It is said in 2Sam 24.1, *The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and He moved David against them, to say, Go number the people.* God was displeased with Israel; and David's sin was not the *procuring cause* of it, but God took the *occasion* to inflict this judgment upon them.

The same may be said of Hezekiah's sin in glorying in the riches of his treasure, and the strength of his armory, as you see in Isa 39.2. He shows all his riches to the ambassador of Babylon; and upon this act of his pride and boasting, God sends the Prophet to tell him that as he had tempted God, so he had but tempted an enemy, and shown him where he might have booty if he came to fetch it. That would be the result of it, for all this treasure and strength which he had revealed, would be carried into Babylon. Now, this particular sin of Hezekiah, for which God seems to threaten calamity, was not the *cause* of it; at the utmost, it was but an *occasion* for it. Therefore it is a great mistake in these and other places, to put for *causes*, those things which are but *occasions*.

**Ans.** Now to answer this charge, I wish, first, that they were no more guilty of confounding things than we are. Certainly, the lack of clear conceptions of things has been the ground of those mistakes and erroneous opinions which they have invented. But we will not recriminate; we will come to the answer, and say:

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<sup>1</sup> It was then believed that the balance of four fluids (humors) in the body, determine our emotional and physical state: blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. It was the basis of bloodletting, widely practiced into the 19th century.

<sup>2</sup> *Cavil*: a trivial objection.

1. I grant that this or that particular sin may sometimes be said to be the *occasion* rather than the *cause* of an affliction.
2. Yet we say that sin is not only an occasion, but it is oftentimes a cause not only of chastisement in general, but of this or that particular castigation. You see this in 1Cor 11.30, *For this cause many are weak, and many are sick, and many have fallen asleep*. So too in Psa 39.11.<sup>1</sup>
3. And for those allegations, I conceive they will but afford them little succor. As for the last one, that of Hezekiah, we are so far from thinking that particular sin of his to be the *cause*, that neither will we admit it was the *occasion* of those threatened calamities. We grant that it was an occasion of the *prediction*, but not of the *punishment*. By his sin, God takes the occasion to foretell the calamity which He had decreed; but this was no occasion of either the decree itself, or of the evil decreed. And for the other, that of David, it was not merely an occasion *taken*, but there was an occasion *given* by David's sin. It was not only an *occasion*, but a *cause* too. If Israel's sins were the deserving cause, then David's sin was the appearing cause. Even if Israel's sin procured this, David's sin gave the finishing and concluding stroke. It was not only his sin in numbering them, but the omission of that duty which God required when they were to be numbered, which was, Exo 30.12, *Every head that was numbered, was to give an offering to the Lord, that there would be no plague among them when they were numbered*. This being omitted, God brought a plague upon them.

This is all I will say for an answer to these cavils which are made. We will now come to their main body of arguments.

### ***Opposing Arguments and Answers***

**Arg. 1.** The first argument by which they would prove that God does not punish believers for sin, is this: **If God takes away the cause, then He takes away the effect also.** Sin is the cause of all punishment; punishment is the effect of sin. Now, if God takes away the cause, which is sin, then He also takes away the effect, which is the punishment of sin. If the body is removed, the shadow must be gone too. Sin is the body, and punishment the shadow. Take away sin, and the punishment must be taken away. And this seems to be implied in that phrase which is used in Scripture for the pardon of sin, *I will remember your sins no more*; <sup>Jer 31-34</sup> that is, I will never condemn you for them, nor hold them against you; nor yet will I punish you for them. Where He pardons sin, there He forgives the punishment.

This seems to be granted in the thing itself: *pardon* of sin. What is pardon of sin if not a removing of guilt? What is guilt if not an obligation and binding over to punishment — spiritual, temporal, and eternal? Therefore, if God takes away the *guilt* of sin, He takes away the *punishment* also.

**Ans.** To answer this, we will distinguish punishments: (1) temporal; (2) spiritual; and (3) eternal.

- (1) For *eternal* punishments, all agree that they can never lay hold on those whom Christ has set free — those, I say, whose sins he has pardoned.
- (2) For *temporal* punishments, because they are related or subordinated to eternal punishments, we are freed from them also.
- (3) And indeed, thirdly, we are freed from all *temporal* punishments:
  1. As they are parts of the curse for sin.
  2. As they are satisfactions for sin — either satisfaction by way of *purchase*, or satisfaction by way of *punishment*. We say God's justice — yes, and both parts of it; His *vindictive* and *rewarding* justice, His *commanding* and *condemning* justice — is satisfied.

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<sup>1</sup> Psa 39:11 When with rebukes You correct man for iniquity, etc.

3. As they are the mere fruits of sin, or as merely penal, for so they are parts of the curse; and so they are inflicted upon wicked men, but not upon the godly, all of whose troubles are *fruitful*, not *penal* troubles.<sup>1</sup>
4. As they are the effects of vindictive justice, and not of fatherly mercy, so we are freed from all temporal punishments for sin. God has thoughts of love in all He does to his people.
  - the *ground* of all His dealings with us is love
  - the *manner* of His dealings is love
  - the *end* of His dealings is love

Our good here, is to be made partakers of His *holiness* (Heb 12.10); our glory hereafter is to be made partakers of His *glory* (Col 3.4).

**Arg. 2. If Christ has borne whatever our sins deserved**, and by that has satisfied God's justice to the full, **then God cannot in justice punish us for sin**. That would be to require the full payment from Christ, and then part of the payment from us as well. But God's justice is fully satisfied in Christ. *Ergo...*

**Ans. 1.** I grant that God's justice is fully satisfied in Christ. He can require no more than what Christ has done and suffered. He has abundantly satisfied. And therefore, far be it from anyone to say that God chastises His children for sin, for satisfaction of His justice. Christ has done that, and has left nothing for us to bear by way of satisfaction. The Papists say that our sufferings are indeed satisfactions, and therefore they do penance, and punish themselves. But I know of none of ours who say it. We say that God does not chastise us as satisfaction for sin, except to bring us to *mourn* for our sins committed, and to *beware* of the like.

**Ans. 2.** But secondly, God may chastise the Saints for the sin which He yet forgives, and which Christ has borne the punishment of. Though Christ has borne the punishment of sin, yet God may fatherly correct his people for sin. Christ endured the great shower of wrath, the black and dismal shower of His displeasure for sin. But what falls upon us is a sunshine shower, warmth with wet — the wet warmth of love to make us fruitful and humble. Christ drank so much of the dregs of that bitter cup as would damn us, and he left so much as would humble us. What you suffer for sin is not *penal*, arising from God's vindictive justice; but *medicinal*, arising from a fatherly love. It is your *medicine*, not your punishment; it is your *chastisement*, not your sentence, your *correction*, not your condemnation. In brief then, God may chastise the Saints for those sins for which Christ has satisfied, and He himself has forgiven; and this is for many reasons. Augustine names three: for the demonstration of our due misery; for the amendment of our life; and for the exercise of our patience. I will name these five reasons:

1. God may do it for the terror of wicked men, so that they may read their destiny in the Saints' miseries. If it is thus done with the *green* tree, what will become of the *dry* tree? If it thus befalls the *sheep* of Christ, what will become of *wolves*, and of *goats*? If he deals thus with *friends*, what will become of his *enemies*? If *judgement begins at the House of God*,<sup>1Pet 4.17</sup> where will the wicked appear?
2. For the manifestation of His justice, that he might declare to the world that he is just. If he were to punish others for sin, and spare his own, wicked men would say he is partial, that He respected persons.<sup>Col 3.25</sup> And therefore, to declare that he is just and impartial, he chastises his own.
3. To remove scandal. The sins of the Saints bring scandal upon religion. Their sins are the sins of public persons, each one stands for many. God was more dishonored by David's impurity,

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<sup>1</sup> That is, for the godly (those who belong to Christ), sin will have its consequences (the *fruit* of sin); these consequences are not from God as punishment for their sins (*penal*), but are self-inflicted wounds. – WHG



than by all the filth of Sodom. The ways of God were blasphemed by it, as the Prophet tells him, 2Sam 12.14. And on that ground, because he gave occasion for it, God chastised him.

4. As a caution to others. Others' woes should be our warnings; others' sufferings, our sermons; and standing sermons *to beware of the like*. Thus God chastises, *ne in alios grassetur peccatum*, lest sin spread. The Apostle set this down at large in 1Cor 10.5-12. Lot's wife was turned to a pillar of salt, *ut te condiret*, to season you.
5. For their own good here, and furtherance of their salvation hereafter.
  - *To humble them more for their sin*. When sin comes clad and arrayed with a cross or sad affliction, it works deeper for humiliation. Afflictions draw men's thoughts inward. As with the wicked, so the godly sometimes have a careless ear that can hear the indictments of sin, and yet not lay it to heart. And therefore God opens their ears by discipline. *In their month, you will find them*.<sup>1</sup> *Schola crucis, est schola lucis*; God's house of correction, is his school of instruction. When an affliction is upon us, we are then ready to listen to the indictments of sin, the checks of conscience, the reproofs of God. And we will be ready to lie down and humble ourselves under them. That's one end.
  - *To work the heart to a further distance from sin*.
  - *To prevent the like: ictus piscatur sapit*; our sufferings will be our warnings. Men who have felt the sting of the Serpent in *affliction* for sin, will beware of the spawn of the Serpent in the *pollution* of sin. We read that before the Babylonian captivity, the children of Israel were ever and anon<sup>2</sup> falling into idolatry, and the whole *creation* was scarcely large enough for them to make idols of. They could scarcely find *creatures* enough to make idols of. But once God had carried them captive into Babylon, and scourged them soundly for their idolatry, of all sins (to this day) they never returned to idols; even to this day, they abhor pictures.

Many other reasons might be laid down. In sum, here is the main: *God chastises us to make us partakers of His holiness here; and of His glory hereafter* — indeed, to sweeten heaven and glory for us. The philosopher Zeno sought out torment to help him taste pleasure. He said that pleasures were worth nothing if they were not thus seasoned. Those *light afflictions you have here for a moment*, will be a mighty offset to that *far exceeding, and eternal weight of glory*.<sup>2Cor 4.17</sup> I will proceed no further with these reasons.

To all this, give me leave to add this much in this unhappy difference, and we will conclude this answer. I will give you but a few thoughts to consider.

(1) Sin naturally brings evil on us. Just as there is peace and good in the ways of holiness, so there is evil and trouble in the ways of sin; they are never separated. Trouble is the natural and proper fruit of sin, that which it naturally bears. Indeed, it is the very center of it. Sin is *malum catholicum* — a big-bellied *universal* evil. All evils are the births of sin. If you could rip up sin, you would find all evil in its bowels. There may be an evil of punishment where there is no evil of sin in it; but all evil of punishment lies in the evil of sin. All the Commandments were given for good, and your good lies in obedience to them. And whoever breaks God's bounds, necessarily runs into evil and trouble. Sin is born of our hearts, and trouble is born of sin; and trouble is as true a child of sin, as sin is the natural issue of our souls. *This is the first*: sin not only brings evil and trouble by consequence and God's ordination, but it does so naturally.

(2) Secondly, the evil that sin brings, or the trouble that comes by sin, is either by *chance*, or by *providence*. But it is by Divine dispensation, and *not* by chance. Job tells us so, and surely he tells

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<sup>1</sup> Jer 2:24 A wild donkey used to the wilderness, sniffs at the wind in her desire; In her time of mating, who can turn her away? All those who seek her will not weary themselves; In her month they will find her.

<sup>2</sup> *Ever and anon*: repeatedly and often (with only short respites between).

us the truth. Job 5.6, *Afflictions do not arise out of the dust*. And Christ says that not a hair can fall from your head, without providence.<sup>1</sup> And if not a hair, if not the smallest thing without providence, then much less the greater. So then, the evil that comes by sin is not by chance, but by providence, by Divine dispensation.

(3) If it is from providence, then it is either from God's *active*, or his *passive* providence. Or you may take it thus: either from his *permissive* providence, or by his active *ordaining* providence. To say it is by his permissive providence only, cannot be well suited with God, who is all act; nor with these words of the prophet Amos, *Is there any evil in the City which I have not done?* <sup>Amo 3.6</sup> You know it means only the evils of punishment, not the evil of sin; for God has no hand in that.

There are many things which God permits in the world, which He does not do; those are the evils of sin. But the evils of punishment, these He both permits and does. *Is there any evil in the City which I have not done?* <sup>Amo 3.6</sup> And in Isa 42.24-25, where the prophet asks the same question and gives the same answer, *Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Was it not the Lord, against whom we have sinned?* — So you see that all these come from Divine dispensation. God brings this evil, and he also tells us it is for sin.

(4) If God in His providence brings any evil upon His people, it is either out of *love*, or out of *anger*, or out of *hatred*.

1. It is not out of *hatred*; we grant that this cannot be. There is nothing that God does to His people that is any fruit or effect of hatred. But indeed, afflictions on the wicked are fruits of hatred; some are drops before the great shower of wrath falls upon them. But it is not so with His own people.
2. Then secondly, it is either out of *love* or *anger*. Certainly it is not out of anger alone, without love; for the principle, the ground, the end of all his dealings with his people is love. There is nothing he does to them that is separated from love; there is love in all. No I say, they proceed from love. *Psa 25.10, For all His ways are ways of mercy, to those who fear Him*. But because afflictions and chastisements are evils, and seem to be the effects of someone who is angry and displeased, I therefore say that though they come from love, yet it is from love *displeased*, from love *offended*. Paul says, *Phi 2.27, God had mercy on him* in restoring Epaphroditus to health. Why? Would it not also have been a mercy to Paul if he had died? Are not *all* His ways, ways of mercy? And therefore, even if he had died, would it not have been a mercy too? What will we say to this? Will we say that it would have been a mercy in the outcome, and the event, because God would sanctify it to him, and do him good by it? As Paul himself says. *Rom 8.28, All things will work together for good to those who love God*.

Indeed, this is good; but this is not all. Sin itself may be a mercy in the outcome. For the Psalmist says, *All His ways, are ways of mercy*. There is not a step that God takes towards his people — not an action that God does, not one dispensation of providence — that is not out of mercy. Therefore, what is the meaning of *God had mercy on me in restoring him*? Why does Paul need to say so, seeing that it would have been a mercy if Epaphroditus had been taken away, and God would have shown mercy to Paul if he had died? Why then does Paul say, *God had mercy on me in restoring him*? Indeed, it would have been a mercy to Paul if he had died, but a *correcting* mercy, mercy in *chastisement*. The Apostle seems to imply by this phrase, that there is a *middle ground*, or at least a difference between mercy in *restoring* Epaphroditus, and mercy in *depriving* Paul of him. It would have been mercy, but a correcting mercy, if God had taken him away.<sup>2</sup> So I say here, though affliction and chastisements are

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<sup>1</sup> Mat 10.29-30; Luk 21.18.

<sup>2</sup> It is unclear why Bolton would think that either Paul or Epaphroditus was in need of *correction*. There is nothing in the Philippian passage to indicate there was a specific sin to warrant it; only sin generally. It may be that he is using this as an example of correction given out of love, which does *not* proceed from love that is displeased or offended.

given out of love, yet because they are evil in themselves, they often (though not always) proceed from love *displeased* or *offended*.

We say that God is indeed angry — not that we are to conceive there is anger in God; he has no passions or affections in him. But we say He is angry because he deals with us, as men are used to dealing with those with whom they are angry. They withdraw from them; chide them; rebuke them; and correct them. And so does God, in a paternal displeasure with those he dearly loves.

### **Closing Propositions**

But we will close this Query with a few particulars which we will lay down for your full satisfaction in it.

**Proposition 1.** God never chastises his people for sin. I say, all the chastisements which God inflicts on his people are *not* for sin. There are some which he inflicts for the prevention of sin, as Paul's temptation was; some for testing grace, as Job's affliction seems to be. Divines distinguish various kinds of afflictions. Some are castigations for sin; some are testimonies to the truth; some are probations of faith, and exercises of our graces. So that, though it is granted that God chastises for sin, yet all the afflictions with which God exercises us, are not for sin. Though it might be said that sin is the general ground for all calamities, it may be said that this or that affliction does not have any particular sin as the procuring cause of it — as you see in Job's and Paul's trials.

**Proposition 2.** God sometimes takes occasion, by the sins of his people, to afflict and chastise them. And maybe this much will be granted on all hands. Many will grant that sin is the *occasion*, who will not grant that sin is the *cause* for which God afflicts his people. I say, many will not grant that sin is the *cause*, yet they will admit that sin is an *occasion* for why God afflicts his people. And indeed, this or that particular sin often seems to be an occasion, rather than a cause of the punishment. Sin may be the *cause*, and yet this or that particular sin may only be the *occasion*, as I have shown before.

**Proposition 3.** God not only takes occasion *by sin*, but God often *for sin*, chastises and afflicts his people. I say, *for sin*, not only for the prevention and cure of sin, but for the punishment and correction of it, as I have shown at large. God makes us see sin in its *effects*, when we will not see it in its *cause*; to see sin in its *fruits*, when we will not see it in the *root*. God reveals sin to us in his *works*, when we will not see it in his *word*. That which we will not learn by *faith*, he will teach us by *sense*. Pro 10.13, *A rod is for the back of a fool*.

**Proposition 4.** When God chastises his people for sin, his chastisements are not fruits of wrath, or parts of the curse; there is no wrath in them; they are not satisfactions for sin; they are not done out of vindictive justice; they are not merely penal, but *medicinal*; their ground is displeased love, and their end is to be embraced more fully.

And this must suffice for the answer to the second Query, which I hope may satisfy.

### 3. Duty is Consistent with Freedom

#### Query 3. Is being tied to duty by God's command, consistent with Christian Freedom?

We now come to the next, and third Query: *Whether this may consist with our Christian freedom: to be tied to do our duty, because God has commanded it.*

The question might have been parted into two questions:

1. Whether it may consist with our Christian freedom, to be tied to doing our duty.
2. Whether we are tied to doing our duty, because God has commanded it.

And we will find both these opinions are held:

1. That it is an infringement of our freedom that we have by Christ, to be tied to the performance of duty at all; and,
2. It is far below the free spirit of Saints to be tied to doing our duty because God has commanded it.

So you see, they might have been separated; but for brevity's sake, we will fold them together in one Question; yet we will answer both parts distinctly.

**Ans. 1.** For the first part, whether it may consist with our Christian freedom to be tied to doing our duty, I say it is out of the question that it is. It is no infringement to our liberty in Christ, to be tied to the performance of duty. It was the great end of our freedom and redemption, that we might serve him. Christ redeemed us from sin, specifically to serve. As Zacharias said in his song, Luk 1.74-75, *That we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of our life.* Christ has not redeemed us from the *matter* of service, but from the *manner* of service. He has redeemed us from a slavish spirit in service, to a son-like spirit; from a spirit of bondage, to a spirit of liberty; he has broken the bonds of subjection to other lords, that we might take on ourselves the yoke of service to him, *whose yoke is easy, and whose burden is light*, Mat 11.30.

And therefore, after the Apostle had set down the main privileges which we enjoy by the redemption of Christ — such as justification, freedom from the guilt and power of sin — he infers that *we are therefore debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh, but to the spirit, to live after the spirit, etc.*, Rom 8.12-13 — it is a truth so plain, as if it were written with a sunbeam. It is as easy to separate the light from the sun, as to separate holiness and obedience from the person who is justified. Tit 2.11-12, *The grace of God which has appeared to us, says the Apostle, teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live piously, godly, and soberly in this present world.* So that, there is no controversy about the first part. It *does* consist with our freedom, to be tied to obedience or performance of duty; indeed, it is *part* of our freedom. And indeed, that is true and real bondage, which is *not* joined with sincere and true obedience.

But now there is some controversy about the second part of it, whether this is any infringement of our Christian liberty, to be tied to duty *because God has commanded it*. Many, though they would do their duty, would yet not be *tied* to it; they would rather do it upon the *inclinations* of their own spirits, than upon the *impositions* of God. There three mistakes about this.

#### **Three mistakes regarding our motives to duty.**

**Mistake 1.** Some think they should not do any duty, unless the Spirit of God moves them to it.

**Ans.** Indeed, when the Spirit moves, it is good to go, to spread your sails when the wind blows, to open when He knocks. As it was said to David when he heard the noise in the mulberry trees, then he should *go out, for God had gone out before him.* <sup>2Sam 5.24</sup> So too, when you find such strong movings upon your spirits, it is good to take those hints of the Spirit; it is good to join with the season. Many are like harlots who would murder the child in the womb to avoid the trouble of

childbirth; so they would murder the births of the Spirit, because they would not have the trouble of the work. That is a fearful sin, to throw water, and quench and cool any motions of the Spirit of God. When God moves, He also comes with power for the performance of the duty; then we go full sail, and it is good to take those hints. But good hearts often mistake here, to their own perplexing. They think that if they don't go with *every* motion, however unseasonable, they have quenched and rejected a motion of the Spirit. I therefore conceive it is not amiss to tell you that sometimes Satan may put us upon a duty, when we think the Spirit of God does it; you may think this is strange, and yet it is a truth. And there are usually four times when Satan puts men on duty:

1. When our spirits are greatly sunken down, *oppressed* either with temptations or troubles, he may then put us on duty. I say, not only does God put us on duty at these times, but sometimes Satan too. He deals with us as the Babylonians dealt with the Israelites in Babylon, oppressed with captivity; then they said, *Come now, sing us one of the songs of Zion.* <sup>Psa 137:3</sup> So too, when our spirit is oppressed and overwhelmed, when Satan thinks we are greatly disadvantaged, and we will but torture ourselves, and discourage ourselves more, then it may be that he puts us to *pray*, and not to *believe*. It is like those who dealt with Christ; they blindfolded his eyes and then bid him to prophecy who it is that strikes him. So here, once Satan has blinded our eyes, he now bids us to see, to prophecy, to pray — when he has disturbed our spirits, when he has troubled the sea so that it brings up nothing but mire and dirt, distrustful and unbelieving thoughts; *then* he bids us to go and pray. And yet, sometimes this helps to belay the storm, and quiet the spirit too, and Satan loses by it. It proves to his own disadvantage, as *unexpected* grace comes in, which he was not aware of nor could foresee.<sup>1</sup>

2. A second time when Satan may put us on duty, is when we are called to other employments by God, either *natural* or *spiritual*.

- (1) *Spiritual*, either to hear, confer, or do other duties — then Satan bids us to pray; he loves to make our duties interfere.

- (2) Or when we are called to *natural* employments — it may be to eat, drink, or sleep — Satan sometimes carries a poor soul out of his bed, or from his food, and he must now go pray (which perhaps has not been to Satan's advantage either). This is how he sometimes deals with poor souls in temptation: if they don't do it at his instigation, he tells them they have resisted a motion of the Spirit; and if they do it, it is for their trouble too. Perhaps he will charge them, after all, with popery and superstition, and voluntary penance; so they must rise in the night to go to prayer, etc. Who requires this at your hand? It would be good in such cases, to say with a godly man who was thus *moved* to prayer when he was to go to sleep: "Get away from here, Satan. I will go to duty when *God* calls, and not when *you* suggest. I have committed my soul into the arms of Christ, and in His arms I rest and sleep."

3. A third time when Satan may put us on duty, is when we are *weak in body*, and not able to perform it. When we lack *natural* spirits to do the work, then he will put us to it. He knows that if we do it, he can take advantage of us, because of our natural weakness. When he puts us to lift logs, he knows we are weak. When he moves us to duty, he knows we have no strength.<sup>2</sup>

4. A fourth time when he puts us upon duty, is when he thinks to put us in a snare; when he thinks duty will become a snare to us. He puts us on it, not as *God's work*, but as *our snare*; he moves us to it merely as a scruple;<sup>3</sup> and to scruple us further, as to whether we will do it or not.

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<sup>1</sup> And therefore, it is not wrong to do our duty, even if Satan is the one moving us to it.

<sup>2</sup> Bolton implies that Satan's aim is to frustrate us, thus luring us to sin or be harmed in our weakness. Therefore, if we lack the strength, we should avoid the duty. For if it is the *Spirit* moving us, he will also supply the strength (see 4).

<sup>3</sup> *Scruple*: to be uneasy or doubtful about the fitness of an action.

He puts us on duty, not to *comfort* us, but to *torment* and vex us; not to *raise us* when we are dejected, but to *cast us lower* — though we are often mistaken.

And yet, though Satan sometimes moves us, as you see, God's Spirit often moves and stirs up the heart to duty. But when *He* moves indeed, he moves *effectually*. He puts you on the duty, *and* he gives you the strength to do it; he carries you through it, etc. And it is good to observe God's times, and the hints of the Spirit, and go with them.

This is the first answer to that mistake of only doing a duty if God moves us to it.

**Ans. 2.** Though we are to go when God's Spirit moves us, yet we are not to neglect our duty when we don't perceive such sensible motions of the Spirit. Grace moves us, or it *should* move us to converse with God every day; and if so, then the Spirit moves, the Spirit regenerates, even if the Spirit's regenerating isn't apparent. God's Spirit may move secretly, though not apparently and sensibly to our soul.

Besides, if you look for an immediate (*direct*) call to duty, then you will not do your duty on your own, out of obedience to the command. We must sometimes do our duty out of obedience, even if we lack both a heart *for it*, and a heart *in it*. That duty is esteemed by God, which is gotten and wrested out of the hands of the flesh; which is done against temptations and misgivings.

Besides, if you never go to duty except when the Spirit sensibly moves you, you would often lack that communion with God which you enjoy. How often have you gone to prayer with a *dead* heart, and rose with a *quickened* one; with a *strait* heart, and rose again with an *enlarged* one; with a *dejected* heart, and rose *comforted*? How often when you could find no such motion of God before, have you yet met with God in the duty, and enjoyed God in a prayer, in a glorious and sweet way? Isa 64.5, *You meet him who rejoices and works righteousness, who remembers You in your ways*. God loves to meet those who are in His way. Though the miller is not able to command a wind, yet he will spread his sails, to be in the way to have it if it comes. <sup>1</sup> Though the lame man could not get into the waters by himself, nor command their movings, yet he lay by the side of the waters 38 years, no doubt with a great deal of longing every time the waters moved. Joh 5.5f. *Oh, that someone would throw me in!* So too, though we cannot bring the Spirit to us, let us set ourselves in the way for Him to meet with us. Uphold the performance of duties; for by them you come to see the face of God, to converse with Him. As you keep headway against sin; you get supplies of strength from Christ; you get above the world. Those who speak against the performance of duty, might as well speak against the actings of faith, and the exercise of grace. For prayer is nothing else but the *communication* of the soul with God, the *actings* of faith, and the *exercise* of grace.

But we will close this. So much for the first mistake, which was that some think they are not to do any duty, unless the Spirit of God moves them to it.

**Mistake 2.** There is a second mistake. Some think they are to do nothing else but pray. God has commanded us to pray, and they think they are to do nothing else. And therefore, ever and anon, they run to their knees, drop a bead as it were, repeat a paternoster, and with too much of a popish spirit too <sup>2</sup> — as if it is so much done to obtain life; so much laid out for the purchase of a pardon and heaven. There are too many such persons. They are especially of two sorts:

1. Those who are blind and ignorant. They would gladly go to heaven; and they hear they ought to pray. And therefore they go to prayer every moment; they will not miss heaven for lack of prayer.
2. There are those who are in humiliation, with wounded spirits; poor souls! They go ever and anon to their knees, which for some is the *dawning* of faith, faith climbing up to Christ. But others go to it as a salve to heal their wound; as so many bribes for a pardon; or as so much good money

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<sup>1</sup> Alluding to a windmill to grind the grain into flour.

<sup>2</sup> Referring to Roman Catholic prayer beads for counting prayers; and to a mindless repetition of the Lord's Prayer.

laid out for the purchase of glory. *Naturally*, men run to a Covenant of Works; but it must be *another* work that brings us to Christ. A *convicted* man may run to a Covenant of Works; but it must be a *converted* man who comes over to the Covenant of Grace.

So much for the second mistake.

**Mistake 3.** There are some who think they are to do their duty, not because God commands it, but because their own hearts incline them to it.

**Ans.** To this I answer and say that, though we must do our duties because God has commanded us, it is not sufficient to do them *merely* because God has commanded them. You must pray, you must hear, and do other duties, because God has commanded them; but not *only* because God has commanded them.

For the explication of this, you must know that laws are two-fold: *Positive* and *Natural*. Or, there are some commands which are founded on God's *will*, and some that are founded on God's *nature*.

Those that are founded on God's *will*, are those which are good because God commands them. Such were many under the Old Testament, like their ceremonies, and their forbidden foods. These were things that were neither good nor evil in themselves, but only as God had commanded or forbidden them.

Some, again, were founded on God's Nature, and were intrinsically and inherently good; not only because God commanded them, but they were good in themselves.

1. Now for the first of these, *Positive* Laws. These were founded on God's mere will, such as those laws mentioned before. It is sufficient that we obey them *merely* because God has commanded them. The Apostle called them a *heavy yoke, which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear*. (Act 15.10) In calling them a heavy yoke, it demonstrates that their obedience to them was more because God commanded them, than out of an inherent or intrinsic goodness in them. In calling them a *heavy yoke*, it was a sign that they obeyed them not out of love of the things commanded, but out of love of that God who commanded them. They were a heavy yoke, yet they bore it till God took it off; they were hard laws, yet they submitted to them till God was pleased to repeal and disannul them. And indeed, I may call it *submission*, for their obedience was more out of submission than delight. And for these laws, it was sufficient that they obeyed them merely because God commanded them.

2. But now the other: those commands and things which were founded upon *God's Nature*, and were in their own nature good and holy. For those, it is not sufficient to obey only because God commanded them. There must be an inward principle agreeable to them, an inward loving and embracing of them, which arises from the suitableness of the heart to them. These commands must not be esteemed a *heavy yoke*, nor a burden, but a *delight*; and principles of love are required in doing them.

When I say, you are *commanded* to love God, to fear God, honor God, it not enough that you do this because God commands it — there must be an inward principle bred in us by which we do all this. Someone who loves God *merely* because God has commanded it, doesn't love God at all. And if that is all, then if God had not commanded it, he would not do it. But a Christian is to do this even if there was never a command to bind him to it. He sees so much beauty and loveliness in God, his heart is so taken with Him, that he *must* love Him.

So too for prayer; it is not enough that a man prays merely because God commanded it; but he is to go to this duty out of his desire for communion with God. He goes upon the duty, not as a duty that is commanded of him — for so carnal hearts say they do, who have no love for the duty. But a believer goes upon it as a means of *converse* and *communion* with God. And he thinks it is his *happiness* when he can enjoy a little communion with Him in a duty. He goes to converse with God, not as a servant goes to his *master*, but as a child goes to his *father*; not as his *duty*, but as

his *nature*; not as his *service* only, but as his *privilege* — esteeming access to God, and communion with Him, as one of the top privileges of a Christian.

Christians are indeed free from duty, by their *freedom* in Christ — but in these ways:

1. We are free from duty as our *task*; for so it was a burden to us. We are not like day laborers in the ways of God, who are to earn every penny we have, at the hands of God. We are free from duty as our task.

2. We are free from duty merely as our *trade*. Though we walk in the ways of duty, we don't walk in them merely as our trade; for that is not for love of the *work*, but love of the *gains* which come by it. A Christian will do a duty, even if he has no gains coming by it, because he loves the work; the work itself is *reward* and *wages* to him. A man who loves sin, whose nature is *vassalized* to sin, will drink and sin even to his utter undoing. So a godly man will serve God; he will uphold the ways of obedience, even though he finds no income. There is such a suitableness between a godly man and the work, that he will do it even though he sees nothing come in by it.

3. We are freed from the *slavery* of spirit in duty, and we do our duty out of a *childlike* spirit. The one does a duty because of his fear of blows, his fear of the club. Were it not for fear of that — of God punishing him — he would not do his duties. But the other would do a duty even if there were no punishment for its omission. He counts this his greatest punishment, to be denied communion with God, conversation with Him; this is enough for him to do his duty.

There is a childlike speech of Absalom in 2Sam 14, that exemplifies this a little. Absalom had been banished from the court and from Jerusalem. But afterward, through the mediation of Joab, he was received again to Jerusalem. Yet he was denied communion with his father, upon which Absalom sends Joab to mediate for him. The pardoning of his fault was not apprehended to be so great a *mercy*, as the banishment from his father's sight was esteemed to be a *misery*. And therefore Absalom says, *Let me see his face, though he kill me*. He thought no punishment for his fault could be so great an evil, as to be denied access to his father, and communion with him.

So it is here with the soul: it thinks this is the greatest punishment, to be denied access to God, and communion with Him. Oh, he esteems this the top of misery; he would rather be killed in communion and access to God, than to enjoy every freedom in the lack and denial of it. A corrupt heart does its duty because of the punishment if he doesn't do it; but a holy heart esteems it the top of punishment to be denied communion with God. He esteems access to God and communion with Him to be his top happiness. *Blessed is the man You cause to approach you*, says the Psalmist. <sup>Psa 65.4</sup> He conceives his blessedness to consist in approaches to God.

4. He is free from duty upon the *tenders* <sup>1</sup> and terms commanded in the Law. He doesn't do duty so that it might go well with him here; nor does he do duty to obtain glory hereafter. He looks upon communion and converse with God, as happiness enough. His spirit does not act in this way: *Pray and obey, and it will go well with you here, and you shall have heaven hereafter*. Rather, he esteems it a piece of heaven to have communion with God here. This is *coelum extra coelum* (*heaven outside of heaven*). He doesn't need to be drawn to it by any promises; there is enough in the thing itself — in communion with God — to induce and make his soul desire it.

He goes about duty as a piece of reward, which if he can but find God in it, and have converse and communion with God in it, then *Oh*, there is heaven enough and glory enough for his soul. As for *other prayers* in which his soul has no communion with God, he has so much comfort from them, that his soul, in such a duty, set itself in sincerity to converse with God, to have *communion* with God, even though miserable poor man that he was, he otherwise lacked it.

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<sup>1</sup> *Tender*: a medium of payment, or a proposal to purchase something at a specified price.



### ***Nine Differences Between Legal and Evangelical Obedience***

Give me leave to give you the difference between these two spirits, *Legal* and *Evangelical*, in nine or ten particulars. It may be worth your observance.

1. The principle that carries the one person upon duty is *slavish*; the other *childlike*. One does these things with a *Legal* spirit — he either hopes for reward by it, or he fears punishment if he doesn't do it. The other does it with an *Evangelical* spirit — he goes about this for communion with God. He sees that his reward and happiness is to have communion with Him; and the lack of it is the greatest punishment.

2. The one does these things as his *delight*; the other as his *burden*. And indeed, it must be a burden to those who don't find God in prayer — either something of God going out from them to Him, or something of God coming down from Him to them. For those who deal with nothing but duty in their duty, such duty is tedious to them. But for those who deal with God, with *Christ*, in duty, such duty is delightful to them. Now, for those who, though they pray, have nothing to do with God in prayer, they have *no converse* with Him; they deal with nothing but duty in this duty. And indeed, not even with duty in it; for they deal with the *world*, with *sin* in duty, and not with *duty* in duty, much less with *God* in duty. And therefore it is tedious to them.

But the other deals with *God*. That is, he *labors*, he *breathes*, his heart *gasps* after Him. It is God whom he has in his eyes, whom he labors after in prayer, even if he cannot enjoy Him.

3. The one does his duty out of convictions of conscience; the other out of the propensities of Nature. Many men whose obedience is their *precept*, but not their *principle*; whose holiness is their *law*, but not their *nature* — many men who are *convicted* — are not *converted*.

Many who are convicted that they *ought* to do this, that they *ought* to pray, yet lack hearts to embrace those things they are convicted of, and which they do. Mere conviction is a *tyrant* rather than a *king*; it *constrains*, it doesn't *persuade*; it *forces*, it doesn't *move* and incline the soul to obedience; it is but a *daring*, not a *reforming* light — it dares a man not to sin; it dares a man to do a duty, but it doesn't enable a man either to *hate* sin, or to *love* duty. And so, all that they do, is done out of mere convictions of *conscience*, not out of propensities of *nature*. Conscience tells you that you ought to do these things, but it gives you no strength to do them. Mere conviction only reveals the way; it tells you what to do, but it doesn't carry the soul in it. Like a stone marker set by the path, it shows the way to the traveller, but it gives no strength to *walk* in it. But now, where there are *principles*, where there is *grace*, it is in the soul like a pilot is in the ship. It not only reveals the way, but it steers us and carries us in the way that it reveals.

4. The one looks for *satisfaction* in the duty *by* the duty; the other looks for satisfaction *in* the duty *by Christ*; he works *beyond* the duty for his satisfaction.

5. The one contents himself with the *shell*; the other is not content without the *substance*. The one goes about his duty as the *means of Communion* with God, to see God and enjoy God, and have converse with God in it. The other goes upon it merely to satisfy the *grumbings* and *quarrels* of his conscience.

6. The one does them, but he looks to *live* by them. Ask many a soul who prays, how he thinks to come to heaven, and he will tell you it is by prayer. But now, the other does them, and looks *past* them; he looks to live *by Christ alone*. He lives *in* duty, but not *by* duty; he lives *in* obedience, and yet *above* his obedience. Gal 2.20, *I live, yet not I, but Christ in me*. He looks for as much by Christ, as if he had never prayed a prayer, or shed a tear. Even if he has done this *abundantly*, yet he looks up to Christ in respect to his *acceptance*, as if he had done none himself.

7. The one does these things *coldly* and *formally*; the other does them *fervently*. And yet I have no doubt that there may be coldness in a godly man, and earnestness in another. If Baal's priests

prayed to their idol so earnestly, then much more will a natural conscience pray to God.<sup>1</sup> A natural man may pray earnestly; there is no question that Ahab was earnest. A condemned man may cry earnestly for a pardon. A natural man may pray earnestly at times, when in fear and horror, under pangs of conscience; he may at such times cry *earnestly*, but not *believingly*. There may be great *affections* in a prayer, when there is but little *faith*. These are fleshly affections, natural affections, raised affections, from convictions, fears, horrors, etc. These are but the cries of nature, of sense and reason, the cries of *flesh*, not of *faith*. Whereas the affections which *faith* raises are not *loud*, yet they are *strong*; though they are *still*, they are *deep*; though they are not so *violent*, they are *sweeter* and more lasting.

8. Again, one does duties by way of subservience to other ends. That which makes duty desirable to someone, may be only in some respects; the duty is desirable only in a particular case. You know things that are looked at as evil in one case, which may be desirable in another. A merchant casting his goods out of a sinking ship, looks at this as in no way desirable; he casts away his heart with them. Yet he submits to it in this case, to save his life. So those who desire duty and holiness only in some cases, look at prayer, obedience, or mortification of their lusts, etc., as so many hard tasks and impositions which they must *submit to*, if they would come to glory. But the other embraces these as his heaven, as a part of his happiness, a piece of his glory. He doesn't embrace these out of *submission*, but out of *delight*; these are not his *penance*, but his *glory*, his *desire*.

The one parts with sin, not because sin is *undesirable*, for he weeps for it; but because it is *damning*. He parts with sin as Jacob parted with Benjamin (Gen 43), because otherwise he would starve; or as Phaltiel parted with Michal (2Sam 3.14-15), because otherwise he would lose his head; or as the merchant parted with his goods, because otherwise he would lose his life. And so he embraces holiness, not out of love and desire for it, but because he must endure this if he would come to heaven. But now, the other parts with his sin as he would part with poison, as an accursed thing which he desires to be rid of; and he embraces holiness as his happiness, which he thirsts to enjoy, and to be swallowed up with.

9. The one does duty as the sick man eats his food; not out of desire and *delight*, but out of *reason*; it is more out of a conviction that he will die if he doesn't eat, than out of a desire or stomach for the food. The other does duty as a healthy man feeds; not merely out of reason, but out of desire and delight in it. Or the one embraces duty as a curative, and not as food; as with medicine, and not meat. There is reluctance to it; it is in no way desirable except in this case, in the case of health. The other embraces it as a healthy man does with his meat; there is delight, desire, and pleasure in feeding on it. These are the newborn babes who desire the sincere milk (1Pet 2.2) — the one cries, *The good that I would do, I cannot do; and the evil that I would not do, I do* (Rom 7.19). The other cries, *The good that I have no desire to do, I do; and the evil that I desire to do, I dare not do* — he would sin, but dares not, because of wrath. He does his duty but has no heart for it, because he lacks a suitable spirit.

All delight in duty, arises from a *suitableness* of spirit in doing them. If there is no *grace* within, as well as *duty* without, if there are no *principles* agreeable to the *precepts*, then the heart can never delight in them. Here is the ground that a godly man walks in duty: it is not merely because it is *commanded*, but because he acts according to his *new nature* in his obedience. The Law of God, which is in the Book, is transcribed into his heart. It is his *nature*, his *new nature*, so that he acts in his own renewed nature, *acting* in obedience. The eye needs no command to see, nor the ear to hear; it is their nature. The command is, in itself, the faculty of seeing at the command to

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<sup>1</sup> Don't confuse this with what Bolton said in the previous section about the difference between doing something merely out of duty, and doing it by nature. It is the *nature* of a spiritual man to do his duty, and not merely an obligation. Here in this section, Bolton is speaking of the *natural* man, as distinct from the *spiritual* man (1Cor 2.14).

see, and of the ear to hear, and of us to *live* in obedience — just as it is the nature of the fish to swim in the water, and the bird to fly in the air.

## Conclusion

And therefore, we do not obey *merely* because it is commanded; that is for those who have no *principle* in them. But we obey out of principles which God has implanted in us, suitable to the commands of God. Indeed, the command is the *Rule* without, but grace is the *principle* within. The heart and command reflect one another. Just as face reflects face in the water, or in a mirror, so it is with the heart and the command; the command is *transcribed* into the heart (Jer 31.33). This is why there is so much delight in obedience, because it is *natural* to obey, so far as the heart is renewed. As it is *natural* for the eye to see, and the ear to hear, so it is *natural* for the heart to obey, so far as it is renewed. And hence comes delight. Psa 40.8, *I delight to do your will, Oh my God*. And he shows by the words that follow, what this delight was in: *Your Law is in my heart*. There was the ground of it: the Law was not only his *command*, but his *nature*. So long as the Law is only your command, you cannot delight to do the will of God. You do duties, but you cannot delight in them, unless you are looking at them as something for glory, something for heaven. But once the Law of God becomes your *nature*, then you come to *delight* in obedience, and in the ways of God.

Actions of *nature* are actions of *delight*; The eye is never weary of seeing, nor the ear of hearing. Nor does the heart weary of obeying, so far as it is renewed, so far as it is sanctified, because it is its nature. God promised in his Covenant, to *write His laws in the tablet of the heart* (Jer 17.1). Poor men, you have the Law in tablets of stone, and write it down as a mere copy. It is a thing outside you, and you have work *indeed*. But God says he will write them in the tablets of the heart. He will transplant them into the soul, by which they will become our nature. And then obedience will not be a *foreign* command, a Law outside you; but obedience will be a *natural* thing, a Law *within* you, as your nature. Hence comes that abundance of delight in the *Law*, as you see up and down in Psalm 119. Hence comes that delight in *obedience* to it, because all this is now your nature; and so far as it acts, it acts with delight.

I grant there may be a kind of irksomeness and tediousness in us at times, to do those things which yet are natural and full of delight. Though it is natural for the eye to see; and *the eye is never weary of seeing* that in which it delights, as Solomon says. <sup>Ecc 1.8</sup> This is to be understood of an eye that is healthy. For if the eye is nearsighted, it may breed a tediousness in the eye, to see that even in which it delights so much. So, though it is natural for the soul to obey, and to do that in which it delights, like a fish swimming in water, yet if the principle within is *disturbed*, if it is *wounded*, it may breed a kind of irksomeness, weariness, and tediousness in the soul, to do that in which it had so much delight before. *And this may arise from various grounds*:

1. Their hearts may be damped with carnal affections.
2. They may be pulled back by prevailing corruptions.
3. They may drive heavily under some vexing and long temptation.
4. In case of the Spirit's withdrawal, either in penal or probational trials. <sup>Eph 4.30</sup>
5. In case of relapsing into sin.

Yet, in their greatest unwillingness — take a saint at his worst — he has a stronger bias to God than any others have when they are at their best. This is because in the one there is some *renewed* will, even if it is a will that is now *obscured*, or in conflict; and in the other, some *passion* may be found, some mood to serve, but there is no *will*.

This much will serve for the answer to this third Query.

In this I have plainly shown you that it is no infringement to our Christian liberty, to be tied to the performance of duties; nor yet to obey and do our duties, *because* God has commanded them. Only, this is the freedom of the Christian spirit: though he does the duties which are commanded,

and does them *because* God commanded them, it is not *merely* because they are commanded, but it is out of the principles of love, delight, and agreeableness to the things commanded. He prays because God has commanded him, but not *merely* because of the command; he prays because there is a suitableness between his *heart* and the *work*, his *soul* and the *duty*. As he desires after it, so his soul delights in his approaches and converses with God. I have spoken to this at large.

#### 4. Assurance of Freedom

##### Query 4. Can the freemen of Christ sin themselves into bondage again?

We come now to the fourth query: Whether the freemen of Christ, or those made free by Christ, may not sin themselves into bondage again? <sup>1</sup> It is affirmed by some. It is denied by others. I will answer in brief, there is a two-fold bondage; 1. **Universal**; 2. **Partial**, or gradual.

##### **Universal vs. Partial Bondage**

1. A UNIVERSAL bondage, or a *state* of bondage, properly so-called, is three-fold:

(1) Bondage to **sin**, which is expressed in Tit 3.3, *We were at one time foolish and disobedient, serving diverse lusts*. So too in Rom 6.20, *For when you were the servants of sin, you were free from righteousness*. And Joh 8.34, *Whoever commits sin, is the servant of sin*. 2Pet 2.19, *While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for by whom a man is overcome, by the same he is brought into bondage*.

(2) Bondage to **Satan**; he is God's Jailer, who holds down poor souls under bronze bars and iron gates, that are not to be broken. Eph 2.2, He is said to *rule in the hearts of the children of disobedience*.

(3) Bondage to the **Law**, first, in the *rigor* of the Law, and second, in the *curse* of the Law.

Bondage to the **RIGOR** of the law requires hard things; impossible things; things in such severity that it will not accept the most eminent endeavors without full performance; nor will it accept obedience in much, if you have failed in a little; nor will it allow repentance after all this failing. One breach is never made up again, either by double diligence, or by repentance. That is the rigor of it.

Bondage to the **CURSE** of the Law is first, an *extensive* and *universal* curse — cursed in soul, body, estate, silver, gold, and relations, as you see in Deu 29. Secondly, it is an *unavoidable* curse. You are not able to obey in all things, and therefore you are unavoidably sentenced under the malediction and curse. As the Apostle reasons in Gal 3.9-11, *As many as are under the works of the Law, are under the curse*. And how does he prove that? *For it is written, Cursed is everyone who does not obey in all things written in the Book of the Law, to do them*. There is the **impartiality** of the curse — it is to *everyone*; and the **severity** of it — whoever does not obey in *everything* (even if he were to obey, just one omission and failing in this life, would sentence him under it); and whoever does not *continue* to obey in all things.

This is the first, the *state* of bondage, or bondage properly so-called.

2. There is also a PARTIAL or *gradual* bondage — a bondage in part, or a bondage in degrees, which is a bondage improperly so-called. It is a bondage in respect to *comfort*; or a bondage in respect to the *manner* of obedience. And so we will answer this in two conclusions.

**Conclusion 1 – Universal Bondage.** The free-man of Christ, or those who are made free by Christ, will never sin themselves back into the first bondage. They will never sin themselves back into that universal *state* of bondage. Once someone is Christ's *freeman*, he will never again become Satan's *bondslave*.

(1) He will never again be a servant to sin. The promise is in **Rom 6.14**, *You are not under the law, but under Grace; therefore sin will no longer have dominion over you*. Sin may have a *tyranny* over you, but never a *sovereignty*; you may be *carried captive*, as the Apostle says in Rom 7.23 — *leading me captive* — but you will not be a *willing captive*; you may *fall* into sin,

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<sup>1</sup> In other words, can Christians lose their salvation, once attained? Can they again come under the Law?

but you will never again be *servants* to sin; your ears will never be bored in token of your willing and voluntary subjection to sin.<sup>1</sup>

(2) Again, he will never again be a slave to Satan. Satan may get the *advantage* of him, but he will never again become Satan's *willing* servant.

(3) So too, he will never again come under the Law — not under the *rigor* of it, not under the *curse* of it. The Law cannot take hold of him unto condemnation. And this is the ground: *he is not under the Law, but under Grace*. If he can sin himself from under grace, then indeed he is again under all this. But *this* is impossible, and therefore the *other* is impossible.

So much for the first conclusion.

**Conclusion 2 – Partial Bondage.** Though the freemen of Christ cannot sin themselves into a state of bondage again, into a *universal* bondage, yet they may sin themselves into a *gradual* or *partial* bondage, which we will show in to two particulars.

**PART. 1 – Loss of Comfort.**

The freeman of Christ may sin himself into bondage in respect to *comfort*. This is what you see David did, Psalm 51, *Restore to me the joys of Your salvation*. Men who will not follow the *direction* of the Spirit, will lack the *consolation* of the Spirit. If they do works of darkness, they must look to walk in darkness. Though promises of Grace are absolute, yet promises of peace and comfort seem to be conditional. It is not that our walking has any meriting or deserving power to procure our peace; but that this is the way in which God will bestow it, and continue our peace and comfort. In the ways of duty, we uphold our communion with God, our converses with him, our actings of faith and grace. And so, in these ways, as comfort and peace are procured, so they are continued. Grace is like the fire; comfort is like the flame that comes from it. But as with green wood, if it is not continually blown on, there will be no flame. So Grace is in us, like fire in green wood: it will quickly gather an ash and deadness, if you don't continue blowing on it. If you don't exercise your graces, you can look for no flame; you can look for no comfort without the exercise of Faith, of Grace, and suitable walking in obedience. Though promises of *grace* are absolute, yet promises of *comfort*, I say, are conditional:

Psa 50.23, *To him who orders his conduct aright, I will show the salvation of God.*

Isa 32.17, *The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness shall be quietness and assurance forever.*

Isa 64.5, *You meet him who rejoices and works righteousness, who remembers You in your way, etc.*

Joh 14.15, 16, 21, *If you love me, keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, who will abide with you forever... Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, is the one who loves me; and the one who loves me shall be loved by my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him.*

In these promises, you see that it all seems to lie upon a condition. So it is in Gal 6.16, *As many as walk according to this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, and upon the whole Israel of God.* So that, if men don't walk in the ways of obedience, they may lack comfort; they may lack peace.

The freemen of Christ may sin themselves into a bondage *by* sin, but not into the bondage *of* sin. They may sin themselves into a bondage of *fear*, yes, and a bondage of *trouble*; their sin may cost them *broken bones*,<sup>Psa 51.8</sup> though they will not sin themselves into a *state* of bondage again. Though you cannot sin away your *grace*, yet you may sin away the *evidence*, the *sense*, the *comfort* of it. Though you cannot sin away your pardon, yet you may sin away the sense of it; indeed the

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<sup>1</sup> In Rome, a slave who was set free, but wished to continue to serve his former master willingly, would have his earlobe pierced with an awl. The hole bored in his ear, was the mark of being a free and voluntary servant.

comforts of it. Though you have it, you have no comfort from it. It is as though you had no pardon in respect to you. Otherwise you would have to say a man may have fulness of peace, of assurance, of comfort even in the highest acts of sin, as some have said. Indeed, you may not only sin away the *sense* and *comfort* of it, but the *evidence* and *knowledge* of it, as that place of Peter seems to imply, 2Pet 1.9, *He has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins*. New sins bring new fears, new guilts and troubles. All the former foundations and resting places of the soul seem to be shaken. New doubts arise whether I am truly justified and pardoned — yes or no; And these new doubts bring new troubles and fears on the soul.

**Objection 1.** But, you may say, this is our *weakness*; for the freemen of Christ are let loose to enjoy the free Spirit of Christ; that is to say, to have free discourse, free society with the Spirit of God, and may hear all the gracious language of God's thoughts; yes, and with application and comfort. And that, say some, is as soon as he comes warm out of sin. <sup>1</sup> This is our weakness indeed; but it is a *personal* weakness, a weakness which is a chastisement of our former wickedness.

**Ans.** Desertions <sup>2</sup> are three-fold: 1. *Cautional*, for the prevention of sin; 2. *Probational*, for the testing and exercise of grace, as with Job; and 3. *Penal*, for the chastisement of some way of wickedness in us, as with David.

In the former two, it is our weakness indeed, and so is the last, yet with much difference. For in the last, this is a weakness which we have contracted on ourselves, or a weakness inflicted in chastisement of a former wickedness, as it was with David — his sin had brought this on him.

The Spirit of God is a tender and delicate Spirit. If you grieve Him, he will grieve you. If you will not follow His counsel and commands, you will lack His comforts and joys. Your iniquities have come between you and your God. Though sin doesn't make a *total* separation, a *final* separation between us and God, yet it may cause a withdrawal, and breed a distance between God and us. It may cast up such a cloud, that all the faith we have will not be able to see through it, as you see in David. You have a passage in Isa 57.17 that proves this: *For the iniquity of his covetousness I was angry. I struck him and hid my face.*

And you see how frequently, upon the admission of sin (though perhaps of an ordinary nature too), what troubles the soul has. All the former resting places for the soul are no rest to a man. All his former evidences are beclouded, and hidden in the dark; he cannot discern them. But all this you may say is his weakness too, as David says in Psa 77.10, *This is my infirmity*. I grant that it is our weakness to question our former *titles* — if God ever granted us *grounded* evidence of a pardon, and of our interest in Christ — and to call it into question again. But it is a weakness that accompanies wickedness; a weakness that sin will bring upon you. And God allows it to be so for his fatherly end, which is to humble us all the more. And therefore,

1. God does not look at us now, as He used to.
2. Conscience does not enter into evidence now, as it used to.
3. It may be that Satan is let loose to tempt us too. <sup>3</sup>
4. It may be that the Spirit of God is withdrawn too, because you have grieved the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>1</sup> That is, such doubts arise as soon as we are newborn in Christ. Often in our mind, assurance of salvation hinges on sanctification of life, rather than resting in justification by faith alone, in Christ alone. And yet, faith without works is dead. John Owen and Joseph Alleine cautioned us that when we doubt, we must search for evidences of our faith, but not rest in them; they are the fruit, not the root. Bolton gives us that same caution throughout this book. — WHG

<sup>2</sup> A believer's sin evidences that he has departed from the path, *deserted* it — not the Faith, but the path of righteousness. Is it final? Why would God permit us to wander? Bolton offers three explanations, not only for our wandering, but for God's correction. However, these are not evidence that we have lost our salvation (Rom 8.1; 8.33-35; 11.29) — WHG

<sup>3</sup> A reference perhaps to Rev 20.3. Many reformers and Puritans considered the 1000-year binding of Satan to be literal, beginning at the close of the persecutions of the church, which ended when Christianity was legalized (313 AD). So Satan's imprisonment would have ended in the 14th century, about the time of the Renaissance. — WHG

So then, it is no marvel if there is trouble, or if the soul lacks comfort.

**Objection 2.** But you may say it is our work at this time, even after a commission of sin, to believe; and if to believe, then to be *comforted*.

**Ans.** There are several observations to be made about comfort.

1. Comfort is the fruit of faith; and therefore it may be our work to believe. But a man may be able to believe, and yet *not* be able to take comfort. A man may rest upon Christ for pardon and yet, upon reflection, he is not able to evidence that he does in fact rest on Him. And a man may be able to discern his own acts, and yet comfort may be suspended for a time.

2. Though it is our work to believe, yet it is not so properly our work to take comfort. God would have us take comfort in an orderly way, to go from believing and mourning, to joy and comfort. God's workings are orderly workings. It is now your work, as you have sinned afresh, to believe afresh, and mourn afresh, and *then* to receive comfort.

3. Yet, you may be comforted *first*, in respect to your former justification. This new sin does not overthrow your former pardon, though it does interrupt and disturb your present peace and comfort. And *secondly*, you may be comforted in this: that there is mercy enough in God to *cover*, and grace enough in Christ to *cure* this fresh sin. *Thirdly*, and in this you are to be comforted, that God does not allow you to lie in sin, but has *revealed* it to you, *humbled* you for it, and brought you over to Christ in whom you may renew your peace, and regain your comforts.

**Objection 3.** But then you may say, if our peace may be interrupted by our walking, then our peace and comfort don't depend upon Christ, but upon ourselves; not upon *Christ's doing*, but upon *our walking*.

**Ans.** There are distinctions to be made between various types of peace.

1. Some distinguish between a peace with God, and a peace with ourselves; the peace with God cannot be lost, but peace with ourselves may be forfeited.

2. Others distinguish between peace *of* conscience, and peace *with* conscience. Wicked men may have peace *with* conscience, but no peace *of* conscience. So likewise, the godly may have peace *of* conscience, and yet lack peace *with* conscience. Their conscience may object, quarrel, and dispute, when the soul is yet truly at peace.

3. Others distinguish between a *real* peace, and an *apprehended* peace. The godly may have *real* peace in respect to their state and condition, and yet lack the *sense* of peace in respect to their own apprehension of it.

4. Others distinguish between the peace *of* justification, and peace *from* justification. The former remains, they say, inchoate <sup>1</sup> and uninterrupted, even when the soul neither sees nor feels its desired consolations, 2Cor 5.7; Psalms 49.5; but the other may be interrupted and disturbed by our walk.

5. Others say there is a peace *of* justification, and a peace *from* sanctification. The former, they say, no more depends on our walking, than our justification does. But the other depends on our walking exactly. God doesn't maintain peace while we neglect to walk in the ways of peace. Gal 6.16, *As many as walk according to this rule, peace be upon them*. God still carries on all His work both of peace and holiness, in near proportion, the one cherishing and helping the other.

In a word, I conceive that we may distinguish between the *foundation* and being of our Christian peace, and the *flourishing* and well-being of it. The foundation of our Christian peace is not in *us*, but in *Christ*; not in *our holiness*, but in *his righteousness*; not in *our walking*, but in *his blood*

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<sup>1</sup> *Inchoate*: only partly in existence, or partly realized; imperfectly formed.



and suffering — who is the *spring* of our peace, and *in whom we have peace* (Joh 16.33); and who is said to *be our peace* (Eph 2.14). But the flourishing and well-being of this peace greatly depend upon the exercise of our graces, and our exact walking with God. It is *purchased* by the obedience of another, but must be *cherished* by our own obedience. And indeed, it so far depends on us, that if we don't walk *exactly*, even though we cannot sin away our prior *pardon*, yet we may sin away our present *peace*.

#### A FIVE-FOLD PEACE AT RISK

There is a five-fold peace that a man may sin away, the least of which is worth a world:

1. There is a peace which flows from the *witness* or hearing of our conscience, in our integrity and exact walking. This is such a peace as Hezekiah had when he said, *Lord, remember how I have walked before You in sincerity*. Isa 38.3 Paul had the same, 1The 2.4-6; Rom 1.9. We may sin away that peace. When we fall into fresh sin, the *comforts* of our former walk will not bear us up.
2. There is a peace which flows from the soul's *communion* and *converse* with God in duty. There is a peace as well as a sweetness in every piece of holiness; and a man may sin away this peace. All the sweetness and adaptation of spirit in duty, is gone upon fresh revolts into sin; the soul formerly comforted, is now interrupted and disturbed in all its approaches and converses with Him.
3. There is a peace which flows from the *exercise of grace implanted* in you. You cannot exercise any grace without some peace and comfort in the exercise of it. When you exercise your *faith* to believe and draw near to Christ, your *repentance* to mourn for sin — there is some peace, some comfort, that is the result of these exercises. Now, a man may sin away this comfort. Your fresh sin *wounds* and *disturbs* you in the exercise of your graces; and therefore your comforts which flow from such exercises must be interrupted. Indeed, if a man may sin away some measures and degrees of grace, and those measures which are gotten from a man's own improvement, then much more may he sin away his peace which should flow from them.
4. There is a peace which flows from the sense and *knowledge of God's grace* implanted in the soul. When a man is able to evidence the works of grace implanted in the soul, there must be peace and comfort in it. Now, a man may sin this away too; he may sin away the sense and knowledge of a work of grace in him. He may so darken and obscure his evidences by sin, that he is not able to read them, nor discern that work of grace in him. He may now find so much grace as to *afflict* him, but not so much as to *comfort* him; his light was not *directive* before, and it is *afflictive* now.
5. There is a peace which flows from the assurance of God *being at peace with the soul*. It is a peace which flows from the sense of God's favor, from the assurance that God is at peace with us. And this peace we may forfeit and lose. Even though we cannot sin away our prior pardon, yet we may sin away our present peace; and even sin away the sense and comfort, even the *knowledge* of our prior pardon. This may be implied in the Apostle's words in 2Pet 1.9, *He has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins*.

And this much will serve for the answer to the objections, and to settle the **first particular**, *that the freemen of Christ may sin themselves into bondage in respect to comfort*.

#### **PART. 2 – Loss of Cheerful Obedience.**

A Christian may sin himself into bondage in respect to the *manner of his obedience*. Though he now serves God, it is not with that measure of willingness; not with that measure of freedom, cheerfulness, and delight; not with that enlarged heart by which he has formerly served. David, after his sin, desired that he might have the free Spirit of God restored to him. Psa 51.12 He had not lost it — the free Spirit was *in* him — but he lacked that former freedom *of* spirit; he lacked those operations and workings of it; he lacked that comfort *in* service, and that freedom *to* service, which he had before. The wheels were now taken off, and he went *heavily* and sadly on in the ways of life. Though it is natural to the eye to see, and the ear to hear, and to do that in which it delights—

for actions of nature are actions of delight — yet if the eye is sore, it may breed a tediousness and burden in doing the actions of nature. So it is here; if the *principle* by which he obeys is wounded, it may work an irksomeness in doing those same things in which a man formerly delighted. Though sin cannot set him into the *state* of a slave, yet as a sin, it may *disable* him from serving fully. And this servileness of spirit may be caused either by fear; or by doubt and unbelief; or else grace is weakened in its operation by the prevailings of sin; or perhaps the soul lacks those former apprehensions, and so it is disheartened in all its approaches to God.

Indeed, now he serves God, but it is more out of obedience than out of delight. He dares not but pray, and yet he finds little *heart* in prayer. He is now wounded in all his approaches to God. That adaptation and sweet harmony which existed between his heart and his duty, is now gone. That complacency and delight which his soul had in all his approaches to God, and walking with Him, is gone; and the soul *drives heavily* in the ways of obedience. He now goes to duty, as a sick man goes to his food; he does his duty out of spiritual reason, rather than natural delight. And thus it befalls many of the saints in their relapses into sin. They sin themselves into bondage in respect to the *manner* of their obedience.

This will serve for the answer to the fourth Query, *Whether the freemen of Christ may not sin themselves into bondage*. We come now to the fifth Query.

## 5. Christian Freedom and Rewards

### Query 5. Whether this may consist with our Christian freedom, to do duties with a respect to reward.

There are three opinions concerning this question.

#### **Opinion 1. We must do our duty to merit Heaven and Glory.**

Some say that we are to do our duty, to walk in the ways of obedience, in order to merit Heaven and Glory. We must fast, pray, and do good works, and all this with an eye to glory, as wages for our work, and as the reward for obedience. And therefore they do all their works — they fast, pray, do penance, and afflict themselves — in reference to the purchase of Heaven and Glory by all this.

The Council of Trent denounces a curse upon those who say that a justified person does not merit eternal life by his obedience. And what wouldn't the proud heart of a man do, if by *doing*, he might merit Heaven? What torments have the very heathen endured, out of an open opinion that they should come to happiness by them? And what wouldn't others do? I read someone's statement, *I would swim through a Sea of Brimstone*, he says, *that I might come to heaven at last*. Men would go to great pains, and spare no cost, if what they did might be seen as *expenditures* for heaven, as the *purchase* of Glory, or as *wages* for their work. The proud heart of man would gladly have by *debt*, that which God has decreed to be by *Grace*; and he desires to *purchase* that which God has intended to be a *free gift*.

But these are to be thrown out of the inquiry. Certainly, though we may do good works, and walk in the ways of obedience with an eye to the recompense of reward, <sup>Heb 10.35</sup> yet none of us hold that these things are to be done with reference to our *meriting* it. The Apostle tells us in Rom 4.4, *it is not of debt, but of Grace*. And in Eph 2.5, *By grace we are saved*. And Rom 6.23, *The gift of God is eternal life*. Glory is not the wages of a servant, but the inheritance of a son.

And indeed, what are all our *works* compared to that glory, if all our *sufferings are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed*? <sup>Rom 8.18</sup> And what then are our *doings*? It was the saying of Anselm,<sup>1</sup> *If a man were to serve God a thousand years, he could never by that service deserve half a day, I say, not one moment of time in that eternal Glory*.

And therefore we will throw these out of the inquiry. It is too gross for Christian ears. The Apostle tells us plainly in Tit 3.5, *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy he saved us*. — Not by works of righteousness, that is, our own works; though we say about them, as some of our more moderate adversaries do, they are *our own works sprinkled with the blood of Christ*. All are injurious to grace. Eph 2.8, *For by grace we are saved*; and grace is in *no way* grace, if it is not in *every way* grace. But let us leave them.

There are two other opinions which are to be debated.

#### **Opinion 2. Our Obedience must not regard reward at all.**

Some say, peremptorily, that we must have no eye nor any respect to Heaven or glory in our obedience. But we must walk in all the ways of obedience with this freedom, carrying no respect to the recompense of reward at all. And that is utterly inconsistent with the free spirit of a Christian, and destructive to our Christian freedom, to do our duty with any respect to reward.

#### **Opinion 3. We may be Obedient and also regard our reward.**

There is a third opinion, that says we may do holy actions, and walk in the ways of obedience, and may also in this doing, cast an eye on, and have respect to the recompense of reward.

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<sup>1</sup> Anselm of Canterbury (c.1033-1109) – A Benedictine monk; archbishop of Canterbury from 1093 to 1109; one of the founders of *scholasticism*; best known for his proof of the existence of God.

These last two opinions come to be examined by us. We have thrown out the first, as inconsistent with the nature of Grace, and the freedom of the Gospel. But these last two are held up as consistent with Grace and Christian freedom. And yet these last two seem to stand on opposite terms. The one says we are to do holy duties, and *may not* eye the recompense of reward at all. The other says we *may* respect to the recompense of reward in doing them.

For the first of these, that we must not regard the recompense of reward, it seems strengthened by these arguments or reasons:

1. Because this overthrows the nature of our obedience, and makes that mercenary and servile, which should be son-like and free. For if we obey God in reference to Heaven and Glory, then we don't obey *freely*, not for God Himself, but *servilely* and mercenarily. For obedience being servile in its *principle*, it is mercenary in its *end*.
2. Because if it were so, then we overthrow the nature of Grace, and make it man's *purchase*, which is freely *bestowed* by God; and this must overthrow the nature of Grace.
3. Because all these things are parts of the Covenant made to us: I will pardon your sins; I will give you Grace; I will give you Glory. Now, we don't obey that we may have pardon; nor obey that we may have Grace; and so, why the other? Why should we say that we obey that we may have Glory, seeing that all these are promised alike?
4. Because all these are fully purchased by Jesus Christ, and provided for in Christ. Therefore, they are not our purchased by us. We don't obey that we may get these, but because these are purchased for us; and being persuaded of this, we therefore obey.

Thus the **first** of these last two opinions is managed.

The **second**, that we may have respect to the recompense of reward in our obedience, may thus be managed and defended:

That which God has propounded as an *incentive* to obedience, we may look upon in our obedience. And God has so propounded it. *Ergo...*

Or thus: if *motives* may be taken from them to quicken us to obedience, then we may eye them in our obedience. This is proved in Rom 8.13. *If you live after the flesh, you shall die; but if you, by the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the flesh, then you shall live.* And in 1Cor 15.58, *Therefore be steadfast, always abounding in the work of the Lord; for as much as you know, your labor is not in vain in the Lord.* So also, 2Pet 1.5-12, *Seeing that you look for new heavens and a new earth, be diligent that you may be found by him in peace, without spot and blameless.* And Gal 6.8-9, *Whoever sows to the flesh, will from the flesh reap corruption; but the one who sows to the Spirit, will from the Spirit reap life everlasting. Do not be weary in well-doing, for in due season you shall reap if you don't faint.* So too, 2Tim 2.12, *If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him.* And therefore, God having propounded this as an incentive to obedience, we may eye it, and regard it in our obedience.

That which the saints and people of God have eyed in their obedience, we may eye also. The saints in their obedience have eyed the recompense of reward. Therefore...

To show they have eyed it, you see Moses, Heb 11.25-26, *He chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt, for he regarded the recompense of reward.*

**Objection.** But you may say, Moses was a man under the Law, and he did not have so free a spirit in service as those now under the Gospel.

**Ans.** But to this it may be answered that,

1. He was a son, though underage, and had the free Spirit of Grace; otherwise he could have had no Glory.
2. Paul <sup>1</sup> commends this act of Moses, showing the greatness of his faith and obedience, and so he makes it imitable to us.
3. But thirdly, we find that those who were under the Gospel, who enjoyed an abundance of God's free Spirit, still had an eye to the same recompense of reward in their obedience. You see Paul, who had as free and ingenious principles in him, as any man ever had. And yet he says of himself, Phi 3.13-14, *I forget all things that are behind, and reaching out to those things which are ahead, I press hard toward the mark, for the price of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ.* And see Heb 12.1-2. <sup>2</sup>

Thus you see the several opinions, and the chief strength on which they stand.

Now, in a way of reconciliation, and setting down that which I apprehend to be the truth in this controversy. I will show (1) what is meant by reward; (2) what is meant by eyeing the reward; and (3) whether eyeing it is any infringement on Christian freedom.

### **Three Branches of Reward: Temporal, Spiritual, & Eternal**

#### ***Defining Our Terms***

(1) For the first, what is meant by *rewards*. Rewards may be said to be of a three-fold nature: temporal; spiritual; and eternal.

1. *Temporal*. These are all kinds of mercies we enjoy in this life, whether *personal* or *relative*, and they may be *positive* (gain) or *privative* (loss), such as health, comfort, food, clothing, house, harbor, riches, freedom, and deliverance.
2. *Spiritual*. These are all kinds of blessings that concern the soul: justification, sanctification, grace, an increase of grace, victory over our lusts, comfort, peace, joy, and communion with God.
3. *Eternal Rewards*. This is the main point in controversy: Glory, immortality, life, as the Apostle sets it down in Rom 2.5-7, *Who will render to every man according to his works, to those who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, eternal life.* In a word, this eternal reward is the *enjoyment* of God, of Christ, and of the Spirit. It is perfect freedom *from sin*; it is perfect *holiness*; it is, indeed, *grace glorified*. This is that eternal reward.

And this will suffice for the branches of rewards.

(2) What is meant by *eyeing* the reward. It is the phrase which the Apostle uses speaking of Moses, Heb 11.25-26. *He esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect to the recompense of reward.* We will explain a little, what is meant by that. There is a three-fold *eye*.

1. There is an eye of *Knowledge*, by which a man sees and knows the excellence of a thing.
2. There is an eye of *Faith*, by which he believes the *truth* of it, and his interest in it.
3. An eye of *Hope*, and thereupon of patience, and waiting, or the expectation of enjoying it.

In these respects, Moses might be said to eye the recompense of reward.

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<sup>1</sup> Bolton, like most reformers and Puritans, believed Paul wrote the book of Hebrews. Comparing the writing style of Hebrews against Paul's known letters, it seems less clear that Paul wrote it. So now we say, "the writer of Hebrews."

<sup>2</sup> Heb 12:1-2 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

1. He eyed it by knowledge; he knew those things which were laid up for him; he saw the One who was invisible, as the next verse tells us; and he saw those rewards which God had laid up for His people — to be preferred far above the pleasures of sin.
2. He had an eye of Faith, by which he was persuaded both of the truth of it (that such things were reserved), and of his portion in them; and that he would possess his Glory.
3. He had an eye of Hope, to wait and respect the enjoyment of all this with patience, Heb 10.36.<sup>1</sup>

And upon this, he esteemed the *reproach* of Christ, above all the *treasures* of Egypt. For the text says, *He had an eye to the recompense of reward*. What's that? Shall we say that he regarded that Glory which he would purchase or enjoy by doing this or that? No! Because he knew the Glory that was reserved for him; because he believed he would possess it; and because he *hoped* for it, and *expected* it. Therefore he despised all the riches and pleasures of the world, as not worthy to be compared with it. Agreeable to this are Col 3.23-24, and Heb 10.34.<sup>2</sup>

And this much for the definition of *eyeing*. We come now to the third.

(3) Whether doing duties with an eye toward the recompense of reward, is any infringement of our Christian freedom.

I answer, if you take it (as I said) for knowing, believing, hoping, and expecting that Glory which God has promised to us, then I say it is no infringement of Christian liberty to do duties with an eye to the recompense of the reward. But to the contrary, I say our liberty consists in the knowledge, faith, persuasion, hope, and expectation of that Glory which God has reserved for us. And *thereupon* we are to be encouraged and quickened in our obedience; and *thereby* we are made free indeed in our obedience of Him.

In brief then, if you take this eyeing of the recompense of reward as I have said, then a man may do his duties with an eye to the recompense of reward. And indeed, we *ought* to do them with such an eye to the recompense of reward upon the knowledge, faith, and persuasion,

1. that God will bless us, and never depart from us, nor depart from doing us good;
2. that God is our Father, and our sins are forgiven; and
3. that God will glorify us at last.

Thereupon we are to obey and give ourselves up to all the ways of obedience, love, and service of God, as the Apostle says in Col 3.23-24: *And whatever you do, do heartily to the Lord, knowing that from the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance.*

But, if by "*eyeing the recompense of reward*" you mean we are *not* to do our duties in regard to obtaining spiritual, temporal, and eternal mercies, then I must *pause*, and answer you by making some distinctions.

### First Branch – Temporal Rewards

Let then the question be asked concerning *temporal* good things: *Whether a man may not do his duties and obey God in reference to God's bestowing of **outward** mercies and enjoyments upon him in this life.* The affirmative is upheld and maintained by holy and learned men, whom I believe in their own obedience, have as little an eye to these things as any. And this is maintained on the former grounds: first, because God has propounded these things as motives and incentives to obedience; secondly, the best of saints have eyed them in their obedience. *Ergo*, we may do it also.

<sup>1</sup> Heb 10:36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.

<sup>2</sup> Col 3:23-24 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, <sup>24</sup> knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. Heb 10:34 for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven.

And to remove all suspicion of a mercenary spirit in doing so, they <sup>1</sup> used to distinguish between *Supreme* grounds and ends, and *Subordinate* grounds and ends. They would say, though the things of their life may be the subordinate ground and end of our service, yet they are not to be the ultimate end and supreme grounds or ends of our service (Mat 6.33). <sup>2</sup> We may eye them with reference and subordination to God's glory, and our good and salvation, but not primarily before, or supremely above the glory of God and our salvation. Therefore, we have the usual cautionary distinctions added by those who affirm the proposition.

I reverence their persons and judgments. And what I say, though it may be different, I suppose it will not be contrary to what has been maintained by them.

The query is *whether a man may not do his duties and obey God, in reference to God's bestowing temporal and good things on him*. For the right stating of the query, I conceive,

*First*, that "man" in the query, must be taken for a *Christian* man, or a man *in Christ*. For if it is spoken of a *Carnal* man, he does not obey from right principles, upon right grounds, in the right manner, or for the right ends. We may say of all his obedience, that it is but carnal; he has carnal principles, and grounds, and ends, in all he does. It may be truly said of him, what God said of the Jews when they fasted and prayed: they did not at all do this to God. They assembled themselves for corn, and wine, and oil <sup>3</sup> — belly-blessings. *Self* is the ground, and *self* is the end, of all. They don't serve God either merely or mainly for *Himself*, but for *themselves*; they don't seek *Him*, but *His*; they don't follow Christ for the *miracles*, but for the *loaves*. Joh 6.26

Many thousands who are moved by no *inner spring*, but only by these *outward weights* which, taken off, as with a clock, they stand still and cannot stir. It is the voice of a carnal heart that asks, *Who will show us any good?* Psa 4.6 They count godliness as no gain. And if they can make no gain by godliness — if instead of *gain*, they have *loss*; instead of *advantage* they meet with *persecution*; if instead of a *good name*, they meet with *reproach*, for *Christ* — then they shortly cast off religion and obedience. They owned it merely to serve their own ends; and for their ends, they disclaim it. He that would serve God for *something*, will serve the devil for *more*. If he can improve his wages, he is for *any* master.

And therefore I conceive by "man" in the query, is meant a *Christian* man, or a man *in Christ*.

*Secondly*, by "good things" here, I conceive is meant *outward* good things, and those which the *world* reckons and esteems to be good things, such as riches, honor, greatness, and applause — or at least a competency and sufficiency of temporal and outward good things.

*Thirdly*, by "serving God" I conceive is meant all acts of obedience; not only *outward* conformity, but *inward* subjection to the Law and commands of Christ.

*Fourthly*, by "eyeing" these temporal good things in service, I conceive is *not* meant making these things either the mere or the main grounds of his obedience, nor the supreme and primary ends and aims of his service (for that would be abominable); but having a regard for the enjoyment of these things, as a subordinate ground to set him to work, and a means to quicken him in working.

### ***Answer – In Four Particulars.***

And thus I have rendered the best sense I can, of those particulars in the Query. And the question being thus stated, I will now come to the answer, in which I conceive I will be granted the following three particulars:

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<sup>1</sup> "They" are the holy and learned men he just mentioned, perhaps referring to the *scholastics*, who loved to endlessly argue fine points.

<sup>2</sup> Mat 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

<sup>3</sup> Hos 2.8; 7.14.

**Part. 1.** That the enjoyment of the good things of this life, is not the **ground** of a Christian man's obedience. They are not what puts us to work, though they should be admitted to quicken us in working.<sup>1</sup> They are not the spring of motion; at most they are but oil to the wheels, to keep on and quicken our motion. I conceive there are these *grounds* for obedience:

First, the *binding grounds*. Those are because God has commanded us. Psa 119.4-5, *You have commanded us to keep Your precepts. Oh, that my heart were directed to keep your statutes.*

Secondly, the *enabling grounds*. There are two —

(1) Our implantation into Christ; as *without him we can do nothing*,<sup>Joh 15.5</sup> so *in him we are created for all good works*,<sup>Eph 2.10</sup> and *I can do all things through Christ*,<sup>Phi 4.13</sup> etc.

(2) Christ's implantation into us, which is called the *forming* of Christ in the soul, the *new man*, the *Law* written in the heart, the *new creature*, faith and love by which we are enabled to obey His precepts. Our faith *enables* (by faith Abraham obeyed),<sup>Heb 11.88</sup> and our love *constrains*.<sup>2Cor 5.14</sup>

Thirdly, *impelling grounds*. Those are rather *motives*, (1) because God is good; and (2) because He has been good to us. God's goodness is a motive, and His Grace is our strength.

**Part. 2.** The *enjoyment* of these things is not the **mere end** of a Christian's obedience, or it would render us servile and mercenary in our obedience, and not son-like and free. Indeed, these things may be the mere ends of the obedience of carnal men, but not of the godly, who have higher ends than these. These are too low for the noble and royal spirits of the saints.<sup>1Pet 2.9</sup>

**Part. 3.** These things are not the **main ends** of their obedience; they have higher ends than these. A Christian has a more noble spirit, a more freeborn soul, than to make anything outside of God Himself, the main end of his obedience to God.

*And so far, all agree.* All of the controversies are about the *next particular*, which I desire to propound in modesty, to those who are of different judgments about it.

**Part. 4.** Whether reward can be the **subordinate end** of a Christian's obedience, seeing that,

1. It was during the pedagogy (tutorship) of the Law, when they seemed to be carried by temporal promises in the ways of obedience; and God seemed to propound to them as though to underage men, the promises of temporal good things to tempt them on to obedience, as you may see in Deu 29.9. <sup>2</sup> Certainly the enjoyment of these temporal things was not the **mere end** of their obedience. Some of them might have had the spirit of the Sadducees, who said they kept the law and observed it so that God might bless them, and it might go well with them in this life. Yet, all were not of this spirit, nor was the enjoyment of these things the **main end** of their obedience, any more than it is of ours. It was but a **subordinate end**. God never propounded it, nor did the godly eye it, as the main end of their obedience. But God deals with them as though in their infancy, as underage. He leads them on and allures them by respects such as these, because they didn't have that measure and abundance of spirit which He has bestowed on His people now, under the Gospel.

2. Not submitting to His wisdom in His disposals to us, <sup>3</sup> seems to proscribe and limit God.

3. It seems to propound that which God has not propounded.

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<sup>1</sup> If these things were what put us to work in the first place, they would become our motive for justification, which is denied by Scripture (e.g., Eph 2.8-9). But once saved, knowing the work put before us (Eph 2.10), these incentives set us to work, to be about the business of God, instead of lazing about in our comfortable salvation. — WHG

<sup>2</sup> Deu 29.9 Therefore keep the words of this covenant, and do them, that you may prosper in all that you do.

<sup>3</sup> *Disposals*: how God manages our affairs; the circumstances, conditions, and resources He ordains for us.



4. This end may fail, and sour our obedience too; at least, to the extent these things were the end of our obedience, our *obedience* will fail in the failing of *these things*.

5. It is hard to carry an eye to things of this nature, and yet have our service be free.

6. I conceive that it is safer to take up arguments to quicken us in our obedience of God, from the mercies of God bestowed upon us, or made ours in the promise to faith, than for us to take up arguments to obey from the expectation of mercy to be bestowed, or to gain mercies by our obedience. It seems better to say that we are not to obey so that God may bestow blessings on us, but rather be quickened to obey Him upon the knowledge of faith, and from our persuasion of God's blessing us here and forever. And the Apostle seems to speak in the same way to us. 2Cor 7.1, *Having therefore these precious promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness, both of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God*. He argues here from mercy to duty, not from duty to mercy. He reasons here from the enjoyment of God's promises, to the performance of our obedience — *having therefore such promises, let us obey*.

So too in Col 3.23-24, *And whatever you do, do it heartily as to the Lord, not to man, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance*. You see here that he takes up the argument to enforce duty from the knowledge of, from the faith in, and persuasion of that reward which God will assuredly bestow on them. So also Heb 10.34, *They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves, they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance*. But I am not dealing here with *eternal*, but with *temporal* rewards. I urge these places no further than to strengthen what I said before, that it seems better to say that we do not obey so that God may bestow these outward blessings on us; but rather, upon the knowledge, faith, and persuasion of God's blessing us here and forever, we are then set to obey Him, and quickened in our obedience of Him.

Certainly, the less we eye these things in our obedience, the more God will eye our obedience. The less regard and respect you have to these outward things in your service, the more God will regard and regard your service; the less you make them the end of your working, the more God will make them the end of your work. Indeed, the enjoyment of outward things seems to be too low for a Christian to eye them in his obedience. The Apostle says, 2Cor 4.18, *We don't look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal*.

### **Objection 1. God has promised all good things for obedience**

But you may say that God has promised all good things for obedience, as He tells us in 1Tim 4.8, *Godliness has the promise of this life, and of that which is to come*; and therefore we may obey with respect to the enjoyment of them.

### **Answers to the First Part of the Objection**

**Answer 1.** Before I come to the answer of this, I will propound one thing, and ask two.

What I propound is this. Whether it wouldn't be better expressed to say that God promises all good things to the *obedient*, rather than to say He promises it to their *obedience*. Especially if it is true that God's promises under the Covenant of Grace are not made as to the *work*, but to the *workman*; not as to the *action*, but to the *person*. I am sure our divines have made this one difference between the Covenant of Works, and that of Grace — that in the Covenant of Works made with Adam, the Promise was made as to the *work*, and not to the *person*. But in the Covenant of Grace, the Promise is made to the *person*, and not as to the *work*.

I expound only this. Now I will ask two things.

1. Whether that which the Apostle calls the “Promise of this life,” and that which is expressed in the *Objection* under the name of “good things,” are symbolic phrases, both expressing the same thing.

2. Whether by “good things” is meant those things which are good in the account of men, or those things which are good in the esteem of God. Or, if you will, whether they are those things which are good in themselves, or those which, in God’s wisdom, He knows are good for us.

If good things are taken at large *indefinitely*, the first part of the *Objection* is granted: that God has promised all good things to the obedient, or to the obedient *in* their obedience. It is His promise in Psa 84.11, *No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly*. And indeed, it is His Covenant in Jer 32.40, *I will never depart from you, from doing you good*. But if you determine and restrict good things either to those things which are *positively* good, those which the world esteems good, and don’t include *wants* as well as *enjoyments*, *straits* as well as *fulness*, *poverty* as well as *prosperity*, to be among the number of those good things — then I say that God has made no such promise to us; nor can we truly interpret this promise in that way. If it were a promise made for obedience and godliness, and the promise were to be interpreted in that way, then surely the Apostles would have been sharers in it. But Christ tells them *they would be hated by all men for his name’s sake, and be brought before princes, thrown into prison, persecuted; and those who acted in this way would think they did God good service*.<sup>1</sup>

The Apostle tells us in Act 20.23, *bonds and affliction awaited him everywhere*. 1Cor 15.19, *If their hope were in this life only, they were, of all men, most miserable*. And it is the same thing which we are to expect and reckon on, according to the Apostle in 2Tim 3.12, *He that would live godly, must suffer persecution*. And Act 14.22, *Through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*. And Christ himself tells us, Luk 9.23, *if we would follow Him, we must take up our daily cross and follow him*. And therefore, certainly, if by “the promise of this life,” and if by “the good things of this life,” is meant outward enjoyments, then I say there is no such promise made here for obedience.

If it is said that the Scripture says, *If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good of the Land*, and that therefore temporal blessings are promised upon condition of obedience; and if it is admitted that the Jews (though they were under a Covenant of Grace) were yet under a different Covenant than us — a subservient Covenant as I have shown, in which God promised outward mercies for obedience; then the answer is soon made, and David might well say, *He never saw the righteous forsaken; nor their seed begging for their bread*. For outward mercies which were the conditions annexed to their obedience, and God’s part in the Covenant typically used not to fail those who walked in them. But whatever it was then, it is not so now. Those who are willing and obedient do not eat the good of the land. Now, it may be that *they* are in the greatest outward trouble and necessity; and those who do wickedly, prosper.

And where is it that God has made such a promise now, under the Gospel? If so, why is it not universal and infallible? Why do those who are willing and obedient enjoy it — and not only *some* of them, but *all* of them? For promises are not made to particular members, but to the whole body of Christ. Indeed, God tells us now, *He that would live godly, must suffer persecution*.<sup>2</sup> 2Tim 3.12 *And through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*. Act 14.22 Yet this is firm in all, that God will never depart from us, nor keep from doing us good. He will *never leave us nor forsake us*.<sup>3</sup> Heb 13.5 *In blessing, He will bless us*. Gen 22.17 *All things will work together for the good of those who love God*.<sup>4</sup> Rom 8.28 And this stands firm and unmovable for all saints. Heaven and earth will sooner pass away, than one tittle of this promise will fail.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mat 10.18, 22; Luk 12.11; Joh 16.2

<sup>2</sup> A play on Mat 5.18.

But you may respond, If blessings are not promised for obedience, and if God does not reward obedience, then by the *Rule of Contraries*, punishments are not threatened against sin, nor does God punish for sin.

**Answer 2.** I will not speak much to the connection here, which lies open enough to just exception; for God may punish sin, and yet not reward obedience. In our obedience (if it were perfect) we don't do what we *should* do, as Christ hints at in Luk 17.10, *When you have done all that is commanded of you, say you are unprofitable servants, and have only done what it was your duty to do.* But when we sin, we do what we should *not* do; and therefore God may punish the one, and yet not reward the other. The punishment of our sin is but the just demerit of our evil; but the reward of our obedience is the gift of His own mercy. The Apostle says as much when he tells us in Rom 6.23, *The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Man may provoke God to justice, but he cannot tempt God to mercy. Our sins draw out His justice, but His mercy is the issue of His own heart. We can do that for which God may *damn* us; but we cannot do that for which He may *save* us. And thus you may see through the parts that are granted to be true, and yet the connection lies open to just exception.

*Secondly*, it is granted that blessings are promised for obedience, and punishments are threatened for sin. But will we judge nothing to be blessings except the enjoyment of temporal and outward good things? May not *losses* be blessings, as well as *enjoyments*? And may not *enjoyments* be *punishments*, when your losses are blessings? Certainly, they may be so in *truth*, though not in *name*. They may be so in God's intention, though not in our apprehension. And to speak truly, nothing is *adverse* except what is an *obstacle* to our *eternal* happiness; and nothing is prosperous except what is advantageous to it.

*Thirdly*, it is granted again that God rewards obedience, and punishes sin. But it is one thing for God to reward obedience, and another thing for man to eye a reward in his obeying. It is granted that reward is the end of his *work*; but it is disputed whether it should be the end of the *workman*, upon those considerations propounded above. Though God rewards obedience and punishes sin, yet just as we don't *avoid sin* because of temporal punishment, so we don't *perform duty* because of reward — where reward is restricted to temporal enjoyments. I would have nothing come in as a motive to the obedience of a godly man, which is unsuitable, or too low and uncertain. And temporal rewards seem to be such:

1. Unsuitable and below his work itself; and surely below his spirit in working.
2. They are uncertain, for we have no absolute promise of them. If there were such a promise, why isn't it universal and infallible? <sup>1</sup>

But this much will serve to answer the first part of the Objection.

### **Answer to the Second Part of the Objection**

**Answer 3.** We come now to the second part, which is inferred from the first: that if God has promised all good things for obedience, then we may obey with respect to the enjoyment of them. I answer by denying the consequence, and say, Though it may be admitted that God had promised *all good things* (interpreted as before) for obedience, yet it doesn't follow that we are to obey God *only* with respect to the enjoyment of them. If we granted that "godliness" in the Apostle's saying in 1Tim 4.8 meant *obedience*, or godliness in *practice*; and "things of this life" meant *all good things*; and that those good things were *positively* good (gain not loss), etc. — yet we must not obey so that we may have the promise; but rather, *having* this promise, we must be quickened to obey. Certainly the Apostle's reasoning is the best reasoning, and he reasons this way: 2Cor 7.1, *Having therefore such precious promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness, both of flesh*

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<sup>1</sup> See Bolton's answer to the first objection above.

*and spirit*. He doesn't say, Let us do this so that we may have such promises; but *having* such precious promises, let us obey.

Don't think it would lessen a Christian's deed, nor *withdraw the jewel*,<sup>1</sup> much less throw water on that which would quicken him to obey. But for the first I say, I conceive that this is not in the *deed*. Riches are not there; prosperity is not there. Rather, it is *mercy* — a *blessing* is there. And for the other, I conceive that it will be a far greater advantage to obedience, and an incentive or a spur to quicken us *in it*, and *to it*, to indeed consider the promise that is made. We are not to obey that we may have the promise; but having such promises, we ought to obey.

**Objection 2. We don't obey to gain the Promise, but the Possession of them.**

But though we are not to obey so that we may have the *promise* of good things, we may yet obey that we may have the *possession* of them.

**Ans.** The things of this life are no part, not so much as a *pin*, of the workmanship of a gracious soul. They are too low to move one wheel of a Christian's frame.<sup>2</sup> To say the most about them, they are but *oil* to the wheel, which is not the *spring* of motion, but only a *help* in motion. The things of this world can neither be the ground nor the end of the obedience of a gracious heart. They neither set us to work, nor do they continue us in working. The enjoyment of them may come in to quicken us to do the work, and in the work itself; but these must not be the end of our working. Nor must we work to obtain the enjoyment of them. Mat 6.22-23, *If the eye is single (whole), the whole body is light*. And so, on the contrary, *if the eye is double* (divided) — if our aims and ends are God, *and* ourselves — if our ends are double, *the whole man is darkness*. In brief, the less respect we have to these things in our obedience, the freer and nobler our obedience will be.

We say of *desire*, he that desires *this* for *that*, doesn't truly desire *this*, but only *that*. He that desires one thing for another thing, doesn't desire this one thing, but the *other* thing — or not this, except *for* the *other* thing. So too, he that obeys with respect to outward things, either would not obey, or he would not obey so *cheerfully*, if there were no such respects to be enjoyed.

**Objection 3. If we may pray for them, then we may do our duty for them.**

But you may say, we may *pray* for these outward things, and therefore we may do our *duty* with respect to them.

**Ans.** It doesn't follow. It is one thing to be the *matter* of our duty, and another thing to be the *ground* of it. We grant that outward things may be the *matter* of our prayer, yet they are not the *ground* of our praying. Besides, it is one thing to be the *ground* or *end* of a particular duty, and another thing to be the *spring* of the whole frame. Some outward respect may be the ground or end of this or that particular duty. We may lawfully go to prayer for this end: to make known our temporal necessities.<sup>Phi 4.6</sup> Indeed, our present wants may be the main and particular *ground* of doing this particular duty, at this time. But no outward respects must be the hinge upon which the *whole frame* moves. I say, they may be the ground of particular *acts*, but not the spring of the *whole*. They may be the particular *end* of this particular *duty*, but they must not be the *general end* of the whole course of our obedience.

**Summary**

And this will suffice to speak of the *First Branch* of the Query, *Whether a man may not obey God in reference to God's bestowing of outward mercies and enjoyments here*. And I say, in a word, it seems most agreeable to the Gospel, and to the frame of the Christian soul, to say that upon the knowledge, faith, and persuasion that God will bless us, and withhold *no good thing* from us, we ought to be quickened in our obedience of Him. But it is not agreeable to then say we are to *obey*

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<sup>1</sup> That is, remove the incentive or reward.

<sup>2</sup> Bolton refers to his illustration of a clockwork, with its pulleys, wheels, cogs, springs, and weights.

God so that we may *gain* these temporal good things *by* our obedience. Certainly the good things of this life, even the assurance of them, so far as they are made over to us, and are good for us, are yet *not* the ground of our obedience. Though they come as *encouragements* in our obedience, they are not the *spring*; though the *oil*, they are not the *grounds* or motion, even if we admit they are *helps* in motion. And if these things are not the *assurance* of them, then how can our *hopes* of them (which are more uncertain) be laid down as the ground of our obeying? Though they may be the ground of this particular act of obedience, yet surely they are not the spring of the whole.

I will prosecute this no further. If in what I have said, I have differed from others, it is not out of disrespect to others whose judgments I honor; and I hope an allowance may be afforded me if I have dissented with reason.

## **Second Branch – Spiritual Rewards**

We come now to the second branch of the Query propounded, *Whether we are not to do our duties with reference and respect to obtaining **spiritual** good things?*

There are some who say we are not to propound any respects or ends at all in doing our duty. By this they don't mean *base* ends, or *carnal* respects, or *secular* advantages. Rather, they intend the *highest* and *noblest* ends. And they tell us plainly that we are not to humble ourselves, fast, and pray for the prevention of any evil, nor for the procuring of any good. Even *higher*, that we are not to do our duty with respect to obtaining *any spiritual good*: either pardon, peace, joy, assurance, the light of God's countenance, the subduing of lusts, or for any other end.

This is an *irrational* opinion; and it denudes men of reason. For take away the *end* which every reasonable creature proposes as a *reasonable* cause for his actions, and you make him level with the beasts. And yet, so that they might seem to be reasonable in this *paradox*, they give us two grounds for it.

1. Because we must not think to purchase by our prayers and duties, that which is the purchase of Christ. And Christ has fully purchased all this for us, i.e., pardon, peace, joy, and every good thing. Ergo...
2. Because all these are sufficiently provided for us in Christ. And God has decreed all these good things for us in Christ; and therefore we must not think to obtain them by our prayers.

These are the reasons that this (may I say it without offense) *unreasonable* and *destructive* opinion seems to be founded on.

Certainly I need not say much against the opinion, for if it is but twice repeated, it will be as good as a confutation of it. Indeed, if this is a truth, we must have another Bible to countenance it. What is more frequent than this? *Call on me in the day of trouble and I will deliver you.* (Psa 50.15) *Ask and you shall have; seek and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened.* (Luk 11.9) Doesn't the Apostle desire them to pray for him? And for what end? He tells you: *that utterance might be given to him.* (Eph 6.19) Doesn't he desire this, *that he might be delivered from unreasonable men?* (2The 3.2) Doesn't James bid us, if we are sick, to call for the elders of the Church? But for what end? To pray for us. And why pray? That the sick person might be healed. *Pray for one another that you may be healed.* (Jas 5.14-15)

But I am weary with this. Is there any place you can look, where a duty is commanded, that there isn't an end propounded for it? And what can be more destructive to Grace, to Reason, than such an opinion? It would be no more absurd to our reason, to say that we must not eat to satisfy our hunger, drink to quench our thirst, nor feed to nourish ourselves. We are to feed out of mere instinct, as *beasts* — and not out of reason, as *men*. But what, are we to do our duty for no end? May we not confess sin, so that we may be humbled, and made sensible of it? May we not hear the Word, so that our understandings may be bettered, our affections quickened, and our faith strengthened?

Surely they themselves propound these ends in their preaching; otherwise why do they take such pains to *persuade* men's understandings (I don't say *convince* them) that they are in error? And may we not use our ordinances for the increase of our graces? For the abatement and weakening of our corruptions? And may we not do works of charity to refresh the poor, and to relieve those who are in extremities? And are these not *ends*? And are not the others, *duties*? But if all this should be denied, you would yet grant that we may do our duty, and walk in the ways of obedience, to adorn our profession, to dignify the Gospel, to glorify God, to benefit the Saints, and to win others. And are these not *ends*? And were these not as much purchased by Christ and provided for by God, as the other? Surely *much more*. God has no need of us, though we have need of Him. His Glory, His Gospel, His Cause don't depend on us. God would advance these and maintain the other, *without* us. And therefore, I leave all to judge how little of men, how little of God, how little of Reason, and how little of Scripture there is in such a tenet.

Yet, that their show of reasons may not go unanswered, I will say (and it is *all* I will say) to them, in a word:

**Ans. 1.** Though Christ has purchased all good things for us, yet God will bestow them by way of *seeking*. You see this in Eze 36.37,<sup>1</sup> which is subscribed at the foot of the freest and most absolute promises. *Yet I will be inquired concerning this* — though God promised to bestow all this, and promised to bestow all this *freely*, without any respect to man, as He tells them in verse 32, *Not for your sakes, be it known to you, Oh house of Israel, I will do this*. No, it was for His own name's sake. And yet He tells them, *I will yet for this be inquired of by the House of Israel, to do it for them*. This plainly shows that though God has proposed and promised freely to bestow these on them, yet He will bestow them by way of their *seeking* them.

**Ans. 2.** We say again, that though God will bestow these things by way of believing and praying, yet they are not the *purchase* of our prayers, but the gift of His own mercy. And I appeal to any, whether they ever heard any conscientious minister say that prayer was the *meriting* cause of any mercy. Did anyone ever say that duty had any causal influence on obtaining any mercy? Hasn't it still been held up as a *subservient means*, and not a *procuring cause* of any mercy from God? When God has a purchase to give, he stirs up the heart to seek. And His stirring up the heart to seek is an evidence that He has a purpose to bestow. He loves to bestow His mercy by way of seeking, so that we might be encouraged to come, and to look at our incomes as the fruits of prayer, and the performance of promises to us.

**Objection 1. If freely promised, why is there a condition of thirst?**

But, it may be said, if these things are freely promised, then why is there a condition required for bestowing them?

**Ans.** There are some who say that though God's promises are free, *in fieri*, in respect to *making* them, yet they are conditional, *in facto esse*, in respect to their *performance*. Though they are made out of mere *mercy*, yet they are performed in relation to our subservient *duty*. And if we subjoin to it, that the subservient condition or duty which is preredquired for the performance of the promise is nothing of our bringing, but first of God's *bestowing* — then I don't see how this in any way encroaches on the freeness of God's Grace, either in making or performing the promise.

He tells us, Rev 21.6, *He will give to him who is thirsty*. Here is a condition or qualification; and yet this doesn't encroach on the freeness of grace. Notwithstanding this qualification, He tells us that he *gives* to him who is thirsty; and what can be freer than a gift? *Gift*, as you know, implies freeness of Grace. And lest anyone object and ask, How is it a gift, when it requires thirst? Surely this qualification implies that it is *not* a gift; it reveals that it is *not* of Grace — I will therefore say

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<sup>1</sup> Eze 36:37 Thus says the Lord GOD: I will also let the house of Israel inquire of Me to do this for them: I will increase their men like a flock.

that God is pleased to adjoin to the former word “gift,” this other word “freely.” *I will give to him who is thirsty, from the fountain of the Waters of Life **freely***. And therefore, this does *not* encroach upon grace, because what God requires as subservient to the promise, is not of *our bringing*, but is first of *God’s bestowing*; it is not first of our *purchasing*, but of God’s *giving*. The one who has engaged Himself by Covenant, not only gives the promise, but also whatever is necessary and subservient to the promise. If indeed anything had been required which was of our *bringing*, and it had not first been of God’s *bestowing*, then it would indeed have encroached upon Grace, and altered the nature of the thing. It would have made a *purchase* of that which is a *gift*. Even if what we had brought bore no proportion to what we had for it — if but one penny were required of us for the purchase of a Kingdom — even if this falls infinitely short of the worth of the thing — yet this alters the nature of the thing. It makes a *purchase* of that which, without it, would be a *gift*.

So here, if there were anything required of our bringing and *obtaining*, which was not of God’s giving and *bestowing*, however small the thing was, it would alter the nature of the gift, and encroach on the freeness of Grace. But when that which is of our bringing, is truly of God’s bestowing and giving, this still upholds the nature of the gift, and in no way encroaches on the freeness of Grace. If God *requires faith* to embrace the promise, and He *gives the faith* by which we are enabled to embrace the promise, <sup>Eph 2.8</sup> then certainly this is no prejudice to Grace. Isa 45, 24, *In the Lord is righteousness and strength*, says the Prophet: righteousness to those who come over to Him, and strength to enable us to come. As the sea sends out waters to fetch us to it, so God issues strength *from* Himself, to draw us *to* Himself. And so all is *of* grace, which can in no way *be* grace, if it is not in every way *truly* Grace.

And if promises of Grace, though absolute and free in themselves, are yet conditional in respect to their performance, then much more may I say this about promises of comfort, peace, and joy. If this were acknowledged, men would certainly not run upon these rocks. Thus a believer, immediately upon the act of sin, may take comfort and hear God speaking *peace* in the promise, and in all the gracious language of heaven, as though he had not sinned. Not acknowledging this, unavoidably carries men upon such rocks. Certainly, whatever the promise is, the performance of these promises is conditional. I say, these kinds of promises are conditional in respect to the *performance* of them, whatever they are in the *nature* of them. And therefore we are to do our duties as subservient means to obtaining them — not that duty is the *cause*, or that it has *causal influence* on procuring these things — but that it is a subservient means for obtaining these things which God has *freely* promised. God has promised these things to his people, and this is the way in which God will perform them. He tells us so in Isa 64.5, *He meets him who rejoices and works righteousness*. And Psa 50.23, *To him who orders his conversation aright, I will show the salvation of God*. And in Gal 6.16, *As many as walk by this Rule, peace be upon them*. So you see that the way in which God performs these promises, is in the way of our duty and obedience. And therefore we may see duty with respect to the enjoyment of these promises.

### **Objection 2. A precedent condition cannot be a fruit of grace.**

But maybe it will be said, what is a *precedent condition* to grace and justification, cannot be a *subservient fruit* of grace and justification. Rather, to perform our duty acceptably is a *subsequent* fruit of our justification, and a work of grace in us, and therefore it cannot be said to be a precedent condition.

**Ans.** We have the concurrent opinions of all our learned and holy writers, that duty is indeed a *subsequent* fruit of our justification. These are expressed in their treatises against justification by works, in opposition to the Papists. Among other arguments, is this one: if we are justified *before* we can work, then we are not justified *by* our works; and we are indeed justified *before* we can work; therefore...

The Scripture seems to hold plainly that we are justified before we can work, when it tells us that *without Christ we can do nothing*. (Joh 15.5) And that *we are created in Christ Jesus for good works*. (Eph 2.10) And in ourselves we are dead men, and all our life is from Christ, and we can have no life from Christ till we have *union* with Him. *For he that has the Son has life, and he that does not have the son, does not have life*. (Eph 2.1; 1Joh 5.12) And as soon as there is life and union, there is justification, for they are simultaneous, both at the same time, though in order of nature, one may be conceived before the other. And so it will be said that if this argument is true which we assert against the Papists — that we must not work so that we may be justified, but we must be justified so that we may work — then the performance of duties *cannot* be said to be the precedent conditions, seeing that they are the subsequent fruits of grace and justification.

Thus I have raised this objection to the utmost height I can. And at this height, I thought to have dealt with it. But I see that it leads into many intricate disputations, which better fit a separate treatise, than as the answer to one objection. Yet, if better and more able hands don't undertake it (which is my earnest desire), then possibly God may afford an occasion for me, one who is the lowliest of those who labor in the Gospel, to say something about such a subject as this. In the meantime, I will propound a few things to be seriously and thoroughly considered.

### ***Eight things to be seriously considered***

1. Whether these things laid down, may not be both precedent conditions, and also subsequent fruits of grace? Especially if you look at them as conditions of God's bestowing *before* our bringing anything; and so they are qualifications *to* grace, and yet qualifications *from* grace, and grace in themselves, and they presuppose some existence of faith.
2. Whether these are good and safe distinctions of qualification? *First*, the qualifications *in* which, or *by* which a soul comes to Christ (which are said to be a sense of need, Mat 11.28; <sup>1</sup> hunger and thirst; and spiritual poverty, Mat 5.3, 6). *Secondly*, the qualification which brings the soul to Christ, namely *faith*. And these are the qualifications *of* grace, and the qualifications *to* grace, especially if it is admitted that these qualifications to grace are not *of* man, though they are *in* man.
3. Whether there isn't some way in order to Grace, which may be said to be *from* the Spirit, yet is not *with* the Spirit. I say *from* the Spirit of sanctification, and yet not *with* the sanctifying Spirit? As the *light* of the morning is *from* the sun, yet it is not *with* the sun.
4. Whether Christ doesn't come *to* us, before He comes *into* us, and we have some kind of life *from* Christ, before we come to live *in* Christ, or before Christ lives in us? And if so, whether it is *before* in order of *time*, or only in order of *nature*; or whether it is before in respect to its *manifestation* to us, or it is before in *reality* and *truth*.
5. Whether those are valid distinctions we hold about *negative* and *positive*, *active* and *passive* preparations to Christ — by the one, the Spirit of God *emptying* us of our sins and ourselves, and by the other, the same Spirit *begetting* in us desires, hungering and thirsting after Christ. Or whether, instead, both of these presuppose some existence and being of *faith* and of Christ in the soul, who has entered the soul as the light enters into a dark room: it *dispels* rather than *expels* the darkness; it *drives out* darkness in its entrance, rather than *throws out* darkness *before* it enters.
6. Whether that is a safe distinction laid down by learned men, of a *passive* and *active* reception of Christ — whether in the one we receive Christ, as a dead man receives life; and in the other, as the living man receives food. And whether the one may be called the soul's interest in Christ, and the other the *manifestation* of that interest. And if so, whether many of those things which

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<sup>1</sup> Mat 11:28 "Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.



are said to be preparations to Christ, don't presuppose Christ in us? And thus, they don't go before the soul's *interest* in Him, though they do go before the *manifestation* of that interest.

7. Whether God's Order of *working* may not differ from what is to be our order of *preaching*; and whether some use is not to be made of this distinction between God's *ordinary*, and His *extraordinary* workings on man?

8. Whether on the same ground on which all preparations, all previous workings, all precedent acts of God to justification are denied — namely, conviction of sin, and revelation of Christ — even on the same ground, *faith* itself may not be denied as precedent to justification. If so, then certainly both faith and justification are *capable* of another sense than the Scripture seems to hold out, and also another sense than they have so long *received*.

### ***The nature of Faith and Justification***

And therefore it would also be worth our pains to spend some thoughts on settling the true nature of *faith* and *justification*; and to inquire into this. On the *nature* of faith:

Whether faith is properly or truly the *instrument* of justification, or only the *evidence* that we are justified. Whether it truly gives us an interest in Christ, or is only the manifestation of our interest, and that which may be useful to such debates. Whether that faith which justifies us, is an act of reclining and resting on Christ for our interest; <sup>Joh 13.23</sup> or a persuasion and assurance of our interest in Him — although those places would be well weighed where we are said to be *justified by faith* (Rom 5.1; 3.28).

Whether it is a *foreign* or an *immanent* act of God. Whether it is an act of God in time; or whether that which is done in time, is not improperly called *justification*, and is rather the manifestation to us of what God has done from all eternity. And it should be examined by those who hold this latter view, whether a distinction of the several periods of justification might not be admitted for the further clarification of this truth. For we may be said to be justified,

- (1) in God's *decree*, so we are justified from everlasting;
- (2) *meritoriously*, so we are justified in the death of Christ; he laid down then, the full price for the payment of our debt;
- (3) *actually*, and so we are justified when we come to believe;
- (4) in the *court of conscience*, and so we are justified to *ourselves* when we come to be *assured*;
- (5) *perfectly*, and so we are justified when we are glorified, when Christ presents his Spouse without either spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; when the Church will be *tota pulchra*, all fair, without spot or sin.

If this is not admitted, then the Order of Scripture will seem to be *inverted*, and we will run from God's *revealed* will to God's *secret* will; and indeed, a man may stand *actually* justified, in this opinion, while he yet stands *actually* under the power, reign, and rage of Satan and sin.

I only suggested to *consider* these things now. I had intended to frame out of these, the answer to the objection. But in this regard, it would have been too large, and I have purposely waved it. I leave this to some more particular treatise, if better hands (as I said earlier) do not undertake it.

For the present, I say only that those dispositions and qualifications which are prerequisite, in no way encroach on the freeness of Grace, seeing that they are *from* Grace, and of God's bestowing, not of our purchasing; they are not of our bringing, but first of God's giving. And we say that no qualifications on man's part are required *from man*; yet there may be something on man's part required *from God*. I will not say that those who deny preparations to Christ, in kind deny the *necessity* of the means of grace to those not brought in.

But what if we *were* to argue this way? If preparations to Christ are not necessary, then means of grace are not necessary to them either. But the means of grace *are* necessary — it is said, *faith comes by hearing*.<sup>Rom 10.17</sup> And also, if the means are not necessary, then men may believe and be justified before they ever heard of Christ!

But I know the consequent will be denied, which may be thus proved: If by the means of grace, God prepares such for Christ, then take away preparations to Christ, and you take away the means of grace to them. But indeed, God prepares us for Christ by means of grace. In them he opens and reveals our misery. In them he makes us see our sinfulness, and need of Christ. In them he opens and reveals Christ and the promises to us, and kindles in the soul a desire and thirst after him, and earnest seekings for him. This is the morning of grace, the dawns of faith and conversion, and those things which are the harbingers of Christ.

It is said of John the Baptist — who was the *prodromus* or harbinger of Christ, both into the world, and into the heart — that he was to *make ready, or prepare people for the Lord* (Luk 1.17). And how was that, if not by his ministry? Christ has some go before him to prepare for His entrance. It is said of the seventy disciples whom Christ sent out to preach, that he sent them to every city and place where he himself would come. And why did he send them before, if not to prepare their hearts to receive Christ when Christ came? This is seen by the text he gave them to preach on: *Go and say to them, the kingdom of God has come near you*, as recorded in Luk 10.1, 9.

It is with Christ in his entrance into the soul, as it is with a Prince coming to a place. You know he has harbingers who go with him; some of his court go *with* him; and his attendants or followers come *after* him. So too, Christ has harbingers. They are preparatory workings, conviction of sin, the discovery of Christ and the promises, earnest longings, thirsting and seeking after him. In his Court are all the graces of the Spirit, which he works in his first entrance into the soul. And his attendants or followers include that *peace which passes all understanding* (Phi 4.7), that joy unspeakable and glorious in the Holy Ghost (1Pet 1.8). Christ may have entered into the house before his followers come in; there may be faith without assurance, and grace without joy. There can be no true joy without grace, but there may be true grace without joy.

I will proceed no further on this. This will suffice for the second branch of the Query.

### **Third Branch – Eternal Rewards**

We come now to the third and last branch, *Whether we may not do His duties and obey God with reference and respect to **eternal** rewards*. This is denied on a double ground.

**1.** Some deny it on this ground: that Christ has *purchased*, and God has fully *provided* Heaven and Glory for us. And therefore we are not to have respect to it in our obedience.

**Ans.** Indeed, it is true; we are not to have respect to *purchasing* it by our obedience. But we may have respect to the *possession* of it in our obedience. We may have respect to the *enjoyment* of it in our obedience, though not to *obtaining* it by our obedience. To have an eye to our enjoyment of it in our obedience is one thing; and to have an eye to obtaining it by our obedience is another. Certainly those who preach obedience and holiness, don't preach them as the *Cause*, but as the *Way*. And they tell us the necessity of them, not in respect to *justice*, but in respect to their *presence* in us — Col 1.12, *to make us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*. They are necessary, not in respect to *causality*, but in respect to God's *order* and *means*, His ordaining — *who has called us to virtue and glory*, as the Apostle says, 2Pet 1.3. — to virtue as the *preparation*; and to glory as the *fruition*. In respect to their presence in us, we say works of righteousness and holiness are *required*. For certainly God makes none *happy* hereafter, except those whom he makes *holy* here. He brings none to glory, except those in whom He works grace. *He gives grace and glory* (Psa 84.11), He brings Heaven into the soul, before he brings the soul to heaven.

But in respect to justice and causality, we decry them, and say with the Apostle, Tit 3.5, *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy he has saved us*. Isn't this ever in your ears, to do all righteousness, and learn to rest in none; to be *in duty* in respect to performance, but *out of duty* in respect to dependence? This will suffice for the first ground, why doing duty with respect to Reward is *denied*.

There are others who deny that we are to have respect to these eternal rewards in our obedience, but it is on another ground. It is because (they say) it doesn't savor of a Gospel and ingenuous spirit, but rather of a mercenary and servile spirit in service. We are to serve God even if there were no heaven or hell, no rewards or punishments. And to this end I have heard alleged a story of a woman who, being met with fire in one hand, and water in the other, and being asked what she would do with it, answered, "With this water I will quench all the fires of hell, and with this fire I will burn up all the joys of heaven, that I may serve God neither for fear of punishment, nor hope of reward, but singly and only for Himself." Here were good affections, but it will appear before I am done, that certainly she lacked clear conceptions of Heaven and Glory. If she had conceived rightly of that, this statement of hers would not have been needed. There is nothing in heaven that a glorified soul can tell how to part with. There is nothing to be burned up. There is nothing but God in *Grace* and in *Glory*, as I will show shortly.

**2.** There is a second opinion; that a godly man may indeed do his duty, and walk in the way of obedience with respect to the recompense of reward. But this opinion is so modified, so tempered and allayed, that it is a wonder that anyone should take offense at it. Though we have respect to Heaven and Glory and our salvation, yet:

- (1) These must not be the supreme and primary respects, but only secondary and inferior respects.
- (2) These must not be respected singly and solely, but conjunctively and jointly with God's glory.
- (3) These must not be absolute respects, but respects in subordination to God's glory. Here was the meditation of someone: "Not heaven, Oh Lord, but God and Christ; rather ten thousand times Christ without Heaven, than Heaven without Christ. But seeing them, has joined them together, so that I cannot enjoy one unless I have the other. Then both, O Lord, but not Christ *for* Heaven, but Heaven, O Lord, *for* Christ."

And what they say for *respects*, so they say for *grounds* and *ends*: that Heaven and Glory are not to be the *sole* grounds and ends of our obedience; nor are they to be the *supreme* grounds and ends of our obedience. We may have an eye to them to quicken us in our motion, but these are not to be the ground of our moving. This may be the refreshment on our way, but this is not to be the sole ground for undertaking our journey. The Apostle's phrase in Heb 11.26, seems to say something to this: *Who had respect to the recompense of reward*. It is not ἐβλέπε (blepo, saw) but ἀπέβλεπε (apoblepo, looked for); he had his eye on it when he was on his journey, to cheer him on his way, to encourage him on his journey, lest he think of the great things he had refused; and in doing that, the flesh would reason and tell him that he got a bad deal. Therefore he steals a look from Glory; he goes to his cordial;<sup>1</sup> he casts an eye to the recompense of reward. And by doing this, he renews his strength; he gets new and fresh encouragement to go on in his way. He doesn't make this the ground of undertaking his journey, only a means to quicken him on the way. It's not the *spring* of his motion, but the *oil* to the wheels by which he might move more cheerfully.

And yet there are some who distinguish between young beginners, and grown Christians. At the first entrance of a soul into the ways of grace, they say, a man looks thus upon heaven and hell: the one is to drive him out of sin, and the other to persuade and draw him into the ways of holiness. But once the soul has entered into the ways of life, he finds so much sweetness in God and His ways, that he now serves Him with a freer and more ingenuous spirit. As the Samaritans said,

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<sup>1</sup> *Cordial*: that which tends to revive, cheer, or invigorate; giving strength or spirits; said of *liqueurs*.

*Now we believe, not because you have said it, but because we have heard him, and know this is the Messiah that was to come* (Joh 4.42). In other words, So now we serve you, not for fear of punishment, or hope of reward, but because we see those beauties in yourself, that sweetness in your ways, that if there were no other heaven, this would be heaven enough.

And there seems to be something that speaks to this in the prodigal, in Luk 15.18-19. When he was first awakened and convinced of his misery, he says he will *return to his father and say, Father, I have sinned and am not worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.* Now he would have himself a hired servant; but *after* he came to his father, and saw the mercy and indulgence of his father — how his father runs to meet him, and embraces him — he talks no more of being a hired servant. He was now overcome with *love*. And therefore he only remembers the wickedness he had done, and abhors himself for it, and says, Luk 15.21, *Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.* He mentions hired servants no more.

So too, when a soul is first awakened to see sin, and misery by sin, he then says, *Oh make me like one of your hired servants.* Fear of hell, and desire for heaven, are the two great plummets <sup>1</sup> which move him. But once the soul comes over to Christ and the promise, once it has tasted of His *mercy* in pardoning, His *goodness* in receiving him, then he falls down and abhors himself. This is what is said of those whom God settled the promises upon, in Eze 36.31. <sup>2</sup> And now all he desires is to serve God for Himself. He sees so much beauty, has tasted so much mercy, that if he had the strength of an angel, it would be too little to be laid out for him. It isn't the blood within the veins, the spirits within his arteries, the life within his body, that can be too dear to be laid out for him. Now the contest isn't what God will give *me*, but what will I give *God*? *What shall I render to the Lord for all His goodness?* <sup>Psa 116.12</sup> He is willing to go through a sea, and through a wilderness, through many difficulties, *any* duties. And all that he can do, falls infinitely short of his heart and his good will to God; all his expressions are but a little off his larger affections in him. And even if God never did any more for him, his heart burns with such affections to God, that he counts all he *can* do for Him, but a little of all that he might *wish* to give.

And now, though I need not proceed any further in this, give me leave — because this is the main point in controversy — to proceed a little further in clarifying it for you. For answers then, to this third branch of the Query — *Whether a Christian man may not do his duties with an eye to the recompense of reward*, or with respect to Heaven and Glory — I answer *affirmatively*.

And in opposition to any contrary opinion, I will lay down and evidence these two propositions to you:

1. That we *may* obey God with respect to Heaven and Glory.
2. That we *ought* to have respect to Heaven and Glory in our obedience.

These two propositions I will endeavor to establish, though not on the same grounds on which the lawfulness of eyeing the reward in our obedience is usually built. I will labor to settle it upon such spiritual and yet true grounds, as you will see in them the reason for our dissenting to the first branch of the Query. We will begin with the first, which is this:

***Proposition 1. That we may obey God with respect to eternal rewards.***

In handling this, I find that those who have maintained the contrary opinion, have grounded it upon mistakes, and false conceptions of what Heaven and Glory are. I find they have made false drafts of heaven, and penciled it out in too carnal a manner, far below Heaven and Glory. It is upon this, I conceive, that they have grounded this opinion that we may not eye it in our obedience. I will therefore, in the first place (having at the entrance to the Query, clarified what is

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<sup>1</sup> *Plummet*: the metal bob of a plumb line; here it refers to the weights of the clock Bolton mentioned earlier.

<sup>2</sup> Eze 36.31 Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that *were* not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations.

meant by *respect*, or *eyeing the reward*), sew down what we conceive is truly meant by Heaven and Glory.

And here I must first tell you that if you abstract or separate from heaven, that which a carnal heart conceives to be heaven, whatever remains is heaven is to a godly man. Carnal men fancy heaven under carnal notions. They look at it as a place where there is freedom from all misery, and where there is fulness of all pleasure and happiness. But both these — the misery and the happiness, the freedom and enjoyment — they fancy in a way suitable to and complying with their carnal or natural hearts. This indeed is a Turkish heaven; <sup>1</sup> but this is not a Christian's heaven. Indeed, we read of heaven, set out sumptuously for us in the Scripture, Rev 21.18-21, *Its walls are jasper, and the city is of pure gold, and its foundations are garnished with all manner of precious stones; the first foundation was of jasper... and the twelve gates are twelve pearls...*

Thus God was pleased to pencil it out, as if He would *tempt* a worldling, and even *corrupt* sense itself, which will never come there to seek the enjoyment of it. But these, you must know, are metaphorical statements, because the glory of heaven cannot be penciled and limbed out as it is.<sup>2</sup> Therefore God condescends here to our weakness, and even to sense itself, and pencils out Heaven and Glory by those things which are known to men to be precious. Not that we are to conceive that heaven is any such thing; no indeed; nor that there is any such thing in heaven. If you think so, I will *spoil* your heavens before I am done. Certainly,

1. God is not beholden to stones, even precious stones, to make heaven glorious — no more than the sun is beholden to the stars to make the day. God himself fills heaven with Glory, and makes it infinitely glorious. God in heaven, is the Glory of Heaven.
2. To what purpose should there be such poor beggarly sensory things, to those who are all spirit and glory? These things are below the spirit of a godly man here; he has a more noble spirit; he can even now trample upon gold and silver, pearls and diamonds. And if his spirit is above these things *here*, what are these to him in Heaven? If these are below him while he is here *below*, what are they then, when he gets *above*?
3. Besides, these are but beggarly glory compared to the least glory in Heaven. You will turn your eyes nowhere without beholding far greater glory than these. *Every glorified soul shall be more glorious than the sun in its glory.* <sup>3</sup> Alas, what are precious stones, but pebbles, if compared to the glory of a glorified saint?

But I will proceed no further upon this mistake. I conceive, in brief, that by eternal rewards is meant whatever ought to be the utmost of the desire of a renewed and sanctified soul. Not to speak of it in that largeness which others have excellently done, <sup>4</sup> but,

1. It is the fruition <sup>5</sup> and enjoyment of God.
2. It is the enjoyment of Christ, that Pearl of great price.
3. It is the enjoyment of the Spirit, the only Comforter.
4. It is the perfection and fulness of Grace.
5. It is an eternal Sabbath — a rest, and a rest *in Jehovah*, in whom there is all rest. It is a rest after all motions. All pantings after Him are now rests in Him — and in Him as your *Center*, your proper place of rest. It is a rest with Glory. Though here these seldom meet, yet in heaven they perfectly meet, and that is for all eternity.

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<sup>1</sup> The Turks were Muslims; so this is the sensual heaven of the *Koran*, says Bolton, not of the *Bible*.

<sup>2</sup> That is, *sketched and outlined*.

<sup>3</sup> 1Cor 15.35-44.

<sup>4</sup> See Jeremiah Burroughs (1599-1646), *Moses' Choice*, pub. 1641, chap. 45, p. 529.

<sup>5</sup> *Fruition*: enjoyment derived from use or possession; the realization of it.

And tell me now, in this little that I have said about it, whether a Christian may not desire all this? Whether a Christian may not eye this, and have respect to this in his service and obedience?

1. May we not desire and have respect to the enjoyment of God in our service? David could say, *Psa 73.25, Whom have I in heaven but You? And on earth I desire none in comparison to You.* The enjoyment of God was the utmost of his desire in heaven, and it is set down as the top privilege by Christ, to bring us to God, *1Pet 3.18* — and may we not eye it *here*? Certainly, the more respect we have to the enjoyment of God in our obedience, the nobler our obedience; the more we eye the enjoyment of God in a duty, the nobler our spirits in duty. May we *now* pray and do our duty with respect to getting a little communion with God and Christ (without which our duties are not sound), and not serve God *then* with respect to full enjoyment and communion with Him? How absurd is this?
2. And may we not desire Christ, and obey God, and follow after him in the ways of holiness with respect to the enjoyment of Christ? This is not to *purchase* him by our obedience, but to *journey* to him in our obedience. Yes, and to walk in ways of service with respect to the enjoyment of him — not as the *merit* of our service, but the *end* in our serving.
3. And thirdly, may we not *desire* the Spirit, who is the only Comforter? Yes, and serve God with respect to enjoying Him who is the *comforting*, the *sanctifying* Spirit — who is now *in us*, but we shall hereafter be *in Him*? As it was said by John, in that preoccupation of Glory, he was *in the Spirit on the Lord's day*, *Rev 1.10*.
4. And may we not *obey* God, and serve Him with respect to the perfection and fulness of Grace? May we not *serve* Him here with an eye to the additions of Grace, and may we not *obey* Him with respect to the fulness of Grace? May we *now* pray, walk in the use of ordinances, and in all the ways of duty with respect to getting a little more grace, a little more faith, more love, more brokenness of heart? How much more may we *serve* God, and obey Him with respect to the fulness and perfection of Grace, *then*? This is what we breathe after, we pray for, we hope for — even *perfection*, satisfaction. *When I awake*, says David, *I shall be satisfied with your likeness*, *Psa 17.1*. And certainly, that which is the saint's satisfaction hereafter, is the saint's desire here; that which they breathe after *then*, as their satisfaction in all their services, may be respected and eyed *here* as our duty in all our services. If those duties are not well done, in which we haven't had respect to communion with God and Christ, and improvements of grace in doing them, then surely we not only *may*, but it is our *duty* to eye these things, and to have respect to them in our doing them.
5. And fifthly, may we not have respect to a perfect Sabbath in doing our duty? What is it if not a rest? Isn't rest the end of all our labor? Doesn't labor tend to rest? And isn't this a rest? Indeed, isn't it a rest from sin, a rest in God, a rest with praises, admirings, and glorifyings to God to all eternity? And may we not labor with respect to this rest? May we not do our service with an eye to obtaining such a Sabbath, where we shall rest forever, and rest from sin? — rest in *service*, and rest in *God*? Even for this cause, *we labor and do not faint*, *2Cor 4.16*.

And tell me now, by what little has been said, *Whether we may not serve God with respects to eternal rewards*? May not a Christian serve God with respect to these things? Indeed, is someone a Christian who doesn't have these respects in serving Him? Why, what is *salvation*, what is *heaven*, what is *glory*, if not all this? I wonder what drafts you make of heaven, or what you think of glory and salvation, when you say we are not to eye these things, nor regard them in our obedience. Certainly you conceive of these things under false notions; you make false drafts of these things; you look at them as the world does, *carnally* and not *spiritually*.

I know none will own that heaven as his happiness, which he may not regard in his service — which he may not make his scope and his aim in his service. The Apostle seems to imply as much in *2Cor 4.18*, *We don't look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen*. The word

implies that we make these things which are not seen, our scope, our aim; and if so, then certainly we may have respect to them. Let us be ashamed to pencil out for heaven, that which a godly man may not be permitted to eye, and to have respect to in his obedience — indeed, to make his scope and end in obeying. That is not so much heaven which comes *by God*, as that which indeed lies *in God*. If we speak of heaven *abstractly*, it is only a notion; it can never make a man happy. But if we speak of heaven *conjunctively* — heaven *with* God, and heaven *in* God — then as it is our happiness, so it is our holiness. And to this we may have an eye, and respect, in all our obedience.

And by this a poor Christian may be satisfied in those doubts with are usually the results of a jealous misgiving spirit. Ah, some will say, I worry that my service is hypocritical and done out of self-love, for I aim at myself; I do service with respect to Heaven and Glory. To this I might say,

1. We never read that God charged anyone with hypocrisy who had respect to this. Indeed, He has charged those who have had respects to the *world*, and these things here *below*, as He says to the Israelites, *You have not fasted and prayed to me; you assembled together for corn, and wine, and oil.* <sup>Hos 7.14</sup> But He never charged anyone with hypocrisy and double mindedness, who had an eye and respect to Heaven and Glory.
2. I say, conceive of Heaven under the right notion, make true drafts of Heaven; look at Heaven as I have set it forth; make this your Heaven which I have laid down to be a Christian's Heaven. And then you may carry an eye and respect to it in your obedience. Indeed, the more eye and respect you have to Heaven thus described, certainly the more spiritual, the more heavenly you are. In this you don't aim at your corrupt self, but your *best* self; and not yourself in opposition to God, or separated from God, but yourself *in God*. You *lose* yourself in Him, to *find* yourself in Him, when you are swallowed up with His likeness.

And here will be the answer to another scruple too. You will hear some say, I fear my *desires* are not true; for I don't desire *grace* for itself, but grace for Glory, grace for Heaven.

To them I might also say, conceive a sight of heaven; don't look at it with small eye, as a place of freedom from sensible misery, and enjoyment of sensual happiness and pleasure. But look at it as a place in which you have communion with God, enjoyment of Christ, perfection and fulness of grace, freedom from all sin, from every corruption and spiritual imperfection — and then you may desire grace for Heaven. Indeed, if you would look at Grace and Heaven as two different things, you might err in desiring grace for heaven. But look at heaven as it is fulness of Grace — and then you may desire grace for Heaven. You may desire grace here as the beginning of Heaven, the earnest of Glory, and as that which may entitle you to perfection and fulness of Grace hereafter.

In brief, whoever desires *grace* merely for Glory, and looks at that Glory as different from grace, his desires are not right. But you may rightly desire grace merely for Heaven, so long as you desire Heaven merely for grace. And the more enlarged you are in those desires, the more gracious and spiritual are your principles. And this much will serve for the first Position, that we may obey God with respect to Heaven and Glory. And indeed, we cannot conceive of Heaven so meanly if we conceive of it rightly. But it may be eyed even under the meanest notion of it. But now we come to the second proposition.

***Proposition 2. That we ought to regard Heaven and Glory in our obedience.***

In the former proposition, I told you only that you *may*; here I tell you that you *must*; you *may* obey God with respect to Heaven, but you *must* respect Heaven in your obedience. It is that which God has set down to fortify our hearts against fears of any troubles, and to bear up our hearts under the sense of any calamities. You see when Christ would arm his disciples against all fears and evils that they might meet with in this life, he takes the encouragement from this: because God would give them a Kingdom. Luk 12.32, *Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's will to give you the Kingdom.* He brings the *harbor* into the sea, the *rest* into the labor, the *glory* into the trouble; and this encourages the soul to go through all. And if we were not to eye it, and have

respect to it, we would be found to slight the encouragements of God. Just as it is a sin to slight the consolations of God (Job 15.11), <sup>1</sup> so it is no less a sin to make light of the encouragements of God. All these things God affords to help faith against sense, to furnish faith with arguments against the carnal reasonings of the flesh, and to encourage us in the greatest straits and distresses that the world can bring upon us. And you see it was that which the saints have eyed in their encouragement in the greatest straits.

It is said of Moses, Heb 11.25, that *he chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, looking (says the text) to the recompense of reward.* That Glory, that happiness which was now made real and visible to the eye of his faith, encouraged him to slight all the greatness of the world. It renders all treasures on earth too little for his spirit; and it renders his spirit too big to be daunted by all the discouragements in the world. And this was Paul's encouragement too, in 2Cor 4.16-18. He was troubled on every side, yet he labored and did not faint. Why? Because *our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not to the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.* Thus you see the Apostle took his great *cordial* from this, and encouragements to go through all his troubles and distresses. He looked *above* those things which are seen and considered those things which are not seen.

### ***The blessings of considering our rewards***

In brief, if you would walk thankfully, and cheerfully, if you would be strong to do, and able to suffer, if you would submit to all God's disposals, if you would rejoice in your sufferings, then you *must* have an eye to the recompense of reward. To speak briefly to these,

1. Would you walk *thankfully*? The considerations of this will make us burst into praises even in our lowest conditions. Here is matter enough for praises: the Apostle bursts out in 1Pet 1.3-4, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has begotten us again to an inheritance immortal and incorruptible, which does not fade away, but is reserved in heaven for us.* Indeed, the thoughts and considerations of this will fill us full of Heaven and Glory, and make us break out into songs of thanksgiving for His goodness; Col 1.12, *He has made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.*
2. Would you walk *cheerfully*? Would you be filled with joy, with comfort in the midst of all your sad conditions? Fetch considerations from Heaven. Heb 10.34, *They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in Heaven a better and an enduring substance.* It is reported about Caesar, that when he was sad, he used to say to himself, *Think that you are Caesar.* Did he think his earthly greatness was enough to bear up his heart in any trouble? Then how much more should the consideration of these great things reserved for us, cheer our hearts, and comfort our spirits in the saddest condition? Whoever lives much in *thoughts* of Heaven, lives much the *life* of Heaven — that is, thankfully, and cheerfully. The philosophers say that if men were above the second Region (*i.e.*, the clouds), they would be above the storms, where there is nothing but serenity and clearness. It is true of those souls who can live in heaven, that they have *rest* in their labor, *calm* in storms, *tranquility* in tempests, and *comforts* amidst their greatest distresses.
3. Would you be strong to *obey* the will of God? You must fetch strength and encouragement from the consideration of these things. The Apostle brings this in as an encouragement, Col 3.23-24, *Whatever you do, do it heartily... knowing that from the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance.* So too in 1Cor 15.58, *Always be abounding in the works of the Lord, for you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.* And you made read the same in 2Pet 1.10-11 and 3.14.

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<sup>1</sup> Job 15:11 *Are the consolations of God too small for you, And the word spoken gently with you?*



4. Would you be enabled to suffer and *rejoice in sufferings*? Why, the considerations of Heaven and Glory will be great encouragements, and enable you to undergo anything. You see this in Moses, Heb 11.25-26; and throughout that chapter; and in Heb 12.1-2. <sup>1</sup> To this I might add *abundantly* more. Whoever eyes Heaven and Glory will be able to walk through any conditions. While Peter held his eye on Christ, he walked safely on a stormy and tempestuous sea; but when he took his eye from Christ, and looked at the storminess of the sea, then he sank. While we have an eye upon eternal things, we are able to walk on the most tempestuous sea; we can go through any storms; we are too big for any trouble. But once we take our eye off Christ and Heaven, then the least trouble is too big for us. Ignatius said, "I care for nothing visible or invisible, that I may get Christ. Let fire, let the cross... let the breaking of bones come; indeed, let the torments of the devil come upon me, so I may get Christ." <sup>2</sup> Consideration of these things put such a blessed magnanimity into him, that he could slight and condemn all the evils of the world. This is certain, whoever considers those eternal weights of Glory, will think that these *light afflictions, which are but for a moment*, are not worthy to be compared to them. <sup>2Cor 4.17</sup> Whoever sees visions of Glory, like Stephen, will not mind a shower of stones. <sup>Act 7.56f</sup> Whoever considers eternity at the end, doesn't dread to go through any troubles on the way. The consideration of these things will render all the good and evil of the world too little for that soul, either to tempt or threaten him out of the ways of life.
5. Would you *submit* to all God's disposals of you? The considerations of Heaven and Glory will make a soul submit to anything here. He can be content to be *poor*, for he knows he will be *rich*; to be *reproached*, for he knows he will be *honored*; to be *afflicted*, for he knows he will be *comforted*; to be *imprisoned*, for he knows he will be brought into a *large place*; to sit at *Dives door*, <sup>3</sup> for he knows he will sit in *Abraham's bosom*; to *lose* all, for he knows he will *find* all on the other side. God will be *all*, and *more* than all to him. He knows it is but for a little season, a day, an hour, a moment, and a small moment; but hereafter there are *eternal* embraces. He can submit to God to work His own work, and work it His own way, and work it according to His own manner, so He will be pleased to bring him to Glory at last. And he can say *welcome* to that sorrow that tends to *joy*; that trouble that ends in *comfort*; those crosses that prepare for *crownings*; and that death which ushers in *eternal life*. All this he can do by considering the great and glorious things which God has reserved for him.

And therefore you see the necessity of having respect to Heaven and Glory in our obedience. And thus I have established these two propositions:

1. That we may obey God with respect to Heaven and Glory.
2. That we *ought* to have respect to Heaven and Glory in our obedience.

And in these two, I have sufficiently answered the Third Branch of the fifth Query, *Whether a Christian may not do his duty with respect to the recompense of reward*.

I will now hasten the rest.

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<sup>1</sup> Heb 12:1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

<sup>2</sup> Bolton mistakenly attributed this to Basil (c.329-379). Ignatius was overseer of the church in Antioch. He was arrested and sent to Rome for preaching Christ. Facing martyrdom, he wrote this to the church at Rome, A.D. 110.

<sup>3</sup> From the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, whom Milton named *Dives* (*Paradise Lost*, 1667). It was the character's name in a 1639 play, *Monsieur Thomas*, by John Fletcher. But *dives* was also a 14th c. word for *rich man*. The name was later used in a number of ballads, hymns, and carols alluding to the parable.

## 6. Christian Freedom and Obedience to Man.

### Query 6. Whether this is a part of our Christian freedom by Christ, to be free from obedience to man.

We come now to a sixth Query, which is *Whether part of our Christian freedom, is to be free from obedience to man; or Whether to obey men, is any infringement of our liberty by Christ.*

Now, before I come to the answer to this, I must tell you that there are some places that seem to say that it does not stand with Christian liberty, to be obedient to man. We find a double charge in Scripture (as I showed you at the beginning of this treatise): 1. *that we should not usurp mastership; 2. that we should not undergo servitude.*

The first you may read in Mat 23.8, *But you must not be called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ, and all of you are brethren;* and the same in verse 10.

The second, that we should not undergo servitude, you read in 1Cor 7.23, *You were bought with a price; do not be the servants of men.*

Now again, contrary to this, we read in Rom 13.1, *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers, for there is no power but of God; the powers that are, are ordained by God.* And in 1Pet 2.13, 16, *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it is to the King as supreme... as free, and yet not using your liberty as a cloak for maliciousness, but as the servants of God.*

Now, how will these two be reconciled? One says, *do not be servants of men;* the other says, *submit yourselves to every ordinance of men.* But the meaning is that we must submit ourselves to the authority of man, such that we don't thereby impeach the Christian liberty which we have in Christ; and we must so maintain our Christian liberty, that under the color of it, we don't neglect our Christian duty.<sup>1</sup> Submit yourselves, says the Apostle, as free, and not as slaves; but even as free men, *still* submit. *He teaches no submission which may impeach our Christian freedom.* In brief then, there is a two-fold subjection to man:

1. There is a subjection which may be yielded with the preservation of our Christian liberty.
2. There is a subjection which *cannot* be yielded without impeaching it.

For the first, a subjection which may be yielded with the preservation of our Christian liberty, you see this implied in Rom 13.1, and 1Pet 2.13-14 (above).

And there is a subjection which *cannot* be yielded without impeaching it, as seen in the contrary places above, *Don't be the servants of men; call no man on earth your master.*

The one is the subjection of the *outward* man in lawful things; the other is the subjection of the *inward* man, the soul and conscience, in unlawful things. The one is a subordinate subjection, a subjection in subordination to God, and *for the Lord's sake*, as the Apostle says in 1Pet 2.13. The other is an absolute subjection, a subjection of our souls and consciences for man's sake; or upon man's authority, we may be subject in respect to the outward man, in lawful things. But for our souls and consciences, just as we have no fathers, so we have no masters, except our Father and Master in Heaven.

You may see both these plainly, if you compare these two places: Mat 23.10, *Do not be called masters, for one is your Master, Christ;* and Eph 6.5, *Servants, be obedient to your masters according to the flesh.* These two places being considered, furnish us with this distinction. There are masters according to the *flesh*, and masters according to the *spirit*. We have masters according to the flesh; that is, so far as pertains to the outward man, in outward things. But we have no

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<sup>1</sup> *Color*: a covering; the outward appearance and form. Gal 5.13, don't use your liberty as license.

masters according to the spirit; we have none to whom we are to subject our souls and consciences, except Christ. Just as in this sense we have no father, so we have no master on earth.

**Objection 1. May a magistrate impose things concerning men's consciences?**

But you may say, Is it not lawful for a magistrate to impose such things on men's practice, which concern their consciences?

**Ans.**

1. It is not lawful for a magistrate to impose anything unlawful to be obeyed. This would be to set up an authority against Christ's authority, the power of man against the power of God.

2. Yet a magistrate may require those things at our hands, which are clearly revealed to be the will of God. And in that, we may obey God *in* man, and not so much man *as* God. In this case, we may say as the Samaritans did, *Now we believe, not because of what you said, but because we have heard Him ourselves.* <sup>Joh 4.42</sup> I conceive there may be a distinction made between supreme masters, and subordinate masters; and so, between subjection under orders to another, and obedience to one as supreme. Those are subordinate masters whom we obey in subordination, or under orders to another. And those are supreme masters, in whom our obedience rests, and into whom it is finally resolved. For this last kind, which is the *Romish* doctrine, surely neither men nor angels may usurp it without high treason to Jesus Christ. It is treason for any to usurp it, and wickedness for any to give it. If God will not allow a *supreme* master, nor *absolute* obedience in *temporal* things, but He requires us to serve men as in subordination to Christ (Eph 6.7; Col 3.23-24), then much less will he allow a supreme master in *spiritual* things. Certainly it is the highest piece of slavery and vassalage in the world, to yield our consciences to the will of any man, or to surrender our judgments to be wholly disposed by the sentences and determinations of any man.

But now, in the other sense, I conceive that men may be masters, and we may be subject to them in subordination to God and Christ. And surely, if you look into the Old Testament, it plainly sets forth this subordination of obedience in spiritual things. The people were bound to obey their magistrate when he commanded obedience to that which God commanded; but they were not to obey them as *types* of Christ (as some imagine, who say their power was to cease and end in Christ, as the great King of his Church, and in whom alone all authority over his people was to be shut up). Rather, they were to obey them as *temporal* magistrates, and the fences (defenders) of the worship of God.

So I conceive a magistrate — without any impeachment to the authority of Christ, or infringement of the liberty of conscience — may require those things to be obeyed which are clearly revealed to be the will and mind of Christ. And yet in this, he is but a subordinate; and Christ is the supreme master. He tells you what *God's* will is, not what *his own* will is. If he tells you it is his *too*, it is only because it is God's *first*.

**Objection 2. May a magistrate impose things that are doubtful?**

But it may be objected again (though it should be *granted*) that a magistrate might command or impose those things which are clearly evident to be the mind of Christ. Yet, why would he impose things that are doubtful? For the answer to this,

**Ans. 1.** It should be inquired whether the things imposed are doubtful in themselves, or only doubtful to me? If indeed they are doubtful in themselves, I humbly conceive, either they should not be imposed at all, or else imposed with tenderness. But if they are only doubtful to me, they may yet be lawfully *imposed*, though as yet not lawfully *obeyed* by me. And that will be my second answer.

**Ans. 2.** Just as some things may be lawfully obeyed, which may not lawfully be imposed, so there are some things which may be lawfully imposed, and yet not lawfully obeyed. When Hezekiah saw men idolatryze the Brazen Serpent, he commanded it to be broken down. It was a lawful command;

it might be lawfully imposed. And yet, if some had reverential thoughts of it, as a thing which had been set up by God, and was so famous in the wilderness, and what is more, a *type* of Christ — and therefore they doubted whether they might obey this command or not — I say in *this case*, that it would not have been lawfully obeyed by them, even though it might be lawfully commanded by Hezekiah. Certainly, there are many things which may be commanded; and if you regard only the things commanded, they may be lawfully obeyed. Yet, if you regard the *person* who is to obey these commands, it may be unlawful for him to obey them. A man, in this way, may both sin in his *doings* (for an erroneous conscience still binds), and he may sin in *not* doing, and be guilty of disobedience.

We might run into a large dispute on this subject, but it is not my intent at this time. Another occasion may be afforded in some other discourse, to treat it more largely. There this question may be rightly stated, faithfully examined, and satisfaction may be endeavored to be given to the multitude of scruples and objections in which this point, above many others, is abundant and fruitful. In the meantime, I will close this answer. And having spoken to the main Queries which are in controversy concerning Christian freedom, instead of raising any more questions, I will now conclude the whole discourse in some brief application.

### ***Applications and Uses***

#### USE 1. THE FEARFUL CONDITION OF UNBELIEVERS.

In the first place, then, is it true that Christ has purchased and instated believers, and believers *only*, into such a privilege? If so, then what a fearful condition it is to be an **unbeliever**. You are still in bondage — 1. bondage to *Sin*; 2. bondage to *Satan*; 3. bondage to the *Law*. And who can express a more miserable condition than this? We will reveal it to you.

**1. You are in bondage to sin**, not only in bondage *by sin*; that is, by sin *exposed*; indeed, and bound over to all evils, *spiritual, temporal, and eternal*. But you are under the commands of every lust. Every sin is a tyrant in the soul. Christ tells us, Joh 8.34, *Whoever commits sin is the servant (slave) of sin*. First, you entertain sin as your friend; and afterwards it becomes your master; Rom 6.20, *you are the servants of sin*. You are *sold to sin*, as the Apostle says of his natural condition. Rom 7.14, *I am carnal, and sold under sin*. Indeed, we are, all of us, sold under sin *by nature*. But here we *sell* ourselves to sin. It may be said of us, as it was said of Ahab, *He sold himself to work wickedness*. <sup>1</sup>Kng 21.25 We are not only *passively* content to be vassals to sin, but we *actively* endeavor to vassal ourselves. We are *actively* willing to be sin's *slaves*, rather than God's *servants*. It is set down as the character of a man in his natural condition, Tit 3.3, *He is disobedient, serving diverse lusts*. His obedience to sin is not forced, but free; it is not voluntary, but natural and with *delight*. Hence it is said that sin reigns in them. Sin has a *sovereignty*, not just a *tyranny* in them. They are professed servants to sin, 2Pet 2.19. <sup>1</sup> They are like those who chose their masters after the Lord's Jubilee was proclaimed, whose ears were bored in token of perpetual subjection.

And this is your condition; you are in bondage to sin. And this is a fearful bondage, if you consider but these particulars:

(1) It is a *soul slavery*. The condition of the Israelites under Pharaoh, and those who are now under the Turkish galleys, is very sad.<sup>2</sup> Yet that is but the bondage of the *body*; this is a *soul* slavery, the bondage of the soul. What is it to have our bodies vassalled, our estates enslaved, in comparison to our *souls*? Better to be under the tyranny of the most imperious man, than under the vassalage and slavery of sin and our own corruption. This is the utmost, the finishing,

<sup>1</sup> 2Pet 2:19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.

<sup>2</sup> In the 17th c., Ottoman and Berber pirates had galley ships operating from the Barbary Coast in N. Africa (the shores of Tripoli, in Libya). In addition to seizing merchant ships, they raided European coastal towns to obtain slaves for the Ottoman slave trade. Some served as chained oarsmen on their galleys, which is what Bolton refers to. — WHG

concluding stroke of God, to give a man up to his sin — to say, *You who are filthy, be filthy still*; and therefore it is the worst of judgments.

(2) It is a *senseless* slavery, a slavery that we were not sensible of. We say in nature, that those diseases are most mortal which deprive us of sense. Now, this is a *senseless* slavery; we are in *chains* and don't feel it; we are under the *weights* of sin and are not sensible of it. God often brings us into bondage by sin. He claps us under the fears and terrors of a self-condemning conscience. And all this is so that He might deliver us out of the bondage to sin. We say a burning fever is more hopeful than lethargy; the physician sometimes puts his patient into a fever to cure the lethargy. So a wounded and troubled condition is better than a secure and dead condition. *The strong man keeps the house when all is at peace.* <sup>Luk 11.21</sup> And this is the misery of this bondage: that you are *insensible* of it.

(3) It is an *active* slavery, a man vassalized to his lusts will drudge or take any pains to satisfy them. Such a man will spend his pains, his strength, his health, his estate too, to satisfy his lusts. Though they think everything is too much to lay out for God and Christ, yet they think nothing is too much to spend upon their lusts — it is an *active* slavery. And yet more,

(4) It is a *willing* slavery. They count their slavery as freedom, their bondage as liberty, their *chains* of brass to be chains of pearl. They are voluntaries, willing servants to sin. How often has the word Jubilee been proclaimed? How often has Christ offered to set us free? And yet we have chosen to return to our old masters. And therefore, God justly bores our ears in token eternal slavery to sin and Satan.

(5) It is a bondage out of which are *not able* to help ourselves.

1. We cannot redeem ourselves by *price*,
2. Nor can we deliver ourselves by *power* or conquest.

1. *We cannot redeem ourselves by price.* A man may be in bondage to men, and able to ransom himself, if not by his own power, yet by the help, collections, and contributions of others. But no man can redeem his own soul. Indeed, all those contributions of men or angels fall far short. They have but *oil* enough to serve themselves. It is set down not only as the proper work of Christ, but the greatest work which Christ has done, *to redeem His people* from sin, Gal 4.5. Indeed, he did it *by price*. <sup>1Cor 7.23</sup> He bought us, but it was *not by silver and gold*, Pet 1.18; for *the redemption of our souls is more costly*, Psa 49.7-8. It was *by the blood of Christ*. <sup>Heb 9.12</sup>

2. As we were not able to redeem ourselves by price, so *we were not able to deliver ourselves by power*. To be a *sinner*, and to be *without strength*, are the same thing, as the Apostle says in Rom 5.6, 8. Therefore he tells us, *While we were sinners, and yet without strength, Christ died for us*. Indeed, we could do nothing to help ourselves out of this bondage. We were not able to weep, to pray, to work ourselves out of this condition. It is with us as men in quicksand: the more they strive, the deeper they sink themselves. The more we strive by our own strength, by our own power, the more we entangle and chain ourselves in this condition. And by this you may see something as to this miserable condition; yet this is not all. And therefore,

**2. We are in bondage to Satan**, not that we owed *him* anything; we were indebted only to God's justice. But he is God's jailer, who holds poor souls down under brazen bars, and iron gates that cannot be broken. If a man were in bondage, it is some relief to have a *merciful* jailor. But this adds to the misery, when you have a *cruel* jailor. The Jailor of Hell is like Nebuchadnezzar, who will take no rewards; he will not be bribed, nor persuaded to set you free. Satan is a cruel tyrant, *who rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience*, Eph 2.2. And *you are taken captive at his will*, says the Apostle in 2Tim 2.26. Indeed he has some who are more royal slaves than others; some he keeps in *arctâ custodiâ*, prisoners in close custody. He holds them down with many weights and chains, under the raging power of many lusts and corruptions. Some he keeps in *liberâ custodiâ*, prisoners at large. He allows them to walk about; they have the liberty of the

prison. Yet they are clapped up at his pleasure; they are taken captive at his will. Though he may allow them to do many actions — Herod to hear, Judas to preach — yet he has hold of them by their lusts. He can bring them back whenever he pleases. That is a second particular of being in bondage to Satan:

(1) It is a *cruel* bondage, a merciless bondage. What is the bondage of Israel to Pharaoh in comparison to this bondage to Satan?

(2) It is a *universal* bondage.

1. It is universal in respect to *persons*, for you were all born *slaves*.
2. It is universal in respect to *parts*, for you have no part free. The judgment, will, affections, mind, and conscience are all in chains, all enslaved to Satan. And,
3. it is universal in respect to *actions* and performances. You cannot perform even one action as a free man. You may perform the *actions* of a free man, those actions which free men do; but you cannot perform them *as* a free man. You pray as a slave, not as a son; you weep as a slave, not as a free man; you do more out of fear of the lash, than for hatred of sin, and love of God. All your actions are in bondage; your very spirit is in bondage; you have no spirit of freedom, of naturalness and delight in anything you do.

And this is a sad condition. You are in this condition till Christ sets you free.

### **3. You are in bondage to the Law:**

(1) to the *curse* of the Law; and

(2) to the *rigor* of the Law.

(1) *You are in bondage to the curse of the Law*, to the penalties and forfeitures of the Law. The Apostle tells us in Gal 3.10, *As many as are of the works of the Law, are under the curse*. And why so? For it is written, *Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the Book of the Law, to do them*. And that is impossible. Therefore you must be unavoidably under the curse.

And if we now take this in pieces, and show you how much lies in the depths of this curse, you will then see your miserable condition. It comprehends all miseries — temporal, spiritual, and eternal.

1. It is a *comprehensive* curse, a universal curse; you are cursed in every condition — in your gold, silver, relations, in your very mercies. Where others are *blessed* in their *afflictions*, you are *cursed* in your *mercies*. Just as there is a blessing hidden in the worst things to the godly — a blessing in sickness, in poverty, in crosses, losses, death itself — so there is a curse in the blessings to wicked men — a curse in your gold and silver, in your comforts and enjoyments. It is an *extensive* curse.
2. It is an *unavoidable* curse; as you are a son of Adam, so you are born an heir to this curse.
3. It is an *unsupportable* curse, which neither men nor angels are able to bear. You see the angels themselves lie under it, and cannot help themselves. The wrath of man may be borne, or at least undergone, for it is a wrath that reaches only to the body. But who can bear the wrath of God? It is a wrath that reaches to the soul; and who *knows*, much less can *bear*, the power of this wrath?
4. It is an *unremovable* curse. If we look at anything we can do, if God lays it on us, then all the power and wit of men or angels cannot take it off. As none can take believers out of the hands of God's mercy, <sup>Joh 10.29</sup> so none can take unbelievers out of the hands of His justice.

And that is the first particular: you are in bondage to the *curse* of the Law.

(2) You are in bondage to the *rigor* of the Law, which requires the following in its rigor:

1. Hard things, *difficult* things. Look over the duties commanded, and see if they are not difficult things.
2. Indeed, it requires *impossible* things in the station in which we are. *It is a yoke we are not able to bear*, Act 15.10. We might as well be set to move mountains, to stop the sun in its course, to fetch yonder star from heaven, as to do what the Law commands.
3. And yet it requires all this to be done by us in the *exactness*, and according to the exactness of the command. It requires *perfect* obedience, in respect to the principle, in respect to the manner, and in respect to the end. It will abate nothing.
4. Yes, and it requires all this in our own *persons*. It will not allow obedience by a surety; no performance by another. That is Gospel; it requires all in our *own person*, Gal 3.10.
5. Indeed, it will not accept your most eminent endeavors, if there is any failing in the actual performance. It will not allow affections in place of actions, nor endeavors for performances. This is the Gospel.
6. It requires constancy in all this — the *whole* man, the *whole* Law, the *whole* life. If you obey ever so many years, and at last fail in but one tittle, in but one thought, a motion, you are gone forever. The Law says, *Cursed is he that does not continue to obey in everything*.
7. Notwithstanding all this exacting from you, yet it will not afford you any strength, nor allow you to get help from another. You must bear your burden alone. It lays the load on you, imposes duty without considering your strength, and will not afford any strength to you. It bids you to see to it as well as you can; it will have it either *by you*, or *out of you*.
8. Here again is the rigor of it, that upon the least failing, all the hope you had of good by the Law, is *gone*. You are disabled and made incapable from ever expecting any good by it. You are despoiled forever. Upon Adam's first sin, all his hopes of life by the Law was gone; had God not propounded a Christ, Adam would have been lost forever. You may ask, Might Adam not be able to do *twice* as much good as he had done evil, and so make amends for his former fault? No, here was the further rigor of it.
9. Once you offended, though in the least particular, you could never make amends for it. You can never undo the Law. Even if you could out-do whatever the Law required, all you could do would never make amends; it would never make up for the former fault. If you were to go about redeeming every idle word with an *age* of prayers; every act of injustice with a *treasury* of alms; every omission with *millions* of duties — all this would be too little; all this would not do to make amends for your former failings. You may ask, What then? Won't the Law accept my tears, my repentance for my fault? No, for there is a further rigor of the Law.
10. If you have *ever* offended, even in the least particular, you are gone forever. Here there is no place for repentance. It will not allow tears or repentance to come in; that would be the *Gospel*, not the *Law*. Under the Law, if you fail in the least particular, and you were to weep seas of tears, tears of blood, even weep your eyes out your head, all this will be no relief to you here. The Law will allow no repentance.

And thus you see what a miserable condition it is to be in bondage. I have spoken of it largely to heighten and commend this great privilege of freedom to you. We used to say, contraries illustrate one another. I hope then, by seeing the miserable condition of being in bondage, you are better able to conceive of this blessed privilege of being set free by Christ. All of which I have set down at large in the entrance to this discourse, and showed you how Christ has freed us from *Sin*, from *Satan*, and from the *Law* — to which I refer you. And yet, I say more.

## USE 2. TWO THINGS ENTRUSTED TO BELIEVERS: FAITH & LIBERTY

You whom Christ has instated into this high and glorious privilege, it is your work to maintain it. Gal 5.1, *Stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made you free*. There are two great things which Christ has entrusted to us, and we are to preserve them inviolate.

1. The first is Christian **Faith**. Jude 1.3, *See that you earnestly contend for the maintenance of the faith which was once delivered to the saints*.
2. The second is Christian **Liberty**. Gal 5.1, *Stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made you free*.

Every man should be faithful in those things with which he is entrusted. God has entrusted you with precious things: Christian *Faith*, and Christian *Liberty*. And how careful should we be to maintain them? Civil and Corporal liberties are very precious. How do we engage ourselves now for our liberties and our freedoms, against those who would deprive us of them? And indeed, they may justly be esteemed men of abject minds, <sup>1</sup> who would for any consideration, forego their freedoms and liberties.

Leo the Emperor made a severe Constitution, in which he forbade all men from buying or selling their freedoms, esteeming it madness in anyone to part with his freedom. And if Civil freedoms are so precious, and to be maintained, then how much more precious is our spiritual freedom, the freedom by Christ — a freedom so dearly purchased by the *blood* of Christ. You esteem your civil freedoms better, in that they cost so much of the blood of your ancestors to obtain them. It is baseness to be careless of what they endured the loss of so much blood to obtain. How much more should we esteem our freedom, which was purchased by the blood of Christ? You are redeemed, not by silver and gold, but by the blood of Christ, says the Apostle. So that it is a freedom dearly purchased, and mercifully revealed; yes, and freely bestowed and fully conveyed to us by the Spirit of Christ. And therefore, how should we endeavor to maintain it? *Stand fast in the liberty in which Christ has set us free, and do not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage*, Gal 5.1.

### Maintaining Christian Liberty

**1. Maintain your Christian Liberty against the Law.** Don't look for *Justification* from it, nor fear *Condemnation* by it. Live in respect to your practice and obedience, as men who are not to be cast down and condemned, nor acquitted and justified by the Law. It is a hard lesson to live *above* the Law, and yet to walk *in* the Law. This is the lesson we are to learn: to walk in the Law in respect to our duty, and yet live above the Law in respect to our comfort, expecting neither favor from it in point of obedience, nor fearing rigor from it in point of failing. Let the Law remind you of sin if you fail; but don't let it to arrest you, and drag you into that Court to be tried and judged for your failings; that would make void Christ and grace. Indeed, we live too much as though we are to expect life by works, and not by grace. We are too big in ourselves when we do well, and too little in Christ in our failings. Oh that we could learn to be *nothing* in ourselves, and in our own strength, and to be *all* in Christ, and in our weakness. In a word, learn how to *walk* in the Law as a rule of sanctification, and yet *live* upon Christ and the promises in point of justification.

The Law is a *yoke of bondage*, as Jerome calls it. And those who look for righteousness from there, are like oxen in the yoke, who draw and toil; and when they have done their labor, they are fated for slaughter. So these men, when they have endeavored hard after their own righteousness, *perish* at last in their *just* condemnation. Luther calls these men the *devil's martyrs* — they take great pains to go to hell. Rom 10.3, *Being ignorant, they go about to establish their own righteousness, and will not submit themselves to the righteousness of God*. Proud Nature would

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<sup>1</sup> *Abject*: here it means of the most contemptible kind.



gladly do something for the *purchase* of Glory. God will have it of *Grace*; we would have it of *debt*. God would have it a *gift*, we would have it of *Purchase*. We have too much of that Nature in us.

We go to prayer, and look at our duties and tears, as so much good money laid out for the purchase of Heaven and Glory. Indeed, even if we bring no money, we would bring our money's worth, and plead our own qualifications and dispositions to gain an interest in the Promise. This utterly *crosses* God's design. He will have all of *Grace*, and you would have all of *Debt*. It is no longer, *Do this and live*, but *Believe and you shall be saved*. Walk in the *duties* of the Law, but with the Gospel *spirit*. Let the Law come in as a Rule of Sanctification, but keep it out in point of Justification. Anything taken in here, one *flaw*, spoils all. It was well said by Luther, *Walk in the heaven of the Promise, but in the earth of the Law* — in the heaven of the Promise in respect to *believing*, and in the earth of the Law in respect to *obeying*. And in this way, you will give the Law its honor, and Christ his glory.

**2. Maintain Christian Liberty against Men.** Christian Liberty is a precious jewel; don't allow anyone to rob you of it. Let us never surrender our *judgments* or our *consciences* to be disposed according to the opinions of *men*, and subjected to their sentences and determinations. Let neither power nor policy, force nor fraud, rob you of this precious jewel. I will speak only to this latter one, *let neither fraud nor policy...* The Apostle says, *Stand fast and do not be entangled*; let us not return like willing servants into our chains again. It is a greater evil for a freeman to be *made* a slave, than to be *born* a slave (Ambrose). Therefore take heed. Don't be tempted to slavery, as the fish is tempted to the net; don't be ensnared and overwhelmed by the policies of men. We are warned to take heed that none deceive us (Eph 5.6; 2Cor 4.8; 2The 2.3) — as though it is within our power to prevent it. And so it is! We cannot be ensnared except by our own fault. We often betray our liberty, when we might maintain it; and so we become the servants of men. And this arises either from a weakness of our head, or the wickedness of our heart. It is my exhortation therefore, that those who are the freemen of Christ, should maintain their Christian freedom — as against the Law, so against Men. Don't be tempted or threatened out of it; don't be bribed or frightened from it; let neither force nor fraud rob you of it. We often keep it against *force*, and lose it by *fraud*. To what purpose is it to maintain it against those who are the open oppugners of it <sup>1</sup> — the Papists, and those who would take it from us — and then to give it up by our own hands, to those who perhaps are not seeking it? Nothing is more usual; and therefore, *beware*.

Don't surrender yourselves to the opinions of other men, however learned, however holy, just because it is their opinion. It is the Apostle's direction, 1The 5.21, to *test all things, and hold fast to that which is good*. It often happens that a high esteem of others, for their learning and piety, makes men accept all they say, from trusting them — subjecting their *own* judgments to *others'* opinions, and their *own* consciences to *others'* precepts. Men will suspect a truth if a liar affirms it; and therefore Christ would not own the devil's acknowledgement of him when he said, *You are the Son of God*.<sup>Mar 3.11</sup> But they are ready to believe an error, to give credit to an untruth, if an honest and faithful man affirms it. Whatever such men say, it comes with a great deal of authority into men's spirits. And yet it is possible for such men to mistake. It is a most dangerous thing to have too much admiration for men's persons, as the Apostle says in Jude 1.16. *We know but in part*, 1Cor 13.12. Even the best (like Paul) are imperfect in knowledge; the most learned and holy martyrs, *every* man, needs this allowance. They are but men; and in that, they are subject to error. Though these things may afford *probable* conjectures that what they hold out is a truth; yet these are not *infallible* evidences. Indeed, there is much credit to be given to men of learning and piety; but we must not tie our boat to their ship. We must not, as the phrase goes, *pin our faith upon their sleeves*; we must not subject *our* judgments, resolve *our* faith, into *their* authority. This would be to make men masters of our faith. This is a shred of that garment by which Babylon is distinguished, a mark of the Roman anti-Christian Church: to resolve our faith into the authorities

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<sup>1</sup> *Oppugners*: those who challenge the accuracy, integrity, or propriety of it.

of men. And though it is not required of you, yet it is no less done by many (even if finely done), than by those of whom such implicit faith and blind obedience is required.

It is my exhortation, and your duty, to labor to maintain your Christian freedom. It was dearly purchased, and mercifully bestowed on you. And therefore, it should not be *weakly* lost, nor yet *willfully* maintained. It was given in *mercy*, and must be kept in *judgment*. You ought to use judgment in rejecting and embracing doctrines, and yet do it with discretion. We must not subject ourselves to the doctrines and determinations of men — even learned and holy men — with blind judgment. Nor are we to reject them with a perverse will.

And this is all I will say to the second branch of this exhortation, about *maintaining* our Christian Liberty. We come now to a third branch, which is no less necessary. And that is,

**3. Beware of abusing your liberty.** Christian Liberty is a precious thing; and the more precious it is, the more care must be taken not to abuse it. Precious things are usually commended to us with words of *caution*.<sup>1</sup> Christian Liberty is a *precious* thing; You see, it was *dearly* purchased, and mercifully bestowed on us. Therefore, let me subjoin this caution, and so conclude: *Beware of abusing it*.

Now, that I may not speak into the air, there are SIX WAYS by which Christian Liberty is abused.

(1) We abuse Christian Liberty when in the use of it, we scandalize others. Liberty was purchased for the comfort of ourselves, not for the affliction of others. Those who use it to afflict others, indeed abuse it. We read about some young Christians at Corinth who would eat meat offered to idols, only to show their liberty. But the Apostle tells them, 1Cor 10.23, *All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient*.<sup>2</sup> And Paul is frequent in instructing them how to exercise Christian Liberty so as to avoid stumbling.<sup>3</sup> Gal 5.13, *Brethren, you have been called to liberty; only don't use that liberty as an occasion for the flesh, but by love serve one another*. Christ has taken off our former yoke of bondage, not that we should be more *wanton*, but more *careful*. Indeed, for the *comfort* of ourselves, but not to *destroy* another. The Apostle argues in 1Cor 8.11, *Through your knowledge*,<sup>4</sup> *shall your weak brother perish for whom Christ died?*

But I will hasten to a conclusion, and therefore close in a word.

(2) There is a second way by which we abuse our Christian Liberty. And that is when we use it for superstition. Many will say they have Christian Liberty, and therefore they may dare to venture upon any observations, customs, and gestures, though never warranted to do so by the Word. This is indeed Christian *licentiousness*, not Christian *liberty*. Christian Liberty is still a *bounded* liberty, bounded with Laws and Rules. But these are men without bounds, and therefore they are Libertines.

(3) We abuse it when we make void the Law of God, as I have shown you at large: when we judge that our liberty is to be exempted from duty. Indeed, this is true *bondage*, not Christian *liberty*. The liberty of a Christian lies not in *exemption* from service, but *in* service. And surely that man is still in *bondage*, who does not judge that *service* is his liberty.

(4) When we give too much scope to ourselves in things that are lawful. It is an easy thing to run from use, to abuse. Jude speaks of such men in verse 4 of that epistle: *There are certain men who turn the grace of God into wantonness*.

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<sup>1</sup> Careful with the baby; careful with the passport; careful with the money...

<sup>2</sup> The word for *expedient* in Greek, is *sumphero*, meaning that which brings together.

<sup>3</sup> Or to avoid *scandal*; the Greek *scandalon* in Gal 5.13, means to cause someone to stumble.

<sup>4</sup> That is, your *knowledge* of having Christian liberty.

(5) When we use it *un-dutifully*, denying obedience to lawful authority, in lawful things, on the pretense of Christian Liberty. This is, indeed, to level the world, to tear down all lawful authority.

(6) When we are tied to nothing, bound to nothing, but what our own spirits incline us to. I have spoken of this at large. Therefore I will conclude it all with the words of the Apostle, 1Pet 2.16:

*You are free; yet do not use your liberty  
as a cloak for maliciousness,  
but as the servants of God.*

**FINIS**

## Preface to the Three-fold Covenant

A Preface to the Ensuing Discourse  
of the Learned John Cameron

Christian Reader,

Goodness and light are of a diffusive nature. Birds, when they come to a full heap of corn, will chirp and call for their fellows. After much searching, I think I have found a full store, and have unlocked the doors. Indeed, I brought it forth to invite others to feed upon it. It is a discourse of the learned and famous divine, Mr. John Cameron, concerning the Three-fold Covenant of God with man. It is the key to the Gospel, and the best resolver I have met with, of all those intricate controversies and disputes concerning the Law. We often read in Scripture that the Law was a Covenant. And more frequently among divines, we read that we are free from the Law as a Covenant; but to tell us what this Covenant was, has been the work of many. I have shown at large in the foregoing Discourse, that it was but a Covenant of *Works*. And if it was a Covenant of *Grace*, then how are we said to be freed from it? In the ensuing discourse, this doubt is resolved. Being thereby in some good measure satisfied myself, I have annexed it here, to do the same for you.

It was first written in Latin; and for the sakes of those who don't understand that language, I thought it good not only, with Samson, to impart the sweetness, which was more than he could do, but to unfold the riddle also; <sup>Jdg 14.12f</sup> and to render to you these excellent labors in your own native language. It is too precious to be concealed any longer, or hidden under the shell of an unknown tongue. In this (so far as restraint would not darken its sense) I have kept to the propriety of the language. I will keep you no longer from it, but will now give you leave to feast yourself upon his plenty, by which (as by all the labors of the saints) you may grow up in light and love. Grace and life is the earnest prayer of him,

Who is not his *own*, if not *yours*,  
in the service of Christ,  
S.B.

**Concerning the Three-fold Covenant of God with Man.**

**Thesis 1.** Covenant in Scripture sometimes signifies the absolute promise of God, without any restipulation, as was that Covenant which God made with Noah shortly after the flood (Gen 9.11), freely promising never to destroy the world again by water. This is that kind of Covenant in which God promises to give to his Elect, faith and perseverance (Heb 8.10). It cannot be conceived there is any condition to be annexed to this promise, which is not comprehended in the promise itself.

**Thesis 2.** But it often happens that the term *Covenant* is so used in holy Scriptures, as it is evident the free promise of God is signified by it; yet, with the restipulation of our duty, which otherwise — as though there were no such intervening promise — might both be *required* by God, and also (if it so pleased God) ought to be *performed* by the creature.

**Thesis 3.** This distinction of the Covenant depends on the distinction of the love of God. For there is love of God *to the creature*, from which everything that is good in the creature has wholly flowed; and there is the *acquiescent* love of God in the creature. And the creature has received this love, not for anything from itself, but from God, as it was loved with that first love of God. *That* love, for better understanding, we call God's *primary* or antecedent love; and *this* love we call God's *secondary* or consequent love. From *that* love, we say, depend both the pact and the fulfilling of the *absolute* Covenant; from *this* love depends the fulfilling of that Covenant, to which is annexed a restipulation — not so for the pact; for that, we say, depends on the first love.

**Thesis 4.** For in the *absolute* Covenant, there is nothing in the creature that impels God either to promise, or to perform what He has promised. But in that Covenant to which a restipulation is annexed, God fulfills what He has promised, because the creature has rendered what is required. And although God has made such a Covenant in which He has promised such great things upon a condition of man's performance, all this proceeds from the antecedent love of God.

**Thesis 5.** Such great things, I say, because to prescribe a measure of reward, is an action of a most free will, and not of God's nature (Heb 6.10). Yet, to render anything as a reward for due service from the creature, and to promise that, belongs altogether to the *consequent* love of God, which is not only voluntary love, but a natural property in God. Of His own proper nature, He inclines as much to the *reward* of good, as to the *punishment* of evil; while the *antecedent* love of God is altogether voluntary.

**Thesis 6.** We are here to treat this Covenant, to which is annexed a restipulation; and because it is not one simple Covenant, we will distribute it into its several kinds, and we will strictly examine what agrees to every kind, and in what manner they differ among themselves.

**Thesis 7.** We say, therefore, there is a Covenant of Nature, a Covenant of Grace, and another that is subservient to the Covenant of Grace. In Scripture it is called the Old Covenant (2Cor 3.14). And therefore we will deal with that in the last place, giving the first place to the Covenant of Nature, and of Grace. This is because they are the chief, and because they have no respect to any other Covenant. Although, we don't deny that the Covenant of Nature, in this corruption of our nature, is subservient to the Covenant of Grace, as it inflames the minds of men with its desires. Yet it does this by accident (incidentally). Seeing this isn't the scope of that Covenant, we will speak more largely of it later.

**Thesis 8.** The Covenant of Nature and the Covenant of Grace agree in the following:

1. In the general end, which is God's glory.
2. In the persons of the Covenant, who are God and Man.
3. In the external form, in that a restipulation is annexed to both.
4. In the Nature, in that both are unchangeable.

**Thesis 9.** They differ in the following:

1. In the special end; for the end of the Covenant of Nature is the declaration of God's justice; but the end of the Covenant of Grace is the declaration of His mercy.
2. In the foundation; for the foundation of the Covenant of Nature is the creation of Man and the integrity of man's nature; but the foundation of the Covenant of Grace is the redemption of man by Christ.
3. In the quality and manner of persons covenanting; for in the Covenant of Nature, God the Creator requires His due, or right, from man as pure and perfect; but in the Covenant of Grace God as a merciful Father, offers Himself to a sinner, wounded with the conscience of sin.
4. In the Covenant of Nature, natural righteousness is required; but in the Covenant Grace, faith alone is required.
5. In the Covenant of Nature, eternal blessed life is promised, and yet it is an *animal* life to be lived in Paradise; but in the Covenant of Grace, a heavenly and *spiritual* life is promised.
6. In the manner of sanction or ratification. In the Covenant of Nature there was no Mediator; hence the Covenant of Nature was not promised before it was published. But the Covenant of Grace was first *promised*, and long after, it was *published* and ratified in the blood of the Son of God.

**Thesis 10.** Justice and Faith differ, as giving and receiving differ; for Justice gives to God (His due), and faith receives from God (what is not our due). *Justice* is placed in the mutual love of God, *Faith* in the persuasion of the love of God. Yet these are joined in an inseparable tie, yet so as Faith precedes, and Love follows; *Faith* is the cause, and *Love* the effect. Initial and weak faith, begets love, though less fervent love. Perfect and complete Faith begets burning affections. Therefore righteousness, or justice, presupposes Faith; and on the contrary, Faith necessarily concludes (or presupposes) Love, as the consequent of it.

**Thesis 11.** From this arises a three-fold question, neither unprofitable nor difficult to unfold:

1. Why in the Covenant of Nature, God didn't expressly require *faith*, but instead, *obedience* and *love*?
2. By what right are faith and justice (or righteousness) opposed in the Covenant of Grace, seeing that they cannot be separated?
3. Whether and how that faith which exact justice presupposes in the Covenant of Nature, differs from that faith which God requires in the Covenant of Grace?

**Thesis 12.** To the first question, why God didn't require *faith* in the Covenant of Nature, we answer that God never required faith from man, except by consequence.

*First* of all, because there wasn't so much as probable cause given to man to distrust in the least, the love and favor of God. For as much as sin had not yet set foot in the world, quite otherwise it falls out in the Covenant of Grace, which is made with a conscience that is terrified with the sense of sin, and which is not able to raise herself up, other than by hearing that there is nothing at all that is required of her except faith; that is, except to persuade herself that she is precious to God, and accepted by Him.

*Secondly*, in the Covenant of Nature, is considered what it is that man is indebted to God for; and that is exacted from him according to the strictness and rigor of justice (for it is Justice and Holiness that he owes). But now, in the Covenant of Grace, is considered only what God, being reconciled to us in His Son, is willing to tender to man; and He tenders that freely.

**Thesis 13.** To the second question, why faith and righteousness (which cannot be separated) are opposed in the Covenant of Grace, we answer that *faith* in the Covenant of Grace is *not* opposed to the righteousness of man, just because formerly they were not able to consist together; nor because they could not exist together (indeed, as has been said, they mutually grant and deny each other). Rather, it is because one and the same Court (as we say) cannot concur together to justify

or acquit a man. For in the Court of Justice, it is called *justice*, from the Covenant of Nature, when either the just man is acquitted, or the unjust man is condemned. Nor is it directly asked whether you have *believed* that you are *precious* to God; but whether you have *loved* God. Whereas in the Court of Mercy, it is not primarily and properly demanded whether you have *loved* God, but whether or not you have *believed*. And if you have believed, you will thereupon be admitted; and if not, you are then immediately bound over to the Court of Justice, to answer it there.

**Thesis 14.** To the third question, how the faith presupposed in the Covenant of Nature differs from the faith required in the Covenant of Grace, we answer that both are from God; both are a persuasion of the love of God; both beget in man the mutual love of God — because faith is abounding, love also abounds; if faith is languishing, love languishes; and if faith is extinguished, love also is extinguished. But they differ —

*First*, in the foundation. For the faith which the justice of *Nature* presupposes (it is founded upon) the title of being a perfect *creature*; and therefore, since the fall of Adam, it has no place. For although God loves the creature in itself, yet as it is corrupt with sin, He hates it. No one, therefore, is able to persuade himself that he is beloved of God, upon this title of being a *creature*. For as much as *all have sinned*, by consequence, he cannot truly love God, nor can he persuade himself that he does. But the faith mentioned in the Covenant of Grace, is founded on the promise made in Christ.

*Secondly*, notwithstanding this, *both are from God* (as the scholastics put it) *by way of Nature*. However, though the faith required in the Covenant of Grace is from God too, but by way of *supernatural grace*.

*Thirdly*, the Justice which the faith of Nature begets was *mutable*. This is because the faith from which that Justice or Righteousness flowed, depended upon a principle of nature, which was mutable. But the *holiness* which the faith of the Covenant of Grace begets, is an eternal and immutable *principle* — to wit, the *Spirit of Grace*.

*Fourthly*, the justice which the faith of Nature begets, however perfect it may have been in its kind, yet in the nobility and excellence of it, it fell far below that holiness which is begotten by faith in Christ. And whereas even the most holy in this life falls far short of that original *justice* (or righteousness), this comes to pass from the penury and scantness of *faith*. But here, in this place, we understand faith in the most eminent and superlative degrees of faith, as it will be hereafter, in the life to come.

**Thesis 15.** Here again, two queries may be propounded. The first is this, *If the holiness and faith of Adam was mutable, how might he be said to be secure?* And in the second place, *In what manner may holiness be said to be the effect of faith, and so united to it that by no means can it be separated from it?* — seeing that hereafter, in the life to come, there is no place for faith, in which there is yet the greatest *holiness*.

**Thesis 16.** To the first query, *how Adam can be secure in his mutable faith*, we answer that it was not possible that any thoughts of that kind would even once steal into the mind of Adam, who was wholly taken up with the sense and admiration of the Divine goodness.

**Thesis 17.** To the second query, *how faith can be inseparable from holiness when faith has no place in the hereafter*, we answer that the persuasion of the love of God (which in this place we call *faith*) was either founded upon a promise which was not yet fulfilled; or else it was founded upon the sense of a promise that was fulfilled already. This latter explanation has its place chiefly in the *life to come*; the former in *this life also*. The Apostle therefore calls this *the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen* (Heb 11.1). This is properly called *faith*; and it is that which is required in justification.

**Thesis 18.** What we said is true, concerning the difference between the promise annexed to the Covenant of Nature, and the Covenant of Grace. Yet because there is some obscurity in it, there is a need to explain it.

**Thesis 19.** We therefore define heavenly life to be *that which Christ now lives in the heavens*. It is called *heavenly*, because the first author of it is the *heavenly man* (1Cor 14.47-48).<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, that which we call *animal life*, is what Adam lived before his fall, in Paradise. It doesn't differ at all in *intention*, but only in *extension* and *duration*, from that life which was to be perpetuated according to the perpetuating of his *obedience*. And so it would have redounded to all his posterity, just as that heavenly life (the possession of which Christ has now entered into) belongs by right of adoption, to all of us who believe in Christ.

**Thesis 20.** The Covenant of Grace is considered either as being *promised*, or as being openly and fully *promulgated* and confirmed. It was promised to the Fathers: first to Adam (Gen 3.15), then to the Patriarchs (Gen 12.15), and afterwards to the people of Israel. But it was openly and fully promulgated, *Now, when the fulness of time had come* (Gal 4.4; 1Pet 1.10-13).

**Thesis 21.** We explain it this way: The foundation and the Mediator of the Covenant of Grace, is our Lord Jesus Christ — either as one *to be* incarnated, *to be* crucified, and *to be* raised from the dead; or else as one *being* incarnate, *being* crucified, and *being* truly raised from the dead (Act 14.12). For none ever had his sins remitted except in Him alone, who is yesterday, and today, and forever Jesus Christ, *true God* and *true Man* (Heb 13.8). Therefore, although he was God only before his incarnation, notwithstanding, he was previously a Mediator in no other way, than as God about to take our flesh upon him, and in it, to perform the whole mystery of our Redemption. Hence he is called *the Lamb of God, slain from before the foundation of the world*; <sup>Rev 13.8</sup> and the Fathers were saved by His Grace, even as we ourselves are.

**Thesis 22.** But although the Son of God, *before* he manifested himself in the flesh, was even then, in God's account (to whom future things are as present) a Mediator, because he *will* come. And therefore, *truly*, sins were remitted through him in the Old Testament. By his Spirit, those men of old both taught, and were taught (2Pet 1.21); and the Church <sup>2</sup> was rightly governed by him. However, the way and manner of his mediation was propounded more darkly at first; afterwards, the force and efficacy of it became still less; and lastly, it redounded to but very few.<sup>3</sup>

**Thesis 23.** We will speak severally to these. *Before the first coming of Christ*. That the way and manner of his mediation was propounded more obscurely, appears from reading the Books of the Sacred Volume, called the Old Testament, in which are handled things concerning the *person* of Christ; and concerning the *way* and *manner* of his execution of his office of Mediator. And in this volume is also handled the *office* of Mediator itself, and the benefits that flow from it.

**Thesis 24.** That his *Person* is described obscurely, appears in this: that although it was clearly signified that he would be true man, and also that he is true God, yet the conjunction of these two Natures into a unity of Person, and the special designation of him from the circumstances, is not so openly propounded that it could be an easy matter for the faithful to hereby attain to such a knowledge of Christ, as we who live under the New Covenant — now promulgated and ratified in the death and resurrection of Christ — now attain to. This explains why his Person is so frequently shadowed out to us under Types and Figures. Nor is it held out to be looked at, except as through a veil.

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<sup>1</sup> 1Cor 15:47-48 The first man *was* of the earth, *made* of dust; the second Man *is* the Lord from heaven. <sup>48</sup> As *was* the man of dust, so also *are* those *who are made* of dust; and as *is* the heavenly Man, so also *are* those *who are* heavenly.

<sup>2</sup> The elect persons of Israel in the Old Testament were called *the Church*, the assembly of the people of God.

<sup>3</sup> Prior to the incarnation, between the Old and New Testaments, the temple was destroyed, and the Spirit went silent.



**Thesis 25.** So also, the *way* and *manner* of his Mediation. We have it sometimes laid down only in general terms; seldom do we have it described more particularly. Very often we have it shadowed out to us only in Types and Figures.

**Thesis 26.** The Spirit of God has taken the same course in describing his benefits and his office. Often they are signified by words, but then more darkly; they are often shadowed out to us only by Types.

**Thesis 27.** The Types by which the Person of Christ is described to us, are either men or things; but those by which the manner of his *mediation* is described, are the *sacrifices*; and the *benefits* are signified to us by earthly benefits, namely, by freedom from the Egyptian bondage; by entrance into the Land of Canaan, and the like. And so the prophets expressed all things by the shadows of earthly blessings. Yes, truly, our Lord Jesus Christ himself made an addition of miracles to his sermons, that they might serve not only to confirm his doctrine (Mat 8.17), but also to figure those things to us in the cures that he worked upon the body, which he was ready to confer upon us in procuring the welfare of our souls.

**Thesis 28.** But in that obscurity, it behooves us to observe several and distinct gradations. Before the Law given by Moses, the promise was more obscure; and when the Law was given, till the times of the prophets, it was somewhat clearer. From the times of the prophets till John the Baptist, it was clearer yet. <sup>Mat 11.13</sup> Upon the preaching of John the Baptist, it was now manifest; and it was most of all manifest once our Lord Jesus Christ succeeded John. He executed and promulgated the counsel of the Father concerning the restoration of His Church. While he was executing it, it was less clear. After he had executed it, it was most clear *first* to his Apostles after his resurrection, and then after his ascension into Heaven, by the solemn mission of the Holy Ghost.

**Thesis 29.** But here it will be demanded, in the *FIRST* place, why those things were propounded more obscurely? *SECONDLY*, why they were increasingly obscure, the further the time was from the coming of Christ? *THIRDLY*, in what sense the faith of the Fathers might be said to be *saving* faith, seeing that Christ was more unknown to them, than to us?

**Thesis 30.** To the *FIRST*, we answer that those things were propounded more obscurely, *first*, because they were yet to come; and prophecies, before they were completed, ought to be more obscure, at least respecting their manner of fulfilling — especially when it is done among those by whom they were to be fulfilled. *Secondly*, the church was then raw and in her infancy; she had not yet attained to her ripe age, God so ordering the matter as seemed best to Him in his great wisdom. *Thirdly*, it was fitting to refer the clear manifestation of this Mystery, to Christ the great Prophet. *Fourthly*, their minds were to be held up in expectation of Christ (Gal 3.23). *But now the hope which is seen is not hope.* <sup>Rom 8.24</sup> In a way not unlike this, our condition in the life to come is propounded to us here more obscurely.

**Thesis 31.** To the *SECOND*, we answer that this mystery was more obscurely propounded by however much further distant the time was from the coming of Christ,

*First*, because however much nearer at hand it was, that much more earnestly the minds of men ought to be stirred up in expectation of his coming.

*Secondly*, because by however much further off those times were from the coming of Christ, that much more clearly God was pleased to manifest Himself for other reasons also — He called upon them from Heaven, He spoke to them by his angels, etc. And however much nearer the times approached the coming of Messiah, that much *less clearly* — for those very reasons — He was pleased to manifest Himself to men. And therefore, they were to make up this defect (if I may put it that way) in some other manner.

*Thirdly*, however much nearer the Church is to her beginnings, that much more imperfect she looks; and therefore she is to be instructed in a more imperfect manner.

*Fourthly*, before the Law was given, the sense of sin was not so sharp. Once the Law was given, it became sharper, yet so as to be its sharpest and most piercing at length, when the Law was to be expounded by the Prophets; and when the truth of those *threats* annexed to the Law were more evidently made good upon them, by so many calamities — by *experience*.

*Fifthly*, before the Law was given, the people had not yet undergone the yoke of the Law (we will declare what that is, in Thesis 60 and following). After the Law was given, they had undergone the yoke. But being only newly entered into the Covenant, they were not sensible of its burden. It was not until in the process of time, having learned by experience — and also having at length been warned by the Sermons of the Prophets, when it was late — that they first felt the weight and burden of it. From this we conclude that the doctrine concerning the mystery of our Redemption, so far as it concerns the perspicuity and clearness of it, was not as necessary *before* the Law was given, as it was *after* the Law had been given; nor is it as necessary *after* the Law had been given, as it was in the times of the Prophets; nor was it so necessary in the times of the Prophets, as it was in the time of John the Baptist.

*Sixthly*, that those times were so much more obscure and dark, the further they appeared at a distance from the rising of the *Sun of Righteousness*. <sup>Mal 4.2</sup> was but agreeable to Nature.

**Thesis 32.** To the THIRD we answer, the measure of faith is the word of God. And so, true and saving faith is that which believes all those things that have been revealed, in the same *manner* as they have been revealed. And therefore, that faith of the Fathers was *saving faith*, which believed all those things which, in those times, it pleased God to reveal. And saving faith also believed them in the same *manner* in which they were revealed by God to them. We consider it a sacrilegious audaciousness for any man to be wise above the Word of God, and to attempt to know those things which God on purpose has propounded to us in a more hidden and obscure manner.

**Thesis 33.** The efficacy of Christ *promised*, was less than the efficacy of Christ *exhibited*, by many degrees.

*First*, remission of sins; though it was certain with God, it was less perceived by man, because of the cloud of the Law hanging between.

*Secondly*, though it was perceived, it afforded less comfort because of the weak sense of sin. This must be supposed in those to whom there does not yet appear so great a necessity to hear of it being *expiated* by the death of the Son of God. There is less comfort because of the weak sense of sin, and the dimmer knowledge of that glory and life which attend remission of sins.

*Thirdly*, the Spirit was poured forth in scant measure on the faithful of old, as being a benefit to be referred till the times of Christ. It was fitting that He should first of all receive into his human nature, all that boundless measure of the Spirit (Joh 3.34), and from there derive it to all of us (Joh 1.16). Moreover, seeing that the benefit of Christ was less known to them in those times, they must be that much less inflamed with the love of God and Christ.

*Fourthly*, the spirit of bondage then reigned because the yoke of the Law was not yet taken off.

*Fifthly*, they were not carried on in a direct course to remission of sins, as it appears by the form of the Covenant first entered into at Mount Sinai, which afterwards was so frequently repeated in the sermons of the Prophets.

*Sixthly*, the sense *then* of the life to come, was more obscure. This is evident from the more obscure mention that is made of it in the Old Testament, and from the horror of death which seems to have reigned in those who lived before the advent of the New Covenant in the blood of Christ.

*Seventhly*, it seemed that the Fathers had not attained to the same pitch of glory that we now attain to, who die in Christ. For,

1. It was necessary that Christ himself first enter in there (Heb 10.20).
2. Because while the first Tabernacle was standing, the second was not yet unlocked (Heb 9.8).
3. There ought to be a certain proportion and respect to be had between the *sense* in *this* life, of the life *to come* (in those who are grown up); and the *fruition* of it in the life to come. But this sense in *them* was *weaker* and much more *obscure* than it is in this day under the New Testament.
4. They were not to be made perfect without us (Heb 11.39-40), even as we are not to be made perfect before the blessed day of the *second coming* of Christ (in which the body of Christ, that is, the Church, shall be absolutely perfect all over). Although, we constantly affirm that the *Fathers*, having been set at liberty out of this prison of the body, now participate in a blessed life. We affirm, moreover, that it was far less excellent than that in which our Lord Jesus Christ himself first participated (Heb 8.6). <sup>1</sup>

**Thesis 34.** The efficacy of the mediation of Christ extended to fewer, being at first restrained and restricted to the family of the Patriarchs. Afterwards, as that number grew to be enlarged, it was enclosed in the Jewish people. This, we conceive, was done for many reasons.

*First*, that thereby the coming of Christ might appear more excellent and conspicuous in the calling of the Gentiles.

*Secondly*, that God might show mercy upon *all*, for He had enclosed all under sin (Rom 11.32).

*Thirdly*, that He might stand forth as a most famous Type of *sanction* (or approval) in the Jews, and of *rejection* (or disapproval) in the Gentiles — to wit, of the Church of God, and of Satan.

**Thesis 35.** Yet, as our Lord Jesus Christ, by taking upon himself at times man's shape, was pleased to appear to the Fathers, that thereby he might, as it were, fore-act his future incarnation, so in like manner, only a few of the Gentiles were received into the Church of God *before* the coming of Christ, so that hereby He might stand forth as a prelude also, of the future calling of the Gentiles.

**Thesis 36.** This much concerning the Covenant *promised*. The beginning of the Covenant *promulgated* is to be fetched from that time in which Christ has fulfilled all things which either were foreshadowed in the Law, or had been foretold in the *Prophets* concerning him; that is to say, from the time of his Ascension. At that time, being lifted up into Heaven, he entered there with his body, and declared that he had sent his Spirit (the Comforter) into the hearts of his Apostles at the feast of Pentecost, in a *visible* shape, with fiery cloven tongues. <sup>Act 2.1-4</sup>

**Thesis 37.** This will plainly appear to whoever serves the *matter* and *form* of the promulgation.

**Thesis 38.** For seeing that this is the *sum of the Gospel*, or *New Covenant* — that all Mosaic Law providing for ceremonies is now ceased — so the *use* of the Law (under whose custody we were detained, even the Faith which would afterwards be revealed) was *abolished* — because Christ is now crucified, dead, and buried, and after that, was received into Heaven.

*First*, that remission of sins in his blood should be cleared and openly propounded, offered, and bestowed upon all those who by true faith believe that this Christ is both Lord and Savior.

*Secondly*, that the Spirit of adoption should be sent into the hearts of those who do this with a firm confidence of mind, who acquiesce in and rest upon this Redeemer, so that they no longer stand in mind of the Pedagogy of the Law, <sup>Gal 3.23-24</sup> seeing that they are taught of God. <sup>Joh 6.45</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Heb 8:6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.

Certainly that doctrine concerning faith in Christ could not properly be called *Gospel* (even if it is called by that name), if the Mosaic worship remained. And that too was by the allowance and approval of Christ, and those things not yet fulfilled which are declared in the Gospel.

**Thesis 39.** This very thing appears to be so in the *form* of the promulgation. For as that *Old Covenant* (which we will say something about by and by) was promulgated, not without great pomp in Mount Sinai (Exo 19.20), the people of Israel both hearing and beholding it, and swearing to it (Exo 19.8) — so this *New Covenant* also happened to be promulgated in a set and solemn way, in a convention of almost all nations, with great splendor (such as it was) on the feast day of Pentecost (Act 2.1-5).

**Thesis 40.** And certainly *before* that day, the Doctrine of Faith was such that men seem rather to be called to the Kingdom of God *which would come*, than to be commanded to rest *satisfied* in the *present state* of things. So that we ascend no higher (for the thing is clearly without any controversy), John the Baptist sent his hearers to Christ; <sup>1</sup> and Christ invited men to the Kingdom of Heaven (that is, the evangelical administration of the Church) as even now at hand, and would shortly be; but it was not yet present.<sup>2</sup> Truly, seeing that he was even now raised from the dead, and though you hear him openly profess to his Apostles that *all power was given to him both in Heaven and on Earth*, and commanding them *to preach the Gospel to every creature* (Mat 28.18); yet he so commands this, that he bids them to expect at Jerusalem the fulfilling of the promise concerning the solemn mission of the Holy Ghost to them (Luk 24.49). Indeed, it was designed already, but then at length it was to be installed and publicly received with extraordinary signs, while many would both hear it, and stand looking on (Act 1.8-9).

**Thesis 41.** Here would be a fit point at which to speak more at large concerning the excellence of this Covenant, seeing that the matter otherwise in itself is not obscure. And in comparing it with the Covenant of Nature, having already touched many things belonging to this place, we will defer the matter until we undertake to show you the comparison between *this* and the *Old Covenant* (which we call a *subservient Covenant*), of which I am now purposed to speak.

**Thesis 42.** The *Old Covenant*, or the *subservient Covenant*, is what we call that which God entered into with the people of Israel in Mount Sinai, that He might *prepare* them for faith; and that He might *inflame* them with a desire for the Promise and for the Gospel Covenant (otherwise it would have aged and languished in their minds); and that with it He might, as with a curb, restrain them from their impieties, until that very time in which He was purposed to send His Spirit of Adoption into their hearts, and to govern them by the Law of Liberty.

**Thesis 43.** Hence we suppose it is *not* obscure, and why we call it a *subservient Covenant*, well near in the same sense in which the Holy Ghost calls it the *Old Covenant*. It is not because it is the first (as some surmise), but because it ought to grow old, and give way to a better Covenant which is to succeed it; and so at length be abolished itself (Heb 8.13).<sup>3</sup>

**Thesis 44.** The nature and condition of this Covenant cannot be more certainly sought, nor more easily found, than by comparing it first with the Covenant of Nature; and after that, with the Covenant of Grace. For it will so come to pass by this search, that all those things being weighed in which it agrees with those other covenants, all its properties will be brought to light.

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<sup>1</sup> Joh 1:26; Mar 1:7 And he preached, saying, “There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. <sup>8</sup> “I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” Mat 3:12 “His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

<sup>2</sup> Mat 3.1-2; Mar 1:15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

<sup>3</sup> Heb 8:13 In that He says, “A new *covenant*,” He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

**Thesis 45.** It **agrees** with the Covenant of Nature in that,

*First*, in both, the one party contracting or covenanting is God; and the other is man.

*Second*, both have their restipulation or condition annexed.

*Third*, the restipulation is the same, so far as touching the Moral Law.

*Fourth*, the promise is the same, in general.

*Fifth*, both of them lead us to Christ.

**Thesis 46.** But they **differ** in that,

*First*, the Covenant of Nature was made altogether with all men; *this* one with the Israelites.

*Second*, the Covenant of Nature was immediately made with man at the instant of his creation, and had no preparatories to it at all; the Old Covenant was made long after, and had many preparatories.

*Third*, the Covenant of Nature only binds us by the Law of Nature to due obedience. The Old Covenant obliges us further, to ceremonies.

*Fourth*, seeing that life is promised in both Covenants, in the Old one it is designed for fruition in the Land of Canaan; in the New one, for fruition in Paradise.

*Fifth*, seeing that both covenants lead us to Christ, the Covenant of Nature doesn't do this by itself, but incidentally; the Old Covenant does it by itself, for it is its true and proper scope. For God didn't make the Covenant of Nature with men for this end, that being oppressed with the weight of it, they would breathe after Christ; rather, the last and main end of it is this, that men should render to God that which is due. But in the *Subservient* Covenant,<sup>1</sup> God does not require His right for any other end than this, that men, upon conviction of their own weakness, should fly into the arms of Christ.

*Sixth*, the Covenant of Nature is founded upon the *Creation* and general *Conservation*; the Subservient Covenant is founded upon the *Election* of the people of Israel; and lastly, upon their freedom from Egypt and *conservation* <sup>2</sup> in the Land of Canaan.

*Seventh*, the Covenant of Nature was therefore made, that men might be drawn *sweetly* by it, for it was written in their hearts. But the *Subservient* Covenant was made for this end, to *compel* men; for it begot them into bondage (Gal 4.24, *sons of Hagar*).

*Eighth*, the Covenant of Nature is *eternal*; the Old Covenant was but *temporary*.

*Ninth*, the Covenant of Nature did not regard restraint from outward impieties, either as touching the *principal* scope of it, nor as touching the *less principal*. The Old Covenant, as touching its *less principal* scope, did regard it (Exo 20.10, *the Sabbath*).

*Tenth*, The Covenant of Nature was engraved on the heart, whereas the Old Covenant was engraved only on tablets of stone.

*Eleventh*, The Covenant of Nature was made in Paradise; the Subservient Covenant was made in Mount Sinai.

*Twelfth*, there was no Mediator of the Covenant of Nature; the *Subservient* Covenant had a Mediator, that is to say, Moses.

*Thirteenth*, the Covenant of Nature was made with man as he was perfect, and in his Innocency; the Subservient Covenant was made only with some *part* of mankind, as it was *lapsed*.

**Thesis 47.** Here may be asked, *first* of all, how we are drawn by the Covenant of Nature to Christ, *incidentally*? For we said, *now* it is was not ordained *mainly* for this end. *Secondly*, how may the Covenant of Nature be said to draw men *sweetly*, since it rather *compels* them? *Thirdly*, seeing then that it *compels* them, in what sense or consideration (touching this part of it) may it be distinguished from the *Subservient* Covenant?

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<sup>1</sup> Remember, the *subservient* covenant is the *Old* Covenant, or the Covenant of the *Law* (see Thesis 43). The Covenant of Nature is the Covenant of *Works*, made with Adam prior to the fall.

<sup>2</sup> Here, *conservation* refers to the *preservation* and furtherment of Israel, by God.

**Thesis 48.** To the FIRST I answer, the Covenant of Nature brings men incidentally to Christ, in that it showed what man is indebted to God for, and how sore a punishment abides on whoever doesn't pay this debt. <sup>Joh 3.36</sup> From this, it compels a man to look to the Mediator, seeing that he is both *unable* to discharge the *debt*, and is every wit as *unable* to undergo the *punishment*.

**Thesis 49.** Nevertheless, it doesn't do this alike in all men. For in those who are guided only by the *light of Nature*, by reason of that *ignorance* which is ingenerated in the mind of man, it compels more superficially and slightly. But it urges more strongly now, those who read of this debt of Nature, in the word of God, or hear it deciphered. But most strongly of all, are those whose minds it sprinkles or enlightens with a singular and extraordinary light, to discern clearly how much they owe, and how little they have paid; and how far a punishment they have demerited on that account.

**Thesis 50.** Yet this was not the end or purpose of this Covenant of Nature. Nevertheless, in that the *knowledge* of it was not wholly blotted out of the mind of lapsed men, it was so ordered by God for this end: that it might be serviceable both to *restrain* men, and to *lead* them to Christ.

**Thesis 51.** And also those very things which the Covenant of Nature effects incidentally, it effects in another manner than the Subservient Covenant does.

**Thesis 52.** For first, in that the Covenant of Nature restrains men from *external vices*, it does this, not for any lack of the Spirit's being empowered forth under the New Testament (to which the restraint that flows from the Subservient Covenant referred). But it restrained men *before* that fulness of time, <sup>Gal 4.4</sup> for lack of the Spirit which those latter times partook of. <sup>1</sup> Since the promulgation of the Gospel, the Covenant of Nature does the same thing also, for lack of that Spirit which was promised in the New Covenant. <sup>Gal 3.14</sup> But in what the Subservient Covenant [i.e., the Covenant of the Old Testament] restrained, it did that because the time had not yet come in which God would send the Spirit of Adoption into the hearts of His faithful ones.

**Thesis 53.** For just as under the New Testament, the measure of the Spirit is one in this life, and another in the life to come, so too under the Old Testament, the measure of the Spirit was far different then, from what it is now under the New. And just as that measure of the Spirit which is bestowed under the New Testament, is not bestowed perfect in this life, there is need of a curb by which the flesh might be restrained, which is the Covenant of Nature. So, that measure which could be afforded to us in the Old Covenant, in as much as it was never afforded us perfect, also needed a like curb.

**Thesis 54.** For this cause, the Jews — both by the Covenant of Nature (like us), and also by the Subservient Covenant (different from us) — were restrained from external sins.

**Thesis 55.** In like manner also, the Covenant of Nature leads us to Christ *one way*, and the Subservient Covenant *another*. For the Covenant of Nature begets and stirs up a thirst in men, which by Christ applied, is assuaged either in the *promise*, or in the *Gospel*.<sup>2</sup> But the thirst which the Subservient Covenant excited, could not be assuaged other than by the coming of Christ himself *in the flesh*.

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<sup>1</sup> Cameron asserts that the Covenant of Nature remains in effect for all non-elect, condemning them in every age, just as it condemned Adam at the first. The Covenant of Grace, whether Old or New, applies *only* to the elect. Hence, the saving work of the Spirit doesn't impact the Covenant of Nature, either before or after the Spirit's effusion. – WHG

<sup>2</sup> The promise of the Messiah in Gen 3.15, to which the Patriarchs looked forward in faith, was sufficient to assuage their thirst for righteousness, which the Covenant of Nature stirred up. It was a Covenant, says Bolton, that is still useful *after* the fall, to "curb our vices." The Mosaic Law stirred the same thirst in the Israelites. The thirst of both the Patriarchs and the Israelites was assuaged in the *Promise*, just as ours is assuaged in the *Gospel*, by *Christ applied*, through faith alone. Those before Christ, didn't know how or when the promised Messiah would come. They only knew that what God had promised, He was able to perform (Rom 4.21-22). – WHG

**Thesis 56.** Therefore, men being pressed so far by the Covenant of Nature, are disquieted with the desire for a Mediator. <sup>Job 9:33</sup> Yet, before He was exhibited, they desired only an *application* of the promised Christ. *After* he was exhibited, they desired the bestowing of Him to be exhibited. But the *Subservient* Covenant did not allow men to rest satisfied in Christ as one who was *promised*, but it further inflamed them with a marvelous desire for his coming *in the flesh*. In just this way under the Gospel, the Covenant of Grace tosses in a desire not only for that measure of Jesus Christ which will be afforded us in this life, but it also excites and stirs up in the minds of the godly, a marvelous desire for the dissolution of this body, and for the second coming of Christ.

**Thesis 57.** Therefore the Jews were brought into Christ by the Covenant of Nature, in another manner from what they were by the Subservient Covenant.

**Thesis 58.** To the SECOND [see Thesis 47], I answer that we consider the Covenant of Nature, according to its first institution, when it was instituted with man, entire and uncorrupt; and *not* according to its incidental use, the nature of man now being wholly corrupted and depraved.

**Thesis 59.** To the third, we already answered (see above in Theses 52, 53), where we explained how men might be restrained from sin in one way by the Covenant of Grace, and in another way by the Subservient Covenant.

**Thesis 60.** But because we have already spoken somewhat about the *coaction* that proceeds both from the Covenant of Nature, and also from the Subservient Covenant, it will not unlikely shorten the labor needed to explain what and how manifold that *coaction* is.

**Thesis 61.** By *coaction* here, we don't mean that by which the members of man are hurried on impetuously to doing those things which by no means they would do willingly; but we mean that kind of coaction to which there concurs some consent of will. Indeed, that consent is not absolute and perfect, nor such that is compelled; for to *assent*, and yet to be *compelled*, are repugnant.

**Thesis 62.** This comes to pass when what we hate in itself, is yet embraced by our wills — either to avoid something we hate more; or to achieve something, the love of which more earnestly inflames us than the hatred of what we *yet desire* in order to achieve this something.

**Thesis 63.** This kind of *coaction* is felt by those who are ever restrained from the outward impieties by the Covenant of Nature, *or* by that Subservient Covenant — yet, so as different sorts of men act in a diverse and different manner. For truly, wicked men are only scared from evil by the fear of punishment, which is denounced in the Covenant against them. Whereas the godly are also drawn by the love of God covenanting with them, even though they are inclined to evil. Now, a man may call that former way *servile*; and this latter way a son-like *filial* action.

**Thesis 64.** But the diversity of this *coaction* has its dependence not so much upon the Covenant itself — either the Covenant of Nature or the Subservient Covenant — as upon the condition of the persons concerned in the Covenant.

**Thesis 65.** For the very Covenant itself, in this corruption of nature, *enforces* — yet it does it by a servile *coaction* in those who are destitute of faith; and by a *filial* coaction in those who are endued with faith.

**Thesis 66.** It now remains to compare the Subservient Covenant (which is the Old Testament) with the Covenant of Grace.

**Thesis 67.** They **agree**,

1. First of all, in that God is Author of them both.
2. Both of them are made with man considered as he is a sinner.
3. Both of them reveal sin.
4. Both of them restrain from sin.
5. They both lead to Christ.

6. Either one is a badge of the Church of God.
7. Both of them were made through the Mediator.
8. In both of them, life is promised.

**Thesis 68.** But they **differ**,

1. In the quality and condition of the Author. For in the Subservient Covenant, God is considered as reproving sin, and as One approving only righteousness. But here *now*, He is otherwise considered in the Covenant of Grace, as One remitting sin, and repairing a new righteousness in man.
2. They differ in the stipulation; for this is the stipulation of the Old Covenant, *Do this and live* (Gal 3.12). But the New Covenant is, *Believe and you won't come into judgment* (Joh 3.18).
3. They differ in their antiquity; for the Subservient Covenant was added to the Promises of Grace which preceded it (Gal 3.17, 19).
4. They differ in the manner of revealing sin; for the Subservient Covenant *doesn't* reveal sin primarily (Rom 7), except by the experience of man's weakness in keeping that Covenant. But the Covenant of Grace does it *primarily*; for it teaches expressly that man is a sinner (Rom 3.9, 23), and that his happiness is placed in the remission of sins (Rom 3.25; 4.6-8).
5. The Subservient Covenant restrains from sin (Rom 7.22-24), but by coaction (Rom 6). The Covenant of Grace does it by a spontaneous and voluntary inclination of the minds of men.
6. Either one leads to Christ. The Covenant of Grace does it *directly*; the Subservient Covenant does it *indirectly*.
7. Whereas both are a badge of the Church, the Old Covenant is a *carnal* or outward badge only of the *Jewish* Church; but the Covenant of Grace is a *spiritual* badge of the Church of the Jews, and also of the Gentiles.
8. Whereas either Covenant was made by a Mediator, the Mediator of the Old Covenant is the man Moses; but the Mediator of the New is not a weak *man*, but Christ the *God-man* (Heb 8.6; 9.15; 12.24).
9. In the Old Covenant, the spirit of bondage is given (Gal 4.24); but in the Covenant of Grace, the Spirit of Adoption is given (Rom 8.15).
10. The Old Covenant was the means to the end; but the Covenant of Grace was the end in itself.
11. The Old Covenant terrified the consciences; the New comforts them.
12. The object of the Old Covenant is man *dead in sin*; of the New, a conscience *terrified* for sin.
13. The Old Covenant declared the manner of worshipping God, but it *performed* nothing. The New Covenant performs both.
14. The Old Covenant is a handwriting against us (Col 2.14); but the New is a burden cast off (Mat 11.28).
15. The Old Covenant is from Mount Sinai, *trembling* (Heb 12.18-24); the New is from Zion (Psa 2.6-8), which is *heavenly, delectable, and lovely*. <sup>Song 5.16</sup>
16. The Old Covenant shuts out the Gentiles; but the New receives them in.
17. And last of all, this difference is further added by some — that whereas life is promised in either one, it seems that life is only promised in the Old to be lived in the *Land of Canaan*; but in the New is promised a life to be lived in *Heaven*.

**Thesis 69.** Furthermore, the Old Covenant was a means to Christ, either as it corrected and reprov'd men of sin; or as it restrained men from sin; or as being a Type and similitude of the New Covenant. The two former (correction and restraint) have been explained already; the latter yet remains.

**Thesis 70.** There are two parts of the Old Covenant: the *Moral* Law, and the *Ceremonial* Law, to which may also be added their *Polity* (i.e., the *Judicial* or *Civil* Law). These, if considered in themselves, corrected and reprov'd man of sin. And indeed, the Moral Law is *impossible*, through the weakness of the flesh. So it declares that a man is *not spiritual*, and it restrains him from



outward impieties, through the intervening *spirit of bondage* (Heb 10.3).<sup>1</sup> Now, the *Ceremonies* set forth man's impurity contracted by sin. But if we consider them as Types, the Moral Law was the copy of our *holiness*. Some of the sacrifices set forth the death of Christ as *expiatory* (an atonement for sin); the rest of them figured *the reasonable sacrifice of our body and mind* (Rom 12.1-2). In respect to this, we are called *priests* (Rev 1.6; 5.10; 20.6); and those other cleansings denote the real *sanctification* of our souls in the blood and Spirit of Christ.

**Thesis 71.** Here, two things may be asked: *First*, how Moses could be said to be a Mediator of that Covenant, seeing that he himself was included in the party covenanting on the one side. *Secondly*, why the sacrifices (sacraments) and ceremonies of the Old Covenant are called *carnal* (Heb 9.10 <sup>KJV</sup>), while the sacraments of the New Covenant are not so. Whereas Christ, or the *benefits* of Christ, were as well represented in those of the *Old* Covenant, as they are in *these*.

**Thesis 72.** I answer, it is not absurd for one and the same person, under a different consideration, to be a Mediator, and yet still be included as the party covenanting on the one side. For in the New Testament, Christ is a Mediator; and yet as God, he is also the other party that is covenanting. So too in the Old Testament, Moses was an Israelite, and a part of that people with whom God entered into a covenant. After he had taken upon himself the *Office of Mediator*, which was appointed to him by God, he was no longer simply to be considered an Israelite, but also a Mediator — making intercession between God and the people of Israel. And we conceive this was done so that he might appear to be a clearer and more manifest Type of Christ.

**Thesis 73.** But from this, a weightier difficulty seems to arise. For seeing that God is infinite, it may not be absurdly demanded, *In what respect could Moses be a Mediator between God and man, seeing that he himself was but a man?* To this we answer that Mediation is two-fold. By the benefit of the one, men are truly and effectually united to God. And this Mediation, we confess, belongs to none other than to a person endued with infinite virtue and power, so that the New Covenant could admit of no other Mediator than one who must be God; we constantly affirm this. But then we say, again, there is *another* Mediation of which the use is only this: to show what the way and manner is in how God is to worshipped, and not to inspire men with a strength and power to perform it; nor to reconcile men to God. Rather, it only propounds those things by which it easily appears what need they have of reconciliation. This is the Mediation of the Old Covenant. This is why we say that its Mediator ought not to have been of *infinite* power, but *finite*, such as may belong to a *creature*.

**Thesis 74.** To the second we answer that the sacrifices and sacraments of the Old Testament are deservedly called *carnal*, etc. Those of the New Covenant are not so, because notwithstanding, *these* as well as *those* (respecting this matter) may be called both *carnal and spiritual* in respect to their signification. Yet there is a *two-fold difference* that distinguishes them from each other.

**Thesis 75.** The FIRST DIFFERENCE is that the sacrifices, sacraments, and ceremonies of the Ancients had their *carnal* use, besides their *spiritual* signification. But the sacraments of the New Covenant, by God's appointment, have *no carnal use* at all now, but are merely *spiritual*.

**Thesis 76.** Nevertheless, we don't deny that even the sacraments of the New Covenant (by the institution and custom of man) may have a carnal use. But it is not one that is prescribed for them by any Word of God.

**Thesis 77.** The SECOND DIFFERENCE is in this: that the sacraments, sacrifices, and ceremonies of the Old Testament set forth *Christ*, and the *benefits* by Christ — not *primarily* but *secondarily*;

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<sup>1</sup> Heb 10:3-4 But in those *sacrifices* there is a reminder of sins every year. <sup>4</sup> For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. **Rom 8:15** For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

and that too is but darkly. But the sacraments of the New Covenant show forth Christ *primarily*, and that is done *clearly*.

**Thesis 78.** Thus circumcision *primarily* separated the seeds of Abraham, from those of the rest of the nations. It sealed to them the *earthly* promise. *Secondarily*, it signified our *sanctification*. In like manner, the Passover *primarily* signified the passing over of the Destroying Angel; <sup>Heb 11.28</sup> and *secondarily* it signified Christ. So also the sacrifices and cleansings *primarily* represented a certain carnal holiness; *secondarily* they figured Christ and the benefit of the New Covenant.

**Thesis 79.** And now I conceive, lastly, it will not be amiss in the place of a conclusion, to subjoin here the *Definitions* of those three *Covenants* concerning which we have raised this dispute.

**Thesis 80.** The COVENANT OF NATURE is that by which God, by right of Creation, requires a perfect obedience of all mankind, and promises a most blessed life to as many as give it to Him, to be lived in *Paradise*. But against those who deny Him this perfect obedience, He denounces eternal death. And that is for this end: that it may appear to all, how greatly He loves *virtue*, and how infinitely He hates *vice*.

**Thesis 81.** The OLD COVENANT is that by which God, who owns them, finds everyone is *shy* to receive His ways, and as ready to *reject* them. But once the *ways* of God become thriving, enriching, and ennobling ways, and *religion* is commonly received and reputed, then everyone is read to entertain it. It is one thing for man to own the Ark when *none* will own it; indeed, many will own a *prospering* truth, and a *blessing* Ark. But he is Obed-Edom indeed,<sup>1</sup> who will own a persecuted, tossed, and banished Ark. <sup>1Chr 13.13</sup> God requires from the people of Israel, obedience to the Moral, Ceremonial, and Judicial Laws. To as many as give it to Him, He promises all sorts of blessings in the possession of the Land of Canaan. On the contrary, to as many as deny it to Him, he most severely denounces curses and death. And it was for this end: that He might bring them to *the Messiah who was to come*. <sup>Joh 4.25</sup>

**Thesis 82.** The COVENANT OF GRACE is that by which God, on the condition propounded (of faith in Christ), promises remission of sins in his blood, and a heavenly life. And it is for this end: *that He might show forth the riches of His mercy*. <sup>Rom 9.23</sup>

And this much concerning the *Covenants*.

*Glory be to you, O Lord Jesus.*

*FINIS*

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<sup>1</sup> The name *Obed-Edom* means “servant of Edom.”