

The Uses of the Gospel and the Law

Part II

[John Colquhoun](#)

(1748-1827)

John Colquhoun was born in Scotland in January 1748. His early education was from the local school supported by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK). At the age of 20, Colquhoun began his studies at the University of Glasgow. Once his pastoral ministry began, he labored faithfully for almost 50 years, and died in 1827. He was one of the greatest of Scottish preachers and writers. His works, include: *A Treatise on the Covenant of Grace*, *A Catechism for the Instruction and Direction of Young Communicants*, *A View of Saving Faith*, *A Collection of the Promises of the Gospel*, *A View of Evangelical Repentance*, *Spiritual Comfort*, and a collection of sermons entitled *Sermons, Chiefly on Doctrinal Subjects*.

The gospel, in its strict and proper sense, is of great and manifold use to both sinners and to saints.

Section 1. The Principal Uses of the Gospel

The gospel in its strict acceptation is, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, of special use:

1. To reveal Christ and God in Him as reconciled, and as reconciling sinners of mankind to Himself. The great use of the gospel is to make Christ known to lost sinners as the only and the all-sufficient Savior; to reveal Him to them in His infinitely glorious person as God-man and Mediator; in His surety-righteousness for their justification before God; in His immeasurable fullness of the Spirit for their sanctification and consolation, and in His saving offices and endearing relations to all who believe in Him. It serves to represent to them how Jesus has loved them, what He has done and suffered for them, and what blessings of salvation He has purchased for them and is ready to dispense to them (1 Corinthians 1:24 and 2:2; 1 Timothy 3:16). It is of use also to reveal to them God as reconciled in the Son, and as reconciling elect sinners to Himself (2 Corinthians 4:3-6 and 5:18-20). Hence the manifold doctrines, offers, and promises of the gospel are in Scripture called "the manifold wisdom of God" (Ephesians 3:10). They clearly show that God has devised the scheme of our redemption with such astonishing wisdom; that our salvation is all of grace and all of merit, all of mercy and all of justice; that our iniquities are forgiven, and yet the punishment due for them is inflicted; that the ungodly who believe are justified and yet ungodliness is condemned; and that salvation is freely bestowed and, after all, the demands of law and justice are fully answered.

2. It is the gospel which also discloses to sinners the covenant of grace into which the Father, and the Son as last Adam, with the infinite approbation of the Holy Spirit, have entered for the salvation of such sinners as believe. Sinful men cannot be otherwise saved than by being enabled to take hold of that everlasting covenant by faith as to come into the bond of it. This, however, they cannot do unless they are made so to know it as to discern spiritually the reality, glory, and suitableness of it to their miserable condition as lost sinners. But it is the gospel only, coming to them “in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,” that reveals this gracious covenant to them, and that shows them how they may be so instated in it as to possess and enjoy the blessings of salvation. They could never, according to the plan established in the counsel of peace, have known that eternal contract but by the revelation of it in the everlasting gospel. It is by the gospel, accompanied with the illuminating influences of His Holy Spirit, that the Lord Jesus, the Messenger of the covenant, shows elect sinners His covenant (Psalm 25:14).

3. It serves, likewise, the highly important purpose of revealing to sinners their warrant to trust in Christ Jesus for complete salvation. In the blessed gospel, Christ, and God in Christ, are freely offered to sinful men, and men are graciously invited as sinners to receive the offer and to entrust the whole affair of their salvation to Christ, and to God in Him (John 6:32; Isaiah 55:1-4). By the gospel, they are informed that the Lord Jesus offers Himself with all the inestimable blessings of the everlasting covenant to them, and that He graciously invites and urges them as sinners to accept Him as their all-sufficient Savior, and to place the confidence of their hearts in Him for salvation from sin and wrath. Were they to not know that a divine warrant is thereby afforded them to receive and trust in the Savior for their salvation, it would be as great presumption in any of them as it would be in a fallen angel to attempt trusting that He would save him. But by the declarations, offers, calls, and promises of the word of grace, an ample warrant is afforded them as sinners of mankind to trust in the divine Savior, and so to take possession of His great salvation. And it is by the gospel, accompanied by the illuminating grace of the Holy Spirit, that their warrant is revealed, that their full right of access to the compassionate Savior is disclosed to them, and that He manifests Himself to be so near them as to be within their reach (Romans 10:6-8). Oh, how great is the importance and utility of the gracious offers and invitations of the blessed gospel to convinced and despondent sinners! By these, under the illuminating influences of the adorable Spirit, they see that it is lawful and warrantable for them to come as sinners, and to entrust, with humble and strong confidence, the eternal salvation of their souls to the Lord Jesus.

4. The gospel is the means which the Holy Spirit employs for communicating the grace of Christ to elect sinners, in order to produce that change of their state and of their nature to which they have been chosen. It is by means of the gospel that, in the moment of regeneration, the Spirit of Christ and His grace enter and take possession of the hearts of God’s elect. Sinners who are born again “are born not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever” (1 Peter 1:23). Hence the Psalmist, directing his speech to the Messiah, says, “The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion; rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies. Thy people

shall be willing in the day of Thy power” (Psalm 110:2-3). The gospel, accordingly, is called “the spirit which giveth life” (2 Corinthians 3:6), “the grace of God that bringeth salvation” (Titus 2:11), and “the power of God unto salvation” (Romans 1:16). By the gospel, God exerts the exceeding greatness of His power in quickening and converting sinners to Himself. It is by means of it that He enlightens their minds, renews their wills, rectifies and sanctifies their affections, and so makes them partakers of a new and holy nature. Hence the Apostle Paul calls it “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,” which made him “free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:2).

5. The gospel is also the instrument by which the Holy Spirit implants the principle and habit of true faith in the hearts of elect sinners. “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Romans 10:17). The Spirit renders the reading and, especially, the hearing of the gospel effectual means of working faith in the hearts of sinners, by which they believe with application the gracious offers of Christ, and of His righteousness and fullness, and trust in Him for salvation to themselves in particular. It is by means of the gospel, which the Apostle Paul calls “the word of faith” (Romans 10:8), that the Spirit of Christ implants and increases precious faith in the souls of His elect (John 20:31). Is it then the believer’s desire that he may make swift progress in the habit and exercise of that living faith by which he gives glory to God and receives grace and glory from Him? Let him, in humble reliance on the promise, and on the Spirit of faith, read, hear, and meditate frequently on the glorious gospel.

6. It is by means of the gospel that the Holy Spirit continues to apply Christ, with His righteousness and fullness, to the hearts of believers for increasing their sanctification and consolation. They are said in Scripture to be “sanctified through the truth” (John 17:17-19), to be clean through the word which Christ has spoken to them (John 15:3), and to have their hearts purified by faith (Acts 15:9). The Apostle Paul presented this prayer for the saints at Ephesus: “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye may be filled with all the fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:17-19). And he informed them that they were “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets” (Ephesians 2:20-22). It is in proportion, then, as the saints are enabled to believe with application to themselves the offers and promises of the gospel, and to trust in Jesus Christ for salvation, that they advance in holiness and comfort. And it is in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, that they all come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13).

7. The gospel is a means of increasing the knowledge, of restraining the depravity, and of reforming the external conduct of many unregenerate sinners; and so of qualifying them for being, in various respects, serviceable to the people of God around them. It is often a means, under the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit, of rendering many unregenerate men less hurtful and more useful to the saints of God than otherwise they would be. As the gospel is a special means of the renewing influences of the Spirit in holy men, so is it of His restraining influence on hypocrites and wicked men (Matthew 13:20-22; 2 Peter 2:20; Hebrews 6:4-5). Now this restraining or providential influence is of inexpressible importance to the saints. For as no saint could continue to live in communion with Christ and with other saints without sanctifying grace, and that daily

communicated to him, so neither could he live among sinners unless restraining influences were afforded to them. He ought, therefore, in a very high degree, to esteem and love the gospel not only because it is the means of special grace to himself, but because it is the vehicle of common influence to the unregenerate around him.

8. Last, it is by means of the gospel that the glory of Christ, and of God in Him, is manifested to men and angels. It is in and by the gospel that the brightest displays “of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” are graciously afforded (2 Corinthians 4:4-7). In the gospel, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord Jesus, and of all the divine perfections, as harmonizing and mingling their refulgent beams in the redemption of sinners by Him, is seen, contemplated, and adored (2 Corinthians 3:18). It is the gospel strictly taken that, under the illuminating influences of the blessed Spirit, serves to discover to the eye of faith “the glory of the only begotten of the Father, the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person.” There the glory of the great Redeemer’s person and work shines forth in the view of holy angels and redeemed men with the most resplendent luster. Hence the gospel is called “the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Corinthians 4:4), and “the glorious gospel of the blessed God” (1 Timothy 1:11). While the Lord affords far more illustrious displays of His infinite glory in redemption than in any other of His works, all the transcendent displays of it in redemption which He makes are in and by the gospel.

Section 2. The Uses of the Moral Law in its Subsistence to the Gospel

The law, both as a covenant of works and as a rule of life, is, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, of special use, and that both to sinners and to saints. Though righteousness and eternal life cannot, since the Fall, be obtained by a man’s own obedience to the moral law, because “by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Galatians 2:16), yet it is of manifold use to men. “The law is good,” says the Apostle Paul, “if a man use it lawfully” (1 Timothy 1:8), that is, if he uses it suitably, to the design for which it is given him, and to the state in which he is, either as an unbeliever or as a believer — or, in other words, if he improves it as a covenant for urging him to receive Jesus Christ, and improve it as a rule for directing him how to walk in Christ.

The law is of use to men in general:

1. To reveal to them the holy nature and will of God, or to show them the infinite holiness and rectitude of His nature and will. Jehovah said to the Israelites in the wilderness, “I am the Lord your God; ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy” (Leviticus 11:44). “The law is holy,” says the Apostle Paul, “and the commandment holy, and just, and good” (Romans 7:12).

2. It serves to inform them of their duty to God, to themselves, and to others around them; and to oblige them, by His sovereign authority, to perform it. “He hath showed

thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God” (Micah 6:8)?

3. It is of use, likewise, to restrain men from much sin. By its peremptory commands and awful threatenings, it serves in some measure to keep them in awe, and to frighten them from committing many external acts of sin in which they otherwise would freely indulge themselves. It is of use, by its terrible denunciations, to curb those who, destitute of every good principle, would rush forward to all manner of sin, and to deter them, through fear of punishment, from many gross enormities. In this view, it serves as a curb to hold sinners within the limits of external decency, and to prevent the world from becoming a scene of robbery and blood. Accordingly our apostle says, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers (1 Timothy 1:9-10).

4. The law conduces also to excite and encourage sinners to the practice of virtue, from the consideration that even the external resemblance of true virtue will often be rewarded with exemption from many outward calamities, and with the possession of many outward advantages (Isaiah 1:19). Nay, it tends to impel sinners to virtuous actions, even from the consideration that, in the event of their performance of them, and afterward of their dying in an unregenerate state, their punishment in hell will be more tolerable than if they had not performed them. Although sinners cannot, by their obedience to the law, procure for themselves a title to heaven; yea, and though they should never be driven by the law from themselves to Christ for righteousness and salvation, but should die under condemnation; yet the more external obedience they yield to the law, the lighter will their punishment be (Luke 12:47-48). They cannot, by their obedience to the law, merit even the lowest place in heaven; but they can by it obtain for themselves an exemption from the lowest place in hell.

5. Moreover, it is of special use to convince sinners of their sinfulness and misery, and also of their utter inability by any righteousness and strength of their own, to recover themselves from their state of sin and misery. “What things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the works of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in His sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:19-20). And again, “But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment, might become exceeding sinful” (Romans 7:13). The precepts of the law serve to convince men of their sins of omission, and the prohibitions of it to convince them of their sins of commission. There are various evils which men would never have known to be sins unless the holy law of God had revealed the sinfulness of them. Accordingly our apostle says, “I had not known sin but by the law: for I had not known lust except the law had said, ‘Thou shalt not covet’ “ (Romans 7:7). While the precepts of the law are of use to convince sinners of the reality and sinfulness of their sins, the threatenings of it are employed to discover to them the tremendous wrath and curse of God due to them for their transgressions (Galatians 3:10). And by disclosing to them the deep depravity of their nature, the precepts and threatenings of

the law serve, in the hand of the Spirit, to convince them of their utter inability to recover themselves, and so to humble them under a painful sense of their sinfulness and misery (Romans 3:9).

6. Last, the law serves to show them their extreme need of Christ, and of His righteousness and salvation. "Wherefore then serveth the law?" asks our apostle, "It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made" (Galatians 3:19). It awakens their consciences to a conviction of their guilt, and to a dread of everlasting punishment, and so discovers to them their absolute need of Christ and His perfect righteousness for their justification in the sight of God (Galatians 3:24; Romans 10:4). Thus the moral law is of use to men in general.

7. It is of special use to unregenerate sinners. Under the awakening influences of the Holy Spirit, it serves as a covenant of works to convince them of sin, and to show them that as they are sinners, and so cannot perform perfect obedience to entitle them to life, it is absolutely impossible for them ever to attain to justification and salvation by their own performances. "By the deeds of the law," says the Apostle Paul, "there shall no flesh be justified in His sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20). "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin reviv'd, and I died" (Romans 7:9).

It reveals the wrath of God against them for their innumerable transgressions of it, and so impresses them with fear of eternal punishment. "The law worketh wrath" (Romans 4:15). It condemns every sinner who is under it to death in all its direful extent, and so it awakens his conscience to expect infinite and insupportable wrath as the just recompense of disobedience to its righteous precepts. Hence the law, in this point of view, is called "the ministration of condemnation" (2 Corinthians 3:7). Thus, as a scourge, it troubles and torments the consciences of impenitent sinners, and renders them uneasy in a course of sin.

The law is of use, likewise, to urge or drive them to Jesus Christ, the only Savior of lost sinners. Seeing it is the means of convincing sinners of their sinfulness, misery, and utter inability to recover themselves, it drives them from confidence in themselves to the Lord Jesus for righteousness and strength. And thus it is their "schoolmaster to bring them unto Christ, that they may be justified by faith" (Galatians 3:24). By demanding perfect holiness of nature, perfect obedience of life, and complete satisfaction for sin, which none of the children of Adam is able to afford, the law shuts them up to see their need of Christ, who has fully answered all these demands for those who believe in Him (Romans 10:4). It serves as a looking glass in which they may contemplate the exceeding sinfulness, and demerit of their sins in order that, despairing of life by their own works, they may be necessitated to flee speedily to Jesus Christ, who has fulfilled a perfect righteousness for their justification.

It serves, at the same time, to convince them that they have those characters of sinfulness and misery under which the offers and invitations of the gospel are addressed to men. The offers and calls of the gospel are addressed to men as unjust,

ungodly, as sinners, enemies, and persons without strength; as lost, dead in trespasses and sins, simple ones, scorers, fools, stout-hearted and far from righteousness; as backsliders and prisoners, as laboring and heavy laden, thirsting for happiness of any kind, spending their money for that which is not bread, and their labor for that which satisfies not, disobedient, gainsaying, and rebellious. Now the law, under the illuminating influences of the Holy Spirit, is of use to show sinners that these are their very characters, and therefore that they are the very persons to whom the Savior is offered, and whom are invited and commanded to receive Him with His righteousness and salvation. In this view, it is eminently subservient to the gospel.

Last, the law serves to render those of them inexcusable who, turning a deaf ear to its dictates respecting their sinfulness and misery, refuse to accept the offer of a Savior, and of salvation by Him (Romans 1:20 with 2:15). And it not only leaves all who reject the divine Redeemer without excuse and under its dreadful curse, but it dooms them to greater, to redoubled condemnation. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know Him that hath said, 'Vengeance belongeth unto Me. I will recompense,' saith the Lord" (Hebrews 10:28-30).

8. The law is of special use, likewise, to regenerate persons or true believers, and that both as a covenant of works and as a rule of duty.

In its covenant form, it serves to show them what Christ, the second Adam, did and suffered in their stead. By requiring from all who are under it perfect holiness of nature and perfect obedience of life, with complete satisfaction for sin, as the conditions of eternal life, it teaches believers what the Lord Jesus, in the greatness of His astonishing love, condescended to become, to do, and to suffer for them. They may see in it as in a glass that He did infinitely more for them than any mere man or angel could ever have done (Romans 8:3-4; Philippians 2:8; Galatians 3:13-14). Thus the law, in subservience to the gospel, teaches believers indirectly what the gospel teaches them in direct terms. It is of use also to show them under what infinite obligations they lie to the Lord Jesus for having fulfilled all the righteousness of it in their stead, Though they are not under the law in its covenant form to be either justified or condemned by it, yet it is of special use to them how much they are bound to love and serve Christ who, by obeying the precepts, and enduring the penalties of it in their stead, has brought in everlasting righteousness for their justification. And so it is a means of exciting their gratitude to Christ, and also to God, who so loved them as to send Him to answer all its demands for them (2 Corinthians 9:15; Colossians 1:12-14).

The law as a rule of life is also of great use to believers. For although, as I already observed, they are not under it as a covenant of works, either to be justified by it for their obedience or to be condemned by it for their disobedience, yet they are under it as

the rule of their new obedience, and they count it their exalted privilege and pleasure to be so (1 Corinthians 9:21). Now in this point of view, it serves, under the illuminating influences of the Holy Spirit:

(1) To show them how far they are from perfection of holiness. In order to render them more humble and contrite, to cause them to renounce, in a higher degree, all confidence in their own wisdom, righteousness, and strength, and to trust constantly and only in the Lord Jesus for all their salvation, the law discovers to them the sin that dwells in them, and that cleaves to all their thoughts, words, and actions. It is of great use to teach them the need that they have to be more humble, penitent, and holy. And so it serves, in a high degree, to promote their sanctification, and their desire to attain perfection of holiness (Philippians 3:10-14; Romans 7:22-24). As it requires them to be holy in a perfect degree (Matthew 5:48), it shows them that their want of perfect conformity to it is, every moment, their sin, and that they ought continually to press on toward perfection, and long for heaven, where their holiness and happiness will be perfect (2 Corinthians 5:2-4; Philippians 1:23).

(2) It serves, under the witnessing of the Spirit, to evidence to their consciences the reality of their sanctification. The holy law serves as a touchstone by which believers may try, and so discover, their begun conformity to the image of the Son of God, the first-born among many brethren. Comparing their hearts and lives with that standard, they sometimes perceive that, though they are far from having a perfection of the degrees, yet they have a perfection of the parts of sanctification; and so the law as a rule conduces, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, to promote their comfort as well as their holiness. "Our rejoicing is this," says an apostle, "the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world" (2 Corinthians 1:12). As a covenant of works, the law is the instrument of the Spirit, as a spirit of bondage, for convincing and alarming secure sinners; but as a rule of life in the hand of the blessed Mediator, it is a means employed by the Spirit, as a Spirit of adoption, for comforting and encouraging true saints. Their habitual desire and endeavor from faith and love, and for the glory of God, to keep all the commandments of it are a good evidence to them that they are the children of God, and are conformed to the image of His Son.

(3) It is of great use to show believers what duty they owe to their God and Redeemer, and to direct them how to perform it. Christ, whom the Father has given for a leader and commander to the people, gives to believers that law to be the rule of their obedience, to inform them what grateful service, what holy obedience, they owe to Him, and to God in Him, and to direct them in the course of their obedience. Accordingly, the holy Psalmist says, "Through Thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:104-105). The law as a rule directs them how to express their gratitude to the Lord Jesus for fulfilling it for them in its covenant form (Romans 8:3-5). It enjoins them to show their love and thankfulness to Him by a growing conformity of heart and life to it as the rule of their obedience (John 14:15; 1 Timothy 1:5; Romans 12:1-2). While it shows them what is good and what is evil, what they ought to do and what they ought to forbear, it guides

them in the exercise of their graces and in the performance of their duties. No sooner does the law as a covenant urge men to Christ for deliverance from the dominion of it in that form than Christ leads them back to the law as a rule for the regulation of their heart and conduct, in order that they may express their gratitude to Him for His perfect obedience to it as a covenant in their stead, by their steady, by their sincere obedience to it as a rule (John 14:15).

(4) Finally, it serves the highly important purpose of binding or obliging the saints to all their various duties. The law as a rule of life to believers comes invested with infinite authority, and therefore lays them under infinite obligations, even to perfect obedience. Seeing they do not cease to be creatures by becoming new creatures, they are, and ever will be, obliged to yield personal obedience to the moral law as a rule of life, and that by the sovereign authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, their Creator. But this divine authority, as was hinted above, issues to them from the Lord Jesus, the great Mediator, who has created as well as redeemed them, and who has “all the fullness of the Godhead, dwelling in Him bodily.” They therefore receive the law at His mouth. And surely the law can lose nothing of its original authority by being conveyed to them in such a glorious channel as the hand of Christ: for not only is He Himself God over all, but all the sovereignty and authority of the infinitely glorious Godhead are in Him as Mediator (Exodus 23:21). The Lord Jesus, therefore, instead of dissolving or in the smallest degree weakening the moral law, greatly strengthens the original obligation of it (*Confession of Faith* XIX:V). Indeed, it is only to God as in Christ, only according to the law as in the hand of Christ, and only by a real believer in Christ that the smallest acceptable obedience can be performed. The law as a rule in the hand of Christ, then, is of special utility to believers inasmuch as it shows them how high their obligations are to the love and practice of holiness. And thus it eminently subserves the gospel, that “doctrine which is according to godliness.”

From the foregoing detail it will be obvious to the devout reader that the law as a covenant is of standing use in the effectual vocation of sinners to Christ. The Holy Spirit makes the offers and calls of the gospel effectual to no sinner without setting home the law as a covenant of works to their minds and consciences. Sinners may be drawn to the Savior by a discovery of His redeeming love (Hosea 11:4), and so may be effectually called without legal terrors; but no man is persuaded and enabled to come to Him without a true conviction of sin and of the want of righteousness. But it is by the law in its covenant form that sinners are convinced of sin, and of their need of a perfect righteousness to free them from eternal death. Thus the law is of standing use to them to show them their extreme need of the compassionate Savior, and of His perfect righteousness, and so to “break up the fallow ground” of their hearts. In this way, the fiery law continues, by the almighty agency of the Spirit, to subserve the merciful design of the blessed gospel.

Hence we may also learn how much conviction of sin and of righteousness by the law is requisite to true conversion. Such a measure of it in adult persons is necessary as will suffice to make them sensible that they are sinners in heart and in life; that they are already undone, and that their misery under the curse of the law is inexpressible; that

they have no righteousness to answer the just demands of the broken law; and that they are so dead in sin as to be totally unable to save themselves, or so much as to prepare themselves for salvation. Such a measure as this is requisite because, without it, they would not see their absolute need of the Lord Jesus to save them either from their sin or their misery, nor would they desire above all things a personal interest in Him and His great salvation. Not that it is requisite as a federal condition of their being graciously received by Christ, but only as an excitement to urge them to flee speedily for refuge to Him.

From what has been said, we may also infer that a minister of the gospel may often preach the law to his hearers and yet not deserve to be called a legal preacher. He cannot preach the gospel faithfully and successfully unless he preaches the law in subservience to it. If he is a faithful and able minister of the New Testament, he will preach the law as a covenant of works, and will press it upon the consciences of secure sinners and self-righteous formalists. He will denounce the tremendous curse of it on those who continue under it, and who rely securely on their own works for a title to eternal life in order to tear away every pillow of carnal security on which they repose themselves, and to show them the vanity of every lying refuge. In proportion also as he is faithful, satisfaction for sin as well as perfect obedience? Or does it demand from every unregenerate sinner perfection of suffering as well as of doing? Then, though a descendant of fallen Adam could say that he never had, in his own person, transgressed the law, and that he would to the end of his life "continue in all things which are written in it, to do them," yet even this perfect obedience of his would not suffice to fulfil the law, and so to entitle him to eternal life according to the covenant of works. For the law as a covenant would still demand from him full satisfaction for the sin that he committed in the first Adam: and satisfaction for sin cannot be given by obeying the precept, but by suffering the penalty of the law in that form. Ever since the fall, the law and the justice of God demand not only full payment of the original debt of perfect obedience, but complete payment, likewise, of the debt of infinite satisfaction for the offense given by sin to the infinite Majesty of heaven (Genesis 2:17). Nay, in the order of law and justice, the debt of full satisfaction ought to be discharged previous to that of perfect obedience. The infinitely righteous Jehovah will first be pacified by a complete satisfaction to His justice for the infinite insult offered to His glorious Majesty by transgression before He can consistently, with the honor of His character and government, be pleased with any degree of obedience from the sinner. If a sinner, then, hopes for eternal life on the ground of his own righteousness, he must first give infinite satisfaction for all his innumerable crimes, and then begin and complete a course of perfect obedience as the condition of life. He must first of all make complete satisfaction to the penalty of the righteous law before his obedience to the precept can be acceptable to God.

But is this possible? Is it possible for one who is to continue through all eternity to be a sinner as well as a sufferer? Is it possible for a sinner, first, to endure the whole of infinite punishment or eternal wrath, and after endless torments shall have been completely endured to return, and, under the dominion of sin, to perform perfect obedience as the condition of eternal life? Oh, that self-righteous and secure sinners

would consider before it is too late how impossible it will be for them ever to obtain eternal life by their own righteousness; and that they would, by faith, submit themselves to the righteousness of Jesus Christ by which He has magnified the law and made it honorable!

Moreover, it appears from what has been said that when our apostle asserts, in his epistles to the Romans and Galatians, that no man can be justified before God by the works of the law, he does not mean the law merely as promulgated from Sinai, or the law of Moses as such; for those churches consisted chiefly of Gentile converts who had no concern with the law of Moses merely as such. Before their conversion they were heathens; they were under the law not as delivered from Sinai, but as the law of nature and as a covenant of works made with Adam, and with them in him. As therefore no Jews can be justified by the works of the moral law as a covenant displayed on Mount Sinai, so no Gentiles can be justified by the works of the moral law as a covenant made with Adam. They among the Gentiles who have been redeemed are said to have been redeemed from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13), that is, of the moral law in its covenant form as given to Adam.

Once more, is it by the law as a covenant that sinners are convinced of misery as well as of sin? Then how great is the misery, and how intolerable will the punishment be, especially of those under the gospel who obstinately continue in their unbelief and impenitence! While the violated law continues in all its binding force against them, their condemnation will be inconceivably more dreadful than if they had never heard the gracious offers of the gospel. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). "Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Luke 20:18). Impenitent sinners under the gospel shall be punished not only for their innumerable transgressions of the law, but for hating and stifling their convictions of sin and misery by it; and their punishment for condemning and rejecting the great Redeemer offered to them in the gospel will be far more tremendous and intolerable than if they had never heard of His name.

No punishment of sinners will be as dreadful as that of those who hear of an only Savior and yet refuse to believe in Him. Suppose that He is offered, and that sinners reject the gracious offer a thousand times; they are a thousand times greater sinners than they were when He began to be offered to them — and according to the greatness of their sin will their punishment be. Oh, that the secure sinner under the gospel would now begin to consider the heinousness of his sin, and the horrible depth of the misery which awaits him in the place of torment! You are under the law as a broken covenant, and obnoxious to its dreadful curse. You believe not on the Son of God for His salvation, and therefore the wrath of God abides on you.

Can you imagine that the omniscient and righteous Judge of all the earth will take no notice of you; or that He who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and who cannot look on iniquity but with infinite abhorrence will suffer you to sin against Him with impunity? Oh, how inexpressibly dreadful will your condition be if you remain asleep in your

sinfulness and misery till everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, awakens you! Alarmed by the terrors of the fiery law, let your heart be won to the compassionate Savior by the mild accents of the blessed gospel. In the glorious gospel, Jesus, with His meritorious righteousness and His great salvation, is freely, wholly, and particularly offered to you as a lost sinner of mankind; and the unlimited and authentic offer affords you a right to receive and trust in Him for complete salvation. Oh, do not any longer despise this unspeakable, this inestimably precious gift! Come to the Lord Jesus, and He will in no wise cast you out. Believe in the dear Redeemer and you shall never perish, but have eternal life.

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