

M

# VINDICIAE LEGIS

A VINDICATION OF THE MORAL LAW AND THE COVENANTS

ANTHONY BURGESS

M

# VINDICIAE LEGIS

A VINDICATION OF THE MORAL LAW AND THE COVENANTS

ANTHONY BURGESS

# VINDICIAE LEGIS

A Vindication of the MORAL LAW AND THE COVENANTS, From the Errors of Papists, Arminians, Socinians, and more especially, Antinomians.

WE the President and Fellowes of Zion College London, earnestly desire Master Anthony Burgess to publish in print his elaborate and judicious Lectures upon the Law and the Covenants against the Antinomian Errors of these times, which at our entreaty he hath preached, (and for which we give him most hearty thanks) that so as well the Kingdom, as this City, may have the benefit of those his learned labors.

Dated at Zion College the 11th of June, 1646. at a general meeting of the Ministers of London there.

Arthur Jackson

President, in the name and by the appointment of the rest.

VINDICIAE LEGIS: OR, A Vindication of the MORAL LAW AND THE COVENANTS, From the Errors of Papists, Arminians, Socinians, and more especially, Antinomians.

In XXX. LECTURES, preached at Laurence-Jury, London.

The second Edition corrected and augmented.

By Anthony Burgess, Preacher of God's Word.

LONDON, Printed by James Young, for Thomas Underhill, at the  
Sign of the Bible in Wood-street. 1647.

## **Table of Contents**

TO THE Truly\_pious and esteemed Lady, Lady Ruth Scudamore

To the Reader

LECTURE I. Knowing the Law is good, if a man use it lawfully. - 1 Timothy 1:8-9.

LECTURE II. Misuses of the Law - 1 Timothy 1:8-9.

LECTURE III. Justification by Grace and Not by Works - 1 Timothy 1:8-9.

LECTURE IV. Upon what grounds are the people of God to be zealous for good works?

LECTURE V. The Law is Not made for a Righteous Man - 1 Timothy 1:9.

LECTURE VI. The entire Theology of the Law of God - Romans 2:14-15

LECTURE VII. The Law Written Upon Men's Hearts

LECTURE VIII. The Light of Nature - Romans 2:14.

LECTURE IX. The Ability and Power of Nature - Romans 2:14.

LECTURE X. The Heathens Advocate for the Power of Man - Romans 2:14.

LECTURE XI. The Law God Gave to Adam. - Genesis 2:17.

LECTURE XII. Let us Make Man - Genesis 1:26

LECTURE XIII. A Covenant that God entered into with Adam and his descendants. GENESIS 2:17

LECTURE XIV. Questions Regarding the State of Innocence

LECTURE XV. The Law delivered by God through Moses to the people of Israel. Exodus. 20. 1

LECTURE XVI. Historical Passages Surrounding the Promulgation of the Law. Exodus. 20. 1.

An Additional Lecture. Ordained by Angels in the Hand of a Mediator - Galatians 3:19.

LECTURE XVII. What is the purpose of discussing the Law as given by Moses? - Exodus 20:1

LECTURE XVIII. The Law Delivered by Moses is Belongs to Us as Christians - Matthew 5:21-22

Lecture XIX. Erroneous views of the Law held by Papists, Anabaptists, and Socinians - Matthew 5:21-22

LECTURE XX. You have heard it said by those of old. - Matthew 5:21, 22

LECTURE XXI. Objections that the Law can be utilised by God in its preaching to bring about man's conversion. Romans 3:31

LECTURE XXII. Do we then make void the Law? - Romans. 3:31.

LECTURE XXIII. Scripture passages that may appear to suggest that the Moral Law was only in force for a specific period, similar to the ceremonial Law - Romans. 3:31.

LECTURE XXIV. The Law as a Covenant - Deuteronomy 4:13

LECTURE XXV. Where is boasting? - Romans 3:27

LECTURE XXVI. The True Differences Between Law and Gospel - Romans. 3:27

LECTURE XXVII. Does the Gospel preach repentance or not? Romans. 3:27

LECTURE XXVIII. For those Seeking to Establish their Own Righteousnes. - Romans 10:4

LECTURE XXIX. I Did Not Come to Destroy the Law - Matthew 5. 17.

**TO THE Truly pious and esteemed Lady,  
Lady Ruth Scudamore**

Dear Madam,

I have noticed how diligent you are in two things: to uphold the duties commanded by the Law and to embrace the promises offered in the Gospel. The former has motivated you towards holiness, while the latter has acted as a restraint against unbelief. Reflecting on this, along with the countless favors you have generously bestowed upon me and my family, I am moved to dedicate this Treatise to you. Although it contains much controversial material, it also offers practical guidance and comfort.

God's grace has been evident in your life, especially during these times of calamity, where you have faced afflictions like those mentioned in Paul's Catalogue. Despite not having a settled abode, your faith remains firm and unwavering. You magnify Grace with a deep sense of your own need and unworthiness, yet you avoid falling into Antinomianism. Moreover, you diligently practice mortification and holiness, steering clear of Pharisaical Popery. It is the right approach to be diligent in working out our salvation with fear and trembling, as if there were no grace to justify us, while simultaneously resting and believing in the grace of Christ, as if no good thing had been done by us.

Dear Madam, continue with God's assistance and consider matters of grace to be of greater importance than matters of knowledge. While some may delight in opinions and novel ideas about faith and holiness, find joy in the essence of these things themselves. May the Lord bless you with His best blessings in the later years of your life and grant you the joy of witnessing a stable reformation in the Church. Thus, when your time comes, you may depart in peace, experiencing the abundant power and love of God both in life and in death.

Madam, this is my prayer as your humble servant in the Lord,  
Anthony Burgess.

September 21, 1646.

## **TO THE READER.**

Dear Reader,

If it is true, as the Father said, that books are the fruits of the mind, just as children are the fruits of the body, then a natural affection compels me (as it did for Moses) to provide some Ark for the safety of this Book, lest it perish. I can think of no better way than to give you some account of its content and structure, should you choose to read it.

Regarding its content, it primarily aims to uphold the dignity and purpose of the Moral Law against recent errors concerning it. This required me to engage with books filled with harmful doctrines rather than solely relying on authors who defended the truth. Strangely enough, looking upon their erroneous beliefs proved to be a valuable aid in propagating and confirming the truth, much like a Roman Painter who carefully drew a picture of a horse by constantly looking at an ass, avoiding any ridiculous or deformed aspects.

I admit that this work exceeds my own abilities, as it addresses a subject not extensively covered by earlier writers. Nevertheless, I take solace in what Augustine said: "Ego parvas vires habeo; sed Dei Verbum magnas habet" (I have little strength, but the Word and



Truth of God have great power). I am not naturally inclined to publish my writings, but considering that those who write good books spread the nets of salvation to catch some people, and that their good works will endure as long as their books live, I have overcome my reluctance and decided to share this work with the world. I have refrained from overly embellishing this book with eloquent language, as it deals with controversial matters and is better suited to straightforward explanations, unadorned to please one's fancy. Indeed, I have avoided superfluous words, striving to convey my thoughts as concisely as possible so that those seeking the substance may not be hindered by excessive verbiage.

As for its structure, I have begun with some general discussions on the usefulness of the Law, then delved into specific aspects, such as its application to Adam and its promulgation by Moses to the people of Israel. Throughout, I have addressed all the significant questions raised by Papists, Arminians, Socinians, and especially Antinomians. I have endeavored to give both the Law and the Gospel their due recognition, recalling the wisdom of Luther: "Qui soit inter Legem & Evangelium distinguere, gratias agat Deo, & sciat se esse Theologum" (He who knows how to distinguish between Law and Gospel, let him give thanks to God and know that he is a theologian).

An allegorical interpretation from one writer suggests that the great feasting and music during the reconciliation of the Father with his Prodigal son signified the sweet harmony and agreement between Law and Gospel. If this is the case, then some represent the elder brother, who grudges and murmurs at this excellent accord. If any adversary should challenge this book, I shall not be overly anxious to respond, as I have endeavored to frame the question in a way that upholds truth and refutes falsehood simultaneously. I am currently

preparing another discourse on Justification, a precious doctrine also affected by the leaven of Antinomian opinions.

## **LECTURE I.**

Knowing the Law is good, if a man use it lawfully.

"Now we know that the Law is good, if a man use it lawfully; understanding this, that the Law is not laid down for the just, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers." - 1 Timothy 1:8-9

This letter addressed to Timothy can be considered as Paul's guidance for the Church of God. He begins by instructing Timothy to safeguard the Truth against false teachers, just as he does in all his letters. Though he faced much animosity due to this, he found comfort and glory in defending the Truth, as Jerome wrote to Augustine, "It is a sign of your greater glory that all heretics hate you."

The first part of his instruction to Timothy starts in verse 3, "Charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine." Some translate it as "another doctrine," implying that it concerns those who follow such teachings, but the subsequent words, "Teachers of the Law," refute that interpretation. The word "different" can be extended to both the content (as some argue, not to teach anything else) or the manner (as others argue, not to teach it differently). The rule is that

one who invents new words begets new doctrines. Melanchthon even wished that not only the same things be taught but also in the exact same words and syllables.

The second part of the injunction is even more crucial: Even if they don't teach different things, they must not waste their gifts on useless matters, such as giving heed to fables. This can be applied to the Jews who had a plethora of fictions. Grotius, however, wrongly referred to our Savior's parables as fables, which is offensive to the truth. While the Scriptures use genealogies in a beneficial manner, here, the sinful use of endless genealogies is reproved. These genealogies resemble vain curiosity, which has no limits, like the unruly waves of the sea. Some interpret genealogy as referring not just to people but also to things, where one thing is imagined to originate from another. For instance, in verse 5, Paul presents a short but profitable "genealogy" by showing that a good conscience flows from a sincere faith. The Apostle condemns these teachings because they do not edify or bear fruit.

The Apostle then explains the true purpose of the Law and the end of the precept. Scultetus, following Chrysostom, interprets "nomos" (translated as law) as "ministry" or "preaching." However, it is evident that the Apostle is specifically referring to the Law afterwards. He reproves false teachers who distort the good law into something unprofitable. To avoid misrepresenting the Law, he adds, "We know" (as if this is universally understood), and introduces the conditional proposition, "The Law is good," and a supposition, "If a man uses it lawfully," with the correction that the Law is not intended for the righteous. This may seem contradictory, as none can use the Law well except a righteous man, but this apparent contradiction will be clarified later. For now, let us focus on the first proposition, which is conditional. I could have delved into the word

"nomos" (Law) and its various uses, as its neglect leads to many errors. There is a Law that we should be contrary to (Antinomians), and there is a Law that we must submit to. However, I will address this in a specific cautionary point later.

Observation 1: The Law of God is good, if used lawfully.

Implied Observation 2: The Law of God can be used unlawfully.

The Law is good for several reasons:

1. The content of the Law is exceedingly good, especially when interpreted spiritually. It encompasses virtues like loving God and trusting in Him, which are of great value. Every duty expected of us can be found within it. Peter Martyr aptly likened the Decalogue to the ten Predicaments, where everything in nature can be categorized under one of those ten. Similarly, every Christian duty can be related to one of the Commandments in the Law, either directly or indirectly. Some debate whether justifying faith is commanded in the Law, but that will be discussed later when considering whether the Law of Moses and the Law inscribed in Adam's heart during innocence are the same. Peter Martyr also addressed the division of the ten Commandments and whether the commonly called Preface [I am the Lord thy God, which are words of a Covenant] should be considered the first Commandment. This leads to the question of whether justifying faith is enjoined there. Some of the Fathers also held similar views, although those words are purely declarative and not preceptive. However, I will provide a more definite explanation of this matter at the appropriate time.
2. The Law is authoritative, as it is given divine sanction and serves as a rule for us. The former point is generally agreed upon, and

there are few who openly dispute the latter. Since the content of the Law is intrinsically and eternally good, it must be commanded by God, even if it cannot justify, as justification is separate from the Law. Some things are just because God wills them, as in all positive matters, while other things are just because they align with God's eternal justice and goodness. Thus, it is far from true that the Law, which bears God's authority as a rule (mandatum), should be abrogated; it is impossible, even for God, as that would contradict His own justice and goodness. Therefore, we rightly reject the blasphemous questions raised by some scholastic theologians, such as whether God can command something contrary to His own nature. The Gospel of Matthew 5 shows that Jesus not only refrained from abrogating the Law but also extended the spiritual scope of its mandatory power beyond the expectations of the Pharisees. James also emphasizes the authority of the Law-giver. The obligation imposed by the Law is eternal and unchanging, to the extent that it implies an inherent contradiction for human nature to possess holiness or righteousness without a law or submission to God's command. Hence, it is a dangerous notion held by some that the holiness of our nature is not commanded by the Law, but only our actions, leading them to argue that the Decalogue forbids only actual sin and not original sin.

3. The Law is also good as an instrument used by God's Spirit for good. There is some debate on whether the Law, and its preaching, serves as an instrument for conversion by the Spirit of God. However, this is a separate question that requires further discussion. At this point, I would like to emphasize that the Spirit of God indeed uses the Law to stir the heart of a believer to fulfill their duties. As the Psalmist says in Psalm 119,

"Thou hast quickened me by thy precepts." Similarly, in Psalm 19, it is said that "The Law of the Lord enlighteneth the simple, and by them thy servant is fore-warned of sin." Now, some may argue that the word "Law" in these verses refers broadly to all precepts and testimonies, and while that may be true, it does not exclude the moral Law, which is of utmost importance. In fact, the entire Word of God serves as an organ and instrument of God's Spirit for instruction, reformation, and guiding individuals towards fulfilling every good work. It is unreasonable to separate the Law from the Spirit of God and compare it with the Gospel. Even if we take the Gospel, such as the promise that "Christ came to save sinners," without the Spirit, it would be ineffectual, and just like the Law, it would become a dead letter. Therefore, Calvin aptly referred to the Law as the "corpus" and the Spirit as the "anima." Just as the soul is essential to a living body, the Spirit is indispensable to the Law's life-giving power. The Law quickens and enlightens through the Spirit of God.

4. The goodness of the Law extends to its sanction. It is accompanied by Promises, not only temporal ones, as in Commandment 5, but also spiritual ones, as seen in Commandment 2, where God is said to pardon to many generations. Therefore, the Law, while not primarily about Christ, does include Christ secondarily and occasionally, as I will demonstrate later. Although the righteousness of the Law and that of the Gospel differ significantly, each has its proper place. Luther aptly describes the challenge of defining their boundaries and how the Apostle opposes them. The false belief propagated by the Manichees and Marcionites, claiming that the Law was only concerned with the flesh and had only carnal promises, is erroneous. It is evident that the Fathers had faith in substance

similar to ours. Taking Law and Gospel in their strict difference, some Divines argue that all precepts must be under the Law, and all Promises must be attributed to the Gospel, whether found in the Old or New Testament. According to this view, the Law merely commands while Grace assists, and Faith obtains when the Law commands. However, this perspective raises the question: where can this be supported in Scripture? When speaking of the Law's sanction by Promise, we consider it in the context of its administration by Moses, which had an Evangelical nature. However, we must not conflate this with the Law's initial giving to Adam, which carried a Promise of Eternal life based on perfect obedience. The propositions made by the Apostle Paul, such as "To him that worketh, the reward is reckoned of debt," and "the doers of the Law are justified," were only applicable in the state of innocence and were never fulfilled afterwards.

5. Another aspect of the Law's goodness is evident in its various acts. We may refer to them as either acts or ends, but I will use the term "acts." A law serves several acts: 1. Declarative, laying down the will of God; 2. Commanding obedience to the declared will; 3. Inviting through Promises or compelling through threatenings; 4. Condemning transgressors. All these uses of the Law are acknowledged to be effective against ungodly and wicked individuals, and some of these acts also apply to the godly. I find it perplexing that an Antinomian author asserts that a law can only be legitimate if it includes a curse. Moreover, this same author acknowledges the moral Law as a rule for believers (and a rule possesses the force of a command as well as doctrine). How then would this author explain the Law given to Adam, who was still righteous and innocent at the time and therefore could not be under a curse or condemnation?

Similarly, the angels were subject to a law, yet it was not a cursing law. While it is true that a law inherently condemns in a potential sense, actual cursing is not a necessary component, especially for a transgressor of the Law who has a surety in their place.

6. In terms of its purpose, Rom. 16:4 states, "Christ is the end of the Law." Due to the different interpretations of the word "end", various conjectures arise. Some understand it merely as the "extreme" or "terminus" since the ceremonial Law found its conclusion in Christ. Others view it as the "fulfilment" of the Law in Christ. Moreover, some add the idea of "intention" or "purpose" to it. Therefore, according to these interpretations, the Law intended Christ in all its ceremonial and moral aspects. Every single ceremony pointed towards Christ, and every moral precept or command also had him in its sight. Calvin comments on this passage, stating, "We have a noble place proving that the Law, in all its parts, looked to Christ; indeed, whatever the Law teaches, commands, or promises, it has Christ as its ultimate goal." Imagine a Jew praying to God without Christ in that prayer, or loving God without Christ in that love. Nonetheless, there is a significant difference between the Law and the Gospel, comparable to the distinction between a tutor and a father. It would be unwise for a child to treat their tutor as their father. Whether this is a correct understanding of the Law's purpose, we will explore later.
7. Regarding its attributes, the Scriptures bestow certain qualities upon the Law. It is worth noting that even when the Apostle strongly opposes the Law, suggesting that it does not improve people but rather worsens them, he still praises it, calling it good and spiritual. Now, I see the term "spiritual" used in two senses:



Firstly, as "effective" because, by God's Spirit, it quickened people to spiritual life. This can be compared to the Apostle calling himself "carnal" in contrast, as the power of corruption within him led to carnal and sinful inclinations. However, I will explain the term "spiritual" in the second sense, which is "formally." The nature and scope of the Law are spiritual, as it not only prohibits external sins but also forbids sins of the spirit, such as pride and envy. Just as God is the father of spirits, the Law is the law of spirits. James likens it to a mirror that reveals even the slightest flaw on one's face, showing no partiality. If you have wrinkles or deformities in your character, they will be exposed. Hence, there is no better way to confront Pharisaical and Moral individuals, bringing them out of self-admiration than by presenting this mirror before them.

8. Regarding its use, it applies both to the ungodly and the believer.

To the ungodly, the Law serves the following purposes:

1. To restrain and limit sin: Indeed, even if it may not bring about a complete transformation of people's hearts, there is still much good in the Law as an outward whip and scourge that keeps them in honest discipline. This is why the Apostle stated, "The Law was added because of transgressions." When the people of Israel were in the wilderness, having forgotten God and being prone to idolatry, the Lord gave them the Law as a restraint. Just as heavy chains and fetters are used to control madmen or those possessed by devils, the Law was imposed on the people of Israel to keep them away from impiety. The Apostle used the analogy of being shut up in a dungeon, but that implies a different sense. Chrysostom compared it to a great man who,

suspecting his wife, appoints eunuchs to watch over and keep her; similarly, God, being jealous over the Jews, appointed these laws.

2. To curse and condemn: In this respect, the Law unleashes all its fury upon the ungodly. For the godly, through Christ, the Law is like a serpent with its sting pulled out, but for the wicked, the sting of sin is the Law, and therefore the condition of someone under it is unspeakably miserable. The curse of the Law is the sore displeasure of God, and it applies to every violation of it. If people who break only human laws are afraid enough to hide and keep themselves concealed, even though no man or judge can condemn them to hell, then how much more should they fear the Law-Giver, who has the power to destroy both soul and body? Therefore, consider this, you profane individual, aren't your oaths and lusts contrary to God's Law? You would be better off having all the men in the world as your enemies than the Law of God. The Law is a spiritual enemy, and so its terrors are spiritual as well as its duties. Do not live your lives as Antinomians any longer, any more than you would live merely based on opinions. I wish I could refute this Antinomianism too; a person's life and conduct might have once been against God's Law, but now they are not.

To Believers, the Law serves these purposes:

1. To excite and motivate them against all sin and corruption: Although Scripture says, "Against such there is no law," and "The Law is not made for the righteous," no godly person is perfectly righteous, and everyone may complain of their lack of fervent love and delight in holy things. Therefore, the Law of God, through its commands, quickens them. How far short they

fall of God's commands! Not that a person should seek justification through the Law or make it a substitute for Christ, but for other purposes. Psalms 1, 19, and 119 are relevant for the godly now, just as they were before. Believers still experience crookedness, hypocrisy, and lukewarmness. Just as a horse that is broken still needs a bit and bridle, not only the ungodly but even the godly, whose hearts have been humbled and tamed, need a bridle to prevent them from casting off the governance of God's Spirit. Some may be adamant in claiming they do not need this, but it is not because they do not require it (they need it the most) but because they do not feel its necessity.

2. To enlighten and reveal their daily heart-sins and soul-sins: The Apostle speaks about this use of the Law in Romans 7 throughout. The Law is essential in uncovering the depth of original sin and all the sinful inclinations that flow from it. The Apostle implies that without the Law, a person would not have known sin, indicating that the Law of nature is so obscured and darkened that it cannot show a person the slightest part of their wickedness. Seneca, who had more insight than others, acknowledged, "It is your error to think sins were born with you; no, they afterwards came upon you." This is true of Pelagius as well, who asserted, "We are born as well without vice as virtue." To this day, all of Popery holds that those motions of the heart not consented to are not sins but necessary conditions arising from our constitution, similar to what Adam had in innocence. Therefore, the people of God see and are humbled for the wickedness that others do not notice. This may satisfy man, but not God's Law.
3. To lead them away from relying on their own power and righteousness: This is another positive outcome, as when

believers realize they fall short of the Law's righteousness, it compels them to abandon self-reliance. Just as Paul, in Romans 7, consented to the Law and delighted in it but could not attain its righteousness, they cry out, "Oh wretched man that I am!" Even the holiest may be inclined to pride and self-assurance, like David and Peter. Just as worms and wasps consume the sweetest fruit, this reminder keeps them humble. How absurd are those who claim that preaching the Law makes people trust in themselves and adhere to their own righteousness? The strictness of the Law reveals a person's poverty and guilt. Some Papists confidently hold that their hope is partly in grace and partly in merits because they believe they can keep the Law. They say, "God forbid that we should enjoy heaven as mere alms; no, we have it by conquest." Such confidence arises from not giving the Law its due.

4. To stimulate a higher appreciation and esteem for Christ and the benefits He brings: As seen in Paul's great agony, wrestling with his corruption, being like a living man tied to a dead carcass, his living faith to dead unbelief, and his humility to loathsome pride. He concludes with thankfulness to God through Jesus Christ. It is true that, at times, the people of God may be driven away from Christ due to a sense of their sin, but this is not the direction that Scripture provides. Scripture presents the riches of Christ for their poverty, righteousness for their guilt, and peace for their terror. This perspective often leads Luther to use hyperbolic language about the Law and sin. All that is said against Christians opposing the Law to the Gospel suggests that discovering the Law does not drive them entirely from the Gospel. That is why Papists and formal Christians may not wholeheartedly and passionately prize Christ or embrace every grace that comes from Him. They tend to possess Christ for

themselves and rely on self-salvation. Although preaching about Christ and grace may lead to appreciating them, the corruption in human nature often demands more.

1. The sense in which we use the term "Law" holds significant importance.

One who distinguishes well can teach well. However, I have observed a considerable oversight in the books discussing these matters. The reason why some find it challenging to accept the term "Law" is that they focus on its usage in English or the Greek word "Nomos," defined by Tully and Aristotle as a strict rule of things to be done through mere command. Nonetheless, the Hebrew word "Torah" encompasses more; it not only strictly signifies what should be done but also broadly denotes any heavenly doctrine, whether it be a promise or a precept. As a result, the Apostle refers to it as the "law of faith," which may seem contradictory in some instances where the word "Law" is used absolutely. However, the Apostle's intention is not, as Chrysostom suggested, to sweeten the Gospel and make it more pleasing to the audience through this expression. Rather, it is likely a Hebraism signifying the general declaration and teaching of God's will.

The Hebrew language possesses a more stringent word for "precept," which is "Mitzvah," yet some argue that it can also occasionally signify a promise. If we pay attention to the Hebrew words, it would not trouble us to hear that the Law is good. The term "Law" has a wide range of meanings: it can refer to any part of the Old Testament, as seen in John 10 where it is said, "It is said in the Law, Ye are gods." It can also encompass all the books of the Old Testament when combined with "Prophets." Additionally, it may be used specifically for the ceremonial law, as in Hebrews 10:1, where it

mentions "The Law having a shadow of things to come." Sometimes, it is used synecdochically for specific acts of the Law, like in Galatians 5: "Against such there is no law." Moreover, it is employed to represent the entire system and unique dispensation of God's worship among the Jews, as stated in passages such as "it is said to be until John, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ." The Apostle, in his letters to the Romans and Galatians, generally uses the term in the sense of the Jews, as without Christ. This has been a subject of dispute between Papists and us concerning the sense in which the Law is understood. Papists tend to limit it to the ceremonial law, while we argue that the initial debate was about the observance of those legal ceremonies as necessary for salvation. However, the Apostle transitions from the hypothesis to the thesis, demonstrating that not only those ordinances but no other works should replace Christ. Therefore, before anyone speaks against or about the Law, the Antinomian must clarify the sense in which the Apostle uses it. Sometimes, it is taken strictly, referring to the five books of Moses. Some even suggest that the frequently mentioned "book of the Law" in Scripture pertained solely to Deuteronomy. Most commonly, it is taken in its strictest sense to refer to the Ten Commandments. The diversity in its usage contributes to the confusion, as the Apostle argues against it in one sense and advocates for it in another.

## 2. The Law and the Spirit of God must not be separated.

The Law only serves as light to the understanding; it requires the Spirit of God to circumcise the heart, fostering love, and delight in it. Otherwise, what Aristotle said in Politics 2, Chapter 2, holds true for God's Law as it does for all human laws; they are not sufficient in themselves to create good and honest citizens. This principle must be kept in mind at all times. The entire Word of God serves as the instrument and organ of spiritual life, and the Law is a part of this

divine Word. I have previously established this fact. Even if the Moral Law were entirely abolished, it would not be because the Spirit of God did not use it as an instrument of life. For instance, circumcision and the sacraments are argued against by the Apostle, deemed incompatible with salvation, and even considered damning when misused. However, in the Old Testament, these sacraments, such as Circumcision and the Paschal Lamb, were spiritual means of faith, just as Baptism and the Lord's Supper are in the New Testament. Although there may be differences in the extent of God's grace through them, the truth remains constant. Therefore, our Divines have effectively refuted the Papists, who believe these sacraments are only typical and not genuinely exhibitiv of grace, as is the case with the sacraments in the New Testament. Hence, if the Apostles argue that the Moral Law is not an instrument of God's Spirit for our benefit, the same reasoning should hold for Circumcision and all other sacraments, at least for that particular time when they served as aids to Christ and grace, just as Circumcision did. If you ask why then does the Apostle argue against the works of the Moral Law, the answer lies in the fact that the Jews relied on them without Christ. It is our people's mistake that they confuse the Gospel with the Law, and we can confidently state that whoever seeks salvation through Baptism deviates from Christ.

3. Doing something out of obedience to the Law and also out of love and delight are not contradictory. This is a common misunderstanding. Some argue that leading someone by the Law is enslaving and servile, while a Believer is moved by love and does not need the Law. Chrysostom has made some hyperbolic statements about this, as seen in the following words, "[The Law is not put for the righteous.]" However, it is weak to oppose the efficient cause and the rule simultaneously. The Spirit of God works in the heart, inspiring love and delight in that which is

commanded. Let's consider Adam as an example; while he stood, he obeyed out of love, but the command was also a factor. Similarly, the angels are ministering spirits, obeying the commandments of God in love. They are under a law, even though they do all things in love. Another illustration can be seen in the case of Moses' mother. She was hired and commanded by Pharaoh's daughter to nurse Moses, her own child. She did this out of love for Moses but also obeyed Pharaoh's daughter's command. Concerning Christ, there was a command laid upon him to fulfill the Law for us, yet he did it out of love.

There is a dispute regarding whether Christ had a command strictly laid upon him by the Father. The Arians inferred Christ's absolute inferiority to the Father from this, but our Orthodox Divines conclude otherwise, supported by numerous scriptural references such as Acts 7:37, John 14:31, and John 15:10. If it were not a commandment, Christ's obedience could not be referred to as such. However, I infer from this that doing something out of obedience to a command, because it is a command, does not imply a lack of love. Admittedly, the commandment was not given to Christ in the same way as it is given to us, either to direct him or to prompt him. Moreover, God's people have diverse relations that influence their obedience. They are God's servants, implying *obedientiam servi* (obedience of a servant), though not *obedientiam servilem* (servile obedience).

Furthermore, a Believer may look to the reward without negating the spirit of love. How much more should we look to God's command? A godly individual may possess *amorem mercedis* (the love of reward) without *amorem mercenarium* (mercenary love). If God, in His Covenant, makes a promise of a reward, looking to that promise



aligns with the Covenant and is not blameworthy. Lastly, every godly person experiences some reluctance towards good things and, therefore, requires the Law not only to direct but also to exhort and motivate them. As I mentioned earlier, even the tamed horse needs a spur, just like the unbroken colt.

4. Although Christ fully obeyed the Law, it does not exempt us from our obedience to it, which serves different purposes than Christ's obedience. If the Antinomian fully understood this, there might be an agreement. We should all zealously oppose Pharisaical and Popish practices that elevate anything within us, even if wrought by the grace of God, as the basis for our justification. However, they fail to distinguish and reason adequately. The works of the Law do not justify; hence, they argue that these works are unnecessary or not required. According to their logic, if Christ's obedience to the righteousness of the Law is attributed to us, then it is no longer ours but Christ's. This reasoning would be valid if we obeyed the Law for the same purpose as Christ did. However, our purposes are vastly different. Some have even questioned whether maintaining the imputation of Christ's active obedience to us inevitably leads to Antinomianism. But more on that later; for now, let them draw a parallel with Christ's passive obedience. Christ satisfied the curse and threat of the Law, freeing us from all punishment. Yet, Believers experience afflictions for other purposes. Similarly, our obedience to God's Law serves different ends than Christ's obedience.

5. The fifth caution or limitation involves distinguishing between a Believer and their personal acts. Although the Law does not curse or condemn the Believer in terms of their state, it does condemn the particular sins they commit, which are guilty of

God's wrath. However, this guilt does not extend to the person. Therefore, it is erroneous to make a wild comparison, claiming that a person under grace has nothing to do with the Law, similar to an Englishman's relationship with the laws of Spain or Turkey. Although every Believer is in a state of grace, resulting in their justification, their person is justified. Yet, being only partially regenerated, their sins are still threatened and condemned just as they would be in anyone else. There is a simple guilt of sin and a guilt that does not extend to the person.

6. The Law should not be discredited simply because we lack the power to keep it, as the same applies to obeying the Gospel. An Antinomian uses the expression, "The Law speaks to thee, if troubled for sin, Do this, and live," comparing it to a judge instructing a criminal, "If you want to avoid hanging, carry all of England on your shoulders to the West Indies." This comparison offers no comfort. However, does not the Gospel present something equally impossible to achieve? When it commands a person to believe, it also speaks of an action seemingly beyond one's power. True, God does not grant enough grace to fulfill the Law entirely, but we possess enough faith to justify us under the Gospel. Yet, this discussion veers away from the present topic. Consequently, the Law and the Gospel differ in other aspects besides this.
7. There is a failure to distinguish between what is essential and inherent in the Law and what is merely occasional. It is undeniable that the Decalogue primarily demands perfect holiness, as all laws require precision. Nevertheless, it does not exclude the need for a Mediator. The Law states, "Do this and live," but it does not say, "No one else shall do this for you." Otherwise, it would imply that God acted unjustly in providing

us with Christ. I am amazed at someone who, in their book, claims, "The Law not only deprives us of comfort, but it also prevents anyone else from offering words of comfort because it is inflexible." They attempt to support this by referencing Galatians 3:23. However, this argument falls short, firstly because the Apostle used the term "the Law" to refer to Scripture in general before. Secondly, he spoke generally of all under Moses' rule, so that the Fathers would have no comfort through that means.

Use 1: For instruction. It is a perilous error to deny the Law. If it is good and can be used well, we must be cautious about rejecting it. Just because it does not serve for justification, does not mean it has no other beneficial aspects. For instance, gold is good, although it cannot be eaten like food. Consider the precepts of the Gospel or even its acts, such as believing. These, as works, do not justify. Hence, any opinion that claims "to believe" (credere) is equal to justification might as well include other acts of obedience. However, just because faith, as a work, does not justify, should we then dismiss the importance of believing? One can misuse all the ordinances of the Gospel just as one can misuse the Law. Those who believe that merely performing the outward act of Baptism or receiving a Sacrament will justify them dishonor God as much as the Jews who believed that circumcision or sacrifices justified them. By that sense, one could easily turn the entire Gospel into the Law. We might as well argue, "Why should I pray? Why should I repent? They cannot justify me," as a reason to deny the relevance of the Law.

Use 2: It is vain to set grace and Christ in opposition to the Law; those who undermine one also undermine the other. Who values the city of refuge more than the guilty pursued by guilt? Who desires the bronze serpent but the one who has been bitten? If Christ is the

fulfillment of the Law, how can he be contrary to it? If Christ and the Law coexisted in the Old Testament, why not in the New? It is true that misusing the Law, not as God intended, can harm and poison us, much like when the Manna was kept improperly and turned into worms. However, when used rightly, it should lead us to Christ. The Law commands us to love God with all our heart and soul. Does this not urge us to turn to Christ? Do we possess the strength to fulfill it perfectly? Even Augustine said, "Vae etiam laudabili vitae ei," implying that a correct use of the Law leads to setting up Christ and grace in both our hearts and words. Though you may view free grace as an opinion, using the Law correctly will make it apparent in all aspects of your life.

## **LECTURE II.**

### Misuses of the Law

Knowing the Law is good, if a man use it lawfully. - 1 Timothy 1:8-9

In these words, you have heard two points: First, the affirmation, "The Law is good." Second, the condition, "If a man use it lawfully."

Now, let it be known in general that this does not diminish the Law's importance as something good, which can be misused (just as God, Christ, the Gospel, or Free-grace can be misused). All these blessings can be turned into bitterness; even an Antinomian may elevate his preaching of grace to an exalted work and trust in it more than in

Christ. I must acknowledge Chrysostom's words, where he speaks of the love of God in Christ, and, being filled with wonder, exclaims, "Oh, I am like a man digging in a deep spring: I stand here, and the water rises up upon me; I stand there, and still the water rises upon me." Such is the experience of the love of Christ and the Gospel; it offers unsearchable treasures to the broken heart. Yet, this should not be used to disregard the importance of the Law.

Consider this as an armed prologue to all that I shall say: the fact that the Law can be misused does not lessen its significance any more than the Gospel's. The whole land will be in woe for misusing the Gospel, as it has become the cause of death for many. Now, let me present the general ways in which the Law can be abused:

1. In these verses, the Apostle primarily addresses the issue of turning the Law into unfruitful and unprofitable disputes. We should question the purpose and benefit of any dispute about the Law (*Cui bono?*). As I undertake this exercise, I must avoid engaging in frivolous or unprofitable disputes, as that would be an improper use of the Law. Ministers must be cautious not to be like the schoolmen, who were compared to someone eating hard stone while good bread was available. Preaching the Law unprofitably involves not only obscuring it with obscure questions but also failing to teach Christ through it. Ministers may feel humbled if they realize that they have emphasized religious duties without exalting Christ, resulting in people being content with performing duties and sacraments devoid of Christ's presence. Just as all vessels in the Temple were to be made of pure gold, our duties should be centered solely on Christ for acceptance. Tertullian said of Cerinthus, "*Legem proponit, ad excludendum Evangelium,*" meaning that he preached the Law to exclude the Gospel. Hence, there may be

legal preachers who are deserving of reproof. The Apostle warns against being teachers of the Law who introduce many fables about it, such as the imagined dialogue between God and the Law before the world was created, or that God made the world for the sake of the Law.

2. Another misuse of the Law occurs when men handle it with a focus on carnal and worldly aspects. This is also an improper use of the Law. For instance, the Priests and the Jews used it to gain a livelihood and seek temporal blessings. Sadly, the doctrine of Christ has been abused in similar ways. There are those who can be likened to "Christ-merchants" and "Christ-hucksters," hoping to achieve carnal ends through Christ, much like Judas did. It is essential that we handle both Law and Gospel with a godly love and zeal for truth, not to create divisions or seek applause. There was an honest complaint from a Popish writer who admitted to handling the Scriptures merely to sustain and clothe themselves. We should strive to follow the example of Paul, who tirelessly preached night and day with great affection, desiring nothing of monetary value from his listeners. Chrysostom aptly called him an "Angelus terrestris" and said, "Cor Pauli est cor Christi" (Paul's heart is Christ's heart).

3. Another misuse of the Law occurs when men seek to completely overthrow or deny it. This was the error of ancient groups like the Marcionites and Manichees, as well as some more recent ones, albeit for different reasons. Their mistake is rooted in the interpretation of various Scripture passages that seem to deny the validity of the Law. Admittedly, understanding the true meaning of these passages requires diligence. As Augustine pointed out, it is not so much the simple who are deceived but the negligent. Chrysostom aptly compared understanding

Scripture to the way a friend familiar with a friend can grasp the meaning of a letter or phrase that would elude a stranger. Those who hold such views must consider two things: Firstly, while there are passages that may seem to undermine the Law, there are many others that confirm it. The Apostle himself raises objections against it only to strongly reject such notions. Secondly, one must interpret the Apostle's words in the particular sense he intends. The principle "Quaelibet res eâ capienda est parte, quâ capi debet" applies here: just as you don't take a sword by the edge but by the handle, or a vessel by the body but by the ear, so you must grasp the doctrine of the Law not in every part but where the Apostle intends it.

4. Ill interpretation of the Law is another misuse. In this regard, many Popish authors deserve reproach, as they excessively limit its spiritual meaning and restrict it to external acts, much like the Pharisees. Jesus, in Matthew 5, did not introduce new commands or counsels as some Popish interpreters suggest. Instead, he purged all the false interpretations that had accumulated over time. Paul himself took a long time to fully grasp the strictness of the Law, which revealed a vast amount of sin in him that he had been unaware of. The Papists unlawfully use the Law by corruptly glossing it as being partially obligatory and partially advisory. They make man's power the ruler of his duty, whereas Scripture clearly states that the measure of grace given to a person is not commensurate with the duty commanded. It is true that Jerome argued that it was blasphemy to claim that God commanded something impossible, but the impossibility he referred to was absolute, meaning that man could never fulfill it.

5. Another form of misuse is when the Law is set in opposition to Christ. This was a fundamental error of the Jews, and the Apostle discusses it in his letters to the Romans and Galatians. Although they attempted to combine Christ and the Law, this synthesis created opposition. Just as there cannot be two suns in the sky, there cannot be two justifying forces; therefore, the reconciliation of the Law and Christ cannot involve blending them for the purpose of justification. Nevertheless, one is antecedent and subordinate to the other and should not be pitted against each other; instead, they should be seen as the means and the end, respectively. It is not surprising that the Law might be opposed to Christ due to misconceptions, just as Christ can be opposed to Christ in certain contexts, as seen in the teachings of some in the realm of Popery. For instance, they oppose Christ as the justifier when they claim that our graces justify us, as they believe that Christ's sanctifying work makes us holy, and this holiness justifies us. Such an opposition within their teachings reveals the importance of advancing Christ and grace in a scriptural manner, rather than based on human assumptions, as the Papists do.

6. Another misuse of the Law is when people seek justification through it. This is a dangerous and desperate error, prevalent in Popery, and it lurks in the hearts of all by nature. They lack an understanding of Gospel-righteousness and turn to the Law in the hope of being their own saviors. Perhaps God permits this Antinomian error to grow for two reasons: first, to humble ministers who have not fully exalted Christ and grace in all their glory. Bernard expressed his reluctance to read Tully (Cicero) because he couldn't find the Name of Christ there. Likewise, in many sermons and ministries, the primary aim is not to advance Christ. Secondly, this error provides an opportunity to



emphasize important truths. Just as the Arians prompted discussions on the deity of Christ, and the Pelagians on grace in predestination and conversion, the Papists and Antinomians challenge us to delve deeper into the grace of justification. At first, Luther emphasized these doctrines, but when he saw how they were misused, he spoke out against the Antinomists. Unfortunately, many have fallen into a formal understanding of these truths, so it's crucial to uplift Christ.

1. This misuse of the Law undermines the very nature of grace. It rejects not only works of the Law but all works of the Gospel and even the works of grace. The opposition here is between works and grace. The Apostle clearly contrasts them, though the Papists may argue otherwise. Grace is often used in Scripture to denote God's favor extended to us, not any merit within us. Though the word [grace] can also refer to its effects, such as inherent holiness, its primary meaning is God's favor. The Papists' emphasis on inherent holiness as the saving grace is due to their misunderstanding of the term [grace]. The troubles and doubts experienced by godly hearts, feeling unworthy, stem from this misinterpretation. The word [grace] carries a comprehensive meaning, implying no merit or causality on our part for acceptance; in fact, it implies the opposite. To experience God's grace is even greater than experiencing His love. Adam, if he had remained righteous, would have received the gift of life, but it wouldn't be as grace strictly defined since he was not in a contrary condition to life. We need to distinguish between different senses of grace, as even the Pelagians spoke of grace but did not uphold Scriptural grace. Merely talking about grace doesn't mean they advocate Scripture-grace. When they claim that

patience or hope is grace and therefore we are saved by grace, we should respond that this is not the Gospel-grace, the Scripture-grace that pardons sins and saves us.

2. It opposes Christ in his fullness, creating a half-Christ. Just as false Apostles made Christ void and departed from Him, it is inadequate to claim that the Apostle refers only to the ceremonial law. As we mentioned earlier, he goes beyond that hypothesis to include all works, even those of Abraham and David, excluding them from justification. If works were our righteousness, Christ would lose his significance, as the righteousness by faith in Christ opposes Paul's own righteousness. This is known as the righteousness of God, and it is made righteousness unto us. If works justify, then what need is there for Christ? Can your graces replace Christ?
  
3. It destroys the true doctrine of Justification. We won't delve deeply into this topic now, but consider how Scripture speaks of justification, not as infusing perfection but forgiving imperfection. For instance, in David's words, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes no sin." We won't debate whether justification has two parts, one positive (the imputation of Christ's righteousness) and one negative (not accounting sin). For now, we emphasize that justification means not having our holiness accepted but our sins remitted. It's a comforting plea for a humble soul to say, "Lord, it's not about my goodness but about your willingness to forgive my wrongs." If this doesn't satisfy your soul, what will? As Chrysostom said, it's like standing on a spring rising higher and higher.

4. It completely undermines justifying faith. When Christ and grace are rejected, faith also falls. Three main causes contribute to our justification: God's grace as the efficient cause, Christ as the meritorious cause, and faith as the instrumental cause. Though the efficient cause is more excellent than the instrumental cause, all are equally necessary for justification. We take it for granted that faith instrumentally justifies. While Antinomians may argue that faith comes before justification, claiming that the argument from Infants supports their view, we will refute this at the appropriate time. For now, it's enough to recognize that the Scriptures attribute an instrumental role to faith: "By faith in his blood" and "By faith in his Name" and "Justified by faith." Though the word "faith" is never used as if it held merit, "through faith" is used. To promote works is to oppose faith, as the Apostle argues. Therefore, faith, as a work, opposes itself as an instrument of justification.
5. It completely discourages a broken-hearted sinner, removing peace with God, the effect of justification, and the ability to glory in tribulations. In Romans 5, it is evident that peace comes through justification by faith in God. No amount of patience, repentance, religious duties, or good heart can bring peace with God. Only through justification can peace with God be attained. As for glorying in tribulations, how is this possible if all glory is self-centered? Shouldn't every affliction remind you of your sin?
6. It leads people inward, which is very dangerous. A person may not only exclude Christ from their soul through gross sins but also through self-confidence. "You are they which justify yourselves," said Jesus, and the Jews refused to

submit to their own righteousness. Paul feared being found in his own righteousness. Beza emphasized the word "found," implying that justice, the Law, and God's wrath pursued and sought after man. If this is the case, where can you find anyone who doesn't offend God and transgress His Law? Rather than seeking righteousness in ourselves, we should seek it in Christ.

7. It undermines the doctrine of imputation and reckoning righteousness to us, as spoken of in Romans 4 and other places. If righteousness were in us and properly ours, there would be no need for righteousness to be reckoned and imputed to us. The Papists make imputative, putative, and imaginary all the same. However, Christ's righteousness is genuinely ours, though not inherent. They differ in the manner of being ours, not in reality. Both Antinomians and Papists misinterpret this doctrine, drawing absurd conclusions like "If Christ's righteousness is ours, then God doesn't see sin in us, and we are as righteous as Christ."
8. It keeps a person in a servile, insecure state in all their duties. Such an individual is constantly tossed around, finding no peace beyond the works of grace. Humility can easily turn into pride, and a heavenly heart can become earthly when relying solely on one's own works. Scripture strongly discourages doubts and fears, considering them the canker-worm that devours our duties. Therefore, the Bible presents words that oppose this Evangelical disposition of being sons, such as "Be not afraid, but believe" and "Why doubted ye?" The latter term implies being in doubt, unable to decide which path to take, carried up and down like meteors in the air. True confidence and boldness come from

faith, but faith's object is Christ, not anything of our own. When we become sons, our first word should be to cry, "Abba, Father."

9. One may as lawfully include saints or angels in their mediation with Christ as graces. The doctrine of making angels and saints mediators and intercessors is condemned because it associates Christ with others in that significant role. Yet, when you join your love and grace with Christ's obedience, you do the same. If graces could speak, they would say to trust in Christ alone, for only He has borne our sins to take them away. Just as gross idolatry makes the works of God a god, subtle idolatry makes the works of Christ a Christ.
10. It undermines the grace of hope. When faith is destroyed, so is hope. The grace of hope is a great support for Christians. If hope is placed in Christ and the promises, it is as firm as faith. On the other hand, if hope is rooted in ourselves, it will often lead to disappointment. Augustine wisely said, "Do not hope in thyself, but in God; for if you hope in yourself, your soul will never find a secure foundation." The Papist's distinction, claiming they may have a certainty of hope but not of faith in matters of salvation, is incorrect. Both hope and faith share the same certainty. Faith presently receives the promised things, while hope keeps the heart steadfast in the face of difficulties until those promises are fulfilled. The Papist's definition of hope as partially coming from God's grace and partially from our merits is destructive.

11. It takes away the glory due to God in the work of justification. If we rely solely on God for our physical needs, shouldn't we also seek pardon of sin from Him? Abraham believed and gave God glory. Believing in Christ should be acknowledged as giving glory to Christ. We may mistakenly think that performing pilgrimages or mortifying our bodies is a likelier way for salvation, but that glorifies man more than God. The wretched Monk's blasphemous words before dying, "Pay me eternal life, which thou owest," demonstrate this misguided belief.
12. It magnifies sin and the first Adam for condemnation more than Christ for salvation. The Apostle in Romans 5 establishes an opposition, showing that the gift of salvation is far greater than the transgression. Thus, while sin may be significant in its damning effects, Christ is infinitely more wonderful as the saving Christ. If we claim the guilt of sin to be infinite, that is only in an objective sense. However, Christ's merits and obedience are infinitely meritorious, having infinite worth due to the dignity of His person. Therefore, just as sin is exceedingly sinful, Christ is exceedingly Christ, and grace is exceedingly grace.
13. It undermines the true doctrine of sanctification, which acknowledges that it is inchoate and imperfect. Our faith contains much unbelief, our best qualities have dross, and our wine has much water. Both Papists and Antinomians share the error that because sin is covered, there can be no sin in the godly. However, Paul in Romans 7 refutes this notion. The Papists' blasphemous direction for dying men to pray for their obedience to be joined with Christ's sufferings for them, and the doctrine that good works are

more meritorious for eternal life than evil works, are both absurd.

14. It disregards the true doctrine of the Law, suggesting it is possible to keep it. Works could not justify us unless they were in line with the righteousness that God commands. Yet, Christ has fulfilled that which was impossible for the Law, as stated in Romans 3.
15. It undermines the true consideration of a person while they are justified. People may view someone as godly, but Scripture regards them as ungodly. The verse in Romans 4 speaks of justifying the ungodly, which refers to those who are not perfectly godly. Abraham is presented as an example of an ungodly person in this context.

Use 1. For Instruction. It is uncharitable and false to accuse our godly Ministers of being merely Justitaries and Legal Preachers. In truth, all sound and godly Ministers present Christ, His righteousness, and the way of justification. Our Protestant authors also firmly uphold this truth, which distinguishes us from Heathens, Jews, Papists, and others. These teachings are heard daily in our Sermons.

Use 2. Not every denial of the Law and emphasis on Christ and Grace constitutes Antinomianism. Luther, in his commentary on Genesis, mentions a so-called Fanatic who denied that Adam could sin because the Law is not given to the righteous. Some, like Bellarmine, may label this as Antinomianism based on Lutheran principles. But more on this later.

Use 3. Beware of using the Law for our justification. It is an unwarranted approach that cannot bring comfort. Instead, focus on

Christ as the source of righteousness and comfort more than before. Just as the posts not sprinkled with blood were destroyed, so too are those persons and duties without Christ. Christ is the propitiation, akin to the Hebrew word used for covering and propitiating sin in Genesis 6. This imagery of the pitch or plaster sealing the Ark illustrates the atonement made by Christ, which covers us and shields us from God's wrath. Do not underestimate the power of believing in Christ; it is not due to the dignity of faith but rather through Christ Himself. Just like the humble Hyssop used to sprinkle the blood, faith may appear insignificant, but it represents great deliverance.

## **LECTURE III.**

### **Justification by Grace and Not by Works**

Knowing the Law is good, if a man use it lawfully. - 1 TIM. 1. 8, 9.

My intention is to demonstrate the clear proof of justification by the grace of God and not by works, and then to address the erroneous inferences made by the Antinomians based on this doctrine. Following that, I will emphasize the necessity of holy and good works.

However, before delving into the dangerous errors of the Antinomians, let me preface with some considerations.



1. It is essential for the Ministers of God to be cautious and prudent in presenting the concept of grace so as not to give legitimate grounds for criticism by the followers of the papal persuasion. Likewise, we must defend the significance of holy works without allowing the Antinomians to take advantage of our arguments. When our Protestant authors diligently extracted the precious gold of justification by free grace from the Scriptures, the Council of Trent responded with Canons, condemning them as Antinomians. For instance, Canon 19 stated that anyone denying the relevance of the Ten Commandments to Christians should be accursed. Similarly, Canon 20 cursed those who believed that a justified person is not bound to observe the Commandments, but only to believe. Another Canon, 21, condemned anyone who viewed Christ Jesus as a Redeemer to be trusted but not as a Law-giver to be obeyed. We can see that these Canons mistakenly associated our beliefs with those of the Antinomians. Our writers have refuted these misunderstandings, and if this were the only point of contention, resolution would be readily achievable. Therefore, preaching about free grace without provoking the Papists or advocating good works without offending the Antinomians presents a challenging task.

2. There have been dangerous assertions about good works, even by those who were not Antinomians, driven by a strong zeal for the grace of God in opposition to the Papists. From what I can gather, these individuals did not align with the Antinomians, but they shared some affinity on this particular point. Among them were rigid Lutherans known as Flacians, who, while expressing themselves excessively, particularly concerning original corruption (though some may excuse them for it), also went to extremes against good works. Instead of affirming the Orthodox

position that "Good works are necessary for salvation" (*Bona opera sunt necessaria ad salutem*), they held that "Good works are harmful to salvation" (*Bona opera sunt pernicioso ad salutem*). The division arose due to the book called "The Interim," which Charles the Emperor wanted to introduce into the German Churches. In that book, there was a passage stating that "Good works are necessary for salvation," to which Melancthon and others agreed (understanding the necessity not in terms of merit or efficiency but of presence). However, Flacius Illyricus and his followers disagreed and used many strong expressions from Luther (similar to the Antinomians) to support their stance.

This led Zanchi to face criticism because his writings included passages like "No grown-up man can be saved unless he gives himself to good works and walks in them." One Hinckelman, a Lutheran, made an attempt to refute Zanchi's assertion with nine arguments, which he referred to as "Calviniana," considering it a clear error. If all of this was intended to dissuade people from the secret sin of placing confidence in their good works, it would be more tolerable. In that sense, we appreciate Luther's warning to be cautious not only of evil works but also of good ones. Another person stated that he gained more good from his sins than from his graces, but these statements must be properly understood. We also admire Augustine's view that all the commands are counted as if you had done them, and when something is not done, it is forgiven.

3. The presence of awkward and even erroneous passages in Antinomian authors might have been more tolerable if they had specific reasons for doing so, as I will explain later. However, it seems that their writings contain more poison than can be

overlooked. If their unsavoury assertions were merely a result of a lack of clear judgment in expressing themselves, where they think more orthodoxly than they write, they could be excused as engaging in a logomachy. However, like Augustine said about those who used the word "fatum" in a positive sense, they should hold onto their opinion but correct their expressions. This shows that their injudiciousness is partly responsible for some of their erroneous passages, as evident in their frequent contradictions.

One of their frequently cited yet highly dangerous passages is that a man, even in his wickedness and at his worst, has his sins pardoned and is justified. Yet in other instances, they claim that even a very wicked man, upon coming to Christ and accepting Him, can have his sins forgiven. This presents a contradiction: how can one be wicked, not improve, and still take Christ? Unless they hold that taking Christ or coming to Him has no positive significance at all? But there will be more discussion on their contradictions later.

Their lack of judgment and weakness is also apparent when they discuss truths that are well-established by godly authors; they use an excessive number of words and praise them as if they had discovered the philosopher's stone or a phoenix. As if the reader should exclaim, "Behold, someone greater than Solomon is here!" when, in fact, it is merely a common point made by almost every writer. Moreover, their lack of judgment is evident in their focus on the promissory part of Scripture while neglecting the mandatory part. They repeatedly cite five or six passages, such as "Christ came to save that which was lost" and "He has laid on Him the iniquities of us all," but they rarely or never refer to verses like "Make your calling and election sure" and "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling," even

though all Scripture is meant for our benefit.

Now, if their weakness were the only ground for this controversy, the danger would not be so significant. Or, if their aim was merely to dissuade people from boasting in themselves and to deny the concurrence of works in the act of justification, that would be excusable to some extent. But their books and aims are not reconcilable in this regard. If their main purpose was only to demonstrate that good works follow a justified person and do not come before justification, there would be no opposition. However, they go as far as to deny the presence of good works in time. If the dispute centered on preparatory works to justification and conversion, which may have some validity with proper limitations, it would not be as grave. Also, if the debate focused on the time gap between a profane man's wickedness and his justification or the amount of sorrow required, it would be a different matter.

It is true that the Christian Religion was offensive to the Heathens, as they were taught that a man, no matter how wicked, could be pardoned if he received Christ, and the timing was as God pleased. Yet, there is also a transformation of the man's nature at that time. Chrysostom, for example, had a passage on the Scripture "The righteous shall live by faith" (Romans 1), stating that through faith alone, a man has remission of sins. He acknowledged that this concept might seem paradoxical to human reason: how can an adulterer or murderer become righteous instantly upon believing in Christ? However, this differs greatly from the Antinomian assertion, as different as heaven from hell.

There is a related story in Ecclesiastical history about

Constantine the Great. After committing heinous crimes, including killing many of his kin and contemplating the murder of his own son, he repented. He sought the advice of Sopater the Philosopher, who succeeded Plotinus in teaching him. Sopater stated that there could be no expiation for those sins. Later, Constantine asked Christian Bishops, and they replied that there could be expiation if he believed in Christ. This story was likely concocted to denigrate our religion.

Lastly, if the dispute aimed to show that there cannot be assurance before justification, or that knowing whether one has truly repented is not necessary when relying on Christ for pardon, it would also be a different matter.

Therefore, let us examine the detrimental implications they derive from the doctrine of Justification. I acknowledge that the appropriate time to address this fully will come when we discuss that point. However, to counter their errors, I will mention a few now. Firstly, they deny good works as a means to reach heaven. One of them expressly states (Section 4, on Christ being a way, page 68) that many people believe our obedience serves as a way to heaven, though not the cause, but a path towards the kingdom. He seeks to refute this notion. The expression itself is borrowed from Divines who took it from Bernard. Among other praises of good works, Bernard called them "Seeds of hope, incentives of love, signs of hidden Predestination, and presages of future happiness." He also added, "The way to the Kingdom, not the cause of reigning." It is true that good works are not a way in the sense that Christ is called the Way, just as the spiritual life of a Christian is not life in the way Christ styles Himself Life. Here, Christ refers to Himself as the causal and meritorious way, as indicated by the Articles added to everyone, and

the subsequent statement, "No man can come to the Father, but by me."

Objection: However, they argue that our works are our business and employment, not our way.

Solution: I respond that when we call them a way, it is a metaphor that the Scripture often delights in. Thus, the ways of God are said to be perfect (Deuteronomy 32), meaning the works of the Lord. When applied to men, it signifies any religion, doctrine, manners, actions, or course of life (2 Peter 2:2, 15, 21). Therefore, good works are both our way and our employment, for in this sense, employment and way are synonymous. For example, Matthew 7:14 states, "Strait is the way that leadeth to life," which refers to the work of grace and godliness. As for the alternative interpretation to understand it as referring to Christ as strait because people consider Him so and thus add works to Him, it would be an erroneous stretch, and Scripture should not be forced to go beyond its intended meaning. In this case, the opposition would not be wickedness but the devil himself would be the broad way.

Secondly, they deny the presence of good works in the person who is justified. This is so dangerous that I cannot fathom how charity can excuse it. It is a flaw that even the ample bosom of charity cannot cover. The Author explicitly states that when Paul said, "Therefore we conclude, a man is justified without the deeds of the Law," the Apostle not only excludes works from having any operative power to contribute to laying iniquities upon Christ, but also excludes all kinds of works that people do from being present and existing in individuals when God justifies them. The author illustrates this with an analogy of a general pardon for thieves and traitors, asserting that one may receive the pardon as well as another. Furthermore,

speaking about the passage "He hath received gifts for men, even for the rebellious," the author concludes that even if a person continues to rebel and practice rebellion, the hatefulness of it is laid upon Christ. Isn't this a doctrine that would undoubtedly please an ungodly heart?

Therefore, let us examine some of their erroneous denials regarding good works:

1. They deny gaining anything by good works, not even peace of heart, and they claim that no harm can come from them. This goes against the teachings of Scripture. For instance, they argue that though sins are committed, peace is not broken because Christ has already satisfied the breach of peace even before the damage occurs. They also suggest that if God were to reckon with believers for sin, either He must ask something of them, or not; and if believers are troubled, then God cannot bring a new reckoning. Furthermore, they assert that anyone seeking to gain something by their graces will only encounter trouble. It is true that if a person views repentance or grace as a cause or merit for obtaining Heaven and pardon, they misunderstand the imperfection of our graces and the magnitude of God's mercy. However, the Scripture does use severe threats even towards the godly when they neglect to repent or persist in sin (Romans 8:13). Therefore, the godly may find comfort in these warnings. Also, our holy duties may not merit salvation, but they do have a promise of pardon and eternal life due to their presence. Finally, their argument is still founded on the false notion that our sins being laid upon Christ negates any consequences for us. However, our sins may be laid upon us for other reasons, such as for our healing and understanding the gravity of sinning against

God, just as Joseph bound his brothers to make them realize the consequences of their past actions.

2. They deny that good works can serve as signs and testimonies of grace or Christ dwelling in us. They insist that only the Spirit of God can reveal this through immediate revelation and faith. In response, we can point out the weakness of this argument:

1. They confuse instrumental evidencing with efficient evidencing. They oppose subordinates, when in fact, they should be combined. It's akin to saying we see the Sun, not its beams or reflections. Just as a person in darkness cannot see a nearby fountain until their eyes are opened, so it is with grace.

2. During times of darkness and temptation, a Christian should not rely solely on signs and marks but trust obediently in God, as David often called upon his soul. This reliance is emphatic, implying holding on as one falling irrecoverably into a pit.

3. Their arguments against sincerity and universality of obedience rest on false grounds. They claim a person cannot distinguish themselves from hypocrites, contrary to Scripture's exhortation, and argue that assurance is possible only through a complete work of godliness. These arguments resemble those of the Papists.

4. The same arguments can be applied to faith as well. Are there not many believers for a season? Is there not a faith that endures only for a while? Therefore, a person can



discern the sincerity of their heart just as they can ascertain the truth of their faith.

Now let's consider their reasons for this peculiar assertion:

1. They argue that God justifies the ungodly based on Romans 4. There are two ways to answer this. Firstly, as commonly explained by our theologians, these words are not to be taken in a combined or inclusive sense but rather in a divided and prior sense. The one who was ungodly, upon being justified, also becomes godly, though it's not his godliness that justifies him. They compare this with the restoration of sight to the blind or hearing to the deaf; it's not that they had sight while being blind, but the blind now have sight. This interpretation is valid. However, I would like to add a second response based on insights from some scholars who suggest that "ungodly" in this context refers to those who, in their nature, lack absolute righteousness but are, at the same time, believers, much like Abraham. Faith of an ungodly person is counted as righteousness. Therefore, the subject of justification is a sinner who is also a believer. Now, it is impossible for a person to be a believer and have an impure heart (Acts 15) because when one believes in Christ, they receive not only justification but also sanctification. As seen in Romans 8, the Apostle seems to present a precise order: Prescience, Predestination, Calling, Justification, and Glorification. While we need not delve into the debate about the specific meaning of Sanctification in that passage, the Antinomian's assumption aligns with the false accusation made by the Papists that a profane and ungodly person, upon believing, will be justified. We argue that this proposition assumes an impossibility since faith in Christ purifies the heart, and through faith, Christ dwells in our hearts

(Ephesians 3). Thus, the Antinomian's dangerous and unsound expressions only serve to confirm the Papists' slander.

Another passage they often cite is Romans 5, where it is stated that Christ died for us while we were enemies and sinners. However, we must address their erroneous inference that a person, no matter how great an enemy of Christ, can be pardoned if they are willing to accept and close with Christ. This is a contradiction, as how can an enemy of Christ genuinely close with Him? This argument seems to imply more than what the Antinomians claim to allow in other places.

Furthermore, Christ's death was not solely for our justification but also for our salvation. Can they then infer that a profane person who lives and dies in such a manner will be saved? Their grand principle that Christ obtained all graces antecedently to us could, in their sense, lead to the belief that a drunkard, continuing in drunkenness, will be saved as well as justified.

To address the passage stating that Christ died and rose again for sinners, we must understand that this is the meritorious cause of our pardon and salvation. However, besides this cause, there are other instrumental causes that contribute to the whole process of justification. Just as some theologians differentiate between passive and active conversion, they also distinguish between active and passive justification. The passive refers to when not only the meritorious cause but also the applying instrument is present, resulting in the person being justified. Thus, they refer to Christ's death as a universal meritorious cause without specifying the application to specific souls. Hence, it's crucial to bear in mind that, for the great mercy of justification, something is required as the efficient cause (i.e., God's grace), the meritorious cause (Christ's

suffering), and the instrumental cause (faith), each being indispensable.

I'll just mention one more passage, which is Psalm 68:18. They emphasize the part that says, "Thou hast received gifts even for the rebellious also, that the Lord God may dwell among them." The author strongly argues, on page 411, that since God cannot dwell where iniquity is, Christ received gifts for men so that the Lord God could dwell among the rebellious. By this means, God can dwell with those who are rebellious because all the hatred of their rebellion is transferred to Christ. The same author adds on page 412, "The Holy Ghost does not say that the Lord takes rebellious persons and gifts, and prepares them, and then will come and dwell with them; but even then, while they are rebellious, without any stop, the Lord Christ hath received gifts for them, that the Lord God may dwell among them." Isn't all this strange? Despite the author's emphasis on sanctification in other places, such principles as these undermine it.

However, if we consider the context of this passage, it becomes their greatest adversary. In Ephesians 3, it becomes evident that the Psalmist speaks of the fruit and power of Christ's Ascension, where gifts were given to men, including the most rebellious, so they could be converted and changed through this ministry. Therefore, this interpretation contradicts their claims. Additionally, the words "with them" or "among them" are not present in the Hebrew. Some interpret "Jah" in Hebrew and "Elohim" in the vocative case to mean "O Lord God" to inhabit the rebellious. Another interpretation relates it to God's dwelling but not with them; rather, it refers to God dwelling, i.e., the Ark being fixed after the enemies are subdued. However, even if we consider our preferred edition to be the best, it still must be understood as referring to rebels changed by God's

Spirit, as Scripture often uses phrases like "God's dwelling in men" in connection with conversion (Romans 8:11, Ephesians 3:12, 2 Corinthians 6:16).

## LECTURE IV.

Upon what grounds are the people of God to be zealous for good works?

"Knowing the Law is good, if a man use it lawfully." - 1 TIM. 1. 8, 9.

Having refuted some dangerous inferences that the Antinomian draws from the precious doctrine of Justification, I will now address only one question: Upon what grounds are the people of God to be zealous for good works? It can be quite challenging to repent, love, be patient, or bear fruit without doing them for the sole purpose of justifying ourselves. And even though we may make a clear theological distinction between holiness as a way or means, and as a cause or merit of salvation, practically, the heart does not always make such subtle distinctions. While I don't intend to delve into the entire doctrine of Sanctification or new obedience at this time, it would be incomplete if I didn't inform you about how good works of the Law, done by grace, and justification of the Gospel, can coexist harmoniously.

First and foremost, let's clarify what we mean by good works. We don't strictly refer to acts of charity or liberality, nor do we consider

any external religious actions as good works if the heart remains impure. We certainly do not endorse the Popish concept of good works of supererogation. Instead, we mean the graces of God's Spirit within us and the actions that flow from them. Often, with the Papists and some Popish individuals, good works are mistakenly associated with superstitious and extra-commanded works that God never required. Or if God did command them, they often interpret them in merely external and superficial terms, such as merely attending Church or receiving sacraments, overlooking the significance of internal and spiritual qualities like genuine faith and a contrite spirit, which form the essence of all duties. Without these inner qualities, outward acts are akin to clothes on a lifeless body, unable to provide warmth since there is no life within. Therefore, even to be considered a godly work, much is required, even if it falls short in perfection: 1. It must be commanded by God. 2. It must be inspired in us by the Spirit of God. All actions of the unregenerate person, including their prayers and services, are sins. 3. It must flow from an inward principle of grace or a supernatural transformation of the soul, making a person a new creature. 4. The ultimate end must be God's glory. Only when a work fulfills these criteria can it truly be deemed good.

The Antinomian errs in two contrary ways concerning good works. At times, they speak erroneously and grossly about them. For instance, Islebius Agricola, the first Antinomian (who later joined others in creating the wicked book called "The Interim"), and his followers, present these positions: They deem Peter's exhortation to "Make your calling and election sure" as an unprofitable saying, claiming that Peter did not understand Christian liberty. They also suggest that merely contemplating how people should live godly and modest lives is a departure from the Gospel. Furthermore, they hold that the Law and works belong only to the Court of Rome. On the

other hand, they elevate good works so high, emphasizing Christ's righteousness imputed to us to the extent of considering all our works perfect, even applying Ephesians 1 to claim that Christ cleanses His Church to be pure without spot or wrinkle in this life. They not only speak of righteousness or justification by imputation but also claim that Christ's obedience grants saintship and holiness, suggesting that God sees no sin in believers. This is a dangerous position, and while they may offer similes and distinctions to qualify it, I will address the dangerous falsehood of imputed righteousness at the appropriate time.

In the discussion about the necessity of good works, it is crucial to carefully distinguish between two propositions: First, good works are necessary to believers, to justified persons, or those who will be saved. Second, good works are necessary to justification and salvation. While the latter proposition holds true in some sense, it can be misleading as it suggests that holiness has an immediate effect on our justification and salvation. Therefore, I fully agree with those learned individuals who believe that in these two cases, we should avoid using such a proposition. When engaging in debates, especially with adversaries like Papists, we should be precise in our language. The Fathers did not use the term < in non-Latin alphabet > for the Virgin Mary, so as not to appear to yield to Nestorius, who denied her to be < in non-Latin alphabet > . The second case is in our sermons and exhortations to people. If we use such language, the common hearer might think that good works are so necessary that they immediately secure our justification. The former proposition refers to the roles and duties of justified individuals, while the latter addresses the conditions affecting justification.

1. These good works ought to be done, or are necessary for several reasons. First, they are the fruit and end of Christ's death, as

Titus 2:14 explains thoroughly. The Apostle demonstrates that the whole benefit of Christ's redemption is lost by those who do not live righteously. There are two aspects to our sins: the guilt, which Christ redeems us from, and the filth, which He purifies us from. If Christ redeems you from the guilt of your sins, He will also cleanse you from their stain. Consider the twofold purpose of this purification: that we may become a peculiar people. The word  $\langle$  in non-Latin alphabet  $\rangle$ , which Jerome sought among human authors but couldn't find, corresponds to the Hebrew word Segullah and signifies something precious and excellent, acquired with great effort. Thus, your holiness and repentance came at a great cost to Christ. The other effect is that we become zealous for good works. The Greek Fathers note that the Apostle doesn't use the term "followers" but "zealous," implying great enthusiasm and affection. And, lest people think we should only preach about Christ and grace, the Apostle encourages us to "speak these things and exhort." Calvin believes the last words, "Let no man despise thee," were directed to the people because they often have delicate ears and cannot tolerate straightforward words about mortification.

2. Second, there is a certain analogical relation between good works and heaven compared to evil works. For instance, in passages like "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our iniquities," and 2 Timothy 4:8, where a "Crown of righteousness" is promised to the righteous. These words do not imply that our good works have merit or efficiency in securing salvation but rather that they are ordainable to eternal life, in contrast to evil and wicked works that cannot be so ordained.
3. Third, there is a promise made to those who engage in good works. As stated in 1 Timothy 4:8, "Godliness has the promises."

Every godly action is accompanied by a promise of eternal life. Though God is not a debtor to us, He is faithful to His own promises. Augustine famously said, "Reddis debita, nulli debens," meaning that God pays what He owes not to us but to Himself and His faithfulness. Thus, the godly can trust in God's promises even though they know they don't deserve them. The Lord's faithfulness is what counts. David emphasized this faithfulness, and the Apostle also affirmed that God's promises are faithful and worthy of acceptance. This understanding motivated the godly to labor and endure shame.

4. Fourth, good works serve as testimonies that confirm our election. As 2 Peter 1:10 advises, "Make your calling and election sure." The Vulgar Translator inserted the words "per bona opera" and accused Luther of removing them from the text to suit his purposes, but these words are not part of Scripture. The Apostle emphasizes that making our calling and election sure requires diligence. The word " < in non-Latin alphabet > " signifies certainty to us, though Estius and other Papists argue for firmness. The Apostle does not speak of the quality in itself but its certainty to us. The motives for making our election sure are twofold: We will never fail, and we will enter abundantly into heaven. These testimonies are not effective without the Spirit of God.
5. Good works are a condition without which a person cannot be saved. While a man cannot deduce the cause of his salvation from their presence, their absence may lead to the conclusion of damnation. Therefore, the Antinomian's assertion that good works do not profit us, and bad works do not hinder us, as Islebius claimed, is inexcusable. The Scriptures are replete with contrary evidence. For example, Romans 8:13 warns, "If you live



according to the flesh, you will die," and Jesus declared, "Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." Such passages abound, making it surprising how an Antinomian can overlook them and consistently focus only on those verses that emphasize God's grace to us but not our duty to Him. According to their principle, Christ has procured justification, glory, and salvation for us, even when we remain sinners and enemies.

6. Good works inherently serve as a defense against sin and corruption. A simple consideration of the nature of these graces, though imperfect, confirms their necessity. Ephesians 6:14 and 6:16 describe some graces as a shield and a breastplate, respectively, which every soldier knows are indispensable during times of war. While the Apostle speaks of the might of the Lord, and prayer must accompany these graces, the principal does not oppose the instrumental. In Romans 13, they are called the weapons of light. Luther observed that the Apostle did not call the works of darkness the weapons of darkness, but rather good works the weapons, as they should be used to resist Satan. He calls them weapons of light because they originate from God, the source of light, and because they are the true light according to Scripture. Though Drusius believed that light here means victory, similar to its use in Judges 5:31 and Psalms 132:17-18, and by Homer, Marcellinus mentioned an ancient custom where children would bring candles during supper, and they would shout, " < in non-Latin alphabet > ".
7. Good works are necessary due to their natural connection with faith and the Spirit of God. Consequently, faith is referred to as "faith which worketh by love." Some Papists, like Lorinus, claim that we speak in contradictions because we sometimes assert that faith alone justifies while also stating that faith needs to be

active to justify us. However, there is no contradiction here. A living faith justifies, not in its active state, but in its act of apprehending and laying hold upon Christ. On the other hand, faith's second notable act is to purify and cleanse the heart and stir up other graces. In this sense, some learned individuals argue that good works are necessary to preserve a person in the state of justification, though they do not immediately contribute to that act. Using the analogy of sight, while a man's shoulders and breast do not directly aid in seeing, if a man's eyes and head were not connected to those parts, he couldn't see. Likewise, although fire does not burn solely due to its light, it would not burn unless it had that quality, as it presupposes that otherwise, the subject would be destroyed. John Hus expressed it well: "Where good works are not outwardly visible, faith cannot be inwardly present." Hence, faith must be made manifest through works, becoming flesh-like, just as Christ became visible through incarnation.

8. Good works are necessary due to debt and obligation. God, in His sovereignty, could have commanded obedience from humans without providing any reward of eternal life. Durand's argument that we cannot merit from God because the more good we can do, the more beholden we become to Him, holds true. This obligation remains perpetual and necessary, unaffected by any covenant of grace. Grace does not nullify nature; "*gratia non destruit naturam.*" We are God's servants, "*Servus non est persona, sed res,*" and we are even more devoted to God than the humblest slave can be to a human master because our very existence and ability to work come from Him.
9. By God's command. It is God's will that you be sanctified, so that you may demonstrate what is His good and acceptable will.

Therefore, the Law of God remains as a rule and guide. Paul expressed his delight in the Law of God within him, as mentioned in Romans 12, emphasizing our renovation and consecration to Him. The word "offer" denotes our readiness and eagerness to follow God's will. Epithets are added to the will of God to encourage us to rejoice in it. There is no room for dispute or argument against God's will. If our Savior, in Matthew 5, says that breaking even the least commandment will make one least in the Kingdom of heaven, how much more inexcusable is the Antinomian who teaches the abolition of all commandments?

10. They are necessary for our comfort. This contradicts various Antinomian teachings that forbid finding peace through holiness. It is true that we should not take comfort in them as a cause for confidence, as no one can do anything with such boldness. For instance, Panigarola, a Papist, made a desperate statement (as related by Rivet) that it would be folly to put confidence solely in Christ's blood. A godly person does not find satisfaction in anything they do, let alone in fulfilling God's will. Though imperfect, these good works can provide great comfort as a testimony of God's eternal love for us. Like Hezekiah in 2 Kings 20:3, who acknowledged his imperfections while still finding comfort in his sincere and comparatively perfect heart. We can find comfort in our good works without resting in them, but rather praising God for them. It is a way of humility to praise God for our works without claiming merit for them.
11. They are necessary in relation to God, as they please and glorify Him. When we say they are necessary in relation to God, we mean declaratively, to display His glory. God is the end of all our actions and goodness, not as one in need of them, but as one

who perfects them to resemble Him. Good works relate to God in two ways: firstly, they please Him, as mentioned in Hebrews 13, "He is well pleased." Just as Leah, though blind-eyed, believed her husband would love her when she bore children, so too, our faith may say, "Now God will love me" when it abounds in the fruits of righteousness. Our godly actions please God, despite their imperfections, because our reconciliation with God occurred first. Secondly, good works glorify God and prevent His name from being blasphemed when we walk in wickedness. Although our good works are imperfect, it is God's grace to consider them as part of His glory.

12. They are necessary in relation to others. In Matthew 5:17, it says, "Let your light shine before men." This is not an encouragement of vain-glory, but it presents the true purpose of our visible holiness. Just like light shouldn't be hidden under a bushel, godliness should extend to others, leading them to glorify God in heaven. Just as we admire an excellent painting and praise the artist who created it, we should walk in a way that others may love Christ dwelling in us. 1 Peter 3:1 encourages wives to walk in a manner that may win their husbands to the Lord. If you pray for your husband's conversion, also let your life be a testimony that could convert him. The phrase "without the word" means public preaching, but the wife's life should preach to him all day long. This implies the great value of each person's soul and the joy they should take in converting others, just as merchants take delight in their trade.
13. Holiness and inherent godliness are the ultimate end of our faith and justification. Our divines say that charity, or love of God, is the end of faith because God has appointed faith as the means of justification until we are brought into eternal glory, where we

will possess perfect inherent holiness. However, even then, all glory and honor will be given to Christ. God could have given us enough inherent grace to obtain eternal life without sin, conforming perfectly to His will. But God's wisdom chose a different way, exalting Christ and Grace while humbling us for our sins. Anselm wisely stated, "My whole life terrifies me, for I see nothing but sin or barrenness." The excellence of sanctification lies in Christ, Grace, and Justification, ultimately leading to our perfect holiness.

Some theologians have gone further, but I cannot agree with them. Some claim that good works have causality and efficiency in our justification and salvation. However, this cannot be taken strictly, as it was the initial covenant of works in Adam. Faith, as the instrument receiving justification, is not included as works are rejected, but rather as the instrumental and passive receiver.

Others argue that while good works do not merit eternal life, they may lead to accidental degrees of glory. However, this is questionable, and even if such degrees exist, they must still come by grace.

Lastly, some believe that temporal blessings come through a covenant of works, but not spiritual blessings. However, this is difficult to accept, as we may receive good things either through Christ or through God's forbearance, not taking advantage of our sins.

I will say no more on this but address a main doubt.

Objection: If good works are still necessary, why is the covenant of grace not considered a covenant of works, as the Arminians affirm?

Answer: Although good works are required in the justified or saved person, the covenant is not one of works, but of faith. Faith alone is the instrument that receives justification and eternal life. Good works qualify the believing individual, but they are not the instrument to receive the covenant. Faith is the sole condition to receive the covenant, yet believing requires a change in the whole person. The receiving nature of faith will be further explored later.

Exhortation: Beware of turning the grace of God into licentiousness. Be cautious of doctrines that emphasize comfort but neglect duty. Seek to distinguish between possessing godliness and trusting in it. Do not separate sanctification from justification. Avoid both Pharisaism and licentiousness. Reconcile the Law and the Gospel, Justification, and Holiness. Pursue holiness with earnestness, as if it were your sole help, while fully relying on Christ's merits as if you had no holiness at all. Although your intent may be to exalt Christ and Grace, be aware that corrupted opinions can corrupt one's life, just like rheum falling from the head putrefies the lungs and other vital parts.

## **LECTURE V.**

The Law is Not made for a Righteous Man

"Knowing this, that the Law is not made for a righteous man."- 1 Timothy 1:9

Today, we are about to challenge one of the strongest arguments of our opponents. It may be assumed that the eighth verse cannot be as damaging to them as the ninth is supportive of their position. As Austin rightly observes, the Apostle presents two seemingly contradictory things together, urging the reader to find the true answer to this question and resolve the apparent conflict. We must, therefore, address these passages as Moses did when he saw two Israelites fighting, asking, "Why fall you out, seeing you are brethren?"

To better understand these words, let us first consider who are the ones said to know, and secondly, what is said to be known.

In the previous verse, the subject "knowing" is in the plural number, while in this verse, it is in the singular. There is some uncertainty about whether it is referring to the same individuals or not. Some interpreters believe that those mentioned in the eighth verse and those in the ninth are the same, and the Apostle changes the number from plural to singular, a common occurrence in Scripture, like in Galatians 6:1. On the other hand, there are interpreters who see the word "knowing" in this verse as a qualification of the one who rightly uses the Law. In other words, "The Law is good if a person uses it lawfully, and using it lawfully means knowing that it is not made for the righteous." The choice between these interpretations is not crucial, but it is essential to observe that the Apostle, by using the words "We know" and "Knowing," emphasizes the understanding that all Christians ought to have regarding the nature of the Law.

Now, let's consider what Law the Apostle refers to in this passage. Some have understood it to be the ceremonial Law, citing Christ's death as the reason for its abolition, and pointing out that all the ceremonies of the Law were reminders of sins and condemnations

for those who used them. However, this cannot be the case because circumcision was commanded to Abraham, a righteous man, and to all the godly individuals under the Old Testament. The persons opposed to the righteous man are those who transgress the Moral Law. Others who interpret it as the Moral Law apply it to its repetition and renovation by Moses. The Law was initially given to Adam after his fall, but wickedness increased, leading to the addition of the Law because of transgressions, as Paul mentions. However, we can understand it more generally as referring to the Moral Law. It's essential to note that the Apostle is not offering a theological discourse on the use of the Law in this passage, as he does in other places. Instead, he introduces it as a general statement to be applied to his specific context concerning the righteous man. When he speaks of the righteous man, it does not mean one who is absolutely righteous, but one who is righteous in intention and desire. The people of God are called righteous because of the righteousness present in them, even though they are not justified by it. Both the Antinomian and the Papist share the same error, though on different grounds, that our righteousness and works are perfect. They apply passages such as "A people without spot or wrinkle" to the people of God in this life, not only in justification but also in sanctification. This error will be refuted later.

Next, let's examine how the Antinomian explains this passage and what they mean by this text. The older Antinomian, Islebius Agricola, frames the question as follows: Is the Law, to a righteous man, a teacher, ruler, commander, and active enforcer of obedience? Or is it that the righteous man does indeed perform the works of the Law, but passively, where the Law works through him, while the Law does not work on him? The question is not whether the things prescribed by the Law are done (for they assert that the righteous man actively adheres to the Law), but rather whether, when these things are done,



they are carried out by a godly individual, admonished, instructed, and commanded by the Law of God. The Antinomian denies this. The later Antinomian speaks very uncertainly and inconsistently. At times, they admit that the Law is a rule, but then contradict themselves by dismissing it. They argue that it cannot merely be a rule but must also reign, making it impossible for one aspect of the Law to exist without the other. They claim that the damnatory power of the Law is inseparable from it. If one accepts the mandatory power, they cannot avoid the damnatory power. According to the Antinomian's view, the Law cannot condemn, and therefore, they believe it cannot command either. The same author calls it a slander to accuse them of denying the Law, yet there is an evident contradiction in their beliefs. This vacillation is not new, as the older Antinomian also changed his views multiple times. Despite condemning his error and publicly recanting it, he eventually relapsed into the same error after Luther's death. Removing poison from the system once ingested is no easy task.

In the fourth place, we aim to clarify the Apostle's meaning. Firstly, know that human authors, who have acknowledged the value of precepts, speak of a righteous man in this way merely to illustrate that he acts righteously out of love for righteousness, not from fear of punishment. Aquinas, for instance, said of his love for God, "I love because I love, and I love in order to love." Similarly, Seneca stated, "Being good merely according to the law is a small thing." Aristotle, in Book 3 of Politics, Chapter 9, showed how a righteous man would be good even without the existence of the law. They also likened a righteous man to a living law. However, these sayings are not entirely true, yet they contain some degree of truth in them. Antisthenes, for instance, claimed that a wise man was not bound by any laws, while Demonax told a lawyer that all their laws would come to nothing since good men did not need them, and wicked men would not be

improved by them. While the sentiments of both the heathens and the Church Fathers are worth noting, the reality is that even a godly person requires the Word as a light and a goad in this life. In heaven, the godly shall not need the Law any more than they will need the Gospel or the entire Word of God.

Secondly, there are three interpretations that closely align with each other and help elucidate the Apostle's message. First, some learned scholars emphasize the word "made" in the phrase "not made for a righteous man." It implies that the Law is not imposed as a burden upon a godly individual who takes pleasure in it. The righteous man does not see the Law as a whip or a source of fear. On the other hand, the wicked desire the absence of the Law, crying out, "Would that we didn't have to follow it!" The righteous man, however, stands in the Law rather than under it. Nevertheless, this interpretation applies only to the extent that a person is righteous, for the things of God can still be burdensome to the godly at times. Hence, we should not oppose the works of the Law to the works of the Spirit, Grace, and the Gospel. The same actions can be seen as the works of the Law in terms of the object and the works of the Spirit in terms of the efficient cause. While Scripture contrasts Grace and Works, and Faith and Works, it does so in a different sense than the Antinomian, as will be explained later.

The second interpretation concerns the damnatory and cursing aspect of the Law. The Law is not made to the believer in a way that he should remain under its cursing and condemning power. This is why we are often told that we are not under the Law. It is true that the godly are deserving of the curse of the Law, but they are not under its actual curse and condemnation. However, this does not mean that there is no Law, for it is a good rule in Divinity that the removal of an act or operation from a subject that is impeded does

not necessarily mean the removal of the thing itself. For example, the three Worthies in the fiery furnace were not burnt by the fire because God hindered the act. Similarly, the Law is not meant to curse or condemn the righteous man.

The third interpretation is that the Law was not made because of righteous men but because of the unrighteous. If Adam had remained innocent, Moses' Law would not have required such a solemn declaration, as it would have been engraved in their hearts. Therefore, although God gave a positive law to Adam for testing his obedience and showing his homage, He did not prescribe the Moral Law to him externally, though it was given to him in another sense. This interpretation can be compared to the proverb "Good laws arise from evil manners." Laws, which have the power to restrain and change the lives of people, are not intended for those who are already holy but for those who need to become holy. This notion aligns with the interpretation of a statement made by Jesus, "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." By repentance, they mean conversion, and by the righteous, they do not refer to Pharisees, but to those who are already converted. Tacitus also mentioned that excellent laws were made because of the wrongdoings of others; punishment followed fault, and amendment followed sin.

Now that these interpretations, which largely agree with one another, can be better understood, let's consider some parallel passages from Scripture. Galatians 5:23, speaking of the fruits of the Spirit, says, "Against such there is no law." This means that the Law was not made to condemn or accuse those who display these righteous actions and graces. Therefore, we can apply the same idea to the godly individuals themselves. Another parallel can be found in Romans 13:3, which states, "Rulers are not a terror to good works,

but to evil." In other words, if you do no evil, you need not fear them. Similarly, the Apostle indicates how the grace of love was wrought in the hearts of the Thessalonians when he said, "I need not write to you to love, for you have been taught of God to do this." By saying "I need not write," he was, in essence, writing to them. Thus, these expressions imply that the godly, to the extent that they are regenerate, delight in the Law of God, and it is not a terror to them. If we were to conclude that because the godly possess an ingenuous and free spirit to do what is good, they do not need the Law to direct or regulate them, the same argument could be applied to the entire Scripture or even the Gospel, since faith is implanted in their hearts. However, such a conclusion is untenable. Thus, the notion that the godly do not need the Law is as dangerous as the belief of the Swencfeldians, who denied the whole Scripture's necessity for someone with the Spirit. This erroneous idea can lead to a damnable position.

The fact that the Law must necessarily have a directive, regulating, and informative power over a godly person becomes evident in two particular instances:

1. We cannot discern true worship of God from superstition and idolatry without referring to the first and second Commandments. While many places in Scripture speak against false worship, it is the second Commandment that serves as a special director to identify when worship becomes false. Orthodox writers prove the unlawfulness of images and the setting up of any part or means of worship not commanded by the Lord through this commandment. A lack of precise understanding of the scope of this Commandment has historically led to various forms of idolatry and superstition. We will also demonstrate (God willing, in due time) that the

Decalogue encompasses not only Moses' ten Commandments but also Christ's and the Apostles' ten Commandments.

2. Another instance of the Law's depth becomes evident when comparing it to the depth of our sin. The Law of God, the Decalogue, commands a greater level of spiritual excellence and holiness than we can attain to. Therefore, we must continuously study it more deeply. As David prays in Psalm 119:18, "Open mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." Even though David was godly and had his eyes opened to a significant degree by the Spirit of God, there was still much to discover in the Law. Similarly, there is a profound depth to our original and native sin. Our hearts carry much more filth than we can comprehend or realize. Psalm 19:12 says, "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults." Therefore, given the abundance of impurity in our carnal hearts, we need the spiritual and holy Law to expose our pollution and abominable nature. For the godly individual, growth partly occurs through the revelation of pride, deadness, and filth in the soul that was previously unknown or unfamiliar.

The practical application of this Scripture can be explained as follows: pray and strive for a heart that is free and heavenly, so that the Law of God and all its precepts may not terrify you but instead bring sweetness and delight. David passionately cried out, "Oh, how I love thy Law!" He couldn't fully express his love for it. And he also declared, "My soul breaks in longing after thy judgments." In another instance, both David and Job regarded God's precepts even more than their necessary food. You don't need to forcefully drag a hungry or thirsty person to their bread and water. I mention this not to imply that it's wrong to consider the rewards, as Moses and Christ did, or even to fear God. It is reasonable to expect that the Scripture,

using such motivations, would not stir up sinful and unlawful affections within us. However, the affection we ought to have toward God and His will should be like that of a loving son towards his father, even if there were no prospect of gaining lordship or a rich inheritance.

There is a difference between acting out of genuine freedom and acting out of compulsion: a free action is one done for its own sake, while a compelled action arises from an external principle without any willingness from the one acting. Let not prayer, belief, or love for God be compelled actions in you. When faith works through love, it gives flavor to all duties and overcomes all difficulties. The Lacedemonians used to sacrifice to Love before going to war, recognizing that only love could make hardships, wounds, and even death itself easier to bear. Therefore, pray for the love of God to be poured into your heart, and consider these two things: First, how the Law laid upon Christ to die and suffer for you was not a burden or terror to him. He expressed this by saying, "With desire I have desired to drink of this cup." Reflect on this: If Christ had been as unwilling to die for me as I am to pray to Him, to be patient, or to be holy, what would have become of my soul? If Christ, as the Mediator for you, could say, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God, thy Law is within mine heart," then how much more should this be true of you in anything you do for Him? You have much less to give up for Him compared to what He gave up for you. Your life and wealth are insignificant in comparison to the glory of His Godhead, which He set aside for a time. Secondly, consider how people love their sins for the sake of the sins themselves; they love the world because of the world. Now, evil is not as significant as good; sin is not as powerful as God is divine, and Christ is Christ. If a profane person can love their sin, even if it costs them hell, because of the sweetness they find in it, should not the godly heart love the things of God because of

their excellence? However, these points can be further expanded upon in another discussion.

## **LECTURE VI.**

### The entire Theology of the Law of God

"For when the Gentiles, which know not the law, do the things of the law by nature, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts." - ROM. 2:14, 15.

Before I address the other Scripture passages used by the Antinomians against the Law, I believe it is essential, for the sake of better organization and your thorough understanding, to explore the entire Theology of the Law of God. This will be done in various aspects: positively, controversially, and practically. I shall begin with the law of Nature, which God has instilled in us, and consider it in two ways: Firstly, as a pure law; and secondly, as a covenant of works made with Adam. Subsequently, I will discuss the Moral Law given by Moses, which is the primary subject of these controversies.

The text I have read is a treasure trove, deserving meticulous examination and exploration. Hence, to better comprehend these words, let us address the following questions:

1. Who are referred to as the Gentiles here? It is commonly known that the Jews used the term "Gentiles" to refer contemptuously to all those who were not Jews, just as the Greeks and Romans

called other nations "Barbarians." Therefore, in some instances in Scripture, the term is applied to wicked Jews, as in Psalm 2, where "heathen" could be interpreted as the Pharisees resisting Christ. Though the Jews may deny that the word "Gentes" (Gentiles) is ever applied to them in the Scriptures, this is false. For instance, in Genesis 17, Abraham is called the father of many nations (Gentes). Hence, they must either deny being the descendants of Abraham or acknowledge the application of the term to them. Generally, it refers to those who did not have the Laws of Moses and did not live by them. Thus, in Galatians 2:14, to "live like a Gentile" means not observing the Laws of Moses. In this sense, the Apostle aims to establish the charge that all mankind, both Jew and Gentile, are naturally steeped in sin. God, being impartial, will punish both equally. However, there is a further question whether this refers to Gentiles who remained as they were or to Gentiles who converted and became believers. Many Latin interpreters, both ancient and modern, argue that the Apostle speaks of converted Gentiles. Chrysostom, a Greek Father, and Estius, a learned Papist, also share this view, providing several arguments to support it. However, there is a counter-argument against this view. The Apostle speaks of those who are without a law and are a law to themselves, which cannot be true of converted Gentiles. Thus, we take the Apostle to refer to Gentiles who remain as they are. In this sense, there is a dangerous and a sound interpretation. The poisonous interpretation is held by the Pelagians, who believe that the law written in their hearts, as in Jeremiah 33, refers to fulfilling the law for salvation. They claim that the Heathens, through natural law and reason, did enough for salvation. However, this interpretation undermines the doctrine of Grace and Christ. The sound interpretation is that the Apostle speaks of the Gentiles but only refers to those remnants of natural reason and



conscience that were present in them, as will be further explained.

2. How are they said to be without a law? They are without a written law, like the Jews had. Therefore, we may say they had a law but without a written form.
3. In what sense are they said to do the things required by the law and that by nature? This does not refer universally to all Gentiles, as the Apostle has shown how many of them lived in sin in the previous chapter. Nor does it refer universally to the matter contained in the law, but to some external acts, as seen in the examples of Aristides and Socrates, among others. It is debated whether a mere Heathen can perform any morally good work. We answer in the negative, as every action ought to have a supernatural end, which they did not aim for. Hence, we reject the distinction between moral and theological good, as every moral good should be theological. They may perform the good actions of the law, but not in the right manner. By nature, we can understand the natural light of conscience, through which they judge and perform some external acts, albeit with the help of God.

The next question is, How is this law said to be written in their hearts? This should not be compared, as Augustine did, with the gracious promise in Jeremiah, where God writes His law in the hearts of His people. There are, therefore, two ways in which the law is written in the hearts of men: Firstly, as knowledge and judgment, whereby they understand what is good and bad. Secondly, in the will and affections, by inclining and delighting them to do good on solid grounds. The latter is referred to by the Prophet in the covenant of

Grace, whereas the former is to be understood here, as will be evident when compared with Chapter 1:19.

The last question is, How do they demonstrate this law written in their hearts? Externally, they do so in two ways: Firstly, by establishing good and wholesome laws to govern their people. Secondly, by practicing, at least to some extent, according to those laws. Internally, they do so through their consciences, finding comfort or fear therein.

Observation: There is a law of Nature inscribed in the hearts of men. If this law is not abolished and believers are bound to follow its direction and obligation, how can the Antinomian argue that the Moral Law, in terms of its commanding power, ceases to be valid? Now, since I intend to present a methodical treatise on the various kinds of God's Law, one might expect me to discuss Laws in general at length. However, many have written extensive volumes on this topic, particularly the Schoolmen, and they have offered valuable rational insights. Yet, as it may not be directly relevant to my objective, I shall refrain from delving into it. Thus, I won't delve into the etymology of the words signifying "Law," whether "Lex" in Latin comes from "legendo" because it was written to be read (although that's not always necessary), or from "ligando" because a law binds to obedience, or from "deligendo" because it selects some precepts. Nor will I dwell on "νόμος" ("nomos") in Greek, whether it comes from "νέμω" ("nemo"), which is improbable, or from "νέμω" ("nemo"), because it distributes to everyone that which is right. Similarly, I won't delve into the Hebrew word "תּוֹרָה" ("Torah"), some claiming it comes from "יָרָה" ("yarah") meaning "to instruct and teach," while others link it to the word "יֶשָׁר" ("yeshar") signifying a disposition or compilation of things together, as laws usually are. Instead, I will move on to the definition of a law, whether it is an act, a habit, or the

soul itself. However, it is essential to note one point against a fundamental error of the Antinomians concerning laws in general. They hold that the damning act of a law must coincide with the commanding act of a law, which is often cited (as I explained last time). Yet, we should observe that only two things constitute the essence of a law (I am not referring to external causes): first, direction, as a law is a rule; thus, the law of God is compared to a light. In Proverbs 20:27, there is a notable expression about the law of Nature: it is a candle of the Lord, searching the inwards of the belly. It is also observed that the Chaldee word for law is synonymous with light. The second essential element of a law is obligation, as this is at the core of sin - the breaking of this law presupposes its obligatory force. Furthermore, there are two consequents of the law that are meant to reinforce its being obeyed. In fact, this turns the law into a covenant, which will be further discussed later. As for the sanction of the law in the form of a promise, it is purely voluntary; due to God's dominion over man, He could have commanded obedience without promising eternal life. Likewise, the other consequent act of the law, to curse and punish, is merely incidental and not essential to the law. It comes into play based on the assumption of transgression. Just as we can say that a Magistrate is just and complete even if they do not administer punitive justice when there are no malefactors, so it is with a law - it is complete and binding even if it does not actively curse. This is evident in the case of the confirmed Angels; the law had only obligatory and mandatory acts upon them. It is clear that they were under a law, as otherwise, they could not have sinned, for where there is no law, there is no transgression. If the Antinomian were corrected in this principle, which is undoubtedly true and straightforward, they would quickly find satisfaction. However, I will delve further into this in another place. Now let us move on to the specifics of the doctrine, pressing which will serve as a powerful

argument against the Antinomian. To better comprehend the Law of Nature, consider the following particulars:

1. The essence of this law lies in the common notions and maxims engraved in the hearts of all people. Some are speculative, like the belief in God's existence, while others are practical, such as the understanding that good should be embraced and evil avoided. Aquinas aptly suggests that these practical rules of nature are comparable to the principles of sciences in matters of demonstration. Thus, we cannot provide reasons for them, for they are self-evident, much like the Sun manifesting itself through its own light. Chrysostom also notes that God, when forbidding murder and other sins, does not offer reasons because such prohibitions are natural. On the other hand, when speaking of the observance of the seventh day, a reason is given—because the Lord rested on that day. This day, although moral, is not inherently natural but rather moral positive, as some experts argue.
2. It is crucial to understand the distinction between the law of Nature in Adam and in us. In Adam, it was perfectly implanted, whereas we possess only fragments and a mere shadow of it. The complete Law of Nature, which perfectly instructed us in God's will, was communicated to him. Despite God providing a positive law to test his obedience, the Law of Nature undoubtedly existed within Adam, given that he was created in God's image, with righteousness, holiness, and a conscience. Therefore, it is impudent of Socinus to deny that Adam had such a law or precept and that he could not lie or commit other sins. Indeed, if Adam had lied or committed any such act, it would have been a sin, just like eating the forbidden fruit.

3. The inherent nature of this law within us is undeniable. It is not something supernaturally added by God, but rather a fundamental aspect of our being. This assertion, however, faces opposition from Flaccus Illyricus, who, driven by a strong desire to highlight original sin and our perceived lack of God's image, argues that these common notions and dictates of conscience are infused *de novo* into us, suggesting they are not innate. Similarly, another pious individual, in his *Book of Temptations*, holds a similar opinion. While Illyricus presents several plausible arguments, he does so under the false assumption that the Apostle's intention is to compare a Gentile, only supposed to follow the Law but not confirmed to do so, with a Jew who hears the Law but does not obey it. To diminish the Jew, Illyricus claims that the Apostle speaks conditionally, implying that if a Gentile were to keep the Law without being circumcised, he would be preferred over the Jew. However, this interpretation is erroneous as the Apostle's aim is to demonstrate that the Gentile has no excuse if God condemns him because he possesses the law within himself, as seen in verse 12. Additionally, the interpretation by Erasmus as [*cum fecerint;*] is misleading since this particle can be applied to both the Indicative Mood and the Subjunctive. Therefore, Illyricus' claim that the Apostle's affirmations about humanity by nature would necessarily justify all Pelagianism is untrue. I shall refrain from discussing his many arguments against natural principles and the knowledge of God, as he ultimately seems to concede to them.
4. Determining the precise extent of the law of Nature is a challenging task. Various interpretations exist, with some considering actions condemned by the law of Nature as acceptable, while others believe them to be approved. Tertullian

aptly remarked that they regard their opinions as the law of Nature. There are four methods of bounding this law.

1. Some argue that the law of Nature consists of those general principles shared by both humans and animals, such as self-defense and the desire for survival. However, this view excludes the idea of natural honesty and righteousness, as animals are not capable of sin or being bound by a law. While the reason behind God's command to kill a beast that has killed a man is debated, it is not because the beast can be bound by a law. Rather, God sought to demonstrate the heinousness of the act by punishing the very instrument responsible.
2. Others attempt to define it by the customs of different nations, known as *jus Gentium*. However, this approach is too diverse, as what may be considered a sin in one culture might be deemed virtuous in another.
3. Some suggest that it is bound by reason in every individual, but this is highly uncertain as people's reasoning may contradict one another. Conscience also varies in scope from person to person, similar to measures in different countries that bear the same name, like a bushel, yet differ in quantity.
4. Another perspective is that it is bound by the will of God, first declared to Noah through seven precepts and later to Moses in the Ten Commandments. However, this view extends the law of Nature not only to first principles but also to the conclusions deduced from them.

5. The obligation of the law of Nature stems from God, its author. God is exempt from any law, but every believer, even if justified by Christ, remains bound by the Moral Law of Moses, as well as the law of Nature. Yet, the law of Nature does not directly bind due to man's reason or conscience, but rather because it acts as the Vicegerent of God or a divine command. For instance, Cain felt a tie and guilt from the law of Nature, forbidding him from sinning, even though there were no Moral Laws given at that time. Some Divines rightly criticize the Papists for referring to the time from Adam to Moses as the law of Nature. This is to argue that sacrifices were performed according to the law of Nature. However, these sacrifices were done in faith with the word of God, otherwise, we would still be obligated to offer Lambs or Kids, which the Papists deny.
  
6. The perpetuity of this obligation is undeniable. The law of Nature can never be abrogated. Thus, the Antinomian must answer whether a believer is bound to obey the dictates of their natural conscience. If a believer's conscience dictates that a certain sin must not be committed, are they not obliged to follow this not just because of the matter itself (which they acknowledge), but also because it is a law and command of God instilled within them? It must be recognized that while there are distinctions between the law of Nature and the Ten Commandments, as will be addressed later, they share the characteristic of being immutable rules with perpetual obligation. Therefore, do not mistake the fact that Christ's sacrifice freed believers from the curse of the Law to mean that they are exempt from obeying the natural law or the laws given by Moses. Denying this would imply that a believer is not obligated to

follow the certain dictates of a natural conscience. However, I acknowledge that we are not always bound to act solely based on our conscience, as it can be obscured and unclear. Yet, I am referring to those dictates that are universally known.

As for other aspects, such as the insufficiency of the law of Nature in directing worship or saving people, I will defer addressing them and conclude by applying what has been presented.

Use 1: Instruction against the Antinomian, who seeks to undermine the directive and binding force of the law of Nature, as well as that of Moses. Doesn't even Nature itself teach you? (as the Apostle said). Now, if one disregards the teachings of Moses, why would they care for the teachings of Nature? It is true that sometimes they concede that the Law serves as a guide, but later they make statements that are entirely contradictory to it.

According to Wendelinus, there were some Swencfeldians who believed that a person was never truly mortified until they had completely silenced their conscience regarding sin. If their conscience troubled them, they considered it a sign of imperfection, indicating that they were not sufficiently mortified. I wouldn't do justice to the Antinomians if I were to claim that they espoused such views in their books. However, they should consider whether some of their positions might lead them perilously close to such dangerous beliefs. If the Law has no authority over me with regard to its mandatory aspects, then feeling troubled over its violation would be considered a weakness, a sign that I am not sufficiently in Christ.

Use 2: Reproof for those who live in defiance of this Law. Sins that run contrary to the Law of Nature are particularly terrifying. How many people persist in such sins that the law of Nature condemns?



Doesn't Nature itself condemn lying, cheating in your business dealings, lust, and immorality? How many tradesmen can be spared from the admonitions of Paul? Even Cicero, in his book on "Offices," condemns their lying, selling deceptive goods, and unlawful profits. It's impressive how far they perceived this path. Sins against one's natural conscience are often referred to as "Crying sins," and even if individuals repent, how long does it take for faith to silence their cries? Haven't many non-believers been faithful and just in their dealings? Of course, mere natural honesty doesn't encompass godliness, and hence there are many spiritual sins for which they don't humble themselves. As Paul noted, he didn't recognize the sinful inclinations of his heart. Therefore, people should be encouraged to seek greater light and sensitivity than what a natural conscience can ever attain. Nevertheless, if individuals live as if they don't have this Law within their hearts, they become even more inexcusable. Aren't there Christians who will be condemned by even non-believers on the Day of Judgment?

Use 3: The reason why believing in the Lord Christ is so difficult is that it involves nothing of nature; it is entirely supernatural. The Papists claim that we offer an easy path to heaven, for no matter how great a sinner one might be, believing alone secures everything. However, those who truly seek God's forgiveness find nothing harder. Nature dictates that lying or stealing is wrong, but when it comes to believing in Christ for pardon while burdened with their sins, nature offers no assistance whatsoever. It's a point of debate among Divines whether the law implanted in Adam's heart also included the power to believe in Christ when He was revealed. But that is a matter for another discussion. The orthodox view is that Adam did not possess explicit justifying faith, as it contradicted his condition. The intention here is to highlight how supernatural and

mysterious the act of believing truly is. No wonder, then, that it is a unique work of the Spirit to convict one of this sin.

## **LECTURE VII.**

### The Law Written Upon Men's Hearts

"For when the Gentiles, who have not the Law, do by nature the things of the law, &c."- ROM. 2. 14.

The Doctrine we have derived from these words is that the Gentiles possess a law of Nature ingrained in their hearts. This law comprises both the light and knowledge of speculative principles and the practice and obedience to practical principles. Thus, we can now explore, firstly, the significance of the light of Nature and then, secondly, the power of Nature. From both aspects, we can draw valuable insights and also refute certain dangerous errors that have infected many. Let's begin, therefore, with the light of Nature, or Reason, and demonstrate its necessity and yet its inadequacy. It is not a guiding star that can lead us to Christ.

Firstly, let us consider this light of Nature from a three-fold perspective:

First, as a remnant of the image of God: Though the primary elements of God's image in man consisted of righteousness and true holiness, the secondary aspect also encompassed the powers and faculties of the rational soul in action. This aspect still remains. Admittedly, compared to the light of faith, this light of Nature is like

a glow-worm compared to the Sun; yet it possesses some illumination and radiance. When God created man, He so masterfully infused His own image in him that man could not fall unless that image were also destroyed. It is akin to the story of Phidias, who crafted Alexander's statue with such artistry that none could damage the statue without harming Phidias' own image skillfully embedded in it. Similarly, in Adam's fall, some light still persists, which the Apostle designates as "Truth" (Rom. 1). He attributes this name to it, stating that they suppress the truth in unrighteousness. This moonlight or glimmering of Nature serves a three-fold purpose:

1. For societies and public commonwealths, enabling them to establish sound laws. It is truly remarkable to witness the excellence of the Heathens in this regard. Chrysostom, speaking about how even the most eminent men require counsel from others, cites Jethro's advice to Moses concerning the appointment of assistant officers. He remarks that the great man Moses, so potent in words and works, and a friend of God, who commanded the creatures, sought counsel from Jethro, his father-in-law, an obscure and barbarian man. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Jethro, when offering this counsel, was not a barbarian and had knowledge of the true God.

Firstly, it should be noted that this light of nature can be viewed from three perspectives:

Firstly, as a remnant of the image of God: Although the primary components of God's image in man consisted of righteousness and true holiness, the secondary aspect also encompassed the powers and faculties of the rational soul in action. This aspect still remains. Admittedly, compared to the light of faith, this light of nature is like a

glow-worm compared to the Sun; yet it possesses some illumination and radiance. When God created man, He so masterfully infused His own image in him that man could not fall unless that image were also destroyed. It is akin to the story of Phidias, who crafted Alexander's statue with such artistry that none could damage the statue without harming Phidias' own image skillfully embedded in it. Similarly, in Adam's fall, some light still persists, which the Apostle designates as "Truth" (Rom. 1). He attributes this name to it, stating that they suppress the truth in unrighteousness. This moonlight or glimmering of nature serves a three-fold purpose:

1. For societies and public commonwealths, enabling them to establish sound laws. It is truly remarkable to witness the excellence of the Heathens in this regard. Chrysostom, speaking about how even the most eminent men require counsel from others, cites Jethro's advice to Moses concerning the appointment of assistant officers. He remarks that the great man Moses, so potent in words and works, and a friend of God, who commanded the creatures, sought counsel from Jethro, his father-in-law, an obscure and barbarian man. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Jethro, when offering this counsel, was not a barbarian and had knowledge of the true God.
2. This light of nature serves as instigation and provocation for men to engage in numerous good actions and duties towards God and others. Here, we must observe the phrase "They detain," indicating that reason and natural light are bound like a prisoner by the chains of lusts and sinful affections. Aristotle vividly illustrates this phenomenon through his portrayal of the incontinent person, who possesses right opinions about what is good in general but is excessively drawn to particular pleasures or profits, thereby causing the better part to be overridden.

Hence, Aristotle affirms that the better part of the mind prompts to better things, which aligns with Paul's perspective. Just as they suppress practical truths concerning human interactions, they also imprison them concerning God. For instance, Plato possessed the knowledge of one God, yet he dared not share it with the common people. In his own words, "Opificem universorum neque invenire facile, neque inventum in vulgus promulgare tutum" - It was not easy to find out the Maker of the world, nor yet safe to make known to the people him, when he was found out. Out of fear of the people, he detained this truth. Austin also mentions how Seneca kept the truth in unrighteousness, revealing that while Seneca boldly wrote against the practices of worship in a book against superstitions (now lost), he did not live according to those convictions. Seneca worshipped what he reprov'd, did what he argued against, and adored what he blamed. Similarly, there are many such Popish spirits who know their superstitions and falsehoods but, due to long-standing custom, refuse to abandon them. Domitianus Calderinus, when speaking about attending Mass, remarked, "Eamus ad communem errorem" - Let us go to common error. A disputing Sophister also said, "Sic dico quando sum in scholis, sed, penes nos sit, aliter sentio" - This is what I say when I am in school, but it's different in private. These examples show that while natural truth would incline us to better actions, it is suppressed. When I say that natural light inclines the heart to good, it should be understood by way of object merely, indicating what is to be desired, not that we have any inherent strength to do good. If you ask why truth, apprehended by natural light, should be less effective in transforming and renewing the heart and life compared to truth received by faith (since Scripture mentions remarkable conversions, and the Heathens boast of one story of Palemon,

who was a great drunkard but left off his drunkenness after hearing Socrates' discourse), the difference lies in the instrument or medium to receive this truth. When Nature receives a truth, it does so with a dim eye and a palsy-hand. However, when we receive it by faith, it comes with the power and might of the Holy Spirit. The influence of truth through natural light is like that of the Moon, watery and weak, incapable of ripening anything. In contrast, the influence of truth through faith is like that of the Sun, heating and quickly bringing things to maturity.

3. The final use of this natural light is to render men inexcusable. Since they did not glorify God according to their knowledge, they are justly condemned. This indeed is not the sole purpose of the light of nature, as some claim, but it is a significant one (Rom. 1:20). This is not God's ultimate purpose in instilling these principles in us, but it happens due to our sinfulness. How are they inexcusable if they could not glorify God by nature as they ought? Some respond that the Apostle speaks of excuse in regard to knowledge. However, if you understand it in terms of power, it is true; for our fault has made us unable, and no one naturally fulfils all they are capable of.

Secondly, you may consider it as corrupted and obscured by sin. In this sense, it is not helpful but a desperate enemy to what is good. The more reason one possesses, the greater the opposition to God. This was evident among all the great natural luminists; the more they inquired and searched, the further they drifted from what is true (1 Cor. 2:14). The "natural man" (  $\langle$  in non-Latin alphabet  $\rangle$  ) referred to here is not a person grossly immersed in sin but someone focused on the intellectual aspect, such as Tully and Aristotle. The wiser they were, the more vain they became. Chrysostom aptly

compared their actions to a servant receiving much money from a king to make his household more glorious but squandering it on debauchery. Likewise, the Heathens adorned the devil with their knowledge.

Hence, Egypt, known as the mother of sciences, also had a seat of idolaters. Similarly, astronomers, boasting of their knowledge of heavenly things, introduced monstrous deities and worshiped them, incorporating many feasts and sports into their rituals. They devised a flawed concept of happiness, what Augustine termed "Scyllaeum bonum," a mix of human and brutish elements. The obscuration of this natural light occurs through three means: firstly, through poor education, akin to the initial shaping of a person's limbs. Secondly, through long-standing customs and degeneration, where some nations permitted gross sins through their public laws, such as robbery, incest, or the hurling of old men down steep hills. Thirdly, through God's just judgment, as seen in Romans 1, where God is said to give them up to sin three times.

Thirdly, you may speak of Nature as informed and enlightened by God's Word. In this state, you need not cast this Hagar out of doors. Let Scripture and the Word of God lay the foundation stone, and then Reason may build upon it. It is likened to Stella's comparison of Faith and Reason to a barren tree with a mould at its root. Remove the mould, add compost, then reintroduce the mould, and it will greatly aid the tree. Similarly, set aside Reason initially and receive truths by Faith, and later, improve them through Reason, and it will be of great assistance. Divine truths are founded not on Reason but on Scripture, yet Reason may support them, just as the elm or wall bears up the vine without producing the fruit; that is the vine's task. As long as the light of Nature is not the rule but is guided and aligned with God's Word, it cannot deceive us.

The second grand consideration is that the light of Nature is necessary in religious and moral matters, though it is not sufficient. In the first consideration, we speak of the light of Nature as the residue of the glorious image of God within us (for the latter, as informed by Scripture, is unquestionable). Now, this is absolutely necessary in two ways. Firstly, as a passive qualification of the subject for faith, for there cannot be faith in a stone or a beast, just as there cannot be sin in them. Therefore, Reason or the light of Nature renders man passively capable for grace, even though he lacks active ability for it. When man is compared to a stone, it is in this passive capacity, not the active sense. Secondly, it is necessary as an instrument, for we cannot believe unless we understand. Whether knowledge is an act ingredient into the essence of faith or a prerequisite, it is agreed that an act of the understanding must precede belief. Hence, knowledge is equated with faith in Hebrews 11, "By faith we understand." Thus, it is necessary as an instrument.

3. There is nothing true in Divinity that contradicts the truth of Nature, as it's the remnant of God's image. Although this may be difficult to comprehend in various points of Divinity, such as the doctrine of the Trinity or Christ's Incarnation, which may appear paradoxical to Reason, we must remember that all truth, regardless of its source, comes from God. Hence, there can be no contradiction between them. For instance, our theologians refute the Popish doctrine of Transubstantiation by Scripture and also demonstrate that a body being in two places goes against the principles of Nature. While they call for faith in such matters, it is essential to compare Scripture with Scripture. In the case of the Trinity, although it surpasses Reason, and we cannot fully fathom its mystery any more than an owl can grasp the Sun beams, it does not contradict it.



4. The same object can be known through the light of Nature and the light of Faith. For example, I can recognize the existence of God through the light of Nature, and I can believe it because Scripture attests to it (Hebrews 11). Similarly, by faith, I can understand that the Word was made, and through logical arguments, I can know the same truth; James refers to this as faith. The devils also "believe" in the sense of possessing evident intuitive knowledge of God, but they lack faith as it is a supernatural gift bestowed by God and includes pious affection towards Him. Faith and the light of Nature lead to the knowledge of the same thing in different ways: faith through divine revelation and testimony, and the light of Nature through logical reasoning. Faith, in this sense, is not a discursive act of the understanding but a simple and apprehensive one.
  
5. Although Reason and the light of Nature are necessary, they are not Judges in matters of faith. The Lutheran perspective may undervalue Reason, while the Socinian viewpoint may overemphasize it, treating it not only as an instrument but as a Judge, leading to the rejection of significant religious mysteries. Some have sought to demonstrate that Reason is the highest form of Religion, and there are remarkable individuals who have proven the truth of Christianity through Reason. However, it is evident that Reason is uncertain in comparison to Faith. I do not agree with the assertion of one prominent Rationalist, Chillingworth, who claims that we accept the Scriptures as the Word of God because Reason leads us to believe so. We must distinguish between the instrument and the Judge. Reason may help to elucidate holy truths derived from Scripture, but it does not make a truth divine; it merely presents it in a particular manner.

6. Reason is altogether insufficient to prescribe or establish any form of worship for God. God repeatedly forbids us from following our own imaginations and choosing our own ways. The Apostle refers to it as "Will-worship" when a person's Will is the sole cause of it. Some are prone to admire human traditions more than God's commands, as seen in the Pharisees and Papists. For instance, a Papist, Raymundus, glorifies the Mass with numerous mysteries, comparing it to the vastness of the sea with its drops of water or the heaven with its countless angels. However, our Savior warns that what is highly esteemed among people may be an abomination before God (Luke 18). Such worship driven by human preference is applied to idols and false-worship. While Reason and prudence may play a role in organizing the Institutions of God, they should not create new articles of faith or new aspects of worship. The insufficiency of Nature in this context is depicted through three lines of reasoning.

1. To have all the worship of God tangible and visually appealing. Parisiensis aptly called it madness in those who dared to claim that the Church was better governed by human inventions than by the Scriptures. The people of Israel desired tangible gods that they could see. Men are similarly drawn to splendid, pompous worship, just as children are attracted to flashy toys. This arises from their ignorance of spiritual worship and their inability to grasp the spiritual benefits from God. A wise observation is that a superstitious person is like God's flatterer, rather than His friend, overly officious where not required, and neglectful where it matters. Such carnal and sensory-focused worshippers can be likened to those who delight in birds and dogs because they have no children, and similarly, they

seek imitations since they lack the genuine graces of the Spirit of God.

2. To appoint mediators between us and God. This was a common argument among the Heathens who deemed themselves unworthy to approach God directly and thus appointed intermediaries. Some of the Church Fathers argued against this notion. However, the Papists adopt a similar approach. They suggest that just as petitioners at the court do not approach the Prince directly but seek the aid of Favorites to speak on their behalf, so must we pray to God through Saints. Salmeron even provides reasons why it is more pious and religious to pray to God and Saints together than to God alone. Yet, in doing so, they overlook Christ, our head, who is much closer to us than the Angels. Angels are themselves reconciled to us through Christ. Following the light of Nature in this manner can lead us astray, and superstition is most dangerous when it masquerades under the guise of plausible arguments.
  
3. To perform all actions as compensation and satisfaction to God. This was the foundation for all the sacrifices of the Heathens. Similarly, does not Popery do the same? They view all penal actions as compensatory. Prayer is deemed meritorious, and fasting becomes an act of satisfaction. Hence, they seem to spare no flesh, and the Apostle remarks that it has a show of wisdom (Colossians 3). However, the more actions resemble worship and wisdom but are not truly so, the more repugnant they become. An ape is deformed and unappealing because of its resemblance to a man while not being one.

Use. This instructs us on why the idolatry of the Church of Rome closely resembles Pagan and Ethnic idolatry. It is because they followed the light of Nature and Reason. Observe how their Pagan gods have corresponding saints. Just as the Heathens had Ceres, Bacchus, and Aesculapius, the Church of Rome has St. Martin for vineyards, St. Christopher for sudden death, St. Nicholas for mariners, and so on. This was initially done, they claim, to attract the Heathens, but it had the opposite effect. Therefore, let us not follow the light of Nature beyond its appropriate bounds; let it be a servant, not a master. Yet, let us also be cautious not to go against it where it truly directs. Are there not many actions that are not only unchristian but also unnatural? We must be mindful of this.

## **LECTURE VIII.**

### The Light of Nature

"For the Gentiles, &c." - ROM. 2. 14.

Today, we shall delve into the concept of the law of Nature, specifically focusing on its knowledge or light. There are questions that need addressing regarding the light of Nature, as some tend to underestimate its significance, while others overemphasize it. The early Christians were derided by the Philosophers who dubbed them "Credentes" (believers) as an insult because they did not rely on reasoning but embraced things on faith. Similarly, some do not go to the extent of Abilardus, who treated faith as mere fancy, but they

give it the status of reason. Let us explore the capabilities of this light by addressing some specific questions, though not covering them all.

The first question we address is whether a person can, through the light of Nature and observation of the natural world, come to know the existence of God. This view is denied by Socinians and others. However, Protestant authors assert that one may indeed attain knowledge of the existence of God through the natural world, but they may not fully grasp the nature of this God, whether He is singular or what His attributes are. They say that while no one can naturally be an atheist in opinion, there are many who, in their affections, desire there to be no God. As Cicero argues, we must be cautious in introducing the idea of God's existence into the world, as it may lead to great fear and servitude. Many politicians today may have such thoughts lingering in their hearts. But we'll discuss this further later. The existence of such natural knowledge is evident from certain passages, such as Romans 1:19, which speaks of "that which may be known of God." There are, of course, things that can never be known through nature, like the Trinity and the Incarnation of Christ. However, this knowledge can be acquired by observing the book of creation, which can be likened to a layman's book. Just as a man who reads a book and sees how each letter is thoughtfully arranged to form a coherent sense, would understand that the letters did not come together by mere chance, but rather were composed by a wise author, so it is with the world. It's unlikely that the beautiful harmony of all its parts came about accidentally. Antony, a figure mentioned in Ecclesiastical history, called the world a grand volume, where heaven, water, and earth were the pages and leaves; the stars and living creatures were the letters on those pages. How glorious a letter is the Sun, which Eudoxus claimed was created solely for beholding! The arguments used by Naturalists to prove this

knowledge have not been through demonstrations à priori, as that would be impossible, but rather by examining the effects. Just as a person who cannot directly gaze at the dazzling Sun looks at its reflection in a basin of water, we, too, cannot comprehend God in Himself, but we can perceive Him through the creatures.

The second proof comes from Psalm 19, in conjunction with Romans 10, where the Psalmist portrays the creatures as speaking of God. The Hebrew word "eructat" signifies the plenty and eloquence, as well as the flowing eloquence, of the heavens. The Apostle also quotes this passage. Two doubts must be addressed here: first, whether the claim of Bellarmine and others that the text is corrupt is true, and second, whether the meaning of the Psalmist has been distorted. Regarding the first doubt, in the Hebrew, the word used is "line," but the Apostle, following the Septuagint, renders it as "sound" as if they had read "Colam" instead of "Cavam." The answer to this is that the Septuagint considered the sense of the passage, and since the Psalmist previously spoke of the words or speech of heaven, they interpreted it in that sense. "Line" here refers to the structure and precise composition of all these things, which demonstrates the remarkable wisdom of the Maker.

Regarding the latter, it is commonly understood as if the Apostle spoke of the Apostles preaching the Gospel, similar to how the Psalmist spoke of the heavens. This interpretation has led Lutherans to understand the entire first part of the Psalm allegorically. Others believe that the Apostle alludes to that passage rather than using it as an argument. For example, in the Epistle to the Corinthians, the Apostle applies the speech about Manna to matters of liberality. However, Jansen and Vasquez among the Papists, and Beza and others among the orthodox, think that the Apostle maintains the literal meaning of the Psalmist. In this view, the Apostle's meaning

would be that God made Himself known even to the Gentiles through the creatures; therefore, how much more would He make Himself known to the Jews through the Prophets? Regardless of how we interpret it, this evidence shows that God teaches through the school of Nature, using His creatures, as well as the school of Grace through His Ministers.

The last proof comes from John 1, where it states that Jesus is the true light, which enlightens every person coming into the world. The word "light" here refers to man, not light, as Socinus and Grotius argue. Some may understand this as the light of Grace, but it is more universally and necessarily applicable to the light of Reason, which is present in infants inherently, if not actively. I won't go into the unsound positions held by an Antinomian author in a manuscript Sermon on this passage, as it is not relevant. Thus, there exists an implanted sense and feeling of a deity. Tertullian even said, "O anima naturaliter Christiana!" and Cyprian declared, "Summaest delicti nolle agnoscere, quem ignorare non potes." If you object that the Scripture refers to the Gentiles as "unknown" in relation to a distinct and obedient knowledge of God, and there are Atheists who explicitly profess this disbelief, remember that their actions are partly out of derision for the many gods, like Socrates and another who mockingly used a statue of Hercules for a fire. They did not truly believe in the absence of a deity, as shown by Diagoras, who, after delivering a famous speech against a deity, was praised by the people who thought he nearly persuaded them, but they also believed that if anyone was God, it was him for the sake of his eloquence. This wretch, like Herod, was content to be thought a god. The reference to an altar to an unknown god in Acts 17:23 conveys the uncertainty among the Heathens about which gods were appropriate to different circumstances. For instance, when a plague struck Athens, Epimenides brought sheep, some black and others white, to

Areopagus, letting them go wherever they pleased, and wherever they lay down, they were instructed to sacrifice to the respective god, leading to the altars dedicated to an unknown god.

The second question is whether the mystery of the Trinity and the Incarnation of Christ can be discovered as truth through the light of Nature. The answer is undoubtedly negative because in 2 Corinthians 2, the Apostle speaks of the mysteries of the Gospel, stating that they cannot be conceived by the human heart. This applies not only to the blessed joy and peace of those truths but also to their truthfulness; therefore, all these things are solely a result of supernatural revelation. There is a story of an intense debate on these mysteries due to the Arians, during which a voice from heaven declared, "The fall of the wise men." Although Augustine and others have attempted to find representations of the Trinity in the creatures, and Nierembergius, a Jesuit, argues in his book "De origin sacrae Scripturae" that God intended to reveal the mysteries of grace through the works of Creation, as He did with the Ark, Tabernacle, and Temple, this view is false. These representations were only made after the doctrine was already known and believed through Scripture. It must be acknowledged that these similes hardly serve as accurate analogies. The Schoolmen speak of three things in every creature: "Esse, posse, & Operari." This notion is especially applied to the soul when it understands or knows and when it loves, representing the Son of God as "Verbum mentis" and the Holy Ghost as "Amor." However, this interpretation is mistaken, as Christ is called "Logos," by John in John 1, following the Chaldee, not in the sense of scholasticism but because He reveals and makes known the will of God to us. Therefore, the union of human nature and the divine in one person has no true analogy, even though learned individuals provide various examples. Even if a similar instance were found, it would not be miraculous or singular. Consequently, we can conclude



that the Scriptures are the sole ladder by which we can understand these things, and our intellect is so limited that we must ascend into the tree of life (the Scriptures) to behold Jesus.

The third question regarding this natural light is whether it is sufficient for salvation. Some hold that anyone, regardless of their nationality, who worships God according to the light of Nature and serves Him can be saved. They distinguish three types of piety: Judaic, Christian, and Ethnic. According to them, just as Moses was to the Jews and Christ to the Christians, Philosophy, or the knowledge of God through nature, serves the same purpose for Heathens. However, this opinion diminishes the importance of the Lord Christ, as salvation is only possible through faith in His Name, as the Scripture states. If the Apostle argued that Christ died in vain if works were added to faith, then it is even more significant if He is entirely excluded. While it may seem difficult for human reason to accept that the majority of the world, including pagan infants, would be excluded from heaven, we must align our judgment with the teachings of Scripture, which declares Christ as the sole path to salvation. If it could be proven, as Zwinglius believed, that Christ revealed Himself to some Heathens, then the matter would be different. However, this assertion stems from a misunderstanding. For instance, Cornelius had implicit knowledge and faith in Christ, and he had received the doctrine of the Messiah, though he was unaware of Christ as an individual Person. Regarding worshipping Christ in every nation, it refers not to the unchanging state of men, but to the expansion of God's acceptance to all who come to Him, regardless of their nationality.

There are two types of unbelief: negative and positive. For negative unbelief, no Heathen is condemned. They are not judged for failing to believe in Christ but for their original and actual sins. Positive

unbelief, on the other hand, applies only to those living under the means of the Gospel.

The fourth question concerns the Papists' belief that the sacrifices offered by the Patriarchs to God were based solely on the light of Nature. Lessius, for instance, claims that the Law of Nature both obligates and persuades everyone to offer sacrifices to God. Therefore, they argue that it is necessary to have a sacrifice under the New Testament. Based on this notion, Lessius argues that it is lawful for the Indians to offer sacrifices to God according to their customs. He ponders how they would have a priest, and he concludes that just as a commonwealth can appoint a governor to rule over them, the people can appoint a priest to officiate for them in all religious matters. This is surprising coming from a Papist, as they usually emphasize the importance of apostolic succession in the priesthood. In this case, they grant the people the power to appoint a priest. However, regardless of whether worshipping God is acknowledged through the light of Nature, only instituted worship can please Him. Even Socrates, a Heathen, acknowledged that God should be worshipped only in the way He has revealed His will. Therefore, it is necessary to believe that God revealed to Adam His will regarding external sacrifices and their offerings. While it is true that almost all Heathens offered sacrifices to their gods, they initially learned this practice through hearsay from the people of God. Furthermore, Satan often imitates God's institutions. Although the change or transformation of the offering, which is always essential in a sacrifice, demonstrates submission and deep humility, it is questionable whether Nature can prescribe the specific method or manner in which we demonstrate our submission.

The fifth question is whether the concept of original sin can be discovered through natural reasoning or if it solely relies on faith

that we are inherently polluted. Mornay, the learned scholar, makes efforts to demonstrate through natural reason our pollution, highlighting that many ancient Platonists concur that the soul is now enslaved to the senses and emotions, hindering it from soaring towards higher realms. Tully, too, proclaims, "Cum primùm nascimur, in omni continuo pravitate versamur," echoing the Scriptural notion that "The imagination of the thoughts of a man's heart is only evil, and that continually." However, Aristotle, whom some unjustly compare to Christ in *Naturals*, perceives man as a blank slate, devoid of sin or virtue, although inclined towards improvement. Tully also contends that innate seeds of virtue exist in us, but we swiftly suppress them. Similarly, Seneca declares, "Erras, si tecum nasci vitia putas, supervenerunt, ingesta sunt," as I mentioned before. This shows how even the wisest philosophers express dissent. Julian, the Pelagian, compiles quotes from prominent philosophers to refute any such corruption of nature. Nevertheless, Augustine dismisses their opinions, considering them irrelevant due to their ignorance. In nature, we may discern a profound sense of frailty and infirmity, but the true understanding of its nature and origin lies in the illumination of Scripture. As the Apostle states in Romans 7, he would not have recognized lust as sin had the Law not declared, "Thou shalt not covet."

The sixth question addresses the meaning of the profound rule of Nature, also reiterated by our Saviour: "That which you would not have other men do to you, do not you to them" (Matthew 7:12). It is said that Alexander Severus greatly admired this saying, which he likely learned from Jews or Christians. Our Saviour further emphasizes that this principle encompasses the Law and the Prophets, making it essential for Christians to adhere to it. While individuals may pray and observe religious duties, they might fail to live by this principle. Therefore, the Apostle adds this to prayer,

encouraging us to embody our prayers in our actions, aligning with the wise Platonist rule, "Live as you pray." Such a principle could quell pride, envy, criticism, and animosity among people. However, when we consider treating others as we wish to be treated, it must be done with a right and well-regulated will, free from corruption or depravity.

The seventh question pertains to whether the practice of the Apostles, where they made all their goods common, was in accordance with the precept of nature, thus binding everyone to such a practice. There have been and still are those who hold this belief. However, it becomes evident that the communion of all things is not based on the law of nature, as theft is a sin against the moral law, which would not be the case if the division of goods were according to the law of nature. While it is true that all things were common in their natural state, it was nature's decree to divide them, as Aristotle argues against Plato with several reasons. What would have occurred in a state of innocence, had Adam stood his ground, whether a common right to all things or divided ownership (referring to goods), is difficult to determine. Regarding the practice of the Church of Jerusalem, it was an occasional and necessary circumstance, hence not to be a foundation for a perpetual command. Other churches did not follow the same practice, as evidenced by the alms gathered, nor was it imposed on everyone to sell what they possessed, as seen in Paul's speech to Ananias.

Use 1. If God is so displeased with those who misuse natural light, how much more so with those who also misuse Gospel light? These individuals do not conceal their light under a bushel but under a dung-hill. Many act like Solifugae, similar to bats and owls. In one chapter, God is mentioned three times as delivering them up because they did not glorify God in accordance with the light of nature; how

much more would they be judged for not doing so with the light of the Gospel? Seneca said, "Gravis est lux conscientiae," but "gravior est lux Evangelii": The light of ministry and the Word must surely be more troubling to one's sinful ways.

Use 2. Let us examine whether, even among Christians, we may find individuals who are no better than Heathens. Such people may include: 1. Ignorant individuals with little knowledge of God. 2. Zealous adherers to former idolatrous practices inherited from their forefathers. A significant difference exists between an idolater and a true believer: The believer is like a creature that will not bear any burden on their back unless supported by Scripture or reason. On the other hand, the Heathen is like a Camel, which has a back designed to carry burdens; therefore, they bear any idolatry without requiring rational arguments. 3. Those excessively preoccupied with worldly matters, seeking after them, much like the Heathens do (referring to Matthew 6). Do you not find yourself sharing some of the characteristics of a Heathen in this regard? 4. Individuals who vehemently oppose Christ and his reformation. As Psalm 2 questions, "Why do the Heathens rage?"

## **LECTURE IX.**

### The Ability and Power of Nature

"For the Gentiles do by nature the things of the law." - ROM. 2.  
14.

In our previous discussion, we explored matters concerning the light and guidance of Nature. Now, we turn our attention to the capability and power of Nature, as there are two extreme errors in this regard. On one side, we find the Pelagians, Papists, Arminians, and others, who elevate this power excessively. They praise the abilities of human nature while lurking as enemies to the concept of grace. It is essential to be cautious of their exaggerated claims. On the other hand, we have the Antinomians, who seem to deny any preparatory work on the heart of a person. They believe that Christ directly communicates Himself to gross sinners as they are, without requiring any prior changes. Although they acknowledge that we are passive in receiving Christ initially, their interpretation is flawed. They liken God to a physician who forcefully opens a sick person's throat and administers medicine, regardless of their willingness. However, in truth, God's conversion is both powerful and gentle.

Now, to fully clarify our inability to do any good thing, we shall present the following propositions:

1. There is a natural power of free will that remains in us. Although the term "free will" is not found in Scripture and has been misused in the past, Calvin even wished to eliminate its use entirely. However, if we focus on its essence rather than its capabilities, we must acknowledge its existence. The closest scriptural expression to "free will" can be found in 1 Corinthians 7:37, referring to having power over one's own will. Generally, the Bible uses the words "volition" and "choice," which align with what we intend. Every individual possesses a natural power to choose between things through the aid of reason. However, we must not extend this to matters concerning grace. Describing what free will truly is remains challenging. Some, like Perkins and certain scholastics, consider it a mixed power of the

understanding and will, while others view it as a third distinct power. Yet, it is plausible to think of it merely as the will in electing or refusing certain things. In this sense, we refer to it as the will when it is necessarily inclined towards what is good and rejects sin as sin. We call it "free will" when it is engaged in matters that are not intrinsically connected to it. For instance, in the realm of understanding, when contemplating first principles, it is called "Intellectus," and when deducing conclusions from them, it is called "Ratio." Our adversaries wrongfully accuse us of reducing men to beasts, but we believe that the understanding comes before the will, and this is more than a mere spontaneous inclination found in natural things. Thus, we do not command fire to burn or persuade a horse to go because these things lack understanding or will as present in humans.

2. The free will that remains in us is insufficient to perform natural actions without God's general help. The power we acknowledged to be in humans naturally must be confined to its proper sphere—natural, civil actions, or some externally religious duties. Even then, we must acknowledge the general help or assistance of God, without which we could not perform any natural action. As stated in Acts, "In him we live and move and have our being," meaning God not only provides the principles of being and motion but that we move in Him, i.e., by Him. Therefore, Jerome rightly reproved the Pelagians who believed that a person could move their finger, write, and speak without God's general aid. Some have argued that all God does for us in our natural actions is to give us the principles and power of action, after which we require no further aid except the preservation of our being. This perspective was held by Durand in the past and recently by someone named Dodo, who wrote a book advocating this view. However, the aforementioned scripture convincingly

refutes it. We see that God prevented the fire from burning the three men in the furnace, even though He upheld the power of burning in the fire at the same time. This could only happen if God denied His actual aid to the working of the fire. To claim that the reason was God's action upon their bodies would be attributing a miracle where the Scripture does not indicate one. If you ask why this may not be considered a special help of God, similar to what enables us to believe or repent, I must explain the significant difference:

1. Because this general aid is necessary not only for good actions but also for wicked actions, in regard to their positive nature.
2. God provides this aid through His Providence as the Creator, while the other aid comes through Predestination as a Father in Christ.
3. The other aid may be considered due, similar to how our theologians speak of original righteousness, with the assumption that man is created to perform such actions. However, it is not properly a debt, but rather something we are deprived of due to our sin. In contrast, the special help of grace cannot be viewed as such.
4. Man is completely unable to produce any good thing. So far, we have discussed man's power in a limited sense, but when it comes to good things, he lacks any power, will, or free will. As Augustine said before Luther, our will is enslaved to sin. Although we retain our understanding and will, the inclination towards good is entirely lost. This can be proven through various arguments:



5. Numerous scriptural passages describe our condition as full of sin and corruption, entirely wicked. Can one gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles? The analogy of a ship in a tempest without a pilot suits us well; we are continually dashed against rocks, although this refers to the negative aspect of corruption.
6. Scripture speaks of grace, conversion, and regeneration as the work of God. While we will clarify the passages that discuss repentance and turning to God in due course, these texts affirm that all the good we do is the work of the Lord. It is not that God believes or repents in us, but He efficiently works these actions in us, which we do formally and vitally.
7. Scripture emphasizes giving glory and praise solely to God, not ourselves. What do we have that we have not received? We ought not to boast in anything because no good thing truly belongs to us. Therefore, the good things we produce are akin to Sarah's dead womb giving birth to a child—a child of the Promise, not of nature. All our graces are of this nature. If we could, in whole or part, effect our own conversion, we would be thanking God and our wills. Yet, how absurd would it be to say, "Lord, I thank you for turning my heart when I was willing to turn it?"
8. Man cannot prepare or dispose himself for the grace of justification or sanctification. Just as he cannot immediately produce any good thing, a natural man cannot prepare or ready himself for the great works of grace. Such an assertion lacks truth. Regardless of man's natural efforts,

God meets him graciously, and the reasons for this are evident:

1. Because no natural thing is inherently oriented or inclined towards a supernatural thing; they belong to different realms and have distinct natures. That's why we never read about any non-believers who, through the enhancement of natural light, received supernatural revelations.
2. Those passages that speak of our total corruption, describing us as intensively inclined towards evil and extensively showing that all human thoughts are evil, demonstrate that we cannot prepare ourselves to encounter God.
3. If we could indeed prepare or dispose ourselves to receive grace, then the primary cause of glory would still lie within a person. For example, why did Peter repent, and not Judas? Some might argue that Peter prepared himself to repent, unlike Judas. However, the crucial question remains, why did Peter choose to set himself on the path of repentance and not Judas? Ultimately, it can be traced back either to the grace of God or the will of man.
4. All the similes used in Scripture illustrate this notion. We are not said to be blind or lame, but dead in sin. Did Lazarus prepare himself to rise from the dead? Likewise, the term "Regeneration" implies new life, and can a man dispose himself to have life? While these comparisons must not be taken too far, the Scripture uses such expressions to depict our complete inability, and we can confidently draw from these Scriptural sources.

Fifthly, we may genuinely accept that some prior works may take place in the heart before those graces are bestowed upon us. This viewpoint counters the Antinomian belief that one can apprehend Christ while still being a grievously polluted soul, without any transformation of the crooked timber or rough stone, merely being taken out of the quarry and immediately incorporated into the building. In the book of Acts, those who were pricked in the heart were still asked to repent and inquire about salvation. Similar to a sick person feeling their burden before seeking relief, a gross sinner is not instantly removed from their vile ways into Christ. However, there are some important limitations to consider in this regard:

1. All these experiences—the sight of sin, trembling for fear, and confused desires—are the workings of God's grace, moving within us, and they do not stem from our own natural strength.
2. However, these experiences are not absolutely necessary for everyone. We can see examples like Matthew and Lydia, who followed Christ without undergoing such intense emotional turmoil. Moreover, God declares that He was found by some who did not actively seek Him. The case of Paul serves as an exception, for he was called by the Lord despite being in a deeply troubled state. Yet, in general, God often leads us through this path.
3. Nevertheless, these experiences are not necessarily antecedents that inevitably lead to conversion. We find instances in Scripture of individuals like Cain and Judas, who were troubled by their sins, but did not undergo genuine transformation. They remained in a state of spiritual wilderness, never entering into the promised land. These internal struggles and convictions may not always result in true conversion, and we must not consider

this state as a middle ground between the regenerate and unregenerate.

Lastly, we must recognize that these inner workings cannot be classified as true preparations or dispositions in themselves, but only intentionally from God's perspective. For instance, when Jesus looked at the young man and loved him, declaring that he was not far from the Kingdom of heaven, it indicated that the life he lived was close to the Kingdom of heaven. However, this was not a preparation in itself, but rather a recognition of the individual's current standing in relation to God's grace. It highlights the great importance of God's intention in these matters.

6. The fact that one's will is determined towards a particular sin does not negate one's natural liberty. This clarifies the truth, as it might appear paradoxical that a person can possess free will and yet be determined towards committing only one sin. It is evident that a determination towards certain acts, whether good or evil, does not negate our liberty. Even in heaven, where angels and saints are confirmed in happiness and will only what is good, they still exercise their freedom. Likewise, demons only will what is wicked. The determination to one sin arises not from the liberty of the will but from its mutability. This distinction between a natural necessity that determines us and a necessity of immutability towards what is good is crucial.
7. This determination to sin does not remove the willingness or delight we have in committing sin. It's important to understand that, even with this determination, a person sins willingly and chooses to do so because of their corrupted heart. The necessity of determination and the willingness to sin are not mutually exclusive. This is well expressed by Bernard: "The necessity

takes not away the willingness of it, nor the willingness of it the necessity." Despite this corrupt necessity within us, no wicked or ungodly person can use it as an excuse. Their choices and actions are driven by their own corrupt desires, and they cannot shift the blame to fate or necessity.

Hence, the responsibility for sin lies solely with the individual, who is fully accountable for their own actions. No one can place the blame on God's decrees or external circumstances. In our corrupted state due to Adam's sin, we may try to cast our sin upon God, but this is a flawed notion that cannot stand. The reality is that our own choices and desires lead us to sin, and we must take full responsibility for our actions.

8. It is essential to consider that a person may acknowledge grace and attribute much to it, but not give it full efficacy. This is a crucial point, as Pelagius, Arminius, and Papists all acknowledge grace. Pelagius, in particular, cleverly disguised his opinion by using the term "grace" to deflect criticism. He deceived the Eastern Churches by claiming that grace was necessary for every good act they performed, but then maintained that grace alone was insufficient. Similarly, Papists and Arminians acknowledge grace but limit its effectiveness. They view grace as a universal help that requires the cooperation of human will to be made effective. In their view, grace is not inherently potent but only eventually effective when the will yields. This perspective undermines the true nature of grace, as it fails to recognize its inherent power. Comparing grace to the Sun and man generating a human, Bellarmine exemplifies this belief, where grace is the general cause, and free will is the particular cause. However, this view diminishes the significance of grace, and our actions can hardly be attributed to its influence. Grace should

not be viewed as a partial cause that merely stirs up our natural abilities to do good; otherwise, it would assume that we are not dead in sin.

9. Despite our corrupt nature, humans can still perform the outward acts commanded by God or refrain from prohibited behaviors. For instance, stories recount how Alexander abstained from the virgins he took captive, and many other examples of Heathens displaying virtuous acts, though some believe they received special help from God. The Apostle's words in the Text are clear, "They do by nature the things of the law." Some may not agree with the distinction that people may do the substance of a good work but not the manner of it, as they believe the substance encompasses what constitutes a good work. However, they generally agree that the external act can be carried out. For instance, Ahab externally humbled himself, and some suggest that Uriah, whom Isaiah referred to as "The faithful witness," may have been the same person who brought the Altar of Damascus. Thus, although Uriah was an idolater and ungodly man, he was considered faithful in his word. This realization makes many individuals inexcusable, as they may refrain from gross impiety if they have not fully immersed themselves in sinful habits or judgment.

Yet 10. All their actions are sinful before God. This serves as an antidote to the previous point. Regardless of what they may do, even if it seems glorious in substance, their actions are still considered glorious sins in the eyes of God.

1. They could not come from faith or someone reconciled with God, as a person must be accepted first before their actions can

be pleasing to God. This aligns with Hebrews 11, which states that without faith, it is impossible to please God.

2. It could not come from a regenerated nature, and therefore, since the tree is not good, the fruit was also bad. In Divinity, unlike in Moral Philosophy, we first have the *esse* or being, and then the *operari* or action. It is worth discussing whether the grace of God works the act of believing and other graces in us first, and then through them, we receive the habits. Some, such as Papists, Arminians, and others, hold this view, but it is not in line with Scripture, as we will explore later.
3. They could not be considered good if we consider the end; they did nothing for the glory of God. Theophylact observed that not a single good Heathen could be cited, as their actions were driven by vain glory and carnal desires. Their intentions, even if geared towards helping others or the commonwealth, fell short, as the ultimate and chief end should be for the glory of God.

Lastly, there is no promise of God made to anything a person does without faith. While Ahab and Nebuchadnezzar received temporal rewards, we will address the sense in which this happened when responding to objections.

Usage: We must lament the woeful condition of humanity by nature. Every bird in the air and beast in the field is in a better natural state than humans. We are worse off than being blind or lame; our souls are all blind, lame, deaf, and dead in sin. It is a tragic state to spend every day and year damning our souls. Whether we eat or drink, buy or sell, we find ourselves sinning. Consider that sin is the greatest evil, which God loathes and detests. Let all your actions terrify and humble you, driving you to cry out for grace, just as the poor, blind, and lame did, seeking healing. If you do not feel this need or are

unwilling to seek help, then you are even more miserable. Refusing to be bound, like the insane, and failing to be awakened, like the lethargic.

## **LECTURE X.**

### The Heathens Advocate for the Power of Man

"For if the Gentiles do by nature the things of the law," &c. -  
ROM. 2. 14.

We have already clearly and positively presented the truth regarding the power and ability of a person by nature to do what is good. Now, it is important to address the objections that seem to challenge this truth, and these objections do indeed appear quite reasonable. Throughout history, men have demonstrated great ingenuity when defending the capabilities of human nature. However, as Augustine rightly referred to it, their arguments can be likened to fragile glass – they may shimmer, but they are easily shattered.

The Heathens, in particular, are adamant in advocating for the inherent power of man. They argue that only the lazy and indolent need divine assistance. Seneca the Tragedian, for instance, declares that "only sluggards need God's help" (*Ignavis opus est auxilio divino*), and the other Seneca claims, "It is the gift of the gods that we live, but it is our own doing that we live well" (*Deorum quidem munus esse quod vivimus, nostrum vero quod bene sancteque vivimus*). In a rather arrogant tone, Cicero states, "Because everyone



acquires virtue for himself, no wise man ever thanked God for it" (Quia sibi quisque virtutem acquirit, neminem e sapientibus unquam de ea gratias Deo egisse). They take pride in their own virtue, believing it to be solely their achievement and not a gift from God.

However, the attitude of these worldly wise men stands in stark contrast to the humble and righteous men portrayed in the Scriptures. Those who have been enabled by God to do good do not claim the glory for themselves. Instead, they acknowledge, like Joab about Rabbah, that the credit is not theirs alone but belongs to God. Just as Joab sent for David to come and take the glory, they declare, "Not I, but the grace of God" (1 Corinthians 15). It is important to understand that the grace of God is present with them, not just working alongside them.

Therefore, they argue, if we are unable to do anything towards our salvation, it would mean turning us into mere objects devoid of reason, comparable to lifeless stones or mindless beasts. However, we contend that though the Scripture uses these similes to illustrate our inability to do good, we must not equate men and stones in every aspect. It is true that converting men can be likened to making children of Abraham out of stones, but this does not imply a complete likeness between men and stones. The dissimilarity lies in this: while stones and beasts lack the capacity for grace, man possesses a passive capacity for it. We believe there is a power for grace in human nature, but the Papists claim it is an active power, albeit remote, while we assert it is only a passive one. In man, there is a power to be converted to God, which is absent in stones or beasts. This crucial difference sets us apart.

Furthermore, we should consider the various degrees among creatures: 1. An inclination towards a specific act, as seen in fire's

inclination to burn. 2. A spontaneous inclination towards certain acts accompanied by sensation and perception, as seen in beasts. 3. A willing inclination accompanied by reason or judgment, and this is found in man. Because man possesses this characteristic, God, in converting, employs arguments – which we never use with horses or brute beasts – alongside the potent work of grace. Though man has lost the rectitude of his will and mind, he has not lost the faculties themselves. Therefore, even though he may be theologically dead, he remains ethically alive and can be influenced by arguments. Hence the saying, "To will is of nature, to will well is of grace, to will ill is of corrupt nature." We may acknowledge that without this free-will (in the sense that it does not extend to good things), there could be no conversion or obedience. Grace does not destroy nature but perfects it.

2. Some argue that our stance leads to contradictions in our preaching and teaching. They claim that Calvinists are Calvinists in their doctrines but become Arminians in their applications. They find it incongruous to tell people that they can do nothing on their own and then exhort them to seek the grace of Christ. However, this supposed contradiction can also be attributed to Christ and Paul. For example, Christ instructed the Jews to labor for the imperishable food, while at the same time stating that none can come to Him unless the Father draws them (John 6). Similarly, Paul acknowledges that God will have mercy on whom He chooses, yet he admonishes the believers to take heed and not become high-minded (Romans 9 & 11). These apparent contradictions can be reconciled, and we will address them shortly.

3. This line of thinking undermines the significance of God's precepts and commands. They argue that it makes God seem

like He is mocking us, as if we were asked to command a blind man to see or a dwarf to touch the heavens with his finger for money. To this, several responses can be made. First, if these things were utterly and absolutely impossible, their argument would hold true. However, something may be considered impossible in different ways:

1. Indeed, there are things that are simply and universally impossible, even for the power of God. Such impossibilities arise from the nature of the thing itself, not from any deficiency in God. We may even say, "Even the most powerful God cannot do this."
2. Some things may be impossible in their kind, like Adam reaching the heavens or a man working beyond natural causes.
3. There are things that are possible for a subject but become impossible accidentally due to a person's fault. When a person is commanded to do something but becomes unable to do so due to their own fault, it is not illusion or cruelty. For instance, if a creditor demands repayment from a bankrupt person who has carelessly spent all their money, it is not unjust. Therefore, the examples of touching the skies or telling blind men to see are unwarranted, as they go beyond the bounds of duty and ability. God's commands imply that man has some power, which the opponents deny, dividing it between grace and man's power.

Lastly, the commands of God serve various purposes, such as conviction and humility, though they are not a measure of our power. Some cite Deuteronomy 30:11 to argue for the ease of fulfilling God's commandments, but this interpretation can be found in Romans 10:11, where Paul interprets it in an evangelical context. The Law,

though not in itself a covenant of grace, was given for evangelical purposes, contrary to the mistaken view of the Antinomian.

4. How can God reproach or reprove men for their transgressions if they cannot do otherwise? This may seem strange if men have no other choice. However, it is not ridiculous because whatever man sins in is truly his fault and sin. He sins voluntarily and with delight, and the more he delights in it, the freer he is in sinning. Augustine emphasizes this point to prevent anyone from blaming their faults on God. No one is forced to sin; they do it willingly and with pleasure. The necessity of sinning in every man does not negate the delight and willingness he has in it at the same time.

This should not be considered absurd; Aristotle also acknowledged that while men may choose whether to be wicked at first, once habituated, they cannot but be evil. This does not excuse but aggravates their actions. As the Prophet said, "Can an Ethiopian change his skin or a leopard its spots? Neither can you do good, who are accustomed to do evil." If habits make it impossible to change, how much more so for original sin, which is the corruption of nature? Although Augustine was hesitant to call it "natural evil" due to the Manichees, he sometimes did so. Therefore, Scripture uses sharp reproofs and upbraidings because no one is a sinner or a damner of themselves without their own fault. These serve as a goad and sharp thorn in the sinner's side, making them restless in their sin.

5. So, what is the purpose of exhortations and admonitions? While the other answers may suffice, we can address this specially by acknowledging that even though God works all our good in us and for us, He does not treat us as lifeless objects. Instead, God

deals with us according to our natures, using arguments and reasons. You may ask, "What's the point? Isn't it like shining the Sun or holding a candle to a blind man?" However, these exhortations and the preaching or reading of God's word are the very instruments through which God works. Therefore, preaching should not be viewed merely as a form of exhortation but as a sanctified medium or instrument through which God accomplishes what He exhorts us to do. Although God may send prophets to exhort those who won't listen, for the godly, these exhortations are operative means, similar to when God said, "Let there be light," or when Christ said, "Lazarus, come forth from the grave." This should deter you from despising even the simplest preaching, as its power lies not in its elegance or eloquence but in its appointment by God to achieve its purpose. Just like water from various conduits, a sermon's effectiveness lies in the water itself, not in the conduit's appearance. Likewise, the seed that is thrown into the ground will fructify whether it comes from a plain hand or one adorned with gold rings and jewels. The minister's gifts may differ, but the power comes from God. The main issue is to open the closed heart.

6. The Scripture portrays conversion and repentance as both the effects of God's grace and our acts. No one denies that we are the subjects, who, enabled by grace, act accordingly. Grace cannot exist without an intelligent subject. Just as dew falls before the manna, preparing the ground to receive it, reason and liberty qualify the subject to be passively receptive of grace. But when empowered by grace, the subject becomes active as well. Some have struggled with certain passages, questioning why those promises of God converting us prove conversion to be His act, while other passages instruct us to turn to the Lord, implying that it is our act. The answer is straightforward: No one denies

that believing and turning to God are our acts. To believe, one must engage the mind and will. Augustine makes a strong point: If we consider man as a partial cause with God merely because it is said, "Not of him that willeth and runneth, but of him that showeth mercy," then we might as well say, "Not in him that showeth mercy, but in him that willeth and runneth."

The question is, Can we do this of ourselves, with grace? Or does grace only enable us to do it? Bernard's distinction is clear: The heart of man is the subject in which grace resides, not from which it originates. Therefore, when grace empowers the mind and will to turn to God, it is not like a seal impressing a stamp on wax or wine being poured into a vessel, where the subject recipient remains motionless. Nor is it like Balaam's ass speaking or like an enthusiastical or involuntary motion. Instead, the Spirit of God inclines the will and affections to their proper object.

The Antinomian's analogy of God converting a man to a physician pouring a potion down a sick man's throat against his will is flawed. It is true that the will, in its illicit and immediate acts, cannot be forced by any power whatsoever. It is impossible for a man to believe unwillingly because believing requires an act of the will. While the will in conversion may be resisted by the corrupt heart and will of a man, when it is overcome by the grace of God, it willingly turns to Him. So, though this argument may seem strange, we can confidently say, "Hoc argumentum non venit à Dea Suada."

7. So, some might argue that if we have no power, then why are we exhorted to come to Christ and read the Word? This belief has led some to sit still and do nothing, expecting grace to come without any effort on their part. There's a tale related by Brenz (if my memory serves me right) about an Anabaptist woman

who invited many guests to supper but made no preparations, expecting God to provide. This question, however, is founded on a misconception that a person's efforts are entirely excluded. The truth is, there are two types of holy things:

There are holy things that are internally and essentially so, and we cannot do these without God. As John 15 states, "Without me, you can do nothing." Augustine emphasizes that it's not just about doing difficult things but doing nothing at all.

There are holy actions that are externally so, such as coming to hear the Word preached or reading and meditating on the Word. Experience shows that people have a natural ability to do these things; many without any grace have produced learned commentaries and expositions on Scripture. However, to do any of these acts holily is God's work. The natural man does not perceive the things of God, and God opened Lydia's heart. Yet, God brings about conversion through the use of these means. He typically doesn't change a heart that doesn't engage with the gates of wisdom. Therefore, God doesn't work on the heart like an artisan using a tool but commands us to read and hear. These are the means by which the Spirit of God will change the heart. When a person reads or hears natural or philosophical truths, they can comprehend them through the strength left in nature. However, they cannot produce thoughts or affections of the heart suitable for the spiritual mysteries presented to them. But the advocates of Nature see it differently; they liken it to a person almost spent by a disease receiving medicine that repairs and increases strength, not infuses it. Or they compare it to a bird tied by a string, with the power to fly but hindered outwardly, so they suppose a latent power in Nature is awakened and stirred up by grace. On the contrary, we believe that the power must be first infused by God.

8. If people necessarily sin, then they may argue they were not bound to pray or come to hear the Word of God preached since they would still sin, and no one is obligated to sin. However, the answer to this is clear. Although a wicked person may sin in praying and hearing, they are still bound to these actions. The reason is that while they may sin in these acts, it is merely accidental, but the duty itself is essential. Therefore, they should not omit the duty that is inherently necessary because of the accidental sin. Instead, their resolution should be to lay down their sin, which corrupts and taints all their actions. Additionally, there is less judgment for those who pray than for those who do not, even though their specific circumstances may aggravate their situation.

9. The Scripture says, "To him that hath, shall be given," and when God distributed talents, it was to everyone as he was able (Matthew 25). Some may argue that this shows that our preparations and dispositions play a role. However, this is not an argumentative theology; it goes to make up the parable. Theophylact dangerously refers it to our preparations and dispositions, but this overlooks the true meaning. The talents represent not only sanctifying gifts but also ministering gifts. The Apostle explicitly states that the Spirit of God gives these diverse gifts as he pleases. Thus, it does not support the view that God distributes gifts according to a person's natural capacity or disposition. Moreover, we should not rely on our natural endowments alone, as they may lead us astray.

Use 1. We must extol the work of grace for its initial, progressive, and consummative work of conversion. By recognizing the weakness of human nature and the power of grace, we understand the necessity of relying on grace for salvation. It would be unwise to dispute



against grace when facing the end of life and entrusting our soul to it. Therefore, we should not merely give something to grace but surrender everything to it – the grace that justifies, sanctifies, and saves.

Use 2. We must not abuse the doctrine of grace as an excuse for idleness or negligence. We should understand that promises and precepts, grace and duties, can be reconciled. Therefore, we should not be negligent in our responsibilities nor get entangled in overly curious disputes. Let us not focus solely on the doctrine of grace to the point of neglecting the actual experience of God's grace in our hearts. Similarly, let us not be so preoccupied with our natural corruption that we fail to make an effort to overcome it. Instead, we should diligently seek to extricate ourselves from the pit of sin in which we are submerged. Austin's analogy illustrates this point well: Just as someone who has fallen into a great pit should seek help to get out rather than endlessly pondering how they fell in, we too should focus on getting out of the sin in which we find ourselves.

## **LECTURE XI.**

### The Law God Gave to Adam

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou mayest not eat: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." - GENESIS 2:17

Now, let us turn our attention to the law God gave to Adam, which can be viewed in two ways: firstly, as a Law, and secondly, as a Covenant. We will first consider it in its role as a Law. This law God gave to Adam consisted of both natural and positive elements, which together formed that covenant. We shall address each aspect separately, beginning with God's positive law as mentioned in the text. This type of law is also known as a symbolical precept, as obedience to it was an outward testimony of our homage and service to God. The object of this command is not inherently good or bad, but rather neutral, and only considered evil because it was prohibited. Thus, in the text, you have the object of this negative precept described in two ways: firstly, by the specific tree – the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; and secondly, by the consequence – death would inevitably follow upon eating from it. To make the commandment more understandable and acceptable, God had previously given Adam a broad commission to eat from any other tree in the garden. When God created this world like a great house, He appointed man as its tenant, and through this test of obedience, man would acknowledge God as his Landlord. It should be noted that while Adam ate in the state of innocence, he did experience hunger, but without the pain and trouble we associate with it. We shall address the difficulties surrounding this concept in our discussion of the doctrine, which states that God, apart from the natural law ingrained in Adam's heart, also gave a positive law to test his obedience.

The uncertainties in explaining this point are as follows: 1. What is meant by the tree of knowledge of good and evil? Here, we must be cautious not to delve too deeply into curiosity, lest, like Adam's sin in eating from it, our curiosity may lead us astray. When I inquire about its meaning, I do not seek to determine the type of fruit or tree it was,

whether an apple or a fig. Rather, I want to understand the reason behind its name. Some Rabbins, who have as many fanciful interpretations of the Old Testament as the Friars have of the New, suggest that Adam and Eve were created without the use of reason, and that this tree was meant to accelerate their intellectual capacity. Likewise, the Socinians approach a similar opinion, claiming that Adam and Eve were created quite simple and weak in understanding. According to them, it is inconceivable that if Adam's soul were adorned with all knowledge and graces (like the firmament adorned with stars), he would come to eat the forbidden fruit or sin against God.

However, both these notions are false. Adam indeed had perfect knowledge, as evidenced by his ability to give fitting and apt names to the creatures and to Eve. Ephesians 3 also refers to the image of God as having a renewed mind. Despite possessing this knowledge and holiness, Adam fell because he was not perfectly confirmed, but rather mutable. The question among theologians of whether his sin began in the Will or in the Understanding is irrelevant to this matter. The widely accepted view, supported by Augustine and others, is that the tree was called so not based on its immediate effects, but because it experientially made one aware of good and evil. In Scripture, it is common to name something based on its subsequent effects. While this explanation is generally accepted and difficult to refute, it is worth noting that it was not solely due to the event, but also by divine decree and appointment of God, as a boundary and limit to Adam. The tree served as a reminder that he should not desire to know more or differently than what God had ordained.

Why God would give a positive law alongside the natural law in Adam's heart? Several reasons are commonly given:

1. To emphasize God's dominion and power over man. Obeying the natural law might be seen as a necessary condition rather than an act of the Will. For instance, even among the Heathens, many abstain from certain sins not because they are forbidden by God, but because they go against their natural reason. Similarly, among Christians, there is a significant difference between performing good actions because God commands them and doing so solely because of a natural conscience. These two principles lead to distinct motives for the same actions. Thus, God wanted to test Adam's obedience through a positive law, highlighting His authority over him. In this, Adam was not to consider the greatness or goodness of the matter, but rather the will of the commander.
2. Another reason flowing from the previous one is to thoroughly test Adam's obedience and demonstrate that it was true obedience. Augustine, while confessing his wickedness, noted that even though he had no need or temptation to sin, he took pleasure in being a sinner for no other reason than sin itself. Conversely, true obedience is accentuated when the sole cause for obeying is obedience itself, and not due to any other motive. Thus, Adam's abstinence from eating the forbidden fruit did not stem from any inherent sin in the action but was purely out of obedience to God's command. Augustine explained this concept well by illustrating that if someone forbids another to touch a herb because it is poisonous, then whether forbidden or not, the herb is harmful. But if something is forbidden and it is not harmful in any way, then it is forbidden solely to manifest the good of obedience and the evil of disobedience.
3. Regarding why God made this law despite foreseeing Adam's fall and misuse of it, many profanely seek reasons for all of God's

actions. This is akin to the Owl trying to gaze into the Sun or the Pygmy attempting to measure the Pyramids. However, it can be answered without resorting to Paul's question, "Who are you, O man?" God did not give Adam this law to make him fall, for Adam had the power to stand. Thus, the essential purpose of this commandment was to test Adam's obedience, and God was not unjust or unrighteous in doing so. Bellarmine acknowledges that God can do things that, if done by man, would be sinful. For instance, while man is obligated to prevent someone from committing sin if he knows they will, God is not bound by the same obligation. God, having supreme providence, allows causes to work according to their nature. Adam was created with the freedom to either sin or not sin. Moreover, God can bring good out of evil, and if He were to prevent all evil, many good things would be missing from the world, considering that people can abuse anything. During the Synod of Dort, English Divines held the view that God had a serious will of saving all men, but not an efficacious will of saving all. They differed from both the Arminians and some Protestant Authors. Their instance of God's serious will is demonstrated in His desire for Adam to stand and providing him with the ability to do so. However, it was not an efficacious will that de facto made him stand, as God could have confirmed Adam's will in good if He chose to do so. The truth of their assertion requires further investigation at an appropriate time. Regardless, in the present context, if a serious will means a will of approval, complacency, and some sense of efficiency, there is no doubt that God seriously willed Adam's standing when He gave that commandment. Even though Adam fell, it was not because God withheld any help that would have made him stand. Denying Adam the help that could have ensured his standing was not necessary on God's part.

But secondly, Austin's perspective is noteworthy. God would not have allowed sin to exist if He could not have brought about greater good than the evil of sin. It is not that God needed sin to display His glory, for He required no glory from His creation. Nevertheless, He permitted sin to manifest the richness of His grace and goodness to those whom He loves. If Arminians remain unsatisfied with these Scripture considerations, we can confidently respond as Augustine did to the Heretics, "Let them prate while we believe."

5. The question arises whether this law would have bound all of Adam's descendants. Undoubtedly, we must conclude that this positive command was universal and addressed to Adam collectively. Although the command was given to Adam as an individual, it had a collective aspect as he was the head or representative of humanity. Hence, in Romans 5, all are said to sin in him. Whether it is "in him" or "inasmuch as all have sinned," it leads to the same result since all could be said to have sinned because they were in him. The commination, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die," would apply to all Adam's posterity as death came upon them. The same reasons that establish the appropriateness of a positive law alongside the natural law for Adam also apply to his descendants. Some Divines who accept the idea of a positive law seem hesitant to affirm explicitly that Adam's posterity would have been tested with the exact commandment to eat the forbidden fruit. However, there seems to be no justifiable reason to doubt this. Further clarity on this matter will emerge when we demonstrate that this is not merely a law but a covenant, leading to the transmission of Adam's sin to his descendants. If God had not dealt with Adam in a covenantal manner, there would be no reason why Adam's sin should be imputed to us any more than the sins of our immediate parents.

6. Concerning how the threatening was fulfilled upon him when he ate the forbidden fruit, we need not resort to the answer of some who suggest that the threat was spoken merely as a warning and not an actual declaration. This interpretation would imply that Adam did not die because of his repentance, but Adam did not immediately repent, and even when he did, he still died. Others read the text as follows: "In the day thou eatest thereof," and then interpret the words "Thou shalt die" as absolute, suggesting that God meant there would be no exception from death once Adam ate the fruit. However, the most plausible answer is that "to die" means to be in the state of death. Symmachus's translation is commended, which reads, "Thou shalt be mortal," implying a change in Adam's state as soon as he ate the forbidden fruit. Death, in this context, encompasses not only the actual dissolution of soul and body but also all the diseases and pains that precede it. This perspective elevates Christians above philosophers, as it considers sin as the root cause of death and suffering. Moreover, we must understand the threatening as encompassing both spiritual and eternal death. While it remains a question whether Adam would have been translated into heaven or simply confirmed in Paradise if he had continued, the certainty is that his death would have been more than temporal, as explained in Romans 5. Although the Old Testament may not explicitly and frequently mention concepts like heaven, hell, and the resurrection, there are sufficient passages to refute the erroneous notion that the promises and threats therein were solely temporal.

7. The question of whether Adam was mortal before eating the forbidden fruit is a well-known one, but I shall not delve into it extensively. Orthodox belief holds that immortality was a privilege of innocence, and Adam's body only became mortal

when his soul became sinful. This view is strongly opposed by both Papists and Socinians. They agree that man would not have died had it not been for sin, but they differ in their interpretation of Adam's state before sin – the Socinians claim he was mortal, while the Papists argue he was immortal due to a supernatural gift from God. Scholars observe that immortality can be understood in several ways: first, as an absolute necessity, which only applies to God; second, when there is no internal material cause of dissolution, as with Angels and human souls; third, as a special gift and appointment of God, as seen in glorified bodies and some views on the heavens and the world; fourth, as something without an inherent propensity to death, yet still capable of dying under certain conditions, which applies to Adam. Consequently, in some sense, Adam can be considered mortal, while in another, he was immortal. However, since the term "mortal" commonly refers to being susceptible to death, we affirm that Adam was immortal before his sin, and this is supported by the threatening sentence given to him. Even though Adam would have partaken in bodily activities, his righteousness would have preserved the suitable condition of his body, especially with God's promise tied to his obedience.

8. We must address the cursed notion that interprets the threatening "Thou shalt die" as indicating the mortality of the whole man, including the soul. Of all the errors that have arisen, none is more abhorrent in nature and more monstrously false than this. If anyone's soul could be considered non-immaterial, merely a quality of temperament, then it would apply to the proponent of this theory, who appears to lack understanding and apprehension of the divine authority of the Scriptures on this matter. It is a horrendous falsehood to call the doctrine of the immortal soul a hellish invention. Moreover, it contradicts



itself by referring to it as hellish while denying the existence of hell. One would expect that such an audacious opinion must have clear scriptural evidence, but this text serves as the main foundation for the argument. The argument goes as follows:

"What was immortal through innocence was made mortal by transgression, But whole Adam was immortal in innocence, Therefore, all and every part, even the whole man, was subject to death by sin."

However, any skilled logician can see that the conclusion contains far more than what was presented in the premises. The premise refers to "whole Adam," yet the conclusion extends it to "all and every part." This is a significant non sequitur. For instance, if I were to say, "The whole Christ died" (referring to Christ's person), and then conclude, "Therefore, every part of Christ died, including His divine nature," it would be an absurd inference. Yet, this fallacy underpins all of their arguments. When man is referred to as mortal, it means the whole man dies, but not necessarily that every part of him ceases to exist.

Moreover, what was once immortal is now mortalized according to their natures; the soul experiences a spiritual and eternal death. But observe how the devil leads this individual further astray, placing him on the pinnacle of error and urging him to plunge headlong. He explicitly states that if souls were destroyed along with bodies, there would be no heaven or hell yet, openly admitting that none exist until the resurrection. This perplexes him greatly, but he mistakenly takes "heaven" to mean the place where the Sun is and dogmatically concludes (as if he were an expert in such matters) that Christ's glorified body resides in the Sun. He confidently claims (page 33), "Without doubt, he must be in the Sun," and asserts (page 34), "The Sun may well be called the right hand of God, by which, through

Christ in him, we live, move, and have our being." His words are filled with darkness, suggesting that the Sun serves as a veil to shield us from the radiant glory of Christ's body; otherwise, it would be so splendid that we could not behold it and survive. How dare anyone interpret "The heavens must contain him" to mean "He must be in the Sun until the restitution of all things"? The mere mention of such ideas is refutation enough. I brought this up only as a passing example to demonstrate how much we need to pray to God for protection from our own presumptuous thoughts.

Use 1: This instructs us that a law can be given even to a righteous man, and threats can be directed towards someone who is not under the actual curse and damning power of the Law.

Use 2: Let us appreciate the goodness of God, who tested Adam with just one positive command. This should serve as a caution against imposing a multitude of Church precepts. As Augustine and Gerson complained in their time, such abundance can lead to confusion.

Use 3: Reflect on how the devil still ensnares us with the temptation of knowledge. There were Heretics called Gnostics and Ophites. The desire to eat from the tree of knowledge has led to much ignorance and error. While some people may be indifferent or find it troublesome to seek knowledge of necessary matters for salvation, desiring to know beyond what is written can be perilous.

Use 4: Beware of our own weaknesses. If Adam, who was once perfect, failed in a trial of such a minor matter, we must be cautious where we place gunpowder, knowing that fire resides in our hearts. Compare Adam's experience with that of Abraham, and observe the vast difference. Augustine thanked God that the heart and temptation did not coincide.

## LECTURE XII.

### Let us Make Man

And God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." - GEN. 1. 26.

You've heard of a twofold law given to Adam: one through outward prescription for testing and encouraging his obedience, and the other through implantation, which was the Moral Law. Today, we shall focus on the latter.

After creating all other things, God then created man, the immediate and proximate purpose of His work. It was God's goodness to ensure that no living creature was made before providing its food and nourishment. Thus, man, the last but the most special external and visible creation, was brought into being with a significant difference from the rest. His creation is introduced by way of deliberation and advice, "Let us make man," signifying two things: 1. The excellence of the man to be made, and 2. The implicit Mystery of the Trinity in the words. Although some suggest that God was speaking to the angels or the inanimate creatures, or that the plural form is used for dignity's sake, citing examples in Hebrew, we are inclined to agree with those who see it as implying the Trinity. While this text alone may not prove the Trinity, as the plural form does not necessarily mean three rather than four or two, when combined with other passages that explicitly express this doctrine, it lends weight to the understanding of the Trinity. In these words, we find the grand and

significant result, "Man"; the wise and powerful agent, "God"; and the excellent and remarkable pattern or exemplar, "After our image." God made man after His image and implanted it in him in a way that this image could only be destroyed if man chose to destroy himself. This image was not man's natural substance or essence, but rather a concreated perfection within him. Now, let us delve into the details of this truth.

The question arises: Do image and likeness signify the same thing? The Papists, following the Fathers, distinguish between the two, stating that image relates to man's natural qualities, including his rational soul with its natural properties, while likeness pertains to the supernatural gifts bestowed upon him. On the other hand, the Orthodox, especially the Calvinists, acknowledge that man's soul and its faculties may be considered the image of God secondarily and remotely (which sets them apart from the Lutherans who may not agree with this), but they argue that the primary and chief aspect of this image lies in righteousness and holiness. However, they contend that this distinction cannot be derived from the words for the following reasons: First, in verse 27, where the decree is executed, only likeness is mentioned, and in Genesis 9, only image is named. Also, in Genesis 5, Adam is said to beget Seth after his image and likeness, making such a distinction impossible. Even Pererius and Lapide acknowledge this clarity. The fact that image and likeness are listed as two separate nouns doesn't matter, as the Hebrew language commonly uses this form when the latter is intended as an adjective, such as in Jeremiah 29:11, where "to give you an end and expectation" means "to give you an expected end." So, here, image and likeness signify "an image most like."

Next, we should consider what constitutes an image. Scholars speak of a four-fold image or likeness: 1. A likeness through an absolute

agreement in the same nature, as the Son of God being the express image of the Father. 2. A likeness through participation in some universal nature, as a man and a beast are alike in their common nature of animality. 3. A likeness based on proportion only, as the pilot of a ship and the governor in the commonwealth are alike. 4. A likeness through an agreement of order, where one thing serves as a pattern for another to be made after it. Properly speaking, an image involves two elements: likeness and being made after another as a pattern. Thus, while man was made like the angels, he was not made after their image, contrary to the belief of the Socinians. To be made in the image of God implies a likeness to God within us, shaped after the divine pattern. Even though man is a body and God is a spirit, this image and likeness may exist in other aspects. Osiander's opinion was that we are said to be made in the image of God because we are made after the likeness of the human nature that the second Person of the Trinity was to assume. While this has been preached as plausible, it may be refuted when we address the question of whether Christ, as a Mediator, was known and considered in the state of innocence.

Now, let us consider what constitutes that image or likeness. Apart from dwelling on man's rational soul, which we call the remote image of God, where we are prohibited from killing or cursing a man because he is made in the image of God, let us observe the various perfections and qualifications in Adam's soul. Firstly, his understanding possessed exact knowledge of divine and natural matters. This understanding of divine things enabled him to love God and be called "very good." Some speak of a three-fold light: immediate knowledge, which Adam had; the light of faith, which the regenerate possess; and the light of glory, enjoyed by the saints in heaven. How profound was Adam's intellectual state? Even Aristotle asserted that a little conjectural knowledge about heavenly things

surpasses much certain knowledge about inferior matters. Thus, Adam's estate must have been glorious, endowed with perfect intellectual abilities: wisdom in knowing God, knowledge in understanding the creatures, and prudence in handling all matters. Moreover, his knowledge is evident in his naming of all the creatures and, particularly, of Eve. While he may not have known all things or the future, he had all the necessary knowledge for fulfilling his purpose, as he was created for such a happy end. Although he may have grown in experimental knowledge, he was undoubtedly aware of those things essential for his life. Knowing that he would fall or that Christ would become a Mediator was likely not revealed to him. Nevertheless, he possessed knowledge of those things that adorned and beautified his soul. Thus, Adam was created with excellence in intellectual abilities: wisdom in knowing God, knowledge in understanding the creatures, and prudence in all actions.

2. His Will, which is the universal appetite of the whole man, can be likened to the supreme orb that carries the inferior with its power. It was wonderfully good, adorned with several habits of goodness, like stars in the firmament. In it, there was a propensity to all that is good, as mentioned in Ephesians 4:24, where it is called righteousness and true holiness. Ecclesiastes 7:29 states that God made man upright, so Adam's Will was not bad, indifferent, or neutral, but genuinely good. The thoughts of his heart were only good and continued in goodness. Surely, if David, Job, and others, who have only partially regained this image, delight in God's will, how much more must Adam have, who found no evil present when he sought to do good? He couldn't say, as we must, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief" or "Lord, I love, help my lack of love." He couldn't complain like the man who said, "I wish to be good, but my thoughts do not allow it."

However, despite his good Will, he still needed God's help to do any good thing. Some learned Divines, like Pareus, deny that the holiness Adam had or the help he received from God can be properly called grace; they prefer calling it righteousness and the gift of God, but not grace. Pareus reproves Bellarmine for naming his book "On the grace of the first man." His reason being that Scripture refers to grace only in the context of Christ and when the subject is in a contrary condition, as we are, not applicable to Adam. Yet, whether this is worth disputing is questionable. What's certain is that Adam could not persevere in obedience without help from God. Moreover, he was not confirmed in a state of goodness like the Angels or every godly person is now through Christ, making it conceivable that he could fall, despite being made holy.

3. As for his Affections, these tempests and waves were under the command of his holiness. They were like wings to a bird or wheels to a chariot, and he was not devoured by them, as Actaeon was. His Affections moved or stirred only when holiness commanded them. He was made right, so no Affection stirred or moved irregularly, similar to Christ when he "troubled himself." Affections did move in Christ and Adam, but like clean water in a clear glass, not like water stirred in a muddy place that causes defilement, as it is with us. In the state of innocence, his Affections were under control; he could set them like an artificer sets a clock to strike when and what he wills.

Moreover, these Affections were subjected in terms of their continuance. When our Affections and Passions are raised, it's difficult to compose them again. We get angry and sin, grieve and sin, while in the state of innocence, Affections were nurtured and obedient, much like commanding dogs to fetch, carry, and lay down objects at will.

Lastly, the degrees of their Affections were different. We are so corrupted that we can't love without over-loving, grieve without over-grieving, and our heat becomes feverish immediately. But it was far different then. With this righteousness, we can perceive the glorious image God placed upon us, and apply it to ourselves, who are not only banished from Paradise but also stripped of all these inward abilities. Who can lament our state enough?

Thus, the Moral Law was written in Adam's heart, and what the command was for direction, he was for conversation. Even though the Socinians deny this law being written in his heart, acknowledging that he had a conscience with the dictates of what was good and righteous is almost as significant. It doesn't matter that we don't read of any such outward law given to him, nor is it necessary to debate whether the breach of the Moral Law would have affected Adam and his posterity as much as the transgression of the positive law. The majority would agree that the Moral Law implanted in his heart and obedience to it were essential for Adam's happiness and holiness. Nevertheless, some might argue that disobedience to the positive precept, which was solely for trial, could be seen as more serious than disobedience to the Moral Law.

Furthermore, the image of God in Adam consisted of being free from fear of misery and danger, much like God himself. This happiness was a result of his holiness. If it is true that the repaired image of God in us is meant to make us serve Him without fear all the days of our life, it must have been even more evident in Adam's state. One may wonder how Adam could be without fear, knowing he might fall and become miserable. The answer lies in the state of his creation; having no guilt within him, he couldn't experience fear. Some argue that even in heaven, the godly will remember their sins without shame and sorrow, as glorified nature is not capable of such feelings.



That explains why Eve wasn't friendly with the Serpent, though it was used by the devil to speak.

Lastly, the image of God also manifested in Adam's dominion and sovereignty over other creatures. Some argue that this was the only aspect in which this image consisted, but it was more of a consequence of the image than a part of it. When God declared His will to make man after His image, He also stated that man should rule over the rest of creation. Although some argue that the woman was not made in God's image because she was created in subordination to man, it can be refuted by the fact that she was given dominion over the other creatures. Matters concerning Adam's body, like its impassibility and immortality, are not relevant to our subject.

Now, let's examine the properties of this righteousness and holiness fixed in Adam's heart.

1. It's referred to as "original" to distinguish it from actual holiness, similar to how we call it "original sin" to differentiate it from actual sin. It is called "original" partly because it was the first righteousness and also because Adam had it as soon as he was created. Just as it's said of original sin, "*Quàm primum originatur homo, originatur itidem peccatum,*" we can say the same about Adam's righteousness, "*In ortu virtus,*" as the Father said, "*In ortu vitium est.*" Furthermore, it is called "original" in relation to his posterity, as it should have been passed on to them.
2. Another property of this righteousness is that it is universal, encompassing the rectitude of all the parts and faculties of Adam's soul. His soul was flawless, just like Absalom is said to be comely from head to foot with no blemish at all. This

perfection was not limited to one part but extended to all, contrasting with our corruption that makes us wholly wounded.

3. It was harmonious; there was not only rectitude in every part but also a sweet correspondency between them. There was no rebellion or conflict between the inferior appetite and the understanding. Some argue that this righteousness is not an aggregation of several habits but an inward rectitude of all faculties, much like the exact temperament of the body is not from any superadded habit but from the natural constitution of the parts.
4. This righteousness and holiness were a perfection due to Adam, given the purpose for which God created him. If God required obedience of Adam to keep the law and attain happiness, it was not due by way of merit but as a fitting response to God's goodness, furnishing him with abilities to fulfill it. Just as the soul of Adam was due to him given the purpose for which God made him, this righteousness was also due to him. While it is now of grace to us and considered differently since we lost it, it was intended to be a propagated righteousness. As it will be proven later, God entered into a covenant with Adam as a public person, making everything he did federally ours—his sin and misery, as well as his righteousness and happiness. Just as sin entered the world through one man, so righteousness and life would have entered through one man.

Questions to be considered:

1. Was this righteousness natural to Adam or not? Some have considered it a mere contention of words, suggesting that with proper explanation, the difference would not be significant. However, the Papists build other significant errors on the belief

that this righteousness was supernatural to Adam, similar to us. This would lead to problematic implications: 1. All motions in the Appetite against Reason would be attributed to the constitution of our nature, making them no different from hunger and thirst. 2. Free-will would still be present in us, and we would have lost only what was merely added to us. They liken Adam's righteousness to an Antidote against poison or a bridle to control a horse, implying that man's nature would rebel without it. By this doctrine, fallen man would be weaker than Adam but not corrupted. Thus, it is necessary to conclude that this righteousness was natural to Adam, not flowing from the principles of nature but a perfection inherent and fitting for him. It was not above him, as it is for us. Just like a blind man who gained the ability to see through supernatural means, it became a natural perfection for him.

2. Did Adam possess justifying faith back then? Or are faith and repentance now parts of that image? This is a dispute among Arminians who argue that Adam did not have the ability to believe in Christ, making it unjust for God to require faith from us since we never had that power in Adam. The answer is straightforward: Adam had the power to believe, as long as it didn't imply an imperfection in the subject. Believing in Christ required greater power, and his inability stemmed from the lack of an object to direct his faith towards, as there were no miserable objects in that state to demonstrate his love.

Regarding whether repentance is part of the image of God, it cannot be, as it denotes an imperfection in the subject, and we do not resemble God in those aspects. However, if it flows from a regenerated nature, it can be seen as reductively part of the image of God.

Question to be considered:

3. Will this image of God be fully restored to us in this life? Although we are said to be partakers of the divine nature and to be renewed in the image of God, we will not experience full restoration in this life. God has declared His will in this matter, and thus, remnants of sin and imperfection are left within us. This serves a purpose—to humble ourselves, mourn our loss, and yearn for the heavenly realm, where our souls will be made holy, and our bodies immortal. Nevertheless, despite this reality, we should still pray for the complete eradication of sin in this life, grounded in God's will and our duty to be holy, rather than merely His decree for specific outcomes. Our corruption is deeply rooted now, and it is not through death alone but through cinerification, reducing the body to ashes, that we are cleansed. We can observe this in the case of Lazarus and others who, though restored to life, were still subject to sin and death and did not possess the image of God in perfect form.

Use 1: To humble ourselves in the face of this significant loss. Let us contemplate what we once were and what we have become—once holy, now unholy. Who can help but feel deep sorrow? We lament when banished from our homes, when we lose our possessions and comforts. Should we not be affected by this greater loss? Our preoccupation with worldly matters reveals a carnal rather than a spiritual nature. We mourn the loss of a father, a friend, and we grieve intensely. Yet, even though we have lost God and His image—our ultimate source of happiness—we fail to take it to heart. Consider how glorious it was to enjoy uninterrupted communion with God—no pride, no earthly desires, no laziness to contend with. Look at Paul, who exclaimed, "O wretched man that I am!" Basil compared Paul to a man thrown off his horse, dragged after it, crying out for

help. Similarly, Paul is thrown down by his corruptions, dragged after them.

Use 2: To magnify the grace of God in Christ, which possesses greater power to save us than Adam's sin to destroy us. This is a source of comfort for the godly. In Romans 5, the Apostle purposefully draws a comparison between the two, highlighting the preeminence of Christ to save over Adam's capacity to condemn. Christ's obedience is a greater good than Adam's sin is an evil. It brings more honour to God than Adam's sin could ever bring dishonour. We should not let sin loom large in our thoughts, conscience, or fears, while diminishing the power of grace. Just as there were times when our hearts felt the bitterness of sin, let us now experience the power of Christ. As our souls have acknowledged the consequences of one man's sin, let us proclaim the life brought by one man—Jesus Christ.

## **LECTURE XIII.**

A Covenant that God entered into with Adam and his descendants

"You shall surely die on the day you eat of it." - GENESIS 2:17

I have previously discussed this text as containing a law given by God to Adam as his sovereign Lord. Now, I shall revisit this text and consider it as part of a Covenant that God entered into with Adam and his descendants. These two aspects, Law and Covenant, stem from different grounds: The Law originates from God as the supreme

authority, demanding subjection; whereas the Covenant arises from God's love and goodness, wherein He sweetens and softens His power, engaging to reward the obedience that would otherwise be due even without recompense from God. The words, having been explained earlier and the text freed of difficulties, lead me to observe this doctrine: God not only enjoined obedience on Adam as a Lawgiver but also, as a loving God, entered into a covenant with him. To comprehend this fully, consider the following points:

1. The Covenant with Adam in his state of innocence is less explicitly stated than the Covenant of grace after the fall. Afterward, we find the explicit naming of the Covenant and the solemn entry into it by both parties. However, the Covenant with Adam can only be deduced and inferred. This text comes closest to describing a Covenant, for it contains both the threatening of punishment and, by consequence, the promise of good for obedience. We should not be too strict in demanding explicit passages that name this Covenant, for what is necessarily and immediately deduced from Scripture is as truly Scriptural as that which is expressly stated within it. Several grounds support the notion that God dealt with Adam's commandments through a Covenant:
2. The evil threatened and the good promised. A mere command constitutes a law, but when accompanied by promises and threats, it becomes a Covenant. If it holds true that the tree of life is a sacrament, then this was not just a bare Covenant, but also a seal to confirm it. Indeed, since God was not obligated to grant Adam eternal life for his obedience, as Adam owed obedience to God simply as a creature, it was an act of pure goodness on God's part to engage in a promise. Some may question whether, upon his obedience, Adam would have been

translated to heaven or merely confirmed in his marvelously happy natural life. In either case, it would have been solely by God's promise, not any natural necessity. Life would have been extended as far as death; now, the death threatened was not just bodily but eternal death. So, why wouldn't the promised life be eternal life in heaven?

3. Another argument supporting God's Covenant with Adam is that his descendants become guilty of his sin and subject to the same punishment imposed on Adam himself. We come to be in Adam in this way either through natural propagation, making Adam no different from our parents, and our parents' sins would become ours just like Adam's. However, this goes against the Apostle's teaching in Romans 5, where he attributes it solely to one man. Moreover, who can claim that the righteousness, holiness, and happiness that we would have shared in Adam's standing could come by natural necessity? It can only be by God's mere covenant and agreement. If Adam's repentance could have been imputed to us, so could his sin.

Lastly, in Romans 5, the Apostle likens all men in Adam to how the godly are in Christ. However, believers receive from Christ not out of natural necessity, merely because they possess the human nature that Christ took upon Himself (for then all should be saved), but through a federal agreement.

Next, let us consider what a Covenant implies, both in the word itself and in the concept it represents. It would be inadequate if I did not touch upon its general nature, although more may be discussed later. Among men, there are things that impose a public obligation but differ in their essence: a Law, a Covenant, and a Testament. A Law and a Testament are absolute and do not require the consent of the

party subject to them. A Law demands obedience without expecting consent from those who are subject to it. Similarly, a Testament or Will bequeaths goods and legacies to a person without requiring their consent. Occasionally, such goods are bequeathed conditionally, giving the recipient the option to accept or decline being an executor. However, this is incidental to the nature of a Testament.

In contrast, a Covenant is distinct from the previous two as it demands consent and agreement between two parties. In theology, if it is between man when whole and upright, it is called a "Covenant of friendship." If it is between fallen man and God, it is referred to as a "Covenant of reconciliation." In covenants that are not mere agreements (*nuda pacta*) but are accompanied by solemnities, stipulations were added, conducted through Question and Answer: "Do you promise?" "I promise." Hence, it is called "stipulation" from the Latin word, derived from the Greek word "stipulatio" or "stipuleo" because these words validated the Covenant. Isidorus's etymology of stipulation, which suggests it originates from "*à frangendis stipulis*" (breaking a stick between the parties to make a promise and each keeping a piece as a tally to maintain their agreement), is rejected by the learned Salmasius.

However, a point of confusion for scholars has been the translation of the Hebrew word signifying "Covenant" by the Septuagint as "Testament," a usage also seen in the New Testament. The question arises: if it is a Covenant, how can it be a Testament, which implies no consent? To address this, we must consider both the word's meaning and the concept it represents.

The reason a Covenant is referred to as a Testament, and not as "diathēkē" (as translated by Aquila), is because the word has a



broader sense, derived from the Greek root "tithēmi," meaning to order and dispose. When we speak of the New or Old Testament, it is not to be taken in the strict sense of a person's Will and Testament, although the Apostle does use it in that sense at times, especially in reference to Christ's death. Instead, it is more encompassing, signifying God's gracious arrangement of mercies and spiritual benefits to us through the death of Christ. The Covenant of grace involves Christ's death, as it is a Covenant of reconciliation. Thus, it contains elements of both a Covenant and a Testament, leading some to refer to it as a Testament-Covenant due to its mixed nature.

As for the etymology of the Hebrew word "Berith," various conjectures exist. Some suggest it comes from a word meaning "to eat," referring to the sacrifices and feasts that accompanied Covenants. Others propose it originates from a word meaning "to cut," alluding to the division of the slaughtered beast during the making of the Covenant. Yet others connect it to the words for "create" and "order" as a way to convey the idea of arranging and disposing of things in a manner of likeness. Some also relate it to words for "pure" and "choose," either due to the agreement aspect of Covenants or the expectation of dealing without fraud. However, these speculations are not critical to our current discussion.

From what has been said, it becomes evident that the Covenant God made with Adam is truly a Covenant, but not in any way a Testament, as no death was required to procure the good for Adam. However, a word of caution must be added here: while we use the term "Covenant" to refer to God's dealings with man, it is more accurately described as an agreement between man and man, where mutual consent is necessary to validate the Covenant. Yet, in the Covenant of Nature or Grace, man's consent is not a prerequisite for its validity. In this context, when we speak of a Covenant, it denotes

God's decree, will, or promise regarding things, whether it concerns irrational creatures or rational beings. For instance, we see God's Covenant not to drown the world and His Covenant with day and night. Moreover, God's Covenant with Abraham bound him to circumcise his child. Similarly, in Adam's case, God's Covenant did not depend on his consent or acceptance, as he was bound to obey God's commands, regardless of his agreement.

The fact that Adam's consent was not essential for the Covenant's validity is evident from the fact that he was obligated to accept what God required of him. The question of whether Adam even knew (and without knowledge, there can be no consent) that God was indenting with him as a public person, and thus representing all his posterity, is a matter of dispute. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to believe that Adam was aware that this precept applied to him and his descendants. This would make his sin even more grievous, as it undid not only himself but also all his progeny. Moreover, this knowledge would inspire gratitude towards God for bestowing such great mercies on him and his lineage, and would also make Adam more vigilant against falling into sin.

Next, we should consider how God can be said to covenant or promise with man, as it may appear as an imperfection, suggesting that God is restricted from doing as He pleases. However, this can be easily resolved. If God can bestow good things upon man, He can also promise to give them. Thus, both giving and promising are acts of liberality and dominion, and do not contradict the majesty of God. By promising, God does not lose His dominion, just as giving does not diminish His authority. While a promise does create an obligation in man, it does not impose any obligation on God towards us. God's promise is an expression of His disposition to give, and it is

our confidence in His faithfulness that leads us to expect the fulfilment of that promise.

In this regard, the saying "Reddit debita nulli debens, donat debita nihil pendens" holds true. God, by entering into a covenant and promising, does not become a debtor to us because He is not subject to the authority of anything or anyone else; rather, everything is subject to Him. Therefore, in the Covenant God makes with man, there is a sense of mutual fidelity, but not a reciprocal and equal right of covenanting, as God's supremacy over man remains, and He determines the terms and conditions of the Covenant. Consequently, it is referred to as God's Covenant and not man's.

Lastly, let us consider why God chooses to deal with man in a covenant way rather than through an absolute supreme way. There could be several reasons for this:

Firstly, by making a Covenant, God endeavours to endear Himself to us. Although He could demand complete obedience from us and eventually annihilate us or withhold heaven and eternal happiness, God shows His goodness and love by generously rewarding that which is due to Him. God did not create man because He needed him, but rather to have beings to whom He could extend His love. As David stated, "Thou needest not my goodness, or, that extendeth not to thee."

Secondly, a Covenant serves to incite and encourage Adam to obey more fervently. Although there was no sin or slackness in Adam, the promise of a reward would have strengthened his resolve to remain obedient to God. This illustrates that performing a duty because of a promised reward is not inherently wrong or unlawful, as was done with Adam. It is essential, however, that the motive for obedience

remains rooted in love and devotion to God alone, and not as a means to acquire something apart from Him.

Thirdly, a Covenant ensures that Adam's obedience is willing and free. While an absolute law might seem to compel obedience, a Covenant makes it appear more voluntary, as if Adam would have obeyed even without any obligation to do so.

Consider that the nature of this Covenant was one of works, not faith. Adam was not told, "Believe and have eternal life," but rather, "Obey, with perfect and complete obedience." Admittedly, there was an element of faith in adherence and dependence on God's promise and word, yet this faith did not imply any imperfection in the state of the subject, as it does in justifying faith. This kind of faith was also present in Christ during His temptations and trials, where He trusted in God. The Old Testament term "trusting" is synonymous with the New Testament term "believing." Some even argue that this faith will be present in heaven, where believers will rely on God for the continuation of their happiness. In Adam's case, this faith was considered a gracious act and work of the soul, rather than the means to receive and apply Christ, as it is now.

In our present context, we have justifying faith and repentance, which sustain a Christian's life, much like the innate heat and radical moisture do in the natural life. Faith can be likened to innate heat, while repentance is akin to radical moisture. If either overwhelms the other, it leads to diseases. Similarly, if believing reduces repentance, or if repenting weakens belief, it causes imbalance.

However, even though it was a Covenant of works, it cannot be seen as one of merit. Adam, even in innocence, could not merit the happiness God bestowed upon him. Firstly, the enjoyment of God, which constituted Adam's happiness, surpassed the power and

ability of man. It was an infinite good, while all human deeds are finite. Secondly, Adam was unable to obey any command of God without divine help. Though some may not call it grace, as they reserve that term solely for what comes through Christ, it is acknowledged that God enabled Adam to do what was good; otherwise, he would have failed. Thus, Adam's obedience, accomplished with God's help, only increased his obligation to God rather than meriting any reward.

God, who entered into this Covenant with Adam, was already pleased and in friendship with him, not yet a reconciled Father through Christ. Therefore, no Mediator or comfort was required, as the soul could not be troubled by any sin. Unlike our present state, where God without Christ is perceived as a consuming fire, and we, as combustible matter, loathsome to God, Adam enjoyed familiarity and communion with God, being considered His close friend and dweller in Paradise.

Although there was not the same ordered administration and involvement of the three Persons in this Covenant of works, all three were still at work within it. The second Person, while not incarnate or to be incarnated, worked alongside the Father to produce all righteousness in Adam. Similarly, the Holy Spirit worked to produce holiness in Adam as the third Person, though not in the same way as the Holy Spirit of Christ, purchased by Christ's death for His Church. Therefore, it is an unlikely assertion that the Trinity was not revealed in this Covenant to Adam, highlighting a significant difference between the Covenant in innocence and the Covenant of grace.

In Adam's case, the Covenant assumed he possessed the power, with God's assistance, to uphold it. Hence, what is now impossible for us was possible for him. The idea of a necessity to sin could not have

arisen from Adam's nature, the devil, or God. Adam's fall was caused by his own actions, not by God abandoning him. Although God did not provide an assistance that would have prevented Adam from falling, He did offer enough help to prevent it. Therefore, the argument that God commands us to do the impossible is unfounded, as the commands were not impossible for Adam to keep, though he later lost the power to keep them, for himself and for us.

It is crucial to recognize the distinctions between the Covenant in innocence and the Covenant of grace, for they reveal different ways in which God interacts with humanity.

Use 1. Consider with gratitude how God deals with us, His creatures, by condescending to a promise-based covenant. There is no inherent necessity, whether natural or moral, for God to act in this manner. We belong to Him, and He could demand obedience without the need for a covenant. Nevertheless, to display His love and goodness, He chooses to follow this path. My dear ones, even if we were uncorrupted, and our actions faultless, we would still be unprofitable to God, and it is only through His goodness that He accepts and rewards us. Was eternal life and happiness merely a gift to Adam for his obedience and love? Then consider how freely and entirely salvation and eternal life are bestowed upon you! If Adam couldn't put trust in his deeds or claim reward, how can we rely on our imperfect performances, tainted by sin?

Use 2. Let us further marvel at God's exceeding grace towards us, for He does not bind us to the Covenant of works forever. That Covenant allowed no room for repentance. Even if Adam and Eve had torn their hearts in sorrow, there would have been no hope or redemption until the Covenant of grace was revealed. My friends, our situation could have been such that no tears or repentance could have saved

us. The path to salvation could have been as impossible as it is for the damned angels. Being under the Covenant of works is as woeful as a poor condemned criminal pleading with the judge for mercy, but the law does not allow it. Similarly, under that Covenant, no matter how much one may cry out or plead, there is no promise or grace to be found.

# LECTURE XIV.

## Questions Regarding the State of Innocence

"When you eat from it you will certainly die." - GENESIS 2:17

Now that we have discussed the Law of God, both the natural law and the specific commands given to Adam, both in an absolute sense and within the framework of the Covenant that God made with him, I will conclude this discussion on the state of innocence by addressing several questions. These questions will help clarify our understanding and guard against the errors prevalent today. Moreover, they will ignite a fervent and practical passion within us.

Therefore, I shall strive to clarify the following questions:

1. Can we make a distinction concerning Adam in his innocent state, considering him either in his natural attributes or in his supernatural ones? Some argue that Adam can be viewed in his mere naturals, without the aid of grace, and in this sense, he loves God as his natural ultimate end, acknowledging Him as the preserver and author of nature. Alternatively, some argue that Adam can be considered in his supernaturals, as God bestowed righteousness upon him, enabling him to enjoy God as his supernatural end. This error is upheld to assert that humans born today can be no worse off than Adam in his initial condition. However, if we accept this error, it would greatly diminish the glory attributed to grace in Scripture, which converts and heals us. Therefore, the following points address this question:



2. It cannot be denied that in Adam, we can observe qualities and actions that arose from him as a living creature endowed with a reasonable soul. For instance, in 1 Corinthians 15:45, Adam is referred to as the first man and a living soul, signifying that he was a living creature with the capacity to provide and prepare the necessities for his nourishment and life. This is what we understand as his natural body, as described by the Apostle. Nevertheless, we must not solely consider him as a man in an abstract sense, but rather as a creature specifically created by God with the purpose of being made happy. Hence, although some scholars discuss Adam's animal state and spiritual condition, we must recognize that both are inherently natural to him.
3. Next, we do not assert that Adam's righteousness and holiness were entirely natural, to the extent of denying any aspect that was supernatural. Indeed, there is no doubt that the favor of God, which he enjoyed, can be rightfully considered supernatural. Similarly, some argue that Adam required actual help from God to be sustained and persevere in his righteousness. Although the principle and habit of righteousness were natural to him, the ongoing assistance from God was deemed supernatural. This can be likened to the eye's natural ability to see, which necessitates the presence of light to fulfill its function.

The second question is: Did Christ's intervention play a role in helping Adam, making Christ necessary in that state? On this matter, many learned and reputable scholars hold differing views. Some argue that Christ, being the Mediator of reconciliation, had no direct relevance to Adam, as God and Adam were friends. On the other hand, some contend that the grace of Christ was universally

necessary, extending to angels and Adam. They uphold the eternal truth of the proposition, "Without me, you can do nothing," applying it to Adam not in terms of pardon or reconciliation, but rather preservation and conservation of his righteousness. Esteemed figures in the Church, such as Calvin, Bucer, Zanchi, and others, have advocated this perspective. To shed light on this truth, let us consider the following points:

1.

It cannot be denied that Christ, as the second Person of the Trinity, created and made all things. We must steadfastly uphold this truth against the cursed opinions that are now beginning to deny the Deity of Christ, even publicly. There are three general ways to prove that Christ is God: First, the name Jehovah and God are applied to Him without any such distinction given to other creatures. Second, He possesses the attributes of God, such as Omnipotence and Omniscience. Third, He performs works that only God can do, such as raising the dead by His own power and creation. The evidence of Christ's creative and sustaining role can be found in John 1, Colossians 1, and Hebrews 1:3. Thus, it is impudent blasphemy to oppose such clear Scripture and deny Christ's creative power. It is essential to understand that His creative work does not exclude the other Persons of the Trinity; rather, He is included in this divine work.

2. Now let's consider the assistance Angels received from Christ. Different thoughts arise, even among the wise. Colossians 1:20, "To reconcile all things to himself by him, whether things in heaven or earth," is considered by some as evidence that Angels needed Christ as a Mediator. Calvin, in his commentary on this verse, provides two reasons why Angels require Christ's mediation:

i. First, because they were not without the danger of falling, and therefore their confirmation came through Christ. However, it is challenging to prove that their confirmation solely came from Christ, as it could be a reward from God for their continued obedience. While Salmerons' opinion suggests that fallen Angels were not immediately condemned and might have been given a set time for repentance, this view cannot be firmly supported by Scripture.

Calvin's second reason is that the obedience of the Angels was imperfect, or not as perfect as required, and thus it needed pardon, which he bases on Job 4:18, "His Angels he charged with folly." This can be explained as follows: The Angels' obedience may be considered imperfect in a negative or comparative sense, as it does not fully match God's greatness. However, it is not imperfect in a privative sense, as if it lacks any perfection due to it and therefore requires pardon. Eliphaz's expression serves to emphasize the Greatness and Majesty of God, highlighting that even Angels fall short in comparison to His glory. Now, regarding Colossians 1:20, when considered together with Ephesians 1:10, which speaks of gathering all things in Christ, we find a parallel message. In Colossians, the term used is "to reconcile," and in Ephesians, some interpret it as "to bring to its first beginning," suggesting that all things suffered a defect from the beginning and are to be restored to their former state by Christ. Others see it as "reducing all to one head," which is Christ, while some consider it a metaphor where all that was prefigured by sacrifices is fulfilled in Christ. However, we take it to mean gathering together what was scattered and divided, effectively describing the ruin and confusion caused by sin. The difficulty arises in how Angels can be said to be gathered, given that they were never divided. Some argue that the "all things" in the text are limited to humans only, with things in heaven referring to the spirits of godly men already translated there, and things on earth

pertaining to living men. But even if extended to Angels, it does not imply their need for mediation by Christ, only that they benefit from Him. For example, through Christ, they gain knowledge of the mysteries of our salvation (Ephesians 3:10), rejoice in the conversion of sinners, and are reconciled with humanity. This interpretation seems most fitting and immediate in this context. Therefore, I cannot find any basis for the assertion that a Mediator is required due to the lack of proportion between a creature and the Creator. If this holds true for Angels, it would also apply to Adam, as no offense or breach existed, necessitating a Mediator's intervention.

It is difficult to determine if Christ would have been incarnated had Adam not sinned. Those who argue for the necessity of Christ for Adam and Angels must also believe that even if Adam had not fallen, Christ would still have been incarnated. The Scripture identifies the principal end of Christ's coming into the world as saving what was lost. Without this purpose, we cannot envision Christ's incarnation. However, whether Christ was the first object in God's decree and predestination, followed by men and other things, is a separate question entirely. Regarding Colossians 1, which speaks of Christ as the head of the Church to have preeminence in all things, it does not prove His incarnation in the absence of Adam's fall; rather, it presupposes it.

3. Let's discuss whether the tree of life was a sacrament of Christ for Adam or not. Some argue that the tree of life was a sacrament given to Adam, representing Christ from whom Adam was to receive his life. However, based on the previous arguments, I deny that the tree of life had any such sacramental significance. Nevertheless, I do acknowledge it as a sacrament, for there is no reason to believe that sacraments could not exist in the state of innocence; they simply did not symbolize Christ.

The reason it was called a tree of life may vary among different interpretations. Some believe it had a special quality and efficacy to preserve Adam's immortality, despite being created as such, means were appointed by God to maintain this state. Yet, we need not conclude on this point definitively. What we can say is that it served as a sacrament, reminding Adam of his life received from God and the happy life he would enjoy through his obedience. This notion is reinforced in Revelation 2:7, where happiness is linked to eating from the tree of life in the midst of Paradise. It is essential to recognize that even in this state of innocence, Adam depended on God for everything and acknowledged Him as the sole source of his bliss. However, the administration of good to mankind plunged into sin differs from that in the state of innocence, primarily through Christ's role.

4. The question arises whether Adam received any revelation of a Christ. We cannot be certain of what might have happened, but there is no solid basis to assert such a revelation. While the Apostle makes a mysterious application of Adam's words to Christ and His Church, symbolizing their immediate union, it does not necessarily imply that Adam understood this mystery at the time. Some propose that Christ appeared in human form and united Adam and Eve in marriage, but we cannot confirm this from Scripture. It also suggests that the Sabbath, as a figure of Christ, acquired additional significance when given to the Jews later and was eventually abolished. The idea that God's blessing and sanctification of the Sabbath day in Genesis 1 were by way of anticipation, and thus denying the command of the Sabbath to Adam, is rather forced and untrue. Although there may have been more than one positive law given to Adam, the Sabbath as a figure of Christ likely had no bearing in the state of innocence.

5. Another crucial question pertains to whether the state of reparation is superior to that of innocence. We cannot conclusively state that one is absolutely better than the other; each holds certain excellences over the other. Adam's original state surpassed our current condition in terms of rectitude, being completely free from sin. Some suggest that he was created in a neutral state, but that contradicts the notion of him being made in the image of God. The blessedness of having a heart untainted by sin, completely unblemished in the soul, is evident when considering Paul's poignant lament, "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Additionally, Adam's state excelled in immortality and outward felicity. While our second Adam, Christ, has conquered the works of sin and Satan, the scars left by those sins are not fully removed. It is comparable to emperors capturing their enemies but delaying their execution until the day of triumph arrives.

However, there is one aspect in which our condition is made happier than Adam's: the certainty of perseverance in the state of grace once translated into it. This consideration was emphasized by Augustine. While we may have much sin along with our grace, God will not let that spark of fire be extinguished. On the other hand, Adam had much holiness and no sin, yet he lost it quickly. It's not that grace of itself is not amissible, like that of Adam, but because of the special promise and grace of God in Christ; therefore, whom He loves, He will always love.

Moving on to the next question, can we now, through Christ, be considered more righteous than Adam? An Antinomian in their *Treatise of Justification* (p. 320-321) quotes some authors affirming that now, through Christ, we have a more perfect righteousness than that of Angels or what was lost in Adam. They then attempt to prove

that we are so holy that God sees no sin in us. To address this, I do not deny that the orthodox have used such expressions, emphasizing that the righteousness of Christ, as His, is of infinite value and consequence. Therefore, as we are in a Mediator, we are in a better and more secure condition than the Angels or Adam. However, these expressions were never meant to imply the Antinomian sense, suggesting that we are made not only perfectly righteous but also holy and without sin. The Treatise about Justification extensively refutes this opinion. It's important to understand that the doctrine of imputation of Christ's righteousness does not necessarily mean that we have a righteousness more excellent than that of Angels or Adam. It is imputed to us for the righteousness we ought to have, not to the same extent as Christ's, but as we need it. God never required from us an holiness equal to that of the Angels or a greater righteousness than Adam's. Therefore, it is senseless to imagine that we should be given something we never needed or were obligated to have. Thus, the expressions of the orthodox must be interpreted in a sound sense.

Now, let's consider whether what God requires of us is greater than what He demanded from Adam in the state of innocence. The Arminians hold that greater abilities are now required of a person to believe the Gospel than were required of Adam to fulfill the Law. They argue that this is partly because the mystery of the Gospel consists in mere revelation, unlike the Law. Additionally, all the actions required by the Gospel presuppose a resurrection from the first fall. According to their view, it takes more to rise from a fall than to prevent a fall. They use these arguments to prove the necessity of universal grace given to all.

Now, to address the first question: I conclude (as previously proven) that the nature of justifying faith existed in Adam, even though there

wasn't a specific object for it to be exercised upon. Sometimes a thing may have its nature without being named or referred to in relation to a certain object that may not currently exist or from effects it cannot produce at the moment. For instance, God's mercy and grace always existed in nature, but they only took on their names when directed towards miserable and wretched creatures, which didn't exist until the creation of such beings. Similarly, Adam had the nature of love and pity, but since certain effects of these emotions couldn't be exercised in his state, they didn't carry the names of mercy or pity. Adam's faith in God's promise about eternal life, based on his obedience, had the nature of justifying faith, but it didn't carry the specific name or reference of justifying because such an object was impossible in that condition. Thus, Adam's faith of dependency was essentially the same in nature as justifying faith. Therefore, the arguments proposing that greater strength is required to rise than to keep from falling are denied. The same things that would have preserved Adam from falling, such as faith, are also required for a person to rise. Just as Adam would have stood as long as his faith in God remained steadfast, with the devil attempting to shake it through temptation, so Christ prayed for Peter, a fallen man through Adam, that his faith wouldn't fail since it was his support and strength.

Lastly, is Adam's immortality in that state different from the immortality in heaven? Yes, it is evident that they are different. In Adam's case, he was immortal in a way that allowed for the possibility of mortality, but this is not the case for those who are glorified. Adam's immortality was related to his natural body, which required nourishment. In contrast, those who are made happy do not have this need. Previously, we concluded that Adam in his first state was naturally immortal, as death wouldn't have been natural, and he wouldn't have abhorred it if it were. Christ did not die simply



because he was a man but because he was a man made for us, who needed to die because of our sin. Although mortality was remotely present in Adam due to his natural body and consumption of food and drink, actual mortality was averted due to the glorious condition he was placed in. However, a mortal state, not actual death, was threatened as a punishment for any apostasy from God.

In conclusion, the instruction we can draw from this is that there is great comfort for the godly in Christ, even though all was lost by nature. When considering the magnitude of this loss – righteousness, immortality, God's image – it may be unsettling. However, looking to Christ is the only way to sustain hope. While we may have lost the image of God and lack perfect righteousness, Christ is the express image of His Father and possesses the righteousness we lack. Therefore, any loss and evil through the first Adam can be countered by gain and goodness through the last Adam. Let us marvel at the mysteries of God's grace and love and expect great things even in spiritual matters. If God is so gracious in providing for our spiritual needs, we can expect much more for our temporal needs. Are riches and sustenance comparable to Christ?

As an exhortation, we must not remain content in any state other than that of restoration. Ephesians 1:10 speaks of gathering, implying that all of humanity is like a house fallen down, lying in ruins and debris. We should not stay in this condition, as it is a state of sin and wrath. It is better never to have been born than to be in such a condition. Even the irrational creatures are happier in their state compared to ours if they are not restored by Christ. Restoration to the image of God is a significant and rare blessing, not experienced by many. Holiness must be deeply rooted and settled within us, just as sin and corruption have permeated us. We may have once imbibed iniquity like water, but now, do we thirst after

righteousness like the Hart panting for water-brooks? The resurrection of the soul must take place in this life. If we were once sinful and proud, we should now strive to become holy and humble.

## **LECTURE XV.**

The Law delivered by God through Moses to the people of Israel

And God spoke all these words, saying, &c. - EXOD. 20. 1.

Having discussed the Law given to Adam in his state of innocence, both as a Law in itself and as a Covenant, we shall now proceed to examine the Law delivered by God through Moses to the people of Israel. This subject is at the heart of the controversy between the Antinomians and our position. While there were indeed precepts and laws given prior to Moses, such as Noah's precepts, which some scholars talk about, these are not relevant to our current discussion, and we shall not delve into them. Instead, we will focus on the Law of Moses, following the same approach of considering it both absolutely and relatively, as a Covenant.

Just as errors have arisen concerning the Deity of Christ, the Trinity, and the grace of God, leading to a need for clarifications, so too shall we address those opinions seeking to undermine the dignity and excellence of the Law. In fact, the Law may be even more exalted in its significance and greatness by refuting these opinions. The passage we just read serves as an introduction to the Law, and it contains the

initial words spoken by God, which form the foundation of our discussion.

1. The content of the message conveyed is referred to as "Words"; as in Deuteronomy 4, they are termed "ten words," giving rise to the term "Decalogue." The Hebrew word used here does not simply mean a single word, like how we might say "one word," as the Ten Commandments are more than just ten words. Instead, it signifies a concise and brief sentence given as a command. In the Septuagint translation, it is sometimes rendered as "έντολή" (entolé) in Deuteronomy 17:19 and other times as "ρήμα" (rhema) in Psalm 118:57. In the New Testament, what is referred to as "the word of God" in Mark 7:13 is called "the commandment of God" in Matthew's account. Paul also says in Galatians 5:14, "The whole Law is fulfilled in one word," meaning one concise sentence given as a command.
2. The phrase "All these words" emphasizes their universality, indicating that nothing may be added to or taken away from them. However, a difficulty arises in Deuteronomy 5, where these things are repeated by Moses with some transpositions and changes in wording. Yet, this can be easily explained, as the Scripture often employs the liberty to change words when repeating the same content, while preserving the intended meaning. This is to refute the superstitious beliefs of some Jews who tend to seek miraculous mysteries in every letter of the Law.
3. The efficient cause of the Law is described with the Hebrew words "אנכי יהוה" (Anokhi Yahweh). The word "אנכי" (Anokhi) is used in the plural form defectively, and it is to be understood as "אנכי יהוה" (Anokhi Yahweh) to denote the excellency of God. It is similar to how the word "fera" is used for "excellentissima fera"

in Latin. In the Septuagint, it is translated as "ἐγὼ εἰμι" (ego eimi) and not as "ὁ ὢν" (ho on) because, as a learned man explains, it was rendered for the Greeks, and the wise among them attributed the name "ho on" to those they called "οὐσία" (ousia). Thus, the translation sought to emphasize that the Law-giver, God, was the Lord over all, including those beings. By ascribing the Laws to God as their author, greater authority is attributed to them. Throughout history, all Law-givers have endeavored to persuade the people that their Laws came from God.

4. The manner of delivering the Laws is described as "God spoke them, saying," although it should not be understood as implying that God has a physical body with organs of speech. Instead, it signifies that He formed a voice in the air to communicate His message. There arises a significant difficulty in Acts 7, where the one who spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai is referred to as "the Angel." This has led some Papists and Grotius to propose a dangerous notion that God did not deliver the Law directly but rather through an Angel, who is then called God and assumes the name Jehovah as a representation of God's person. However, this interpretation has been refuted by learned scholars. Without further ado, let us conclude that God delivered the Law to the people of Israel through the hand or ministry of Moses.

I shall, God willing, address this topic doctrinally in all theological considerations concerning the Law. First, it is essential to bear in mind that the term "Law" can be used in various senses. Before making any assertions about it, one must clarify the intended sense of the Law. Without delving into all the different meanings of the word, it is crucial to recognize that "Law" can have either a broad or

restricted significance. In the broad sense, it encompasses the entire dispensation and promulgation of the Commandments, including the Moral, Judicial, and Ceremonial aspects. In a more specific sense, it may refer strictly to the Moral Law with its accompanying preface and promises. In both these aspects, the Law was given as a Covenant of grace, a point to be demonstrated in due course. Finally, in the most stringent sense, "Law" denotes that which is purely mandative and preceptive, devoid of any promise. In this sense, many assertions made by the Learned regarding the distinction between the Law and the Gospel are to be understood. They often classify all precepts and threats in Scripture as the Law and all gracious promises as the Gospel, which can lead to harsh judgments against the Law. This issue will be addressed in a separate question, as some distinguished individuals are firm in upholding this distinction, but I am doubtful whether it holds true.

2. Now, let us consider what Law was delivered at Mount Sinai and the different types of laws that exist, as well as the reason for labeling it the Moral Law. As seen in Exodus 20 and subsequent chapters, all the laws that the Jews were to follow were given to Moses for delivery to the people. However, the Moral Law holds preeminence, as it was written by God himself twice on stone tablets. The entire body of these laws can be categorized into Moral, Ceremonial, and Judicial based on their subject matter and objectives. For now, we will not delve into the debates surrounding this classification, but rather accept it without danger. The Law we are concerned with here is the Moral Law. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that the varied use of the term "Moral" has caused much confusion and led to misunderstandings in various controversies. The word "Moral" or "Morally" has been employed in disputes regarding the Sabbath, converting grace, the doctrine of the Sacraments, and

their efficacy and causality. Likewise, in this particular matter, it is used to discern what makes a Law "moral." Although the term "Moral" may not carry the same weight in its connotation—simply denoting that which guides and obliges in matters, thereby applicable even to the Judicial and Ceremonial aspects—here, it is intended to refer to that which is perpetual and always binding, as opposed to that which is binding only for a certain period.

3. Another point of consideration is whether the Law repeated by Moses is the same as the Law of nature implanted within us. While many assume this to be the case, there are significant differences between them:

Firstly, if we refer to the Law of Nature originally instilled in Adam or the now degenerated version present in us, anything enjoined by that law applies universally and binds all individuals, even without explicit promulgation. However, the Moral Law contains certain positive aspects, determined solely by the will of God, which do not bind all nations worldwide. For instance, the commandment regarding the Sabbath day is perpetual, yet it does not obligate the Gentiles who have never been made aware of this specific time designated by God. Therefore, the Moral Law encompasses more specific elements than the law of Nature.

Moreover, secondly, the Moral Law given by God introduces a new obligation through its commandments. While the subject matter may align with some aspects of the law of nature, transgressing these Commandments now constitutes a graver sin compared to someone who is a Heathen or Pagan. This is because God's command imposes an additional obligation and responsibility upon the individual.

In the third place, the Moral Law necessitates justifying faith and repentance, as I will discuss further when addressing it as a Covenant. Such requirements were not present in the Law given to Adam. For example, the second Commandment mandates the specific worship of God, to the extent that all ceremonial laws, including our Sacraments, are commanded in it. This indicates that the Moral Law possesses a spiritual and comprehensive nature, encompassing more particulars than the law of Nature. Hence, the Apostle acknowledges that he would not have recognized lust as sin if not for the explicit statement in the Law, even though the law of Nature could convict him of sin.

4. As for the reason why it was now added, its timing is evident from Exodus 18, occurring while the people of Israel were in the Wilderness and had reached their twelfth station at Mount Sinai. Philo's assertion that God's Laws are to be learnt in the Wilderness, where the multitude cannot hinder one's understanding, does not hold true. Instead, two plausible reasons may explain why God gave this Law at this specific time and not sooner or later:

Firstly, upon their departure from Egypt, the people of Israel had defiled themselves with their sinful ways. During their journey in the Wilderness, they succumbed to horrific and gross impieties. To restrain their impious and idolatrous tendencies, God bestowed this Law upon them, acting as a deterrent against such insolence. This aligns with Romans 5 and Galatians 3, where it is stated that the Law was given because of transgressions. The word "added," as noted by Theophilact, suggests that the Law was not primarily given for its own sake, as the promises were, but rather to curb the excessive transgressions occurring at that time.

Secondly, I propose that the main reason God chose this time to give the Law was because the people of Israel were evolving into a significant nation. They were preparing to enter Canaan and establish a Commonwealth, making God their special King. Consequently, all their laws, even the political ones, were divine in nature. This meant that the Magistrates could not dispense with these laws, as modern Governors might with laws of the Commonwealth that are merely human in origin. In this instance, dispensing with divine laws would be unlawful. Thus, the primary reason for God's timing in presenting the entire body of laws was the impending formation of their Commonwealth. This led Josephus to refer to the Commonwealth of the Jews as "a place where God was the Governor."

5. Another point of consideration is whether this Law existed in the Church of God before Moses' administration. To think otherwise would be a grave mistake. Murder, for example, was already considered a sin, evident from God's words to Cain, and even the anger that precedes murder was condemned. Moreover, the outward worship of God, such as calling upon His name, was practiced in the Church from early on. Thus, the Law has always been an integral part of the Church of God. This was not just through its presence in people's hearts but was also publicly preached through the ministry available at that time, as demonstrated by Noah's preaching to the old world and God's striving with men through His word.

Therefore, we can affirm that the Decalogue belongs to Adam, Abraham, Noah, Christ, and the Apostles, just as much as it belongs to Moses. While there were specific reasons for its special promulgation and solemn repetition during Moses' time, the Law has continuously resonated in the Church since its inception.



Understanding this fact highlights the Law's excellence as a perpetual means and instrument used by God in His Church to guide duty, convict of sin, and exhort to holiness. Thus, those who oppose the use and preaching of the Law go against the universal practice of the Church of God in both the Old and New Testaments.

6. Now, turning to the ultimate reason why God gave this Law to them, I previously discussed its purpose at that particular time. However, in a general sense, we must acknowledge that the promulgation of the Law had multiple ends:

Firstly, due to the widespread corruption among mankind and the prolonged period during which the people of Israel lived without public worship and service of God, it was essential to impose this Law upon them. By doing so, they would comprehend that far greater purity and holiness were required of them than they might have realized otherwise.

Secondly, through this means, they would become aware of their sins, as the Apostle conveys, and thus experience deep humility. The Law of God functions as a clear light that reveals the inward heart-sins and soul-lusts lurking within us, akin to numerous toads and serpents that remained hidden until exposed by this illuminating Law.

Thirdly, the Law beautifully represents the excellent and holy nature of God, as well as the purity He accepts. It instructs us to be holy, just as He is holy, for the Law is holy, just like God is holy. It is an expression and reflection of the immense purity found in His nature. The wisdom of the people of Israel lies in having such laws, and even the surrounding nations should marvel at their existence.

7. Now, we come to consider the great goodness and favor of God in delivering this Law to the people. It was indeed an immeasurable act of mercy from God to bestow upon them these commandments. Deuteronomy 9 and other passages emphasize how frequently God reminds them of His love in giving them these commandments. It was not for their merit or worthiness but solely out of His love for them. In Psalm 147, David marvels that such a gift was not given to other nations. Hosea similarly underscores this mercy, calling the Law a precious gift entrusted to the Jews. Many benefits result from the law of God, as revealed by the Psalmist and Prophets, making it ingratitude and unthankfulness to reject or disparage the Law and its preaching. The Law, which God deems a great mercy to His people, should not be disregarded.

Moreover, just because God has expressed greater love to us in these latter days, we should not forget or disregard the former mercies bestowed upon us. The Law remains relevant to us under the Gospel, as it was given to the Jews, and we should not take it for granted. Every time we read and hear the Law's spiritual explication (for the Law is spiritual), we have cause to give thanks and praise to God, realizing how clearly and purely His will has been manifested to us. Such clarity of revelation surpasses what other nations, even Papists, may have received. Thus, it is insufficient to merely reject Antinomianism; we should also bless and praise God for the reading and preaching of His Law in our congregations.

8. As we continue, it is vital to appreciate the perfection of this Law, which serves as a complete rule for all aspects concerning God and man. Although it may be concise, it is so perfect that it encompasses all that is to be done or omitted by us. Even the Prophets and Apostles primarily provide explications of the Law

rather than introducing entirely new precepts. This is why the Law commands us not to add to it or take away from it. When Jesus presents various precepts in Matthew 5, He does not introduce them as new additions to the Moral Law but rather clarifies it by refuting the corrupt interpretations of the Pharisees. While some might find it difficult to believe that Christ, justifying faith, and the doctrine of the Trinity were included in the Law's promulgation, it can be demonstrated that they were indeed comprehended, though not as explicitly as in the Gospel. This recognition does not confuse the Law and the Gospel.

In light of this, we must be cautious not to vilify or disregard the Law, whether in doctrine or practice. Doctrinally, it is dangerous to adopt the views of the Marcionites, Manichees, and Basilides, who belittled or maligned the Law as carnal or even ascribed it to the devil, viewing it as a tool for the destruction of the Jews. Likewise, we should be wary of opinions and expressions from Antinomians that undermine the significance of the Law. We should not revile that which God bestowed upon His people as a great mercy. Just because Jews and Papists may abuse the Law for justification does not diminish its rightful place and importance. We should cherish the opening of God's pure and excellent image of holiness and find delight in the purity it commands, which prompts us to value Christ and grace more and serves as a driving force towards holiness. The Law and the Gospel are not mutually exclusive but complement each other, enhancing our understanding and appreciation of God's mercy in both temporal and spiritual matters.

## LECTURE XVI.

### Historical Passages Surrounding the Promulgation of the Law

God spoke these words, saying, &c. - EXOD. 20. 1.

I have already commenced our discussion on the Moral Law, and now I shall delve into the historical passages surrounding its promulgation. By considering these details, we can better appreciate the Law's excellence, for upon observing the circumstances of its history, one can see how God glorified it. While the Apostle, in Hebrews 12 and 2 Corinthians 3, extols the Gospel above the ministry of Moses, the Moral Law, in and of itself, received great honour from God. In general, it is evident that God delivered the Law with solemnity and majesty to enhance its authority. Such methods were not uncommon even among pagans, who often claimed a divine connection to lend reverence to their laws. Numa, for instance, attributed his laws to the goddess Aegaeria, while Pythagoras used a tamed eagle to make people believe his sentences were delivered from heaven. If human laws can be called the "oracles of human wisdom," as Demosthenes put it, then how much more fitting it is to consider the Law of God as such? Some have suggested that the Jews were called so because they received the Jus Dei, the Law of God, but this is a mere notion. Furthermore, it is worth noting that God has always manifested Himself in ways that correspond to the context. He appeared in a burning bush to Moses, like an armed man to Joshua, and with all signs of majesty as a great God when delivering laws to the people, so they could comprehend His power to avenge every breach of His commands.

Again, in the next place, take note of this general observation: although the Judicial and Ceremonial laws were given alongside the

Moral Law, there is a difference between them. This distinction is important to avoid the misconception that this discussion solely elevates the honour of the Moral Law above the others. It is true that all three kinds of laws share the common efficient cause, which is God, and the mediator, Moses, as well as the subject, the people of Israel. They also share the common effects of binding and obliging obedience while punishing offenders. However, the Moral Law excels in several ways: Firstly, it serves as the foundation for the other laws, which can be reduced to it. Secondly, it is perpetual, unlike the others. Lastly, it was directly written by God and commanded to be kept in the Ark, which the other laws were not.

Lastly, observe these two things in general about the time of the delivery of the Law: Firstly, God did not give them His Law until He had deeply humbled them. Similarly, it may be that Christ will not establish His ordinance with us until He has brought us low. Secondly, before they could enter the Promised Land, God settled His worship and laws. Only after this was done did He instruct them to go towards Canaan. This demonstrates that a people cannot enter their promised blessings until the things of God are settled.

Now, let us come to the remarkable parts of the history surrounding the promulgation of this Law. First, consider the great and diligent preparation of the people to hear it. In Exodus 19, they were required to sanctify themselves and wash their clothes. Although the act of washing their clothes was unique to those times, it signified God's demand for the cleansing and sanctification of their hearts. A similar superstitious practice was observed among the Gentiles, who would wash before going to sacrifice. It's worth noting that such customs also found their way into the early Church. However, the primary message here is that God emphasized the purity and holiness of heart required to receive His Law.

The second requirement was to set bounds so that no one could touch the Mount. Some have falsely applied this allegorically to a layman reading or engaging with Scripture, while it was meant to extend even to the priests themselves. God intended for people to keep their distance and not become too curious. The doctrines of the Trinity and Predestination, for example, are akin to a mountain that we must respect and approach with humility, not attempting to climb it recklessly.

The third requirement was not to come near their wives. While some interpret this as referring to women who were legally impure, it can also be understood as a call for conjugal abstinence. Not as something sinful, but as a symbolic gesture to put off affections not only to sinful things but also to lawful ones. This three-day preparation, therefore, emphasises the significance of the Law and reminds us of the spiritual mindset required to receive it.

2. The Declaration of Majesty and Greatness during its delivery: It must be acknowledged that this was a method suited to the Law, designed to convict of sin and inspire fear (as the Apostle points out in Hebrews 12:18, 19, etc.), which is why he prefers the Gospel's ministry over it. Nevertheless, it remains true that thunderings and terrors accompanied the promulgation of the Law, aiming to raise the people's reverence and fear for the Lawgiver. Revelation 4:5 describes God in His Majesty, sitting on His throne, with lightnings and thunders emanating from Him. These extraordinary manifestations were likely brought forth by God to overpower even the stoutest hearts. And even now, we ought to assume that the Law is preached to us in a similar nature. Though the terror may have passed, its effect should still abide in each of us to the extent that corruption

remains in us. For who among us does not need awakening from pride, lukewarmness, or any other sinful tendencies?

In Exodus 19:18, it is said that God descended upon Mount Sinai in a smoke of fire and cloud to demonstrate His incomprehensible Majesty and terror to wicked men. In comparison, the dispensation of the Gospel was of greater sweetness, as mentioned in Galatians 4:24, where the Apostle refers to Mount Sinai as Agar, generating bondage. This comparison is valid when contrasting Gospel dispensations. Nevertheless, Psalms 50:2 speaks of this event absolutely, highlighting it as a great mercy, depicting God's glorious splendor and His power to overthrow His enemies. In Psalm 96, the entire earth is called to rejoice at the Lord's reigning, described by the solemn giving of the Law, an occasion for the Church to rejoice as well. Moreover, it is applied to Christ in Hebrews 7, following the Septuagint. Hence, when viewed absolutely, these events are regarded as mercies and even applied to Christ. It is indeed a wonderful mercy that God familiarly revealed Himself to them, as seen in Deuteronomy 4:7 and Deuteronomy 5:4. Some scholars believe that Christ, the Son of God, appeared in the form of a man to deliver this Law to Moses and speak to him in a familiar manner. Deuteronomy 33:3 uses the term "loving," signifying embracing by way of protection in the bosom. Just as the gifts of the Holy Ghost were given with fiery tongues and a mighty rushing wind, the Gospel is also associated with fire, just like the Law.

3. God's immediate writing of these laws with His own fingers on tablets of stone (Exodus 31:18). This honour was not granted to the other laws.

Though some of the Fathers have interpreted "Finger of God" to refer to the Holy Ghost, associating the finger with the same essence as the

body and, in turn, inferring the Holy Ghost to be of the same nature as God, this notion is not sound. While Luke 11:20 and Matthew 12:28 refer to what is called the "finger of God" and the "Spirit of God," respectively, we must understand it to denote the power and operation of God, who caused those words to be written. The material on which it was written is said to be tablets of stone. The Rabbinic belief suggesting that it was a single table appearing as one or two at times is not worthy of consideration. The significant point to be noted here, contributing to the dignity of the Law, is that it was written by God on tablets of stone, symbolizing its perpetuity and stability.

Though this, in itself, may not be a demonstrative argument to establish the perpetuity of the Law against any Antinomian, it may indeed persuade any reasonable person. Lawgivers who sought to ensure the stability of their laws had them engraved in Brass or Marble. Pliny, in his third book, chapter 9, mentions "brassie tables ad perpetuitatem monumentorum" (brass tables for perpetual memorials), and Plato, as reported by Rhodoginus in his 25th book, chapter 2, believed that laws should be written on cypress tablets because he considered them more eternal than those of brass. While it is true that there is also a mystical significance, not to be discarded, the Apostle's allusions in this context emphasize the hardness of the Jews' hearts, which could not easily receive the impression of the Law. Herein, the excellence of the Gospel is revealed, as it is worked in the hearts of men by grace. However, it must not be misunderstood to suggest that God did not write His Law in the hearts of men during the Old Testament. The promise mentioned by Jeremiah in the Gospel is not exclusive, implying that God did not write His Law in their hearts at all, but rather comparative.



4. The sorrowful breaking of this Law by the people of Israel. Just as the Law given by God to Adam was immediately broken, the Law given in such a powerful manner to keep the Israelites in holy fear and reverence was soon forgotten by them. Upon Moses' delay, they quickly fell into idolatry. Some believe that they thought Moses was dead, and in their desire for a visible god like the Egyptians, they made a calf, which was an act of great wickedness (although some Rabbins try to excuse them from idolatry). It is remarkable that they fell into this sin immediately after the Law's promulgation, despite having solemnly promised obedience. Not only did they commit idolatry, but they also worshiped the calf, giving it credit for all the blessings they enjoyed. This refutes the distinctions that idolaters, especially Papists, use in defense of their false worship. Instead of following our hearts, we are to follow the Word. Just as a child in the womb receives nourishment solely through the umbilical cord from the mother, the Church gains instruction and direction from Christ alone.
  
5. The time of Moses' stay on the Mount is also noteworthy in the story. It not only established great authority for Moses among the people but also for the Law itself. Some compare the time of giving the Law to the effusion of the gifts of the Holy Ghost in the Gospel, with the former occurring fifty days after their exodus from Egypt, known as Pentecost. Similarly, the Holy Ghost was given to the Church at that same time. This comparison is made between Moses' forty days on the Mount and our Savior's forty days in the wilderness when He was tempted. Moses' miraculous sustenance without eating or drinking for that duration was indeed remarkable. However, drawing a parallel between Moses and our Savior to justify fasting during Lent is baseless and unwarranted.

6. Moses' zeal against their idolatry and his breaking of the Tablets. When Moses descended from the Mount and saw how the people had violated God's Law, he was so moved by zeal that he broke the Tablets that were first made. This action was undoubtedly ordered by God to signify that this could not be a path to justification for them. Indeed, to assert that the Law can justify is a grave error; in this sense, we are all Antinomians. Some have criticized Moses for this act, considering it impatience and rashness. They acknowledge it as good zeal for the greater cause, but they suspect there was some inappropriate fire, like the fire of the Sanctuary. Yet, while Moses' outburst was sudden, it is not clear why breaking the Tablets should be attributed to rashness on his part. He had brought those Tablets as a symbol of their Covenant with God, but the people had broken it through their idolatry. It was entirely justifiable to break the Tablets before the eyes of the people, so they could understand God's alienation from them. We believe Moses did this with holy zeal, without any sinful agitation of the mind. God also ordered it to convey that He would enter into a new Covenant with them, prompting Augustine to exclaim, "O ira prophetica, et animus non perturbatus, sed illuminatus!" (Oh, prophetic anger and a mind not disturbed but enlightened!)

7. Moses' request to God for His presence and the manifestation of His glory to him, along with God's response. Although this does not directly concern the promulgation of the Law, it's inserted before the reparation of the Tablets, and it highlights the honor God bestowed upon Moses while he was establishing the laws of Israel. In Chapter 33, verse 12, Moses desires God's presence to be with him in leading the people of Israel. As a sign of confirmation of His presence, he also asks to see God's glory. It is difficult to determine the exact nature of Moses' petition in

this matter. I do not agree with those who consider it merely a vision and not an actual event, nor with those who believe that Moses desired to see the essence of God. The question of whether a person's physical eyes can behold God, who is a spirit, is also not up for debate.

Neither do I think those are correct who interpret God's glory as referring to the reasons and grounds for God's mercies, particularly His providence towards the Israelites, and the "back-parts" that Moses was allowed to see as the effects of His mercy and providence, as if God intended to show Moses His wonderful effects but not their reasons.

Lastly, I don't agree with the interpretation that Moses sought to see the humanity of Christ in glory, like the transfiguration vision. Instead, I lean towards the most literal understanding: while it is stated in verse 11 that Moses spoke with God face to face, indicating familiarity, even then God was veiled in a cloud. Moses desired God to manifest Himself in a more perceptible, visible, and glorious way, just as He had previously revealed His name. God partially grants his request, showing a glorious object, but Moses is not able to fully behold it due to its intense light.

8. The reparation of the Tablets. Here, some differences arise between the first and second Tablets. In the first instance, God provided both the shape and the writing, as mentioned earlier. However, in the second instance, Moses is responsible for forming or polishing the Tablets, while God handles the writing. In Exodus 34:1, God instructs Moses to hew two Tablets of stone similar to the former, and God will write upon these Tablets. This is explicitly stated again in Deuteronomy 10:1, 2, 3. The writing of the Law on the second Tablets is as immediate an act

of God as it was with the first, but the preparation of the Tablets is done by Moses. Only one verse in Scripture poses a challenge to this understanding, seemingly suggesting that Moses wrote on the second Tablet by God's command and direction.

This conflicting verse is found in Exodus 34:27, 28. Examining the context of these texts reveals some difficulties. However, two things help clarify the situation: firstly, the things Moses wrote were not the Ten Commandments but rather the various precepts that served as explanations; secondly, while verse 28 appears to be about Moses, the first two predicates, his forty-day stay with God and his abstinence from eating and drinking during that time, apply to him. The third predicate, writing upon the Ten Commandments, is attributed to God. This type of construction is common in Hebrew to refer the relative to a more remote subject rather than the nearest, which resolves the ambiguity. A notable aspect is that even though the first Tablets were broken, God enters into a Covenant of grace with them, as evidenced by proclaiming His longsuffering and gracious nature. Nevertheless, God has the Ten Commandments written again, implying that they can coexist with a Covenant of grace, which counters the Antinomian viewpoint.

9. The extraordinary glory that rested upon Moses is a significant aspect to consider. The Apostle, speaking of this in 2 Corinthians 3, acknowledges that the ministration of the Law had a certain glory, but one that was temporary. It is essential to distinguish between the Law itself and its particular administration and dispensation, which was meant to cease. It's crucial to avoid confusion between the two, as done by some Antinomians.

Regarding Moses, it appears that the glory upon him was communicated when he beheld the glory of God. The duration of this

radiance is uncertain, as some Rabbins believe it lasted throughout his lifetime. The Vulgate translation misinterpreted the term, rendering it as "horned," leading to depictions of Moses with horns in paintings. However, the word signifies "to glitter" or "shine," and the rays of light could have appeared like horns. The glory was so intense that Moses had to veil his face when addressing the people. Interestingly, the text mentions that Moses himself was unaware of the shining on his face. It is an admirable trait when God bestows much glory upon an individual, and they remain unaware of it. Gregory likened this aspect of Moses to ministers, suggesting that, just as Moses veiled his face to allow the people to interact with him, ministers should show humility and condescension to those they serve, even if they possess greater knowledge and learning.

10. The custody and preservation of the Law in the Ark. Only this Law, directly written by the hand of God, was commanded to be placed in the Ark. There is a historical dispute about the contents of the Ark: 1 Kings 8:9 explicitly states that there were only the stone Tablets, while Hebrews 9:4 includes Aaron's rod and a pot of manna. Rejecting the Epistle to the Hebrews due to this discrepancy is unwarranted and presumptuous. Some suggest that initially, God commanded these items to be placed alongside the Tablets of the Covenant, but when Solomon built the Temple, they were stored separately, and the account in Kings refers to this later arrangement. Another interpretation suggests that "in" could mean "before" or "hard by," implying that the pot and rod were beside the Ark. However, Junius' observation is more likely, pointing out that the relative pronoun is in the feminine gender and does not refer to "Ark," the nearest noun, but "Tabernacle." This is a common practice in Scripture. Although this interpretation might be subject to objections, it reconciles the historical accuracy of both passages.

The duration of the Tablets' preservation and their final fate remain uncertain. This underscores the great glory God bestowed upon the Law, surpassing anything else, as intended in all these historical observations.

Conclusion: These observations instruct us about God's willingness to bestow glory and perpetuity upon the Law. Therefore, we must avoid diminishing its importance. If it were possible to proclaim the Law with the same awe and solemnity in our congregations as it was on Mount Sinai, even Antinomians would acknowledge its power and be hesitant to reject it. Just as a physician prepares the body before administering treatment, so ministers of Christ must first humble hearts by exposing sin through the Law before applying the grace and promises thereof. Antinomians may come to realize the gravity of sin in believers and reassess their views. Those who have disparaged or disregarded the Law should recognize their sin and restore its rightful honour. As a story is told of Stesichorus, who was struck blind for demeaning Helen's beauty but regained his sight after praising her, by exalting the excellence of the Law like David did, one may discover even greater glory in it.

## **An Additional Lecture.**

Ordained by Angels in the Hand of a Mediator

"And it was ordained by Angels in the hand of a Mediator." -  
Galatians 3:19

The involvement of angels in the promulgation of the Law adds to its honour. The Moral Law was enacted by a sacred and august Senate, where Jesus Christ, accompanied by thousands of angels, delivered these precepts to the people of Israel. The angels' service and ministry on this occasion mark three solemn instances: their singing at the Creation of the world, their proclamation at Christ's birth, and possibly their role during the promulgation of the Law.

To understand the text, it's essential to consider the Apostle's argument in the preceding part of the chapter. He presents several points to prove that justification does not come through the Law and that eternal life is not attained by it. However, lest this discourse diminish the importance of the Law, he raises an objection: "To what use, then, is the Law?" (v. 21). With great indignation, he responds that the Law is not against the promises—God forbid. The Apostle here refers to the specific purpose of the Law, not its absolute end in itself. It was added because of transgressions, to convict the proud and hypocritical Jews of their wickedness and thus to confirm the righteousness of Christ. The Apostle is not addressing the manifold uses of the Law, but only that which fits his present argument. He illustrates this use by highlighting its duration: it was to remain until the coming of Christ. Therefore, when the Apostle speaks of the Law, he refers synecdochically to one part of the Law, the Regiment, or Mosaic Administrations in the Ceremonial aspect.

Next, the Apostle commends the Law with a fitting digression, noting its two ministerial causes. The proximate and immediate cause was the angels, and the remote cause was the hand of a Mediator. Some interpret this addition as a means of debasing the Law and distinguishing it from the Gospel. They argue that the Law was given by angels, while the Gospel was immediately given by Christ. However, I see it as a commendation, ensuring that he is not

misunderstood as condemning the Law, as his adversaries accused him of speaking against it in Acts 21:21. Though the Apostle exalts the Gospel far above the Law, he always gives the Law the due titles of commendation that it deserves. The phrase "ordained by angels" is not easy to interpret. Acts 7:53 and Hebrews 2:2 mention receiving the Law by the disposition of angels, and Deuteronomy 33:2 refers to God coming from Sinai with thousands of saints and a fiery law. The Septuagint interprets this as referring to angels. Putting these passages together, it appears that Jesus Christ, who is also referred to as the Angel that spoke to Moses on the mount and appeared to him in the bush (Acts 7:38, 35), accompanied by thousands of angels, gave Moses the Law from the midst of them. Jesus Christ is referred to as the Angel due to his outward appearance. The Sanctuary expresses this giving of the Law, as God sat between the Cherubim and delivered his Oracles. Moses built the Tabernacle according to the pattern shown to him in the Mount, and Psalm 68:8 can be understood as God delivering his Oracles from the Cherubim in the Sanctuary, just as he gave the Law from among the angels on Mount Sinai.

Moving on to the remote cause, some interpret it as Moses being the Mediator in giving the Law between God and the Jews, with Deuteronomy 5:5 supporting this interpretation. Moses can be seen as a typological Mediator, similar to the sacrifices that foreshadowed Christ's blood. In Acts 7:35, he is called a Redeemer, though some render it as a deliverer.

But many interpreters understand this as referring to Christ as the Mediator of the Law. Indeed, the following words seem to support this interpretation. The Apostle says that a Mediator is not a Mediator of one, meaning those who are in consent and accord, but of those who dissent. Therefore, Moses could not truly and actually



be a Mediator between God and the people of Israel when God was angry with them for their sins. Besides, as will be shown, the Law is a Covenant of grace, and Christ alone can be the Mediator in such a Covenant by virtue of His nature. Beza presents arguments against this interpretation, but they do not seem strong enough to dismiss this sense given. Furthermore, the phrase "by the hand" (which is an Hebraism) does not always denote ministry and inferiority; sometimes, it signifies power and strength. But we will delve further into this in the explanation of the doctrine.

Observation: It was a great honour given to the Law that it was delivered by Christ, accompanied by thousands of angels. No other assembly or parliament was as glorious as this one, where the Law was enacted, and Jesus Christ Himself was the Speaker. The more glory God bestowed upon it, the greater the sin of those doctrines that diminish its significance. While Christ indeed gave the Law, the Apostle places the preeminence of the Gospel far above it because Christ gave the Law in the form of an Angel, but He gave the Gospel when He became man, manifesting the glory not of angels but of the only begotten Son of God. Men should be careful, therefore, not to offend or transgress the Law, which possesses such sacred authority. It is astounding to witness how afraid people are to break man-made laws, which cannot condemn them, yet they do not tremble when they offend the Lawgiver who alone has the power to save or destroy. To comprehend this better, consider that Jesus Christ is the Angel who gave the Law, the chief captain of all the angels who accompanied Him. As stated in Acts 7:35, He is the same who appeared to Moses in the bush. God the Father entrusted the entire government and guidance of the redemption of the people of Israel into the hands of Christ. Hence, He is called the Angel of the Covenant in Isaiah 6:3 and 9, as He made that Covenant of the Law with His people on Mount Sinai. In Exodus 33:2, God said He would

send an Angel before them to drive out the Nations of the land, and in verse 14, this Angel is referred to as the face of God or His presence that would go before them. A notable passage is found in Exodus 23:20, where God said He would send an Angel before them to keep them in the way and bring them to the place He prepared. He warned them not to provoke this Angel, for He would not pardon their transgressions, as His name was in Him. Clearly, it was Jesus Christ who served the Father in the entire work of Redemption out of Egypt. Grotius, in the explanation of the Decalogue, deemed it a grievous error to hold that the second person in the Trinity was the Angel who gave the Law. However, all the Socinians deny this, claiming that Christ had no existence before His Incarnation. Some Papists also believe this Angel to be a created one, but He must be God since He began the promulgation of the Law with the declaration, "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt." It does not suffice to say that the Angel calls Himself the God who brought them out of Egypt as an Ambassador speaking in the name of the Lord. Prophets were also God's Ambassadors, yet they never appropriated the name of Jehovah to themselves. In contrast, this Angel is called Jehovah, and in 1 Corinthians 10:9, the Jews are said to tempt Christ because He was the Angel who delivered them through Moses.

It is debated whether, when any Angel appeared who was also God, it was the Son of God. Therefore, in the Old Testament, the Father and the Holy Ghost never appeared, only the Son. Augustine considered it a question worth resolving and devoted a significant portion of his second book of the Trinity to address it. Many of the ancient Fathers believed that it was the Son alone who appeared, so that all the apparitions to Adam, Abraham, and Moses were understood to be the Son. They regarded this as a prelude to His Incarnation. However, some of these Ancients provided a dangerous and false

reason for this belief, claiming that only the Father was invisible. As such, they applied the text "No man hath seen God at any time" solely to the Father, and consequently, they thought the Son could be seen, but not the Father. The Arians later eagerly seized upon these passages.

But this is certain: the second Person is no more visible or mutable than the first. The doubt lies in whether all the administrations and apparitions in the Old Testament were not by the second Person. In the New Testament, the voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son," must be from the Father immediately. It has been difficult to determine whether the Angel that appeared was a created one or the increated Son of God. Let us not be too curious in deciding this matter. The lesson to learn is to be cautious in discrediting this Law, which God has honoured, whether through doctrines or practices. We may live down the Law or preach against it, both of which are a reproach to it. The Law's perpetual and immutable obligation is such that sin's very existence lies in being a transgression of the Law. If the obligatory power of the Law is negated, then there can be no sin. Just as the Heathen considered political laws as the walls of a city, fortifying them and upholding laws, how much more true is this of God's Commandments? In God, there is transcendent authority, wisdom, and holiness, and every sin contains disobedience against authority, folly against wisdom, and injustice against righteousness.

In this passage, as well as in his other Epistles, Paul is careful to set boundaries between the doctrine of the Law and the Gospel, ensuring that neither encroaches upon the other. It is crucial to preach the Law in a way that does not obscure the Gospel and to commend the Gospel in a manner that does not destroy the Law. Paul consistently observed this method in his teachings. However, achieving this balance has been challenging, as some preachers and

hearers have been inclined to make one doctrine prejudicial to the other. While the Gospel is to be preferred in various respects, when it is extolled to the extent that the Law becomes useless and unprofitable, lawful limits are exceeded. Throughout history, various groups such as Jews, Papists, Arminians, Socinians, and generally, all Heretics have elevated the Law, overshadowing the Gospel. Few have extolled the Gospel to the detriment of the Law.

To proceed methodically, we will discuss when the Law is preached prejudicially to the Gospel and when the Gospel is prejudicial to the Law.

Firstly, the Law is stretched too far when its works are pressed for justification, whether these works are the fruits of grace or antecedent to grace. The Apostle vehemently opposes this dangerous doctrine of the Law in his Epistles and accuses its teachers of apostasy from Christ and making His sufferings in vain. To be a legal preacher, in the Scriptural sense, is not to press the duty and works of the Law for justification and the righteousness relied upon before God's Tribunal. Those who accuse Protestant preachers of being legal preachers misunderstand this distinction and may be driven by unsanctified and corrupt hearts that aversion to the Law in the former sense.

2. The Law is used derogatory to the Gospel when Christ is not excluded from justification, but rather Christ and works are joined together. This is more subtly dangerous than the previous error. This was the false doctrine propagated by the deceivers among the Galatians; they did not completely exclude Christ, but they failed to make Him the sole source of salvation. God does not approve of such unequal yoking. Preaching no Christ or an imperfect Christ is equally impious. Therefore, any teachings

that diminish Christ's sufficiency should be rejected. There is only one Mediator, and just as God does not share His glory with another, Christ will not share His Mediatorship with anyone else. Christ is jealous when people give glory to their own works instead of to Him. This difficulty in fully embracing justifying Faith is due to the innate desire in people's hearts to claim some merit of their own and to be reluctant to rely solely on Christ for everything.

3. The Law is preached prejudicially to the Gospel when it is made to be the instrumental cause of working grace. It cannot be denied that God uses the Law to initiate and increase grace, but this grace comes wholly through Christ. It is not the Law itself that imparts this spiritual virtue to people. Just as when the woman touched the hem of Christ's garment, it was not the hem but Christ Himself who worked the miraculous healing in her. Grace may be given with the preaching of the Law, but it is not given by the Law itself. The Gospel must be acknowledged as the sole source of both justifying and sanctifying grace. Just as without the rising of the sun, every creature would be lifeless and unable to grow, there would be no natural life or growth. Similarly, without the Son of righteousness bringing healing, no Law or Ordinance could ever be beneficial to us.

In the second place, the Gospel may be exalted to the detriment of the Law. This happens when it is claimed to bring not only freedom from the condemning power of the Law but also freedom from the obligatory power of it. Antinomists, in promoting grace and the Gospel, must ask themselves the same objection that Paul raised: "Do we then make void the Law? God forbid." If the condemning and commanding power of the Law is taken away, little of it remains, just like the remains of Jezebel's corpse after the dogs had gnawed it.

While standing firm in the liberty of the Gospel, one must be cautious to discern whether it is true Gospel-liberty or profane license that is being advocated. Embracing the Gospel in a scriptural way, and not in a subjective manner, involves respecting the bounds set by Scripture. Gospel-grace should not be used as an excuse for loose and ungodly living. Beware of claiming a self-made Gospel or free-grace that deviates from true scriptural teachings. There may be times when the Law is unseasonably preached, just as there may be times when the promises should not be emphasized.

2. The Gospel or grace is set up contrary to the Law when Christians are completely exempted from humility for sin and from the Law's threatening. The notion that the Law has no relevance to a believer is dangerous. Even in the New Testament, Believers are awakened with solemn and severe warnings. While seeking a spirit of adoption and striving for an Evangelical temper is essential, one must be cautious not to fall into temptations or be intoxicated by an overindulgence in this sweet wine of grace. Both Ministers and people should harmoniously acknowledge the Law and Gospel in their practical observations. Just as Christ and Moses were both in glory on the Mount of transfiguration without any opposition, the Law can be a glorious Law and the Gospel a glorious Gospel, serving their purposes and being understood in harmony.

## **LECTURE XVII.**

What is the purpose of discussing the Law as given by Moses?

And God spoke all these words, saying, &c. - EXOD. 20. 1.

We have already examined the historical observations made during the delivery of the Law and highlighted its dignity and excellence. Now, let's address the questions that arise, shedding light on the truths that are currently being doubted. First and foremost, one might ask, what is the purpose of discussing the Law as given by Moses? Aren't we Christians? Does it concern us? Hasn't Christ abolished the Law? Isn't Moses and his ministry now obsolete? Therefore, it is worth exploring whether the Ten Commandments, as given by Moses, are applicable to us Christians or not.

To answer this question, I will present some propositions as a preface, followed by arguments in favor of the affirmative stance.

First and foremost, even if we were to grant that the Moral Law, as given by Moses, does not directly apply to us Christians, the doctrine of the Antinomians would still be invalid. Some learned and solid Divines, like Zanchi and Rivet, and even some Papists, like Suarez and Medina, argue that the Law, as delivered by Moses, does not bind us, but they are strongly against Antinomian beliefs. Their perspective is that although the Law may not bind under the Mosaic notion, it still holds its authority because it is confirmed by Christ. So, while the initial obligation from Moses may have ceased, the second obligation, given by Christ, is still applicable. This alone is sufficient to refute the Antinomian stance, which advocates for the total abrogation of the Law.

Moreover, this position seems to rest on a flawed premise, suggesting that in Matthew 5, Jesus took away the obligation of the Law from Moses and introduced a new authority by his own sanction. However, this interpretation contradicts the overall purpose of our Savior's message, which is to show that he did not

come to destroy the Law. He did not intend to be a new Law-giver but rather an Interpreter of the old Law given by Moses. I plan to address this further, God willing, in the question of whether Christ appointed any new duties that were not present in the Law before. It appears clear that our Savior only interprets the old Law and defends it from misinterpretations, without establishing a new Law or intending a new confirmation of the old Law.

Secondly, let's consider the sense in which we say that the Law still binds us in regard to Moses. And,

Firstly, we should not understand it reduplicatively, as if it binds us because of Moses, as this would be false and contrary to the entire Scripture. For instance, the Ceremonial Law would then also apply to us, which is not the case.

Secondly, we can understand it as Moses being a Penman of the Scripture, writing down these laws for the Church of God, intending them for the benefit of Christians in the New Testament. This should not be denied by those who believe that the Old Testament applies to Christians. If the books of the Prophets belong to us, why not the books of Moses as well?

Thirdly, we can understand it in the sense that when God gave the Ten Commandments through Moses to the people of Israel, although they were the immediate recipients, God intended these Laws to apply not only to the Jews but also to all other nations that would be converted and embrace their religion. The real question is not whether Moses was a Minister or a Mediator to Christians as well as Jews (as that is clearly false), but whether when he delivered the Ten Commandments, he intended them only for the Jews and not for all future converts. The Law was indeed given to the people of Israel, but the question is whether others who come under its promulgation



are not also bound to receive it, just as Jews are. Thus, we must see Moses as receiving the Moral Law for the Church of God perpetually, but the other laws in a more specific and appropriated manner for the Jews. The Jewish Church can be seen in two ways: firstly, as a context where many ordinances were typical, and Moses was a typical Mediator; secondly, as an Academy or School, preserving the true doctrine about God and His will, along with interpretations given by the Prophets then living. In the latter sense, what they did, they did for us, as well as for the Jews. To understand this better, we can consider that the Moral Law binds in two ways:

1. In terms of the subject matter, the Law of Nature obliges everyone; therefore, it also bound the Jews before its formal promulgation on Mount Sinai.
2. Alternatively, we may consider its binding authority through the precepts and commands given with it. When a Law is declared by a Messenger, a new obligation is placed upon it. Thus, when Moses, as a Minister and Servant of God, delivered this Law to the people, he imposed an obligation upon them.

Now, the key question is whether this obligation was temporary or perpetual. I am inclined to the view shared by Pareus, Bellarmine, and Vasquez that it is perpetual.

3. While Rivet may not see this question as significant and may regard it as a mere wordplay, it is indeed crucial. Although they claim to oppose the Antinomians and affirm that the Law still obliges because of Christ's confirmation of it, the Antinomians assert that they do not differ from them in this regard. According to the Antinomians, the Law binds in terms of its subject matter and its relationship with Jesus Christ. However, this assertion contradicts their other statements, as seen in the

dangerous positions they hold concerning good works, which I have examined before. So, if we can demonstrate, without twisting or forcing Scripture, that when God gave the Ten Commandments (referring only to the Moral Law) through Moses, He intended a perpetual obligation for the Jews and all others who convert to Him, then the Antinomian error will be more evidently debunked. I must emphasize that in presenting my arguments for the affirmative, it is essential to keep in mind the specific sense in which the Question is framed, and that I do not speak of the entire scope of Moses's ministry.

First and foremost, I offer this compelling argument: If the Ceremonial Law, as given by Moses, still obliged Christians (even though its subject matter had no inherent obligation and required revocation and abolition), then the Moral Law given by Moses must also continue to bind, despite the absence of binding in terms of its subject matter, unless we can demonstrate where it has been repealed. To clarify further, consider that in the early days of the Church, there was a major debate regarding whether converted Gentiles were obligated to observe the Ceremonial Law, including circumcision and all the legal purifications. The resolution to these questions was based on the understanding that these ceremonial practices were merely shadows, and since Christ, the fulfillment, had come, they were no longer necessary.

As for the Judicial Laws, they were given specifically for the political body of the Jewish nation, and as the polity ceased to exist, these laws lost their principal purpose, causing the accessory to fall with it. Thus, according to general consensus, the Ceremonial Law would have continued to bind Christians if not for specific revocations and inherent reasons for their cessation. However, the same cannot be said for the Moral Law, as its subject matter is eternal, and there are

no scriptural passages that abrogate it. While some may argue that the Apostles' references to the Law encompass both the Moral and Ceremonial aspects, it is crucial to note that the primary issue in the early dispute was solely about Ceremonial Law and its relation to justification. The Apostles clarified that neither Ceremonial nor Moral Law justifies; instead, justification is attained through Christ alone. Therefore, their inclusion of the Moral Law in the discussion relates to justification, not obligation. The main question revolved around whether the Ceremonial Law still obliged, with some believing that performing those acts could lead to justification. This, in essence, is the first argument.

The second Argument stems from Scripture, which emphasizes the binding nature of the Moral Law on Gentiles who have embraced Christianity. This is evident in Paul's writings to the Romans and Ephesians, where he cites the commandments given by Moses as still relevant. For example, in Romans 13:8-9, he declares that love fulfills the Law and then proceeds to list the commandments given by Moses. Similarly, in Ephesians 6:2, Paul urges children to honor their father and mother, referring to it as the first Commandment with a promise. These exhortations are based entirely on Moses's teachings and cannot be attributed to any other source. The Epistle of James further supports this perspective in chapters 2:8 and 2:10, where he refers to the fulfillment of the "royal Law" as laid out in the Scriptures (referring to Moses's writings). The argument here is not based on the matter or content of the commandments but on the authority and origin of these commandments, which come directly from God through Moses. Therefore, when considering whether these commandments apply to Gentile converts, we must recognize that Jews and Christians are regarded as one people in God's sight. For instance, in 1 Corinthians 10, the Apostle addresses the Corinthians as having a spiritual connection to their ancestors

through Moses, signifying that they are seen as part of the same spiritual lineage.

The third Argument centers around the obligation to observe the Sabbath day. This is a strong indication that the Moral Law, as given by Moses, binds us as Christians. The Orthodoxy's view, which is abundantly supported, is that the Sabbath day is perpetual and based on the fourth Commandment. Consequently, we can infer that the Commandments, as delivered by Moses, hold sway over us. The distinction made by some between the binding nature of the Law based on its content (*ration materiae*) and the binding nature based on its ministry (*ration ministrii*) is not applicable in this context. The seventh-day Sabbath does not bind us merely due to the content or matter of the day itself; there is nothing inherent in nature to specify the seventh day over the fifth day, for instance. Instead, its observance is derived solely from God's direct Command. However, it does not necessarily follow that we are bound to observe the Jewish seventh-day Sabbath, as the Learned have demonstrated in their scholarly discussions on this topic.

Now, those who deny that the Law was given by Moses must consequently conclude that we observe the Sabbath day only based on New Testament grounds, and not as a result of the fourth Commandment. Despite this argument not being strong enough to rely upon, it is noteworthy that all Churches have maintained the moral Law alongside its Preface in their Catechisms, implying that it applies to us.

When profane opinions and licentious doctrines arose against the observance of the Sabbath day, learned and sound individuals regarded it as an attack on one of the Commandments. Thus, their distinction that the Moral Law binds due to the Law of Nature but

not the Law of Moses does not hold. As the Sabbath day's moral and perpetual nature derives solely from God's positive Commandment, it cannot be rooted in the Law of Nature concerning a specific time.

The fourth Argument is based on Reason, which deems it incongruous to impose a temporary obligation on a perpetual duty. It is implausible that God, while delivering the Law through Moses, intended it to have a temporary obligation when the subject matter is perpetual. Such a scenario would imply that certain Commandments, like not having other gods or not committing adultery, would lose their obligation after Moses's time, making room for new obligations. However, there is no logical reason to believe that God would change obligations when the matter is necessary and everlasting. The practice of circumcision or offering sacrifices until the end of Moses's ministry is understandable, but there is no reasonable basis for altering the obligations of the Moral Law in a similar manner.

The fifth Argument argues that if the Law as given by Moses does not bind us, then the explications of it by other Prophets do not apply either. Moses, in other places, explains the Law, and various biblical texts, including David's Psalms, Solomon's Proverbs, and the Prophets' prophecies (particularly in moral contexts), serve as explications of the Moral Law. Rejecting the binding force of the Old Testament would open the door to undermining its authority. For instance, if one were to cite Deuteronomy 32:46 ("Set your hearts upon these words which I testify to you this day, because it is your life, etc.") to encourage Christians to keep the Commandments of the Lord, the response might be that it is not relevant since it pertains to Moses and does not concern us. This approach would lead to the rejection of various texts and proofs presented in Sermons. For instance, Dominicus à Soto, a proponent of the negative view among the Papists, explicitly states in "lib. 2. de Just. & jure, quaest. 5. Art.

4." that no passage from the Old Testament can be cited as having obliging force for Christians. This stance effectively undermines the significance of the Old Testament.

Let us now examine the primary arguments put forth to support the opinion that the Law, as given by Moses, does not bind Christians. Firstly, they point to the Preface [I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of Egypt.] and claim it does not apply to us since neither we nor our ancestors were in Egypt. Moreover, they argue that the temporal Promise attached to keeping the Law does not concern us. For instance, in Ephesians 6:2, when Paul urges the Commandment with the Promise, he does not specifically mention that "thy life may be long in the land the Lord thy God shall give thee." Instead, he speaks more generally, saying that "it may be well with thee," which was not part of the original Promise. He then adds that "thou mayest live long upon the earth in general."

Regarding the Preface, some suggest that we may be said to be in Egypt in a literal sense by considering ourselves one with the people of the Jews. They refer to Romans 11, where Gentiles are said to be grafted in, becoming of the same stock. This interpretation makes believers part of Abraham's seed, thus making them beneficiaries of the same mercies. While this is plausible, I will not rely on this explanation. Another response is that the bondage in Egypt was a typification of our spiritual bondage, and the deliverance from it was a typification of our deliverance from Hell. Although this interpretation may hold truth, it is not as literal as I desire. Therefore, I posit that there may be specific arguments for Jews to keep the Commandments, but there are general ones that apply to all. The general arguments, such as "I am the Lord thy God," apply to us, while the specific ones may be unique to the Jews. It is not uncommon for a perpetual duty to be emphasized for a particular

group through certain occasions or motives. For instance, in Jeremiah 16:14-15, God speaks through the Prophet, stating that people will no longer say, "The Lord that brought us up out of the land of Egypt," but rather "that brought us up out of the land of the North." This demonstrates how a specific new argument may be presented for a general duty. As for the particular temporal Promise, I concede that it was exclusive to the Jews, but I deny the consequent notion that the precept does not apply to us. Scripture often employs various arguments to urge obedience to the same Command. For example, David's Psalms and some of Paul's Epistles, like Philemon, were written for specific occasions, yet their contents remain relevant to us.

The second Argument contends that if the Law obligated us as given by Moses, then it would have applied to the Gentiles and Heathens as well, making them bound to the Commandments just like the Jews. However, this is not the case; hence, Paul, in Romans 2, speaks of the Gentiles without this Law, as those who will be judged without it.

Now, there is a response to this: It does not necessarily mean that the Law given by Moses must immediately bind the Gentiles. Instead, it becomes binding when it is promulgated and made known to them. In the same way, Infidels and Pagans are not obligated to believe in Jesus Christ at this time, but if the doctrine of Christ were presented to them, then they would be bound by it. I have no doubt that other nations were bound during Moses' ministry to seek after the true God and worship Him in the Jewish manner as much as they could. We see evidence of this in the account of the Eunuch traveling to Jerusalem for worship. If a whole nation had converted during that time, they would have had to worship God according to their own institutions, or God would have revealed to them a different way of worship from the Jews. Otherwise, they were bound, to the extent

they could, to worship God according to the Jewish practices prescribed by Him. So, the Law given by Moses did bind Gentiles when made known to them. For instance, the stranger within their gates was required to observe the Sabbath, which referred to someone who had embraced their religion. In Nehemiah 13:19, Nehemiah did not allow the Tyrians, who were strangers and did not follow the Jewish Law, to defile the Sabbath.

However, it is essential to add this limitation: The Law given by Moses does not apply to us in all its specific administration. The manner in which the Law was delivered, in a terrifying fashion, might have been a unique aspect reserved for the Jews, befitting the dispensation of the Old Testament. Nevertheless, the Law itself, with its binding authority, does pertain to us. We all acknowledge that the Old Testament had a distinctive administration compared to the New; it was more fearsome and inclined towards bondage compared to the New. Some even suggest that the Law was given on Mount Sinai, so called because of the abundance of bramble bushes (Seneh) present, symbolizing the fearsome and prickly nature of the Law.

In conclusion, we must be cautious not to reject the Law as given by Moses, for in doing so, we would essentially reject the entire Old Testament. The Prophets, like the Law, were in effect until John the Baptist's time. Therefore, why should the Antinomians limit the Law solely to Moses, as if it did not bind through other prophets like David, Isaiah, and Jeremiah? Even Moses speaks of Christ in other places, as explicitly mentioned by our Savior. Thus, I fail to see how an Antinomian can consistently follow their principle without essentially disregarding the Old Testament, except in its prophecies of Christ.



## LECTURE XVIII.

The Law Delivered by Moses is Belongs to Us as Christians

"You have heard that it was said by them of old time... But I say unto you..." -MATTHEW 5:21-22

In our previous discussion, we considered the Law from two perspectives: as an absolute Rule and as a relative Covenant. We focused on the former aspect and established that the Law, as delivered by Moses, is applicable to us Christians. Now, let us delve into its perfection and demonstrate that Christ has not introduced any new duty that was not already commanded by the Law of Moses. This topic holds significance in refuting the arguments of Antinomians, Papists, and Socinians, as we shall see in due course. To better approach this subject, it is worth noting that these words are part of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, where He expounds on the Law, much like how it was initially given on a mount. In this sermon, Christ first addresses the end of actions – blessedness, aligning with the approach of practical Moral Philosophy. He then describes the qualities of the subjects who shall partake in this blessedness.

Some scholars believe that in verse 13, He provides instructions to the Apostles regarding their specific roles: "You are the salt" – which is bitter to wounds, not sweet like honey, and "You are the light" – which can be discomfoting to sore eyes. Christ proceeds to instruct the people (though some suggest it is directed solely to the Disciples). He begins by clarifying the substance of the precepts – which duties should be performed – in contrast to the false interpretations of the Pharisees and Scribes. In the subsequent

chapter, He reveals the purpose behind fulfilling the good things God requires of us – that is, for the glory of God, which should surpass all other motives, like the Sun extinguishing the light of a fire. The first substantial duty Christ highlights from the Commandments is the one mentioned in my text.

Before I present the Doctrine, I must address some Questions: Firstly, what is meant by the phrase "It hath been said by them of old"? There is some difference in interpretation. Some understand it in the dative case as "It hath been said to them of old," implying the previous hearers. Others see it as equivalent to "It hath been said from the ancients," as if "from the ancients" corresponds to the Ablative case in Latin. Our interpreters tend to lean towards the latter, and so do others who are Orthodox. However, the opposition between "It hath been said to them of old" and "But I say unto you" leads me to lean towards the former interpretation where "to them" is in the dative case. It is also questioned who are meant by "those of old" and to what period it extends. Some limit it to the time between Esdras and Christ, but I believe it extends back to Moses' time, as we see Christ referring to commands given then. The word "ancients" (except in Acts 21:16) generally refers to the times of Moses or the Prophets.

Secondly, the question arises whether the precepts said to be heard of old are the Law and words of Moses or additions made by corrupt glossers. It is evident that most of them are the direct words of Moses, such as "Thou shalt not kill" or "Commit adultery." However, doubts arise concerning two passages. The first is in verse 21, "Shall be in danger of judgment." Some argue that there are two corruptions here: firstly, the addition of words not found in the Scripture, where it is stated firmly, "He shall die," while the actual meaning seems obscure and doubtful – that the person shall be

brought before the judges to be tried to determine their guilt. The second corruption is believed to be in the sense, as if the Pharisees understood the Commandment only to forbid actual murder but not murderous thoughts, affections, or intentions. The latter seems to be the correct interpretation, as I will explain later, but I am somewhat unsure about the former, as there may be an implied equivalent. In Numbers 35:30, it is mentioned that a murderer to be put to death should be tried by witnesses, suggesting the presence of judges to decide the case.

The second particular is found in verse 43, "Thou shalt hate thine enemy." Here, some scholars observe a three-fold corruption: firstly, an implied one, suggesting that a friend is merely a neighbor; secondly, a plain omission – in Leviticus 19, it is added "as thyself," which is missing here; thirdly, a clear addition of something that was not only not commanded or permitted but expressly prohibited in Exodus 23 and Proverbs 25. This may be seen as an interpretation by the Scribes and Pharisees arguing that if we are to love our neighbors, we must hate our enemies. Some believe this could apply only in a limited sense to the Canaanites, as they were commanded not to make a covenant with them but to destroy them without pity. The Jews even thought they were allowed to kill idolaters. Tacitus remarked that they showed mercy to their own but had hostile hatred towards all others. However, some understand the command of God to destroy those nations not absolutely, but limitedly, if they refused the conditions of peace. I lean towards those who view this as a perverse addition by the Scribes and Pharisees, but I cannot entirely dismiss the other interpretation.

3. The question here is whether our Savior opposes others as a Law-giver or as an Interpreter, clearing away the misconceptions from the fountain. This is worth investigating

because this chapter has been misused by the Manichees, Marcionites of old, and other erroneous individuals more recently, to support significant errors. Some have claimed that the authors of the Old and New Testaments are contradictory, while others argue that the New Testament or the Gospel contains more precise and spiritual duties than the Old. They then conclude that many things that were permissible before are now forbidden, citing examples like Magistracy, resistance to injuries, swearing, loving enemies, and additional counsels of perfection. This is a crucial question because it reveals the true excellence of the Law when it becomes evident that Jesus Christ (aside from the positive precepts like Baptism and the Lord's Supper) did not command any new duty that was not already incumbent upon them.

Now, to demonstrate that our Savior only interpreted and did not add new Laws, consider the following:

Firstly, our Savior's own protestation and solemn affirmation before instructing the hearers about their duties: "Think not that I came to destroy the Law, but to fulfill it." While Christ's fulfillment of the Law can be understood in various ways, it is most primarily applicable to his doctrinal fulfillment. He contrasts teaching the Law with breaking the Law, implying that his intention was not to introduce new duties but rather to provide a better understanding of the Law, making people more aware of their sins and revealing the true depth of their foulness and abominations. As Theophylact puts it, just as a painter does not obliterate the original features but rather enhances and beautifies them, Christ did the same with the Law.

Secondly, Christ did not introduce new duties not already commanded in the Law because the Law is perfect, and it is

prohibited to add or subtract from it. Therefore, we cannot embrace a superior way of duty than what is already prescribed there.

Certainly, the Gospel surpasses infinitely in terms of the remedy offered to afflicted sinners and the glorious manifestation of God's grace and goodness. However, when it comes to holy and spiritual duties, there cannot be a more excellent path of holiness, as it is an idea and representation of the magnificent nature of God.

3. The evidence that nothing can be added to the Law becomes apparent through the commandment to love God with all our heart and soul. This command is of the utmost importance and not only indicates the ultimate goal we are to strive for but also prescribes all the means leading to it.

Furthermore, our Savior does not say that our righteousness should exceed that of Moses' Law or the commandments delivered by him, but that of the Scribes and Pharisees. By this, he clearly intends to expose and reveal the formal and hypocritical ways they took pleasure in, while failing to grasp the true essence and excellence of the Law.

Question 4: What was the prevailing opinion among the Pharisees concerning God's Commandments? To understand the grounds on which our Savior interpreted the Law in this manner, we must consider the general opinion held by the Jews regarding the meaning of the Commandments. They believed that the Law only applied to outward actions and forbade only these external acts. They did not consider inward desires or intentions as sinful in the eyes of God, as long as these desires were not carried out in outward actions. This belief is evident in Paul's testimony while he was under the influence of Pharisaical principles, as he did not see inward lust as sin. This erroneous interpretation extended to the understanding of certain

Psalms, as mentioned by Kimchy, where only outward acts were seen as sinful, and inward desires were not considered as transgressions.

This inclination to ignore heart sins unless they manifested outwardly is a natural tendency in all of us. We often neglect to recognize and be humbled for sins of the heart if they do not culminate in external actions. However, God, being a spirit, values spiritual graces highly and, conversely, abhors spiritual sins. The schools correctly note that outward sins may bring greater shame, but inward heart-sins carry greater guilt. This truth is evident in the case of the devils. The corruption in human nature also gives rise to a poisonous notion in some circles, including formal Protestants, and more pronounced in Popery, that God's commands merely forbid the voluntary omission of outward acts, while ignoring the inward heart issues. Our Savior's explications of the Law align with the teachings of sound Divines, who understand that the Law is spiritual and not only forbids the outward manifestations of sin but also addresses its root and fountain. Moreover, wherever a sin is forbidden, the opposite good is commanded proportionately.

Considering these aspects, every person should tremble and fear their own heart, echoing the cry of the Psalmist, "Gehenna sum Domine, I am a very hell itself." Therefore, let us not be afraid to preach the Law as Christ does here, for it serves as a powerful tool to confront formality and Pharisaism prevalent among people.

In conclusion, the Doctrine is that the Law of God is an utterly perfect rule of life, and Christ did not introduce any new precepts or duties to it. As the Prophets explicated the Law by emphasizing moral duties before Christ, so He and the Apostles, in urging people towards holiness, reiterate the same duties that were previously commanded. This does not include Sacraments or the outward

positive worship, which differ from the Old-Testament practices (e.g., circumcision and Baptism). Instead, it pertains to the Moral duties required of us.

Indeed, in the Old Testament, many things were expressed in a more literal and material manner, and the people often understood them in a similarly physical way. However, the duties commanded then were just as spiritual as they are now. The difference lies in the gradual unfolding and clearer manifestation of these duties, rather than any fundamental change in the duties themselves. To highlight the dignity and excellence of the Law, let me provide some specific examples:

Firstly, the Law of God demanded heart-worship and service. It is generally accepted that when moral duties are emphasized in the Old Testament, the Prophets act as explainers of the Law, revealing what was previously folded together. Consider the passages in the Old Testament that call for heart involvement: Proverbs 3:1 speaks of keeping God's commandments in the heart, and Proverbs 23:26 says, "My son, give me thine heart." Any outward duties performed without the engagement of the heart and inner self were not valued. God required heartfelt prayer and genuine humility. However, people at that time often perceived these commands only in a physical and superficial sense. Even in the present Gospel era, people tend to focus on external duties without truly examining whether their prayers and humbling of themselves align with the Word's description of such acts. Like David, many are aware of their heart's negligence, praying for God to unite their hearts to fear His Name. The same temptation persists; people may pray and humble themselves, but their hearts remain divided and distracted, as if responding like Satan to God's question, "From whence comest thou?" with "From compassing the earth."

Secondly, the Law prioritized the duties of Mortification and Sanctification over outward religious practices. The Prophets repeatedly emphasize this aspect. In Isaiah 1, God strongly disapproves of their solemn duties, considering them abominable like carrion, because they lack inner cleansing. Similarly, David highlights that a broken and contrite heart is more significant than any burnt offering, even in the Gospel era. This is a lofty duty, and few manage to attain it. The Apostle reproves the Corinthians for seeking gifts rather than graces, and abilities over holiness. Therefore, this excellent duty prescribed by God's Law, to be able to mortify our desires and possess sanctified natures, surpasses even possessing Seraphical knowledge or Cherubinical affections in any duty. Who then can be against the preaching of the Law when it offers such precious holiness?

Lastly, the Law demanded the performance of all our duties, both towards God and fellow human beings. The Old Testament is replete with exhortations to fulfill our responsibilities and obligations. These duties encompassed not only external actions but also the heart's disposition and motives behind the actions. The Law acknowledged the necessity of inward purity in the discharge of our duties.

In conclusion, the Law of God, though expressed in a more tangible manner in the Old Testament, embraced spiritual duties. It called for wholehearted worship, prioritized inner transformation, and encompassed all aspects of our duties. The Law serves as an excellent and pure rule, guiding us towards precious holiness.

1. Regarding faith: Who can deny that when God required, in the first Table, for the people to have Him as their God, it implicitly commanded faith and trust in Him as a God in Covenant, willing to pardon sin? How could the Jews love and pray to God



acceptably if they did not have faith in Him? Therefore, the Law should be strictly considered as containing nothing but precepts of things to be done, which is sometimes, although rarely, taken. Additionally, the Law should be seen more broadly, including the Preface and Promises added to it, necessitating justifying faith. It is inconceivable that when God commanded the people of Israel, through Moses, to worship and acknowledge Him as their God, He did not also intend for them to believe in Him as a Father. More on this topic will be discussed when we speak of the Law as a Covenant.

2. Concerning love: The Law places great emphasis on love. Christ encapsulates the sum of the Law in two things: love of God and love of our neighbor. Therefore, I am puzzled by the Antinomian who opposes acting in love and acting according to the Law simultaneously. Does the Law of God not command every duty to be carried out in love? Are we not required to love God for the many benefits He bestows upon us, even more so for the spiritual ones?

The Law may have been dispensed in a formidable and restrictive manner, leaning towards bondage. However, its doctrine promoted love. The more a Jew acted in love towards God, the more in line he was with God's Law.

4. The Law demanded an affectionate heart, prompting us to love God above all else. It did not merely require love to God; it commanded it in such preeminence that no Christian under the Gospel could perform a higher duty or express greater love than what was commanded of the Jews. Suppose a person becomes a martyr, sacrificing their life for God's cause; this would be obedience to the first Commandment. When our Saviour states,

"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me," He imposes no higher standard on any Christian than what every Jew was obligated to do. Hence, Levi was commended for executing justice without regard for father or mother. This should come as no surprise because nothing can exceed loving God entirely, with all our mind, heart, and strength. Though we cannot love God in the way He loves Himself, nothing can surpass, equal, or contradict such love.

5. The Law required spiritual motives for all our solemn approaches to God. Some may view all Jews in the Old Testament as merely fixated on earthly matters, like children drawn to apples and nuts rather than a great inheritance. According to this view, they were motivated to perform duties solely by carnal and temporal incentives, devoid of any spiritual considerations. However, this notion is false, as evidenced by the general complaints of the Prophets that the fasting of the people was not genuinely directed towards God, but rather towards their miseries. For instance, David, even after receiving pardon for his sin, spiritually mourns, saying, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned." In Micah 7, a spiritual confession declares, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against Him." Such sentiments are undeniably spiritual.
6. The Law demanded joy and contentment in God above all else, even to the point of despising all other creatures. Can the Gospel administration command anything higher? Expressions such as "Rejoice in the Lord always," "Set your affections on things above," and "Our Conversation is in Heaven" are considered highly spiritual. However, David's exclamation goes equally high when he says, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and none in earth in comparison of thee?" He prefers the Word of God above

gold and honey, and his heart faints and yearns for Him. What a sweet expression of his heart's desire when, in exile, he does not yearn for his kingdom or outward wealth but to behold God in the beauty of holiness! Hence, despite the dispensation being less clear and manifest, those who diligently sought God were able to attain such excellent dispositions.

7. Furthermore, the Law demanded perfection. But why go further into discussing perfection when the Law commanded it in all its forms? Perfection in the subject; the person ought to be entirely holy in mind, soul, and affections. Perfection in the object; no duty or performance was excluded from the Law's requirements. Perfection in degrees; it demanded love without any defect or remissness at all. Therefore, there cannot be a more excellent doctrinal path to holiness than the preaching of the Law.
8. God works grace in us through the Law as well as through the Gospel. I mention this specifically so that no one may say, "All this is more terrifying because it only commands and does not help." My response is that God uses the Law instrumentally to invigorate and increase grace within us, as David elaborates in Psalm 119. True, the Law alone cannot produce grace, just as the Gospel alone cannot produce grace. The distinction lies in this: we cannot be justified by any works of the Law that we perform, even though enabled to do so; rather, we are justified by faith—not as a work (for it is commanded in the Law), but as an instrument that applies Christ. Hence, God's spirit graciously accompanies us as we uphold these duties, and this transforms us into living embodiments of the Law. This does not negate Christ but rather exalts Him further.

Instruction: It becomes evident how crucial a duty it is for a Minister of Jesus Christ to diligently preach and expound upon the Law of God. Just as Christ, in this lengthy and foremost Sermon He preached, vindicated the Law and extolled its excellence, so should we, without fear, present the Law. Some have dared to speak ill of Christ in this regard, branding Him as a legal Preacher. Yet, in truth, the preaching of the Law is indispensable, and you can never become spiritual, heavenly, or heart-centered Christians unless these matters are constantly laid before you. Can a child ever learn to write well without a precise model before them? Therefore, we can never emphasize the Law too much or hear enough about it, as long as it is consistently presented as a Rule and Doctrine. However, when it is used as the foundation for our Justification, we pervert the precious Manna into corrupt worms. Instead of condemning or debating against the Law, we should fervently desire to have this excellent Rule set before us more and more. Reflect on how proud even our best humility may be or how worldly our best heavenly-mindedness may appear if not measured by this Rule. Formality and customary duties will lose their grip when we pay heed to this guide. Know that there is much hidden sinfulness in your heart because the Law remains unknown to you.

## **Lecture XIX.**

Erroneous views of the Law held by Papists, Anabaptists, and Socinians

"You have heard that it was said to those of old, &c."- Matthew  
5:21-22

My intention is to emphasize the importance of the Moral Law, and in this sermon, I will briefly refute the erroneous view held by Papists, Anabaptists, and Socinians. They claim that Christ came to give us more precise commandments than Moses delivered to the Jews, suggesting that Christ was not an Interpreter, but a Reformer. There is no denying that this sermon by our Saviour has stirred many thoughts and debates, as certain precepts here, when not properly understood, led the Heathens to criticize the Christian Religion, arguing that it could not coexist with a well-ordered society. The early Church Fathers faced challenges in responding to these objections; when Julian and others argued that Christ's commands prohibited resistance to evil and called for endurance of further injuries, they contended that war, magistracy, and places of judicature were permissible, yet following a higher and more Christian way involved refraining from engaging in them. This misunderstanding also gave rise to the erroneous notion of Precepts and Councils.

Moreover, scholars believe that some of the early Church Fathers, having been philosophers before their conversion, retained certain Stoic inclinations, causing them to interpret Christ's precepts to align with their own sentiments. However, I aim to demonstrate that every lawful moral way commanded by Moses to the Jews equally applies to Christians today. Yet, it is worth mentioning that even though the things questioned by our opponents are permissible for Christians, few fully embrace and practice them according to Christ's teachings. For instance, the teachings of non-resistance to evil and giving our cloak to the one who takes our coat do not exclude the existence of magistrates or the seeking of their help in our defense. Nonetheless,

they do discourage the frequent and common practice of such patience and Christian meekness among most Christians today. Regrettably, many kingdoms and states prioritize worldly values rather than embodying the patience and meekness commanded by Christ. The laws and practices of these societies align more with human standards than with the laws of Christ. Now let us move on to the specifics.

Firstly, it has been argued that while under the Law of Moses, swearing was considered lawful, some believe that under the Gospel, it is now absolutely forbidden under any circumstances. They point to our Savior's words in the Sermon on the Mount, where He states, "Swear not at all," and James follows a similar line of thought. According to this view, it is not only wrong to swear falsely or vainly, but to swear in any capacity whatsoever. They consider this a higher standard of perfection required of Christians beyond those under the Law. Some doubt this perspective, especially considering that some ancient Fathers held the belief that swearing is absolutely forbidden for Christians. For example, Eusebius recounts the case of a Christian named Basilides, who refused to swear, stating that it was unlawful for him as a Christian. Similarly, Jerome suggests that while swearing may have been allowed for Jews or infants, some thought there was an absolute prohibition against it. However, it appears that even those who expressed such views may have sworn under specific circumstances, as Athanasius made an oath to clear himself when accused before the Emperor. Likewise, Tertullian mentions that Christians refused to swear "per genium Principis" because they saw it as a devilish act, but they did swear "per salutem principis."

Others have proposed that while swearing may be lawful, it should only be done in religious matters or issues related to public safety,

and that it should not be used in personal affairs or financial matters. Basil, for instance, cites the example of a Pythagorean named Clinus, who chose to bear a significant fine rather than swear an oath. Some have even considered the idea of having a promise without an accompanying oath in human affairs, but with the same severe punishment for breaking the promise as if it were perjury. This is because fear of punishment often has a stronger deterrent effect on people than the fear of breaking an oath. However, regardless of various perspectives on the limitations of swearing, there are certain cases where swearing is considered lawful. It is evident that our Savior's words are not meant to be a universal prohibition.

Firstly, because to universally forbid it would mean contradicting the Law, which He explicitly denies doing. In Deuteronomy 6, swearing by God is mentioned, not as an absolute command in itself, but rather on occasions when it becomes necessary. The Hebrew word for "to swear" is in the passive sense, suggesting that it should not be done voluntarily, but only when the situation demands it.

Secondly, Christ's words do not imply an absolute prohibition because the purpose of an oath is enduring and essential. Oaths serve to settle disputes, as mentioned in Hebrews 6. Aquinas aptly compares oaths in practical matters to the role of first principles in speculatives—they both serve to resolve controversies and doubts.

Thirdly and finally, we have the example of Paul, who sometimes used oaths in his Epistles. Thus, our Savior does not completely forbid swearing, but He reproves the corrupt interpretations of the Pharisees. Firstly, they believed that if a person did not explicitly mention God's name in an oath, but instead swore by other creatures or things, it would not be considered perjury if they broke that oath.

Many today come close to this view, thinking that if they swear by anything other than God, it is not as serious an offense. The second corrupt interpretation was that they believed God's name was not defiled if they intended to fulfill their promise, even if they used God's name in oaths about unnecessary and trivial matters. Our Savior prohibits this mindset in His affirmative direction, commanding us to let our "yes" be "yes" and our "no" be "no." Anything more than this comes from evil. He refers to our ordinary and familiar discourse as private individuals, not to public matters. Similar to when He later mentions the duty of not resisting evil, He forbids private revenge, not public justice. Some interpret this, along with a passage in James, not in relation to assertory oaths (as it is spoken in addition to the command, "You shall pay your vows to the Lord") but to promissory oaths. The meaning then would be that even if one intends to fulfill a promise or perform an action, it is advisable not to swear, as life is uncertain, and many unforeseen events may occur. This interpretation is quite plausible. However, if one understands it in the former manner, it should not be taken to mean that oaths are a desirable thing in themselves, but only as a remedy, much like medicine, which is sometimes necessary for other purposes. Now that we have established that our Savior does not intend to impose a higher standard than what was previously lawful, permit me to address the prevalent and problematic practice of swearing among those who claim to be Christians. If you observe people in their conversations and business dealings, do they conduct themselves as if Christ had said, "Do not swear at all," or do they behave as if He had said, "Swear always and altogether"? Oh, that this common and customary habit of swearing, which directly contradicts Christ's teachings, were completely abandoned! Even the Heathens would criticize us for this, as they used expressions like "ex animisui sententià" instead of oaths. It appears that the custom of swearing in everyday conversation has been around for a long time,



as Chrysostom and Austin were very vehement against it in their Sermons. Now, let us continue.

Some people gather from our Savior's words in verse 38, 39, 40, and 41 that under the Gospel, it is not lawful: 1. To impose the death penalty for any fault whatsoever. 2. To engage in warfare. 3. To take legal action in any case. 4. To seek a Magistrate's help for our defense. They believe that holding these opinions demonstrates Christian meekness and patience. However, before we delve into the specifics, let's consider the meaning of "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." This type of law was practiced in ancient civilizations, and Aristotle called it "retaliation." There were two forms of retaliation: the Pythagorean, which was wicked and ungodly, suggesting that if one person stole from another, the same person could steal back from the first one; and the Mosaic, which was just and fair. The question is whether this should be taken literally, allowing a person who had their eye or tooth injured by another to request that the offender suffer the same injury in return.

You can find the Law in Exodus 21:23 and how it should be moderated by Judges (as private individuals should not seek revenge) in Deuteronomy 19:19. This Law was not given to indulge the vengeful tendencies of the Jews, as some wickedly claim, nor is it an imperfect Law (asserting that human laws are better). Rather, it was instituted to prevent private revenge, ensuring that justice could be served. Some argue that this law was strictly followed, meaning that if someone was wounded by another, they would be wounded in return. However, I believe that the command in its literal sense was not strictly observed. Instead, a compensation was made according to the judgment of the Judge to address the loss suffered. It would have been unjust to inflict precisely the same wound, neither deeper nor wider, on the person who committed the violence.

We now turn to the question of capital punishment for certain offenders. Some argue that it is not in line with the goodness and meekness of a Gospel spirit to put anyone to death for any crime. However, this argument is false for several reasons. Firstly, it has been a command of God from the beginning, with a perpetual reason added to it, that those guilty of murder should face capital punishment. The command can be found in Genesis 9:6: "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," and the reason given is that man bears the image of God, particularly in his soul. Some try to evade this by claiming it's a mere prediction and not a command, but why would God foretell this if it were not meant to be done as a duty? The Scripture specifies that "by man it shall be shed," emphasizing the role of the Magistrate in this matter. Thus, while some scholars may argue against capital punishment being appointed by the Law of Nature or a perpetual Law of God, this passage contradicts that notion.

It's true that historical examples, such as Plato's commonwealth or the Romans' use of lighter punishments like deportation, cannot dictate our moral standards, which should be guided by commands, especially divine ones. The case of Cain is often brought up, but it should be acknowledged that God's indulgence to him was significant, sparing his life and providing protection. Yet, this should not undermine the fact that capital punishment remains a requirement of the common Law of Nature and the perpetual Law of God.

Another argument in favour of capital punishment under the Gospel comes from the Magistrate's office, as stated in Romans 13: they do not bear the sword in vain, and the sword implies the power of life and death. Even the apostle Paul acknowledged that there were

actions deserving of death, as seen in his statement, "If I have done anything worthy of death."

Lastly, the judgment upon Ananias and Sapphira demonstrates that capital punishment is not contrary to the spirit of the Gospel. The severity of their punishment under the Gospel surpassed many examples in the Law. Therefore, while we strive for the meekness and patience of a Christian, we should not forget our zeal for God's glory and the public good. It would be cruel to spare the bad at the expense of the good, and our compassion should extend to the well-being of the commonwealth as well.

The objection raised against this view is twofold. Firstly, it refers to the rebuke Jesus gave to his Disciples when they wanted to call down fire from heaven, and they were reprovved for not understanding the spirit they were influenced by. Some argue that this spirit is the spirit of the New Testament, opposed to the spirit of Elijah in the Old. The answer to this is straightforward: Jesus was not contrasting the spirit of the New and Old Testaments together, but rather the spirit of his Disciples and the spirit of Elijah. Elijah acted under the guidance of God's Spirit, not seeking personal revenge, but to glorify God. However, the Disciples' desire for fire was rash and vindictive, fueled by low and unworthy motives.

Secondly, the objection mentions the account of Jesus with the adulteress in John 8, where he did not proceed with stoning her but showed mercy. The response is that during his first coming, Jesus did not take on the role of a Judge, so he refrained from dealing with temporal punishments. Instead, as a minister, he worked towards bringing repentance to both the woman and her accusers.

Regarding the argument that this form of capital punishment goes against charity and the love of souls because some are put to death

without apparent repentance, leading them to Hell, it is explained that all Magistrates should be concerned for the salvation of criminals' souls as much as possible. However, if the offenders perish in their sins, it is not due to the justice administered, which is meant to remind them of their wrongs and humble them, but it is a result of their own stubbornness and hardness of heart.

Moreover, since we see the institution of Magistracy upheld in the Gospel, we do not need an explicit command in the New Testament to justify capital punishment for certain offenders.

The third matter they claim was permitted under the Law but prohibited by Christ in the Gospel is War. In ancient times, some Christians did indeed object to participating in wars, though not universally. There were Christian soldiers as well. However, there were specific reasons why some Christians abstained from war back then. Firstly, the military oath involved invoking a pagan god, and their banners were associated with idolatry. Secondly, they were afraid that they might be compelled to execute the Emperor's orders against Christians, which they were not willing to do. If we cite Old Testament passages to argue for the legitimacy of wars, they dismiss them, stating that the laws of Nature and Moses are reformed by Christ's laws. They claim that God allowed the Jews to fight in the Old Testament because they had a temporal inheritance that they could only retain by force of arms, but under the New Testament, God has not given such a command to His people. However, this argument is flawed since, by a mere law of nature, Abraham engaged in war to rescue his nephew Lot from enemies.

The fact that War is allowed by Christ becomes evident when we compare 1 Timothy 2:3 and Romans 13. The Apostle instructs us to pray for Magistrates and assumes that they may be Christians while

in office, enabling us to live peacefully and piously under their rule. This implies that they may wield the sword against wrongdoers. If they cannot be brought to justice through legal means, then force of arms may be necessary.

Another well-known argument comes from Luke 3, where John the Baptist advises soldiers not to abandon their profession but to perform the necessary duties in that role. Interestingly, these were likely mercenary soldiers at the time.

Regarding objections, we will address them in the next section. Orthodox believers who view war as permissible also acknowledge the necessity for holy and godly conduct during its execution. Maintaining a holy camp is challenging, and this led Augustine to remark that all wars, even just ones, are abhorrent due to the accompanying evils. Nonetheless, he recognized the need for its use when it concerns God's glory and the welfare of the public.

## **LECTURE XX.**

You have heard it said by those of old

You have heard it said by those of old, &c. - Matthew 5:21, 22

There are two more questions to be addressed regarding Christ's interpretation of the Law of Moses: Firstly, the permissibility of repelling force with force, and secondly, the appropriateness of seeking the Magistrate's help to protect us from injury and violence. To avoid being overly verbose in discussing these matters, I will

present a few foundational points that help clarify the truth here. This topic, as you have heard, significantly contributes to the dignity and excellence of the Law. Now let us proceed to explore these questions further.

First and foremost, we must acknowledge that there is an unfortunate tendency in people to seek revenge. In fact, only a tiny fraction of individuals truly embody the excellent way and principle of patience. Even among the Heathens, seeking revenge was considered lawful by some, but there were also dissenting voices. Seneca, for instance, condemned revenge as a monstrous act, stating that those who seek revenge sin with some excuse. Regardless of debates about its lawfulness, it is evident that revengeful actions are widespread in human practices, be it in matters of state, civil affairs, or within the Church. Such attitudes fall far short of our Saviour's teachings.

Instead of harbouring revengeful feelings, we should adopt holy and mortifying thoughts when faced with injury or violence. David, for example, responded to Sheba's curse with a sense of sin, looking to God more than the instrument of harm. Defamations and reproaches can serve to magnify our virtues, just as a gardener plants unsavoury herbs near sweet roses to enhance their fragrance, as Plutarch observed.

Secondly, the early Christians took a strong stance against defending oneself from a potential killer by resorting to killing the attacker. Augustine expressed uncertainty about defending those who kill the invader, while others also held similar views. Some argue that choosing to be killed rather than resorting to violence is an act of great charity and worthy of admiration. However, there are those who dismiss these teachings as outdated, claiming they do not apply

to modern times and would be detrimental to the Church. This perspective is flawed.

On the other hand, some Jesuits take an opposite view and grant too much leeway for revenge. They argue that a nobleman, when suddenly invaded, need not flee but may lawfully kill the invader if it is the only way to preserve both his life and honour. Such counsel is corrupt and could lead to many murders under the pretence of honour.

Thirdly, it is essential to note that the Law of God in the Old Testament was just as stringent against revenge as any command in the New Testament. Therefore, we are not now required to do anything that was not expected of us then. Consider the passage in Leviticus 19:16, "You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself." This makes it clear that we must suppress the waves of anger and resentment that surge within us. Similarly, Proverbs 24:29 advises against retaliatory actions or thoughts. Paul also draws from the Old Testament when he urges us not to avenge ourselves but to leave vengeance to God in Romans 12:19. Instead of engaging in disputes, we should earnestly practice this duty, particularly since it can be more enticing to our sinful hearts than even honey. In the present times, this sin seems to be widespread and raging.

Lastly, it is crucial to understand that our Saviour does not prohibit legitimate public revenge but private revenge. The early Church Fathers, not being aware of this distinction between public and private revenge, sometimes resorted to extreme and impractical statements. Some even used this distinction to support the notion of separate counsels and precepts. For instance, Augustine claimed that the revenge permitted in the Old Testament was specific to that

period. However, this view does not align with the context of our Saviour's teaching here, as He is offering guidance to individual Christians, not to public officials. The distinction between public and private revenge becomes evident when we examine Paul's words in Romans 12:18, where he exhorts Christians not to take revenge since it belongs to God. However, in Romans 13:4, Paul speaks of the magistrate as the avenger who executes wrath upon evildoers. Thus, there is a revenger that is not God or ourselves but the magistrate, acting according to God's appointment. In Numbers 31:3, the people are told to "arm themselves and avenge the Lord on the Midianites," and in 2 Chronicles 19, it is said that magistrates "execute the judgments of the Lord, and not of men." Nevertheless, it is possible for magistrates to have revengeful feelings even when they administer justice. Similarly, when people seek the magistrate's aid, it may not always be motivated by a sense of justice and the public good but influenced by personal emotions and carnal inclinations. How blessed would our commonwealth be if everyone acted based on this public perspective within their respective roles!

Having thus addressed these controversies briefly, I now turn to another, where the Antinomian undermines the beneficial impact and advantage of the Law. This assertion, upheld by an Antinomian author, argues that the Law does not contribute to genuine sanctification, and that the Gospel promise is the seed and doctrine of our new birth. To support this viewpoint, he presents various arguments and the opinions of several learned individuals ("Assertion of grace," p. 163). It cannot be denied that some statements from certain individuals might seem to align with this opinion. However, I shall strive to defend the positive aspect, which asserts that the preaching of God's Law can be blessed by Him as an instrumental means to effect the conversion of individuals. This is a crucial point to establish, for if the contrary were true, it would imply



that ministers should largely abandon the preaching of the Moral Law, as it would not serve as an instrument or means towards the primary end of the Ministry – the conversion of souls. However, I do not agree with the notion that the preaching of the Law is only preparatory and can evoke some terrors about sin, going no further than that. Instead, I believe that Jesus Christ, through His death and ascension, has obtained from God such efficacy and virtue in the Ministry that whether preaching the Law or the Gospel, souls can be healed and converted. Before proceeding, two things need to be clarified.

Firstly, the Law could never lead to regeneration without the Gospel promise. No one can fully obey the Law through the Law alone. The gracious promise of God, through Christ, to give a new heart, is essential to making anything preached from the Law effectual. For example, when a Minister preaches any Commandment and thereby molds and reshapes the heart, this benefit comes from Christ, who died and ascended into Heaven to make our preaching beneficial to our souls. In this sense, there never was a purely Law-based or purely Gospel-based Church. Instead, they have always complemented each other in the great work of conversion. The question is not whether converting grace comes through the Law or the power of the Law but whether it can coexist with the preaching of the Law. While it is important to understand the precise difference between the Law and the Gospel, I will not delve into that discussion now. My assertion is that, concerning a person's conversion, God may use the preaching of the Moral Law as an instrumental factor, but this comes through Christ.

Secondly, although the Law preached may contribute to conversion, its content cannot be the basis for our justification or adoption. When a person repents and turns to God from their sins, their hope

and consolation cannot be found in their actions; it must rest in the promise of the Gospel. The difference between the Law and the Gospel does not lie in one being an instrument of grace and the other not, for God employs both, as I shall demonstrate. Instead, the distinction lies in the fact that the holiness wrought in us by the preaching of God's Word, whether Law or Gospel, does not justify us. Instead, justification comes through an evangelical manner, where God forgives whatever is irregular in us and imputes Christ's righteousness to us. Therefore, let us not confuse the Law and the Gospel or present them as entirely contrary in nature and effects, such that one excludes the other.

In addition to these points, there is a third consideration to make: how the Word of God, in general, serves as a medium or instrument for our conversion. Understanding this well will show that the Law of God, being a part of His Word, can lead to conversion, just like the Gospel. This is the view held by all sound theologians, regardless of any remarks they may make at other times. For instance, when confronted by the Papists' question about the impossibility of obeying the Law and its commands, theologians answer that these commandments are not only informative but also practical and operative means established by God to, at least to some extent, accomplish what is commanded. Therefore, these commands are compared to our Saviour's command to Lazarus to rise up and walk. Furthermore, it is evident in the reasons God provides for revealing the Law: to make us see our deformities as in a mirror, to humble ourselves before God, to be frightened out of our selves and seek grace in Christ. Can the Law, on its own, accomplish this, or does grace work this in us through the preaching of the Law? Is this not the initial grace of conversion? As Austin said, "When you begin to be displeased with what you have done, your good works commence, because you accuse your bad works" (Tract. 12. in Johan).

Therefore, to clarify this matter, it is essential to understand that the Word of God, whether read or preached, alone cannot bring about a person's conversion. Consider it as itself, devoid of the animating power of the Spirit of God, and its impact is limited to acting as an object upon the understanding. This is why the Scripture is likened to a light, much like the sun gives light to serve as an object for seeing, but it does not grant sight to a blind person. A significant theological question arises from this: since regeneration is attributed to both the word and baptism, how do they each work differently, and if both contribute to regeneration, why is one not redundant? Addressing the word preached is easier than dealing with sacraments in this regard. The preached word works as an object on a person's soul, but it requires the empowering work of the Spirit of God to go further. This is evident since the word of God can only convert those who are capable of hearing and understanding it. By itself, the word of God merely serves as a directive and informative guide. Therefore, if the Spirit of God is absent, the entire Scripture, including what we refer to as the Gospel, becomes ineffective. Preaching the promises of the Gospel countless times will not convey grace if the Spirit of God is not actively present. In practice, even with the abundance of promises, many individuals to whom the grace of God is offered remain unconverted.

Next, consider this: whatever good effects or benefits are conveyed to the soul through the preaching of the Law or the Gospel, they are efficaciously from God's Spirit. Thus, we cannot take the Law without the Spirit of God and then compare it to the Gospel with the Spirit of God, for that would be an unequal comparison. By the same logic, sometimes I may favour the Law over the Gospel. For instance, if a Minister expounds on the duties of the Law, as Christ does in this Chapter, and the Spirit of God accompanies the message to change a person's heart, that can be powerfully transformative. On the other

hand, if someone preaches the Gospel in its greatest glory but lacks the accompaniment of God's Spirit, there might be no grace wrought in any hearer. The notion that the Law shows us our duty, but the Gospel grants us the grace to fulfil it, does not hold up well in light of this understanding. If we take the Gospel as the Promises preached, many hear these promises without receiving any benefit from them. Conversely, if the Law, expounding our duty, is accompanied by God's Spirit, it may instrumentally work in us an ability to fulfil that duty, while the Gospel cannot do so without the Spirit. Admittedly, if the meaning of this assertion is that grace is brought to our souls through Christ and the Promises of the Gospel, and the Law serves as a medium to our conversion by Christ, then it holds true. However, the obscure and unclear expression of this idea creates an opportunity for the Antinomian error.

It is evident that the Scripture, as it is written or preached, cannot convert us without the Spirit of God. Otherwise, even devils and people of great intellect who understand the letter of the Scripture better than others would be more easily converted. Moreover, the Scripture, as a word read or preached, cannot reach the depths of the heart to bring about significant change. Although the Word of God is likened to a sword, it is referred to as the "Sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17), indicating that the Spirit of God is the active agent in its efficacy. While this is true, we must avoid falling into the extreme error of some who deny the necessity of Scripture and advocate complete reliance on the Spirit of God, arguing that the Scripture is merely a creature, and we should not give it undue importance. Instead, we must recognize that the Spirit is the efficient agent, and the Word is the subordinate instrument, and these two must be seen in harmony, not in opposition.

Now that I have clarified this general point, I present the following arguments to prove that the Law and its preaching are means of conversion.

1. Whatever is attributed to the entire word of God, as God's word, should not be denied to any part of it. This attribution is made to the whole Word of God in 2 Timothy 3:16, where the manifold effects of God's word are mentioned: to reprove, correct, and instruct in righteousness, so that the person of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. Note the universality of this concept. All Scripture, whether taken collectively or distributively, supports this argument, as each part of Scripture has its partial ability and suitability for the mentioned effects. For instance, in Matthew 13, the Word of God in general is likened to seed sown, yielding fruit, and in Hebrews 4:12, it is described as powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword.
2. The second argument comes from passages explicitly naming the Law as instrumental in this great work of conversion. We can refer to Romans 7:14, where the Law is called spiritual, working spiritually in us, just as Paul was called carnal because of his carnal actions. In Psalms 119 and Psalms 19:7, the Law of God is declared to be perfect, converting the soul. Some interpret the "converting of the soul" to mean reviving it, as if the soul was about to faint due to troubles, but the Law brings revival and comfort. However, this interpretation seems challenging. The Antinomian objection to this is that the Hebrew word used here broadly signifies any doctrine and may encompass the whole Word of God. Nevertheless, this can be easily addressed. Firstly, the same Hebrew word is commonly used for the Law when strictly taken, which counters their argument that it signifies a commanding, terrifying, and

damning notion, while it rather signifies instruction and information.

Moreover, even if we grant that the word has an extensive and comprehensive sense, it still does not exclude the Moral Law; rather, it always includes it. When David commends the Law of God, it is inconceivable that he means all of God's Word except the Moral Law, especially considering that it was the most significant part of it during that time.

3. The opinion that suggests Christ did not take an instrumental way for the conversion of men in his first Sermon, wherein he extensively spoke, cannot be asserted. Denying that the preaching of the Law is a medium to conversion implies that Christ did not take the most direct path to convert his hearers. If we consider that Sermon, it mainly focuses on opening the Moral Law and emphasizing its duties. It is evident that our Savior considered this as a profitable and soul-saving matter. I fail to see why it should only be seen as the occasion and not the medium if it is powerfully presented with the influence of God's Spirit.
4. If the Law of God has the potential to profoundly impact the heart when effectively presented by the Spirit of God, then it can be used instrumentally just like the Gospel. And indeed, it possesses such an objective nature, as evidenced by David's approval and delight in God's Law, as well as Paul's delight in the Law of God, as mentioned in Romans 7. When a Minister expounds on the beautiful purity and excellence of the Law, highlighting how it reflects God's nature, the Spirit of God can undoubtedly stir the heart and kindle a greater love for it. If the Heathens praised Virtue, believing that its visible beauty would

captivate people, how much more true must this be for the purity and holiness of the Law?

5. If the Ceremonial Law, the Sacraments, and Sacrifices were blessed by God's Spirit when they were commanded to be used for strengthening and increasing grace, despite their outdated nature now, then the Moral Law may also be blessed by God for spiritual effects since it still remains in force.

Therefore, let us take this as an admonition, that instead of engaging in disputes about or against the Law, we should pray to experience its savoury benefits and fruits in our souls. Let us implore God to fulfil His promise of writing His Law in our hearts. Embrace the Law of God wholeheartedly, not as the basis of our justification, but as the means of our sanctification. Regeneration itself entails the writing of the Moral Law in our hearts. This reflects the Image of God in which Adam was created. So, let us earnestly desire to see more of this holy Law in the hearts and lives of people, that it may enlighten their minds, ignite their wills, and inflame their affections.

## **LECTURE XXI.**

Objections that the Law can be utilised by God in its preaching to bring about man's conversion

"Do we then make void the Law through faith? God forbid: But we rather establish the Law." Romans 3. 31.

Now, let us address a renowned question regarding the abrogation of the Moral Law. However, before delving into this, I must address some objections raised against the previous assertion—that the Law can be utilised by God in its preaching to bring about man's conversion, as previously explained. If we neglect to address these objections, it might lead to a perception that the assertion is harsh and implausible. But, first, let us correct a significant misconception made by the Antinomian author in the "Assert. of grace," page 171. He wrongly contends that the reason they are accused of Antinomianism is their rejection of the Law's instrumental use in the conversion of individuals. However, this is a considerable misunderstanding, as many learned individuals acknowledge that the work of the Law, through the power of God's Spirit, is not more than preparatory, and yet, in spite of that, they firmly maintain the usefulness and the binding nature of the Law for believers. Thus, they are not condemned for that error in this regard.

Another consideration that I would like to present is that the work of conversion is not entirely accomplished in a person without the Gospel. As I previously mentioned, in the preaching of the Word, there is neither mere Law nor mere Gospel, but rather a composition where they complement each other. Additionally, any benefit or effect we experience in hearing, preaching, or meditating upon the Law of God should be attributed to the Covenant of grace in Christ. Therefore, all those passages attributing conversion and holiness to the Gospel do not contradict my assertion. The key question here is not whether we come to obey the Law through the power of the Law itself, but whether grace can use the Precepts or Law preached to ignite our affections with love for the things commanded, ultimately leading us to greater holiness. This is how I interpret the authors who deny the Law's instrumental role in holiness, meaning they see it as separate from the working of God's Spirit.



Now, let's consider the passages that are brought against the truth I have presented. I won't address all of them individually, as one response may suffice since they are based on the same foundation.

Firstly, the state of the question is somewhat unclear. The author states, "[The promise, or the Gospel, and not the Law, is the seed or doctrine of our new birth.]" (Assert. of grace, pag. 163). This statement raises ambiguities, as it appears to decisively determine that anything promised in the Scripture belongs to the Gospel, while commands or threats belong to the Law. However, this matter requires a more in-depth discussion.

Secondly, the question isn't solely about the Gospel and the Law as doctrines in the Scripture but rather about the work of the Spirit of God, operating through one or the other. Not paying attention to this distinction results in a confusing argument.

Thirdly, the author claims that the Gospel is not the seed of the New birth, whereas conversion or regeneration involves the writing of the Law in the heart (referring to Matthew 13). The Word of God, in general, is compared to seed sown, producing various fruits, as mentioned earlier. Let's move on from this point.

Now, let's address the first instance brought up from John 17:17, "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy Word is truth." The author interprets sanctification as separating something from common use and consecrating it to God. When applied to man, it involves two aspects: first, justification through the communication of Christ's perfect holiness, leading to the believer being presented as holy and blameless before God; second, an internal renewal and transformation, purifying the heart and life gradually, as stated on page 165.

I will respond to these objections. Firstly, when the word "sanctify" is applied to men, it signifies not only justification or renovation but also setting them apart for a specific office or charge. Some learned scholars interpret Christ's prayer in John 17:17 as a request for the apostles to be prepared and equipped for their significant responsibilities, much like the priests and Levites who were consecrated for entering the sanctuary. This is also seen in Jeremiah 1:5 where the term "sanctified" implies being appointed as a prophet to the nations. This interpretation is supported by the following verses in John 17, where Jesus mentions being sent into the world and sanctifying himself for the sake of the apostles' sanctification through the truth. Therefore, this sanctification primarily refers to setting apart Christ as the Mediator rather than justification or renovation. Moreover, even if we consider sanctification in terms of renovation, it doesn't disprove the instrumental use of the Law, as Christ's argument in John 17 is universal, stating that God's Word is truth, which applies to both the Law and the Gospel. David himself refers to the Law as pure, clean, and true in Psalm 119:142, which further supports this idea.

The next instance comes from Titus 2:11-12, where the grace of God that brings salvation teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. It is true that the Gospel is an instrument of holiness, and there is no contradiction in acknowledging that. However, the author previously equated the Gospel with a promise, which can be misleading. The Gospel indeed commands holiness and godliness, but it does so based on the gracious promise of salvation through Christ. Although God's grace in the Gospel effectively moves the elect towards godliness, not everyone who hears the Gospel is effectually turned from worldly lusts.

Furthermore, the argument can be turned around to suggest that the Law also teaches to deny ungodliness and sanctifies and instructs individuals. For instance, Psalm 119 speaks of the cleansing effect of the Law on a young man facing strong temptations. However, we must always recognize the preeminence of the Gospel over the Law. The Law's positive impact on the human heart is made possible by the gracious Promise in Christ. Hence, godly individuals in the Old Testament, who benefited from the Moral Law through study and meditation, still relied on the Gospel or God's grace in Christ, as evidenced in David's prayers to be quickened by God's Law.

A noteworthy comment by Peter Martyr on Romans 7:14 supports the idea that the Law can achieve such effects, but only when it is written not on tablets but in the hearts and minds of people, by the Spirit of God. This aligns with our contention that the Spirit of God uses the Law instrumentally by writing it in our hearts. This is the essence of our position.

A third and final scriptural instance, which, when answered, will address all concerns, comes from Galatians 3:2: "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?" In explaining this passage, we must avoid three errors: First, the idea that we possess faith before receiving the Spirit, as this would imply that faith arises solely from our reason and will, negating the divine work of God. The Apostle speaks of the increase of the graces of the Spirit, with one aspect augmenting the other, akin to a circular relationship where clouds form from vapors and, in turn, create more vapors. Yet, we must acknowledge the primary cause, the Spirit of God, which initially worked faith in us.

The second error is the belief held by the Papists, who distinguish between the Law and the Gospel, asserting that the same thing is

called the Law when devoid of the Spirit, and the Gospel when it possesses the Spirit. This confusion blurs the distinction between the Law and the Gospel and introduces the notion of Justification through works.

The third error, mentioned later, pertains to the Socinians. By avoiding these pitfalls, we can now consider the verse. Firstly, we may inquire whether anyone under the Old Testament became recipients of God's Spirit. If so, how did they obtain it? The only plausible explanation is that God bestowed His Spirit upon the believing Israelites in all public ordinances. While they may have partially obeyed the Law, it was not solely due to the Law's power but rather through the power of Grace.

Furthermore, a compelling argument arises from the question of whether the people of God received His Grace offered in the Sacraments during that time. We maintain that our Sacraments and theirs do not fundamentally differ. Hence, in the case of Circumcision and the Paschal Lamb, they partook of Christ just as we do now. However, the Apostle seemingly excludes Circumcision and other Jewish Ordinances from Grace, which raises a potential contradiction in Scripture. Therefore, another interpretation must be considered for these words.

Some propose that by "the Spirit," the Apostle refers to the miraculous works of God's Spirit, which were reserved for the times of the Messiah. Through these miracles, Christ's doctrine was confirmed as divine, originating from Heaven. The fifth verse supports this idea explicitly. Beza also acknowledges this as the principal aim of the Apostle, though not necessarily excluding other gracious works of God's Spirit. If this interpretation holds, it wouldn't be pertinent to our discussion.

Again, let me explain this by stating that when the term "faith" is used, it refers to the doctrine of faith, and similarly, by the phrase "works of the Law," it denotes the doctrine of relying on the works of the Law, as taught by the false Apostles. They propagated the notion that Christ's sacrifice alone was insufficient for justification, and works of the Law had to be added as a cause. If we interpret the text this way, it becomes evident that the Galatians did not receive God's Spirit through the corrupt teachings of their seducers but earlier, when they embraced the pure doctrine of Christ. Their folly lay in beginning with the Spirit but later returning to the flesh.

Another interpretation worth considering is that the Jews and false Apostles viewed the Law as adequate for salvation without Christ. In their view, the Law and Christ's observance had equal weight in justification and salvation. However, the Law, apart from Christ, only accused and condemned; it could not save. Therefore, their hope for grace and benefits through it was in vain. The Apostle's argument does not entirely dismiss the benefits of the Law that David and Moses praised. Instead, he opposes the common Jewish belief that the Law alone could justify or, at best, when combined with Christ. We reject both ideas: that God uses the Law for our justification and that the Law itself can ignite any godly affection within us.

Although more scriptures are cited against this view, they are better suited for discussion under the notion of the Law as a covenant. Thus, I will conclude this point, acknowledging that many learned and orthodox individuals hold differing perspectives, and this question is not without its difficulties. However, the interpretation I have presented carries more weight with me. One more text worth mentioning is Acts 7:38, where the Moral Law received by Moses to give to the Israelites is called "lively Oracles," signifying not mere words of life but life-giving and vivifying words. This means that

when, through grace, we obey these commandments, God, out of His mercy, bestows eternal life upon us. This inclination towards this interpretation is further supported because Socinians, in urging similar verses that mention justification and faith through Christ and the Gospel, deny that grace and justification existed under the Law. They argue that these privileges were only revealed by Christ in the Gospel under the new Covenant. Yet, the Apostle cites examples of Abraham and David, who lived under the Law as a schoolmaster, receiving the same kind of justification as we do.

Now, moving on to another question, which is the central and immediate point of contention between the Antinomians and us, and the reason behind their name, is the abrogation of the Moral Law. Although I have already addressed many aspects that confirm its perpetual obligation, I will now do so more directly and explicitly, using the chosen Text as a foundation for this argument. The Apostle Paul, having thoroughly explained the nature of justification in preceding verses, describing all its causes - efficient, meritorious, formal, instrumental, and final - as well as its consequence, which is the exclusion of self-confidence and boasting in our works, draws a conclusion or inference in verse 26. This conclusion is first stated affirmatively and positively: "A man is justified by faith." The phrases "through faith," "by faith," and "through the faith" all have equivalent meanings according to the Apostle. Then, to avoid any misconceptions or objections, he reiterates this proposition in an exclusive manner, emphasizing "without the deeds of the Law."

He extends this proposition to both Jews and Gentiles, emphasizing the unity of God, which refers not to the unity of His Essence but rather His Will and Promise. By asserting all this, he addresses an objection (common in this Epistle) to dispel the reproach cast upon him by his adversaries, who accused him of seeking to destroy the

Law. The objection is posed as a rhetorical question for greater effect: "Do we make void the Law?" The term "παύω" (make void) denotes to render something empty and useless, implying that the Law would lose its functionality.

Again, let me explain this by stating that when the term "faith" is used, it refers to the doctrine of faith, and similarly, by the phrase "works of the Law," it denotes the doctrine of relying on the works of the Law, as taught by the false Apostles. They propagated the notion that Christ's sacrifice alone was insufficient for justification, and works of the Law had to be added as a cause. If we interpret the text this way, it becomes evident that the Galatians did not receive God's Spirit through the corrupt teachings of their seducers but earlier, when they embraced the pure doctrine of Christ. Their folly lay in beginning with the Spirit but later returning to the flesh.

Another interpretation worth considering is that the Jews and false Apostles viewed the Law as adequate for salvation without Christ. In their view, the Law and Christ's observance had equal weight in justification and salvation. However, the Law, apart from Christ, only accused and condemned; it could not save. Therefore, their hope for grace and benefits through it was in vain. The Apostle's argument does not entirely dismiss the benefits of the Law that David and Moses praised. Instead, he opposes the common Jewish belief that the Law alone could justify or, at best, when combined with Christ. We reject both ideas: that God uses the Law for our justification and that the Law itself can ignite any godly affection within us.

Although more scriptures are cited against this view, they are better suited for discussion under the notion of the Law as a covenant. Thus, I will conclude this point, acknowledging that many learned and orthodox individuals hold differing perspectives, and this

question is not without its difficulties. However, the interpretation I have presented carries more weight with me. One more text worth mentioning is Acts 7:38, where the Moral Law received by Moses to give to the Israelites is called "lively Oracles," signifying not mere words of life but life-giving and vivifying words. This means that when, through grace, we obey these commandments, God, out of His mercy, bestows eternal life upon us. This inclination towards this interpretation is further supported because Socinians, in urging similar verses that mention justification and faith through Christ and the Gospel, deny that grace and justification existed under the Law. They argue that these privileges were only revealed by Christ in the Gospel under the new Covenant. Yet, the Apostle cites examples of Abraham and David, who lived under the Law as a schoolmaster, receiving the same kind of justification as we do.

Now, moving on to another question, which is the central and immediate point of contention between the Antinomians and us, and the reason behind their name, is the abrogation of the Moral Law. Although I have already addressed many aspects that confirm its perpetual obligation, I will now do so more directly and explicitly, using the chosen Text as a foundation for this argument. The Apostle Paul, having thoroughly explained the nature of justification in preceding verses, describing all its causes - efficient, meritorious, formal, instrumental, and final - as well as its consequence, which is the exclusion of self-confidence and boasting in our works, draws a conclusion or inference in verse 26. This conclusion is first stated affirmatively and positively: "A man is justified by faith." The phrases "through faith," "by faith," and "through the faith" all have equivalent meanings according to the Apostle. Then, to avoid any misconceptions or objections, he reiterates this proposition in an exclusive manner, emphasizing "without the deeds of the Law."



He extends this proposition to both Jews and Gentiles, emphasizing the unity of God, which refers not to the unity of His Essence but rather His Will and Promise. By asserting all this, he addresses an objection (common in this Epistle) to dispel the reproach cast upon him by his adversaries, who accused him of seeking to destroy the Law. The objection is posed as a rhetorical question for greater effect: "Do we make void the Law?" The term "παύω" (make void) denotes to render something empty and useless, implying that the Law would lose its functionality.

To this, the Apostle responds with a firm negative, expressing his strong disapproval of such a doctrine by saying, "God forbid." This shows how unacceptable it should be to the people of God to take away the Law. Not only does the Apostle reject this objection, but he goes further, asserting that they establish the Law. He uses a metaphor, comparing it to those who reinforce and strengthen a falling pillar or any such thing. This has troubled interpreters, as it seems contradictory to other places in his Epistles where the Law appears to be abrogated. Some suggest that the righteousness of faith finds its validation in the Law and the Prophets, as mentioned in verse 21 of this chapter. In this sense, they argue that the Law is established because what was foretold in it has now come to pass, just as Jesus stated that Moses bore witness of him. However, this interpretation does not fully capture the Apostle's intention. Others, who limit this statement to the Ceremonial Law, interpret it as the fulfillment of ceremonies and types in Christ, who embodies their substance and essence.

Yet, the Apostle includes the Moral Law under the term "Law."

The Papists view the Gospel as a new Law and compare it with the old Law, now having the Spirit, as two things differing only

gradually. According to them, the old Law is established by the new, akin to how childhood is perfected by old age, not through abolition but through perfection.

The perspective that many Orthodox believers adopt is that the Law is established in three ways by the Gospel.

First, whereas the Law previously threatened death to every transgressor, this is now established in Christ, who satisfied God's justice.

Secondly, the Law's demand for perfect obedience is also fulfilled in Christ. Now, this leads to a matter worth discussing: whether the righteousness by which we are justified is the righteousness of the Law.

Opponents of the imputation of Christ's active obedience raise a compelling argument in this regard. They contend that if Christ's active obedience is made ours, and we are justified by it, then we are still justified by the works of the Law. This would mean that the righteousness of faith and works becomes indistinguishable, with faith in us and works in Christ. However, those who accept the truth of this doctrine, including myself, see that if Christ's active obedience is made ours, the Law is indeed established.

Thirdly, and lastly, which I consider to be the truth, and as Austin interpreted it in the past, the Law is established because through the Gospel, we obtain the grace to fulfill the Law to some extent. So, we continue to adhere to the preceptive and informative aspects of the Law. By having faith in Christ, we attain a measure of obedience to it, which, while not being the Covenant of grace itself, still leads us towards salvation.



## LECTURE XXII.

Do we then make void the Law?

"Do we then make void the Law?" Romans. 3. 31.

This text has already been explained, and two observations naturally arise from it. Firstly, it is challenging to exalt Christ and grace without being misunderstood as intending to destroy the Law. Paul himself was misinterpreted by some, and similarly, the Antinomians, not fully comprehending the scope of the Orthodox arguments against Popery that opposed the Law to the Gospel, fell into a perilous error. However, I will not dwell on this point. Secondly, the doctrine I aim to address is that the teaching of Christ and grace, in its highest and fullest form, does not abolish the Law but rather establishes it. This doctrine will lead us directly to confront the main pillars of the Antinomians' ideology. The question we shall discuss today is whether the Law is abrogated by Christ for the believers under the Gospel. I will answer this question through several propositions that can contribute to clarifying the truth, as it may seem that the Scripture presents contradictions on this matter. In my text, it denies that the apostles "make void" the Law; yet in 2 Cor. 3:11, the apostle uses the phrase, speaking of the Law as something that is "done away." Likewise, in Ephesians 2:14, Christ is described as the one who "makes void" the handwriting against us. In that place, the apostle uses the same word, which he had denied in Matthew 5, stating that he did not come to "dissolve" the Law. Chemnitz wisely advises us that in all other matters, general words lead to confusion and obscurity, but in the doctrine of the abrogation of the Law, they are particularly dangerous unless precisely explained in what manner it is abrogated.

First and foremost, let us consider that there are different aspects to a Law, which can be described as "affections," so to speak. There is Interpretation, Dispensation, or Relaxation, and these are distinct from Abrogation. The former assumes that the Law is still in effect but may be mitigated, whereas Abrogation is the total removal of a Law. Abrogation can occur through different means, such as the initial constitution setting a time limit for the Law's existence, or through a formal revocation and repeal by the authority that enacted it, or by the addition of a new law commanding the opposite. We can easily demonstrate that the Ceremonial and Judicial laws have been abrogated by express repeal. For example, in 1 Peter 2:13, believers are commanded to be subject to every human institution, and Genesis 49:10 foretells that the Law-giver would be taken from Judah. The Ceremonial Law is explicitly repealed in Acts 15 and elsewhere. It is essential to understand that these laws were not evil, nor did they originate from an evil source. However, with the arrival of the fullness and substance of these laws in Christ, they served as mere shadows. While commanded by God, they provided exercises of faith and piety, and God dispensed grace through their observance. Nonetheless, they proved insufficient for those who relied on them while neglecting Christ. This assertion does not contradict the Apostle's statement in Ephesians 2:15, where he refers to these ordinances as enmity and decrees against us. When considering these ceremonies, they can be viewed in two ways: first as signs of God's grace and favor, and second as demonstrations of duties we were bound to but could not fulfill. In this sense, all those purifications and cleansings were against us. Consequently, it is no longer indifferent to use them; rather, it is sinful. I find it difficult to agree with Luther's statement in Galatians 2, where he believes that if the Jews had observed the Law and Circumcision in the manner permitted by the Apostles, Judaism would have persisted, and the whole world would have adopted Jewish ceremonies.

Secondly, if we are to be precise and accurate, we cannot affirm that the Moral Law has been abrogated in any positive sense. True, our learned writers argue that the Law is abrogated in terms of justification, condemnation, and the strictness of obedience. I will provide instances of these later. However, when speaking rigorously, we cannot say that the Law is entirely abrogated. We may say that it has been mitigated concerning our personal accountability, as Christ, our surety, fully bore its burden. Had God removed the Law in such a way that neither man nor his surety were under its curse or obligation to obey it, then we could claim it had been properly abrogated. However, since our surety was bound to satisfy and perfectly obey it, and we are still obligated to conform to it, it cannot be accurately said that the Law was generally abrogated. Instead, we can more precisely state that there has been a change and alteration in our relationship with the Law. Therefore, although the Apostle denies that he "makes void" the Law, he uses the expression in Romans 7:6, "we are freed or abrogated from the Law," rather than stating that the Law is abrogated. This distinction is essential when speaking precisely. Nevertheless, since satisfaction and obedience are through Christ, not ourselves, we can assert that the Law is abrogated to us, so that we may not seek remission of sins or justification through it. However, we must also differentiate between different parts of the Law. While some parts may be abolished, the whole nature of the Law endures. It consists of Commands, Promises of life to those who obey them, and Threatenings of eternal wrath to those who fail even in the slightest. For a believer, the Moral Law may be abrogated concerning the latter two aspects, but it still remains in terms of Commands. Moreover, it will persist even in Heaven itself. As we have already proven against the Antinomians, one part of the Law may endure while another does not.

The third proposition:

Those who claim that the Law is abolished as a covenant but not as a rule are correct. The Law can be considered both as a Covenant and as an absolute Rule that requires conformity. However, there are differing opinions among scholars when it comes to describing this Covenant. Some view the Law as a Covenant of works and believe it is abrogated for that reason. Others regard it as a subservient covenant to the covenant of grace, introduced to magnify grace. Some even label it as a mixed covenant of works and grace, though this interpretation is questionable. I, on the other hand, agree with the view that the Law given by Moses was a Covenant of grace. In God's dealings with fallen humanity, the only Covenant He transacts with us is that of grace. This Covenant of grace unfolded more clearly through successive ages, according to God's wise plan. Therefore, the Law, as a Covenant of grace, is indeed abrogated, as the administration of the former covenant is entirely outdated. This is evident in Hebrews 7:18-19 and Hebrews 8:7-8. Anyone who seeks life and justification through the Law is reviving the covenant of works. It is not a valid argument to claim that these works are done by grace through Christ's spirit because, even if we were justified by these works, it would resemble Adam's justification, albeit with some differences. We strongly denounce self-justifiers, pharisaical, Popish, and formal individuals who believe their good works are equivalent to Christ or Jesus. In matters of justification, we embrace Paul's spirit, knowing nothing but Christ crucified, and considering all things as worthless compared to Him. We lament the lack of people's deep need for Christ in all their actions. We are troubled by the ease with which some people are content with their duties and performances without crying out, "None but Christ, None but Christ." These are the principles we preach and uphold. Nevertheless, we maintain that the Law still serves as a rule to guide our conduct, even though it is not a Covenant of works for justification.

4. The Antinomian distinction of the Law being abolished as a Law but still abiding in respect to its matter is contradictory. This is a frequent refuge for the adversary. The Antinomians argue that, to the best of their knowledge, the matter of the Law has never been denied as the rule that believers should follow in their lives. Thus, they consider opposing views to be impudent slander (Asser. of grace, pag. 170).

However, in response, we must point out that if they believe the matter of the Law obliges believers to walk according to their duties, then any failure to do so results in sin, and the curse of sin applies. Hence, their argument provides no shelter for them because an obligation or bond still exists, and breaking it makes them liable under God's Law. Furthermore, claiming that the matter of the Law binds, but not as a Law, is a contradiction. A Law is an object presented by the command and will of a superior. Therefore, if "love for God" is the object or matter presented, it must also be bound by God's will. According to the Antinomians' assertion, love for God should bind us not because God wills us to love Him, but because the matter itself is good. They must then deny that God's will obliges us to love Him under the Law, but a Law is simply the will of the Law-giver, commanding obedience or avoidance of certain things. If there were any validity to the distinction between the matter of the Law binding and the Law itself, it would apply only to matters that are perpetually and necessarily good, such as loving God and honoring parents. However, for matters that are considered good through positive divine institution, such as observing the Lord's Day, the Law must be regarded as binding as a Law and not solely because of the matter of the Law.

5. The Law is not more abrogated for a believer under the Old Testament than for one under the New. This assertion exposes



the fallacy of the adversary's opinion, which suggests that the Law is only abrogated for believers under the Gospel. How can this be supported? They must either deny the existence of believers under the Old Testament or, if there were believers, then they are freed from the Law just like believers today. Indeed, if we consider the Law as the entire administration of the Covenant in the Old Testament, we acknowledge that it was pedagogical and more restrictive. Believers in the Old Testament did not experience the same clear and evident displays of love as believers in the Gospel. Nevertheless, in terms of justification and salvation, the Law applied equally to them as it does to us.

We do not dispute that the administration of the later covenant is far more glorious than that of the former, and that we enjoy many privileges they did not have. However, whatever is necessary and essential for justification or salvation, they were made partakers of them just as we are. The ordinary comparison between their happiness and ours can be illustrated by the analogy of those who carried the cluster of grapes on a staff from the land of Canaan, as described in Numbers 13:23. Thus, if we consider the essential aspects of the Law, which include guidance, commandments, threats, and promises of life upon perfect obedience, these apply equally in power or are equally abrogated for all believers, whether under the Old or New Testament. Therefore, the arguments against believers' subjection under the New Testament are equally strong against those under the Old.

Hence, it is erroneous Divinity of an Antinomian (in Chapter 6 of the Honey-comb of free justification) to create three different states of the Church: one under the Law, another under John the Baptist, and a third under the Gospel. Comparing these states, the Antinomian claims that those under the Gospel exceed the godly of the Law in

various aspects. However, there are two blatant falsehoods in this claim. Firstly, the assertion that God saw sin in the believers of the Old Testament, but not in those of the New, is absurd and contradictory even to the Author's own principles. The passage they often cite, "God seeth not iniquity in Jacob," was spoken of the Church in the Old Testament. Besides, if the godly were then in Christ, it follows logically that God must not see any sin in them. I mention this not because there is any truth in the notion of God seeing no sin in believers, whether of the Old or New Testament, but merely to highlight the absurd contradictions in the Antinomian's argument.

The second difference the Antinomian claims is that God saw sin in those of the Old Testament and thus punished and afflicted them for their sins, but He does not do this under the Gospel. The Antinomian cites examples of Moses, Jonah, Uzzah, and Eli facing sudden punishments. They also mention famines as a form of punishment. However, these arguments are weak and illogical. In the New Testament, some believers were sick and asleep, and they were judged by the Lord, as mentioned by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11. Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead immediately. There are also famines, pestilence, and wars affecting people under the Gospel. Moreover, these assertions contradict themselves because if their arguments from God's Law and Christ indicate the complete removal of sin and its punishments, then it should apply equally to all believers, not just some.

6. The arguments of the Antinomians not only undermine the use of the Law for believers but also for unbelievers. This aspect is worth considering as well. In many places, the Apostle discusses the Law as a Schoolmaster and its temporary continuation, not in a comparative sense between a believer and an unbeliever,

but between the state of the Gospel and the state of the Old Testament. Therefore, just as a wicked person may not circumcise or offer sacrifices, they may also not use the Moral Law as the Jews commonly did, as if it alone were sufficient for salvation, apart from Christ. Hence, I am puzzled why the Antinomians present many arguments to prove that a believer is freed from the Law. Most of these arguments also imply that unbelievers under the New Testament are freed from it as well. The Apostle often argues against the former state of the Church and administrations used in the past, as seen in 1 Corinthians 3, where he presents the administration of the Law as death and the administration of the Gospel as life. This argument pertains not to specific individuals but to the general state under the Gospel. The same holds true for Galatians 2 and 3, where the Apostle argues against the entire dispensation of the Law, making it equally abrogated for all. Moreover, it is probable that the famous expression of the Apostle, "you are not under the Law but under grace," is not solely applicable to individual believers but generally to the entire dispensation of the Gospel under the New Testament.

7. We acknowledge that to a believer, the Law is, in a sense, abrogated in the following respects:

Justification. Although the term "mitigation" could be used here more appropriately, we shall refer to it as "abrogation" (following the Orthodox) because it holds true to some extent for the godly. The most significant and comforting aspect of this abrogation is in relation to justification. A believer is not to expect acceptance at the throne of grace based on their own merit or actions but by trusting in Christ. The Papists claim that this approach would lead to idleness and laziness, comparing it to Saul's command that no one should eat

anything, much like Jonathan was not allowed to taste the honey. Saul thought that this restriction would lead to more enemies being killed, but Jonathan argued that allowing them to eat the honey would revive and empower them to defeat their adversaries more effectively. Similarly, the Papists forbid us from partaking in this honey, this precious comfort in Christ, fearing it might hinder our pursuit against sin. However, it is, in fact, the only strength and power against sin.

Condemnation and curse. The condition of a believer is made unspeakably happy in this regard. Romans 8 assures us that there is no condemnation for those in Christ, and Galatians proclaims that Christ became a curse for us. Thus, a gracious soul has daily encouragement, praying with confidence, acknowledging that even though their sins deserve a curse, Christ's obedience does not. Though they may fall short, Christ does not need to be better. Although they may have sinned away their own ability to do good, Christ's power to save remains. Hebrews 6:18 beautifully illustrates this concept of a godly person fleeing to Christ for refuge, pursued by sin as a criminal was pursued for a murder charge.

Rigorous obedience. This is another aspect where the Orthodox declare the abrogation of the Law. However, it must be carefully understood. Christ did not obtain from God through His death that the Law should not obligate us to perfect obedience. The Orthodox argue against the Papists, maintaining that believers are in sin if they do not obey God's Law to its utmost perfection. They hold that it is impossible for a believer to fulfill the Law perfectly. Nevertheless, through Christ, God accepts our obedience to the Law, which may be incomplete and imperfect. Without Christ, the Law would demand perfect obedience, just like a judge would not pardon a criminal who, despite expressing remorse, remains condemned by the Law.

It is not a terror to the godly, nor does it compel them to obedience in a slavish manner. However, this must be rightly understood, for within the godly, there exists an unregenerate or carnal part alongside the regenerate and spiritual part (see Rom. 7:22, 25). Though it is true that the Law's terrifying aspect is not as necessary for the regenerated part, due to their new nature, they still have flesh and corruption in them. Hence, the Scripture uses threatenings as sharp goads to provoke them towards piety. No godly person is always so willing in spirit that they do not find their flesh resistant to holy duties. They often need Christ and the Law to draw and quicken them. Therefore, there is still great use in preaching the Law to believers, as it can instrumentally stimulate and encourage them in their duties. Luther rightly stated, "Qui dicit se amare legem, mentitur, & nescit quid dicit: Tàm enim amamus legem, quàm homicida carcerem," meaning that if one says they love the Law, they lie and do not understand what they say. We love the Law as much as a murderer loves the prison.

The Law does not work or increase sin in believers as it does in the wicked. The Apostle Paul lamented in Romans 7:8 that the Law had a bitter effect on him, making him worse. The more spiritual and supernatural it was, the more his corrupt heart raged against it, and the more the Law dammed up sinful lusts, the higher they swelled. However, this sad outcome was not due to the Law but rather Paul's corruption. It is like how drinking water or beer frequently does not cause Dropsy; rather, it is the ill distemper in the body that causes the disease. Similarly, the Law, which is holy and just, requiring severe obedience from frail humans, overwhelms them. In the godly, where there is a new nature and a principle of love and delight in the Law of God, their corruption is not increased or strengthened by the Law, but rather subdued and quelled. Nonetheless, sometimes, even in the godly, corruption may still produce woeful effects, as seen in

the story of Asa growing more enraged after being reprovved by a prophet for his wickedness. It is important to note that both the commandments of the Law and the promises of the Gospel only stir up evil in a heart that is entirely unsanctified.

The Law is abrogated in many accessories and circumstantialia. Even the Moral Law, in certain aspects, is entirely abrogated, such as the manner of writing on tablets of stone. The first tablets were broken, and the fate of the last remains unknown. Paul draws an opposition in 2 Corinthians 3:3, stating that the Law is not written on tablets of stone but on the fleshly tablets of the heart. However, it is essential to understand that the doctrine of the Gospel, written with ink and paper, is no more effective for spiritual working than the Law written on tablets. The Apostle emphasizes in that verse, "Not written with ink" as well as "Not in tablets of stone." This is to counter the argument of the Antinomians, who may belittle the Law by pointing out its stone inscription, as one could similarly question the effectiveness of the Gospel's written form on paper.

Nevertheless, the Law perpetually continues as a rule for believers, as demonstrated below:

1. The Apostle uses different phrases concerning the Ceremonial Law that are not applied to the Moral Law. Chemnitz diligently lists these phrases: "abolished" (Eph. 2:14), "change" (Heb. 7:12), "become obsolete," "vanish away" (Heb. 8:13), and "abrogation" (Heb. 7:18). These words are not used for the Moral Law, indicating that they signify a change in the Law itself, not in the believers. If the Antinomians could find places where it is as unlawful for us to love the Lord, as it is unlawful to circumcise or offer sacrifices, then they might have something to support their argument.

2. The sanctification and holiness required of believers is nothing but conformity to the Law. When we read the Apostle speaking against the Law, it does not mean he refers to the Law as a rule obliging us to obey it. For instance, in Galatians 5:4, after warning them of their woeful condition for seeking justification through the Law, he goes on to urge them in verses 13 and 14 not to misuse their liberty as an occasion to indulge the flesh. He gives this reason: "For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" There are no contradictions in the same chapter; the Apostle reproves them for seeking justification through the Law, and on the other hand, admonishes them not to reject obedience to the Law. The distinction made by the Antinomians between the matter of the Law and the Law itself has already been proven to be a contradiction.
3. Disobedience to the Law remains a sin for believers, as sin is defined by the Apostle John as a transgression of the Law. When David commits adultery or when Peter denies Christ, these actions are sins committed by them. David's sin is a sin because it goes against specific commandments. The argument that it is a sin against the Law in the hand of Christ and not in itself cannot hold, as it would imply that the only sins are sins of unkindness or unthankfulness. While Christ's love may be a motive to obey God's commands, it does not negate the binding nature of the commandments themselves as the will of the Lawgiver. Further explanation of this distinction will be provided later.
4. The Ceremonial Law differs from other laws, such as the Moral Law, regarding the causes of abrogation. There are compelling

reasons for the abrogation of the Ceremonial Law that do not apply to the Moral Law:

Firstly, the object of the Ceremonial Law is not perpetually and inherently holy. Circumcision and offering sacrifices are not inherently holy and good acts, and ceasing to perform them is not a sin. On the other hand, the essence of the Moral Law is perpetually good, and failing to abide by it is necessarily a sin. For instance, to the Apostle, it was not the same whether someone was a murderer, adulterer, or chaste and innocent, as it was whether someone was circumcised or not circumcised. Tertullian rightly stated, "The burdens of the Ceremonial Law are removed, not the commands of holiness; liberty in Christ is not injurious to innocence."

Secondly, the Ceremonial Law was typological, foreshadowing the coming of Christ. With Christ's arrival, there was no longer a need for these ceremonies.

Lastly, both Jews and Gentiles were to unite into one body, and no distinctions were to be made between them. To achieve this, the partition wall of the Ceremonial Law needed to be removed, as long as it stood, they could not unite as one.

## **LECTURE XXIII.**

Scripture passages that may appear to suggest that the Moral Law was only in force for a specific period, similar to the ceremonial Law



"Do we then make void the Law? Yea, we establish it."Romans.

3. 31.

I will not dwell on further arguments to prove the perpetual obligation of the Moral Law, as that assertion has already been adequately supported: the fact that the Moral Law, as given by Moses, still applies to us, has been confirmed.

Let us now turn our attention to those Scripture passages that may appear to suggest that the Moral Law was only in force for a specific period, similar to the ceremonial Law. I will highlight the most significant passages and address them to provide a comprehensive understanding. I'll begin with Luke 16:16, where it is stated, "The Law and the Prophets were until John." This might suggest that the Law was meant to continue only until the time of John the Baptist. I won't engage in a debate here on whether John the Baptist should be considered under the Old or New Testament. We'll simply take note that we cannot create a third distinct dispensation of the Covenant of grace, as suggested by some Antinomian authors, as it seems that our Savior regarded John as part of the Old Testament. He even said, "The least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." Though John was greater than the previous prophets in the sense that he pointed to the present Messiah rather than prophesying about a future one. As for the text itself, no one can prove that the Law was to be abolished when John the Baptist arrived. In fact, our Savior emphasizes that heaven and earth would sooner pass away than one title of the Law would fall to the ground. So, the intended meaning is that the typical aspect of the Law, which foreshadowed and prefigured Christ, was to cease. Therefore, the Law and the Prophets are mentioned together, as they both serve the purpose of foretelling and typifying Christ. This becomes clearer when we compare this verse with Matthew 11:13, where it states, "All the Prophets and the

Law prophesied until John." This further confirms that our Savior is referring to the typical part of the Law, although it does not imply an immediate cessation of the Ceremonies, but rather their gradual vanishing.

The next Scripture passage to consider is the well-known instance that has been much debated in this controversy, Romans 6:15, "For you are not under the Law, but under grace." To understand this better, let's consider the following points:

1. In what context the Apostle is arguing against the Law and what was the central issue of that time. In Acts 15:5, it is mentioned that some believing Jews who were followers of the Pharisees pressed the necessity of Circumcision and sought to merge the teachings of Moses and Christ. Though the Apostles had already addressed and condemned this error, it seems that many still held on to this false doctrine. Hence, in his Epistle to the Romans and to the Galatians, the Apostle reproveth this mistaken belief and strongly refutes it. While Stapleton and other papists believe the controversy was solely about the Ceremonial Law, they do so to maintain their position of justification by works under the grace of Christ. However, though the primary cause of dispute was related to the observance of the Ceremonial Law, the Apostle extends his arguments and examples to include the Moral Law in order to illustrate the fullness of grace and the role of Christ. The Jews generally believed that knowing and obeying the Moral Law without Christ was enough for their peace and salvation. The Apostle argues against this mistaken notion, wherein they sought justification through obedience to the Law alone, without the need for Christ. It's similar to a learned person refuting the claims of some philosophers who assert that second causes work solely by their own strength, without God's

involvement. In countering their argument, the learned person assumes the power of second causes that the philosophers advocate, even though he doesn't believe in it. But this doesn't mean that he agrees with their view. Similarly, the Apostle speaks seemingly against the Law in their misinterpreted sense, wherein they sought justification by external observance of the Ceremonial Law while disregarding the importance of obedience to the Moral Law. This misunderstanding led them to believe that merely external conformity to the Moral Law would secure God's favor. However, in this sense, the Apostle speaks seemingly derogatory to the Law because they divorced it from its true connection with Christ, just as he refers to the ceremonies as "beggarly elements," even though they were actually signs of an Evangelical grace.

2. The Apostle uses the term "Law" in various senses, which has led to much confusion on this matter. In many instances where the Law appears to be abolished, it is used in one of two senses. Firstly, it may be synecdochically, where the Law represents only part of the Law, specifically the part that condemns and accuses. In such cases, the Apostle speaks as though the Law's sole purpose is condemnation, whereas in reality, a Law also serves to guide and prescribe. Secondly, the term "Law" can also refer to the ministry of Moses, which was inferior compared to the ministry of the Gospel. The Apostle employs this sense in his Epistles to the Galatians and Hebrews. Therefore, it is crucial to avoid misconceptions when Antinomians present verses that seem to abolish the Law and instead clarify which Law and in what sense those verses should be interpreted.
3. Let's consider the meaning of these phrases: "Of the Law," "Without the Law," "Under the Law," and "In the Law."

"Without the Law" can be understood in two ways: First, it means being without the knowledge and understanding of the Law, as applicable to the Gentiles who lacked this knowledge. Secondly, it means being without the sense and experience of the accusing and terrifying power of the Law. Paul mentions this when he says that when the Law came, he felt the weight of its conviction. However, the godly, though not under the Law, are not said to be without the Law, as the Moral Law still obliges believers in terms of knowledge and observance, just as it did the Gentiles before they encountered it. To contrast this, "In the Law" is used in Romans 2:12, and it signifies those who have the Law and yet sin against it. A similar phrase is "Of the Law" in Romans 4:14. Here, it could mean "Of the Circumcision," referring to those initiated into the Ministry of Moses, or in other places, it may signify the opposite of "Without the Law," as seen in Romans 4:14, where the Apostle clarifies that the promise made to Abraham was not a result of obedience to the Mosaic Law, which came later, but rather, it pertains to obedience to the Moral Law as revealed at that time. Another phrase, "By the Law," refers to works done in conformity to the Law. The Apostle argues that righteousness and the promise are not attained through the Law.

4. There are two ways to be "Under the Law": voluntarily, as Christ was, and being under it in a negative sense. A willing obedience to the Law is acceptable, as seen in 1 Corinthians 9:20, where the Apostle describes how he acted as "under the Law" for some, though he adds a clarification there that pertains to the ceremonial part of the Law. Thus, a godly person, while not properly "under the Law," can be considered as "under the Law" in a well-explained sense. However, when the Apostle uses this phrase in most cases, as in our text and in other places, he

primarily refers to being under the Law in a negative sense. So, let's now examine how this applies to the Godly.

5. While some with sound judgment interpret the phrase "Not to be under the Law" to mean "Not under the curse of the Law" or "Not subject to its guilt," this interpretation may not align with the context. The general understanding is that the Apostle makes an objection from this perspective: "Shall we sin because we are not under the Law, but under grace?" This seems to suggest that being "under the Law" refers to being under its condemning power, and "under grace" pertains to pardon and free justification. However, as the Apostle is discussing sanctification in this chapter and the next, I prefer Beza's interpretation, which equates being "under the Law" with being "under sin." In Chapter 7, the Apostle speaks of himself as carnal, saying that the Law incited all kinds of evil in him. This, indeed, is the effect of the Law on every unregenerate person, where applying the Law only brings forth more corruption. Thus, the Apostle's argument is that sin should not reign in believers, for they are no longer under the Law, stirring up sin, but under grace. Here, "under grace" doesn't just mean justification and pardon, although they are also under that, but primarily sanctification and healing. The Apostle raises the objection "What then, shall we sin, because we are not under the Law?" because the phrase was ambiguous and could be misconstrued, as Libertines do, to suggest unrestricted freedom without any control of any Law. With this interpretation, we find a sweet harmony in the context.

The third instance is found in Romans 7, especially in the beginning of the chapter. The answer to the previous objection will also clarify this matter, as the Apostle continues discussing what it means to be

"under the Law" by using a simile of a wife bound to her husband as long as he lives, but when he dies, she is free. The interpretation of the simile varies among commentators, but I understand it like this: Sin, which the Law provokes and incites in our corrupt nature, is like the former husband the soul had, and our lusts are the offspring of this union. However, upon regeneration, Christ becomes the husband of the godly soul, setting them free from the dominion of sin. Therefore, those who consider the Moral Law to be the husband are mistaken. Properly, sin plays that role. If one argues that the Moral Law could be the husband, they must understand it in the sense that it inflames the heart towards evil. The Apostle (as the Learned have observed) does not say the Law is dead, but that "we are dead" to it, meaning that the Law is never as alive as it is in the godly, who consistently obey and live in accordance with it.

This explanation also applies to the passage in Galatians 5:18, which states, "If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law." Here, "under the Law" means being under its compelling force.

Austin distinguishes four states of men: those who are "Ante legem" (before the Law), and they commit sin without knowing it; "Sub lege" (under the Law), and they struggle with sin but are overcome by it; "Sub gratia" (under grace), and they fight against sin and will overcome it; and "Sub pace" (under peace), which refers to those in heaven.

## **LECTURE XXIV.**

## The Law as a Covenant

"And he declared unto you his Covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten Commandments, &c." - Deuteronomy 4. 13.

I have already discussed the Law as a Rule, and now I shall consider it as a Covenant, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the whole Law. I won't dwell on this topic for long, although it is vast and challenging. It resembles the Land of Canaan, filled with many giants and significant objections along the way. Instead of delving into controversies, I will focus on presenting it in a positive light. In the realm of Divinity, I find few topics that confuse and perplex learned men as much as this one. It's like Abraham's ram entangled in a thicket of briars and brambles by its head.

To proceed in an organized manner, let us observe the context of this verse and the purpose behind it. Moses aims to persuade the people of Israel to obey the Law, using several compelling arguments.

As we examine Deuteronomy 4:13, we find compelling arguments put forth by Moses to persuade the people of Israel to obey the Law. Firstly, there is the promise of a good and profitable outcome – not merely temporal, but symbolizing eternal life in heaven.

A second argument highlights the perfection of the Law, making it complete and immutable, with nothing to be added or taken away.

The third argument focuses on the exceptional wisdom and understanding the Israelites will possess through these holy and perfect laws. No other nation under the sun has been granted such divine and flawless laws, and this wisdom will set them apart.

Moses presents additional arguments, emphasizing the great authority and mercy in God giving them the Law instead of another nation. The verse under consideration, declaring the Law as a Covenant, is part of the argument that proves the Law's dignity and glorious authority based on its manner of delivery.

Now, it's important to note that the term "Covenant" is sometimes used metonymically, referring to part of the Covenant, as seen in these words.

The doctrine I shall focus on is that the Law was delivered by God on Mount Sinai in the form of a Covenant – the Law was a Covenant God made with the people of Israel. This becomes evident through its designation as a Covenant and the characteristics of an actual Covenant.

Scripture references confirm this, such as 2 Kings 18:12, where transgressing God's Covenant refers to the Ten Commandments. Deuteronomy 17:2 also indicates transgressing the Covenant, identified as the Ten Commandments.

A more explicit example is found in 2 Chronicles 6:11, where the Ark holds the Covenant the Lord made with the children of Israel. Strictly speaking, the books of Moses and the Prophets are not as aptly called the Old Covenant or Testament as this doctrine delivered on Mount Sinai, along with its administrations.

Hebrews 7 and 8 further underscore this, just as when the Apostle refers to ministers of the New Testament in 2 Corinthians 3:6, he means the Gospel or Covenant of grace.

Another reference highlighting the Law as a Covenant is Jeremiah 11:2-4.



In the next instance, you can observe the essential properties of a Covenant, which involve mutual consent and stipulation on both sides. This can be seen in the full account of Exodus 24:3-9. The Apostle refers to this history in Hebrews 9, and though there are many difficulties noted by learned interpreters, I shall not delve into them.

In the quoted words from Exodus, we witness elements that pertain to a Covenant. Firstly, God Himself expresses His consent and willingness to be their God if they keep the Commandments given to them. Secondly, the people wholeheartedly consent and eagerly commit to obeying them. Thirdly, as Covenants were typically written for posterity, Moses writes down the precepts in a book. Fourthly, since Covenants were often confirmed with visible signs, especially through animal sacrifices, this is also carried out here. Half of the blood is sprinkled on the Altar, symbolizing God's entrance into the Covenant, while the people are also sprinkled with blood, signifying their voluntary covenanting. This confirms the reality of covenanting when the Law is given.

Similarly, we can see this in effect in Deuteronomy 29:10-13, where it is expressly stated that they stood to enter into a Covenant with God, establishing themselves as His people, and He as their God. Again, it is evident in Deuteronomy 26:17-18, where it is affirmed that the Lord is their God, and they vow to walk in His ways. The Lord, in turn, declares them to be His special people. Thus, it is apparent that the Law was given as a Covenant. Indeed, the Apostle refers to it as a Testament, despite some objections to the distinction between the Old and New Testaments. Nevertheless, 1 Corinthians 3 does support this distinction. The challenge lies in understanding how this Covenant can be rightly called a Testament, considering Christ's singular death, which is essential for a Testament. The answer lies in

the typical death of Christ in the sacrifices, which suffices to make the Covenant a Testament.

Having established that it is a Covenant, the remaining difficulty lies in determining which Covenant it is. The Learned and Orthodox differ on this, owing to the various Scripture passages that, while not contradictory, sometimes confound our understanding. Some view it as a Covenant of works, others as a mixed Covenant, and some as a subservient Covenant. However, I am persuaded to side with those who regard it as a Covenant of grace. Indeed, strong arguments can be presented in favour of this view, yet it may pose challenges in responding to passages that seem to argue against it. If the affirmative proves true, it will reveal the Law's dignity and excellence. Now, before I present the arguments that lead me to this conclusion, let us consider the possible interpretation of the Law as a Covenant of grace.

Some explain it as a Covenant of grace that the Jews misconstrued as a Covenant of works, leading them to oppose Christ. Therefore, the Apostle argues against the Law as it was understood by the Jews, who falsely believed it opposed the promises and grace. While there is truth in this explanation, it is not entirely comprehensive.

Others consider the Law to be a Covenant of grace, but with obscurity, likening the Gospel and the Law as akin to an acorn within its husk and an oak when fully grown. However, if this interpretation leans towards a Popish notion that the righteousness of the Law and the Gospel are the same, it would be dangerous and directly contradict Scripture.

Some explain it like this: God had a primary or antecedent will in giving the Law, and a secondary and consequent will. His primary will was to present perfect and exact righteousness, against which the

Apostle argues, proving that no one can be justified by it. However, God, knowing human weakness and inability, secondarily commanded repentance and promised gracious acceptance through Christ. This interpretation can be well received if not clouded by negative interpretations.

But, in the end, I will take a different approach: The Law (in this context) can be considered more broadly as the entire doctrine delivered on Mount Sinai, with the preface and attached promises, and all that can be related to it. Alternatively, it can be considered more narrowly as an abstract rule of righteousness, offering life only through perfect obedience. In the former sense, it was a Covenant of grace; in the latter sense, abstracted from Moses' administration, it was not of grace, but of works.

This distinction will invalidate all objections against the negative view. It should not be surprising that the Apostle considered the Law differently, as Paul is known to do so in his Epistles, especially in these controversies. For example, in Romans 10:5-6, Paul describes the righteousness of the Law from the words "Do this and live," which refers to Leviticus 18:5, but in effect, it can also be found in Deuteronomy 30:16. Yet, from this very chapter, the Apostle describes the righteousness by faith. Beza acknowledges that what Moses speaks of the Law, Paul applies to the Gospel. This can only be reconciled if we distinguish between the general doctrine of Moses delivered to the people and the specific doctrine concerning the Law when taken in a limited and abstracted sense. It should be noted that even if the Law were a Covenant of grace, the righteousness of works and faith differ significantly. However, the Papists make a difference by stating that the righteousness of the Law is what we do by our own power, knowledge, and understanding of the Law, while the righteousness of faith is the righteousness of the Law enabled by

grace through Christ. But the Apostle excludes the works of David and Abraham, which they did in obedience to the Law, enabled by grace. Hence, it is necessary in matters of justification and pardon to exclude all works and anything that is ours.

Now, moving on to the arguments to prove the affirmative, the first shall be taken from the relation of the Covenanters: God on one part and the Israelites on the other. God did not deal with them absolutely, but as their God and Father. Hence, God declares Himself their God, and when Christ quotes the commandments, He includes the preface, "Hear O Israel, the Lord your God is one." In Romans 9:4, it is stated that to the Israelites belong adoption, glory, covenants, the giving of the Law, and the promises. If this were not a covenant of grace, how could God be their God, considering they were sinners? Furthermore, considering the relationship the people of Israel were taken into, it further confirms the point. Exodus 19:5-6 states, "If you obey my voice, you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me, and you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation," which Peter applies to the people of God under the Gospel. Therefore, if the Law were a Covenant of works, how could such an agreement come between them?

2. If we consider the blessings attached to this Covenant, it must undoubtedly be a Covenant of grace. In it, we find remission and pardon of sins, whereas in the Covenant of works, there is no room for repentance or forgiveness. The second Commandment describes God as showing mercy to thousands, which means granting pardon, as contrasted with visiting iniquity. The Law, strictly taken, does not allow for any humbling or debasing of oneself but rather curses anyone who fails to obey all its commandments with complete and perfect obedience. However, in Exodus 34:6-7, God proclaims His gracious and merciful

attributes, keeping mercy for thousands and forgiving iniquity, which He did upon the renewal of the two Tablets. If the people of Israel were held strictly to the Law's demand for universal perfect obedience without any failings, they would have despaired and perished without hope.

3. If we consider the duties commanded in the Law in a general sense, it must necessarily be a Covenant of grace. What does the first Commandment mean but to have one God in Christ our God through faith? If faith had not been commanded on such terms, it would have been impossible for them to love or pray to God. The true meaning, then, is to love, delight in, and trust in God, and how can this be without faith through Christ? Though Christ or faith is not explicitly mentioned in the first Commandment, our Savior reveals it there, and they must be understood to be there by necessary consequence. When the people of Israel took upon themselves to observe the Law, the meaning was not that they would do it perfectly without sin or without God's grace for pardon when they broke the Law.
4. From the Ceremonial Law, all Divines agree that it is related to the Moral Law, so sacrifices were commanded by virtue of the second Commandment. Sacrifices were evangelical, foreshadowing remission of sins through Christ's blood. Therefore, if these were commanded by the Moral Law, grace must necessarily be included, albeit in an obscure and dark manner. The Apostle argues against circumcision and the entire Ceremonial Law as much as the Moral Law; the first controversy arose from that. Circumcision and sacrifices did not oppose Christ or grace but rather pointed to them. This has been a strong argument for me to lean towards the affirmative. True, the Jews rested on these rituals without looking to Christ, but

similarly, Christians in our times might focus too much on Sacraments and other duties.

5. This becomes evident from the visible seal to ratify this Covenant, accomplished through sacrifices and sprinkling the people with blood. These acts symbolized Christ, as He was also the Mediator of this Covenant. Reconciliation with a sinner could only be achieved through the Mediation of Christ and not any mortal man. Therefore, when Moses is called the Mediator, it should be understood in a typical sense, just as the sacrifices typified the washing away of sin. Some believe Christ was also the Angel mentioned in Acts 7, with whom Moses interacted in the wilderness, which seems plausible. If Christ was the Mediator of the Law as a Covenant, the Antinomian distinction that places the Law in Moses' hand and not in Christ's must be discarded, for on Mount Sinai, the Law was in the hand of Christ.
6. If the Law were the same Covenant as the oath God made to Isaac, then it must necessarily be a Covenant of grace. We find that when God gave this Law to them, He made it an argument of His love and grace towards them. He remembered what He had promised to Abraham, as stated in Deuteronomy 7:12. It was said, "Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and do them, that the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the Covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers." If the Law had been a Covenant of works, God would have fully abrogated and broken His Covenant and Promise of grace made with Abraham and his descendants. Thus, when the Apostle opposes the Law and the promise together in Galatians 3:18, making the inheritance by one and not the other, it should be understood according to the earlier mentioned distinction of

the Law taken in a strict and limited sense. It is evident that Moses, in the administration of this Law, had regard to the Covenant and Promise and even equated them.

Objections are raised from certain Scripture passages where the Law and faith or the promise are directly opposed, such as Romans 10 and Galatians 3:18, and where the Law is referred to as the ministry of death and working wrath. To address these objections:

Firstly, if these statements were rigidly and universally true, then the Socinians' doctrine would prevail, claiming that the Jews received no grace, faith, or anything of Christ. However, it is clear they had adoption, even though their state was one of bondage.

Secondly, the Gospel is also said to be the savor of death, and those without Christ are said to have no sin. Despising Christ leads to more severe judgments than despising the Law of Moses. The effect of the Law as ministry of death is accidental due to our corruption. God does not grant grace for strict legal justification through the Law, but He does provide it for Evangelical justification.

Thirdly, derogatory passages regarding the Law may apply to the Ceremonial Law, yet even there, Christ and grace were held forth.

Fourthly, these passages hold true in a respective sense, as understood by the Jews who, without Christ, perceive the Law as a killing letter, much like how we would view the doctrine of the Gospel without the grace of Christ. The Apostle understands these aspects as separated and opposed to Christ and His grace.

Lastly, we must retain the distinction of the Law in a larger sense as delivered by Moses and in a stricter sense, consisting of precepts,

threatenings, and promises based on a condition impossible for us to fulfill perfectly, which is the complete fulfillment of the Law.

## **LECTURE XXV.**

Where is boasting?

"So where does all this boasting come from? It is completely excluded. By what principle? By one of works? No, but by the principle of faith." - Romans 3:27

In the preceding verses, the Apostle presented a concise and comprehensive doctrine of justification, covering its various causes. From this, he draws a conclusion in this verse, which debunks all grounds for boasting in oneself. He does so through brief interrogations, aiming to subdue our self-confidence. "Where is boasting?" he asks. This applies universally to both Jews and Gentiles, but it particularly addresses the Jewish tendency to boast. Chrysostom suggests that Christ's delay in coming in the flesh was partly to humble human pride. If Christ had come earlier, people might not have realized the absolute need for a Savior.

The second question is about the Law that excludes boasting. The answer is twofold. Firstly, it is not excluded by the Law of works. Secondly, it is positively excluded by the principle of faith.

The Apostle refers to the doctrine of works, which prescribes them as the condition for our justification and salvation, when he speaks of the "law of works." He uses the plural form "works" because a few



good works, even if perfectly done (if that were possible), would not satisfy the Law for our acceptance. It requires a continuous and universal practice of them, both in parts and degrees. On the other hand, he calls the doctrine of faith the "law of faith," either to sweeten and endear the Gospel to the Jews or to mimic the Jewish sense of the term "law" as seen in John 6, where faith is referred to as a work because the Jews asked what they should do.

In Scripture, we find two clear illustrations of both aspects of the text. The Pharisee boasts about his works and fails to acknowledge the grace of God, while the Publican humbly sees himself as a sinner and excludes all boasting through the law of faith.

The Papists interpret the "works" in the text as those preceding faith, stating that faith leads to works. However, this interpretation corrupts the text, as the Apostle refers to Abraham as an example, showing how he had no grounds for boasting in himself and instead gave glory to God through belief. The reason works imply boasting, even when enabled by God's grace, is that we attribute justification to the work of grace within us, which is still incomplete and should entirely be given to Christ.

The doctrine I will explore from these words is that even though the Law given by God to the Israelites was a Covenant of grace, in some sense, the Law and Gospel oppose and contradict each other. This exploration is essential as it reveals the nature of the Gospel and the Law. Calvin, in his Institutes, calls it an error to only compare the Gospel and the Law based on the merit of works versus the free imputation of righteousness. He states that this antithesis or opposition is not to be rejected because the Apostle often contrasts them, referring to the Law as the rule of life, where God requires us to fulfill what is His, giving us no hope unless we keep the Law

entirely. However, when the Law is taken more broadly, the only difference is in clearer manifestation, just as Pareus explained the old and new Covenant.

Before exploring the exact opposition between the Law and the Gospel, it is essential to establish two foundational points. Firstly, the Law and the Gospel can be compared in terms of the grace God gave under the Old Testament and the New Testament, in which case they differ only gradually. Under the Law, they did experience grace and the Spirit of God, although some deny it, but compared to the Gospel, it might be said that there was less spirit and grace. Secondly, the doctrine of the Law in its mere preceptive nature can be compared with the doctrine of the Gospel, with the grace of God accompanying it. However, this comparison is somewhat unequal because without the grace of God, the letter of the Gospel can be as deadly as the letter of the Law. Nonetheless, we must ensure that the parallel is equal when comparing Law and Gospel and that we do not give one more advantage or less than its nature requires.

In this second part of the discussion, it's important to keep in mind the different ways the term "Law" is used, particularly in relation to this specific point. If we strictly interpret "Law" but also consider it a Covenant of grace, we end up mixing the concepts of righteousness based on works and righteousness through faith together, just as the Papists do. However, if we take a broader view of "Law," then there is the possibility of a happy reconciliation between the two.

To better understand this, let's consider that both the terms "Law" and "Gospel" can be interpreted broadly or strictly. We won't delve into the various meanings of these words, such as whether they might also refer to a sorrowful message along with glad news (as some suggest, citing passages like 1 Sam. 4:17 and 2 Sam. 1:10). For

our purposes, it suffices to know that in the Scripture, they are sometimes used in a broader sense and at other times more narrowly.

When taken broadly, "Gospel" refers to the entire doctrine that the Apostles were tasked to preach, as seen in Mark 16:15, "Preach the Gospel to every creature." It can also denote the beginning of Christ's preaching, as in Mark 1:1, "The beginning of the Gospel," meaning the doctrine and teachings of Christ. In a stricter sense, it is used in Luke 2:10, "Behold, I bring you glad tidings," signifying the Gospel of peace and the grace of God. Thus, we see that the terms "Law" and "Gospel" are employed differently, with both broader and stricter connotations.

Now, there is a notable debate over whether the command of repentance belongs to the Gospel. Different theological factions, such as the Lutherans, Antinomians, and Calvinists, hold varying views on this matter. However, this discussion delves further into the strict interpretation of "Law" and "Gospel," which we will address separately.

Bellarmino argues that Protestants deny the necessity of good works because they believe the Gospel lacks precepts and threats (lib. 4. de Justif. cap. 2). He cites Romans 1:18, where the wrath of God is said to be revealed from heaven in the Gospel. Nevertheless, as we shall demonstrate, he misunderstands the essence of the dispute by taking "Gospel" in a broader sense than intended by the Protestants. On the other hand, Islebius, an Antinomian proponent, asserts that repentance should not be taught from the Decalogue but from the Gospel. He advocates resisting any teaching that suggests the Gospel should only be preached to those who are made contrite by the Law.

However, a proper understanding of the word "Gospel" would swiftly mend these divisions.

The Law and the Gospel have distinct meanings, and I will first illustrate their opposition in their broader sense and then in a more limited sense. Understanding this is crucial as it forms the foundation of our comfort, if we grasp it correctly. In this broader sense, the question pertains to the difference between the Old and New Testaments or Covenants, which has led to varying and, in my view, somewhat confused views among scholars. Whether it is appropriate to call them "Old" and "New" because the former refers to the old man, condemning it, while the latter encourages and comforts the new, I won't examine in detail. Instead, I believe the terms are used to signify that the old was to eventually cease and vanish, existing before the new. I'll first address false differences and then the true ones.

The Anabaptists and Socinians hold the false belief that all who lived under the Law had only temporal earthly blessings in their knowledge and affections. They argue that while Christ and eternal things were promised in the Old Testament, they were not realized until the New Testament, claiming that grace and salvation were absent until Christ's advent. They interpret the Antinomians' passages concerning believers under the New Testament too rigidly and universally, as if eternal life and the Spirit of God were absent before Christ. They even contend that the Gospel only commenced with Christ and that the promise of a coming Christ or Messiah was never termed the Gospel, but rather its actual manifestation. This is untrue; indeed, while this promise is sometimes referred to as "the promise made to the fathers" (Acts 7:17, Acts 13:32), it is also called the Gospel (Romans 1:2, Romans 10:14-15). Furthermore, there are clear passages disproving this wicked error, such as the Apostle's

examples of Abraham and David, who obtained justification and remission of sins, spiritual blessings. Evidence of their knowledge of eternal life is evident through our Savior's command to search the Scriptures, as in them they hoped for eternal life (John 11:39). They also possessed knowledge and hope of a resurrection, as seen in Acts 24:14, where our Savior confirms the resurrection based on God's communication to Moses. Though we acknowledge that their state was childlike, influenced by sensory experiences, spiritual aspects were indeed revealed amidst these temporal blessings. For instance, in 1 Corinthians 10, the Apostle argues that the Jews shared the same spiritual matters and benefits in their Sacraments as we do.

Next, let's address the false differences presented by the Papists, who are also supported by some Socinians.

Firstly, they claim that Christ, in the New Testament, introduced more perfect Laws and sound counsels compared to before. For instance, they mention wilful poverty and vowed chastity as new additions. The Socinians, on the other hand, argue that Christ added to every precept of the Decalogue. They assert that Christ commanded prayer, which they say was lacking in the Old Testament, though godly men did pray. Furthermore, they claim that Christ not only commanded prayer but also provided a prescribed form of prayer. However, I have already demonstrated that Christ did not introduce any moral duty that was not already commanded before.

Secondly, the Papists maintain that the Law and the Gospel cannot be considered opposite to each other, not even in a strict sense. They insist that both are Covenants of works and that the Fathers under the Old Testament, as well as those under the New, were justified by fulfilling God's Law. This leads to a grave error that undermines the

significance of Christ and grace. We shall refute this falsehood when discussing the Law and Gospel in a strict sense, which the Papists, due to their dangerous error, refer to as the Old Law and the New.

Lastly, the Papists argue that under the Old Testament, the departed Fathers did not go directly to heaven. They claim that only after Christ's death did a way open for them and us. Thus, they refrain from using titles like "Saint Jeremiah" or "Saint Isaiah" for those who lived before Christ's death. However, this claim has been sufficiently refuted in the Popish controversies.

Now, let us turn to the Antinomian difference, which presents an unprecedented notion. In the Honey-comb of Justification (pg. 117), it is asserted that God saw sin in the believers of the Old Testament but not in those of the New. Their reasoning is based on the belief that the glory of free Justification was not as openly revealed, and the veil was not lifted. However, this argument is weak. Does the revelation of free Justification impact how freely God justifies? This reasoning may suggest that the people of God in the Old Testament did not fully comprehend this doctrine as those in the New, but it does not imply that God saw sin differently based on this revelation. The Scripture passages cited, such as Zech. 13:1 and Dan. 9:14, seem more aligned with Socinian beliefs that pardon and eternal life are exclusive to the Gospel. Another passage mentioned, Jer. 5:20, actually promises pardon of sin to the residue of Jews who God would bring back from captivity, not solely to believers under the Gospel. Similarly, the application of Heb. 10:17 solely to believers of the Gospel is misguided. The godly in the Old Testament also had the Law written in their hearts and access to the same means of removing their sins through Christ's blood, just like we do under the Gospel.

His second reason is that God saw sin in them because they were children who needed discipline, but He sees none in us because we are mature heirs. This reasoning appears strange since parents often perceive less sin in their young children and excuse their childishness. Furthermore, while children may face discipline with a rod, grown-ups often receive more severe punishments. The Apostle even threatens believers who despise Christ with more severe punishment than those who despised Moses.

His third reason is that since they were under the Law as a School-master, God saw sin in them, but not in us, as we are no longer under a School-master. However, this argument lacks solidity. Being under the Law as a School-master primarily involves teaching and guiding to prepare for Christ. Hence, Christians under the Gospel should exhibit greater wisdom and grown graces than the Jews, not because they are free from a School-master, but because they have progressed like a young man moving from a Grammar school to a University.

The fourth reason why God saw sin in them was that they were not made perfect according to the conscience, as mentioned in Heb. 9:13-14. This reasoning appears mistaken, for the Apostle intended to show that the godly then could not obtain righteousness through sacrifices, but through Christ, the true sacrifice. Hence, it does not imply that they only received a legal bodily cleansing. Other reasons presented to support the distinction between the Old and New Covenants are easily refuted, such as the notion that God saw no sin in them because the doctrine of heaven's kingdom was not preached as clearly as it is now. This supposition is weak and does not hold if we consider Christ's blood to be effective and operative throughout history.

The author presents other differences between the Law and the Gospel, as presented by another Antinomian in a sermon on the two Covenants of grace. The author asserts that God interacted with the Jews in a Covenant of grace, yet he considers it to be distinct from the Covenant under the Gospel. However, the mere use of the terms "Old" and "New" does not indicate an essential difference. For instance, the Commandment of love is referred to as both old and new, but its essence remains the same. The terms "good" and "better" similarly imply a gradual difference in excellence. The author's reasoning on the distinctions between these two Covenants of grace is erroneous and requires critical examination.

The first difference he points out is regarding the remission of sins, but his grounds differ from those in the Honey-comb. He argues that they (referring to people in the past) did not have a complete remission of all types of sins. For instance, sacrifices were made for sins of ignorance but not for sins committed presumptuously. According to this view, if no sacrifices were offered, then no pardon was obtained. On the other hand, under the Gospel, Christ's blood cleanses from all sin. However, this argument contains several falsehoods.

Firstly, it is incorrect to claim that all the legal sacrifices were exclusively for sins of ignorance, as Leviticus 6:2-3 prescribes a sacrifice for lying and false swearing in the matter of withholding a neighbor's goods, which can only be considered sins of knowledge. Additionally, Leviticus 16 describes the feast of expiation and atonement, made for all the sins of the people, clearly indicating sacrifices for various sins, not limited to ignorance. Thus, it is evident that the Antinomian's assertion contradicts the plain teachings of Scripture, leading to doubt about the reliability of such claims.



Moreover, even if it were assumed that some sins did not have designated legal sacrifices, it does not logically follow that no pardon was available for those sins. This line of reasoning is flawed. If such a doctrine were true, then why did individuals like David and Manasseh seek pardon for their sins? The error becomes even more apparent when considering the godly figures in the Old Testament who committed serious transgressions without specific sacrifices prescribed for them.

Furthermore, in the New Testament, there is the sin against the Holy Ghost, for which no pardon is promised, despite Christ's blood being sufficient to remove its guilt. God has declared that He will not pardon this particular sin.

The author then contends that under the Gospel, it is stated that the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin. However, this does not negate the fact that even in the past, God has proclaimed Himself as a God who is gracious and forgiving, capable of pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin. Isaiah 1 calls upon Jerusalem to repent of her various sins, with the promise that though their sins may be as scarlet, they can be made white as snow. This argument presented by the author is flawed and weak, akin to a dead fly in an ointment box. Additionally, the truth of Christ's blood cleansing from all sin has been evident since Adam's fall and not unique to the Gospel era. Only someone with Socinian beliefs would deny this truth.

4. Another difference that the author proposes concerning the remission of sins for those in the past and us under the Gospel is equally strange and false. According to the author, God did not grant the grace of remission of sins to those under the old Covenant without antecedent conditions. They had to incur expenses for sacrifices, confess their sins to the priests, and in

some cases, fast. However, under the Gospel, there is no prerequisite action required for participation in the Covenant. This difference contains much absurdity, falsehood, and contradiction within the author's own arguments.

For instance, the author cites Ezekiel 16, where God speaks to the Church and tells her to live while she was in her blood, implying there was no antecedent condition. However, this claim overlooks the context that clearly shows God addressing the Church of the Jews. Moreover, Isaiah 65:1, which speaks of God being found by those who did not seek Him, can also be applied to the Jews before God called them. God repeatedly tells the Jews that the good He does for them is for His own name's sake, not because of anything in them.

Furthermore, if these antecedent qualifications were required for the remission of sins in the past, then the same arguments used against Christ and grace for us today could apply to the Jews of old. This would imply that a Jew could claim their services, sacrifices, and prayers contributed to the remission of their sins, while Christians are forbidden from doing so. This distinction suggests a double standard between the time of the Law and the time of grace, contradicting the doctrine of grace.

Regarding the remission of sins, the author also points out that for those in the past, it was granted gradually and successively. If a person sinned and offered a sacrifice, that sin would be pardoned, but future ignorance required a new sacrifice for forgiveness. However, the author's reasoning is based on the assumption that the sacrifices themselves possessed the power to take away sins. If we acknowledge that the true sacrifice is Christ, represented in every sacrifice, then all sins could be forgiven, not just some. Unless the

author denies the efficacy of Christ's blood during the Old Testament, they cannot escape this contradiction.

Moreover, the author's argument contradicts their own position on justification and faith. They claim that faith does not justify but only serves as evidence and declaration of justification. This is because God's love and free grace to justify exist from all eternity, rendering past and future sins irrelevant. However, if God justified David and the ungodly in those days from all eternity, then all their sins should have been fully forgiven at once, just as the sins of believers under the Gospel. The Apostle even uses David as an example of justification and remission of sins under the New Testament, suggesting a similar manner of justification for both periods.

In the meantime, let me present an Antinomian argument that attempts to prove we are justified and have all our sins forgiven before we even believe. However, this reasoning can be undermined by another Antinomian who brings forward various arguments to show that successive remission of sins exists. These arguments apply to believers under the Old Testament as well as the New, as they were elected and had their sins laid upon Christ, just like us. If God's love for us today and potential hatred tomorrow is accepted, then it should be acknowledged that the same could be said for believers in the past. The refuting Antinomian, who I'm addressing, must be consistent and acknowledge that godly individuals in the past also had half pardons and experienced fluctuating divine affection.

Additionally, the Apostle's statement about Christ offering Himself once for all to perfect the sanctified is a perpetual truth since the time of Adam's fall. Its efficacy applied to those who lived before Christ's death as much as to those after, as indicated by the

description of Christ as a Lamb slain from the beginning of the world, a notion that Socinians might try to distort.

Lastly, I contest the idea that even under the Gospel, all sins are forgiven to the justified person at once. Although they are put into a state of justification where no condemnation awaits, their sins are not forgiven until they are committed and repented of. We pray for the daily pardon of sins, not solely for the assurance of pardon, but for the actual forgiveness itself. This matter will be further addressed in the discussion on Justification. The other differences raised by the aforementioned author have already been refuted in substance.

## **LECTURE XXVI.**

### **The True Differences Between Law and Gospel**

So, where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Romans. 3. 27.

We have now refuted the false differences and shall proceed to present the true differences between the Law and the Gospel in a broader sense.

Firstly, it is important to understand that the difference between them is not essential or fundamental, but rather accidental. The division of the Testament or Covenant into Old and New does not imply a division of the Genus into opposite Species; rather, it pertains to the subject, considering its various accidental administrations, both on God's part and on man's. Some Lutheran

Divines explicitly oppose the Calvinists on this matter, asserting that the Covenant given by Moses was a Covenant of works and thus in direct contrast to the Covenant of grace. However, it has been demonstrated that Moses' Covenant was, in fact, a Covenant of grace. By properly understanding the terms Law and Gospel, the apparent differences among the Learned in this regard can be easily resolved. Undoubtedly, the godly Jews did not merely rely on sacrifices or sacraments; they genuinely experienced Christ through faith, just as we do in our time. Christ was prefigured by the Mercy-seat, and both the Cherubim and the people of the Jews and Gentiles directed their gaze towards Him. Although Christ had not yet taken on our flesh at that time, the fruit and benefit of His incarnation were communicated because of God's decree and promise (1 Pet. 1:20).

One significant difference lies in the degrees of clarity and perspicuity in the revelation of heavenly truths. In the Old Testament, the light of revelation is compared to the light during the night, while in the New Testament, it is likened to the brightness of the sun during the day (2 Pet. 1:19). Heavenly doctrine can be summarized into three categories: credenda, things to be believed; speranda, things to be hoped for; and facienda, things to be done.

In terms of credenda, the objects of faith were more obscurely delivered to them. The doctrine of the Trinity, the Incarnation of Christ, and the Resurrection were conveyed in a less clear manner, yet according to the measure of light available at that time, the godly were bound to believe those truths. It can be said that Moses' doctrine had a veil upon it, just as he had a veil upon himself. The knowledge we possess here on earth is limited compared to that in heaven, and similarly, the knowledge in the Old Testament could be considered less clear compared to that in the New.

Likewise, in *speranda*, things hoped for, the opinion of the Socinians and others, suggesting that those before Christ only hoped for temporal blessings, is wicked. The notion that the Jews were gathered together as mere beasts rather than called together as men is also false. The promises made to them were mostly temporal and carnal in nature, but they also symbolized spiritual and heavenly realities. The Jews looked forward to temporal mercies, and later the Christians were allured by spiritual blessings. Abraham and others sought a heavenly country, indicating that their hopes extended beyond mere outward mercies. Though the term "kingdom of heaven" may not be explicitly mentioned in the Old Testament, David's profession of making God his portion suggests a deeper understanding.

Regarding *facienda*, things to be done, it is true that Christ added no new commands to the Law of Moses, and moral sins now were also sins then. However, the doctrine regarding these matters was not as full, penetrating, and clear as it is under the Gospel. Claims that Christ added and perfected the Law or filled vacuities in it are misguided. The Law of God is perfect, and nothing should be added to it. Christ is said to fill the Law in response to the corrupt glosses of the Pharisees, not because the Law itself was lacking. A dangerous book called "The Practical Catechism" propagates Socinian poison, claiming that Christ added to the Law. But such assertions are weak and inconsistent. It would be illogical to argue that lusting after a woman in one's heart would not be sin for a Jew but would be sin for a Christian.

The second particular difference lies in the measure of grace. The Scripture sometimes appears to suggest that the people under the Old Testament had no grace at all, simply because the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was not as abundant as it is now. It is true that certain

individuals, like Abraham and David, may have exhibited remarkable degrees of grace, surpassing many under the Gospel. However, this was not the ordinary state of affairs during those times. While the Jews experienced drops of grace, we, as Christians, have access to the fountain of grace. It is both a privilege and an obligation, as it calls for greater knowledge and holiness than what was required of them in those days. We face the same reprovals from the Prophets, such as ignorance, self-confidence, and relying solely on external duties, as they did from their people.

3. Their condition was more servile. Everything weighed heavily on them, pushing them towards fear and bondage more than is the case among us now. The Apostle compares their state to that of the sons of the bondwoman in Galatians 4:30. Augustine distinguishes the difference between the two Testaments as "fear" and "love." God met man sinning under the Law with terror, charging sin upon him, much like how Adam faced fear after his transgression. However, under the Gospel, God receives us as a father does a prodigal son returning home. This difference is well-considered by Paul in Hebrews 12: "You have not come to Mount Sinai," etc. It is essential to understand that the Jews had a dual perspective; they were both servile and seen as sons under age. They were not entirely excluded from the Spirit of Adoption, and the Apostle affirmed that the Promises and Adoption belonged to them. David, in his prayer, appropriated God as his Father, revealing that he had the Spirit of Adoption, allowing him to call God "Abba, Father." While they were more prone to inward bondage, they were also under external bondage, which is contrasted with the Christian liberty Paul speaks of. This liberty sets them free from the burdens of ceremonial rituals, which Paul fervently argues against those who seek to reintroduce them.

To address a possible concern, some might question how the Jews could be in more servitude than the Christians merely because of ceremonies and sacrifices. After all, these practices were commanded by God and had spiritual meanings, serving as aids to their faith and expressions of piety. Similar to how the Sacraments under the Gospel are not seen as burdens but as visible signs of God's love towards us. However, it can be countered that while the ceremonies held spiritual significance, they required much bodily labor and were difficult to observe. No spiritually-minded priest or Levite in those days would prefer the labor-intensive task of sacrificing and flaying animals over ministering under the Gospel. Augustine rightly observed God's love in appointing fewer, easier, and more meaningful Sacraments for us. These bodily exercises were better suited for the spiritual infancy of the Church and were appropriate for their low condition. In contrast, the absence of Sacraments in heaven suggests their limited necessity. It is worth noting that Popery's introduction of numerous ceremonial observations and Church precepts has regressed the times of the Gospel to a state of spiritual infancy again. Such practices reveal a lack of spirituality, as those who delight in outward rituals often fail to grasp the spiritual essence. The more one fixates on external observations, the less one may partake in the spiritual realm.

Let me exemplify this with a fourth difference (since many discussing this subject mention these differences), and that is the duration and abode of it. The Mosaic administration of the Law was meant to last until Christ, the fulfillment, came. Just as the scaffolding is removed when the house is built, so were all those external ordinances to be abolished when Christ Himself arrived. A candle becomes unnecessary when the sun appears. A schoolmaster is no longer needed for those who have gained perfect knowledge. Milk is unsuitable for those who consume solid meat. The chaff protects the



corn, but when the corn is gathered, the chaff is discarded. When the fruit comes, the flower falls to the ground. The Apostle argues against it in Hebrews 7, stating that it could not bring anything to perfection, and none of those purifications could achieve any good or spiritual effect. Therefore, it was necessary for Christ to be revealed, and He would work all these spiritual blessings for us. Had there been no further progression, and we remained stuck in those offerings and sacrifices, it would have been forever impossible for God to be pleased with us. Hence, it is in this sense that it was to be discontinued, making room for a better covenant to replace it. The Apostle describes those things in Hebrews 10 as a shadow—a mere representation but not living, eating, or speaking. So, those sacrifices shadowed out Christ, but they could not provide the true benefits that come through Christ. It's similar to how Elisha sent his servant with a staff to raise the Shunamite's son, but he could do nothing without Elisha himself, who ultimately raised him up. Similarly, Moses was like the servant of the prophets; he went with a staff to raise those dead in sin but couldn't do it without Christ.

Now, a question may arise concerning why God appointed various and different administrations. This aspect of God's providence became a stumbling block for the Marcionites and Manicheans, leading them to deny that the same God was the author of both Testaments. In response to this, God could have clearly revealed Christ and poured out His Spirit, offering eternal life as abundantly under the Law as under the Gospel if He desired. However, asking why He chose this path would be as presumptuous and arrogant as questioning why He created the world when He did. If a schoolmaster teaches a new beginner differently from a proficient student, no one questions their wisdom. Just as in the case of the Paschal Lamb, where they were to eat the flesh but discard the bones, in all matters of religion, we may consume what is revealed

and beneficial while leaving aside what is abstruse and difficult. It is better to remain ignorant through God's choice not to reveal something than to try to understand it through human presumption.

Now, to conclude, let me provide the difference between the Law strictly taken, as requiring exact and perfect obedience with eternal life promised on no other terms, and the Gospel strictly taken, as a solemn proclamation of Christ and His benefits to a broken sinner.

The first difference is that the Law, to some extent, is known through natural light and aligns with a natural conscience. However, while some aspects of the Law's duties may be unknown to natural consciences, most external and outward duties are discerned through natural light, and the will may align with them as good to be done (though not in a godly manner). On the other hand, the Gospel's truth must be wholly revealed by God, as no human acumen could ever devise such a remarkable remedy for justification and salvation through Christ. As it is beyond human knowledge, the heart is more averse to this way.

This is why it is challenging to believe; why people of God find it difficult to roll their souls upon Christ when burdened with guilt. There is nothing in their natural conscience to aid them in this duty. A man's natural conscience agrees with the rejection of murder, theft, and adultery; however, urging him to believe is entirely beyond nature. Consequently, we naturally seek justification through our works, making justification by faith a different way than corrupted nature in us or right nature in Adam would incline towards. Therefore, let not the people of God be discouraged in their struggles and battles with unbelief. They must know that even a small degree of faith holds great significance. If it is said that Christianity requires a constant violence against nature, it holds especially true in matters

of faith. We are as stubborn in rejecting a promise as we are in refusing a command.

The second difference lies in the subject matter: The Law presents a perfect righteousness and allows for no other, whereas the Gospel condescends and offers pardon through Christ. This is the primary difference, and one in which they can never be reconciled. However, some like the Papists, Arminians, Socinians, and others, attempt to undermine this crucial distinction by advocating justification by works under some guise or another. Yet the Apostle clearly opposes this by stating an immediate contrast: "If of faith, then not of works." The Apostle does not distinguish between works of nature and works of grace or perfect and imperfect works of grace; rather, he speaks absolutely and thus rejects the subtle opinion of considering faith as a work. This truth is the foundation of the Church of God and sets us apart from Jews, Turks, Papists, and many heretics.

The third difference concerns the manner of obtaining the promised good thing: Those who would obtain eternal life through the Law do so as a debt and by way of justice, as mentioned in Romans 4:4. Not that Adam in his state of innocence could have earned anything from God, nor did God become a strict debtor, since Adam owed everything to God. However, in some sense, it might have appeared as if God owed something. Thus, boasting would not have been excluded, for eternal life would have been the reward for holy works done. Yet, in the Gospel, everything is of grace through Christ. Our righteousness stems solely from God's indulgence—not from the holiness within us but from the sin that has been pardoned, making us acceptable. Therefore, the broken and contrite heart can never fully comprehend the grace and goodness of God in the Gospel. No wonder Paul is often overcome by the weight of these considerations. This truly qualifies as good news, and if our hearts were spiritually

affected, we would declare, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring these glad tidings?"

The fourth difference pertains to the subject: The Law, strictly interpreted, applies only to those with a perfect and holy nature. Hence, it is a Covenant of friendship and not reconciliation, making a Mediator unnecessary. While there is merit in using the Law to humble proud Pharisees, convict gross sinners, and teach the godly the fair copy they ought to follow, when it comes to justification and eternal life, only those found perfectly holy can benefit from it. Just as it was not Moses but the serpent that brought healing, so it is not the Law but Christ that can comfort broken hearts stung with sin. The Priest and the Levite passed by, showing no pity. In contrast, the Gospel is given to a broken-hearted sinner, one who feels overwhelmed with shame, lies wounded in conscience, and cries for the oil of healing. How wretchedly uncomfortable must all Popish and Socinian Doctors be, advising the sinful and tempted to seek works under the Law, which is as unhelpful as suggesting a sick person to find the Philosopher's stone or eat a piece of the Phoenix to find relief?

Lastly, the Law differs from the Gospel in form: The Law is conditional, while the Gospel is absolute. The question of whether the Gospel is absolute or not can be troublesome. It does not ask whether the Gospel requires faith as a condition or whether it excludes repentance and holiness, as only a Scripture novice would think so. Instead, it asks whether the Gospel promises eternal life to a person based on any dignity, intention, merit, work, or disposition in us, under any notion whatsoever, or if it promises eternal life solely through faith in Christ. The answer is that if we consider the Gospel broadly as the doctrine of Christ and the Apostles, then it undoubtedly emphasizes the duty of mortification and sanctification,

while also threatening those who neglect these duties. However, if we strictly interpret the Gospel, it solely presents the remission of sins through Christ, not requiring any other duty as a condition or using any threatening language to do so. The question then arises as to which category repentance falls into: Is it a duty of the Law or the Gospel? Repentance cannot belong to the Law, as it admits of none. Therefore, it must be of the Gospel. Nonetheless, there are different expressions and opinions on this matter, with Lutheran Divines generally opposing the Antinomians on the grounds that the Gospel does not command repentance or exhort to it, but that it must come from the Law, which prepares people for Christ. This question will be the focus of our next discussion: whether the Gospel commands repentance or if it is solely from the Law.

## **LECTURE XXVII.**

Does the Gospel preach repentance or not?

Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works?

Nay, but by the Law of faith. - Romans. 3. 27.

Now, let us address the question at hand: Does the Gospel preach repentance or not? This issue caused significant controversy between the Orthodox and Antinomians in the past. I will provide a concise response.

1. The term "repentance" is sometimes used in a broad sense, encompassing faith within it, and represents a complete turning

to God (Rev. 2:5). At other times, it is used more narrowly, referring specifically to sorrow over sin and distinct from faith. For example, someone may not repent in order to believe; faith and repentance are mentioned together. When a person experiences sorrow and remorse for sin without faith, it is like a body without a soul, and this can lead to despair, as it focuses solely on the things that are against them instead of what is for them. The tears of repentance can be bitter until Christ sweetens them.

2. It is crucial to consider that the Law and the Gospel are not administered separately, but rather they are inseparably linked in the Word and Ministry. Although there is a significant opposition between them when taken strictly, they are highly supportive and complementary in their practical application. It is not good for either the Law or the Gospel to stand alone; they have distinct roles. Some old Antinomians taught repentance only through the Gospel, excluding the Law entirely, but they failed to recognize the useful connection between the two. The Law directs, commands, and humbles, while the Gospel comforts, refreshes, and supports. As a Christian, it is wise to keep both aspects in view. Some become disheartened by considering only the perfection of the Law and their inability to meet its demands, while others grow complacent by focusing solely on free grace. Both Law and Gospel are instrumental in the work of faith and repentance.
3. Considering the close link between Law and Gospel in their practical application, there is no need to separate them into two separate commands, one for faith and the other for repentance. Nor should we consider them as mere additions to the Gospel. Instead, we can understand that faith and repentance have both

an initial and consummative aspect, and therefore, both Law and Gospel are involved in their working. Just as there is a legal repentance and an evangelical one, similarly, there is a legal faith that involves believing in the threatenings and terrors of the Lord, and an evangelical faith that involves applying Christ in the promises. Legal faith and repentance may be regarded as initial, while evangelical faith and repentance are considered consummate. Hence, the command to practice these duties should not separate Law and Gospel.

4. Fourthly, unbelief is a sin against both the Law and the Gospel. While the Gospel reveals and declares the object of justifying faith, the Law condemns those who do not believe in Him. Therefore, both the Law and the Gospel bear witness to Christ and accuse those who reject Him, as shown in Moses and the Law testifying against the Jews for refusing the Messiah. The Law requires belief in whatever God reveals, while the Gospel discloses Christ, and then the Law, illuminated by the Gospel, commands us to believe in Christ. It is true when the Law is taken strictly and separately from Moses' administration, but if we consider it broadly as delivered by Moses, faith in Christ was commanded there, albeit in an obscure manner, due to its nature as a Covenant of grace. Thus, the Law and the Gospel can coexist in their glory, and it is our folly when we allow them to hinder one another practically.

Though all of this is true, if we strictly consider the Gospel, it is not a doctrine solely focused on repentance or holy works. Instead, it is a gracious promise of Christ to the broken heart for sin, encompassing nothing more than the glad tidings of a Savior. Some learned individuals might use the term "Evangelical commands" to refer to Faith and repentance, but in a broader sense, they may include the

teachings of Christ and the Apostles. However, when taken strictly, the Gospel is primarily a promise of Christ and His benefits, and in this sense, it does not terrify or accuse. There are certainly solemn threats for those who reject Christ, even more severe than for those who rejected Moses, but this arises from the Gospel's practical conjunction with the Law. The Gospel is also described as the "savor of death unto many," not because of its inherent nature, but due to the Law, which is illuminated by the Gospel. As a result, those who are already condemned by the Law for not believing in Christ are further condemned by the Gospel.

If you suggest that the sufferings of Christ can lead us to repent of sin and be moved by the love He demonstrated, consider that godly Ministers may indeed use the price of blood associated with every sin committed to instill a hatred of sin in people's hearts. It is also said that people shall look upon Him whom they have pierced and mourn for their sins.

All of this is true, but these factors work as objects of contemplation, not as commands. They serve as reminders from the Gospel, while the command to be affected by Christ's death because of the kindness displayed therein arises from God's Law. Therefore, those who claim that preaching the Gospel will humble and break people's hearts for their sins should understand that this is true through the Gospel as an object of contemplation, but the command to have such affections towards these objects comes from God's Law. Let those who seek to humble and break hearts for sin consider this distinction, appreciating the dual roles of Law and Gospel.

The practical use of this doctrine is to guide Christians in properly employing the Law and Gospel without conflicting with one another. Many aspects of Christianity, which the people of God sometimes



perceive as oppositional, can actually complement and support each other when wisely harmonized. Joy and trembling, faith and repentance, zeal and prudence, the Law and the Gospel need not thwart one another. Instead, with spiritual wisdom, they can be united. Take the Law as a goad to instruct and the Gospel as a cordial to support. When your heart is careless and dull, turn to the Law to be stirred. When your soul is dejected and fearful, seek comfort in the arms of the Gospel. Both the Law and the Gospel possess their own loveliness; the former is a pure reflection of God's holiness, while the latter showcases His mercy and goodness. The contemplation of either can greatly inflame and uplift your affections.

## **LECTURE XXVIII.**

For those Seeking to Establish their Own Righteousnes

For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. - Romans. 10. 4.

Paul, like a skilled physician (says Peter Martyr) intending to administer strong medicine to expel noxious humors from a diseased body, first prepares the ground by giving some potions to make it receptive and fluid for the operation. In a similar manner, Paul, knowing that he must sharply address the Jews and lead them away from their self-righteousness, shows his love for them by sweetening the bitter pill, so that they may swallow it with more ease and delight. This love is evident in his use of the term "brethren" and his

heartfelt prayers and desires for them. He is moved by their zeal for God, even though it is misguided. It is like a skilled farmer who looks at a piece of land full of weeds and brambles, yet wishes to have it because he knows that with proper cultivation and tillage, it will become exceedingly fruitful. As the orator wisely said, "Amo unde amputem" - I love the wit that needs some pruning. The luxuriance is a sign of fertility.

This zeal was flawed for several reasons. Firstly, it lacked knowledge and was akin to Sampson without his eyes. Secondly, it fostered pride, as the Apostle clearly highlights in two ways:

1. They sought to establish their own righteousness. This implied their willful pride and arrogance, as they clung to their weak and feeble righteousness, unwilling to admit its frailty. They persisted in propping it up, much like the Philistines did with their fallen Dagon before the Ark.
2. The Apostle emphatically expressed their failure to submit to the righteousness of God. In the original context, they were "not submitted" in the passive sense, revealing the inherent arrogance of humanity, as they were unwilling to relinquish their own righteousness and fully embrace Christ.

It is essential to note a grievous error of the Antinomian, who denies assurance and comfort through signs of grace and tries to prove that an unregenerate person can display universal and sincere obedience, using the Jews as an example of sincere obedience.

But sincerity can be understood in two ways: Firstly, as it opposes gross hypocrisy, and in this regard, the Jews' zeal was not hypocritical because they acted in accordance with their conscience. Secondly, sincerity can be seen in its opposition to the truth of grace,

and thus the Jews' zeal lacked true graciousness for the reasons mentioned earlier. Now, in my text, it is given as a reason why the Jews relied on their own righteousness rather than God's righteousness, and this is because they neglected Christ, who is described here as the fulfillment and purpose of the Law for righteousness. The word "end" (ἔσχατος) can sometimes mean the extreme and final conclusion of something, as seen in Mark 13:7 - "The end is not yet." Those who oppose the calling of the Jewish nation cite 1 Thessalonians 2:16 - "Wrath has come upon them to the uttermost" - as if no mercy were to be expected. However, this word can also signify perfection and fulfillment of a thing, as seen in Romans 2:27 - "Will not uncircumcision, if it fulfills the Law, condemn you?" and James 2:8 - "If you fulfill the royal Law." In this sense, Aristotle used the word to mean perfection, and it was also used to describe the consummation of a near bond or the cost involved in a ceremony, such as sacrifices before marriage, known as "eschatos." Erasmus interprets it as "perfection" here, but Beza reproves him, arguing that the word is not used in this manner elsewhere. However, considering the phrase "The end of the commandment is charity" in 1 Timothy 7:5, which can be understood as love being the fulfillment of the Law, I am inclined to think that this interpretation is a significant part of the meaning here. Therefore, when stating that Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every believer, I also take into account the intention or purpose towards which the Law-giver aimed when giving the Law, and this will be further explained in the following points.

Let us begin by considering that the term "end" can be understood in two ways: Firstly, as the ultimate conclusion or termination of something; and secondly, as the goal or perfection that confirms it, as described by Augustine - *Finis interficiens* and *finis perficiens*. In the former sense, Christ served as the end of the Ceremonial Law,

signifying its abolition, although it also represented perfection to them, as the Ceremonial Law and the Prophecies all foreshadowed and culminated in Christ. While this is indeed true, it is not relevant to the Apostle's purpose here, as he specifically refers to a Law in which the Jews sought righteousness through their observance - which can only be the Moral Law.

When we consider the Moral Law with Christ as its end, we can do so in two ways:

1. Rigidly and abstractly, focusing solely on its requirement for perfect obedience and its condemnation of those who fail to comply. In this sense, Christ cannot be the ultimate goal or end of the Law, as it is only by accident and on occasion that a soul condemned by the Law seeks Christ. It is important to note that the Law, in this understanding, does not exclude Christ; it requires perfect righteousness of our own, but if we bring the righteousness of a surety (Christ), while this is not explicitly commanded by the Law, it is not against it or excluded by it. Otherwise, it would be unjust for God to accept Christ as our surety.
2. Alternatively, we can consider the Law in a broader sense, including its administration by Moses in all its particulars. In this understanding, Christ was the intended and direct end - when God gave the Law to the people of Israel, He intended that their awareness of their inability to keep it and the immense danger they faced would lead them to desire and seek out Christ. Unfortunately, the Jews, as a whole, failed to grasp this purpose and, like Adam covering his nakedness with fig leaves, resorted to empty external obedience.

Aquinas provides a helpful distinction concerning the concept of an end: It can be twofold - either that which a thing naturally inclines towards, or that which becomes an end through the appointment and ordination of some Agent. Naturally, the end of the Law is eternal life to be attained through perfect righteousness within us. However, the appointed end, established by God the Lawgiver during its promulgation, was the Lord Christ. Hence, everything the Law commanded, promised, or threatened was meant to lead the Israelites to Christ. They were not to find satisfaction in mere precepts or duties but to seek Christ. For a believer, joy in anything from the Law should only come after finding Christ, and once found, there is no need to seek further - they should remain in Christ. Nevertheless, this is a difficult duty since every individual is naturally inclined to be their own Christ and Savior. The reason why believers under the Gospel still struggle to rest solely on Christ for righteousness is due to the inherent self-dependence within them.

With these points established, let us explore how Christ is the end of the Law when viewed in the wider context of Moses' ministry. Firstly, Christ served as the intended goal and purpose: By giving such a holy Law that demanded perfect obedience, God sought to humble and debase the Israelites so that they would earnestly turn to Christ - just as an Israelite stung by a serpent would immediately look to the brazen Serpent for healing. Though Christ's manifestation was more obscure and less apparent at that time, it was still a duty to search for Christ in all those administrations. This is further illustrated in Paul's allegory in 2 Corinthians 3:7, which I shall explain to address any misconceptions that might arise, especially among the Antinomians who might misinterpret it to imply the abolition of preaching the Law due to the transience of Moses' ministry. However, that is far from the Apostle's intention, for he aims to

demonstrate the superiority of the Gospel ministry over that of the Law in three aspects.

1. Firstly, consider that one ministry leads to death and condemnation, while the other brings life and righteousness. Therefore, the former is termed "Letter," and the latter "Spirit." However, it is essential to comprehend this cautiously, distinguishing the Law in its pure form, without the influence of God's Spirit, from the Gospel with the Spirit. As Beza rightly points out, without God's Spirit, even the Gospel can become a ministry of death since it is equally impossible for us to believe as it is to obey the Law through our own strength. Yet, life and spirit are ascribed to the Gospel, not to the Law, since Christ, the author of the Gospel, is the source of life. When any good comes from observing the Law, it is by the spirit of Christ.
2. The second superiority lies in the aspect of continuity and duration. The ministry of Moses was to be made void and abolished, referring to the Jewish pedagogy, not the entire Law. As previously established, the Moral Law, as given by Moses, still binds us as Christians. Conversely, the ministry of the Gospel endures forever, with no new ministry to succeed it. However, in heaven, all earthly ministries shall cease.
3. Another distinction is in terms of glory: When Moses received the Law, God shone a material glory upon him to enhance the Law's authority and majesty. In contrast, the glory brought by the Gospel is spiritual and surpasses the former, leading to eternal glory. The previous glory appears insignificant compared to the latter, much like candlelight appears feeble in comparison to the brilliance of the sun. The Apostle, in discussing these differences, proceeds to allegorically expound on an analogy,

which he could only have done with the guidance of the Spirit of God. This allegory holds relevance to my current theme. Various interpretations exist for this passage, but I shall plainly explain it as follows: Moses' shining face, as he was with God and returned, symbolizes the glory and excellence of the Law from God's intentions and purposes. Though the Law may seem to offer only temporal blessings without reference to Christ and heaven, God's intentions were far greater. Nevertheless, the Apostle asserts that the Jews were unable to comprehend this glory due to the veil upon their hearts. He likens the veil upon Moses to the spiritual blindness and hardness of the Israelites. Just as the veil covered Moses' face, preventing them from seeing its glory, the veil of blindness and obtuseness upon the hearts of the Jews obstructed their perception of the Law's glory, which was Christ. This is evident in the fact that the word used in my text, "look steadfastly," is in Greek always used in reference to persons. Though the original word is in the singular form, as per Scriptural custom, it can be understood plurally since it addresses a collective body. Therefore, when the Jews turn to God, the veil is taken away simultaneously.

Allow me to provide another instance that illustrates Christ as the ultimate intention and goal in the dispensation of the Law, found in Galatians 3:23, 24: "Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the Law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. So the Law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith." In these verses, the comparison is not merely limited to the Moral Law but encompasses the entire Jewish dispensation, likened to the guidance of a schoolmaster. Just as a schoolmaster not only disciplines but also instructs and guides, the Law not only sternly restrains and prevents sin but also points to Christ. This is why we are described as being "kept under the Law."

Though some view this as an expression of strict observance, akin to how soldiers guard a garrison, a learned individual interprets it as the duty of a schoolmaster, accountable for those under their charge. In this sense, Cain inquired, "Am I my brother's keeper?" The Law, as a schoolmaster, not only threatened and condemned or, like Egyptian taskmasters, punished when work was not done, but also directed those in need of help to Christ alone.

Secondly, Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of the Law's perfection. The Law's purpose is to justify and bring eternal life, a goal unattainable through our own power due to our inherent weakness, not because of any flaw in the Law itself. Therefore, Christ accomplishes the Law's intent of justifying and granting life. Just as human laws aim to make people good and honest, much more so does the Moral Law appointed by God Himself. However, instead of making us good, the Law actually evokes evil in us, as the Apostle acknowledges. It is akin to nourishing a diseased stomach with nutritious food, which only worsens the illness, as the saying goes, "*Corpora impura, quanto magis nutrias, deteriora reddis.*" This holds true for every individual by nature: The Law, meant for holiness and life, paradoxically brings sin and death. Therefore, Christ, to achieve the Law's intended purpose, assumes our human nature so that the righteousness of the Law may be fulfilled in us.

3. Christ is the culmination of the Law's perfection in that merely having knowledge of the Law and externally obeying it is insufficient for any benefit. Thus, Christ bestows His Holy Spirit upon us, regenerating us, enabling partial obedience to God's Law. The people of God possess a righteousness or holiness of works, albeit imperfect, and thus inadequate for justification. It is in this sense that the people of God are described as keeping God's commandments. The Jews, however, made a significant



mistake in boasting of the Law, not for its true purpose, but solely in terms of knowledge and external observance, neglecting to look to Christ. This was, in essence, glorifying the shadow without acknowledging the substance.

4. Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of the Law's perfection because His righteousness and obedience to the Law are imputed to us, and as our surety, we fulfill the Law in Him. Admittedly, this assertion faces opposition from learned and devout adversaries, but Scripture seems to support the notion. In Romans 5, a parallel is drawn between the first Adam and his descendants and the second Adam (Christ) and His seed. The Apostle proves that we are made righteous by Christ, as sinners in Him. This is partly through imputation, as seen in 2 Corinthians 5: He becomes our sin by imputation, and we become His righteousness. Romans 8:3-4 also emphasizes that what was impossible for the Law to achieve, God accomplished through His Son. Christ's fulfilling of the Law is made ours, not by works, but through belief or faith. This righteousness of Christ is not our personal achievement, as the Law demands, but it is ours by believing or relying on Christ's righteousness. This clearly refutes Stapleton's and other Papists' interpretations that view righteousness by faith or of Christ as merely a gradation of the righteousness of works. The Apostle specifies "believing" instead of "working," signifying that eternal life is attained through faith in Christ's work, not through personal accomplishment. This phrase effectively rejects both Papists' and Antinomians' misinterpretations of this passage. Theological skill lies in amplifying the righteousness of faith without works in such a way that neither Papists nor Antinomians can misconstrue it.

Lastly, observe the subject to whom Christ's righteousness is imputed: the believer. The term "everyone" encompasses both Jew and Gentile. Therefore, Jews should not delude themselves into thinking that external rites and observances could lead to true righteousness. Instead, genuine righteousness is found in faith in Christ.

Lastly, let us contemplate the purpose for which Christ is the fulfillment of the Law – righteousness. The proper discussion of this lies in the doctrine of Justification. However, let me briefly address a question raised by some: Is the righteousness of faith, or the righteousness we have through Christ, of the same nature as the righteousness of works and the Law? Stapleton argues that they must be the same since the Law only directs us towards its own righteousness. While it is true that the Law, strictly taken, does not directly lead to any righteousness other than its own, indirectly it may, and as given by Moses, it did directly and properly point to Christ. Though these two righteousnesses are distinct rather than contradictory (except in terms of justification, for it is indeed impossible to be justified by both methods), they both coexist in the same subject. A righteousness of faith necessarily includes a righteousness of works in the same subject, albeit imperfect and insufficient for justification.

Application: Is Christ the fulfillment of the Law for righteousness? Then let the believer bless and praise God for providing such a righteousness. Consider how destitute and helpless your condition was. If justice had demanded payment from you, you could not have replied, "Leave me alone, and I will pay you everything." Neither angels nor humans could provide this righteousness for you. If you thank God for providing clothes, food, and shelter, how much more should you thank Him for providing righteousness for your soul?

Troubled soul, burdened by sin, you may think, "If only I had no sin, if I were not corrupted, how much better it would be!" But do you not realize that God has found a righteousness for you, even for you, in this world, whereby you are accepted by Him?

Moreover, this righteousness satisfies and pleases God. Your own holiness cannot suffice for justification, but Christ's righteousness can. Just as the light of the stars and moon cannot completely dispel the darkness of the night, only the light of the sun can do that. Similarly, our own righteousness cannot fully satisfy God, but Christ's righteousness achieves that.

## **LECTURE XXIX.**

### **I Did Not Come to Destroy the Law**

"Therefore, whoever breaks one of these least commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called the least in the Kingdom of heaven." - Matthew 5. 17.

Our Savior aims to vindicate the Law from the corrupt interpretations of the Pharisees. First and foremost, he dispels any notion that he intends to destroy the Law, as was falsely assumed due to the Pharisees' influence in defining what constituted the Law. In verse 17, he emphatically states, "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law." To emphasize the enduring nature of the Law, he declares that not even the smallest detail of it will pass away until the

end of time. The Prophets are mentioned alongside the Law, not only due to their prophetic predictions but also as interpreters of the Law.

Next, Jesus addresses the consequences of breaking the Law. He highlights two types of Antinomianism - one in practice and one in doctrine. The Antinomianism in practice is particularly concerning, even if it concerns one of the least commandments. The term "least" may have been used because the Pharisees considered certain commandments of lesser importance, or it could indicate that not all divine commands have the same level of significance.

The Antinomianism in doctrine, on the other hand, refers to teaching others to break the commandments. Rather than resorting to Beza's interpretation, suggesting that this teaching refers to setting a bad example in life, it seems more fitting to interpret it as doctrinal breaking, which aligns with the Pharisees' tendency to nullify God's commandments through their human doctrines.

The consequences for those who break the commandments and teach others to do so are significant. They shall be considered the least in the Kingdom of heaven. Some understand this to mean that they will have no place in the heavenly Kingdom at all.

Others understand "Kingdom of heaven" as the Church of God, where a reformation will occur, and the truth will prevail, leading to the exposure of corrupt teachers. At that time, these false teachers will be of no account, just as it happened to the Pharisees who were once highly esteemed. I won't delve into the hotly debated question of whether our Savior's discourse pertains only to the Moral Law or also includes the Ceremonial Law, as it is not relevant to my purpose. However, it is evident that the focus is primarily on the Moral Law, given the examples provided by Christ.

From the Text, I observe that any doctrine promoting the abrogation or dissolution of the Law is highly offensive to God. Such doctrines may directly overthrow the Law, as seen in the teachings of the Marcionites and Manichees. Alternatively, they may do so indirectly through interpretations that undermine the full extent of the Law's obligations. For instance, the Pharisees voided the Law by considering only outward acts as sinful, while the Papists, to some extent, diminish the Law's obligation by making it dependent on human capacity.

Moreover, some doctrines may indirectly lead to the abrogation of the Law through their underlying principles, even if they disclaim it explicitly. This is evident in certain Antinomian teachings, which, though not explicitly asserting the Law's abolishment, inherently imply it through their assertions.

Lastly, the Law can be doctrinally dissolved by imposing duties on people that force them to violate God's commandments. For example, the Pharisees taught that any vow made concerning a gift must be fulfilled, even if it meant dishonoring their parents. Similarly, the Church of Rome's multitude of observances and requirements often lead people to break God's plain commandments.

In summary, I will briefly mention some general errors that undermine God's Law and then focus on the specific Antinomian doctrine.

The first heretics to oppose it were the Marcionites and Manichees. Marcion, whom Tertullian called "Mus potincus" because of his distorting and manipulating the Scripture to support his errors, introduced the belief that the old Law (as he called it) was evil and originated from an evil god. He was followed by Manes, whose errors, though gross, were widely spread and took around two

hundred years to settle. Both these groups and their followers rejected the Law of God. There were also heretics known as Anomi (meaning "without law"), who believed that they could comprehend the divine nature through their knowledge. They thought that this faith protected them from the consequences of committing heinous sins.

Leaving these historical examples aside, it can be said that a significant part of Popery exhibits Antinomianism. Antichrist is referred to as "the lawless one." This can be seen in doctrines that claim the Pope has the authority to dispense with the Laws of God, suggesting that the Pope and Christ share the same authority. For instance, some versions of their Catechisms omit the second Commandment, which prohibits the worship of images. A scholar named Vasquez expressly argued that the second Commandment only applied to Jews and did not bind Christians.

There are also contemporary groups denying the validity of certain Commandments. Some Anabaptists, while not all, undermine the fifth Commandment by asserting that Magistracy is not lawful for Christians.

However, the Antinomians pose the most significant challenge to this text. They not only teach the dis-obligation of certain commandments but reject the entire Law. This was evident in Luther's time when the first Antinomians, led by Islebius, denied the authority of the Law. Luther confronted them in six public disputations, where he defended the significance of the Law. Islebius initially retracted his errors but later returned to them after Luther's death.

The Antinomians disseminated several Propositions that expressed their views, such as denying the worthiness of the Law as the word of

God and asserting that repentance should not be taught from the Decalogue or any Law of Moses, but from the violation of the Son of God in the Gospel. They opposed teaching the Gospel to those whose hearts were first made contrite by the Law. These beliefs exemplify their Antinomian stance.

These are some of their propositions set down by Luther, against which he had his disputations. Sousselberge, in his book against Antinomians, relates more of them as follows:

1. The Law does not demonstrate good works, and it should not be preached to motivate us to do them.
2. The Law is not given to Christians; therefore, they should not be reproved by the Law.
3. Preachers under the Gospel are only supposed to preach the Gospel, not the Law. They argue that Christ did not say, "Preach the Law," but "Preach the Gospel to every creature."
4. The legal sermons of the Prophets do not apply to us at all.
5. To say that the Law is a standard for good works is considered blasphemy in Divinity.

These propositions directly oppose the Law and, therefore, fall under the condemnation of our Saviour in the Text. However, at other times, the proper state of the question between the Orthodox and Antinomists appears to be not whether a godly person delights in the Law and does the works of the Law, but whether they do it with the Law teaching, urging, and commanding them. In later times, figures like Doctor Taylor and Mr. Burton preached and wrote against the Antinomians, attesting to the same opinions held by them.

In his book against the Antinomians, Master Burton mentions that they divided everyone in the body of the Church of England into "Hogs" or "Dogs." "Hogs" referred to those who despised justification

and indulged in sinful desires, while "Dogs" included those who sought justification through their works. Burton also recounts one of their disciples saying, "Away with this scurvy sanctification," and arguing that there is no difference between being godly here and in their state of glory except in sense and apprehension. Numerous other troubling assertions are found in their writings, but these examples should suffice to provide an idea of their opinions.

As for me, I have only encountered them through their written works, and in those, every error is presented more warily than in secret. Sometimes they concede that the Law is a rule of life and reject being called Antinomists, insisting that their adversaries should be called Antifidians instead. Nonetheless, it cannot be denied that certain parts of their books contain wholesome and good passages, much like violets and primroses found in a wood or forest full of shrubs and brambles. However, even in the places where they disavow certain assertions as theirs, they inadvertently acknowledge them. The Author of the Assertion of Free-grace, who explicitly addresses these matters and disclaims the opinion against the Law, still asserts principles from which this conclusion will inevitably follow.

Firstly, there is no real difference made either in Scripture or in the use of words between the Law reigning and ruling. If the Law rules over a man, it reigns over him. Now, they deny that the Law reigns over a believer (and so do the Orthodox), so they must hold that it cannot be a rule for him. Additionally, on page 5, Doctor Taylor stated that the Apostle does not free a Christian from obedience to the Law or its rule, but he adds that he dare not trust a believer without his keeper. This suggests that he judges a believer no differently than a malefactor of Newgate, who would rob and kill without their Gaoler present. Furthermore, on page 31, Doctor



Taylor refutes the distinction of being under the mandatory power of the Law but not the damnatory, making these inseparable. He argues that it is as impossible for the Law to be a Law and not have both, as it is to take the brains and heart from a man but leave him still a man. Hence, since he denies (and so do all Protestant writers) that a believer is under the damnatory power of the Law, he must also deny that they are under the mandatory power because, as he claims, this is inseparable.

I will now provide some antidotes against this opinion and its authors. Luther calls them "Hosts Legis" and "Organa Satanae," stating that their doctrine is more dangerous than that of the Papists because, while the Papists teach a false or imperfect repentance, the Antinomians take everything away from the Church. Rivet refers to them as "Furores Antinomorum."

Firstly, fear doctrinal errors as they may damn you just as much as open gross sins. Galatians 5:20 lists heresies among the very gross sins that exclude one from the Kingdom of Heaven. The Apostle treats heresies there in a religious sense, as it is distinguished from seditions, strifes, and variances. Do not seek pleasure in the question of what heresy is; for the Apostle presents it as a manifest work of the flesh in the same chapter. In 2 John 10, see how much the people of God should fear any evil doctrine, as the Apostle equates evil doctrine with evil deeds.

Secondly, consider all the places of Scripture, not just some of them. This is a recurring flaw among the Antinomians: they selectively choose those passages that speak of Christ and His grace, but they neglect those texts that command duties, especially those that highly commend the Law of God for its many benefits and its perpetuity. The Law of God abides forever, either to be fulfilled in the damned or

already fulfilled in the happy. Reflect on how passionately and zealously the Apostle denies destroying the Law in Romans 3, making it unlikely that he would abolish it in Romans 4. Ordinary men would not fall into such a contradiction.

Thirdly, do not seek applause among people by presenting some new and exclusive way to understand Christ and grace. I have noticed this itch for attention in printed Antinomian sermons, where they call upon their audience to listen as they might hear something unheard before, even if it is false or already taught by others. When individuals desire worldly recognition, they may act as if they have discovered something entirely new and share it with their inner circle, leading to its wide dissemination and eventual exaltation.

Fourthly, diligently study the fundamentals and principles of Religion. As a child grows crooked without proper attention, errors spread because of inadequate catechesis. Build a strong foundation. Maximus, an Ecclesiastical Writer, once lamented, "It is a great matter to have a sound and accurate knowledge in matters of Religion." Aristides wisely said, "We are not of those who vomit or spit out things suddenly, but take time to be diligent and considerate."

Fifthly, when you begin to incline towards an opinion that differs from the learned and godly, do not be too rash and hasty in publicizing it. The Apostle provides a good rule in Romans 14:22, "Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself." He does not command one to equivocate or deny the truth but advises against needlessly professing it when it may cause offense to others. Cyprian criticized the recklessness of Christians who went to Heathen Magistrates on their own accord, openly professing themselves as Christians, leading to their own execution. He remarked, "Confiteri nos magis

voluit, quàm profiteri": he who confesses does so when asked and demanded, not out of their own free will.

Lastly, remember that Antinomianism is the only way to truly undermine grace and Christ. Setting up free grace and Christ does not merely involve mentioning it often in a book or from the pulpit; it requires an inward and profound affection towards it. The one who urges no use of the Law, takes away the sense of sin and denies humility sets up free grace and Christ less genuinely than the one who acknowledges their defects by the perfect rule of the Law and is humbled by these shortcomings. The latter will genuinely exalt free grace in their heart and real affections.

FINIS

-----

## **MONERGISM BOOKS**

Vindiciae Legis, by Anthony Burgess. Copyright © 2023

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. By payment of the required fees, you have been granted the non-exclusive, non-transferable right to access and read the text

of this e-book on-screen. No part of this text may be reproduced, transmitted, downloaded, decompiled, reverse engineered, or stored in or introduced into any information storage and retrieval system, in any form or by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, now known or hereinafter invented, without the express written permission of Monergism Books.

ePub, .mobi & .pdf Editions February 2-23. Requests for information should be addressed to: Monergism Books, PO Box 491, West Linn Or 97068