

The Law and the Saint 2. the Negative Side

by A.W. Pink

The Law remains a rule of duty for believers, and they are under obligation to obey its moral precepts, but it is not a means of justification.

Scripture: Romans 2:12

Topics: "Law And Grace", "Christian Conduct"

Description

A.W. Pink addresses the relationship between the Law and the believer, emphasizing the confusion surrounding this topic in contemporary Christianity. He outlines three views: that salvation is achieved through the Law, that the Law serves as a rule of life for believers, and that the Law is irrelevant to Christians today. Pink argues that while believers are not justified by the Law, they are still called to obey its moral precepts as a reflection of their faith and relationship with God. He encourages believers to seek clarity from Scripture rather than relying on conflicting human interpretations.

Transcript

THE LAW AND THE SAINT

2. THE NEGATIVE SIDE

What is the relation between the Law and the saint? By the Law we refer to the Ten Commandments engraven upon the tables of stone by the finger of God; by the saint we mean, the believer living in the present dispensation. What, then, is the relation between the Christian living today and the Ten Commandments formally proclaimed in the time of Moses? It is indeed sad that such a question needs to be raised, and that the Divine answer requires to be pressed upon the people of God.

There was a time when it would not have been easy to find a Christian who was ignorant upon this subject; a time when the first thing committed to memory by the children of Christian parents was the Ten Commandments. But, alas, today it is far otherwise. Now, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find those who can give a clear and scriptural answer to our opening question. And as to finding children who can repeat the Ten Commandments, they are rare indeed. The Law and the saint.

Present-day teachings on this subject, as on almost every other scriptural theme, is conflicting and contradictory. There are indeed few Divine doctrines upon which even Christian teachers are uniform in their testimony. What differences of opinion exist concerning Church-truth and the ordinances! What a

variety of interpretations of prophecy now confront us! What a lack of harmony concerning the doctrine of sanctification. The same confusion prevails concerning the relation of the Law to the saint.

Just as the Confusion of Tongues (Gen. 11) immediately preceded God's call to Abraham (the father of us all) to leave his native home and go forth into that land which he was to receive for an inheritance (Gen. 12), so there is a confusion of tongues in the theological world just before the people of God are to be called away from this earth to their heavenly inheritance (1 Pet. 1:4). That God has a good reason for permitting the present confusion of tongues, we doubt not--"For there must be factions among you; that they that are approved may be made manifest among you" (1 Cor. 11:19, R.

V.). What is the relation of the Law to the saint? Three answers have been given. First, that sinners become saints by obeying the Law. Second, that the Law is a rule of life for believers. Third, that the Law has nothing whatever to do with believers today. Those who give the first answer teach that the Law defines what God requires from man, and therefore man must keep it in order to be accepted by God. Those who give the second answer teach that the Law exhibits a standard of conduct, and that while this Old Testament standard receives amplification in the New, yet the latter does not set aside the former.

Those who give the third answer teach that the Law was a yoke of bondage, grievous to be borne, and that it has been made an end of so far as Christians are concerned. The first answer is Legalism pure and simple: salvation by works; the second, relates to true Christian liberty; the third, is Antinomianism--lawlessness, a repudiation of God's governmental authority. The first view prevailed generally through the Medieval Ages, when Popery reigned almost supreme. The second view prevailed generally during the time of the Reformers and Puritans.

The third view has come into prominence during the last century, and now is the popular belief of our day. How thankful we should be that it is our happy privilege to return from the theological bedlam that surrounds us, and enter the quiet sanctuary of God's truth; that we may turn away from the conflicting voices of men, to hear what God says on the subject. We trust that this is the hearty desire of our readers. We cherish the hope that few who have read the above paragraphs are so conceited as to suppose they have no need to examine or reexamine what the Scriptures teach about the relation of the Law to believers.

We are persuaded, rather, that the reader shares the conviction of the writer, namely, that this is an imperative necessity. It is so easy to conclude that our views of certain Divine truths have been formed from our own study of what we have (correctly or incorrectly) imbibed from human teachers. Our need is that of the Bereans (Acts 17:11) --to "Search the Scriptures daily" to find out whether or not what we hear and read is in accord with the Word of Truth. Moreover, this is sure, "if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know" (1 Cor. 8:2).

Therefore it behooves every one of us to definitely look to God for light and help, and then reverently turn to His Word for the needed instruction. Before we present to the reader some of the leading scriptures which set forth the relation of the Law to believers of this dispensation, it will first be necessary to examine the passages which are appealed to by those who affirm that the Law has no relation to the people of God living today. Let us then turn to these passages, and without prejudice (as far as that is possible) seek to ascertain their true meaning.

"For as many as have sinned without Law shall also perish without Law...for when the Gentiles which have not the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law, these, having not the Law, are a Law unto

themselves" (Rom. 2:12-14). These verses really have no direct bearing on our present theme, inasmuch as they treat of other than saints. Yet, as this passage does relate to the wider subject of the Law in general, and as it is made use of by those who flatly and hotly deny the Law has any relation to believers today, we give it a brief notice.

It is affirmed by some whom we respect, but from whom on this subject we are obliged to differ, that the Law was given to the nation of Israel and to none else, and therefore, that neither Gentiles nor Christians are under any obligation to keep it. That the Law was formally given to Israel at Sinai is freely granted. But does that prove it was meant for none other than the descendants of Jacob? Surely not. When writing to the saints at Rome (many of whom were Gentiles, see 1:13; 11:13; 15:15, 16, etc.)

Paul said, "But now we are delivered from the Law" (7:6). Again, in 8:7 he declares, "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be": mark, it is not "the Jewish mind", but the "carnal mind" to Jew and Gentile alike. Now, there would be no point to this statement if the mind of man, as man, is not obligated to be in subjection to the Law of God. Man's mind is not subject, and because of its innate depravity "cannot be"; nevertheless, it ought to be.

Once more: note how in Ephesians 2:2 the wicked are said to be "children of disobedience"; this is meaningless if they are not under obligation to obey the commandments of God. These scriptures, then, are sufficient to establish the fact that Gentiles, as well as Jews, are "under the Law". Returning now to Romans 2:12,13. The simple meaning of these verses is that, the Gentiles never had given to them the two tablets of stone on which the Ten Commandments were inscribed, nor were they in possession of the Scriptures, wherein those Commandments were recorded.

But it should be carefully noted that Romans 2:5 goes on to state these very Gentiles "show the work of the Law written on their hearts". On these verses Professor Stifler has well said, "The argument (of v.14) lies in this, that Gentiles have what is tantamount to the moral Law". The fact that the Gentiles are "a law unto themselves" shows that God gave them the equivalent of what He gave the Jews, namely, a standard of right and wrong. In the case of the former, it was "written in their hearts", in the case of the latter, it was written on tables of stone, and afterwards in the Scriptures.

"From this it is clear that the moral Law given to Israel by Moses was but a transcript, or compendium, of the Law which God, in the creation, had stamped upon the moral nature of man...The moral Law, therefore, was not altogether new in the time of the exodus; nor was it something exclusively for Israel, but was a gift for the whole race, and therefore, must be of perpetual validity" (Mr. Wm. Mead). "For ye are not under the Law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14). This is the favorite verse with those who take the position that the Law has no relation to believers of this dispensation.

"Not under the Law" is explicit, and seems final. What, then, have we to say concerning it? This: that like every other verse in the Bible, it must not be divorced from its setting, but is to be studied and faithfully interpreted in the light of its context. What, then, is the context about? First, what is the remote context concerned with? Second, what is the theme of the immediate context? By the remote context we mean, the Epistle as a whole. This is always the first thing to be weighed in connection with the exposition of any passage.

Failure here is responsible for the great majority of misinterpretations and erroneous applications of Scripture. It should be carefully noted that the words "Ye are not under the Law" but "under grace" are found not in Hebrews, but in Romans. This, of itself, should warn us that "not under Law" needs to be

understood in a modified sense. If it were true that the Law has been abrogated, then the Epistle to the Hebrews would be the one place of all others where we should expect to find this taught.

The theme of Hebrews is, The superiority of Christianity over Judaism. [1] In the expansion of this theme the apostle, again and again, shows how the prominent things in Judaism are not obsolete--see chapter 7 for the changing of the priesthood, from the Aaronic to the Melchizedek order; chapters 8 and 9 for the substitution of the new covenant for the old, etc. And yet, not a word is said in it that the Law is now supplanted by grace. "Not under the Law, but under grace" is found in Romans, the great theme of which is, The righteousness of God: man's need of God's righteousness, how it becomes the believer's, what are the legal consequences of this, and the effect it should have on our conduct.

The prominent feature of the first eight chapters of Romans is that they treat of the judicial side of Gospel truth, rather than with the experimental and practical. Romans 5 and 6, especially, treat of justification and its consequences. In the light of this fact it is not difficult to discover the meaning of 6:14. "Ye are not under the Law, but under grace" signifies, Ye are under a system of gratuitous justification. "The whole previous argument explains this sentence. He refers to our acceptance.

He goes back to the justification of the guilty, 'without the deeds of the Law', the act of free grace; and briefly restates it thus, that he may take up afresh the position that this glorious liberation means not license, but Divine order" (Bishop Moule - 1893). "Ye are not under the Law but under grace". The contrast is not between the Law of Moses and the gospel of Christ, as two economies or dispensations, rather is it a contrast between Law and grace as the principles of two methods of justification, the one false, the other true; the one of human devising, the other of Divine provision.

"Under Law' means, ruled by Law as a covenant of works" (Dr. Griffith-Thomas). "Law" and "grace" here are parallel with "the Law of works" and "the Law of faith" in 3:27! Romans 6:14 was just as true of the Old Testament saints as of New Testament believers. Caleb, Joshua, David, Elijah, Daniel were no more "under Law" in the sense that these words bear in Romans 6:14, than Christians are today. Instead, they were "under grace" in the matter of their justification, just as truly as we are.

"Not under the Law" does not mean, Not under obligation to obey the precepts of the moral Law; but signifies, Not keeping the Law in order to be saved. The apostle asserts in this verse that Christians are not under the Law, as an actual, effectual adequate means of justification or sanctification, and if they are so, their case is utterly hopeless; for ruin must inevitably ensue. That this is all that he means is apparent from the sequel of his remarks (6:15-8:39). What can be plainer, than that the moral Law as 'precept' is altogether approved and recognized by him.

See chapter 7:12-14. Nay, so far is the apostle from pleading for oblivion or repeal of moral precepts, that he asserts directly (8:3,4) that the Gospel is designed to secure obedience to these moral precepts; which the Law was unable to do. It is, then, from the Law viewed in this light, and this only, namely, as inadequate to effect the justification and secure the obedience of sinners, that the apostle declares us to be free. "Let no one, then, abuse this declaration by imagining that it in anywise affords ground to believe that Christians are freed from obligation to obey the precepts of the moral Law.

What is the Divine Law but a transcript of the Divine will? And are not Christians to be conformed to this? Is not all the Law summed up in these two declarations: "Thou shalt love the Lord with all thine heart; and thy neighbour as thyself"! And are Christians absolved from loving God and their neighbour? If not, then this part of the subject stands unembarrassed by anything which the apostle has said in our text or

context' (Prof. Moses Stuart). The force of Romans 6:14 becomes more apparent if we observe what follows it.

In the very next verse we read, "What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the Law, but under grace? God forbid". This anticipates an objection: If we are not under the Law as the ground of our justification, then are we to be lawless? The inspired answer is, God forbid. Nothing is more self-evidently certain then, that if the moral Law is not a rule of life to believers, they are at liberty to disregard its precepts. But the apostle rejects this error with the utmost abhorrence.

We quote here a part of Calvin's comments on Romans 6:15: "But we are much deceived if we think, that the righteousness which God approves of in His Law is abolished, when the Law is abrogated; for the abrogation is by no means to be applied to the precepts which teach the right way of living, as Christ confirms and sanctions these, and does not abrogate them; but the right view is, that nothing is taken away but the curse, to which men without grace are subject". In what follows, to the end of this chapter, the apostle shows that though the believer is "not under Law" as the ground of his justification, nevertheless, he is under the Law as a rule of his Christian life, that is, he is under obligations to obey its moral precepts.

In verse 18 (which contains the positive answer to the question asked in v. 15) the apostle declares, "being then made free from sin, ye became the servants (bond-slaves) of righteousness". Again in verse 22 he says, "But now being made free from sin, and become servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness". Observe carefully, it is not here said "servants of Christ", nor "servants of the Father", which would bring in quite another thought, but "servants of God", which enforces the believer's responsibility to the Law-giver.

That this is the meaning of Romans 6:18 and 22 is clear from 7:25, where the apostle says, "So then with the mind I myself serve THE LAW OF GOD". "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the Law. . . Now we are delivered from the Law" (Rom. 7:4,6). These statements really call for a full exposition of Romans 7:1-6. but it would occupy too much space to give that here. Perhaps we can arrive at the meaning of these two verses by a shorter route. They occur in a section of the Epistle which treats of the results of Divine righteousness being imputed to the believer.

Chapter 4 deals with the imputation of this righteousness; chapters 5 to 8 give the results. The results (summarized) are as follows: 5:1-11 Justification and Reconciliation; 5:12-6:23 Identification with Christ, the last Adam; 7:1-25 Emancipation from the Curse of the Law; 8:1-39 Preservation through time and eternity. Thus it will be seen that these chapters deal mainly with the Divine rather than the human side of things. "Dead to the Law" in 7:4 is parallel with "dead to sin" in 6:2: parallel in this sense, that it is objective "death" not subjective; the judicial and not the practical aspect of truth which is in view.

Observe it is said, we "become dead to the Law by the body of Christ", not by a Divine repeal of the Law. In other words, we died to the Law vicariously, in the person of our blessed Substitute. So, too, we are "delivered from the Law", or as the R. V. more accurately puts it "We have been discharged from the Law", because we have "died to that wherein we were held". In Christ we "died" to the judicial threatenings and ceremonial requirements of the Law. "Dead to the Law". "By the term the Law, in this place, is intended that Law which is obligatory on both Jews and Gentiles.

It is the Law, the work of which is written in the hearts of all men; and that Law which was given to the Jews in which they rested, 2:17. It is the Law taken in the largest extent of the word, including the whole

will of God in any way manifested to all mankind, whether Jew or Gentile. All those whom the apostle is addressing, had been under this Law in their unconverted state. . . To the moral Law exclusively here and throughout the rest of the chapter, the apostle refers... Dead to the Law means freedom from the power of the Law, as having endured its penalty, and satisfied its demands.

It has ceased to have a claim on the obedience of believers in order to life (better, on believers it has ceased to pronounce its curse--A. W. P.), although it still remains their rule of duty" (Robert Haldane). On the words, "Now we are delivered from the Law", Mr. Haldane says: "Christ hath fulfilled the Law, and suffered its penalty for them, and they in consequence are free from its demands for the purpose of obtaining life, or that, on account of the breach of it, the purpose of obtaining life, or that, on account of the breath of it, they should suffer death".

One further word needs to be said on Romans 7:4-6. Some insist that the whole passage treats only of Jewish believers. But this is certainly a mistake. When Paul says in verse 1 "I speak to them that know Law" --there is no article in the Greek--he reasons on the basis that his readers were fully cognizant of the principle that "the Law hath dominion over a man so long as he liveth". If Paul was here confining his address to Jewish believers, he had said, "I speak to those among you who know the Law".

When he says "Know ye not, brethren" (v. 1) and "Wherefore, my brethren" (v. 4) he is addressing his brethren in Christ as the Jews, his brethren by nature, he is careful to so intimate, "My brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (9:3)! Finally, it should be carefully noted how the apostle uses the pronouns "ye" and "we" interchangeably in verses 4 and 5. The emphatic "ye also" in verse 4 seems specifically designed to show that his illustration in the previous verses, with its obvious suggestion of Israel's history, was strictly applicable to all Christians.

"The deliverance from Law in Galatians is that which leads to the sonship of all saints, while the deliverance in Romans leads to the union of all saints with Christ. But in both they are viewed as all alike having been in bondage under Law, and all alike delivered from it. For indeed it is the design of the Holy Spirit ever to lead the saints of all ages to regard themselves as delivered from a common guilt, redeemed from a common curse-- "the curse of the Law" --rescued from a common doom; and all this as the result of the curse being fulfilled in the death of Him in whom they all alike died" (Charles Campbell).

"For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10:4). Frequently, only the first half of this verse is quoted, "Christ is the end of the Law". But this is not all that is said here. Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness, that is, before God. The context unequivocally settles the scope and significance of this expression. Paul had just affirmed that Israel, who was ignorant of God's righteousness, had gone about "to establish their own righteousness".

Once more it is justification which is in view, and not the walk of a believer. Says Dr. Thos. Chalmers: "There is one obvious sense in which Christ is the end of the Law, and that is when the Law is viewed as a schoolmaster brings us to the conclusion, as to its last lesson, that Christ is our only refuge, our only righteousness". So also Dr. G. Thomas: "With Christ before us legal righteousness is necessarily at an end, and in not submitting to Christ, the Jews were refusing to submit to the God who gave them the Law".

Another passage frequently appealed to by those who insist on the total abrogation of the Law is 2 Cor. 3. Such expressions as "That which is done away" (v. 11), and "that which is abolished" (v. 13) are regarded as alluding to the Ten Commandments "written and engraven in stones" (v. 7). That this is a mistake, is easily proven. For in Rom. 13:9 and Eph. 6:2 several of the Ten Commandments are quoted and

enforced. This is quite sufficient to prove that the moral Law is not "done away".

And such scriptures as Isaiah 2:2,3; Jeremiah 31:33, etc., make it plain that the Law is not abolished". In 2 Corinthians 3 (and again and again throughout the Epistle) Paul is contending against false "apostles" (note 2:17 and see further 6:1; 11:3,4,13,22) who, preaching the Law to the exclusion of Christ, were seducing the people of God from the blessings of the new covenant. Consequently, the apostle is not here treating of the Law as the moral standard of conduct for believers, but as that which condemns sinners.

The inspired penman is pointing out the folly of turning back to the Law as the ground of acceptance before God--which was what the false apostles insisted on. The method he follows is to draw a series of contrasts between the old covenant and the new, showing the immeasurable superiority of the latter over the former. He shows that apart from Christ, the old covenant was but a ministration of condemnation and death; that just as the body without the spirit is dead, so the Law without Christ was but a lifeless "letter".

Second Corinthians 3, then contrasts Christianity with Judaism. That which has been "done away" is the old covenant; that which is "abolished" (for the Christian) is the ceremonial law. In the Galatian Epistle there are quite a number of verses which are used by those who affirm the Law has no relation to believers today--e.g. 2:19; 3:13; 3:23-25; 4:5; 5:18. Now it is impossible to understand these verses unless we first see what is the theme and character of the Epistle in which they are found.

The theme of Galatians is the Believer's Emancipation from the Law. The special character of the Epistle is that it was written to confirm the faith of Christians, who had been troubled and shaken by Judaizers. But a careful reading of the Epistle should show the Emancipation here viewed is not from the Law as the standard of moral conduct, but from the curse or penalty of the Law; and the particular heresy of the Judaizers was not that they pressed the Ten Commandments upon the saints as a rule of life, but that they insisted the works of the Law must be fulfilled before a sinner could be saved. (See Acts 15:1).

"The trouble at Galatia was legalism and ritualism. Speaking strictly the two are one; for the attempt to secure Divine favor through law observance leads inevitably to ritualism in its worst form. That the Galatians were going over to the ground of law for acceptance with God is evident from the whole tenor of the Epistle" (Prof. W. G. Morehead on "Galatians"). "The object of the Epistle to the Galatians was to restore among them the pure Gospel which they had received, but which they had so mingled with human works and ceremonies and a notion of their own free will and merits, as to have well-nigh lost it" ("Grace in Galatians" by Dr.

George S. Bishop). The central issue raised in Galatians is not what is the standard of conduct for the believer's life, but what is the ground of a sinner's salvation. In proof of this assertion note carefully that in Galatians 1:7 Paul expressly says the Judaistic troublers were they who "would pervert the Gospel of Christ". Again, "That no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God is evident", etc. (3:11), shows the trend of the argument. Again; "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole Law" (5:3 and cf. 6:15) indicates wherein the Judaizers erred.

So, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the Law; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4) evidences the subject of the Epistle. To "fall from grace" means not for a Christian to obey the Ten Commandments, but to do the works of the Law (moral and ceremonial) in order to be justified. The Law and the Gospel are irreconcilable. Every attempt to combine them strikes equally at the majesty of the Law and the grace of the Gospel. On Galatians 3:25 Dr.

George Bishop has this to say: "We are no longer 'under a schoolmaster! i.e., for discipline, for penalty. It does not mean for precept. It does not mean that the Ten Commandments are abolished. It simply says, You are not saved by keeping the Commandments, nor are you lost if you fail. It is Christ who has saved you, and you cannot be lost. Now you will obey from the instinct of the new nature and from gratitude, for these are holiness". On 5:13, 14 he says, "By love serve one another".

Here the Law is brought in as a service. 'I am among you', Saud Hesysm; as One that serveth-- 'If ye love Me keep My commandments'. The New Testament repeats and enforces all the Ten Commandments. They were given to be kept, and kept they shall be. Matthew 5:19: 'For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'. The Law is fulfilled': the Law was given to be fulfilled, not only for us, but in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

There is danger here of a mistake on either side--for if we do not preach faith alone for salvation, no one is saved; but if we preach a faith that does not obey, we preach that which nullifies the faith which saves us." On Galatians 5:18 Dr. John Eadie has this to say: "The Galatians were putting themselves in subjection to Law, and ignoring the free government of the Spirit. To be led by the Spirit is incompatible with being under the Law. So the beginning of Galatians 3. To be under the Law is thus to acknowledge its claim and to seek to obey it in hope of meriting eternal life".

To be led by the Spirit is incompatible with being under the Law because the Holy Spirit leads a sinner to trust in Christ alone for salvation. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross" (Col. 2:14). Here it is assumed that the "handwriting of ordinances" refers to the Ten Commandments, and, that "which was contrary to us", refers to Christians. Such a distortion is quickly discovered once this interpretation is exposed to the light.

Observe, in the first place, that at the beginning of the previous verse the apostle refers to Gentile believers-- "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh", etc. The "us" of verse 14 refers, then to Jewish believers. But between the "you" and the "us" is a word which supplies the key to what follows, namely, the word "together", which here, as in Ephesians 2:5, 6, points to the spiritual union of believing Gentiles with believing Jews. Believing Jews and gentiles were "quickened together".

And how could that be? Because they were "quickened together with Him". Christ acted vicariously, as the Representative of all His people, so that when He died they all died (judicially); when He was quickened they all were; when He rose again they all rose; not merely one part of them did, but all together. But in order for Jew and Gentile to enjoy fellowship, in order for them to be brought "together", that which had hitherto separated them must be made an end of. And it is this which is in view in Colossians 2:14.

The handwriting of ordinances was against us," i.e. against the Jews, for their Divinely-given Law prohibited them for all religious intercourse with the Gentiles. But that which had been against the Jews, was taken out of the way, being nailed to the Cross. Nor does this interpretation stand unsupported: it is indubitably confirmed by a parallel passage. It is well-known among students of the Word that the Epistles of Ephesians and Colossians are largely complementary and supplementary; and it will frequently be found that the one is absolutely indispensable to the interpretation of the other.

Now in Ephesians 2 there is a passage which is strictly parallel with this portion of Colossians 2. In verse 11 the apostle addresses the Gentile saints, who were of the Uncircumcision--note the reference to "uncircumcision" in Colossians 2:13. Then in verse 12 he reminds them of how in their unconverted state they had been "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel", etc. But in verse 13 he tells them that they had

been "made nigh" by the blood of Christ. The result of this is stated in verse 14: "For He is our peace who hath made both one" (i.e. both believing Jews and believing Gentiles): the "made both one" being parallel with the "quicken together" of Colossians 2:13.

Next the apostle tells how this had been made possible: "And hath broken down the middle wall of partition" (that had separated Jew from Gentile); which is parallel with "and took it out of the way", etc. Then the apostle declares, "having abolished in His flesh the enmity, the Law of commandments contained in ordinances", which is parallel with "blotting out the handwriting of ordinances"! Thus has God most graciously made us entirely independent of all human interpretations of Colossians 2:13, 14, by interpreting it for us in Ephesians 2:11-15.

How much we lose by failing to compare scripture with scripture. One other verse we must consider, and that is 1 Timothy 1:9: "Knowing this, that the Law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinner", etc. The key to this is supplied in the immediate context. In verses 3 and 4 the apostle bids Timothy to "charge some that they preach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies", etc. It is clear that he has in mind those who had been infected by Judaizers.

In verse 5 the apostle tells his son in the faith what was the "end", of "the commandments" --i.e. the moral Law, as is clear from what precedes and what follows. The design or aim of that Law which is "holy and just and good" (Rom. 7:12) was to direct and advance love to God and men; but this love ("charity") can spring only "out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned". Next, in verses 6 and 7 the apostle taxes the Judaizers and those affected by them, as having "swerved" from love and faith, turning aside to "vain jangling", and setting themselves up as teachers of the Law, understanding neither what they said nor affirmed.

Then, in verse 8, the apostle guards against His readers drawing a false inference from what he had just said in verse 7, and so he declares "But we know that the Law is good, if a man use it lawfully"; thus amplifying what he had affirmed in verse 5. Lest they should think that because he had reflected upon the Judaizers, he had also disparaged the Law itself, he added this safeguard in verse 8. To "use" the Law "lawfully", is to use it as God intended it to be used: not as a means of salvation, but as a standard of conduct; not as the ground of our justification, but as the director of our obedience to God.

The Law is used unlawfully, not when presented as the rule of the believer's life, but when it is opposed to Christ! Finally, in verses 9 and 10 the apostle contrasts the design of the Law as it respected believers and unbelievers: "The Law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient", etc. That is to say, the Law as an instrument of terror and condemnation, was not made for the righteous but for the wicked. "The Law, threatening, compelling, condemning, is not made for a righteous man, because he is pushed forward to duty of his own accord, and is no more led by the spirit of bondage and fear of punishment" (Turretin).

"By the Law is to be understood, the moral Law, as it is armed with stings and terrors, to restrain rebellious sinners. By the righteous man, is meant, one in whom a principle of Divine grace is planted, and who, for the knowledge and love of God, chooses the things that are pleasing to Him. As the Law has annexed so many severe threatenings to the transgression of it, it is evidently directed to the wicked, who will only be compelled by fear from the outrageous breaking of it" (Poole's Annotations).

We have now examined every passage of any importance in the New Testament which is used by modern Antinomians. And not one of them has a word to say against believers in this dispensation using the Law as the standard of their moral conduct. In our next article, we shall treat of the positive side of the subject, and show that the children of God are obligated to obey the Ten Commandments, not as a condition of salvation, but as the director of their obedience to God. In this article we have departed from our usual custom, in that we have quoted from quite a number of the commentators of the past.

This has been done, not because we desired to buttress our expositions by an appeal to human authorities--though the interpretations of godly men of the past are not to be scorned and regarded as obsolete, rather should they receive the careful examination which they merit, for it was under such teaching was produced Christian conduct that puts to unutterable shame the laxity of the present-day Christian walk. No, we have appealed to the writings of Christian exegetes of the past that it might be seen we have not given a forced and novel interpretation of those passages which stood in the way of what we deem to be the truth on the subject of the relation of the Law to Christians; but instead, an interpretation which, though the result of personal study, is in full accord with that given by many, who for piety, scholarship, spiritual discernment, and knowledge of the Scriptures, few living today are worthy to be compared. ENDNOTES

[1] This theme is developed by showing the superiority of Christ--the Center and Life of Christianity - over angels. Adam, Moses, Joshua, Aaron, and the whole Levitical economy.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-pink/the-law-and-the-saint-2-the-negative-side/>

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