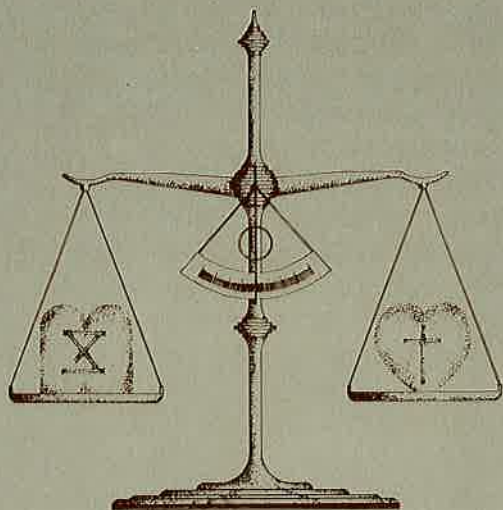


THE LAW



OF MOSES
&
OF JESUS

TIMOTHY TOW

THE
LAW
OF MOSES
&
OF JESUS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

An Anthology of Sermons and Verses

Songs and Verses from the Holy Land

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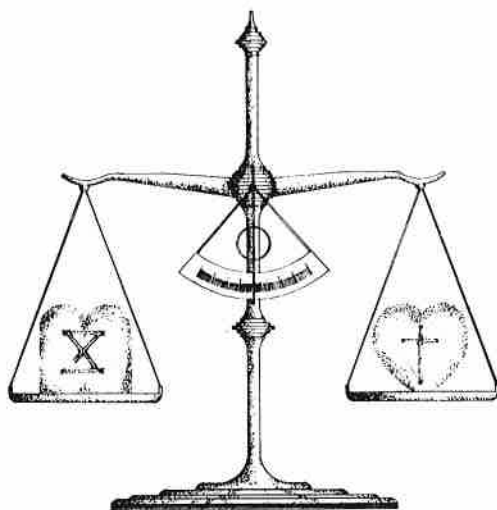
*In John Sung's Steps—
the Story of Lim Puay Hian*

The Gospel of Life

The Gospel Prophets

John Sung My Teacher

THE LAW



OF MOSES & OF JESUS

Timothy Tow



Christian Life Publishers

THE LAW OF MOSES AND OF JESUS

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FOREWORD

I count it a privilege to contribute a Foreword to this work, which I commend to preachers and all serious Christian readers with great enthusiasm. Dr Timothy Tow has been used of God in Singapore, Malaysia and elsewhere in a very remarkable way over the last thirty-five years, both in the upbuilding of the large congregation which he pastors, and in the emergence of an entire constituency of thriving churches and mission outposts. A key element in this wonderful work of church planting has been the Far Eastern Bible College, of which Dr Tow is founding Principal.

This book was originally compiled as a scholarly critique of the attitude of many "popular" dispensationalists to the Law of Moses and also to the Psalms. Its value will be obvious from a glance at the Table of Contents, which literally bristles with topics of vital interest to Bible students. In recent years the importance of the Christian Sabbath has again been challenged, particularly among evangelicals in the U.S.A. Dr Tow examines the grounds on which many dispensationalists reject the Moral Law of Moses, and with clear and powerful arguments he shows that the Reformed position is scripturally correct.

The author holds to a premillennial view of "last things", and so this study has the added value of demonstrating that by no means all premillennialists are dispensationalists. In our day these two positions are often, quite wrongly, equated together.

In these pages the ideas of teachers such as C.I. Scofield are repeatedly contested. One high point in the study occurs where Dr Tow brilliantly contrasts Scofield's attitude to the Law of Moses with the attitude of the Lord Jesus.

This book undoubtedly fulfills a great need. While it takes the form of a serious study, yet because the author is by nature and calling a preacher, and because of his stature as a communicator, the pace and flow of the book draws the reader into each argument, to provide a very stimulating "read". May we all emulate this endeavour to make impor-

tant theological issues intelligible and challenging to the soul.

It is good to see emphasised in these pages the place of the Law in evangelistic ministry. It is also extremely helpful to have the place of the ancient Law in the life of the New Testament believer so clearly presented and explained. Truly, as the author says, it is not so much the Law of Moses, as the Law of Jesus.

May the Lord bless this study, all who read it, and its author, with continuing and expanding instrumentality, to the glory of His name.

Dr Peter Masters
The Metropolitan Tabernacle,
(Spurgeon's)
London

1986

PREFACE

When the writer graduated from Faith Theological Seminary in 1950, he was firmly established in the teaching which he had received. This teaching was based on “the system of doctrine contained in the Scriptures, and expounded in the historic Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, . . . including the premillennial return of Christ.”¹ He was deeply impressed by the aim of the Seminary which is “to stress those matters that the Bible clearly and repeatedly presents, and to avoid giving undue importance to matters of doubtful interpretations, . . . to maintain fellowship with all who are loyal to the Scriptures, but to avoid compromise with any who reject its clear teachings.”²

Attitude Toward the Problem

Thus, while he was called during the intervening years to the ministry of the gospel in Singapore, he was constrained to “earnestly contend” against heresies detrimental to the faith, but in regard to “truths and forms with respect to which men of good character and principles might differ,”³ he has not only exercised forbearance to dissenting brethren to the best of his ability, but also extended the right hand of fellowship, on behalf of his congregation, to “all branches of the church which in their creed and practice hold fast to the historic Christian faith.”⁴

Among ministers of the gospel invited to his pulpit, those who hold the Dispensational viewpoint predominated. The writer has never entertained antagonism to this system of hermeneutics, insofar as it does not detract from the authority of Holy Scripture, having himself used a Scofield Reference Bible for a decade, to much profit. However, he begs to differ with certain views propounded therein, which are also held by a number of other Dispensational writers. These views he respectfully submits to be disharmonious to the tenor of God’s unified Word.

Extent of the Problem

As far as this thesis is concerned, these views relate to the Law of Moses, particularly as respecting the moral elements,

which are summarized in the Ten Commandments. The scope of the Mosaic Law under consideration covers not only the Pentateuch which Moses wrote, but also all the expositions thereof which have been given by Christ and the prophets and apostles, for our better understanding. Nevertheless, it may be profitable, within the scope of this inquiry, to consider also certain of the Psalms, which are classified as “Jewish”⁵ and “imprecatory” by the Dispensationalists, and have been declared “unsuited” to the Christian Church.⁶

Solution to the Problem

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to investigate whether such views are warranted by Scripture. Since our Lord repeatedly appealed to Moses and the prophets in His earthly ministry, and declared that His coming was not to destroy that authority but rather to fulfil it,⁷ the writer has been intrigued with the idea of finding the verdict of Jesus to our present problem. This should lead both writer and reader to many a throbbing interview with the Master. What will He say about Moses? Is the Decalogue relevant to the Church as a rule of life in the days in which we live? Are the Psalms primarily a Jewish Song Book or are they the favorite hymns of believers of both Old and New Testaments? In order that these questions might be satisfactorily answered, the Dispensational view of the Law of Moses, and the Psalms, will be carefully examined in the light of the teaching of Jesus. The light of Jesus’ teaching will be sought from a fresh exegetical study of His acts and utterances, from which principles will be drawn and applied. This method of study may be called the inductive method.

¹ *Catalogue of Faith Theological Seminary*, Elkins Park, Philadelphia, Pa., 1959–1961, p. 16.

² *Ibid.*, p. 17.

³ *The Constitution of the Bible Presbyterian Church*, The Committee on Publications of the Bible Presbyterian Church (Wilmington: Wm. N. Cann, Inc., 1946), p. 128.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

⁵ Arno C. Gaebelien, *The Book of Psalms*, A Devotional and Prophetic Commentary (“Our Hope” Publications, 1939), p. 10.

⁶ *Scofield Reference Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press), p. 599.

⁷ Matt. 5: 17.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to record his heartfelt thanks to the Reverend Alfred W. Eppard, Assistant Professor of New Testament, and to Mr. Arthur M. Ross, M.A., B.D., Instructor in the same Department, for their wise counselling and criticism of the manuscript. He wishes also to thank Dr. Allan A. MacRae, beloved President of the Faculty, for his friendly interest in the welfare of the writer, Mr. Arthur E. Steele, President of the Student Body, for his kindness, Mr. Richard D. Shellabarger for his brotherly encouragement and loan of fine books, and last but not least, Mrs. V. T. Baker for typing this thesis.

Above all, he pledges anew to give his heart to the Saviour, who washed him in His own blood, and separated him unto Himself for the gospel ministry. Amen.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a critique of the Dispensational view of the Law of Moses, and the Psalms, in the light of our Lord's teaching as recorded in the Gospels.

In order to comprehend what are the theological implications involved in such a viewpoint, it will be necessary to:

1. Render a proper definition of the term "dispensation",
2. Discover something of its historical background,
3. Acquaint ourselves with its various schools of interpretation.

1. Definition of the Term "Dispensation"

"Dispensation" is a Biblical word. As used in the Authorised Version, it is derived from the Latin Translation (*dispensatio*)¹ of the Greek *οικονομία* [*oikonomia*] (I Cor. 9:17; Eph. 1:10; 3:2; Col. 1:25). "Stewardship" is another rendering (Lk. 16:2-4). "To be a steward" translates the verb form of *οικονομία* (*οικονομέω*—*oikonomeo*), while "steward" is used for the concrete noun, *οικονόμος* [*oikonomos*] (Lk. 12:42; 16:1,3; I Cor. 4:1,2 Tit. 1:7; I Pet. 4:10). Thus, "dispensation" means a stewardship, an economy, or "economical management or superintendence."²

Webster's New International Dictionary defines "dispensation" as "a system of principles, promises and rules ordained and administered; schemes, economy, as the patriarchal, Mosaic and Christian dispensations."³ The etymology of *οικονομία* is clearly discernible in the phrase "ordained and administered."

In theological usage, however, "dispensation" has gathered to itself the connotation of a "time-period," during which a certain prescription of Divine stewardship or economy is administered. It is to be noted that Scofield defines a "dispensation" as "a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God."⁴ In a booklet for popular Bible study, he

further amplifies its meaning in these words, “Each of the dispensations may be regarded as a new test of the natural man, and each ends in judgment—his utter failure.”⁵

Modern Dispensationalism generally teaches seven such dispensations, or time-periods, during each of which man is tested for salvation. Such a viewpoint stands in sharp contrast with Federal or Covenant Theology, in which scheme of redemption there is only one testing, though with two or more dispensations subsumed thereunder.⁶

2. Historical Background

Dispensationalism may be traced back to Johannes Cocceius (1603–1669), an eminent Dutch Reformed theologian of the 17th century. He has been called “the father of covenant theology.” Cocceius partitioned the Covenant of Grace which was to be administered under three dispensations, or economies, as follows:

1. The ante-legal (*ante legem*), commencing with the Protevangelium. (During this period the law was given to the patriarchs through the conscience.)
2. The legal (*sub lege*), which began with the written law of Moses. (During this period, God’s grace was administered to Israel through sacrifices and ceremonies, and the prophets.)
3. The post-legal (*post legem*), from the time of the incarnation of Christ. (During this period the Kingdom of God became universalised.)⁷

The aim of Cocceius was evidently to put the doctrine of predestination in the background and to show that “after the fall, God placed salvation within the reach of all by covenant and actually provided redemption in Christ for all who believed.”⁸

D. H. Kromminga, author of “The Millennium in the Church,” has a chapter on “Pietism and Dispensationalism.” In this chapter he observes many points of similarity between Cocceius’ teaching and modern American Dispensationalism, such as “the schematisation of the history of redemption in a series of successive covenants and dispensations,” stress on typology, unfulfilled prophecy, and their

peculiar attitude towards the Decalogue, including the Sabbath. He therefore calls Cocceius "the father of dispensationalism."⁹

Oswald T. Allis, however, traces modern dispensationalism directly to the Brethren Movement, which began in England about 1830. John Nelson Darby (1800–82), an ex-clergyman, was the Movement's versatile and indefatigable leader. Among his associates were scholars like Benjamin W. Newton (1805–1898) and Samuel P. Tregelles (1813–1875) along with George Müller (1805–1898) of the Bristol Orphanage fame.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the Brethren split into three parties by 1845, but Darby, with greater energy than before, spread his teachings to Europe and America.¹¹

Although the history of Dispensationalism has not been shattered by internal conflict like that of primitive Brethrenism, the early fellowship of Dispensational teachers had experienced serious opposition from within its own brotherhood. The bone of contention was the matter of the Tribulation. In the United States about seventy years ago, Robert Cameron¹² and Nathanael West took issue over Pre-Tribulationism with the colleagues of the Niagara Conference, "the Believers' Meeting for Bible Study." They were followed by others, such as W. J. Erdman and Henry W. Frost.¹³ Today, the cause of Post-Tribulationism continues to be espoused, e.g., by the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony (London), after the tradition of Benjamin W. Newton.¹⁴ One of the most vocal opponents to Dispensationalism in our generation is Philip Mauro, one time an ardent advocate himself.¹⁵

Jesse W. Hodges, a most recent critic of "Dispensational Truth," connects Darby's teaching with that of Cocceius and of Johann Petersen (1647–1727) and his abler wife, Eleonara von Merlau. According to the Petersens' more fanciful divisions, there were seven dispensations in the Old Testament and seven in the New. After the Millennium, more dispensations were to be evolved before the restitution of the fallen creation could be completed. These concluding dispensations were in the nature of judgment and punishment of Satan and his angels, by which they also would be re-instated.¹⁶ This sort of speculative Dispensationalism degenerated into a theosophy.

In contrast with such theosophic fantasy, the Darbyite system has only seven dispensations for both the Old and

New Testaments.¹⁷ Since Darby does not give a lucid outline of the dispensations, Arnold D. Ehlert has delineated it more clearly under these heads:

- [1] Paradisiacal state], to the flood;
- 2) Noah;
- 3) Abraham;
- 4) Israel
 - a) Under the law,
 - b) Under the priesthood,
 - c) Under the kings;
- 5) Gentiles;
- 6) The Spirit;
- [7] The Millennium.]¹⁸

This theory has been received, modified, and taught by well known writers like William Kelly, W. E. Blackstone,¹⁹ C. H. Mackintosh, F. W. Grant, James M. Gray, Arno C. Gaebelien, F. C. Ottman, H. A. Ironside, W. R. Newell, and Lewis Sperry Chafer. But the greatest disciple of them all was C. I. Scofield, who popularised Dispensational teaching through the publication of his Reference Bible by the Oxford University Press. According to the latest information released by the said company, in commemoration of the Golden Anniversary of the Scofield Reference Bible (1909–1959), “the total sales of this unique edition of the Holy Scriptures have several times exceeded the million mark.”²⁰

Incidental to the writer’s ethnic background, the Dispensationalism of Scofield has also greatly influenced the thinking of the Chinese Church. This has been effected through the dissemination of his Chinese Correspondence Courses by the Hunan Bible Institute, Changsha, prior to the Communist “Liberation.” Chia Yu-ming, China’s doyen theologian, at whose feet the writer once sat, divides the Bible into six aeons and five dispensations.²¹

3. Schools of Interpretation

Since the division of the Biblical plan of redemption into dispensations has been drawn by idiosyncratic human hands, it is natural to expect all kinds of schematisation. John F. Walvoord, president of Dallas Theological Seminary, where the Dispensational viewpoint is tenaciously held, admits:

A wide divergence of belief is found within the general designation of dispensationalists. This has frequently tended to confuse the issue as opponents of dispensationalism have resorted to citation of the most extreme statements they could find instead of trying to discover the normative position.²²

The same author also makes an analysis of the various schools of dispensational interpretation in the article cited above.

From the standpoint of this thesis, Dispensationalism may be divided into two schools as follows:

a. Ultra-Dispensationalism

This school is further divided into two views. The more extreme viewpoint was propagated by E. W. Bullinger (1837–1913), a minister of the Church of England. Bullinger “discovered” two dispensations within the church period. The first period belonged to the Jewish Church of Acts, and the second to the Gentile Church, as the body Christ. Bullinger rejected the Lord’s Supper and Water Baptism as applicable to this church age.

Although Bullinger was a prolific writer like Darby, and was listed by the British **Who’s Who**, 1913, as the author of seventy-seven works,²³ his followers are today almost extinct.

The less extreme viewpoint (considered by followers of Scofield to be ultra-dispensational)²⁴ is presently propagated by Cornelius R. Stam, as in his **Fundamentals of Dispensationalism** and through a monthly publication.²⁵ Another zealous exponent is J. C. O’Hair who hotly crusades against H. A. Ironside and other “high priests.”²⁶ This school presents the teaching that the Church, as the body of Christ, is exclusively a Pauline doctrine, to the prejudice of the non-Pauline sections of the New Testament. In contrast with Bullingerism which rejects both New Testament sacraments, Stam and O’Hair exclude only Water Baptism. But their contention for the abrogation of Water Baptism has so obsessed them that it has become a main plank of their pulpit platform.²⁷

Ultra-Dispensationalists are evidently a minority today. Yet, they serve “to illustrate the extreme positions to which Dispensationalism logically forces those who seek to carry it out to its ultimate conclusions.”²⁸

(This page is reproduced from "The Fundamentals of Dispensationalism" by Cornelius R. Stem, *The Berean Searchlight*, 1951,* p. 29f.)

ADAM Created in God's Image Gen. 1:26,27	ADAM Fallen in Sin Rom. 5:12	NOAH First Civil Ruler Gen. 9:1-7	ABRAHAM Father of Believers Rom. 4:9-12	MOSES The Law Giver John 1:17	PAUL Chief of Sinners Saved I Tim. 1:13-16	CHRIST The Shepherd King Jer. 23:5,6
<p>THE PRINCIPLES OF GOD ETERNAL AND UNCHANGEABLE Salvation always essentially by Grace through Faith</p>						
The DISPENSA- TION OF INNOCENCE Gen. 2:8-17 Gen. 2:25	The DISPENSA- TION OF CONSCIENCE Gen. 3:8-10 Rom. 2:11-15	The DISPENSA- TION OF HUMAN GOV'T. Gen. 9:6 Rom. 13:1	The DISPENSA- TION OF PROMISE Gen. 12:1-3 Gen. 22:17,18	The DISPENSA- TION OF LAW Ex. 20:1-26 Gal. 3:19	The DISPENSA- TION OF GRACE Rom. 5:20,21 Eph. 3:1-4	The DISPENSA- TION OF THE KINGDOM Isa. 9:6,7 Isa. 11:1-9
<p>This chart is not meant to indicate the <i>close</i> of any dispensation, but rather the changes or advances in God's dealings with men, for some of the dispensations have not yet closed. For example: while the call of Abraham ushered in the dispensation of promise, it did not bring the preceding dispensation to a close, for human government is still in force today.</p> <p>Note carefully that while God <i>refuses</i> works for salvation today, He <i>required</i> them under other dispensations. This was not, as we have explained, because works <i>in themselves</i> could ever save, but because they were the necessary expression of faith when so required.</p> <p>Tradition has it that men have always been saved through faith in the shed blood of Christ; that even those who lived before the cross had to look forward in faith to the death of a coming Christ for salvation.</p> <p>It is high time that this false notion, so deeply rooted in the minds of even sincere believers, be shattered, for it does not have one single line of Scriptural support.</p>						

Fig. 1

b. Popular Dispensationalism

What is being advanced today as “conservative” or “normative” dispensationalism should rather be called “popular” dispensationalism. This is not to cast any aspersion on dispensational scholarship, but rather to show its docile acceptance by the masses through the publication of the Scofield Reference Bible.²⁹ Undoubtedly, the majority of dispensationalists belongs to this school today.

Popular Dispensationalism divides the Scriptures into seven dispensations, viz., (1) Innocence, (2) Conscience, (3) Human Government, (4) Promise, (5) Law, (6) Grace, and (7) Kingdom.

What is pertinent to the discussion is that this system teaches that “three major dispensations are the subject of extensive revelation in the Bible, namely the dispensation of law, the dispensation of Grace and the dispensation of the Kingdom . . .” and that the same school of interpretation “necessarily insists that as a rule of life the major dispensations differ extensively with each other and that each replaces the former dispensation.”³⁰

To what extent does each major dispensation differ with, and to what extent does one displace, the other? This we shall see in the following pages!

¹ *Biblia Sacra Vulgatae* Editionis Sixti V et Clementis VIII, Sumptibus Samuelis Bagster.

² Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Dispensationalism*, rep. fr. Bibliotheca Sacra No. 372, Vol. 93, Oct.–Dec., 1936, p. 390.

³ “Dispensation,” 2nd edition unabridged (G. & C. Merriam Co., 1943).

⁴ *Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 5.

⁵ C. I. Scofield, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*, (4032 Swiss Ave., Dallas 4, Through the Bible Publishers), p. 14.

⁶ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Thomas Nelson & Sons), Vol. II, p. 373.

⁷ L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (4th revised and enlarged edition, Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1949), p. 292.

⁸ A. H. Newman, *A Manual of Church History* (The American Baptist Pub. Soc.), Vol II, p. 576.

⁹ D. H. Kromminga, *The Millennium in the Church* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1945), p. 205.

¹⁰ O. T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church* (Presby. & Reformed Pub. Co.), p. 9ff.

¹¹ Thomas S. Veitch, *The Story of the Brethren Movement*, (London: Pickering & Inglis).

¹² Robert Cameron, *Scriptural Truth About the Lord's Return* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1922).

¹³ Allis, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

¹⁴ *Watching and Waiting*, a Bimonthly, is published by the said Testimony, edited by George H. Fromow, 9 Milnethorpe Rd., Chiswick, London W.4.

¹⁵ Philip Mauro, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, with an Examination of Modern Dispensationalism (Hamilton Bros.), Intro.

¹⁶ Jesse W. Hodges, *Christ's Kingdom and Coming* (Eerdmans, 1957), p. 46. Cf. Kromminga, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

¹⁷ J. N. Darby, *Trans. of the Holy Bible* (1881) (London: G. Morrish), Intro.

¹⁸ Arnold D. Ehlert, *A Bibliography of Dispensationalism* (Bibliotheca Sacra), Vol. CII, p. 84ff.

¹⁹ His book, "*Jesus is coming*" was first published in 1878. By 1917 350,000 were printed. It was translated into 25 languages. Cf. C. Norman Kraus, *Dispensationalism in America* (John Knox Press, 1958), p. 33.

²⁰ Frank E. Gacbelein, *The Story of the Scofield Reference Bible, 1909-1959* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 6.

²¹ Chia Yu-ming, *The Perfect Salvation* (in Chinese) (Shanghai: Spiritual Training Theological Seminary, 1949), p. 592.

²² John F. Walvoord, "Dispensational Premillennialism," *Christianity Today*, Vol. II, No. 24, Sept. 15, 1958.

²³ Allis, *op. cit.*, p. 289.

²⁴ H. A. Ironside, *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*.

²⁵ *The Berean Searchlight*, 7609 West Belmont Ave., Chicago, Illinois.

²⁶ J. C. O'Hair, *The Dispensational Razzle-Dazzle*, 1016 Wilson Ave., Chicago, Illinois.

²⁷ J. C. O'Hair, *Let's De-Judaize the Church of Christ*, 1011 Wilson Ave., Chicago, Illinois.

²⁸ Allis, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

²⁹ T. T. Shields, *Gospel Witness*, April 7, 1932. Cf. Albertus Pieters, *A Candid Examination of the Scofield Bible* (Bible Truth Depot, Swengei, Union Co., Pa.)

³⁰ Walvoord, *op. cit.*

CHAPTER II

**A BRIEF SURVEY
OF THE DISPENSATIONAL VIEW
OF THE LAW OF MOSES**

Of the seven dispensations enumerated at the conclusion of the previous chapter, it has been pointed out that the last three, viz., Law, Grace, and Kingdom are of immediate relevance to this thesis.

According to John F. Walvoord, the Dispensation of Law extends from Moses to the Church, the Dispensation of Grace from the Church (beginning at Pentecost) to the Rapture, the Dispensation of the Kingdom from Christ's Second Advent to the Creation of the Eternal State.

1. Principle of Dispensational Hermeneutics

Now, Walvoord also insists that, as a rule of life, these three major dispensations differ extensively with each other, so much so that each dispensation is replaced by the one after it.¹ According to this principle of hermeneutics, it seems necessary to conclude that the Law of Moses, being "exclusively"² addressed to Israel, will not apply directly to the Church, and thus has been abrogated altogether. We must let Dispensational theologians answer this question themselves.

2. Some Dispensational Views on the Mosaic Code

Writing under "The Law Systems and Judaism Done Away" in his important work on Systematic Theology, Lewis Sperry Chafer says:

Since law and grace are opposed to each other at every point, it is impossible for them to coexist either as a ground of acceptance before God or as the rule of life. Of necessity therefore, the Scriptures of the New Testament which present the facts and scope of grace, both assume and directly teach that the law is done away. Consequent-

ly it is not in force in any sense whatsoever. The present nullification of the law applies not only (1)* to the legal code of the Mosaic system and (2) the law of the kingdom, but to every possible application of (3) the principle of law That the law, in the widest threefold meaning of the term, is now set aside, is revealed as a fundamental fact in the divine economy of grace.³

In his Reference Bible, Scofield condemns the law as a rule of life for the Gospel Dispensation:

The test of the Gospel is grace. If the message excludes grace, or mingles law with grace as the means either of justification or sanctification (Gal. 2:21; 3:1-3), . . . it is "another" gospel, and the preacher of it is under the anathema of God (vs. 8, 9).⁴

Similarly, Arno C. Gaebelin says of the Decalogue (as given within the Mosaic Code):

This law was given to Israel exclusively, which is seen in the opening word May we fully understand that this law cannot give righteousness nor life and that it is not in force as the rule for the Christian in order to receive blessing from God.⁵

3. Resultant View on the Decalogue

Thus, the resultant view of the above treatises on the Mosaic Code resolves that the Decalogue shall not have dominion over Christians as a rule of life. This viewpoint may indeed be termed "Dispensational Antinomianism."⁶ It should be observed that such a low view of the Ten Commandments is a radical departure from the theological position set forth in the Creeds of the Reformation.

4. The Position of the Creeds

While it is acknowledged in the light of the clear teaching of Scripture that the ceremonial law, and generally, the judicial law of Moses are abrogated for this age, the historic Creeds have upheld the authority of the Decalogue as a rule of life for the Church. This testimony is nowhere more succinctly presented than in the Westminster Confession of

Faith. In contrast with Dispensational Antinomianism, Chapter XIX⁷ of the same Confession is reproduced here for the serious consideration of the reader:

Of the Law of God

1. God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which he bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it; and endued him with power and ability to keep it.
2. This law, after his Fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness, and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai in ten commandments, and written in two tables: the first four commandments containing our duty towards God, and the other six our duty to man.
3. Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a Church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, his graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits, and partly holding forth divers instructions of moral duties. All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated under the New Testament.
4. To them also, as a body politic, he gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people, not obliging any other, now, further than the general equity thereof may require.
5. The moral law doth forever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof; and that not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator who gave it. Neither doth Christ in the gospel any way dissolve, but much strengthen, this obligation.
6. Although true believers be not under the law as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned, yet is it of great use to them, as well as to others, in that, as a rule of life, informing them of the will of God and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly; discovering also the sinful pollutions of their nature, hearts, and lives; so as, examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin; together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and the perfection of his obedience. It is likewise of use to the regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin; and the threatenings of it serve to show what ever their sins deserve, and what afflictions in this life they may expect for them, although freed from the curse thereof, although

threatened in the law. The promises of it, in like manner, show them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof, although not as due to them by the law as a covenant of works: so as a man's doing good, and refraining from evil, because the law encourageth to the one, and deterreth from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law, and not under grace.

7. Neither are the forementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the gospel, but do sweetly comply with it; the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely and cheerfully which the will of God, revealed in the law, requireth to be done.

Other Confessions

Other Confessions⁸ declaring the moral law to be a continuing rule of life for this age are:

1. The Scottish Confession (1560).
2. The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England (1571).
3. The Formula of Concord (1577).
4. The Irish Articles (1615).
5. The Methodist Articles of Religion (1784).
6. The New Hampshire Confession (1833).
7. The Reformed Episcopal Articles of Religion (1875).

Thus, it is quite evident that the Decalogue has been upheld by, and within, all Protestant Churches through the years until Dispensationalism arose to challenge it from the middle of the last century.⁹ Indeed, the law of God has been a rule of life for the Church throughout the course of church history from the very beginning.¹⁰

Nevertheless, it must be admitted in fairness to our dissenting brethren,¹¹ that though the pronouncements of Synods and Councils are entitled to great respect, it is neither scriptural nor scientific to commit our understanding solely to them.¹² The Word of God, and the Word of God alone, is our supreme and only infallible rule of faith and practice.¹³ Our final appeal must be made to the Holy Scriptures.

5. Dispensational Interpretation of the Scriptures Examined

What then are the Biblical grounds upon which Dispensational Antinomianism is purported to build? A survey of representative literature leads us to the following passages:

(a) *John 1:16-17*: “And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”

“According to this passage,” comments Chafer, “the whole Mosaic system was fulfilled, superseded and terminated in the first advent of Christ.”¹⁴

In the light of Chafer’s theology, the whole Mosaic system must necessarily be interpreted to include the Decalogue. It is to be noted that this theologian uses the King James translation’s italic “*but*.” If the drawing of his sharp dispensational divisions has been guided by this inserted adversative, then he had followed an English will-o’-the-wisp raised up by the translators from an empty Greek text.¹⁵

In the fuller context of *John 1:15-18*, the intention of the Evangelist seems rather to introduce a resplendent Christ and not to dismiss a waning Moses. In contrast with Chafer’s exegesis, Augustine’s view of the passage is synthetic, not antithetic:

“The law was given by Moses: grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” By a servant was the law given, and men made guilty: by an Emperor was pardon given, and delivered the guilty. “The Law was given by Moses.” Let not the servant attribute to himself more than was done through him. Chosen to a great ministry as one faithful in his house, but yet a servant, he is able to act according to law, but cannot release from the guilt of the law. “The law,” then, “was given by Moses: grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

And lest, perhaps, anyone should say, And did not grace and truth come through Moses, who saw God? Immediately he adds, “No one hath seen God at any time.” And how did God become known to Moses? Because the Lord revealed Himself to His servant. What Lord? The same Christ, who sent the law beforehand by His servant, that He might Himself come with grace and truth.¹⁶

As Augustine says in another place, “*Lex data est ut gratia quaeraretur; gratia data est ut lex impleretur*” — “The law was

given that grace might be sought; grace was given that the law might be fulfilled.”¹⁷

(b) A second passage used by Dispensationalists to dispense with the Decalogue is *Galatians 3:19–25*.

‘Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made . . . that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we [Jews] were kept under the law, shut up unto faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster [child-disciplinarian] to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under such a schoolmaster (the law).’ Comment is unnecessary concerning this unconditional declaration relative to the passing of the Mosaic system.¹⁸

Chafer’s terse commentary above is elaborated by H. A. Ironside more fully as follows:

“The law was our child-leader,” perhaps not exactly to *bring* us to Christ, but, “The law was our child-leader *until* Christ” (John 1:17). Now Christ has come we have come to the door of the schoolroom of grace, and we have learned the blessed truth of justification by faith alone in Him whom God has set forth to be the propitiation of our sins. We are no longer under a child-director.

We are here told that we are not only freed from the law as a means of attempting to secure justification, but also free from that law as a means of sanctification, for we have so much higher a standard in Christ risen from the dead, and are to be occupied with Him.¹⁹

Thus, both Chafer and Ironside would abolish the Decalogue as a rule of Christian life. This conclusion, it is respectfully submitted, is erroneously drawn.

Indeed the Law of Moses, as a παιδαγωγός [*paidagogos*], holds a temporary office, but faith in Christ, the Master, is permanent. Since the law is temporary, it is abolished when the permanent comes. But, in what sense is the law abolished? It is abolished in the sense that (1) as a covenant of works, it has failed to bring salvation, and (2) as an exhibitor of Christ only by shadowy ceremonies, it is set aside

when the Reality appears.²⁰ For the chief point at issue in the Galatian Epistle is (1) keeping the ceremonial law of circumcision as a condition of salvation,²¹ which leads to (2) the wicked doctrine of “obtaining Salvation by Works.”²² Nowhere is there any condemnation of the moral law as a rule of life for Christians. The conclusion which dispenses with the ceremonial law only should be noted together with the recurring authority and demands of the moral law. For, in the same breath, Paul gives liberty to the Galatians from the yoke of circumcision, and circumscribes them with the second great commandment, “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion of the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”²³

Calvin sums up the discussion on Gal. 3:19–25 in these words:

But here the question is again put, Is the law so abolished that we have nothing to do with it? I answer, the law, so far as it is a rule of life, a bridle to keep us in the fear of the Lord, a spur to correct the sluggishness of our flesh—so far, in short, as it is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that believers may be instructed in every good work,” (2 Tim. 3:16, 17)—is as much in force as ever, and remains untouched.²⁴

“Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.”²⁵ Even as it is expressed by the inspired Psalmist, “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.”²⁶ And the law of the Lord is not only for the soul that needs conversion, but also for the nurture and warning of the converted. Thus David continues to describe the relation between the law and his Christian walk: “The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.”²⁷

(c) A third passage often quoted by Dispensationalists is

Romans 7:2–6. In his *Miscellaneous Writings*, C. H. Mac-kintosh comments as follows:

Then, as to its being a rule of life, we read, “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him that is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God” (Rom. VII.4). “But now are we delivered from the law, being dead to that (see margin) wherein we were held: that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of letter (ver. 6). Observe that in this last-quoted passage two things: first, “we are delivered from the law”; second, not that we may do nature’s pleasure, but “that we should serve in newness of spirit.”

In a word, then, it is evident that a sinner cannot be justified by the works of the law; and it is equally evident that the law is not the rule of the believer’s life. . . . The law knows no such thing as a distinction between a regenerated and an unregenerated man: it curses all who attempt to stand before it.”²⁸

It is respectfully submitted that failure of this commentator to distinguish the dual personality of the believer, and the dual function of the law, at this point, has resulted in such a rigid application of the Scripture. For, Paul is endeavouring to show that there are two natures within the regenerated Christian, the old and the new. Now, if we crucify the old man in us, he is dead, and the law cannot prosecute us. In this sense we are dead to the law, or not under the law. But this is not enough. Having crucified the old man, the new man in us must be united to Christ.

Indeed, as we are fully in Christ, we are now delivered from the law, not in the sense that we will not follow it as a guide, but in the sense that we cannot be condemned by it. Luther says, “We are delivered from the Law in the sense that by faith in Christ we obey the Law, and by grace freely and willingly do what the Law demands of us.”²⁹ Thus, in order not to be misunderstood, Paul re-affirms the validity of the law in the latter part of the same chapter, “Wherefore, the law is holy and the commandment holy, and just and good.”³⁰ What must be mortified in Romans Seven is not the law, but the old man. And if the new man is constantly in loving union with Christ, he will keep his commandments.³¹

The truth of this dual function of the law may be discerned more clearly in the experiences of the motorist—for who has not transgressed the traffic laws, wittingly or unwittingly, in the course of his daily itineraries! Suppose the reader was stopped by the highway patrolman for speeding at eighty miles an hour. He was to be summoned to court for the offence. However, his sincere penitence and entreaties with the police officer moved him to compassion, and he was given a second chance. Now that he was released from “under the law” will he pursue his journey with the same reckless speed? And now, as he drives away gratefully within the limits of traffic regulations, is the law therefore abolished altogether for him? “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.”

As to Romans 7:6, “We should serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter,” it is to be observed that this verse does not teach the discarding of the law. Lenski supports this view, quoting also Romans 3:31:

Do we then abolish the law through faith? Perish the thought! On the contrary, we establish law. In what other way can newness of spirit serve God in its new liberty than by doing his will freely and joyfully? And his will is revealed in his law which this newness of spirit uses as its servant and its guide instead of as a slavish master such as it could only be when we were in the flesh.³²

(d) A fourth passage of Scripture frequently appealed to by Dispensational teachers is *II Cor. 3:7–13*.

But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:

In his book *Grace*, Chafer says of the above Scripture:

It is the law as crystallized in the Ten Commandments which is in view; for that law alone was "written and graven in stones." In the midst of the strongest possible contrasts between the reign of the teachings of the law and the teachings of grace, it is declared that these commandments were "done away" and "abolished." It should be recognized that the old was abolished to make place for the new, which far excels in glory.³³

For the purposes of this thesis, it is not necessary to interpret the whole passage of Scripture just cited. Commentators generally are agreed that it speaks of the Mosaic Code fading in the brighter brilliance of the Gospel. Even if the Decalogue is admitted to be the sole subject of discussion, as a golden rule of hermeneutics, one must ask the question, "In what sense is it done away?"

For an illustration of interpreting Scripture in its contextual sense, let one consider Christ's reference to Himself as a stone upon which whosoever shall fall "shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."³⁴ Does this mean that Christ is a ruthless tyrant? Taken by itself, He would seem so to be. But, taken together with the whole parable, yea, in the light of the whole Bible, Christ is revealed as a righteous judge, punishing those who now reject Him. In the same way, those passages of Scripture that note the abolition of law must be construed in conjunction with others that uphold it. Thus, Milton S. Terry says, "A further and most important method of ascertaining the *usus loquendi* is an extensive and careful comparison of similar or parallel passages of Scripture."³⁵ And, in the words of the Apostle Paul himself, whose words were deemed by Peter "hard to be understood,"³⁶ we are exhorted to study the Bible by comparing spiritual things with spiritual.³⁷

Since Paul has anticipated for us that we do not make void the law through faith but rather establish it, these words should serve to focus our understanding of II Cor. 3:7-13 in a more proper perspective. In what sense, then, is the law here called, "a ministration of death . . . done away?" Answer: In the sense that its powers, as a death warrant, are annulled by faith in the Gospel. Thus, Calvin disagrees with Chafer: "For my part," he says, "I understand that the

abolition of the law of which mention is here made as referring to the whole Old Testament, *in so far** as it is opposed to the gospel, so that it corresponds with the statement,—the law and prophets were until John.”³⁸

Two other Scriptural passages remain to be considered to bring this chapter to a close. They are Eph. 2:15 and Col. 2:14.

(e) In *Lectures on the Epistle of Paul, the Apostle, to the Ephesians with a New Translation*, William Kelly, a representative of the British writers on Dispensationalism, comments on *Eph. 2:15* as follows:

The will of man has raked up the law of commandments out of the grave of Christ, and enacts it over again. This is what is found throughout all Christendom. It is inconceivable, except through realizing the power of Satan, how Christians can take up the peculiar institutions of God to His people, curses and all, in the face of such a chapter as this, where we find that all this is gone, even for the Jews who believe, by the authority of God. It is a practical denial of the blood and cross of Christ. What a solemn proof of the ruined state of the Church of God! The truth is plain indeed: “Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances . . .”³⁹

It is the Dispensationalist’s contention that the law is “one complete and inseparable whole.”⁴⁰ Thus, a reference by the Word to an abolition of the law must include the Decalogue. The Reformed view, however, makes a clear distinction of the law in three categories: The moral which is unchangeable; the judicial, and the ceremonial, which are changeable. The judicial was given to a church under age, for a peculiar local situation, and the ceremonial was a shadow of Christ, which must fade away when the reality appeared.⁴¹

In the fuller context of Eph. 2:11–19, it is abundantly clear that Paul is showing the Christian Gentiles of Ephesus their equal status with Christian Jews, and that equality is effected by the abrogation of the ceremonial law. For, in Christ, Gentiles are not compelled to observe the Jewish rite of circumcision and the whole gamut of Jewish ordinances, in order to get to God.⁴² Inasmuch as Eph. 2:14 which says of the breaking down of the middle wall of partition, τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας [*to mesotoikon tou phragmou lusas*], is admitted by Kelly to be “the annihilation of

all such distinctions separating Gentiles from Jews,” it makes good sense to conclude that the law of commandments in ordinances, τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασι [*ton nomon ton entolon en dogmasi*], in apodosis, refers not to the moral law, but the ceremonial. Calvin says:

What had been metaphorically understood by the word wall is now more plainly expressed. The ceremonies, by which the distinction was declared, have been abolished through Christ. What were circumcision, sacrifices, washings and abstaining from certain kinds of food, but symbols of sanctification, reminding the Jews that their lot was different from that of other nations; . . . Paul declares not only that the Gentiles are equally with the Jews admitted to the fellowship of grace, so that they no longer differ from each other, but that the mark of difference has been taken away; for ceremonies have been abolished. . . . It is evident, too, that Paul is here treating exclusively of the ceremonial law; for the moral law is not a wall of partition separating us from the Jews, but lays down instructions in which the Jews were not less deeply concerned than ourselves.⁴³

Ellicott supports the above view that τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασι where δόγμασι is rendered “ordinance” (according to the Biblical usage of Lk. 2:1; Acts 16:4; 17:7; Heb. 11:23) means a law imposed and accepted, not for its intrinsic righteousness, but on authority; or as Butler says, not a “moral” but a “positive law.”⁴⁴

In the light of the above exegesis, how can anyone accept Kelly’s charge that “the will of man has raked up the law of commandments out of the grave of Christ and enacts it over again”?

(f) The last verse used by Dispensationalists that shall be considered here is *Col. 2:14*: “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.” Of this text E. Schuyler English says:

. . . the handwriting of the ordinances refers to the Law, especially the Ten Commandments, written by the finger of God. The law was against us—it does not save, but condemns. However, this writing was blotted out, done away with. It was nailed to the Cross of Christ—and when He died, it died. It is no longer in operation, but has been superseded by the better sacrifice, that of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁴⁵

Albert Barnes does not agree with English that the handwriting is the Ten Commandments, but rather an allusion to a written contract which binds one to do any work, or to make a payment, and which remains in force until the bond is cancelled. In the Orient, the practice of cancelling is to drive a nail through it, and the Jewish ceremonial law, now abrogated, is so metaphorically portrayed.⁴⁶

Calvin concurs fully with this exegesis of Col. 2:14, adding, "Some think that Paul speaks simply of the moral law, but there is no ground for this. For Paul is accustomed to give the name of *ordinances* to that department which consists in ceremonies, as he does in the Epistle to the Ephesians (Eph. 2:15) and as we shall find him shortly afterwards."

Truly, all the above views are substantiated by the Apostle himself in Col. 2:16, where he enumerates some of those ordinances which should no longer bind believers today: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." No mention whatsoever is made against the Ten Commandments. Instead, we find that the authority of the Decalogue is appealed to in those "practical" sections of Paul's Epistles where the problems of the very real and wayward carnality of the saved man, in daily down-to-earth living, are discussed.⁴⁷ As Joshua in the allegorical Land of Victorious Living is commanded to recite the Law on Mount Ebal to "all the congregation of Israel, with the women and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them"⁴⁸ so Paul is constrained by the Holy Spirit to repeat the same to the Church of this age, which, some suppose, is seated once for all way up in the heavenlies, her feet never touching the earth.

6. Appeal to the Teaching of Jesus

With the opposite views on the last Scripture passage finally presented, this chapter on "A Brief Survey of the Dispensational View of the Law of Moses" is concluded. Although it has been shown how Dispensational hermeneu-

tics has determined the total “segregation” of the Mosaic Law from the Gospel Dispensation, resulting in keeping out the Decalogue from the Christian Church; and although many authorities have been cited against the Dispensational View, the purpose of this thesis is rather to find the solution from the lips of Jesus Himself. This is not to say that the Epistles are less authoritative than the Gospels, by any means. The motive of this procedure, as announced in the Preface, is prompted by our Lord’s fuller treatment of the subject, by which He also established the theology of the Apostles, insofar as the law was concerned. Perhaps, a logical development of hearing from our Lord should be a hearing of the immediate witnesses in the Catholic Epistles.

A fresh study of the teaching of Jesus on the Law of Moses should throw some rays of light on much misunderstanding which enshrouds fundamental Christian thinking today on the subject of “Law and Grace.” For, interwoven with the warp and woof of the Decalogue is a maze of modern concepts, concerning, e.g., the Sabbath, Tithing, and even the Psalms, the Bible of the Bible, all so vital to a healthy church life—spun by sincere men, no doubt, but which are wrought not according to the heavenly pattern. May this be the prayer of both writer and reader that the Spirit of all Truth will interpret for them what they hear from the Master.

NOTES

¹ *Loc. cit.*, p. 11. Cf. “The Dispensations,” *Doctrinal Statement, Bulletin of Dallas Theological Seminary*, 1956, p. 69.

² Arno C. Gaebelien, *The Annotated Bible*, Vol. I, p.

* Numerals ours.

³ L. S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 8 vols. (Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), Vol. IV, p. 234.

⁴ *Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 1241.

⁵ Gaebelien, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

⁶ Patrick Fairbairn, *The Revelation of Law in Scripture* (Zondervan, ed. of 1957), p. 30.

⁷ *Constitution of the Bible Presbyterian Church, op. cit.*, p. 24.

⁸ Philip Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom* (New York: Harper Bros., 1877), Vol. III, p. 93ff.

⁹ J. N. Darby, “Presbyterianism” in *Collected Writings*, Vol. XIV, p. 525. Cf. Allis, *op. cit.*

¹⁰ Robert C. McQuilkin, *God's Law and God's Grace* (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1958), p. 30.

¹¹ L. S. Chafer, *Dispensationalism*, p. 96.

¹² *Form of Government of the Bible Presbyterian Church*, Chap. I. Obtainable from Christian Beacon, Collingswood, N. J.

¹³ "Doctrinal Statement," *Constitution of the International Council of Christian Churches*, Singel 386, Amsterdam C, Netherlands.

¹⁴ L. S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. IV, p. 240.

¹⁵ Alexander Souter, *Novum Testamentum Graece* (2nd ed.; *John* (London: Pickering & Inglis), p. 19.

¹⁶ Philip Schaff, *The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*; (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), Vol. VII, p. 23.

¹⁷ *DeSp. and Lit.*, Sec. XIX; Cf. Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

¹⁸ Chafer, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

¹⁹ H. A. Ironside, *Galatians* (Loizeaux Bros.), p. 127.

²⁰ L. Berkhof, *op. cit.*, p. 614; Cf. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, Vol. II, p. 562.

²¹ Gal. 6: 13; Cf. Acts 15: 1.

²² Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1948), p. 18.

²³ Gal. 5: 13f; Matt. 22: 39.

²⁴ Calvin, *op. cit.*, p. 109f.

²⁵ Rom. 3: 31.

²⁶ Ps. 19: 7, 8.

²⁷ Ps. 19: 9b-11.

²⁸ C. H. Mackintosh, "A Scriptural Inquiry as to the Sabbath, the Law, and Christian Ministry" *Misc. Writings* (New York: Loizeaux Bros., 8th printing, 1951), Vol. III, p. 10f.

²⁹ Martin Luther, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Zondervan), p. 93. Cf. C. Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub Co., 1953), p. 246.

³⁰ Rom. 7: 12.

³¹ Rom. 7: 25; John 15: 10.

³² C. H. R. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Romans* (Wartburg Press, 1945), p. 456.

³³ L. S. Chafer, *Grace* (The Bible Institute Colportage Assoc., 1933), p. 228f.

³⁴ Matt. 21: 44.

³⁵ Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics* (Zondervan), p. 186.

³⁶ II Pet. 3: 16.

³⁷ I Cor. 2: 13b.

* Underscoring ours.

³⁸ Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Corinthians*, Vol. II, p. 179; Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 185.

³⁹ William Kelly (London: G. Morrish), p. 107.

⁴⁰ *Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 1244.

⁴¹ *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, chap. xix, *op cit.*

⁴² Acts 15: 19f.

⁴³ Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, p. 237f.

⁴⁴ Charles John Ellicott, *The Epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians and Philippians* (Cassell & Co. Ltd.), p. 161.

⁴⁵ E. Schuyler English, *Studies in the Epistles to the Colossians* (Pub. Office "Our Hope"), p. 77.

⁴⁶ Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Epistles of Paul to the Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians* (New York: Harper Bros.), p. 304.

⁴⁷ Rom. 7: 7; 13: 9.

⁴⁸ Josh. 8: 35.

CHAPTER III

THE DISPENSATIONAL VIEW OF THE TEACHING OF JESUS

1. Dispensational Hermeneutics and the Teaching of Jesus

The appeal to Jesus immediately poses a problem, for the reader will soon discover that the Dispensationalists cannot view the teaching of Jesus without their tinted lenses. In so doing, they will be shown to form a perspective of Christ's Word focused mainly under the Law. According to the yardstick of Dispensational hermeneutics, the teaching of Jesus must be ruled out of any direct application to the Christian Church. His teaching, they say, is for the Jews, rather than for Christians; for the Temple, rather than for the Church! The Sermon on the Mount is "intensified" law, not grace; for the Millennial Kingdom, not for the Gospel Dispensation.

2. Scofield's View on the Teaching of Jesus

Thus, in the introduction to "The Four Gospels," in his Reference Bible, Scofield presents the Dispensational status of the teaching of Jesus in the following words:

The mission of Jesus was, primarily, to the Jews (Mt. 10.5, 6; 15.23–25; John 1.11). He was "made under the law" (Gal. 4:4), and was "a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (Rom. 15.8), and to fulfill the law that grace might flow out.

Expect, therefore, a strong legal and Jewish colouring up to the cross (e.g. Mt. 5.17–19; 6.12; cf. Eph. 4.32, Mt. 10.5, 6; 15.22–28; Mk. 1.44; Mt. 23.2, etc.). The Sermon on the Mount is law, not grace, for it demands as the condition of blessing (Mt. 5.3–9) that perfect character which grace, through divine power, creates (Gal. 5.22, 23).¹

In another place in the same Reference Bible, Scofield goes on to stretch the "time-period" of the Dispensation of

Law to the point of the Crucifixion:

This dispensation extends from Sinai to Calvary—from the Exodus to the Cross. The history of Israel in the wilderness and in the land is one long record of the violation of the law. The testing of the nation by law ended in the judgment of the Captivities, but the dispensation itself ended at the Cross.²

By what scriptural authority does Scofield determine the Dispensation of Law to extend to the Cross? What about the opinion of Cocceius, whom D. H. Kromminga calls “the father of dispensationalism,” that the legal dispensation terminates at the Incarnation?³ Are the durations of dispensations to be determined arbitrarily by the whims of men, or by the Word of God?

Now, if the Dispensationalists will recall their favourite text, “For the law was given by Moses, [but] grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,” and if this is the divine commentary on the coming of a new age by the Forerunner pointing to the World-Saviour, will they not have to refute Scofield for extending the Dispensation of Law beyond the limitation of their own proof text?

With grace freely flowing from Jordan’s bank, as living waters to the woman of Samaria, as food and drink to the spiritually hungry five thousand, as streams of healing light upon the festering passions of an adulterous generation,⁴ and of His fulness have we received even today through the Gospels, what a jangling of God’s harmonious Word it is for Scofield to comment, “The *doctrines* of grace are to be sought in the Epistles, not in the Gospels!”⁵

It is tearfully submitted that this arbitrary, Scofieldic method of Judaizing Christ, for the sake of fitting Him into some man-made, compartmentalized theology, is contrary to Christ’s dispensational teaching. In Lk. 16:16, Jesus declares, “The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.”⁶ Commenting further on the dispensational status of John’s work, the Master reiterates that the Dispensation of Law terminates in the Forerunner, “And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.”⁷ What theological language could be clearer than this, “The

law and the prophets were until John... For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John"? If the law and the prophets were until John, then it could not intrude an inch into the ministry of Him who is "full of grace and truth." Then it is impossible for the law to extend, as Scofield fancies, to the point of the Cross.

John A. Broadus takes the plain sense of our Lord's statement, quoting Athanasius. When he refers to the Dispensation of Law, Broadus says:

... but this period of prophecy ended in the coming of the new Elijah in the person of John, who was at once the predictor of the kingdom of heaven, and the first preacher of it; and now the good news of the reign of the Messiah is made known (Luke 16:16), and men are pressing into it with violence. Athanasius: "Up to John the law; from him the gospel."⁸

Indeed, Athanasius is right in this keener perception. Precisely speaking, both Law and Gospel met in the person and work of John, and it is debatable that the so-called Dispensation of Grace was officially ushered in when John cried, "Behold, the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

Albert Barnes speaks even more incisively on Matt. 11:13, "It is meant by this verse that John introduced a new dispensation; and that the old one, where the prophets and the law of Moses were the guide, was closed when he preached that the kingdom of heaven was at hand."⁹

It is unnecessary to further inquire into other human authorities. The words of our Lord decide once for all the question. "The law and prophets were until John."

The vital significance of showing the Dispensation of Law to end at the River Jordan instead of Calvary is the restoration of the Four Gospels as our Lord's magna charta for His Church. For, by teaching that the Gospels have "a strong legal and Jewish colouring up to the Cross"¹⁰ and that "the Gospels do not unfold the doctrine of the Church,"¹¹ the heart of the Bible becomes enmeshed in the fat of dispensational imagination. The Gospels are consigned "primarily to the Jews!" How impoverished dispensational preaching must be to deprive itself of drinking freely from the fountain of Grace—the life and teaching of our Lord

and Saviour Jesus Christ.

3. The Postponed Kingdom Theory

Yet, the freeing of the Gospels at this stage is not totally complete, for the Dispensationalists have set up a second barrier. All that earlier portion of Matthew to Chapter 11:27, they say, is not applicable to the Church, because this section is “Kingdom Teaching.”¹² This leads us now to consider a most peculiar doctrine of the Dispensationalists, viz., “The Postponed Kingdom Theory.”

Jesse Wilson Hodges, a recent critic of Dispensationalism, describes this theory as follows:

Throughout the early part of Jesus’ public ministry He preached the kingdom of heaven as the political kingdom of Israel, and offered Himself in all good faith to Israel as her earthly king. If the Lord’s offer had been accepted, He would then and there have restored the throne of David, and would have begun an earthly reign in Jerusalem. This restoration would have been in literal fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah and in strict accord with the national hopes of Israel.

The call to repentance which John the Baptist and Jesus stressed in early New Testament days was a call for national repentance only, and had nothing to do with the gospel of grace.

After Christ’s Kingdom offer was rejected by the Jews and the kingdom was consequently postponed, He changed His message to that of the “kingdom of heaven in mystery form.” This new preaching began with the seven parables of Jesus in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, and shows how the kingdom, during the present age, will be thoroughly corrupted by evil elements.”¹³

To have a first hand picture of the Postponed Kingdom Theory, it may be profitable to quote from the pen of two Dispensational writers.

Clarence Larkin, author of *Dispensational Truth or God’s Plan and Purpose in the Ages*, propounds the theory with greater fervour by tracing it back to creation, through the kings, judges and patriarchs:

It is clear from the Scriptures that God has been trying to

set up a “visible” Kingdom on this earth ever since the creation of man, to whom He gave dominion. . . . In the “Call” of Abraham God took the first step toward the setting up of a “visible” Kingdom on this earth, which assumed an outward form in the “Jewish Commonwealth,” under Moses, and during the administration of Moses, Joshua, the Elders that outlived Joshua, the Judges, David, Solomon, the kings of Israel and Judah down to the Babylonish Captivity, God reigned through these men under the form of a “Theocracy.” . . .

But when 600 years of the “Times of the Gentiles” had run their course, God again made the attempt to set up His Kingdom on the earth, and the angel Gabriel announced to Mary the birth of the King. Luke 1:26–33.

Thirty years later the King’s forerunner, John the Baptist, announced that the Kingdom was “at hand” (Matt. 3:1,2); and when the king manifested Himself to Israel, He Himself made the same announcement, (Matt. 4:17-23), and later He sent out the “Twelve” (Matt. 10:7), and the “Seventy” to proclaim the same thing. Luke 10:1–9.¹⁴

Speaking again about the earthly aspect and mission of the earthly ministry of Jesus in opposition to the heavenly and spiritual, Larkin argues in another place from the message of the king’s herald, “Prepare ye the way of the Lord”:

Prepare the way of the Lord for what? Not for the “Cross” but the “Kingdom.” John’s message had no meaning to those who heard him and were looking for the setting up of the “Messianic Kingdom,” if he did not mean by the “Kingdom of Heaven” an outward and visible earthly Kingdom.¹⁵

With regard to this Kingdom Theory, it is shown how Larkin has positively contended for its first part, viz., the offer of a political, earthly kingdom by both the Forerunner and the Christ. In the following quotation, Scofield tells of its rejection, leading to the Postponement:

The kingdom of heaven announced as “at hand” by John the Baptist, by the King Himself, and by the twelve, and attested by mighty works, has been *morally* rejected. The places chosen for the testing of the nation, Chorazin, Bethsaida, etc., having rejected both John and Jesus . . . the rejected King now turns from the rejecting *nation* and offers, not the *Kingdom*, but *rest* and *service* to such

in the nation as are conscious of need. It is a pivotal point in the ministry of Jesus.¹⁶

Thus, Scofield alleges that in the chapters leading up to Matt. 11:27, Jesus offered a political, earthly kingdom. At this point the King was “morally” rejected. The Kingdom’s fulfillment was thereby postponed and henceforth Jesus switched to a spiritual message, offering “rest and service” to individuals who needed it. This is the Postponed Kingdom Theory in a nutshell.

Such a theory, insofar as this thesis is concerned, incapacitates the first eleven chapters of Matthew as being a part of the teaching of Jesus for the Church. This, of course, hinders the appeal to Jesus, with regard to His verdict on the Law of Moses, and the Psalms. In order to liberate this vital portion of Christian truth from the Dispensationalists’ “Second barrier,” it will be necessary to prove that:

- a. John the Baptist did not herald a political, earthly kingdom.
- b. Christ did not offer a political, earthly kingdom.
- c. The “kingdom of heaven” that Christ preached was not a political, earthly kingdom.

As a premillennialist, the writer believes in the personal return of our Lord to restore peace and justice to this earth. In this respect, the coming reign of Christ will be a political, earthly kingdom.¹⁷ A greater than Solomon shall establish His capital in Jerusalem with celestial resplendence, dictators and presidents, communists and capitalists, east and west, all prostrating at His feet.¹⁸ It shall be a rule of benign force, the Crook holding sway as a rod of iron.¹⁹

a. The Non-Political Kingdom Aspect of John the Baptist’s Message

Now, if John the Baptist was truly a herald of Christ’s earthly rule, why did he not base his message on the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament? Why did he not introduce Christ by His more proper regal title, “The Lion of the Tribe of Juda”²⁰ rather than as “the lamb of God that

taketh away the sin of the world”?

The message of John the Baptist is recorded in Matthew, Luke, and John. A careful study of the three accounts fails to reveal an iota of reference to Christ’s kingly office. On the other hand, the introduction of Christ as “the lamb of God,” so clear a message of salvation to the pious Jews, was to be received also by the whole world. John’s message was not nationalistic as Larkin asserted but universal, yet it was directed to the individual heart. He demanded repentance, confession of sins and faith from each one of his hearers, whether Pharisee or publican. John’s message was a warning of eternal judgment, hellfire for those who rejected the sin-bearing Saviour. His message was truly revival-evangelistic, and may be called the prototype of all future “fundamental hellfire preaching.”

The remarks of Jesse W. Hodges at this point are similar:

If Jesus actually came to preach a political message as the Dispensationalists claim, then it is evident that John missed the mark entirely in his introductory ministry (Luke 3:3–9,16,17). For he stressed only spiritual matters—repentance, faith, baptism and a changed life—as he prepared the way of the Lord before Him.²¹

What a plain, sensible, evangelical theology is presented by the simple Gospels, in contrast with the complicated, dispensational rabbinism of Clarence Larkin and C. I. Scofield.

The surest commentary on John’s ministry, whether he be precursor of the Messianic Kingdom, or of the Gospel of Saving Grace, is to be found in the canticle of Zacharias which is known as the Benedictus:

And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.²²

In the light of this evangelistic aspect of John’s career and message, which was to turn sinners in darkness to the Dayspring from on high, the Dispensational view of a herald to Christ’s earthly kingdom becomes untenable.

b. The Non-Political Kingdom Aspect of Jesus' Message

With respect to Jesus' alleged postponement of the Kingdom at Matt. 11:27, it is to be noted that the same verse in Scofield's *Harmony of the Life of Christ*²³ chronologically "covers" Mk. 3:19, Lk. 7:35 and Jn. 5:47. To show that Christ did not offer a political kingdom, it is therefore not necessary to inquire beyond these verses.

A good method of investigating whether Jesus offered a political, earthly kingdom to the Jews is to study the first message he preached for, like any other inaugural message, that was bound to reveal the purpose and mission of the speaker. The first recorded message of the early ministry of Jesus is the sermon to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. If the mission of Jesus was the offer of an earthly kingdom, here was a golden opportunity to reveal his plan to one most qualified to receive it. Instead, the words that Jesus imparted have become the beacon of the Gospel message, for from this chapter is radiated the rays of salvation in the best-known verse of the Bible, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." An analysis of the message of Jesus to Nicodemus shows his emphasis on:

- (i) a spiritual rebirth to qualify for entry into the kingdom.
- (ii) a salvation plan that extends to the whole world.
- (iii) a suffering Saviour bestowing grace upon all men.

It is not a nationalistic message, but a spiritual one, a full exposition of what was preached first by John, "Behold the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." The theme is not the throne, but the cross: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."²⁴ Does Scofield expect "a strong legal and Jewish colouring" in this inaugural speech of the Lamb of God?

The message of John Four to the Samaritan woman further substantiates John Three. If Christ's mission was the revival of an earthly Israelite kingdom, why did He go out of His way to speak to an outcaste woman of Samaria, and later, with her, to a whole city? It is to be noted that the

message in Samaria, while demanding repentance as a condition of life, abolished Jerusalem as the centre of worship²⁵—a truly evangelical emphasis, quite contrary to the alleged Messianic Constitution.²⁶

John Five again offers a spiritual message which warns of eternal damnation, but offers resurrection and life to those who believe in Him. The famous text from Jn. 5:24, one of seven red-lined verses by the Pocket Testament League in its Million Testaments Campaign of soul-winning, should be noted, “Verily, verily I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.”

There is not much by way of sermons in Mark for this study. Luke contains two relevant passages, but since Lk. 6:20–47 will be treated under the Sermon on the Mount, only Lk. 4:16–30 demands our attention.

The message of Luke Four is Jesus’ first sermon preached at Nazareth from Isa. 61:1,2. Again, no clue to an earthly kingdom is to be found, but rather faith as a qualification for grace. When our Lord contrarily cited the Gentile examples of faith from the Old Testament, viz., the widow of Sarepta and Naaman the Syrian, He was thrust out of the city. Were it not for His omniscience, He would have been dashed headlong down the cliffs, at the murderous hands of the Jews. It may be put to Scofield concerning his rejection theory, “Why do you not fix the rejection of the King at this breaking point of the Messianic tension?”

The Non-Political Kingdom Aspect of the Sermon on the Mount

The Sermon on the Mount is treated by the Dispensationalists at length. All are agreed it is not for the Church, but for the Kingdom. James M. Gray calls it “the Constitution of His Kingdom”:

The Sermon on the Mount is distinctively Jewish, and describes, as has been said, the character of the citizens of the earthly kingdom which the Messiah came to set up. It assumes a class of people already saved, regenerated and in fellowship with their king. This the Jews were not in Christ’s time, and are not today, and will not be spoken of by the prophets, whence the “remnant” will come forth

purified. (see the last chapter of Malachi.) It was because Jesus laid down and insisted upon such a holy standard as this that His people rejected and crucified Him. They were looking for a political restoration of their kingdom, but refused submission to the moral restoration which must precede it.²⁷

Likewise, Scofield designates the Sermon on the Mount to be “literally” applied to the Kingdom:

In this sense it gives the divine constitution for the righteous government of the earth. Whenever the kingdom of heaven is established on earth it will be according to that constitution, which may be regarded as an explanation of the word “righteousness” as used by the prophets in describing the kingdom (e.g. Isa. 11.4,5; 32.1; Dan 9.24). In this sense the Sermon on the Mount is pure law, and transfers the offence from the overt act to the motive (Matt. 5.21,22,27,28). Here lies the deeper reason why the Jews rejected the kingdom.²⁸

In order to examine whether or not the Sermon on the Mount is “the constitution of His Kingdom” it is proposed to ask the following questions:

- i) Do the earthly conditions portrayed in the Sermon on the Mount coincide with those of the Old Testament prophecies of the Messianic reign?
- ii) Did the apostles’ knowledge of the Christ support the view that the Sermon on the Mount is the Constitution of the Kingdom?
- iii) Did Jesus’ comments on the nature of the kingdom support the view that the Sermon on the Mount is the Constitution of the Kingdom?

In answer to Question 1, note three of the most well known kingdom passages, viz., Isaiah Eleven, Amos Nine, and Micah Four, and suffice that it be shown that the earthly conditions as visualized in these Scriptures are those of universal peace and security:

1) Isaiah 11:3,4,9: And his delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked... They shall not hurt nor

destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.
.....

2) *Amos 9:13-15*: Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring back the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith Jehovah thy God.
.....

3) *Micah 4:3-5*: And he will judge between many peoples, and will decide concerning strong nations afar off: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of Jehovah of hosts hath spoken it. For all the peoples walk everyone in the name of his god; and we will walk in the name of Jehovah our God for ever and ever.²⁹

These Scriptures offer a far more idealistic utopia than man today is vainly striving to build. It is a state of perfect universal peace, to be ushered in by the return of the Prince of Peace to earth. That such a kingdom should have the Sermon on the Mount, addressed to an imperfect society, as its constitution, is quite incongruous.

For the state of perfect universal peace as portrayed in the three prophetic passages is nowhere obtainable in the Sermon on the Mount. The fact that the Master finds it necessary to exhort meekness presupposes arrogance, peacemaking quarrels, patience to persecution, anti-Christian accusations and arrests. Then, if the so-called Constitution be given for Christ's earthly government, why does it yet teach its citizens to pray for "Thy kingdom come" in the Lord's Prayer? What kingdom is it to be ushered in after Christ's reign? Will there be two earthly millenniums? In persuading His subjects to bank up their money in Heaven from the outreach of thieves, does not the King admit trouble in His perfect reign? Does this not refute the

golden predictions of “everyman under his vine and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid”? Finally, but by no means exhaustive, it should be observed that the Constitution legislates against false prophets, certainly most unthinkable in a Messianic reign when the earth shall be “full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.”³⁰ How could the King be secure with such imposters undermining His authority?

In answer to Question 2, “Did the apostles’ knowledge of the Christ support the view that the Sermon on the Mount is the Constitution of the Kingdom,” it will be shown that the apostles did not preach “the Christ,” which title, Scofield admits, means, “the covenanted King” to the Jews.³¹ Now, if there never was any announcement by the King’s heralds of a “covenanted King,” where was the logical necessity of a Constitution for the kingdom?

That the apostle Peter probably displayed no full knowledge of Jesus as “the Christ” until Caesarea Philippi is attested by his “encounter” with Jesus and the Master’s reply. From the context of the sacred record, the same might be said of the rest of the Apostolic College:

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.³²

Notice Jesus’ answer to Peter at this point: “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” Peter’s full knowledge of the Person of his Master as the Christ, “the covenanted King” according to Scofield, came at or about this time as a revelation from heaven. If the apostles were commissioned from the beginning to preach a Messianic earthly kingdom, they should have recognized the identity of the ruler of that kingdom. From Peter’s late revelation and Jesus’ first commendation of his confession, it was not likely that Peter had consciously heralded Christ as “the covenanted King” before this time.

If there was no message of an earthly king, where was the need of a Kingdom Constitution? The conception of the

masses about Christ, not as the Messianic King but as one of the prophets,³³ further corroborates this interpretation. If indeed the apostles heralded Christ as king, then they had failed miserably in their homiletic assignments.

However, Scofield boldly asserts in his footnote to Peter's confession, "The disciples had been proclaiming Jesus as the Christ, i.e. the covenanted King of a kingdom promised to the Jews, and at hand."³⁴ In reply to this assertion, it is admitted that John's Gospel does record earlier confessions made by the apostles. Andrew witnessed to his brother Simon, "We have found the Messias." Philip told Nathanael, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael, being impressed by Jesus' omniscience, called his newfound Master, "the Son of God, the King of Israel."³⁵ Yet Jesus did not commend the three for their faith. To Nathanael, He remarked, "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you (ὅμῶν [*humin*], note the plural, i.e. to all the apostles), Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

Edersheim, quoting Godet and Westcott, says of these earliest disciples:

As yet they were only followers, learners, not yet called to be apostles, with all of entire renunciation of home, family, and other calling which this implied. This, in the course of proper development, remained to quite another period. Alike their knowledge and their faith for the present needed and could only bear, the call to personal attachment.³⁶

And though Edersheim commends Nathanael for his guileless faith, he critically observes:

And yet that painful path of slower learning to enduring conviction must still be trodden, whether in the sufferings of the heart or the struggle of the mind. This it is which seems implied in the half-sad question of the Master yet with full view of the final triumph ('thou shalt see greater things than these').³⁷

In other words, the apostles at this time were not much better than the common crowd of whom John tells us in the

next chapter, “. . . many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew *all* men.”³⁸ This divine commentary appended so close to the early confessions of the apostles seems to confirm Edersheim’s view of Jesus’ non-commitment to their protestations. Did not Peter, nearing the day of graduation from Christ’s Seminary, pledge to die for the Master? Jesus’ reply was, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.”³⁹ Similarly, our Lord revealed the deceitfulness of the hearts of the other disciples, “Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone. . . .”⁴⁰

The other occasion prior to Caesarea Philippi, when an apostolic confession of Jesus’ Messiahship was made, was after the feeding of the five thousand. When the crowd dispersed because it resented Jesus’ “hard saying,” Peter, as usual, stepped forward to assure his Master, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”⁴¹ Once again we find a reticent Lord. The divine commentary in this context is, “For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.”⁴² Although the one who betrayed our Lord was not Peter but Judas Iscariot, the divine silence over Peter’s confession, and the anti-climax to which the sacred record quickly descends, seems to hint a meaningful reserve.

Did not the five thousand after the feeding say, “This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world”?⁴³ But the divine weighing of the substance of that noble declaration was, “From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.”⁴⁴

It is to be noted that according to Scofield’s Cyclopedic Concordance, Peter’s confession following the feeding of the five thousand was about ten months after Christ’s alleged “Postponement of the Kingdom” at Matthew 11:27.⁴⁵ To admit, for the sake of an argument *ad Scofieldem* that Peter at this juncture fully knew Jesus as “the covenanted King,” would in no way prejudice the position of this thesis.

With regard to Question 3, “Did Jesus’ comments on the nature of the kingdom support the view that the Sermon on

the Mount is the Constitution of the Kingdom, let, first of all, His charge to the twelve before the alleged Kingdom proclamation speak for itself: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace but a sword."⁴⁶ Remember, this is chronologically before Matt. 11:27, the alleged pivotal point of the ministry of Jesus. To hand a weapon of war to the king's messengers, at the outset of its presentation, surely dispels any illusion of a peaceful earthly kingdom. Even near the close of that commission, when such politically ambitious disciples as Zebedee's sons sought premiership in the Messianic Government, Jesus had to admonish them for their gross error. This sword, which is none other than the offensive theme of the Cross—not the Throne—stood out in Jesus' ministry from the day of his Nativity,⁴⁷ and was never retracted by the Heavenly Hand for a moment until the mission was "finished."

The two Emmaus disciples entertained the same Scofieldic fancy for an earthly Messianic kingdom. John W. Sanderson interprets their hope that "He should have redeemed Israel" to refer "not to the expiation of sins, but to the rescuing of the people from under the Roman yoke and the consequent establishment of the prophesied theocracy."⁴⁸ Alford, Olshausen and J. C. Ryle concur with Sanderson at this point. Hence, Jesus had to admonish them, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" The Cross first, afterwards the Throne! Christ never possessed the keener perception of the Dispensationalists to see an introductory Postponed Kingdom, hidden in the Old Testament.

Christ's non-Postponed Kingdom view is further corroborated by Peter's message after Pentecost, "But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled." Immediately following the message of the Cross, Peter presents the Throne, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."⁴⁹ Quoting Heinrich A. W. Meyer, Scofield admits the times of refreshing following Christ's crucifixion are "seasons in which, through the appearance of the Messiah in His kingdom, there shall occur blessed rest and refreshment for the people of God."⁵⁰

Since it is shown how Jesus has consistently presented that Cross before the Throne in the order of his kingdom message, it is difficult to see how the Sermon on the Mount could fit into the pattern as “the Constitution of the Kingdom.”

c. *The Non-Political Kingdom Aspect of the Kingdom of Heaven*

The last and final obstacle to remove from hampering the appeal to Jesus is the Dispensational interpretation of the “kingdom of heaven.” According to *Unger’s Bible Dictionary* the “kingdom of heaven” is a term:

... descriptive of any type of rulership God may assert on the earth (Acts 1:6) and is the subject of extended glowing prophecies in the Old Testament As a covenanted kingdom, the kingdom becomes the national hope of Israel (II Sam. 7:4–17). John the Baptist, Christ and the Apostles announced the kingdom unto National Israel as “at hand.”⁵¹

Thus the Dispensationalists regard the kingdom of heaven to be a revived, earthly Israelite kingdom which Christ offered to the nation at the very outset. They also regard it as a different sphere of activity from the kingdom of God. In making the distinction *Unger’s Bible Dictionary* further says:

The kingdom of God is evidently a more comprehensive term than “the kingdom of heaven” and embraces all created intelligences both in heaven and on earth who are willingly subject to God and thus fellowship with him.⁵²

In other words, the kingdom of heaven is restricted to a nationalistic earthly realm, while the Kingdom of God, being essentially spiritual, comprehends both heaven and earth.

So far as this thesis is concerned, it is to be noted that all the teaching of our Lord given in the context of the kingdom of heaven is dispensationally disqualified for the Church. This prejudices the solution to our problem, which is, to discover the verdict of the teaching of Jesus on the Law of Moses, etc. The burden of inquiry immediately following is therefore to show that the kingdom of heaven is not the revived earthly Israelite kingdom. Now, the Dispensationalists are agreed that the Kingdom of God is a spiritual realm.

Therefore, if it be demonstrated that the kingdom of heaven is synonymous with the kingdom of God, then the former is delivered from its dispensational limitation, and Christ's teaching on the Law of Moses, etc., in its context, must primarily and effectually apply to the Church.

In the closing verses of the Acts of the Apostles, Luke climaxes the life story of the missionary to the Gentiles in these words, "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, *Preaching the kingdom of God*, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."⁵³ It is evident from this statement that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is equated with the message of the kingdom of God. So the New Testament uses the word "kingdom" about two hundred times in connection with the Christian messages or the hope of that message. Of these two hundred "kingdom" references, there are some sixty-five with either the term, "kingdom of heaven," or "kingdom of God."⁵⁴ It is observed that the term, "kingdom of heaven," is employed exclusively in Matthew, while "kingdom of God" is used a few times in Matthew and throughout the rest of the New Testament.

Now, a harmony study of the gospels⁵⁵ will reveal that, instance after instance, both terms are employed to describe the same subject, in the same circumstances. This may be done by comparing the following parallel passages:

1. Matthew 4:17 = Mark 1:15
2. Matthew 5:3 = Luke 6:20
3. Matthew 11:11 = Luke 7:28
4. Matthew 10:7 = Luke 8:10
5. Matthew 13:11 = Luke 18:16
6. Matthew 19:14 = Luke 18:16
7. Matthew 19:23 = Luke 18:24

It is quite unnecessary to enter into a detailed study of these parallel passages except to tabulate together the first three, whereby Scripture, "comparing spiritual things with spiritual" will speak for itself.

1st Parallel

Matthew 4: 12,17

Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee. . . . From that time Jesus began to preach and say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Mark 1: 14,15

Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye and believe the gospel.

2nd Parallel

Matthew 5:3

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

Luke 6:20

Blessed be ye poor: for your's is the kingdom of God.

3rd Parallel

Matthew 11:11

Verily I say unto you, Among them that be born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Luke 7:28

For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

What have the Dispensationalists to give for an answer to these mutually corroborative Scriptures? *Unger's Bible Dictionary* says:

The kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven, as Lewis Sperry Chafer points out, are not identical despite the fact that "Matthew employs the terminology of the kingdom of heaven" and Mark and Luke, when presenting practically the same teaching, employ the term "kingdom of God." According to Scripture the "children of the kingdom" may be taken out (Matt. 8:12; 24:50,51; 25:28-30). This fact cannot be applied to the kingdom of God and its members (John 3:18). The parable of the wheat and the tares (Matt. 13:34-30, 36-43) and that of the good and bad fish (Matt. 13:47-50), are spoken only of the kingdom of heaven. The parable of leaven, however, (Matt. 13:33; Luke 13:21) is applied to both kingdoms. "Leaven represents evil doctrine rather than evil persons, and evil doctrine may and does corrupt both kingdoms."⁵⁶

It must be pointed out that Lewis Sperry Chafer, as do other Dispensationalists, have made much of these Matth-

aeon parables to evade the unanswerable logic of the seven parallel passages. If as the Dispensationalists say, the two terms refer to two different things, then they must admit that the three parallel passages above describe two different kingdoms. Then all the harmonies ever made of the Gospels by learned Christian scholars are disharmonious at these points, while Christ could perform the impossible miracle of preaching two kingdoms in the same breath. Note that the three parallel passages quoted above are taken from before Matt. 11:27, that is to say, before Christ's alleged pivotal change from offering a political, earthly kingdom to a spiritual one. According to previous Dispensational arguments at this point, the kingdom of God in Mark One and Luke Five and Seven must be equated with Matthew's kingdom of heaven, which they also deny. This self-contradiction, of course, scuttles the whole kingdom of heaven theory.

Thus, it is not the burden of this thesis to answer Chafer on the Matthaean parables. For, the Dispensationalists have not first discharged their responsibility of answering the testimony of the seven parallel passages.

The admission by Erich Sauer, an eminent German Dispensationalist, that the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God are synonymous, is worthy of full quotation:

Before the time of John the Baptist the Jews had already spoken of the kingdom of heaven. They called it *malekut haschamayim* [מַלְכוּת הַשָּׁמַיִם]⁵⁷ (kingdom of the heavens), and understood by this the rule of God over all created beings, especially His kingly rule over Israel, particularly the glorious kingdoms of Messiah at the end of history. As says the Talmud: "If anyone as he prays places his hand before his face he takes upon himself the yoke of the kingdom of heaven." Again the Targum of Jonathan on Micah 4:7 reads: "When at Sinai Israel accepted the book of the law, it accepted with it the law of the kingdom of heaven." "The kingdom of heaven will be manifested on Mount Zion." That the kingdom of heaven was called the kingdom of heaven was because the Jews, out of reverence for the holy name of Jehovah, transcribed this by such expression as "height," "name," "power," "heaven." Daniel had said: "the *heavens* rule" to indicate the sovereignty of *God*.

We may compare such Rabbinical expressions as "Ask

heaven for pardon," "love heaven and fear it," "sanctify the name of heaven," "heaven does wonders." This circumlocution for God's name had nothing to do with the insipid conceptions of modern unbelief regarding "heaven" and "Providence." The former arose from an intense, the latter from an indistinct idea of God.

Thus John the Baptist and Christ were not the first who spoke of the kingdom of heaven. Much rather they adopted the language of the Old Testament and of Judaism around them, filling the same expression with new meaning; as Luke 15:21: "Father, I have sinned against heaven (i.e., God), and before thee"; Matt. 21:25: "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven (i.e., God), or from men?"; Matt. 26:64: "Ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power" (i.e., of God). Therefore with the Lord the prevailing description of the kingdom of God is the kingdom of heaven.⁵⁸

With this scholarly testimony by a notable Dispensational teacher, the last obstacle to finding an authoritative verdict on the problem of this inquiry is removed. The Dispensational view of the Law of Moses, and the Psalms, what it is and how it affects the Christian rule of life, must now be scrutinized under the searchlight of the teaching of Jesus in the four Gospels, even as the Author of Truth declares in St. John, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."⁵⁹

NOTES

¹ *Scofield Reference Bible, op. cit.*, p. 989f.

² *Ibid.*, p. 94.

³ *Supra*, p. 4.

⁴ Jn. 4:14; 6:27; 8:12.

⁵ *Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 989.

⁶ Cf. Philip Mauro, *The Gospel of the Kingdom with an Examination of Modern Dispensationalism* (Boston: Hamilton Bros., 1928), p. 40.

⁷ Matt. 11:12ff.

⁸ John A. Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, An American Commentary on the New Testament ed. Alvah Hovey*, Vol. I, p. 242.

⁹ *Notes, Explanatory and Practical on the Gospels*, Vol. I (New York: Harper Bros.), p. 135.

¹⁰ *Scofield Reference Bible, Loc. cit.*

- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 990.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 1011.
- ¹³ Hodges, *op. cit.*, p. 36f.
- ¹⁴ Clarence Larkin, *Dispensational Truth, or God's Plan and Purpose in the Ages* (6th ed.; Phila., Pa.), p. 85.
- ¹⁵ Larkin, *Rightly Dividing the Word*, p. 51. Cf. Hodges, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
- ¹⁶ *Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 1011.
- ¹⁷ Zech. 14:9.
- ¹⁸ Zech. 14:16–21.
- ¹⁹ Ps. 2:9.
- ²⁰ Rev. 5:5.
- ²¹ Hodges, *op. cit.*, p. 115.
- ²² Lk. 1:76ff.
- ²³ *Scofield Reference Bible, Cyclopedic Concordance*, p. 41.
- ²⁴ Jn. 3:14f.
- ²⁵ Jn. 4:21.
- ²⁶ Isa. 2:2ff; 66:18ff.
- ²⁷ James M. Gray, *Synthetic Bible Studies* (New ed., Fleming H. Revell Co.), p. 193.
- ²⁸ *Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 999f.
- ²⁹ William E. Biederwolf, *The Millennium Bible* (The W. P. Blessing Co.).
- ³⁰ Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14.
- ³¹ *Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 1022.
- ³² Matt. 16:13–16.
- ³³ Matt. 16:14.
- ³⁴ *Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 1022.
- ³⁵ Jn. 1:35–51.
- ³⁶ Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (New American ed.; Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1945), Vol. I, p. 347f.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 350.
- ³⁸ Jn. 2:23f.
- ³⁹ Jn. 13:38.
- ⁴⁰ Jn. 16:31f. Cf. Edersheim, *op. cit.*, p. 350.
- ⁴¹ Jn. 6:68f.
- ⁴² Jn. 6:62.
- ⁴³ Jn. 6:14.
- ⁴⁴ Jn. 6:66.
- ⁴⁵ *Scofield Reference Bible, Cyclopedic Concordance*, p. 41.
- ⁴⁶ Matt. 10:34.
- ⁴⁷ Luke 2:35.
- ⁴⁸ John W. Sanderson, "Is the Sermon on the Mount for the Church?" *The Bible Today*, Vol. 39, No. 3, Dec., 1944, p. 63.
- ⁴⁹ Acts 3:18f.
- ⁵⁰ *Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 1152.
- ⁵¹ Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1957), p. 632.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*
- ⁵³ Acts 28:30,31; cf. 20:24,25.
- ⁵⁴ Hodges, *op. cit.*, p. 121.
- ⁵⁵ Edward Robinson, *Harmony of the Four Gospels in English* (17th ed.; Crocker and Brewster, 1857), p. 20ff.
- ⁵⁶ Unger, *op. cit.*, p. 632.
- ⁵⁷ Hebrew quoted from *Hebrew New Testament*, produced by Trinitarian Bible Society, London, for the Million Testaments Campaigns, 1505 Race St., Philadelphia.
- ⁵⁸ Erich Sauer, *The Triumph of the Crucified, A Survey of Historical Revelation in the New Testament*, trans. G. H. Lang (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1952), p. 22f.
- ⁵⁹ Jn. 8:32.

CHAPTER IV

**A FULLER SURVEY
OF THE DISPENSATIONAL VIEW
OF THE LAW OF MOSES**

Dispensationalists, as do Reformed theologians, recognize a three-fold giving of the Mosaic Law. It is comprised of:

- (a) the commandments (the moral law as summarized in the Decalogue),
- (b) the judgments (judicial laws),
- (c) the ordinances (ceremonial laws).¹

However, they regard these three as forming one complete and inseparable whole,² so that in the abrogation of the ceremonial and judicial laws under the so-called Dispensation of Grace, the Ten Commandments are simultaneously abolished. As pointed out in an earlier part of this thesis, the abrogation of the Ten Commandments by the Dispensationalists stands contrary to the historic position of the Creeds.³

1. Contrast Between the Ceremonial and Moral Laws

Now, if the Mosaic Law be considered one complete and inseparable whole, and abolished *in toto* with the passing of the Dispensation of Law, what necessity is there for the Dispensationalists to make such disparaging distinctions between the ceremonial and moral laws? An analysis of Scofield's writings shows a remarkably biased treatment between the two categories.

The ceremonial law is regarded as "the wonder and delight of the spiritually minded,"⁴ but the moral is, in Philip Mauro's observation, belittled and inveighed "in terms of strongest reprobation."⁵ This disparity between the ceremonial and moral laws may be best seen from Scofield's discussion in *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*. In respect of the ceremonial law he says:

It should be remembered also that in the ceremonial law are enshrined those marvellous types—the beautiful foreshadowings of the person and work of the Lord Jesus as Priest and Sacrifice, which must ever be the wonder and delight of the spiritually minded. Expressions in the Psalms which would be inexplicable if understood only of the “ministration of death written and engraven in stones” (2 Cor. 3:7) are made clear when seen to refer also to the types—those lovely pictures of grace:

“But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.” Ps.1:2.

“Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law is my delight.” Ps.119:77.

“Oh how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day.” Ps.119:97.⁶

The moral law on the other hand is, in fact, not so esteemed. It is treated rather like a hostile enemy under the following array of Scriptures:

“For *whosoever* shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” Jas. 2:10.

“The *ministration of death*, written and engraven in stones.” 2 Cor. 3:7.

“The *ministration of condemnation*.” 2 Cor. 3:9.

“For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived and I *died*.” Rom. 7:9.

“The strength of sin is the law.” 1 Cor. 15:56.

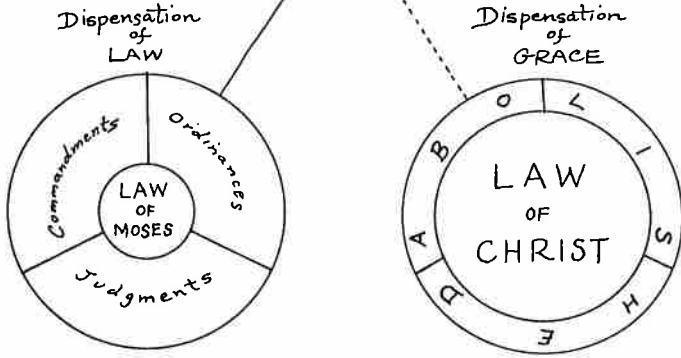
It is evident, then, that God’s purpose in giving the law, after the race had existed twenty-five hundred years without it (John 1:17; Gal. 3:17), was to bring to guilty man the knowledge of his sin, first, then of his helplessness in view of God’s just requirements. It is purely and only a ministration of condemnation and death.⁷

Concluding that the moral law is positively done away as a rule of life for the believer, Scofield sums up the discussion in these words: “It was reserved to modern nomolaters to wrench these holy and just but deathful tables from underneath the mercy-seat and the atoning blood, and erect them in Christian churches as the rule of Christian life.”⁸

2. Contrast Between the Moral Law and Grace

If the law is considered “purely and only a ministration of condemnation and death” and upholders of the Ten Com-

The Mosaic Law from the Antithetic Viewpoint of the Dispensationalists



The Mosaic Law from the Synthetic Viewpoint of the Westminster Confession

L A W O F M O S E S	U N C H A N G E A B L E	Old Testament	New Testament	U N C H A N G E A B L E	L A W O F C H R I S T
		MORAL as summarized in the X commandments	MORAL as summarized in the X commandments		
	C H A N G E A B L E	JUDICIAL codified	JUDICIAL general equity thereof	C H A N G E A B L E	
		CEREMONIAL 1. Circumcision, etc. 2. Passover, etc.	CEREMONIAL 1. Baptism 2. Lord's Supper.		

Fig. 2

mandments are called “nomolaters” (i.e., servers or worshippers of the law), then the law has become in effect an abominable thing in the sight of the preachers of “grace.” Scofield has contrasted law against grace more acrimoniously in these terms:

It is however, of the most vital moment to observe that Scripture never, in *any* dispensations, *mingles* these two principles. Law always has a place and work distinct and wholly diverse from that of Grace. Law is God prohibiting and requiring; grace is God beseeching and bestowing. Law is a ministry of condemnation; grace, of forgiveness. Law curses; grace redeems from that curse. Law kills; grace makes alive. Law shuts every mouth before God; grace opens every mouth to praise Him. Law puts a great and guilty distance between man and God; grace makes guilty man nigh to God; Law says, “an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth”; grace says, “resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.” Law says, “Hate thine enemy”; grace, “Love your enemies, bless them that despitefully use you.” Law says, do and live; grace, believe and live. Law never had a missionary; grace is preached to every creature. Law utterly condemns the best man; grace freely justifies the worst. (Luke 23:43; Rom. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:15; 1 Cor. 6:9–11.) Law is a system of probation; grace, of favour. Law stones an adulteress; grace says, “Neither do I condemn thee.” Under the law the sheep dies for the shepherd; under grace the Shepherd dies for the sheep.

Everywhere the Scriptures present law and grace in sharply contrasted spheres.

The mingling of them in much of the current teaching of the day spoils both, for law is robbed of its terror and grace of its freeness.⁹

Before discussing Scofield’s view of “Law versus Grace,” certain inconsistencies in his argument at this point need to be rectified. Scofield’s thesis is that both grace and law are spoilt once they are commingled. If that be the case, why then does he now quote from the Sermon on the Mount, which he maintains elsewhere to be “pure law,”¹⁰ to support his argument for grace? The injunction “Love your enemies, bless them that despitefully use you,”¹¹ is drawn from the heart of the Sermon. So is his quotation of the famous “turn-the-other-cheek” passage taken from the same con-

text. Has not Scofield unwittingly destroyed the castle he is trying to build? If these words of Jesus must hereby be categorised under grace, then the other argument that the Sermon on the Mount is “pure” or “intensified”¹² law evaporates into thin air.

One other glaring inconsistency in Scofield’s argument that is easily refuted is his putting into Moses’ hand a law he never made: “Law says, ‘Hate your enemy.’” This injunction is nowhere to be found in the whole Old Testament, much less in the Pentateuch.¹³ Moses rather speaks on this wise concerning the treatment of enemies: “If thou meet thine enemy’s ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldst forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help him.”¹⁴ The Law of Moses regarding enemies, according to Scripture’s surer record, prohibits hatred on the one hand and enjoins love on the other. All the laws that Scofield has quoted or misquoted, insofar as these inconsistencies are concerned, are mingled with grace.

The Origin of the Spirit of Dispensational Antinomianism

Returning to the main thought on the contrast between Law and Grace, it has been noted that in the compartmentalized thinking of Dispensational theologians, there is absolutely no room for co-existence between Law and Gospel in this so-called age of Grace, nor in any other.¹⁵ This antithetical view kindles within them a zeal to persecute the law as the Agar of the Christian Church.¹⁶ It must be pointed out that this spirit of near-Antinomianism¹⁷ was engendered as a result of the bitter conflict between the Brethren Movement about 1830 with the established Church of England, because the latter were alleged to have “lost the message of grace and sought to keep God’s law on the basis of merit . . . In order to avoid the mistake of legalism these [Brethren] teachers began to proclaim a new doctrine of law and grace, declaring that Christians were not under law, and having nothing to do with law.”¹⁸ This spirit of the primitive Brethren, the progenitors of modern Dispensationalism, has naturally permeated downwards to Dispensationalists of all denominations today.

3. Abrogation of the Decalogue a Dispensational Problem

In their contrast between the moral law and grace, the Dispensationalists did not accord to the Decalogue its eternal and unchanging authority, because it was considered part and parcel of the “temporary” Mosaic Law. Does this suggest that the Dispensationalists have no moral law at all under grace? To be consistent, that should be their position. But since the Decalogue is re-affirmed in the Epistles, wherein the doctrines of grace, according to the Dispensationalists, are exclusively found, this attestation by the Apostles the favourite authority of the Dispensationalists, poses a real problem for them. Lewis Sperry Chafer has a seemingly ingenious way of extricating himself out of the quandary. In the chapter, “Law Systems and Judaism Done Away” of his Systematic Theology, he asserts that the Mosaic Law, including the Decalogue, is “not intended to be the rule of the believer’s life under grace. Yet on the other hand,” he reverses and turns about, “the abiding principles of the law which are adaptable to grace, are carried forward and restated under the teachings of grace, not as law, but reformed to the mold of infinite grace.”¹⁹

Chafer’s Parable of the German Gold Coin

Then he gives an “apt” illustration of the experience of an American citizen who fled Germany at the outbreak of the first World War with pockets filled with German gold coin. Chafer observes:

This coin, being of German stamp, was of no value as currency in England, but when melted and restamped in the mints of England, it bore all the value of coin in that realm. Thus the intrinsic value of the gold of the law is preserved and reappears bearing the stamp of the teaching of grace.²⁰

Does not this parable more obviously confirm the Reformed view of the unchangeability of the moral law? What a perfect analogy of the abrogation of the Jewish ceremonies is found in the re-minting of the German coin, and of the unchangeability of the Ten Commandments in the preservation of the intrinsic value of the gold. Since “we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth,”²¹ Chafer has to admit

again in the interpretation of his own parable, “Thus the intrinsic value of the gold of the law is preserved and re-appears bearing the stamp of the new teachings of grace.”²² Whatever be the meaning of “bearing the stamp of the new teachings of grace,” the simple, imperishable truth of the “preservation of the intrinsic value of the gold of the law,” is, according to Paul’s simpler logic: “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.”²³

4. The “Dispensational Progression” of the Moral Law (According to Chafer)

The Dispensational treatment of the law, now doing away with it, now preserving its intrinsic value, is, by its dualistic complexity, highly intricate. In order to get a clearer understanding of what is meant by doing away the “whole and inseparable” Mosaic Law and yet incorporating a part of it into Grace, it is necessary to scrutinize Chafer’s view of the law in the history of redemption, from beginning to end.

According to Chafer’s presentation, “the law of God over men” runs progressively through the history of redemption in four stages, with an abrupt “intensification” of it to the degree of infinity under the Dispensation of Grace. These stages are as follows:

a. The Inherent Law in the Dispensational Progression

The first stage of the law extends at one stretch through four dispensations, viz., the Dispensations of Innocence, Conscience, Human Government and Promise. It begins from Adam and ends with the introduction of the written law of Moses. Of this stage of the law, Chafer writes:

It is probable that the divine authority over men before Moses was of the nature of inherent law, which calls for a recognition on man’s part—however revealed—of the inherent responsibility which the creature sustains to the Creator The august edict “Be ye holy, for I am holy,” aims directly at inherent responsibility and not upon some

published code of action. Inherent obligation differs from the Mosaic system in that the latter is reduced to written precepts and is a system which promises recognition in the form of blessings otherwise not available to those who comply with its terms, while inherent law is that to which the creature is inseparably related by creation, being essential to the specific thing which he is. It is binding upon every human being in every age. To it the Mosaic system was added, and for the believer it has had its perfect fulfillment in Christ along with every necessity which could have been laid upon him.²⁴

b. The Mosaic Law in the Dispensational Progression

The second stage of the law extends throughout the dispensation of Law from the giving of the Ten Commandments at Sinai to Christ's death on Calvary. Chafer says:

The law which came by Moses is declared to be an ad interim dealing which served its purpose during the interval of 1,500 years between its enactment and the death of Christ. Its purpose is defined as that of a παιδαγωγός—a child disciplinarian—to lead to Christ. The immediate service of the Law of Moses was to provide a redeemed people, who are under covenants, with divine instruction for their civil, religious and moral life. Two truths are of primary importance, namely, (1) that the Mosaic Law was never addressed to Gentiles, except those who became Israelites as proselytes, and (2) that the Law of Moses did not serve to institute right relations between an Israelite and God. . . . In case of failure to do the law, sacrifices were accepted as a means of restoration. . . . There was in the law an element of merit, because of its attending blessings for compliance and judgments for failure. . . .

The Mosaic economy, which was a complete system in itself requiring no additions to the end that it might set forth the entire will of God for an individual Israelite or for the whole nation, is composed of three parts, namely, (1) the commandments, which regulated moral issues (Ex. 20:1-17), (2) the judgments, which regulated civic issues (Ex. 21:1-24:11), and (3) the ordinances, which regulated religious issues (Ex. 24:12-31:18). It is obvious that both the judgments and ordinances ceased with the close of the Jewish age. There are misunderstandings, however, respecting the Decalogue which call for consideration. Two features of truth concerning the

Mosaic system, and more specifically the Decalogue, are to be emphasized, which are (1) the relation that the Mosaic Law sustained to the time of its reign, and (2) the application of the Mosaic system.²⁵

As to (1) the relation that the Mosaic Law sustained to the time of its reign, Chafer points out the fact of its validity as a rule of life only for Israel, “limited to a period of about 1,500 years, or from Sinai to Calvary.” Its transitory character is “proved” by the fact that the law was “added” because of transgressions, and its purpose was merely to be a schoolmaster to lead transgressors to Christ. When Christ came it was done away.

Chafer, as does Scofield at this point, blames the Israelites for “deliberately” (Scofield says “rashly”) forsaking their position of grace to accept the law, as if God was playing chess with them and they were offered to make a choice between whites and blacks.

As to (2) the application of the Mosaic system, Chafer “permits no discussion” as to whether it is applicable to Gentiles in the light of these verses which he cites for his argument:

“Hear, O Israel; The Lord thy God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart (Mark 12:29–30); “And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them.”²⁶

Since the Law is addressed to Israel, says Chafer, it cannot apply to us today:

It may be concluded, then, that the law which was given by Moses was a covenant of works, that it was “added” after centuries of human history, that its reign was terminated by the death of Christ, that it was given to Israel only, and that, since it was never given to Gentiles, the only relation that Gentiles can sustain to it is, without any divine authority, to impose it upon themselves²⁷

But the Apostle to the Jews puts Christians on the same footing as the elect of the Old Dispensation, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people”²⁸, quoting Moses’ Second Giving of the Law.²⁹ And the Apostle to the Gentiles says of the Old

Testament, “*All scripture* is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”³⁰ The Law of Moses, insofar as it is not expressly abrogated, and especially, the Decalogue, is for the Christian Church. Hence, in the humble opinion of the writer, it is not Biblical to say, “We are a New Testament Church,” for in another Epistle, Paul reminds us that the Church is built upon the apostles and *prophets*, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone.³¹

c. The “Law of Christ” in the Dispensational Progression

The third stage of the “Law” covers the whole Dispensation of Grace, called by Chafer “the intercalation age,” because it prophetically inserts between the Mosaic and Kingdom economies. This period extends from the death of Christ to His Second Coming. Chafer, while reluctantly admitting that this stage of the dispensational progression of the law is the “law of Christ” in the “Doctrinal Summarization” of his Systematic Theology,³² consistently calls it “the teachings of grace.” As a rule of life for Christians only, it comprises “all of the teachings of the Epistles, the Acts and also certain parts of the Gospels apart from their mere historical features.”³³

It may be well stated again that the standard of conduct prescribed under the teachings of grace is immeasurably more difficult to maintain than that prescribed either by the Law of Moses, or the law of the kingdom. It is as much higher than these as heaven is higher than the earth. Similarly, the divine enablement provided under grace is nothing less than the infinite power of the indwelling Spirit. The teachings of grace are addressed only to the supernaturally endowed man, who is both born of the Spirit and indwelt by the Spirit. These teachings are such as naturally belong to a citizen of heaven. Since the saving work of God places the believer in the heavenly positions in Christ, and transfers his citizenship from earth to heaven, it is only consistent that he should be required to walk as it becometh a citizen of heaven. This, it is evident, must be a supernatural life. Turning to the Scriptures which reveal the responsibility of the child of God under grace, it is found that a superhuman manner of life is proposed These teachings surpass the standards of

the Law of Moses in the measure in which infinity surpasses the finite.³⁴

Perhaps, a note of Scofield's at this point should sum up the Dispensational view of the "law of Christ" more succinctly:

The new "law of Christ" is the divine love, as wrought into the renewed heart by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5.5; Heb. 10.16), and outflowing in the energy of the Spirit, unforced and spontaneous, toward the objects of the divine love (2 Cor. 5.14-20; 1 Thes. 2.7,8), in contrast with the eternal law of Moses. Moses' law demands love (Lev. 19.18; Deut. 6.5; Lk. 10.27); Christ's law is love (Rom. 5.5; 1 John 4.7, 19, 20), and so takes the place of the external law by fulfilling it (Rom. 13.10; Gal. 5.14). It is the "law written in the heart" under the New Covenant (Heb. 8.8, note).³⁵

A question arises in the writer's mind at this point: If Christ's law, which is the sum total of "the teachings of grace," is nothing less than spontaneous love, why does the Apostle of Grace in Romans command us in the thunderous voice of Sinai, "For, thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not lust; and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"?³⁶ In order to ascertain that there is no bias in the argument, this quotation from Paul is taken from Darby's translation.

d. The Kingdom Law in the Dispensational Progression

The fourth and final stage of the law to be considered in the examination of the Dispensational Progression, is the law of the Kingdom. This stage begins with the ushering in of the Millennial Kingdom by Christ's Second Coming after the Tribulation, and lasts for a thousand years:

The law system is not introduced again at the beginning of the Kingdom age; it is continued with certain additions directly from the Mosaic system with no reference to, or contributions from, this intercalation age" (i.e., the dispensation of grace).

Kingdom teachings will be found in those Psalms and prophecies of the Old Testament which anticipate the reign of Messiah in the earth, and in the kingdom portions of the Gospels. These teachings as found in the Old

The "Dispensational Progression"
of the Moral Law
in the History of Redemption

Infinity
LAW OF CHRIST

"These teachings
[of Grace]
surpass the
Law of Moses
in the measure
in which infinity
surpasses the
finite."
- Chafer

Fig. 3

D	I	S	P	E	N	S	A	T	I	O	N	S
INNOCENCE	CONSCIENCE	HUMAN GOVT.	PROMISE	LAW	GRACE	KING-DOM						
						KINGDOM LAW						
				"Added" }		MOSAIC LAW		"Done away"				
I	N	H	E	R	E	N	T	L	A	W		
C	O	V	E	N	A	N	T	S				

Testament and the New are purely legal in essence, both by their inherent character and by the explicit declaration of the Word of God. The legal requirements of the kingdom teachings are greatly advanced, both in severity and detail, beyond the requirements of the Law of Moses. Though incorporating much of the Mosaic system, the kingdom teaching is a system complete and perfect in itself. . . . In the kingdom law, anger is condemned in the same connection where only murder had been prohibited in the Law of Moses, and the glance of the eye is condemned where only adultery had previously been forbidden. . . . The writing of the law upon the heart is a divine assistance toward the keeping of the kingdom law, which enablement was in no wise provided under the reign of Moses. However the written law on the heart, as it will be in the kingdom is not to be compared with the power of the indwelling Spirit which is the present divine enablement provided for the believer under grace.³⁷

With this fourth and last stage of the Dispensational Progression of the law excerpted from Chafer's *Theology* before the reader, the fuller survey of the Dispensational view of the Mosaic law is finally concluded. What a bewildering revelation it is to the writer in making this study to find such a cosmical ocean separating the law of Moses from the "law of Christ" in the thinking of Dispensational theologians! Does Christ teach such irreconcilably contradictory doctrines of the law in the history of redemption? Does the One greater than Moses make disparaging distinctions between Grace and Law, and between one section of the law against another? The verdict of truth must be sought from His own mouth in the pages ahead.

NOTES

¹ *Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 95.

² *Ibid.*, p. 1244.

³ *Surpra*, p. 16.

⁴ Scofield, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*, p. 35.

⁵ Mauro, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

⁶ Scofield, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 35. ¹⁰ *Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 1,000.

¹¹ Matt. 5:44.

¹² Chafer, *Grace*, p. 160.

¹³ R. Laird Harris, "The Sermon on the Mount and Verbal Inspiration," *The Reformation Review*, Vol. I, No. 4 (1954), p. 21ff.

¹⁴ Ex. 23:3, 4.

¹⁵ Supra p. 15.

¹⁶ *Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 1246.

¹⁷ Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

¹⁸ McQuilkin, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

¹⁹ Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. IV., p. 243.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 243.

²¹ II Cor. 13:8

²² Chafer, *op. cit.*, p. 243. ²³ Rom. 3:31.

²⁴ Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. IV., p. 158.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 159f.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 165f.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

²⁸ I Pet. 2:9.

²⁹ Deut. 7:6.

³⁰ II Tim. 3:16.

³¹ Eph. 2:20.

³² Chafer, *op. cit.*, Vol. VII, p. 226.

³³ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 183.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 186f.

³⁵ *Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 1326.

³⁶ Rom. 13:9.

³⁷ Chafer, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 169.

CHAPTER V

THE DISPENSATIONAL VIEW OF THE LAW OF MOSES EXAMINED IN THE LIGHT OF THE TEACHING OF JESUS

1. The Attitude of Jesus Toward the Law of Moses

What is the attitude of Jesus toward the Law of Moses? Does He make such disparaging distinctions between Law and Grace, and between one section of the law and another as the Dispensationalists have done? Perhaps, some among His audience on the Mount are so prejudiced. Perhaps, others, seeing His constant clash with those who sit in Moses' seat mistake His action as revolutionary against the Mosaic system and are naturally, though mistakenly, minded to treat the law with contempt. In order once for all to dispel such erroneous notions, Jesus declares at the very outset of His Sermon:

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.¹

This classic passage on the authority of the law and the prophets is often quoted today by orthodox theologians to defend the doctrine of verbal inspiration of the Scriptures.² Verbal inspiration is assuredly taught in this declaration, but our Lord's primary purpose, in the light of the immediate context, is to pledge allegiance to all the law that was given by Moses' hand and expounded by the prophets.³ This spirit of loyalty to the Mosaic law is again manifested when the Master tells the multitude, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do." But the Lord also rebukes the hypocrisy of these high Jewish churchmen who deceitfully handle the law for the sake of their belly, "Do not ye after *their* works: for they say, and do not."⁴ Concerning the Law of Moses and the commentary of the prophets, Jesus teaches

that it must be revered and listened to with awe, because it is the very Word of God, no less than “the oracles from heaven” originally given. And Christ now comes to fulfil or substantiate that Word, by doing all its demands in order to redeem a disobedient and fallen race, not as some say, to ratify or complete its teaching, as if the Word of God needs any ratification or improvement. Patrick Fairbairn’s commentary on Jesus’ statement of Moses and the prophets should further illumine our understanding:

And uttered as the declaration was when men’s minds were fermenting with all manner of opinions respecting the intentions of Jesus, it was plainly meant to assure them that He stood in friendly relation to the law and the prophets, and could no more, in His teaching than in His working, do what would be subversive of their design. They must find in Him only their fulfilment. To render His meaning still more explicit, our Lord gives it the advantage of two specific illustrations, one hypothetical, the other actual. ‘Should any one, therefore (He says, in ver. 19), annul (not break, as in the English version, but put away, abrogate, annul, λύση—*luse*) one of these commandments—the least of them—and teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven;’ such is the exact rendering, and it expressly asserts the validity of what was found in preceding revelations, down even to the last commands, in the kingdom presently to be set up. There was to be no antagonism between the new and the old. . . .⁵

If there was no antagonism between the new and the old dispensations, the meeting of Moses, Elijah and Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration⁶ should all the more confirm the Covenantal teaching of dispensational harmony between the Law and the Gospel. Now, if the Dispensationalists are truly zealous in serving their Gracious Saviour, let them follow His injunctions and adopt His attitude toward the Law of Moses. Let them listen to the voice of the Father Who endorses all that the Son says and does, “Hear ye Him.”

2. The Attitude of Jesus Toward the Ceremonial Law

It has been noted how the Dispensationalists favourably regard the ceremonial law with the yearnings of the Psalm-

ist, “Oh how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day!” As Scofield has said, “In the ceremonial law are enshrined those marvellous types—the foreshadowings of the person and work of Christ the Lord Jesus as Priest and Sacrifice” There is no doubt about the truth of the latter statement, insofar as those marvellous types, so profusely taught in the Scofield Reference Bible, are sanctioned by Scripture.

The writer would compare the Mosaic ceremonies with *Koinē* Greek paradigms (παρὰ + δείγωμι), preliminary exercises to the eventual reading of the New Testament Greek text. Just as the declensions and conjugations of Biblical nouns and verbs need not occupy one’s time when one attains proficiency in the reading of the Greek Testament, so the ceremonies of the Old Testament are laid aside when Christ is plainly revealed. Nevertheless, Scofield’s elaborate teaching on the typology of the ceremonial laws, making Christ to blossom from every Tabernacle board and socket,⁷ is nowhere enjoined by our Lord or the Apostles. Nor is Christ’s attitude toward the ceremonial law one that makes Him meditate upon the types “all the day.” No one having mastered the reading of the Greek Testament devotes oneself to conjugations and declensions! The ceremonial laws were treated “as the legal economy did, in the light merely of appendages to the moral—temporary expedients, or provisional substitutes for better things to come, which had no inherent value in themselves, and were to give way before the great realities they foreshadowed.”⁸ “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices, which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect.”⁹

Our Lord therefore displayed a purposeful reserve in regard to the external ceremonies. Although he underwent the rite of circumcision soon after birth, attended the Passover at Jerusalem at the age of twelve according to the sacred custom, and was baptized of John “to fulfil all righteousness,” it must be noted that when He began His public ministry as a Preacher of the Gospel, He took no Nazarene vow,¹⁰ though he was the perfect Nazarite, nor was he anointed with oil though He was Prophet, Priest and

King. Though He did not abstain from the Temple feasts, He never was said to have made offerings for Himself and His disciples. Though He accommodated Himself to pay the half-shekel¹¹ (δίδραχμα)—(*didrachma*) tribute money to the Temple¹² for Himself and Peter, He claimed rightful exemption by virtue of His royal prerogative. He declared openly that when He, the real Temple was “destroyed,”¹³ the material symbol of what He was in relation to His people would also be removed.¹⁴

*Jesus’ Institution of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper
“Recognizes” the Old Testament Ceremonies*

Jesus’ reserve toward the ceremonial laws “contrasts sharply” with the Dispensational Bible teaching, according to Scofield, which reveals in all kinds of types and antitypes, “artificial and extravagant,”¹⁵ way beyond and above those sanctioned by the Holy Scriptures. Nor did our Lord ever discriminate against the ceremonial law in the way the Dispensationalists are wont against the moral law. In fact, when He instituted the sacraments of Water Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, ceremonial laws for the Church under the Gospel Dispensation, He “recognized” the dispensational value of circumcision and the Passover, with all the rites of purification and sacrifices of the Mosaic economy. The words of L. Berkhof should be noted:

As a matter of fact, however, there is no *essential* difference between the sacraments of the Old and those of the New Testament. This is proved by the following: (a) in I Cor. 10: 1–4 Paul ascribes to the Old Testament Church that which is essential in the New Testament sacraments; (b) in Rom. 4: 11 he speaks of the circumcision of Abraham as a seal of the righteousness of faith; and (c) in view of the fact that they represent the same spiritual realities, the names of the sacraments of both dispensations are used interchangeably; circumcision and passover are ascribed to the New Testament Church, I Cor. 5: 7; Col. 2: 11, and baptism and the Lord’s Supper to the Church of the Old Testament, I Cor. 10: 1–4.¹⁶

The ceremonial system of the Mosaic Law was not destroyed as much as an iota or tittle, but rather fulfilled in these twin New Testament ordinances, through the redemptive work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The Dispensationalists, on the other hand, are silent on the “fulfillment” of the Old Testament ceremonies by the New. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are treated as something unrelated and heterogeneous to the Old Testament institutions. Such discreet reticence is understandable to those with more knowledge of Dispensational hermeneutical principles.

3. The Attitude of Jesus Toward the Moral Law

The purposeful reserve which our Lord maintained toward the ceremonial law was fully discussed in the last chapter. This attitude was necessitated by the changeability of the ceremonial law, “being a shadow of good things to come and not the very image of the things.” The attitude of our Lord toward the moral law, on the other hand, is antithetical to His manifestation toward the ceremonial.¹⁷ How He upholds the Ten Commandments and all the moral precepts of the Old Testament, expounds and teaches them, side by side with the Gospel message! How ineffectual His sermons would be were all their moral demands removed! (How shall a wayward child of sin come to Christ without the leading of the “schoolmaster” of law?) Yet, the doing away of the moral law is the delight of the Dispensationalists.

The Scripture in Matt. 5:17,18 has been cited as the *locus classicus* for the doctrine of verbal inspiration. It has been pointed out that while it is the bulwark of defence for the infallibility of the Holy Scriptures, its primary reference is to the authority of the Mosaic Law with all the divine commentaries by the prophets. It is further submitted herewith that if its primary reference is to the Mosaic law, the moral section thereof is the focus of its attention. For, immediately following this introductory remark of the Sermon, Jesus requires of His hearers the fullest conformity to the holy will of God, as expressed in the Decalogue. The emphasis on this point of the Sermon is recapitulated at the end of the chapter, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”¹⁸

a. Obedience to the Moral Law an Evidence of Salvation

While no one can ever be saved by keeping the Ten Commandments, it is salutary to our souls to note that Jesus

in His Sermon is showing that a willing obedience to the Law of God is one of the many proofs of an assured salvation. "How can I know I am saved?" is the inquirer's question. "You know you are saved, not by feelings, but by what God says in His word," is the counsellor's reply. In one sense, this answer is right. Now, salvation is such a vital subject that the Word of God must make it so plain, precept upon precept, line upon line, that even "the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."¹⁹

Thus, to Nicodemus, Jesus gives one of the evidences of salvation as the *re-birth* of a soul, through the mysterious operation of the Holy Spirit, like a wind.²⁰ To the sinful woman of Samaria, He emphasizes the need of *repentance*, a turning away from her many husbands.²¹ To the multitude on the slopes of Galilee, He stresses the importance of the doctrine of justification by works, as the fruits of faith, a manifestation of sweet compliance with the law of God as proof of one's avowed salvation. Often songs of salvation are sung in fundamental Christian circles and testimonies of salvation are liberally exchanged. "I am saved, and my sins are gone," could well become an outworn shibboleth on the lips of timemarking church-goers. To such the Saviour utters a warning, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."²²

b. Obedience to the Moral Law Corroborated by James and John

Whether James, the brother of our Lord in the flesh, was present or not at the Sermon on the Mount, the Words of Jesus' daily preaching struck root in his life, and bore fruit through his pen. In the earliest days of the primitive church, James wrote his more-than-straw Epistle on the doctrine of salvation by works, as the fruits of faith.²³ With the gracious words of Christ still lingering in his ears, does not James simply echo the sound of our Lord's Sermon when he declares, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."²⁴ And what is works but a continuance in the commandments of the law?²⁵

Similarly, John, the Apostle of love, enjoins upon us, "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love

God, and keep his commandments.”²⁶ By the fine distinctions of Dispensational hermeneutics, “his commandments” in this context are “God’s commandments,” and therefore, strictly, not “the law of Christ.” And what are God’s commandments but those promulgated by Elohim in Ten Words amidst the thunderings and lightnings of Sinai?²⁷ John further solves the dispensational problem of “keeping God’s laws” with this secret, “. . . and his (God’s) commandments are not grievous”!²⁸ These last words of John are so similar to those of Moses before his death, “Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law. *For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life.*”²⁹

c. Obedience to the Moral Law Not Man’s Dispensational But Eternal Duty

The major part of the Sermon is undoubtedly law, law indeed, for such a crying, rebellious age as this—not, as the Dispensationalists teach, for a golden Millennium. For what need is there of such a legal constitution, as the Sermon on the Mount, since the coming earthly reign of Christ will be a perfect society, when “they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.” The incongruity of enacting laws against thieves and false prophets, for example, in preparation for the Kingdom age, has been pointed out earlier in this thesis. As the Lawyer-Apostle says:

Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.³⁰

For the sake of an argument *ad hominem*, let it be conceded that the promulgation of an “intensified” law in the Sermon on the Mount does not presuppose a corrupt society. Then, the high moral laws contained therein are according to the Dispensationalists, given for the Kingdom age. Nevertheless, the fact still remains that Christ requires the same high standard of morality in those passages of the

A Comparative Table of the Synoptic Gospels Showing the Teaching of Jesus on the Decalogue on Occasions Other Than the Sermon on the Mount

Commandment Quoted or Referred to	Occasion of Jesus' Teaching as Recorded in the Synoptic Gospels		
	Matthew	Mark	Luke
VI, VII, VIII, IX, X	The Sermon on the Mount 5-7		
IV	Plucking Corn on the Sabbath Day 12: 1-8	2: 23-28	6: 1-5
IV	Healing the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath Day 12: 9-14	3: 1-5	6: 6-11
III, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX	Encounter with scribes and Pharisees on the tradition of washing hands 15: 1-20	7: 1-23	
VII	The Pharisee's test question on divorce 19: 3-9	10: 1-12	16: 18
V, VI, VII, VIII, IX	Encounter with the rich young ruler 19: 16-30	10: 17-22	18: 18-30
The Law and the Prophets	On the Great Commandment 22: 34-40	12: 28-34	10: 25-37

Figure 4.

Gospels which are agreed by Dispensationalists and all to be unconnected with the Kingdom. To make an Everest out of Galilee's Hill over and above Jesus' mountain-top expositions of the Decalogue elsewhere is to create a self-contradictory Christ. The following chart, showing six occasions other than the Sermon on the Mount on which our Lord expounded the teachings of the Decalogue, concludes that the moral law is an eternal rule of life for Jews, Christians, and Gentiles alike. For God is no Respector of persons, nor of dispensations.

NOTES

¹ Matt. 5: 17, 18.

² R. Laird Harris, *Inspiration and Canonicity of the Bible* (Zondervan Pub. House, 1957), p. 46ff.

³ J. C. Ryle, *Holiness* (London: James Clarke & Co., Ltd., 1952), p. 27. Cf. J. Gresham Machen, *The Christian View of Man* (The Macmillan Co., 1937), p. 221.

⁴ Matt. 23: 2, 3.

⁵ Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, p. 224. ⁶ Mark 9: 1ff.

⁷ *Scofield Reference Bible*, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

⁸ Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, p. 216. ⁹ Heb. 10: 1.

¹⁰ Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

¹¹ *American Standard Version* (Thos. Nelson & Sons, 1901).

¹² Edersheim, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 113. ¹³ 3.

¹³ Jn. 2: 19. ¹⁴ Mark 13: 1f. ¹⁵ Pieters, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

¹⁶ Berkhof, *op. cit.*, p. 619.

¹⁷ R. Laird Harris, "The Purpose of the Mosaic Law," *The Bible Today*, Vol. 38, No. 1, p. 18.

¹⁸ Matt. 5: 48. ¹⁹ Isa. 35: 8.

²⁰ Jn. 3: 1-8.

²¹ Jn. 4: 16.

²² Matt. 5: 20.

²³ John D. Davis, *A Dictionary of the Bible* (4th Revised ed.; Baker Book House, 1954), p. 353.

²⁴ Jas. 2: 17.

²⁵ Jas. 1: 25.

²⁶ I Jn. 5: 2.

²⁷ Ex. 20: 1.

²⁸ I Jn. 5: 3b.

²⁹ Deut. 32: 46, 47.

³⁰ I Tim. 1: 9f.

CHAPTER VI

THE DISPENSATIONAL EVALUATION OF THE LAW OF MOSES MEASURED IN THE LIGHT OF THE TEACHING OF JESUS

1. The Dispensational Evaluation of the Law of Moses Measured by the Sermon on the Mount

A glance at the table showing our Lord's references to the Decalogue in His teaching ministry should lead one to inquire more diligently into His expositions. Indeed, it is a high and holy duty to study the teaching of Jesus on those portions of the Mosaic Law which are castigated in fundamental Christian circles today as a result of Antinomian indoctrination.

a. The Dispensational Evaluation of the Law of Moses Relative to "Grace and Kingdom Teachings"

It has been shown in the last chapter how Chafer has not only banished the Decalogue from the Church as Sara did to Agar, but also despised it for its low Jewish ancestry. The reader will re-examine the disparity he made between the "teachings of grace" and Moses:

These teachings of grace surpass the standards of the Law of Moses in which infinity surpasses the finite . . . It may be well stated again that the standard of conduct prescribed under the teachings of grace is immeasurably more difficult to maintain than that prescribed either by the law of Moses or the law of the Kingdom. It is as much higher than these as heaven is higher than the earth.¹

Speaking of the Mosaic Law in antithesis to the Kingdom Law, Chafer makes another contrast:

The legal requirements of the Kingdom teachings are greatly advanced, both in severity and detail beyond the requirements of the Law of Moses. Though incorporating much of the Mosaic system, the kingdom teaching is a system complete and perfect in itself . . . In the kingdom

law, anger is condemned in the same connection where only murder had been prohibited in the Law of Moses, and the glance of the eye is condemned where only adultery had previously been forbidden. . . . The writing of the law upon the heart is a divine assistance toward the keeping of the Kingdom law, which enablement was in no wise provided under the reign of Moses.²

In Chafer's evaluation, relative to the Grace and Kingdom teachings, the Mosaic Law is purely a Jewish national code given for the duration of a particular dispensation. The standard of the Decalogue seems to be devalued to perhaps a little higher than the Code of Hammurabi, since all the merit that Chafer could find in it is no deeper than an external prohibition of evil.

b. Basis for Alleged Disparity Between the Mosaic Law and "Grace and Kingdom Teachings"

Now, if it be asked what is the basis for the Dispensationalists' making such a disparity between the Grace and Kingdom teachings on the one hand, and the Mosaic Law on the other, the answer may be found in their misinterpretation of the Sermon on the Mount. As far as this thesis is concerned, the latter part of Matthew Five, which contains sayings about the Mosaic Law and Jesus' contrary remarks, require investigation. These sayings are:

- 1) Ye have heard that it was said (ἐρρήθη—*errēthē*) by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of judgment: But I say unto you . . . (v. 21).
- 2) Ye have heard that it was said (ἐρρήθη) by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you . . . (v. 27).
- 3) It hath been said (ἐρρήθη), Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you . . . (v. 31).
- 4) Again, ye have heard that it hath been said (ἐρρήθη) by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you . . . (v. 33).
- 5) Ye have heard that it hath been said (ἐρρήθη), An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you . . . (v. 38).

- 6) Ye have heard that it hath been said (ἐρρήθη), Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy: But I say unto you . . . (v. 43).

E. Schuyler English, in his *Studies in the Gospel According to Matthew*, without ado assumes these sayings *en bloc* to be the Law of Moses, much needing Christ “to fulfil” it “in full”:

No greater illustration of the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ came to fulfil the law in full could be found than in Matthew five; first, because He said so; and secondly, because in His proclamation concerning the righteousness of the Kingdom age, He showed that the law of Moses shall be exceeded, that it will be a law of love.³

Similarly, Arthur T. Pierson, consulting editor of the Scofield Reference Bible, considers the Sermon on the Mount to give us a “*modified moral Decalogue* which is easily traceable—the new laws of the Kingdom singularly correspondent with the old . . .”⁴

The significance of these statements is twofold:

- (i) The sayings by them of old times (or to them of old time) are equated with the Laws of Moses, without proper identification.
- (ii) These laws of Moses need Christ to “fulfil in full” or “modify” in order that they might become a “law of love.”

This raises a problem needing the following questions to be answered: Are the sayings by them of old time (or to them of old time) to be identified with the Mosaic Law in its authoritative written form, or are they rather commentaries accumulated through the centuries? If these sayings are actually the written laws of Moses, do they need Christ to “modify” in order that they might become a “law of love”? The basis for the disparity between Moses and Christ must be investigated.

c. Basis for Alleged Disparity Between the Mosaic Law and “Grace and Kingdom Teachings” Rejected

- (i) **By a Grammatical Study Between ἐρηται [*eiretai*] and ἐρρήθη [*errethe*]**

In regard to Point 1 of the significance of the Dispensational statements which form the basis for the alleged

disparity between Moses and Jesus, it is to be noted that in our Lord's ministry, He often appealed to the Old Testament to refute His opponents. In the wilderness temptation, for example, He thrice cited Deuteronomy to turn down Satan's overtures. The formula used for quoting Moses in this instance, as at other times, is, "It *is* written" (ἔγγραπται—*gegruptai*). This is recorded in both Matthew and Luke. However, Luke makes one exception to the rule, using ἔρηται i.e., "It *is* said." But the form of ἔρηται is perfect passive, which is equivalent to that of ἔγγραπται.

Machen points out in his Greek Grammar that the Greek perfect passive ἔγγραπται is "very well" reproduced in its English form, for "both English and Greek here refer to a present state resultant upon an act of writing which took place long ago." Or, as he puts it more succinctly, "It *is* written" means "It *stands* written."⁵ Since ἔρηται is perfect passive as is ἔγγραπται, the same force of speech accorded to the latter must logically be applied to the former. That is to say, "It *is* said" should mean: What Moses said "*stands*" from the day it was written down to this day.

Robertson and Davis further demonstrate the Greek perfect to be "in the full tide of its power as a tense. It has the linear and punctiliar ideas combined (a state of completion)," which may be represented in graph as:

- 1) _____ ● or,
- 2) ● _____ or
- 3)⁶

According to Machen's observation, the perfect passive "It *is* written" may thus be represented by a dot immediately followed by a long dash, thus: ● _____, meaning "a present continuing state resultant upon an act of writing or saying which took place long ago."⁷ That is to say again, the Law of Moses given by his hand and through his lips remains or "stands" from the time it was first proclaimed to this day.

On the other hand, the form used for "It *was* said" or "It *hath been* said" by (or to) them of old time is ἔρηθη, which is in the aorist. The aorist, quite different from the more comprehensive perfect, is equivalent to the English simple past tense, which, according to Machen, means "the action

has taken place in past time without any implications as to its present results.”⁸ From a strictly grammatical viewpoint, ἐρρήθη, (“It *was* said,” or “It *hath been* said”), with reference either to “to them of old time” or “by them of old time,” therefore does not commit the things that “were said” or “hath been said” to a guarantee that they remain in force today.

Now, it must be remembered that even Greek words are poor vehicles of speech, and it may seem ultra-pedantic to split grammatical hairs over ἐρήται and ἐρρήθη. However, the fact remains that the six citations of the sayings all take ἐρρήθη, not the more comprehensive ἐρήται. Does this not seem to suggest that Matthew, an accomplished grammarian under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, studiously avoided the perfect tense in citing this series of sayings, in order not to accord to men’s words the force of Holy Writ? Therefore, the use of ἐρρήθη in the series of sayings seems to suggest that these are human sayings, and not the written Law of Moses.

(ii) By a Textual Comparison Between the Sayings and the Mosaic Code.

Nevertheless, rejection of the Dispensational view for equating the six sayings with the written Law of Moses must be substantiated by more solid evidence. This may be done by comparing the sayings with the Mosaic Code. Such a procedure of investigation reduces the six sayings, as alleged citations from the written Law, to two, viz.,

- 1) Thou shalt not commit adultery (Matt. 5:27), quoted from Ex. 20:14 (LXX,⁹ Ex. 20:13).
- 2) An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth (Matt. 5:38), from Ex. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21.

So, it seems justifiable to conclude, at first glance, that two Mosaic laws have fallen under Jesus’ criticism, so that the Dispensational evaluations are proved to be not without foundation.

It must be admitted that the Seventh Commandment and the famous law of retaliation are quoted word for word from the Septuagint, which translates exactly from the Decalogue

and the Mosaic Penal Code. But to jump to the above conclusion of a disparity between Moses and Jesus would be rather hasty judgment! The basis for making such disparaging evaluations must be rejected in the light of a more careful examination of Jesus' exposition of the sayings.

d. The Law of Moses Measured by a Proper Exegesis of Jesus' Exposition of the Sayings

A proper exegesis will show that Jesus is not endeavouring to "modify" Moses' laws, nor the sayings, with "love." Rather, He is purging them of the sharp practices¹⁰ devised from them by cunning "lawyers" or of erroneous interpretations heaped upon them by blind teachers,¹¹ just as He has to cleanse the temple from the pollutions of vendors and moneychangers, saying, "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise."¹² By casting out the ugliness of religious fairs from the temple courtyard, the beauty of holiness of the sanctuary is restored. By purging the Mosaic laws and sayings of the ancient Shylockian interpretations, the intents of a just and merciful God are reestablished. Jesus has no higher or fuller moral law to teach than a Biblical exposition of the Mosaic Law. There is no Dispensational disparity between the two lawgivers, for all law comes from God. The Law of Moses is the Law of Jesus. This shall be seen in the exegesis of Jesus' exposition of the sayings, as follows:

(i) Thou shalt not commit adultery

Chafer says that the Seventh Commandment is so intensified under Kingdom teaching that "the glance of the eye is condemned where only adultery had previously been forbidden."¹³ So did the scribes and Pharisees interpret this Commandment on an external basis. In the pericope of John 8:1-11, they accused a woman "taken in adultery" before Jesus, saying, "Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?" Now they did this not only because they took an external view of the Mosaic Law, but also used it maliciously to "tempt" Jesus. It is these twin evils imposed upon Moses by the blindness and wickedness of men that Jesus is purging.

Notice what Jesus said in reply: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Jesus did not say, "He that has never committed adultery like this woman, let him cast a stone at her." In other words, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" is not merely the external prohibition, but rather the internal, "for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."¹⁴ Thus, to look on a woman to lust after her is committing adultery in the heart, which the Seventh Commandment inherently forbids. Is this sexual sin of the heart and eyes a new prohibition to be enforced when the Millennium begins (according to Chafer), or is it an eternal prohibition ever since sin entered into the world? Job, who lived before Moses, under inspiration said of "the law written in his heart,"¹⁵ "I made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?"¹⁶ That Moses' forbidding adultery did include every greater and lesser sexual sin is borne out by the innumerable judicial laws he further made in his Penal Code.¹⁷ The fact that Old Testament saints were prohibited as much as those in the New from looking at a woman to lust after her is further attested by Prov. 6:25, "Lust not after her in thine heart, neither let her take thee by her eyelids." The Law of Jesus is the Law of Moses.

(ii) An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth

This famous law of retaliation (*lex talionis*) is also known as the law of compensation.¹⁸ It is repeated thrice in the Mosaic Penal Code, which suggests its importance. It is a divine maxim for the guidance of Israel's judges¹⁹ to mete out justice fairly and squarely, or in the parlance of modern jurisprudence, "without fear or favour." It is an eternal, unchangeable principle in the moral realm, just as the law of gravity is in the physical. "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" is not what is "popularly conceived of as a primitive form of justice,"²⁰ but a positive enactment based on the Sixth Commandment which was first applied in the punishment of Cain for the murder of his brother Abel, though tempered with mercy,²¹ and given to Noah, under the so-called Dispensation of Human Government: "Whoso

sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.”²² This execution of public justice is expressly confirmed on the shoulders of the civil magistrate by the Apostle Paul saying, “For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.”⁶³ Fairbairn, commenting on the necessity of the *jus talionis* in the words of Kalisch, says:

In fact our own Christian legislation could not dispense with similar principles: life is punished with life, and intentional injuries are visited with more than equivalent penalties. Not even the most sentimental and romantic legislator has ever had the fancy to pardon all criminals out of Christian love. For, in reality, every simple law in our criminal code is based on the *jus talionis* (the law of compensation)²⁴

The universality of the *lex talionis* (or *jus talionis*) is attested by the institution of law courts in every land and by the ubiquitous emblem of a sword and balance upheld in the hands of Justice on the facades of judicial buildings.

A public law has been taken into private hands for a more revengeful purpose! What a travesty of justice! Perhaps the *lex talionis* was often perverted by the Pharisees to devour widow's houses. At any rate, it was maliciously appealed to by those who “tempted” Jesus in the case of the woman taken in adultery. These evil practices must be purged “with unquenchable fire”!²⁵ Jesus is not contradicting the public law of retaliation (or according to Fairbairn, more properly called the law of compensation).²⁶ He is contradicting its misuse. His teaching on non-retaliation with reference to the private individual, which Paul also enjoins in Romans,²⁷ is actually based on Moses' valedictory sermon to Israel, “To me belongeth vengeance and recompense.”²⁸ The Law of Moses is the Law of Jesus.

(iii) Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thy enemy

This grossly inaccurate quotation of Moses' law regarding enemies was discussed earlier in this thesis. “Hate thy enemy” is nowhere to be found in the whole Old Testament,

much less in Moses' Pentateuch. This is simply an erroneous interpolation of his law, first made by them of old times and now taken for granted by them of this age. Moses' teaching on loving one's enemy is no less positive than Christ's, as may be seen in this enactment:

If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him.²⁹

A collateral statute of love for one's enemy is the law on the hospitable treatment of aliens:

And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.³⁰

It is further observed that the Mosaic commandment to love one's enemy reaches into the remotest recess of the heart and stretches to the uttermost reach of the hand. This may be seen in the Book of Proverbs:

Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth; lest the Lord see, and it displease him, and he turn his wrath away from him.³¹

If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee.³²

This last injunction is both quoted and commanded by Paul in the "teachings of grace,"³³ which Chafer says are higher than the Mosaic Law as "infinity surpasses the finite." Does this, according to Chafer, make the Law of Moses at this point higher than Jesus' so-called Kingdom teaching? The more proper evaluation is that the Law of Moses is equal to the Law of Jesus.

(iv) Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of judgment

"Thou shalt not kill" is a direct quotation of the Sixth Commandment, but the rest of the sentence is an addition to

the Word of God “by them of old times.” “And whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of judgment” seems to be a fair comment. Yet, this seemingly helpful commentary has fallen into the category of “whatever is more than these cometh of evil.”³⁴ The added word to the Six Commandment instead of bringing out its inner meaning has obscured it, because these words are spoken in such a way as to say, “You are guilty of murder only when you have killed a man.”

Jesus, seeing the gross darkness engendered by such a legalistic teaching, corrects it. The Sixth Commandment itself deals with the very roots of murder which he elsewhere declares to run deep into the human heart. Since murder is conceived in unrighteous anger, He points out that any one who is angry against his brother, without a cause, shall be in danger of judgment—the same consequence as facing him who kills.

The next two sentences, “And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire,” are usually taken to be the progression of the argument to a climax. R. Laird Harris rather treats them as a second alternation between the quotation of a common error and Jesus’ answer thereto, basing his conclusion from a parallel instance in Matt. 23: 16–19. The writer is inclined to this view. So Jesus is seen saying again, “(You say) whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be liable to the Sanhedrin. (I say) whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire!” The abusive words which are none other than the “breathing out threatenings and slaughter”³⁵ from a murderous heart, were it not for the grace of the Saviour, shall send any hateful man to hell!

Does our Lord’s teaching at this point of the moral law contradict Moses? Is condemnation of unrighteous anger and a foul mouth, as Chafer teaches, Kingdom law for the Millennium, and never for the Mosaic Dispensation? It will be an amazing discovery for one to go through the judicial laws of Moses and such books as the Psalms and Proverbs to find the frequent recurrence of similar injunctions and warnings against the sin of wrath. Does not Moses also say, “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart . . . Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of

thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord"?³⁶ David likens the tongue of the violent man to a serpent with "adders' poison under their lips." Arthur W. Pink, quoting Matthew Henry, observes these snake bites to be "all malicious slanders and censures."³⁷ The Word of Wisdom says, "A fool's lips enter into contention and his mouth calleth for strokes. A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul."³⁸ All these poisonous spoutings from an angry and murderous heart are as much condemned by Moses as by Jesus.

Now, anger, malice and backbiting are some of the besetting sins of the church. So Jesus further enjoins, "Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."³⁹ This is an inseparable corollary to the injunction prohibiting unrighteous anger, and except this law be obeyed, no Christian taking the Lord's Supper can be favoured with His blessing. Does not the Old Testament teach likewise? The Psalmist had already confessed, before Jesus came, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."⁴⁰ There is no difference between the requirements of the Old Testament laws and the New.

(v) Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oath.

In his Reference Bible, Scofield gives Lev. 19:12 as the origin of this saying. But the exact words are: "And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord." The positive command in regard to oaths is "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve Him, and shalt swear by His name."⁴¹

Now Jesus says:

But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven for it is God's throne: Nor by earth; for it is his stool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great king. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.⁴²

Is our Lord here contradicting Moses? By no means! What He is contradicting by this “negative of comparison”⁴³ is the many light oaths the Jews made: by heaven, by earth, by Jerusalem and “by my head,” not realizing that oaths involve intruding into God’s holy presence on a very serious matter, and they who take them are like those who enter the tabernacle to worship. An oath binds a man who takes it to his own hurt. At crucial moments in one’s life, an oath such as is taken in the law court may be required.⁴⁴ But to swear without reverence to the holiness and awesomeness of God is to commit the grave sin of taking God’s name in vain. Besides, the Pharisees also classified oaths under various categories. Oaths such as were sworn by the gold of the Temple were binding. Oaths sworn by the Temple were not binding! R. Laird Harris, quoting the Mishnah, says, “It would obviously be easy for a sharp lawyer operating by these principles to devour the estate of a poor widow who did not know the right things by which to swear!”⁴⁵

There is no contradiction between Jesus and Moses in the law of oaths, for the harmony between the Old and New Testaments may be seen in Psalm 24. Just as Jesus commands us to speak the truth and refrain from light oaths, so the Psalmist requires of the worshipper that he should be one “that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.”

(vi) Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement

This is the last of the series of sayings in which Christ’s exposition of the Mosaic Law is discussed. This saying is not an exact quotation of what Moses wrote, but the Pharisee’s own interpretation of a clause in a lengthy paragraph in Moses’ Civil Code, in which a husband is forbidden to marry back his divorced wife, as follows:

When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man’s wife. And if the

latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the Lord: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.⁴⁶

The Pharisees here make Moses to say, “Let him give her a writing of divorcement,” as if that was his happy approval. Perhaps, they have purposely, or carelessly, twisted their Greek translation of the Hebrew, so as to make Moses serve their evil hearts. Unfortunately, the King James translation of the Hebrew in Deut. 24:1 seems to have been affected by the Pharisees’ translation. It says, “. . . then let him write her a bill of divorcement . . .” The commentary by R. Laird Harris on the King James translation at this point may be helpful to our understanding:

Examining the passage in the Hebrew, we see that actually the verse probably should not be taken as giving a divine approval of divorce at all. The clauses of the first part, the protasis, are so closely joined together by conjunctions that there seems to be no good place for conclusion, the apodosis, until verse 4, where the negative *lo* gives the conclusion to the *ki* of verse 1, meaning “when” or “if.” Also note that the protasis includes different possible situations to all of which the apodosis of verse 4 applies. . . . The Septuagint translation of these verses supports this rendering of the Hebrew and it is followed in the Revised Standard Version.⁴⁷

Where King James gives, “let him write her a bill of divorcement,” the Septuagint has *καὶ γράφει αὐτῇ βιβλίον ἀποστασίου* [*kai graphai aute biblion apostasiou*] which is based on the Hebrew [וְקָתַב לָהּ סֵפֶר פְּרִיחָת] In other words, the Law of Moses, according to the Hebrew, and supported by the Septuagint at this point, should not be read in the imperative mood as the Pharisees have done. It mentions “writing a bill of divorcement” merely as a matter of sufferance. The object of this civil legislation is not the granting of a “merry Hollywood divorce,” but the prohibition of promiscuous remarriage, or as Harris calls it, “wifetrading.”⁴⁸ This exegesis is substantiated by Christ in

Matt. 19:8: "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so." Nor is His prohibition of divorce, "except it be for fornication," a modification of the Mosaic Civil Code, since the judicial laws were already "modified" by God to the practical needs of an imperfect Israelite society,⁴⁹ just as divorce laws today also vary from country to country, according to each one's peculiar custom and environment. In forbidding divorce, "except it be for fornication," Jesus was simply bringing back the eternal, unchangeable Seventh Commandment to its exalted position as in "the beginning." He is preaching the Law of Moses! He is asserting the authority of the Word of God!

Living in an age of rampant divorces, it is salutary to one's soul to further heed the words of the heavenly Bridegroom:

Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.⁵⁰

Before this chapter is brought to a close, a further word should be said of the judicial laws. It was noted at the beginning of this thesis that this category of the threefold Mosaic Law is today generally done away for the reason as given in the case of "writing a bill of divorcement." However, those judicial laws that are universally applicable, are surely binding, e.g., the *lex talionis*, if not according to its literal form, at least according to the equity thereof. Of course such a view is antithetical to that of the Dispensationalists. P. J. Verdam's report of an address by D. P. D. Fabius, Professor in the Free University at Amsterdam, at the end of the 19th century, which represents the writer's view more eloquently, is worthy of full quotation for our study:

Fabius finds as salient features in the Mosaic laws in comparison with Roman law the unity of family, descent, its being related to God, the limitation of property, and God's sovereignty. As law, Mosaic law has no absolute authority, according to Fabius, but is of a relative nature and coordinated with other regulations of law (p. 16). But on account of its own, distinct, divine character it is

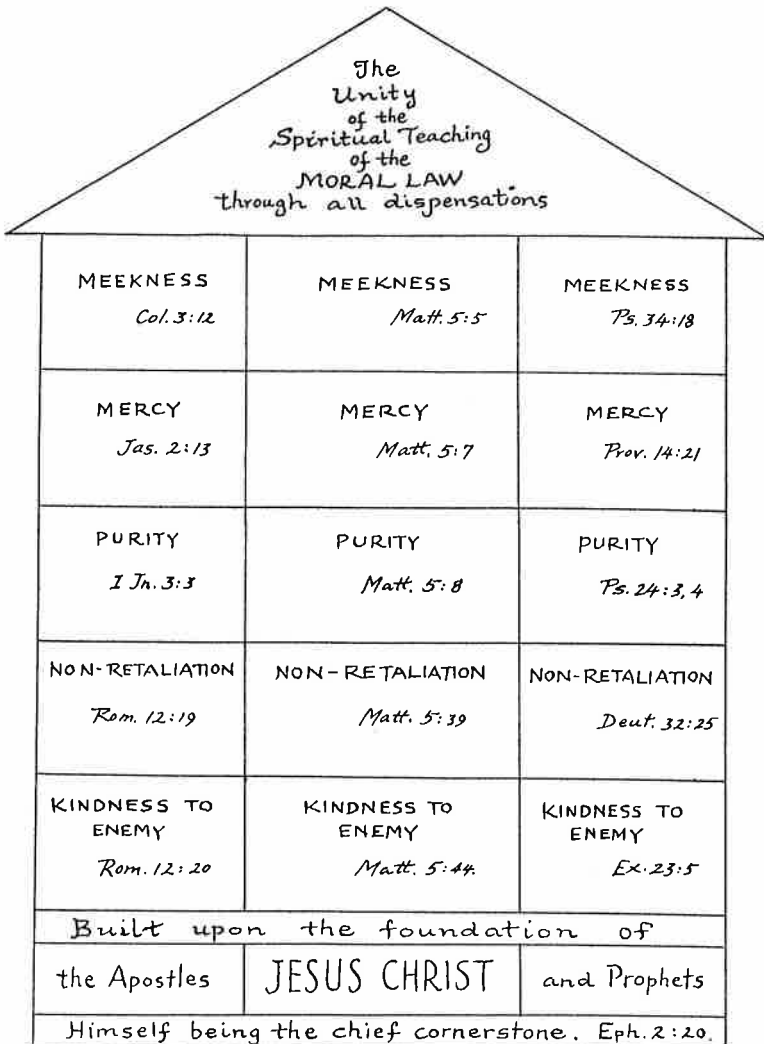


Fig. 5

nevertheless a “mirror for all law” (p. 6), “the norm by which all other systems of law are to be judged, both as regards principles and the manner in which the connexion was brought about between these principles of life” (p. 343), although Fabius, when working this out, does not get much further than censuring the allegedly one-sided and absolute character of subjective right in Roman law (p. 40ff), opposing it with the charitableness of the Bible (p. 45). Fabius also sounds a loud note of warning against the dangers of a too easy comparison (p. 37), and winds up with the conclusion: “There is no question of taking over Mosaic law. Here, too, the words apply that bread is eaten in the sweat of the brow. But it is our duty to seek in this law the word that retains its validity for our times as well. For “What nation is there so great that hath statutes and judgements so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?” (Deut. 4:8)⁵¹

Every pastor taking a leading part in the administration of a congregation, large or small, would do well to look into “the mirror of all law” and to measure his method of administration by “the norm by which all other systems of law are to be judged.” Of course, “the mirror of all law” is not contained within the frame of the Pentateuch, but extends throughout the Old and New Testaments. The Book of Proverbs however deserves special mention as a fitting compendium to the Pentateuch which, if a wise Christian will consistently meditate therein, “findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.”⁵²

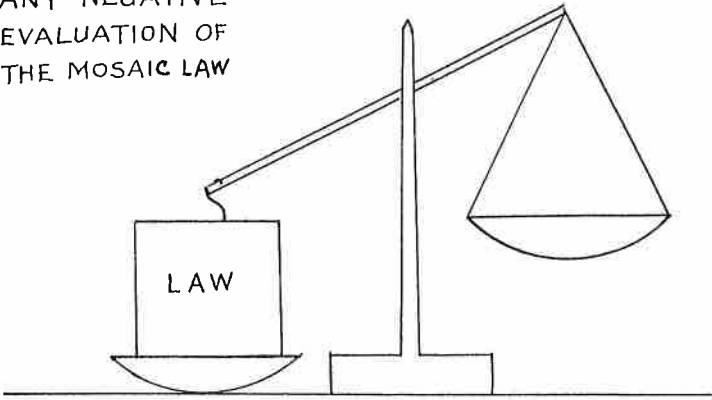
Thus, it has been shown that the Dispensational belittling evaluation of the Mosaic law, whether with regard to the Decalogue or to the judicial laws, has been biased through a careless measurement of it with the Sermon on the Mount. The moral standard of the Law of Moses is the same as the Law of Christ.

2. The Dispensational Evaluation of the Law of Moses Weighed by the Two Great Commandments

a. The Negative Evaluation by Scofield

There is a saying in the Analects of Confucius: “Whatsoever I would that others should not do unto me, that would I not do unto them.” 我不欲人之加諸我也，吾亦欲無加諸人。

ANY NEGATIVE
EVALUATION OF
THE MOSAIC LAW



JESUS' EVALUATION : ON THESE TWO COMMANDMENTS
(LOVE FOR GOD AND MAN) HANG
ALL THE ^{THE} LAW AND PROPHETS.

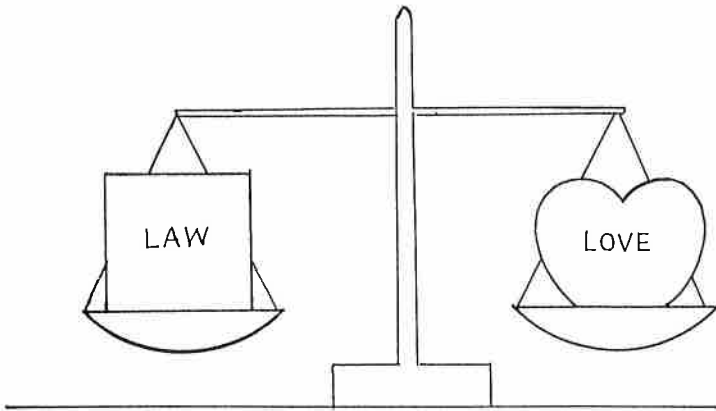


Fig. 6

Well might this maxim of negativism become a Dispensational evaluation of the Law of Moses! For, apart from charging the Mosaic Law to be of a low spiritual standard, Scofield looks upon it also as a system of negatives. That is the conclusion anyone would draw from reading “Law and Grace” in *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*. As pointed out earlier in this thesis, Scofield allows of no commingling of Law and Grace, and by Law, he means the Law of Moses. In other words, the Law of Moses is purely legal, and negative, while the Gospel of Jesus Christ is purely gracious, and positive. Since these two systems are like oil and water, they do not mix, so that “the mingling of them in much of the current teaching of the day spoils both, for law is robbed of its terror and grace of its freeness.”⁵³

The following is a table of negatives of the Law of Moses, gleaned from Scofield’s evaluation under “Law and Grace.”

1. Law is God prohibiting and requiring.
2. Law is a ministry of condemnation.
3. Law curses.
4. Law kills.
5. Law shuts every mouth before God.
6. Law puts a great and guilty distance between man and God.
7. Law says, “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.”
8. Law says, “Hate thine enemy.” (This is a misquotation.)
9. Law never had a missionary.
10. Law utterly condemns the best man.
11. Law is a system of probation.
12. Law stones an adulterous woman.
13. Under law the sheep dies for the shepherd.⁵⁴

b. The Positive Evaluation by Jesus

Is the Law of Moses so gloomy a picture as Scofield has painted? Is the Law of Moses merely a vain code of curses and “Thou shalt nots”? Jesus does not teach an all-negative Mosaic system. In the Sermon on the Mount, He brings out its positive aspects in direct antithesis to the negative Confucian saying, almost word against word. Jesus says, “Wherefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should

do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.”⁵⁵

On another occasion, when a lawyer of the Pharisees “tempted” Him with a moot question on the definition of the great commandment of the law, Jesus replied, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first great commandment.” It is to be noticed that Jesus did not stop short at this point as having fully answered the question. To be complete, He continued with what He substantially said in the Sermon on the Mount, “And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang the law and the prophets.”⁵⁶ What Christ has commanded in the Gospels is further affirmed in the Epistles. John says, “For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous.”⁵⁷ Paul completes with the second great commandment, “And if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.’”⁵⁸

It is to be noted that the second great commandment is taught in the Sermon on the Mount, which the Dispensationalists claim to be Kingdom teaching, and an “intensifying” of the negative Law of Moses. But a careful examination will show that this is not so. The Law of Moses need not be “intensified” with a new evangelical love.⁵⁹ For Moses, not Christ, nor the Apostles, is the first to give the second great commandment. In Lev. 19: 18 he says, “Thou shalt not avenge nor bear grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord.” Then, “to complete the circle of the great commandments” (according to a chart to follow), Moses says further in Deuteronomy, “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy might.”⁶⁰

Although Moses, by God’s grace, was the first to promulgate the two great commandments, it was Jesus, the Fulfiller of the Law of Moses,⁶¹ who should have the pre-eminence, to expound this mighty principle, “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” That is to say, Jesus teaches us that except as the Mosaic laws are seen to “hang” in equipoise between the negatives of “Thou shalt not” and the positives of “Love God and

man,” they must suffer from an unbalance resultant upon the negativistic interpretation of the Pharisees. For the scribes and Pharisees were careful to pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, but had omitted “the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith.”⁶² And what are judgment, mercy and faith but love for God and man? The following chart will illustrate the one-sided, negative evaluation of the Pharisees concerning the Law of Moses and Christ’s exposition of the two great commandments in order to “straighten” it.

If the negative evaluation by the Pharisees of the Law of Moses must be restored to equilibrium by “the weightier things of the law,” which is utmost love for God and man, the logical progression of this moral principle must lead one to discover a wealth of positives in the Mosaic Law to counterbalance the negatives which Scofield has adduced. Indeed, as the Scriptures are more carefully searched, one will rejoice to find that:

1. Law is also God inviting and requesting (Deut. 28: 1).
2. Law is also a ministry of life (Deut. 32:46f).
3. Law also blesses (Deut. 28:2).
4. Law also offers refuge for life (Deut. 19:4).
5. Law also sweetens the mouth of every believer (Ps. 19:10).
6. Law also draws man close to God (Ex. 19:5).
7. Law also says, “To me belongeth vengeance and recompense” (Deut. 32:35).
8. Law (also) says, “If thy enemy hunger give him bread to eat . . . (Prov. 25:21).
9. Law also is a “schoolmaster” to bring sinners to Christ (Gal. 3:24).
10. Law also blesses the outcaste men of Gibeon (Josh. 9:19–21).
11. Law also is a system of perfection (Ex. 19:6).
12. Law also protects an innocent girl (Deut. 22:26).
13. Under Law one living bird is also set free (Lev. 14:7).

In the light of the weightier evidence recovered above, it is easy to understand why Jesus made the Law of Moses the theme of the Sermon on the Mount, and why He gravely cautioned those who thought to make light of Moses:

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the

least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.⁶³

The Pharisees, in keeping merely to the letter of the law, became extreme legalists, and Jesus demanded a righteousness that must be weightier than their papyrus legal scrolls. On the other hand, those who exalt grace at the expense of law might unconsciously become antinomians, and in breaking “one of these commandments and teaching men so shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.” Any evaluation of the Law of Moses, to be approved of God, must be weighed in the balance of Jesus’ verdict:

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.⁶⁴

c. Jesus’ Evaluation of the Law of Moses a Standard for the Reformers

In speaking of the positive evaluation of the Law of Moses by our Lord, the negative side which Scofield has rightly presented must not be forgotten as also from Him. Thus, any standard evaluation of the Mosaic Law must be a positive-negative evaluation. This standard was rightly perceived by the Reformers of the 16th century. Calvin even proceeded to prove the correctness of such a standard from common reason:

It needs no proof, that an injunction of any thing good is a prohibition of the opposite evil; for every man will concede it. And common sense will easily admit, that a prohibition of crimes is a command to practise the contrary duties.⁶⁵

And then he advances a step farther with our Lord to show that in the practice of the duties towards God and man, the Commandments require “somewhat more”⁶⁶ than is com-

monly intended by those forms of expression, as for example, in the requirements of the Sixth Commandment:

Therefore, in this precept, "Thou shalt not kill," the common sense of mankind will perceive nothing more than that we ought to abstain from all act of injury to others, and from all desire to commit any such acts. I maintain that it also implies, that we should do everything that we possibly can towards the preservation of the life of our neighbour. And not to speak without reason, I prove it in the following manner: God forbids us to injure the safety of our brother, because he wishes his life to be dear and precious to us: he therefore at the same time requires of us all those offices of love which may contribute to the preservation of it. Thus we perceive, that the end of the precept will always discover to us whatever it enjoins or forbids us to do.⁶⁷

Commenting on Calvin's positive-negative evaluation of the law at this point, Fairbairn adds, "So also Luther who under the same precept, considers all indeed forbidden that might lead to murder, but holds this also to be included, that 'we must help our neighbour and assist him in all bodily troubles.'"⁶⁸ And so, this positive-negative evaluation of the Law of Moses became a standard in the composition of the Larger and Shorter Catechisms by the Westminster divines, particularly with regard to the Commandments of the Decalogue,⁶⁹ the diligent instruction of which whenever given to young converts of the Church must produce sweet results.

d. Jesus' Evaluation of the Decalogue as a Standard for Reformatory Evangelism

It is to be further observed that of the 196 questions and answers of the Larger Catechism of the Westminster Confession, 57 of these are devoted to a careful exposition of the inherent positive-negative requirements of the Decalogue. This is designed according to Paul's teaching that the law is a "schoolmaster" to bring sinners to Christ.⁷⁰ A Catechism Class for "new converts" based on the Larger Catechism's exposition of the Seventh Commandment, for example, cannot fail to arouse the innermost heart-searching and

**SPECIMEN FROM THE SHORTER CATECHISM
SHOWING
the Positive-Negative Application of
the Ten Commandments in
the Catechising
of Converts**

- Q. 45. Which is the first commandment?
A. The first commandment is, Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
- Q. 46. What is required in the first commandment?
A. The first commandment requireth us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly.
- Q. 47. What is forbidden in the first commandment?
A. The first commandment forbiddeth the denying, or not worshipping and glorifying, the true God as God, and our God; and the giving of that worship and glory to any other, which is due to him alone.
-
- Q. 67. Which is the sixth commandment?
A. The sixth commandment is, Thou shalt not kill.
- Q. 68. What is required in the sixth commandment?
A. The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life, and the life of others.
- Q. 69. What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?
A. The sixth commandment forbiddeth the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbor unjustly, or whatsoever tendeth thereunto.

Fig. 7.

expose such shameful guilt as to drive the catechumens to the mercies of the Saviour. For an insight into the power of this Biblical method of soul conversion, it is proposed that the positive and negative duties required of the Seventh Commandment, according to the Larger Catechism, be reproduced as follows:

Q. 138. What are the duties required in the Seventh Commandment?

A. The duties required in the Seventh Commandment are: chastity in body, mind, affections, words, and behaviour; and the preservation of it in ourselves and others; watchfulness over the eyes and all the senses; temperance; keeping of chaste company; modesty in apparel; marriage by those that have not the gift of continency; conjugal love, and cohabitation; diligent labour in our callings; shunning all occasions of uncleanness, and resisting temptations thereunto.

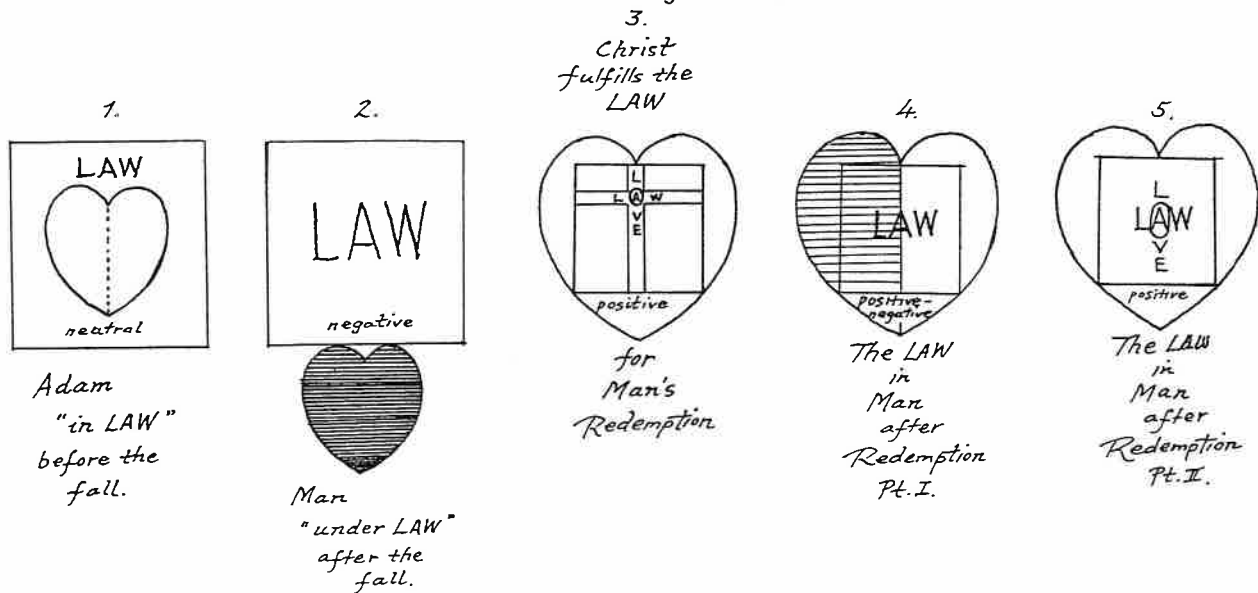
Q. 139. What are the sins forbidden in the Seventh Commandment?

A. The sins forbidden in the Seventh Commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are: adultery, fornication, rape, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts; all unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and affections; all corrupt or filthy communications, or listening thereunto; wanton looks; impudent or light behaviour; immodest apparel; prohibiting of lawful and dispensing with unlawful marriages; allowing, tolerating, keeping of stews, and resorting to them; entangling vows of single life; undue delay of marriage, having more wives or husbands than one at the same time; unjust divorce or desertion; idleness; gluttony; drunkenness; unchaste company; lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancings, stage plays; and other provocations to, or acts of uncleanness either in ourselves or others.

As one follows through the Catechism to the end of the holy commandments one is inevitably conducted to the door of the Saviour by the "schoolmaster" which further questions the sinner in the transition, "What doth every sin deserve at the hands of God?" To this awful question, the catechumen is led to repeat:

A Non-Dispensational View of the Operation of LAW in the History of Redemption

Fig. 8



1. Rom. 10: 5.
Lev. 18: 5.

2. Rom. 3: 19.

3. Ps. 40: 8.
Gal. 3: 13, 4: 4f.
Matt. 5: 17.

4. Rom. 7: 22f
" 7: 12f.

5. Rom. 13: 10
Gal. 5: 14.

Every sin, even the least, being against the sovereignty, goodness, and holiness of God, and against his righteous law, deserveth his wrath and curse, both in this life and that which is to come; and cannot be expiated out by the blood of Christ.⁷¹

It is only after such a lengthy tuition under the “schoolmaster” that a convert is introduced to the mercies of the Saviour, for without the instruction of law and without the increased knowledge of one’s guilt by that instruction, how will one need to flee to Christ for salvation? The Catechisms are a Scriptural method of reformatory evangelism so designed as to help the pastor of a local church, so that there is no excuse for not winning and building new members into the organism of the local congregation. Yet the Dispensationalists fight shy of catechisms⁷² and prefer to instruct converts purely in the “teachings of grace,”⁷³ for they have discarded the Decalogue as a thing “done away.”

It is respectfully submitted that herein is a reason to believe why present day evangelism has failed to produce the reformatory results that should be reaped were there a more respectful and consistent teaching of the law. The writer’s sentiments are substantiated by an editorial on Law and Reformation in a recent issue of Christianity Today:

Another means—if we are to witness a genuine reformation—is *the preaching of the Law*. And this has been greatly neglected in our day of superficial religion. People must be confronted with the Law and the Lawgiver—the holy and righteous God.

It has been said that the Reformation was born the day Luther nailed his ninety-five theses on the door of the church in Wittenberg. But this is not accurate. The Reformation was born in the tortured, self-accused soul of Luther as he was confronted with the moral Governor of the universe—the God whose law he had transgressed. Martin Luther had sought balm and healing for his wounded conscience in the rites of the Church and deeds of penitence. He relates that at times the emotion of his repentance was so agonizing that had it continued for more than ten minutes his limbs would have turned to ashes. And the torment of the knowledge that he had broken the law of God drove him to the authoritative Scriptures where he learned of the redemption that is in Christ. And in the face of divine revelation, he came to Christ through whom he obtained forgiveness and a

The LAW of MOSES
 Comprehended Under
 the TWO GREAT COMMANDMENTS
 Matt. 22:37ff.

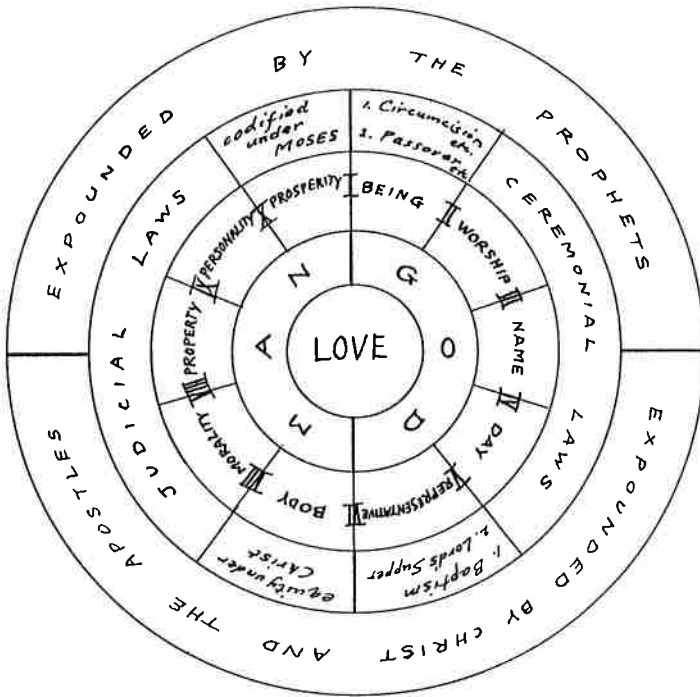


Fig. 9

righteousness that was not his own. Luther experienced the truth of Galatians 3:24: "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."

A more powerful proclamation of the law is the desperate need today. The preaching of the Gospel, defined in the narrow sense of the Atonement alone, is not sufficient. People feel no need of the Gospel, until they are confronted with the law of God A vigorous proclamation of the Law and nothing short of this, is the requisite that will drive people to Christ who is able to cleanse from corruption.⁷⁴

In the light of the discussion above, it should be easier for the Dispensationalists to understand why Jesus presented the exacting demands of the Ten Commandments to the rich young ruler, and not according to the soft-peddling in so much of evangelical preaching today. As the editor of Christianity Today has said, "The preaching of the Gospel, defined in the narrow sense of the Atonement alone is not sufficient." Therefore our Lord has used the law to good advantage, saying, "But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. Thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not commit adultery . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Notice the effects of this lashing from the holy commandments. For the rich young ruler was brought immediately to his knees, beseeching, "All these things have I kept from my youth up: *what lack I yet?*" It is only when he had seen his utter helplessness in conforming to the holy commandments of God that Jesus gave the invitation to "accept" Him, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast . . . and come and follow me."⁷⁵ That the law is a "schoolmaster" to bring us to Christ also during the Gospel Dispensation is Christ's evaluation, not only by precept as we have seen, but also by example. If the restoring of this much depreciated portion of God's Word will cause the reader to revere and teach it, the time taken in writing this chapter will not be spent in vain.

NOTES

¹ Chafer, *loc. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 187.

² *Ibid.*, p. 169f.

³ E. Schuyler English, *Studies in the Gospel According to Matthew* (Zondervan Pub. House, 1938), p. 49f.

- ⁴ Arthur T. Pierson, *Knowing the Scriptures* (Zondervan Pub. House), p. 213.
- ⁵ J. Gresham Machen, *N. T. Greek for Beginners* (The Macmillan Co., 1923), p. 188.
- ⁶ Robertson & Davis, *A New Short Grammar of the Greek Testament* (Harper & Bros., 1933), p. 302.
- ⁷ Machen, *op. cit.*, p. 188.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 82.
- ⁹ *The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament*, with an English Trans. by Sir L. Lee Brenton (Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1879).
- ¹⁰ R. Laird Harris, *Inspiration and Canonicity of the Bible* (Zondervan Publishing House, 1957), p. 49.
- ¹¹ Matt. 23:24.
- ¹² Jn. 2:16.
- ¹³ Chafer, *loc. cit.*
- ¹⁴ Matt. 15:19.
- ¹⁵ Cf. Rom. 2:15.
- ¹⁶ Deut. 22:22ff; etc.
- ¹⁸ David Daube, *Studies in Biblical Law* (Cambridge University Press, 1947), p. 102ff.
- ¹⁹ Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
- ²⁰ "Lex talionis," Vergilius Ferm, *An Encyclopaedia of Religion* (Philosophical Library, 1945), p. 442.
- ²¹ Gen. 4:11-15.
- ²² Gen. 9:6
- ²³ Rom. 13:4
- ²⁴ Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, p. 103.
- ²⁵ Matt. 3:12.
- ²⁶ Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, p. 102.
- ²⁷ Rom. 12:17.
- ²⁸ Deut. 32:35.
- ²⁹ Ex. 23:4f.
- ³⁰ Lev. 19:33f.
- ³¹ Prov. 24:17f.
- ³² Prov. 25:21f.
- ³³ Rom. 12:20.
- ³⁴ Matt. 5:37.
- ³⁵ Acts 9:1.
- ³⁶ Lev. 19:17f.
- ³⁷ Arthur W. Pink, *An Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount* (Bible Truth Depot, 1953), p. 72.
- ³⁸ Prov. 18:7.
- ³⁹ Matt. 5:23f.
- ⁴⁰ Ps. 66:18.
- ⁴¹ Deut. 6:13.
- ⁴² Matt. 5:34ff.
- ⁴³ Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
- ⁴⁴ Matt. 26:63.
- ⁴⁵ Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
- ⁴⁶ Deut. 24:1ff.
- ⁴⁷ Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 55f.
- ⁴⁸ Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
- ⁴⁹ Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, p. 95.
- ⁵⁰ Matt. 19:5f.
- ⁵¹ P. J. Verdam, "Mosaic Law in Practice and Study Throughout the Ages," *Free University Quarterly* (Amsterdam: Free University), Vol. V, 1957/1958, p. 72.
- ⁵² Prov. 8:35.
- ⁵³ Scofield, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*, p. 35.

- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 34f.
⁵⁵ Matt. 7:12.
⁵⁶ Matt. 22:35ff.
⁵⁷ I Jn. 5:3.
⁵⁸ Rom. 13:9.
⁵⁹ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Presbyterian Board of Pub., n.d.), Vol. I, Book II, Chap. viii, Sec. 7.
⁶⁰ Deut. 6:5.
⁶¹ Matt. 5:17.
⁶² Matt. 23:23.
⁶³ Matt. 5:19f.
⁶⁴ Matt. 22:37ff.
⁶⁵ Calvin, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Book II, Chap. viii, Sec. 9.
⁶⁶ *Ibid.*
⁶⁷ *Ibid.*
⁶⁸ Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
⁶⁹ *Infra*, Fig. 7.
⁷⁰ Gal. 3:24, *Vide Appendix*, p. 176.
⁷¹ *The Larger Catechism*, Q. and A. 152.
⁷² Chafer, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 184.
⁷³ *Ibid.*
⁷⁴ Editorial, *Christianity Today*, Vol. III, No. 2, Oct. 27, 1958, p. 20f.
⁷⁵ Matt. 19:16ff.

CHAPTER VII

**JESUS AND
THE DISPENSATIONAL VIEW
OF THE SABBATH**

This thesis will not be complete without an examination of the Dispensational view of the Sabbath. In fact, the Sabbath question is the only plausible ground upon which the whole Dispensational theory of the abrogation of the Decalogue has been built. It is not necessary to quote at length from the Dispensational teaching on this subject, except to state briefly that the Sabbath is abolished for this age. The Sabbath is regarded simply as a day of complete rest for man and beast, a humane provision for man's needs, and not a day of worship or any manner of religious service. It is therefore considered purely a Jewish institution, "a day of legal obligation," done away under grace. It will be re-instituted during the Millennium.¹

1. Evidence for the Dispensational View of the Sabbath

All the Biblical evidence that the Dispensationalists have adduced against Sabbath keeping for the Gospel dispensation is an argument from silence, and several Pauline "proof texts." Chafer says, "Of the whole Decalogue, it is the Sabbath-day commandment only which is **not** carried forward in any manner whatsoever into the reign of grace, nor could it be."² T. B. Gilbert, author of a tract called "Which Day is the Sabbath?" writes:

It is significant to note that nine of the Ten Commandments (especially those containing principles of righteousness) are mentioned in some form in the New Testament; but the fourth commandment, which was a sign to Israel, "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy," is not mentioned.³

The Pauline "proof texts" usually cited in Dispensational writings are *Col. 2:16; Gal. 4:9, 10; and Rom. 14:5.*⁴

2. Evidence for the Dispensational View of the Sabbath Refuted

In regard to the Dispensational argument from silence that the sabbath-day commandment is done away because it

is not carried forward into “the reign of grace,” it is to be noted that this commandment is not carried forward insofar as the Epistles are concerned. In the Gospels, which the Dispensationalists have arbitrarily rejected on this subject for not unfolding any doctrine of the Church, the sabbath-day commandment actually occupies more attention than any other of the Decalogue. It was a doctrine of bitter controversy between our Lord and the Pharisees, and all that needed to be cleared concerning Sabbath keeping was thrashed out on the winnowing floor of the Gospels. To say that the sabbath-day commandment is not carried over into the reign of grace, meaning to exclude the Gospels as having a direct application to the Church, is to brush aside chapters of our Lord’s teaching; and not to face the verdict of His teaching in such a case is to renounce the jurisdiction of a section of the Word of God. Is not “**all scripture** given by inspiration of God” and “profitable for doctrine”?⁵ Since it has been proved in this thesis that the teaching of Jesus, whether recorded in the Sermon on the Mount or elsewhere in the Gospels, binds the Church in doctrine and practice, the Dispensational argument from silence must be considered to be untenable. However, before the verdict of Jesus is sought, the Pauline “proof texts” on the Sabbath question require preliminary examination.

The first passage of Scripture quoted by the Dispensationalists for the abrogation of the Sabbath is Col. 2: 16:

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

According to Scofield’s introduction to the Colossians in his Reference Bible, this letter deals with “two forms of error at work: The first was legality in its Alexandrian form of asceticism, touch not, taste not, with a trace of the Judaic observance of days the second form of error was false mysticism”⁶ The passage of Scripture under review refers to the first form of error, i.e., “touch not, taste not, with a trace of the Judaic observance of days.” Now, as to meat and drink, it was once a doctrinal bone of contention between Paul and Peter, “for before that certain came from James, he [Peter] did eat with the Gentiles, but when they were come he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them

that were of the circumcision.”⁷ The outcome of that contention has ever since become “health to the navel” of the Christian Church. The Gentiles were not only released from keeping Jewish food laws, except that they should “abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood and from things strangled,”⁸ but they were freed also from the rest of the ceremonial laws. Inasmuch as Paul reiterated here that Gentile Christians were not bound by Jewish eating traditions, so the Gentile Church was under no obligation to keep the whole gamut of Jewish religious days. The first day of the week around which they gathered for worship in the tradition of the Apostles was all-sufficient. The point at issue here, as far as this thesis is concerned, was the keeping of Jewish festive days and not the principle of Sabbath or holy rest! How can it be substantiated that the Sabbath principle was not the point at issue? Elicott observes that “of the new moons or of the sabbaths” in Col. 2:16 is a direct allusion to the “new moons and sabbaths” mentioned in Isa. 1:13, 14, Ezek. 45:17 and Hos. 2:11. For example, Hos. 2:11 says, “I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her Sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts.” The Sabbaths in these contexts evidently refer not only to the weekly Sabbath Days, but also to those of special occasions in the Jewish calendar, such as, the Day of Atonement.⁹ Therefore the inherent Sabbath principle is not the object of the Apostle’s discussion. Albert Barnes fully concurs with this interpretation with a more detailed commentary as follows:

The word Sabbath in the Old Testament is applied not only to the seventh day but to all the days of holy rest that were observed by the Hebrews, and particularly to the beginning and close of the great festivals. There is doubtless reference to those days in this place, as the word is used in the plural number, and the Apostle does not refer particularly to the Sabbath so called. There is no evidence from this passage that he could teach there was no obligation to observe any holy time, for there is not the slightest reason to believe that he meant to teach that one of the ten commandments had ceased to be binding on mankind. If he had used the word in the singular number “The Sabbath,” it would then, of course, have been clear that he meant to teach that the commandment had ceased to be binding, and that a Sabbath was no longer to be observed. But the use of the term in plural number, and

the connections show that he had his eye on the great number of days which were observed by the Hebrews as festivals, as a part of their ceremonial and typical law, and not to the moral law, or the ten commandments could be spoken of as a 'shadow of good things to come.' These commandments are from the nature of moral law, of perpetual and universal obligation.¹⁰

A modern analogy of this situation is the criticism by Reformed Christians of the keeping of the Sabbath on Saturday by Seventh Day Adventists without any intention of abrogating the principle of the Sabbath, naturally inherent in the Lord's Day.

The second "proof text" used by Dispensationalists to abrogate the Sabbath principle is Gal. 4:9, 10.

But now after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to weak and beggarly elements whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days and months, and times, and years.

In this passage, no Sabbath is mentioned at all, though it must be admitted that Sabbath days may be hinted. Hermann Olshausen comments rather as follows:

The ἡμέραι are, it may be supposed, the Sabbaths, μῆνες, the new moons, καιροί, longer festival seasons, Easter, Pentecost, the feast of Tabernacles, which were celebrated for eight days successively, ἐνιαυτόν, in fine, the years of jubilee. The first three seasons are also adduced in Col. 2:16. Finally the **solemnization in itself is not blamed** (even the early church had its festivals); **but the superstitious belief**, that it was necessary to salvation.¹¹

The third and final passage cited against the Sabbath that will be considered in this thesis is Rom. 14:5: "One man esteemeth one day above another: another man esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." This verse of Scripture has no reference to the doing away with the Sabbath principle. Rather it gives liberty to observe or not to observe the Jewish Sabbath Day during the period of transition of the Christian Church. Charles Hodge's commentary, with reference also to Col. 2:16 and Gal. 4:10 sums up the teaching of the three passages succinctly as follows:

As the law of Moses not only made a distinction between meats as clean and unclean, but also prescribed the

observance of certain days as religious festivals, the Jewish converts were as scrupulous with regard to this latter point as the former. Some Christians, therefore, thought it incumbent on them to observe these days; others were of a contrary opinion. Both were to be tolerated. The veneration of these days was a weakness; but still it was not a vital matter, and therefore should not be allowed to disturb the harmony of Christian intercourse, or the peace of the church. It is obvious from the context, and from such parallel passages as Gal. iv. 10, "Ye observe days, and months, and times and years," and Col. 2: 16, "Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or the new moon, or of the Sabbath-days," that Paul has reference to the Jewish festivals, and therefore his language cannot properly be applied to the Christian Sabbath.¹²

This commentary brings the preliminary examination of the Dispensational "proof texts" to a close. The remaining part of this chapter will take us to the Gospels to hear the verdict from the lips of our Lord. Before receiving this verdict from Him, there is one important principle of hermeneutics that must be borne in mind: the Fourth Commandment is one of the Ten Words written by the finger of God amidst the thunder and lightning of Sinai and kept in the Ark in the Holy of Holies. No one, in heaven or on earth, is worthy to change an iota of this commandment other than He who is "the Lord of the Sabbath."

3. The Verdict of Jesus on Sabbath Keeping

If there was a law that the Pharisees consistently exploited to "entangle" our Lord, it was the law of the Sabbath. In the foreordination of God, this law was used to "entangle" Him for good, for out of the contention between the "lawyers" and the Master, there is preserved for this age a full exposition of the doctrine of the Sabbath.

First, the Sabbath principle of holy rest is more than ever upheld for the Gospel Dispensation by the example of our Lord. In all the accusations brought against Him in the matter of Sabbath keeping, there was not one that charged Jesus or His disciples for doing secular work as on weekdays. Our Lord travelled long distances during His preaching ministry, and His disciples caught fish to support themselves

and their families, but they were never accused for taking more than a Sabbath Day's journey, or for catching fish or drying nets on the Sabbath Day. All that the Pharisees could find fault with, on a technical basis, was one minor incident—plucking and eating corn by His disciples in the cornfields on the Sabbath Day. This is a small incident, but it tells a mighty story! It strongly suggests that apart from this event, our Lord and His disciples had so faithfully observed the Sabbath that the Pharisees could bring no charge against them. This is not an argument from silence because Jesus was maliciously accused on four other occasions, viz., the healing of the man who had an infirmity for thirty-eight years,¹³ the healing of the man with a withered hand,¹⁴ the healing of the man born blind,¹⁵ and the healing of the woman with a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years.¹⁶ On none of these occasions, could He be convicted for doing weekday secular work.

With regard to the accusation of plucking and eating corn in the cornfields on the Sabbath Day, our Lord declared that His disciples were "guiltless."¹⁷ However, He did not exonerate them without a good reason. As a Lawyer of lawyers, He proceeded to plead the cause of extenuating circumstances which found a precedent in two established cases.

(1) The disciples plucked and ate corn in the cornfields on the Sabbath Day because they were hungry. This was permissible by the example of David and his men who ate shewbread when they were hungry which, under normal circumstances, they were not permitted to eat. Therefore the law of the Sabbath must yield to the law of preservation of human life, which was summed up in the maxim, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." By this principle, our Lord healed on the four occasions cited above, and He showed that this action was further substantiated by the law of nature. In reply to those who criticized Him for healing the man with a withered hand on the Sabbath Day, Jesus said:

What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.¹⁸

The law of "the sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath," however, is never to be used as a license to do according to one's pleasure, but "to do well" on the Sabbath Day. Therefore, it is lawful to visit the sick and help the poor on the Sabbath Day, but not to mow one's lawn or wash one's car.

(2) The disciples plucked and ate corn in the cornfields on the Sabbath Day in the course of their active gospel ministry, and this was permissible under the exemption accorded to priests who "profaned" the Sabbath¹⁹ by offering sacrifices and circumcising "a man."²⁰ The law of the Sabbath must yield to the law of rendering service to God. One greater than the Temple is still greater than a law of the Temple. Therefore, it is lawful to travel about on the Sabbath Day on preaching engagement, but not lawful to go on a picnic.

But the resultant teaching from the afore-mentioned precepts is the most important of all. The Son of man is "Lord even of the Sabbath." There would not have been a Sabbath law if the Lawgiver had not given it. By virtue of His higher prerogative as Lawgiver, it would be justifiable for our Lord to exonerate His disciples with no reference to the legal precedents whatsoever if He so chooses. That He has power to amend the law of the Sabbath, without reference to any legal precedence, is assuredly hinted by His third declaration, "The Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath."²¹

In contrast with the Lordship of Christ, Moses, a faithful servant though he was in God's house, had no such power. When certain men were defiled by the dead body of a man so that they could not keep the Passover on the appointed day, Moses could not set another date for the defiled men until he had made due inquiry from the Lord. This is Moses' testimony of his inability to amend the date of keeping the Passover, except as the Lord would make a ruling:

And Moses said unto them, Stand still, and I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you. And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you or of your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the passover unto the Lord. The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it²²

The fourteenth day of the second month is one month after the regular date of the passover, which falls on the fourteenth day of the first month.²³ He who is “Lord even of the Sabbath” was He who amended the Passover!

If the Lord alone had any power to amend a holy day in the Old Dispensation, then none ever changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday for the New except the Lord Himself. It is true the Bible records no explicit command from His lips, but His appearances on the first two consecutive Sundays after the resurrection to bless the disciples assembled for worship, strongly attest to His sanction.²⁴ Why did our Lord appear on the first two consecutive Sundays to bless the disciples in worship? Because two is the least number required of a lawful witness: “. . . in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.”²⁵

The first day of the week that the Lord of the Sabbath established for Christian worship is properly called the Lord’s Day.²⁶ It is right that the Lord’s Day should be a Sabbath Day also by the divine principle that every holy day apart from the Sabbath Day, under the Mosaic Dispensation, must be kept as a Sabbath Day. How much more must the Lord’s Day, in commemoration of the finished work of redemption, be set aside as a Sabbath Day of worship and witness. It is therefore called by reformed theologians the Christian Sabbath. Those who hold to the Dispensational view that the Lord’s Day is in no way connected with the Sabbath Day of the Old Dispensation, nor should holy rest be required for this Day in the worship and service of God,²⁷ should consider our Lord’s view on Sabbath keeping.

It is finally submitted that this synthetic view of the Sabbath Day as transferred from the seventh day to the first by the implicit command of our Lord is consistently taught by the Westminster Confession, as follows:

As it is of the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God, so, in his Word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all men in all ages, he hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath, to be kept holy unto him: which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week, which in Scripture is called the Lord’s Day, and to be continued to the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath.

This Sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering of their common affairs beforehand, do not only observe an holy rest all the day from their own works, words, and thoughts, about their worldly employments and recreations but also are taken up the whole time in public and private exercise of his worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.²⁸

NOTES

¹ *Scofield Reference Bible, op. cit.*, p. 1011f.

² Chafer, *Grace*, p. 245.

³ T. B. Gilbert, *Which Day is the Sabbath?* (Chicago: Good News Pub.).

⁴ W. R. Newell, *Romans Verse by verse* (Moody Press, 1938).

⁵ II Tim. 3: 16.

⁶ *Scofield Reference Bible, op. cit.*, p. 1262.

⁷ Gal. 2: 12.

⁸ Acts 15: 29.

⁹ *Lev. 16: 31.*

¹⁰ Barnes, *op. cit.*, p. 306.

¹¹ Hermann Olshausen, *Biblical Commentary on the New Testament* (New York: Sheldon, Blakeman & Co., 1858), Vol. IV, p. 562.

¹² C. Hodge, *op. cit.*, p. 420.

¹³ *Jn. 5: 1ff.*

¹⁴ *Matt. 12: 9ff.*

¹⁵ *Jn. 9: 1ff.*

¹⁶ *Lk. 13: 10ff.*

¹⁷ *Matt. 12: 7.*

¹⁸ *Matt. 12: 11f.*

¹⁹ *Matt. 12: 5.*

²⁰ *Jn. 7: 22.*

²¹ Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

²² *Num. 9: 6ff.*

²³ *Num. 9: 3.*

²⁴ *Jn. 20: 19ff.*

²⁵ *Matt. 18: 16.*

²⁶ *Rev. 1: 10.*

²⁷ *Scofield Reference Bible, op. cit.*, p. 1011.

²⁸ *Westminster Confession*, Chap. xxi, Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath-day, para. vii, viii.

CHAPTER VIII

**JESUS AND
THE DISPENSATIONAL VIEW
OF TITHING**

Finance is an important factor in the economy of human society. It is as important a factor in the maintenance of the House of God as it is in the management of secular institutions. There is no wonder then that a law on the financial support of the Temple should also be given to the people of God by the hand of Moses.¹ Finance for the House of God is as important today as in the day of Moses. If the discussion in this chapter will contribute somewhat to a better understanding of the economical management of the Church, indeed, a problem with many a struggling congregation, the time taken herein will not have been spent in vain.

1. A General Survey of Tithing

Tithing was the basic law of financial support for the Temple under the old dispensation. It is not within the province of this thesis to inquire into the details of the laws and by-laws of the Tithe, as prescribed by the hand of Moses, but merely to note that Tithing was the minimum standard of financial support required of the people of God.

The law of the Tithe did not originate with Moses. It was inherent in the grateful hearts of the patriarchs from the beginning.² Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec, the priest of the most high God, and he was blessed by one greater than he.³ Jacob vowed to give a tenth to the God of Bethel who saved him from a howling wilderness,⁴ and that vow remained forever a fresh memorial before the Lord. Moses tells us that the God to whom Jacob vowed to give a tenth spoke to the patriarch two decades later in another crisis of his life, "I am the God of Beth-el, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me"⁵ Jacob's tithe had received the gracious acceptance of El Shaddai, the God of All-sufficiency who, seeing the sincerity of the patriarch's worship, returned to bless him with His abiding presence in his hour of need.

On the other hand, those people of God who enjoyed His

blessings with a cold and callous heart were denounced as robbers. Malachi's message to the remnants who resettled comfortably in Jerusalem after their return from the exile said:

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.⁶

What a solemn rebuke upon the neglect of God's people to tithe! What a solemn declaration against Christians today who fail to faithfully give of their income to the maintenance of the Church of God. The writer sincerely believes that the Word of God by Malachi is as much a direct message to Christians today as it was to the sons of Israel. This is based upon the teaching of Paul that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."⁷ This is also based on the corollary that since the Mosaic Law is the Word of God, that portion of the Law that is not abrogated under the Gospel Dispensation shall remain and continue as a standard whereby the life and conduct of Christians today shall be judged.

The Revival of Tithing in the United States of America

Now, the view that the law of Tithing applies to the Christian Church as much as it did to Israel has become an ever growing conviction in Bible-believing churches today, especially in the United States of America. George A. E. Salstrand, in his comprehensive history of the development of Tithing in America, remarks that "this Biblical doctrine was only recently rediscovered by American Christians and the revival of stewardship is largely an American contribution to theological thinking."⁸ He further observes that "in the old world the most common means of support for the churches was subsidy by the state, supplemented by fees for

such church ministration as baptisms, marriages, funerals, etc.”⁹ This tradition followed the footsteps of the early colonists to the new world, but was soon abandoned under the life of a new economy. It could not survive when the Union was formed and the Constitution was adopted, separating the church from the control of the state. A necessity therefore arose for finding other means of financial support of the churches. This necessity gradually led to the rediscovery of the law of Tithing at the close of the nineteenth century, and on to the great stewardship awakening in the forties and fifties of the last century.

Some of the prophets of the great stewardship awakening were Horace Bushnell, a popular congregational preacher and theologian of Hartford, Connecticut; Abel Stevens, a Methodist clergyman and editor; Lyman Abbot, the successor of Henry Ward Beecher in Brooklyn; and Josiah Strong, minister of the Central Congregational Church of Cincinnati.

Horace Bushnell asserted that what the Church needed was one more revival, namely, that of Christian Stewardship, or “the consecration of the money power of the church of God.” He declared, “When that revival comes, the kingdom of God will come in a day.”¹⁰ Abel Stevens predicted, “A change amounting to a revolution must come over Christendom (with regard to the) relation of Christian men to property, . . . Before Christianity can fairly accomplish its mission in our world.”¹¹ Lyman Abbot said that the objective of all business and activity of human endeavour was none other than the “promotion of the kingdom of God.”¹² Lastly, Josiah Strong astonished his hearers with the statement, “It is the duty of some men to make a great deal of money.”¹³ He declared that those whom God had given talents to make money should do so with the purpose of consecrating their earnings to the expansion of God’s kingdom. He pointed out that in whatever occupation a Christian might be, he was “under the same obligation to be wholly consecrated to the work as is the missionary.”¹⁴ When the great stewardship awakening reached its peak in the fifties, the revival of 1857–58 burst out suddenly into flames. The spark from a prayer meeting called in New York was lit by a lay missionary named Jeremiah Lamphier.

A century after this great stewardship awakening, God continues to bless those who faithfully continue to tithe.

Salstrand reports from a comparative study of 48 denominations in the United States for the year 1953 that the highest per capita giving church was the Christian and Missionary Alliance. The sum of \$44.50 per person was contributed to missions alone, in addition to the regular giving for the support of the home church. The average per capita giving for foreign missions of the other 47 denominations trailed pitifully behind with a mere \$1.45. H. E. Nelson, a representative of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, wrote to Salstrand concerning the financial policy of his denomination that **Tithing** and Christian Stewardship were inherent principles in the doctrinal position of his church, and that “all but an inconsequential few, tithe and give offerings in addition to the regular tithe the issue of tithes, offerings and Christian Stewardship are kept alive week in and week out in the churches of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.”¹⁵

2. The Dispensational View on Tithing

In contrast with the doctrine and practice of Tithing as maintained in one of the most fruitful missionary churches of the United States, the Dispensationalists teach that since Tithing is a Mosaic law, it should not be commingled with the principle of Christian giving under Grace, which is called “Stewardship.” Chafer says, “Stewardship is a New Testament doctrine governing benevolence, and stands in sharp contrast to the Old Testament plan of tithing while equally differentiated from mere random giving.”¹⁶ William L. Pettingill replies to the question, “How may I prove tithing belongs to the present dispensation of grace,” as follows:

You cannot prove that tithing belongs to the grace dispensation, for it does not so belong. It is a good thing to give proportionately as God prospers (I Cor. 16:2), and it certainly ought to be considered a high privilege to give to God under grace as much as His people were commanded to give under law; but tithing is not laid down in the New Testament as a Christian obligation.¹⁷

In the same book from which the above citation is made, Pettingill continues, “Tithing is not the principle of Christian giving at all, though many Christians practice tithing.”¹⁸

Now, it is to be noted that both Chafer and Pettingill’s interpretation that Tithing is not the principle of Christian

giving is determined obviously by this compartmentalizing principle of Dispensational hermeneutics: “The Law of Moses is completely done away under the Dispensation of Grace.” Does Jesus say that Tithing is not a principle of Christian giving? Is it true that Tithing is nowhere taught in the New Testament? Perhaps the Lord has much more to say on Tithing than many Dispensationalists think.

3. The Verdict of Jesus on Tithing

In one of the many denunciations of the Pharisees, Jesus remarks, “But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”¹⁹ A superficial reading of this verse of Scripture with one’s attention drawn to the first part of the verse might lead one to a false impression that Jesus is rebuking the Pharisees for tithing. Similarly, in a casual reading of the parable of the Pharisee and the publican,²⁰ one might take a light view of Tithing because it was mentioned again in connection with the works of a Pharisee. Is Christ denouncing Tithing per se or is He denouncing the hypocritical Tithing of the Pharisee? A more careful study of Lk. 11:42 and Matt. 23:23, in which Tithing is mentioned alongside with judgment, the love of God, mercy and faith, shows that the latter are “weightier matters of the law” which ought to be done; yet Tithing is not to be left undone! While stressing the weightier matters of the law (N.B.: the love of God, mercy and faith are called weightier matters of the **law**), Jesus does not slight even one of the least commandments of God which He declares, in the Sermon on the Mount, shall not be destroyed as much as a tittle. Jesus has not abrogated Tithing in the New Testament but rather has upheld it. And the few words He appends to the rebuke on the Pharisees are precious for the stirring up of our conscience towards a more dutiful support of the Church of God. However, according to the hermeneutical principle laid down earlier in this chapter, which says, “That portion of the Law that is not abrogated under the Gospel Dispensation shall remain and continue as a standard whereby the life and conduct of Christians today shall be judged,”²¹ the law of Tithing shall stand had Jesus not confirmed its validity in the Gospel records!

One argument often presented by the Dispensationalists against Tithing is the teaching of Paul in II Cor. 8 and 9.²² Since Paul has not mentioned Tithing but exhorts “hilarious”²³ giving, therefore the Christian is not to be judged for Tithing, for that would be bringing him under the law. Such an argument is fallacious because Jesus also exhorts Christians to give of their very best, “Give, and it shall be given you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom.”²⁴ In Paul’s farewell message to the Ephesian elders, our Lord is further quoted as saying, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”²⁵ And in the example of the widow’s mites, He commends the poor woman for giving her whole living.²⁶ Do all these exhortations to liberal and sacrificial giving, without reference to Tithing, therefore destroy the Law of Giving? If, as Pettingill says, a Christian under grace is expected to give “as much as His people were commanded to give under Law,”²⁷ the logic of this argument proves nothing less than that Tithing for the Christian is more than ever upheld! “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.”²⁸

Another argument of the Dispensationalists against Tithing is that since Christians have the higher “law of Christ”²⁹ within their hearts, they must not come under the bondage of law again, so that to command them to tithe would be contrary to the “teachings of Grace.” This is also a fallacy because within the “teachings of Grace” countless commands are given, yea, even the thunderous commandments of the Decalogue are repeated to them in the same imperative mood.³⁰ Why should not Christ speak through Malachi today to command Christians to render their God-appointed giving? The reason why Dispensationalists talk so much of the sweet workings of grace at the expense of law is that they have not reckoned with the practical aspects of Christian practice which, by and large, fall far short of the heavenly standards. When the Church of God, as represented in 47 denominations in the United States, gave a pittance of \$1.45 per capita to foreign missions in 1953, according to Salstrand’s statistics, it was high time for the prophet to thunder forth the Law of the Tithe. For, if it is true that we are not under law when we are led of the spirit,³¹ it is equally true that we go under its denunciation when we are led of the flesh.

A most important teaching of Jesus that concerns Tithing is implied in His requirement of the rich young ruler, “Do not steal . . . Defraud not.”^{32*} Now, Malachi declares that defaulters in Tithing have robbed God. Therefore Tithing is a “by-law” inherently included in the Eighth Commandment, “Thou shalt not steal!” Therefore Tithing is a moral law that defies abrogation under Grace or under any other dispensation, so long as human institutions last. And if the law of Tithing is not done away, Christians are obliged also to keep it. Refusing to tithe on the plea of Christian liberty is to rob God. Giving more than a tithe under whatever principle one may call it is to fulfill the law of the Tithe.

The motive of Christian Tithing is love and not fear. So is the motive of Mosaic Tithing, for Tithing is also included under one of the Two Great Commandments which Moses gave and Christ confirmed, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”³³ Why should not Tithing be a law of love for both Hebrew and Christian when we are thus reminded by His Word:

He made him ride on the high places of the earth,
That he might eat the increase of the field;
And He made him to suck honey out of the rock,
And oil out of the flinty rock;
Butter of kine, and milk of sheep,
With fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan,
And goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat;
And thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape.³⁴

Yet, Tithing is only the first step in giving. The Hebrews have a second Tithe, and some say a third,³⁵ freewill offerings too and alms for the poor. The teaching of our Lord on Tithing in the Gospels in no way limits the “hilarious” giving that Dispensationalists are happy to give. For above the law of Tithing is the law of Love.

NOTES

¹ Lev. 27:30ff; Num. 18:26ff; Deut. 12:5ff; 14:23ff.

² Rom. 2:14f.

³ Heb. 7:6.

⁴ Deut. 32:10.

⁵ Gen. 31:13.

⁶ Mal. 3:8ff.

⁷ II Tim. 3:16f.

⁸ George A. E. Salstrand, *The Story of Stewardship in the United States of America* (Baler Book House, 1956), Preface.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

¹⁶ Chafer, *op. cit.*, Vol. VII, p. 293f.

¹⁷ William L. Pettingill, *Bible Questions Answered* (3rd ed., Just a Word Incorporated, 1935), p. 94.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.95.

¹⁹ Lk. 11:42.

²⁰ Lk. 18:10.

²¹ *Supra*, p. 146.

²² *Scofield Reference Bible, op. cit.*, p. 1235.

²³ Pettingill, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

²⁴ Lk. 6:38.

²⁵ Acts 20:35.

²⁶ Mk. 12:41ff.

²⁷ Pettingill, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

²⁸ Rom. 3:31.

²⁹ *Scofield Reference Bible, op. cit.*, p. 1326.

³⁰ Rom. 13:9.

³¹ Gal. 5:18.

³² Mk. 10:19.

*Suppose this rich young ruler had been evading payment of income tax to Caesar. How these words must have stabbed his guilty heart!

³³ Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:37ff.

³⁴ Deut. 32:13f.

³⁵ Unger, *op. cit.*, p. 1102.

CHAPTER IX

THE DISPENSATIONAL VIEW OF THE “IMPRECATORY”¹ PSALMS EXAMINED IN THE LIGHT OF THE TEACHING OF JESUS

1. Reasons for Inclusion of the “Imprecatory” Psalms in This Thesis

Two reasons have motivated the writer to include the “Imprecatory” Psalms within the study of this thesis.

(a) The Psalms were considered both by Jews and our Lord to be a part of the Law of Moses. In an argument with the Jews concerning His deity, Jesus quoted His authority from Psalm 82 and referred to it as “your law,”² that is to say, “the Law of Moses which the Jews believed.” The Psalms are also considered to be “Jewish”³ by the Dispensationalists, a product of the Dispensation of Law. A treatment of the “Imprecatory” Psalms therefore falls within the province of this thesis.

(b) The Book of Psalms, says Luther, is “a little Bible.”⁴ It is the most read book of the Bible, as may be evidenced by the public demand for “New Testament with Psalms” editions, and also for its inclusion under “Responsive Readings” in hymnals. Another evidence of its popularity is the reading or singing of Psalms in worship on the Lord’s Day. To declare that certain Psalms are “imprecatory” and “unsuited”⁵ to the Church inevitably arouses the feelings of those who love the Psalms, for the Psalms have always been read and sung in the Church without any reservation. The writer is such an one who has been aroused and he takes advantage of this opportunity to inquire if it is right to declare the “Imprecatory” Psalms “unsuited to the Church.” Are the Dispensationalists justified in doing so?

2. The Dispensational View of the “Imprecatory” Psalms

In order to form a fair picture of what is meant by the Dispensational view of the “Imprecatory” Psalms, it is

proposed to quote from two Dispensational writers, and from the commentary of one of them on a Psalm that is considered to be “imprecatory.”

(a) Scofield says:

The imprecatory Psalms are the cry of the oppressed in Israel for *justice*—a cry appropriate and right in the early people of God, and based upon a distinct promise in the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 15:18 *refs.*); but a cry unsuited to the church, a heavenly people who have taken their place with a rejected and crucified Christ (Luke 9.52–55).⁶

(b) Arno C. Gaebelein, writing in *The Annotated Bible* under “The Message of the Psalms,” confirms Scofield’s view:

It would be impossible to give a complete review of the great message contained in the Psalms. A close study of each Psalm only can bring this out fully and even then we probably touch but the surface of this marvellous mine of wisdom and knowledge. That a part of the message is the experience of the Saint in the world, his trials, sorrows, the persecutions he suffers, his dependence on God, his deliverance and much else, is known to all readers of this book. *Yet it must be remembered that the experiences are those of Jewish Saints; true Christian experience is higher. In the midst of persecutions from the enemies, these Jewish Saints call to God to destroy their enemies, to burn them up like stubble. The New Testament demands that Saints should love their enemies.*7*

Gaebelein has a companion volume to his Annotated Bible called, “*The Book of Psalms, a Devotional and Prophetic Commentary*”⁸ in which the Psalms are more fully discussed. In order to be fair to the Dispensational viewpoint, it is proposed to quote at length from his commentary on Ps. 137:7–9, which is considered to be imprecatory.

The Future Terrible Vengeance. (Verses 7–9)

Remember, O Jehovah, the children of Edom
 In the day of Jerusalem,
 Who said, Rase it, rase it,
 Even unto the foundations thereof.
 O daughter of Babylon that shall be destroyed,
 Happy is he who recompenseth thee,

As thou hast done to us.
 Happy is he who taketh and dasheth
 Thy little ones against the rock.

The latter statement is frequently used by infidels of every description, including the liberalists of Christendom. What a God, they say, who can inspire one to write that innocents, babes, should be dashed against a stone! *Of course we as Christian believers, who are told to love our enemies, shrink from such language.** Yet how often this very thing has been done by soldiers of military Christendom. Even worse today are the bombings of unfortified towns, inhabited by non-combatants, and hundreds of mothers and their babes are cruelly dashed to pieces.

There is God's law of retribution. No doubt the Chaldean hordes as they swept against Jerusalem were the instruments of God to punish unrepentant Israel. They were cruel, ripped open women with child, and dashed tender babes against the stones. As they did, so should it be done unto them. As they sowed, so would they reap. We can think here of Adoni-bezek. When the men of Judah caught him they cut off his thumbs and great toes. He confessed then in the following words: "Three score and ten kings having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table; as I have done, so hath God requited me" (Judges 1:6,7). There is a judgment to come which will be executed according to God's righteous law. Babylon, and all the enemies of Israel, will receive their punishments accordingly.⁹

3. The Dispensational View of the Imprecatory Psalms Examined in the Light of the Teaching of Jesus

In the first paragraph of the commentary on Ps. 137:7-9, Gaebelien says, "Of course we as Christian believers, who are told to love our enemies shrink from such language." "Such language" refers to the Psalmist's prayer for judgment on Edom, Judah's age-long enemy, and on Babylon, Judah's captor.

Now, it is to be noted that in the second paragraph, Gaebelien allows judgment to be righteously executed for Israel (a modern example: Japanese reparations to the Philippines for the atrocities committed during World War II), because "there is God's law of retribution." This view is right, for the eternal principle of *lex talionis* applies also in

international spheres. Now, it was shown earlier in this thesis that Jesus did not abrogate Moses' law of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" because it was given, not by Moses, but by God, to maintain justice in the world. But Gaebelien must bring in the Dispensational principle of "dividing" and say in words like Scofield's, "This language is 'unsuited to the church!'"

Why must the precious Word of God, old yet ever new, be disqualified at this point in direct application to the Christian Church? Why must the Jews be right to pray for national justice and not the Christians? Scofield's argument is that they have a land given them by God, and standing upon their "earthly" rights, they can imprecate against their oppressors. Is God the God of one nation only? Does not Paul testify that He "... hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation"?¹⁰ If this Scripture teaches that God has also given to the nations of the world their lands, then the Christians of those lands have equal citizenship rights, and are as much protected as the Jews under God's law of retribution. On this submission, the imprecatory Psalms are equally a prayer suited to the Christian as to the Jew.

Lessons from the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen

But Christ has more to say than the Sermon on the Mount. He has a full discourse on God's law of retribution extended to the national and international spheres in the parable of the wicked husbandmen. This parable is recorded in all three of the Synoptic Gospels¹¹ and the account in Matthew is as follows:

Hear another parable: There was a certain household-er, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen

saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and the Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them¹²

According to Scofield's annotation in his Reference Bible, "the Wicked Husbandmen" is related to the parable of Jehovah's vineyard as recorded in Isa. 5: 1-7. The latter is a parable of judgment upon apostate Judah, of terrible destruction, couched in such language as: "I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down . . ." The parable of the wicked husbandmen, which is given under the Gospel Dispensation, teaches the same law of retribution. Inasmuch as Israel has the right to imprecate against her oppressors, so has Christ the right, as Judge of the nations, to punish Israel when she sins. The doctrine of retribution is masterly put by Jesus into the mouths of the Jews, "He will miserably destroy those wicked men . . ." Adam Clark aptly observes: ". . . our Lord caused them to pass that sentence of destruction upon themselves which was literally executed about forty years after."¹³

At the close of the parable, Jesus further extends this principle of judgment on the ungrateful Jews who crucified Him to the widest possible sphere in human relations: "And *whosoever* shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on *whomsoever* it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." This stone is none other than the stone "cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay and brake them to pieces."¹⁴ Jesus is coming to judge

every nation that rejects Him, and it is He who will judge His enemies with fire. Shall He who is also “full of grace and truth” be required to shrink from the language of Psalm 137?

The reason for the confusion in Dispensational thinking is the failure to differentiate between public and private enemies. Christians should leave to God to judge between them and their personal enemies, but in the realm of public justice,¹⁵ they should hate with perfect hatred¹⁶ all who rebel against the righteousness and truth of God. Calvin points out this much-observed truth in his commentary of Ps. 137:8:

In declaring those to be happy who should *pay back vengeance upon the Babylonians*, he does not mean that the service done by the Medes and Persians, in itself, met with the approbation of God; for they were actuated in the war by ambition, insatiable covetousness, and unprincipled rivalry; but he declares that a war which was carried on in a manner under God’s auspices, should be crowned with success Jeremiah (chap. xlviii.10) declares those cursed who should do the work of the Lord negligently, that is, fail in strenuously carrying out the work of desolation and destruction, to which God had called them as hired executioners. It may seem to savour of cruelty, that he should wish the tender and innocent infants to be dashed and mangled upon the stones, but he does not speak under the impulse of personal feeling, and only employs words which God had himself authorized, so that this is but the declaration of a just judgment, as when our Lord says, “With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” (Matt. vii.2.)¹⁷

It is good that Calvin has further pointed out that this imprecatory prayer is not uttered “under the impulse of personal feeling, and only employs words which God had himself authorized.” According to the writer who has experienced the bondage of captivity, under the Japanese conquest of Singapore during World War II, such imprecatory Psalms are rather the “intercession for us with groanings”¹⁸ of the Holy Spirit, so that Christians might not lose hope in the Judge of the nations. Were not the faithful remnants of Judah, pining by the rivers of Babylon in greater floods of tears, similarly encouraged? The question of taking private revenge surely never entered into these

Psalms.

The imprecatory Psalms rightly belong to both Hebrews and Christians to assure them of justice due to them, not only in the physical realm, but also in the spiritual. Did not the prophets cry out against the false prophets, and the apostles against the false apostles? Thus Jude exhorts us to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,”¹⁹ while Paul admonishes even by name: “. . . some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: of which is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.”²⁰ But Paul’s imprecatory denunciation of those who spoil our salvation is no less vehement than the Psalm:

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that he have received, let him be accursed.”²¹

The imprecatory Psalms are of greater significance than ever in these last days of violence and lawlessness, apostasy and unbelief. To those who, by the grace of God, have been called to the arena of the world to fight the hordes of Satan, transformed into angels of light, these Psalms are an ointment for wounds from the contests. Theirs is a weary lot, but God, the God of all comfort, also heals their bleeding heart with this balm of eternal justice. Henceforth, let no man say of any Psalm, “It is unsuited to the church.”

NOTES

¹ *Supra*, Preface, p. x.

² Jn. 10:34.

³ *Supra*, Preface, p. x.

⁴ Luther, *Works of Martin Luther*, with Intro. and Notes (The Phila. ed.; Muhlenberg Press, 1932), Vol. VI, p. 385.

⁵ *Supra*, Preface, p. x.

⁶ *Scotfield Reference Bible*, *op. cit.*, p. 599.

* Underscoring ours.

⁷ A. Gaebelein, *The Annotated Bible*, Vol. III, p. 211.

⁸ A. Gaebelein, *The Book of Psalms*.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 478.

¹⁰ Acts 17:26.

¹¹ Matt. 21:33ff; Mk. 12:1ff; Lk. 20:9ff.

¹² Matt. 21:33ff.

¹³ Adam Clark, *The New Testament with a Commentary and Critical Notes* (1831), Vol. I, p. 188.

¹⁴ Dan. 2:34.

¹⁵ Carl McIntire, *Author of Liberty* (Collingswood, N. J.: Christian Beacon Press, 1946), p. 99.

¹⁶ Psalm 139:22.

¹⁷ John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, trans. James Anderson (Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1849), p. 197.

¹⁸ Rom. 8:26.

¹⁹ Jude 3.

²⁰ I Tim. 1:20.

²¹ Gal. 1:6ff.

CHAPTER X

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the Preface to this thesis, the writer stated his theological position as being essentially Reformed. This position found him in disagreement with certain teachings of the Dispensational school, as represented by the Scofield Reference Bible, particularly with regard to the Law of Moses and the "Imprecatory" Psalms. The Dispensationalists say that the Law of Moses is completely done away under the Gospel Dispensation and declare that the "Imprecatory" Psalms are "unsuited to the church." The writer, however, believes that the Mosaic Law is not completely abrogated, especially the Decalogue in which the unchangeable moral law is summarized, nor should the "Imprecatory" Psalms be designated "unsuited to the church."

This difference with the dissenting brethren, whom he respects in the Lord, has motivated him to study the problem in this thesis. The method determined for this study was simple and reasonable. Since our Lord has taught extensively on the Law of Moses, the best way to the solution of the problem would be to examine the Dispensational view in the light of His teaching. This method was also fair, because every doctrine of man, including the humble opinion of the writer, must be judged by the Word of God.

The appeal to Jesus however met with Dispensational disapproval. The reason given was that the teaching of Jesus did not apply to the church. Jesus' mission, says Scofield, was **primarily** to the Jews, and all his ministry up to the Cross, being under the Dispensation of Law, had a strong legal and Jewish colouring. Another reason why the Dispensationalists said that the teaching of our Lord did not apply to the Church was that His ministry, as recorded up to Matt. 11:27, and in the corresponding Gospel records, concerned the offer of an earthly Messianic kingdom to the Jews. Hence, the Sermon on the Mount was called "the Constitution of the Kingdom," and judged not applicable to the Church. These two reasons advanced by the Dispensationalists were carefully and exhaustively examined in the light of Jesus' testimony and that of His Forerunner and disciples,

and found wanting. Thus the way to a direct hearing of the verdict of Jesus on the Dispensational view of the Mosaic Law was cleared.

A fuller survey of the Dispensational view of the Mosaic Law shows that it recognizes, as do Reformed theologians, a threefold giving of the Law of Moses, viz., the commandments (the moral law as summarized in the Decalogue; the judgments (judicial laws); and the ordinances (ceremonial laws). However, it regards this three-fold giving of the Law to be one complete and inseparable whole, so that its abrogation under the so-called Dispensation of Grace is a total abrogation. This total abrogation of the Law of Moses is determined by the rigid Dispensational hermeneutical principle that law and grace can never commingle. This Dispensational attitude is hostile to the Law, and may be traced to the bitter conflict between the early Dispensationalists of the Brethren movement and the established churches of England which were alleged to have "lost the message of grace, and sought to keep God's law on the basis of merit."

The Dispensational evaluation of the Law of Moses is surprisingly low. The Law of Moses is judged no more than a legal code like the code of Hammurabi, prohibiting only external evil, and not the intents of the hearts. In contrast with the Law of Moses, the "teachings of grace," as the Law of Christ, is said to surpass the Law of Moses "as infinity surpasses the finite."

The Dispensational evaluation of the Law of Moses is also negative. It is only a ministration of death and a code of "Thou shalt nots." It is the exact opposite to the grace of Christ.

The verdict of Jesus, on the other hand shows that the Law of Moses is the perfect Law of God. Jesus comes not to destroy it, but to fulfill, by doing all its demands; not to contradict, but to teach it. The Sermon on the Mount is not the giving of a higher or fuller moral law but simply a Divine exposition of the Mosaic law. The seemingly contradictory remarks by our Lord are directed not at Moses, but against the blind or malicious Jewish teachers, whose erroneous commentaries encrusted around the Law of Moses need to be purged.

Jesus maintained a purposeful reserve toward the ceremonial laws because they were to be done away by the

completion of His redemptive work on the Cross. However, his institution of Baptism and the Lord's Supper for the New Dispensation recognized the value of the old ceremonies. Jesus upheld Moses for the institution of the judicial laws as relevant to an imperfect society and for a church under age during the Old Dispensation. In respect to the moral law, as summarized in the Ten Commandments, He exalted it constantly as a rule of Christian life and an evidence of salvation, for "except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

In the Sermon on the Mount, He showed that the Law of Moses did not merely prohibit the external acts, but also the innermost intents of the heart. Therefore His view sharply contradicts that of the Dispensationalists who make a disparaging contrast between the Law of Moses and the "teachings of Grace."

Jesus shows that the Law of Moses is not merely negative, but positive, for upon the Two Great Commandments, utmost love for God and man, do hang all the law and the prophets. Hence, the Law is a rule of life for the church and for every Christian, for by it he is not only prohibited to do evil but exhorted to do good, toward God and his fellowmen. In sweet compliance with the Law of God, one is assured of the blessings of life.

A thrilling discovery made during the course of study is our Lord's example of preaching the Law in his evangelistic messages. His presentation of the holy requirements of the Ten Commandments to the rich young ruler, for example, brought him to his knees. It was only after his confession of the lack of righteousness, under the preaching of the Law, that Jesus invited him to receive salvation. The Law is still a schoolmaster to lead sinners to Christ in this so-called age of Grace. The Dispensational view that the Law is completely done away in this age has engendered a preaching confined chiefly to the Atonement. This one-sided grace-preaching at the expense of the Law is pointed out by an editorial in *Christianity Today* as not producing the holy results as a Biblical evangelism should have. The preaching of the Law by our Lord is the key to a reformatory evangelism.

A corollary to this discovery is the re-evaluation of the old catechisms of the Church. The painstaking catechising of the holy requirements of the Decalogue, as provided by the

The Writer's View
of the Progression of LAW in the History of Redemption

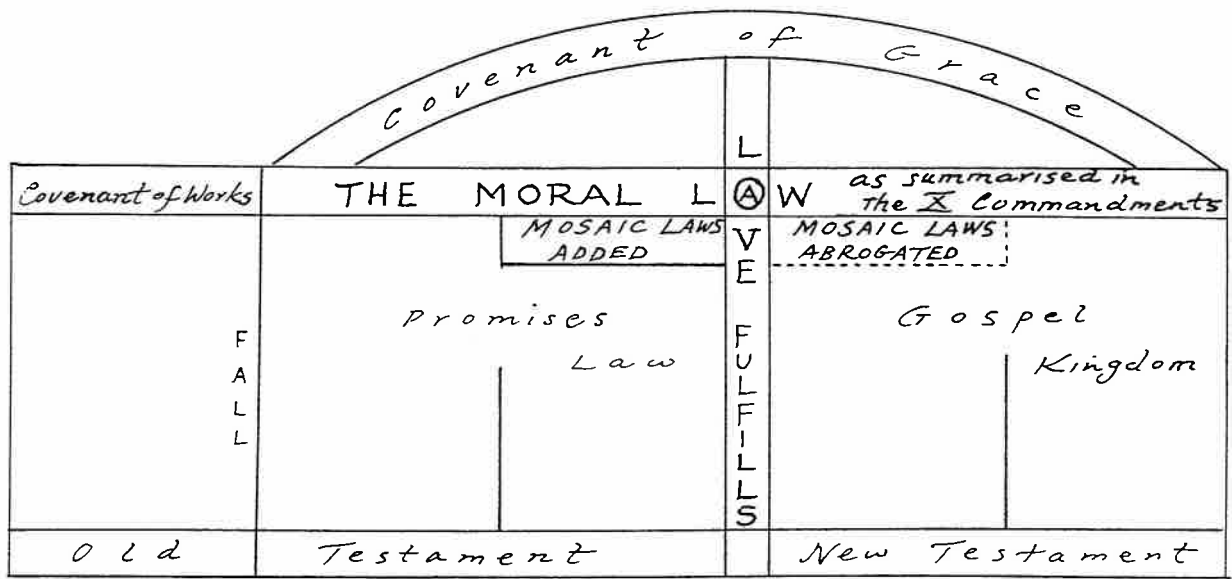


Fig. 10

Larger and Shorter Catechisms of the Westminster Confession, is found to be a tremendous aid to reformatory evangelism, and for the instruction and edification of new converts into the organism of the Church.

If the Decalogue must ever be maintained as a rule of Christian life, the law of the Sabbath, which is one of the Ten words given amidst the thunder and lightning of Sinai, must bind Christians to a holy Sabbath on the Lord's Day, in Christian worship and service. It is submitted that the Lord of the Sabbath, by implicit command, changed the Sabbath Day from the last day of the week to the first. Similarly, Tithing, being a moral law inherent in the Eighth Commandment, "Thou shalt not steal" is submitted to be a standard of giving by which Christians are measured and encouraged. The "Imprecatory" Psalms, according to the *lex talionis* (law of retaliation, or better compensation) and Jesus' teaching in the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen, are submitted to be as suited to the Church as to the Jews.

And so, the Law of Moses, except for the abrogation of the ceremonial, and generally, the judicial laws, stands. It stands, ever the same high moral standard, from eternity to eternity, not because Moses made it great, but because it stems from the holiness, justice and goodness of God. The Law of Moses is the Law of Jesus.

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.¹

NOTES

¹ Matt. 5:19.

EPILOGUE

‘There is indeed a true law, right reason, conformable to nature, diffused among all, unchanging, eternal, which, by commanding, urges to duty; by prohibiting, deters from fraud; not in vain commanding or prohibiting the good, though by neither moving the wicked. This law cannot be abrogated, nor may anything be withdrawn from it; it is in the power of no senate or people to set us free from it; nor is there to be sought any extraneous teacher or interpreter of it. It shall not be one law at Rome, another at Athens; one now, another at some future time; but one law, alike eternal and unchangeable, shall bind all nations and through all time; and one shall be the common teacher, as it were, and governor of all—God, who is Himself the Author, the Administrator, and Enactor of this law.’

—Cicero in *De Republica*

APPENDIX

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM THE CATECHISM FOR YOUNG CHILDREN (An Introduction to the Shorter Catechism)

- Q. 72. How many commandments did God give on Mount Sinai?**
A. Ten commandments.
- Q. 73. What are the ten commandments sometimes called?**
A. The Decalogue.
- Q. 74. What do the first four commandments teach?**
A. Our duty to God.
- Q. 75. What do the last six commandments teach?**
A. Our duty to our fellow men.
- Q. 76. What is the sum of the ten commandments?**
A. To love God with all my heart, and my neighbor as myself.
- Q. 77. Who is your neighbor?**
A. All my fellow men are my neighbors.
- Q. 78. Is God pleased with those who love and obey him?**
A. Yes; he says, "I love them that love me."
- Q. 79. Is God displeased with those who do not love and obey him?**
A. Yes; "God is angry with the wicked every day."
- Q. 80. What is the first commandment?**
A. The first commandment is, Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
- Q. 81. What does the first commandment teach us?**
A. To worship God alone.
- Q. 82. What is the second commandment?**
A. The second commandment is, Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of

them that love me, and keep my commandments.

- Q. 83. What does the second commandment teach us?**
 A. To worship God in a proper manner, and to avoid idolatry.
- Q. 84. What is the third commandment?**
 A. The third commandment is, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
- Q. 85. What does the third commandment teach us?**
 A. To reverence God's name, word, and works.
- Q. 86. What is the fourth commandment?**
 A. The fourth commandment is, Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath Day, and hallowed it.
- Q. 87. What does the fourth commandment teach us?**
 A. To keep the Sabbath holy.
- Q. 88. What day of the week is the Christian Sabbath?**
 A. The first day of the week, called the Lord's day.
- Q. 89. Why is it called the Lord's day?**
 A. Because on that day Christ rose from the dead.
- Q. 90. How should the Sabbath be spent?**
 A. In prayer and praise, in hearing and reading God's Word, and in doing good to our fellow men.
- Q. 91. What is the fifth commandment?**
 A. The fifth commandment is, Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.
- Q. 92. What does the fifth commandment teach us?**
 A. To love and obey your parents and teachers.
- Q. 93. What is the sixth commandment?**
 A. The sixth commandment is, Thou shalt not kill.

- Q. 94. What does the sixth commandment teach us?**
 A. To avoid angry passions.
- Q. 95. What is the seven commandment?**
 A. The seventh commandment is, Thou shalt not commit adultery.
- Q. 96. What does the seventh commandment teach us?**
 A. To be pure in heart, language, and conduct.
- Q. 97. What is the eighth commandment?**
 A. The eighth commandment is, Thou shalt not steal.
- Q. 98. What does the eighth commandment teach us?**
 A. To be honest and industrious.
- Q. 99. What is the ninth commandment?**
 A. The ninth commandment is, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
- Q. 100. What does the ninth commandment teach us?**
 A. To tell the truth.
- Q. 101. What is the tenth commandment?**
 A. The tenth commandment is, Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.
- Q. 102. What does the tenth commandment teach us?**
 A. To be content with our lot.
- Q. 103. Can any man keep these ten commandments perfectly?**
 A. No mere man, since the fall of Adam, ever did or can keep the ten commandments perfectly.
- Q. 104. Of what use are the ten commandments to us?**
 A. They teach us our duty, and show our need of a Saviour¹

NOTES

¹ *Catechism for Young Children*, An Introduction to the Shorter Catechism (Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1936), p. 17ff.

GLOSSARY

A

- acrimonious** Sharp, bitter
ad hominem To a man, personal
adder Viper
adduce Cite as proof or instance
adversative Word expressing opposition or antithesis
ado Fuss; difficulty
aeons Ages, a series of ages
allegorical Of narrative description of a subject under guise of another suggestively similar
allusion Implied, indirect reference
anathema A solemn ecclesiastical curse
anise Umbelliferous plant with aromatic seeds
antinomianism The belief that Christians are emancipated by the Gospel from the obligation to keep the moral law
apodosis The consequent clause of a conditional sentence
approbation Approval
asceticism Aim to compass holiness through self-mortification
aspersion Calumny, slander
atonement Reconciliation of God and man by means of the incarnation and death of Christ

B

- Benedictus** The canticle of Zacharias (Luke 1: 68–70) used in Roman Catholic service

C

- callous** Hardened, unfeeling
canticle Song, a more metrical hymn
castigate To chastise, to punish with stripes
catechumen One who is being taught the rudiments of Christianity
categorise To place in a category or list: to class.
circumlocution Use of many words where few would do
cohabitation Living together as husband and wife
collateral Side by side

conjugal Of marriage
contingency Thing dependent on an uncertain event
corollary Proposition appended to one already demonstrated as self-evident inference from it
corroborate To confirm, to make more certain
cosmical Relating to the cosmos, the world as an orderly or systematic whole
cummin Umbelliferous plant like fennel with aromatic seeds

D

dayspring Dawn
decatalogue The ten commandments
disparage To dishonour by comparison with what is inferior
dispensation Various methods or stages of God's dealing with His creatures — Patriarchal, Mosaic Christians
doyen Senior member (of an academy)

E

edict Order issued by a king or law-giver
El Shaddai Almighty God
Elohim God
endue To put on, as clothes
equilibrium Equal balancing
equipoise Equality of weight or force
equity Moral justice; fairness
ethnic Concerning nations or races
etymology The science that treats of the origin and history of words
excerpt An extract from a book
exegetical Of the science of interpretation, especially of the Scriptures
exonerate To free from the burden of blame or obligation
expiation Act of atoning for
extenuate To lessen, to weaken the force of

F

facade The face of a building
fallacious Calculated to deceive or mislead

G

gamut The whole extent of a thing

H

hermeneutics The science of interpretation, especially of the Scriptures

heterogeneous Of another race or kind

hilarious Very merry (Gr. cheerful)

homiletic Of the art of preaching

I

idiosyncratic Of any characteristic of a person

imprecate To pray for good or evil; to curse

impudent Shamelessly forward

in toto Wholly, entirely

incest Sexual intercourse within the prohibited degrees of kindred

incisively Cutting into a thing

incongruity Inconsistency

inductive Of the process of reasoning from particular facts — the conclusion drawn from such reasoning

injunction Order, precept, exhortation

intercalation Insertion between; as a day in a calendar

interpolation Insertion, as a spurious word or passage in a book or manuscript

intrinsic Inward or inherent

inveigh To attack with words

iota The Greek letter *i*; a jot

jangling Making harsh noise

jubilee The year of release among the Jews every fiftieth year

L

lascivious Tending to produce lustful emotions

linear Of or belonging to a line

locus classicus The classical passage

M

Magna Carta (Charta) Great charter of English personal and political liberty

Millenium A thousand years

mint Aromatic plant

Mishnah Collection of precepts forming basis of Talmud

moot To propose for discussion

mortified To be subdued, humbled

mysticism Tendency of religious feeling marked by an effort to attain to direct communion with God

N

nomolater Worshipper of law

normative Establishing a standard

O

omniscience Infinite knowledge

organism A living being, animal or vegetable

overt Openly done

P

paradisiacal Pertaining to paradise

parlance Way of speaking

pedantic Displaying knowledge for the sake of showing

Pentateuch The first five books of the Old Testament

per se In itself

pericope An extract, especially the selections from the epistles and gospels for the Sundays of the year

pietism The doctrine and practice of the pietists, originally a sect of German religious reformers of deep devotional feeling

pittance A very small portion or quantity

plausible Seeming reasonable

politic Prudent, judicious in management

posterity Descendants

precursor forerunner

prerogative A peculiar privilege shared by no other

pre-tribulationism The coming of Christ before the Tribulation

progenitor Ancestor

promiscuous Mixed, not restricted to one individual

propitiation Appeasement, gift meant to propitiate

protasis The first part of a conditional sentence

protestation Solemn affirmation

Protevangelium The earliest announcement of the Gospel (Genesis 3:15)

prototype The original thing or person in relation to another

Q

quandary A state of difficulty

R

rabbinism Jewish authority on law and doctrine, most of them between 2nd and 13th centuries

raca Worthless, a term of contempt used by the Jews in Christ's day

ratify To confirm; to make valid

recapitulate To go over again the chief points of anything

rectify To make right

reparation Amends, supply of what is wasted.

reprobation The act of abandoning to destruction

requisite Required

S

Sacrament Religious ceremony as outward sign of inward and spiritual grace

scrupulous Conscientious; exact

Septuagint A Greek translation of the Old Testament

Shibboleth A test word or password

Shylockian Like Shylock, hard-hearted money lender

sodomy Unnatural sexuality, between males

stew Brothel

subsume To place any one cognitive under another as belonging to it, as "all horses are animals"

succinctly Concisely

sufferance Toleration

synoptic Affording a general view of the whole

synthetic The uniting of ideas into a sentence

T

Talmud body of Jewish law and legend, etc

Targum A general term for the Aramaic versions of the Old Testament

Tenor General run or currency

Theocracy State governed by God directly or through a sacerdotal class

theosophy Immediate divine illumination or inspiration claimed to be possessed by specially gifted men

titlle A small particle

travesty A crude and ridiculous representation

typology The study of types, symbols

U

ubiquitous Being everywhere

usus loquendi Current usage of speech

utopia Ideally perfect place or state of things

V

valedictory Bidding farewell

W

wanton Playful, irresponsible

warp Threads stretched lengthwise in loom to be crossed by weft

will-o'-the-wisp Any deluding person or thing

winnow Fan grain free of chaff

woof That which is woven on to the warp

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I count it a privilege to contribute a Foreword to this work, which I commend to preachers and all serious Christian readers with great enthusiasm...

This book was originally compiled as a scholarly critique of the attitude of many "popular" dispensationalists to the Law of Moses and also to the Psalms. Its value will be obvious from a glance at the Table of Contents, which literally bristles with topics of vital interest to Bible students... Dr Tow examines the grounds on which many dispensationalists reject the Moral Law of Moses, and with clear and powerful arguments he shows that the Reformed position is scripturally correct.

In these pages the ideas of teachers such as C.I. Scofield are repeatedly contested. One high point in the study occurs where Dr Tow brilliantly contrasts Scofield's attitude to the Law of Moses with the attitude of the Lord Jesus.

This book undoubtedly fulfills a great need. While it takes the form of a serious study, yet because the author is by nature and calling a preacher, and because of his stature as a communicator, the pace and flow of the book draws the reader into each argument, to provide a very stimulating "read".

from the Foreword by Dr. Peter Masters