

## The Law and the Gospel

John Colquhoun (1815)

### Chapter 10a (Lesson 13)

#### The Believer's Privilege of Being Dead to the Law as a Covenant of Works, with a Highly Important Consequence of it

*"Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ...But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive..."-Romans 7:4, 6*

Q. If the law still has a place in the believer's life (as a rule of life) how can the Apostle Paul say that we have \_\_\_\_\_ to it? A. We have died to the law as it stands in its form as a covenant of works. Unbelievers are still alive to the law in this form.

*"But lest they should imagine that it was the law of creation and the law as a rule of life to which they were dead, he compared the law of which he was speaking to the law of a husband, which is a covenant or contract between him and his spouse and which establishes her relation to him as long as they both live. By this comparison he plainly hinted to them that it was the moral law not as a rule of life but as a covenant of works, only to which they were dead."*

In Christ the law as a covenant of works has been satisfied. He fulfilled all righteousness. He was punished for our law breaking. Our Just God would not and does not require a \_\_\_\_\_ payment for the same debt.

Those in Christ are \_\_\_\_\_ partakers of eternal life, which the enjoyment of it will only flourish and grow as they progress into eternity. Those outside of Christ are already beginning to taste the bitterness of life apart from the Fountain of all Blessing.

*"In the Oracles of Truth, we are informed that saints on earth are, upon their vital union with the Second Adam, as really possessed of eternal life as the saints in heaven are and that sinners who have no such union with Him are as really under the begun execution of the sentence of eternal death as the damned in hell are, though in a far lower degree."*

While the saints are dead to the law as a covenant of works, yet in practice it is \_\_\_\_\_ and common to fall back into a legal frame of mind.

*"Indeed, they (Christians) find nothing in their spiritual exercise more difficult than so to mortify their legal temper as to die to all hope from the law as a covenant. This death to the law, then, admits of degrees in believers, and it will not be perfect in any of them as long as sin remains in them. They cannot, in their practice, become perfectly dead to the law till they are perfectly dead to sin."*

#### -Section 1-What it is in the law as a Covenant of Works to which believers are dead

There are four different aspects of the law as a covenant of works that we are dead to:

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ power of it-the law commands perfect obedience-it requires nothing less.

*"Justified on the ground of that consummate righteousness that Christ in their stead fulfilled in answer to its demands of perfect obedience and full satisfaction for sin, they are delivered as much from the commanding as from the condemning power of it."*

This does not mean that we are free from \_\_\_\_\_ the commanding power of the law. We are only dead to the commanding power of the law as it stands in the form of a covenant of works demanding perfection from us for the promise of life.

*“The precept to perform perfect obedience simply is not the command of the covenant of works. Man was bound to perfect obedience previous to the covenant of works and would have been obliged to perform it though such a covenant had never been made with him, for it is essential to the divine law to be a rule of human obedience but not to be a covenant of works.”*

*“The obligation to do, or to obey, the law is eternally binding on all believers; but from the obligation to do and live, to do in order to procure a title to eternal life, they are delivered.”*

**2. The \_\_\_\_\_ power of it-the promise of eternal life for the perfect keeping of the law**

*“They hold all their title to life eternal in the second Adam, their Blessed Surety. In Him they have that perfect righteousness to which eternal life is promised and which is the only foundation of their sure title of it. Their own sincere obedience is not the legal ground of their title to life; and therefore, it has not the legal promise of life. Their evangelical obedience is an evidence of their union with the last Adam, and communion with Him in His righteousness has, indeed, a promise of the covenant of grace connecting eternal life with it.”*

*“Believing, then, in the Lord Jesus, they have eternal life not according to the promise of the first covenant but according to that of the second.”*

**3. The \_\_\_\_\_ power of it-the law condemns all who do not do all that it requires**

In Christ, there is now no condemnation. We are free from the wrath of God for our transgression. In Christ, the condemning power of the law has been completely taken away.

*“The law in its federal form condemns every sinner who is under it to death in all its dreadful extent.”*

*“In consequence of communion with Christ in His righteousness, by which the law’s demand of infinite satisfaction for sin is completely answered, they are dead to it as a covenant of works, and it is dead to them. It has no more power to frown on them or condemn them than a dead husband has to frown on his deceased spouse.”*

**4. The \_\_\_\_\_ power of it-the law inflames the sinner with more sin**

*“When a man under the covenant of works and the dominion of sin obtains a transient view of the purity, spirituality, and strictness of the law and at the same time of his innumerable and aggravated transgressions of it, with the tremendous wrath to which they have exposed him, this not only fills his mind with a disquieting dread of hell but inflames the corruptions of this heart and makes them rage vehemently against the holy law.”*

*“The evil passions of his depraved nature, irritated by the purity of the precepts and the severity of the curses of the law as a covenant, urge him more violently to the commission of that which is prohibited. This law, strictly forbidding all motions of sin in his heart, and that without affording him the smallest degree to resist them, irritates, provokes, and so renders them fiercer and more intractable.”*

*“Trusting in the Lord Jesus for complete salvation, relying on His meritorious righteousness for all their title to life eternal, constrained by His redeeming love, and enabled by His sanctifying Spirit to mortify their depravity and perform spiritual obedience, they delight in the law as a rule of duty and serve God in newness of Spirit.”*