

# Sermon XI.

[It is extremely probable that this was one of the probationary discourses which the author delivered before the Presbytery of Glasgow, previous to his ordination. The following is an extract from the Record of that Presbytery: “Dec. 5, 1649. The qlk daye Mr. Hew Binnen made his popular sermon 1 Tim. i. ver. 5 ‘The end of ye commandment is charity.’—Ordaines Mr. Hew Binnen to handle his controversie this day fifteen dayes, De satisfactione Christi.”—*Ed.*]

1 Tim. ii. 5.—“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned.”

In this chapter the apostle, after the inscription of this epistle, repeats a former commandment that he had given to Timothy, how he should both teach himself, and by authority, committed unto him by an extraordinary commission, see that other ministers teach so also. Paul almost in all his epistles, sets himself against legal preachers, and false teachers. It was a common error in the primitive times, to confound the law and grace, in the point of righteousness, or to make free justification inconsistent with the moral law. Therefore our apostle makes it his chief study to vindicate the doctrine of the gospel. He preaches the gospel, and yet is not Antinomian. He preaches the law, and yet is no legal preacher. He exalts Christ more than the Antinomian can do, and yet he presses holiness more than the mere legalist can do. He excludes the law in the point of justification and pardon, and then brings it in again to the justified man's hand. If these words were rightly understood, and made use of, it would put an end to the many useless controversies of the present time, and reform many of our practices.

There are as many practical abuses among Christians concerning the law and the gospel, as there are speculative errors among

other sects. In the former verse, he more particularly directs him what to take a care of, that men may neither spend their own, or their neighbour's time, in foolish, unnecessary, or impertinent questions, that tend nothing to the edification of the body of Christ, or in building them up in our most holy faith, the doctrine of Christ Jesus, and faith in it. And in this verse, he shows the true meaning and purpose of the law, and commandment, when he meets these doctors, and draws an argument against them from their own doctrine. They boasted of the law, and were counted very zealous of it, but as it is said of the Jews, they had a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge, because they did not submit unto the righteousness of God. They were also zealous for the commandment, but neither God nor the commandment would give them thanks. Why? Because they wholly mistake and pervert the meaning and purpose of the law. As long as they make the law inconsistent with the gospel, or would mix it with it, in the point of justification, they do it not unto edification in faith (as it is read), and as they ought to do, verses 4, 5, 6. We think this evangelic sentence, but rawly,<sup>459</sup> yea, legally expounded by many, when they look upon the words as they lie here, "the end of the commandment is love," for love worketh no evil, and is the fulfilling of the whole law, and this love is described to be pure and sincere, by the following properties. But we conceive the main business is not to describe love, or to oppose this unto their contentions about trifling questions. We choose rather to understand the text another way, according to the order of nature, which also the words themselves give ground for, "The end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart," out "of faith unfeigned." So then, according to the phraseology and meaning of the words, love is not first, but faith must be first, and primarily intended, so that the sense of the words is this, The end of the commandment is unfeigned faith, from whence

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<sup>459</sup> [That is, coldly.—*Ed.*]

flows a good conscience, a pure heart, and love, or the end of the commandment is faith, which is proved unfeigned by these effects, that it gives the answer of a good conscience, it purifies the heart, worketh by love, the effect of faith which is love, being to our knowledge more sensible than faith itself. We think it then more native<sup>460</sup> to make a pure heart, and love, marks of unfeigned faith, than faith and a good conscience the marks of love. This exposition is yet more confirmed by parallel places, Rom. x. 4, "The end of the law is Christ for righteousness, unto them that believe." This is most principally intended, and even before love. Now it is all one to speak of faith as to speak of Christ. For faith and Christ are inseparably joined, and faith comes not as a consideration in the gospel, abstracted from Christ the object of it, as some enemies of Christ affirm. It justifies us not as an act or work, but as an instrument, whereby we apprehend Christ and his righteousness. For faith abstracted from Christ is but an empty notion, and among the dung and loss that Paul would quit to be found in Christ, Phil. iii. 7-9. Now this sense only fits the scope and purpose, and leads on strongly against the false teachers. When Paul brings his argument from the law, which they defended against the gospel, they made the commandment to contradict the gospel. Paul makes the commandment to contradict them, and agree with the gospel, and to be so far from disagreeing with it, that it hath a great affinity with it as the mean to the end as that which is unperfect, without its own complement and perfection. Faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation, quieting a man's conscience, is the very intent of the law, and the command was never given since Adam, to justify men by obedience to it, but to pursue men after Christ. And to satisfy you more fully, and clear it up he says, though the end of the command be not to justify, but to pursue a man from it to Christ, yet the command suffers no prejudice by this means,

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<sup>460</sup> [Natural.—Ed.]

but rather is established by faith, the end of it, because this faith persuades the heart, and makes a man obey out of love to God, whereas before it should never have gotten any obedience, while men sought salvation by it.

You see then, there is an admirable harmony and consent between these things that are set at variance, both in the opinion and practice of the times. For what seems more contrary than the cursing commanding law, and the absolving promising gospel? Yet here they are agreed. Doth not justice go cross to mercy in the ordinary notion? Yet here there is a friendly subordination of justice to mercy, of the law to the gospel. Behold how faith is environed with the law, commanding and cursing on the one hand, and obedience to the command on the other hand, how faith is the middle party. A good conscience could never meet with the command since Adam's fall. A pure heart, and the obedience of love, had casten out<sup>461</sup> with the command, but here is the union, the meeting of old friends. Faith is the mediator, as it were, and the gospel comes between them, and so they dare meet again. Christ Jesus, who is our peace to make two one, comes in the middle, and takes away the difference. The law never meets with an obedient servant, or friend, till it meet first with Christ. It can find none righteous in all the world, none upright. Here you have the law's command and curse reconciled with the gospel's promise, and absolution reconciled with new obedience unto the command, the command leading to Christ, and Christ leading the man just back again to the command, the command serving Christ's design, and Christ serving the command. And this is the round that the believer shall go about in, until sin shall be no more. He shall be put over from one hand to another, till Christ shall be all in all. The command shall put him to Jesus, and Christ shall lead him back again, under a new notion, to his old master.

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<sup>461</sup> [Fallen out or quarrelled.—*Ed.*]

We may consider in the text a twofold relation that faith stands in, the relation of an end, and of a cause. Faith hath the relation of an end unto the commandment, of a cause unto a good conscience and a pure heart, and love, for these are said to be out of faith, which notes this dependence of a cause and fountain. The command is for faith, and a pure heart and love are from faith. We shall use no other division but consider the method of these effects that flow from faith. There is an order of emanation and dependence. There is a chain here. The first link nearest faith is a good conscience. The second link is a pure heart. The third is love, the hand follows the heart, and the heart follows the conscience.

We need not be subtle in seeking our purpose on these words, we think there is more in the plain words than we can speak of. We shall only resolve the verse in these propositions, without more observations. *First*, Faith in Jesus Christ is the end of the commandment, or law. *Secondly*, There is a faith feigned, and a faith unfeigned, a true and a false faith. *Thirdly*, Unfeigned faith gives the answer of a good conscience. *Fourthly*, Faith purging the conscience, purifies the heart. *Fifthly*, Faith purifying the heart, works by love. Here then is the substance of all the gospel, and all this makes up an entire complete end. Faith purifying the heart, purging the conscience, and working by love, is the end of the commandment.

*First*, The end of the commandment or law (for a part is put for the whole) is faith in Christ or Jesus Christ apprehended by faith, which is all one. For ye cannot abstract faith from Christ, for the whole gospel is a shadow without him. Grace and glory is but a beam of the Sun of righteousness, that if ye come between it and Christ, it evanishes presently, Rom. x. 4, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes." And if Christ be the end of the law, then faith is the end of it, because faith is the profession of Christ, and union with him. But consider, I. That the end is not taken here for the consumption

[603]

or destruction of a thing. Christ is not the end of the law in that sense, though indeed, if the Antinomian speak ingenuously, his sense would be this, Christ makes an end of the law, contrary to Christ's own express meaning, "I came not to destroy the law but to fulfil it," Matt. v. 17. II. The end is either the intention or scope of a thing, the original word imports both. III. There is an end principally and directly intended in the thing, or work itself, and an end adventitious, and of the work. We may speak either of the end the law, of its own nature, is ordained unto, or the end of the Lawgiver in promulgating the law. These may be different. Next, concerning the law, consider, I. That the law may be taken strictly in a limited sense, as it comprehends only the command, and the promise of life, and the curse on the breach of it, and in this sense, it is frequently taken in Paul's epistles to the Romans, and Galatians, and opposed to faith and the gospel, as the gospel contains promises of salvation to penitent sinners. Or, II. It may, or useth to be so extended, as to comprehend all the administrations made under Moses, or all God's mind revealed under the Old Testament; now, in this sense, it comprehends the gospel, and covenant of grace in it, as we shall hear. Faith in Christ is the intention and scope of the law. Indeed, faith in Jesus is not the intention of the law itself, as it is only made up of commandments, promises, and curses. For the law as it commands, hath nothing to do, but to be a rule and obligation to men, and as it curses, it condemns men, and speaks nothing of Jesus Christ, or a way to make up the breach of the law. The gospel is not contained in the law, but rather accidental to it. For Jesus Christ comes with the gospel, as if some unexpected cautioner would come in, when the Judge is, as the angel that held Abraham's hand,—when he was to slay his son, and offer him up a burnt offering,—giving sentence to deliver him. It is an exception from the curse.

But Christ is directly intended and pointed out by the law. If ye consider the whole administration of Moses, that is, the law

and covenant of works, though it was preached after the fall, yet it was never preached alone without the gospel, and so if ye consider the whole administration of God's mind and ordinances, Christ is principally aimed at. For, 1. The doctrine Moses delivered in mount Sinai contained a covenant of grace. If you look to the preface of the ten commandments, it is even the chief gospel promise, and article of the covenant. For how could God come to terms with men after sin, but in terms of grace? and on no other terms can man stand before God, nor God be his God. And likewise, seeing the gospel was preached in paradise, and afterwards to Abraham, God could not be false in his promise made to Abraham, neither could the promulgation of the law that followed make that null which went before, Gal. iii. 17. What meant all the ceremonial law? It shadowed out Jesus Christ, the only sacrifice and propitiation. And this is the sum of the gospel salvation to penitents believing in Christ, and looking through the sacrifices unto him, and thus David's righteousness was the imputation of righteousness, and not inherent holiness, Psal. xxxii. 1, 2; Rom. iv. 5. But 2. It used to be a question, whether the law delivered upon mount Sinai was a covenant of works or not. Some say, that the law which was delivered upon mount Sinai was indeed a covenant of works, though they confess it was preached with the covenant of grace, and not delivered to them to stand by it or of intention to get righteousness by it, but to be subservient to the covenant of grace. Others speak absolutely that the law upon mount Sinai was a covenant of grace. We conceive this is but a contention about words. The matter is clear in itself, (1) That neither is now the gospel preached without the law, as ye may see in Christ's sermon upon the mount, and his sermon to the young man, (Matt. chapters v., vi., vii., Mark x. 17,) nor yet was then the law preached without the gospel, as ye may see in Exod. chap. xx. The preface to the commandments, and the second command contains much of the gospel in them. Deut. xxx. 6, 7, &c., compared with Rom. x. 6, &c., where Paul notes

both the righteousness of faith and of the works of the law. (2) Those who say the law on mount Sinai was a covenant of works, do not assert that God gave it to be a covenant of works, out of intention that men should seek salvation thereby, but they make it only a schoolmaster to lead us unto Christ, and to discover our sinful condition; and those who say it was a covenant of grace, consider it in relation to God's end of sending it, and as it takes in all the administration and doctrine of Moses. So there needs be no difficulty here. The matter seems clear, that the covenant of works was preached by Moses, and so it was by Paul, (Rom. x., Gal. iii.) and that neither Paul nor Moses preached the covenant of works, but as a broken covenant; not as such that men could stand unto, or be saved by. No man can preach the gospel, unless he preach the covenant of works; not because both concur to the justification of a sinner, but because the knowledge of a man's own lost condition under the one, presses him to flee to the other.

[604]

Now I say, Christ Jesus, or faith in him, is the scope and intention of the law. It is the scope and intention of the lawgiver, in giving out the law. God hath never given a command or curse since Adam's fall, but for this end, to bring sinners unto Christ. This is the end revealed, and appointed by him in his word. This we shall clear from some texts of scripture, because it is very material, Rom. v. 20, 21. It might be questioned from the former words, since death hath reigned before Moses, for sins against nature's light, what means the new entry of the written law? What was the end of the promulgation of it on mount Sinai? He answers, "the law entered that sin might abound;" that is, the world knew not sin, the letters of nature's light were worn out and rusty; men thought not of their miserable condition by nature, and did not charge themselves before God; therefore a new edition and publication of the law must be given, that all men may know how much they owe, and how they were guilty in a thousand things they never dreamed of. But wherefore serves this? That grace might superabound where sin had abounded. The Lord

would have sin abounding in men's knowledge, and their charge to be great and weighty, that God's pardoning grace might be more conspicuous, and the discharge more sweet. We also learn, (Gal. iii. 19.) that the same question was moved, "Wherefore then serves the law? Seeing the covenant of grace was preached to Abraham, what meant the publishing of a covenant of works upon mount Sinai?" He answers, "It was added because of transgression, till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made;" and as it is said, Rom. v. 13, "For until the law sin was in the world." It abounded in all places of the world before the law came; but men did not impute it unto themselves, nor condemn themselves as guilty. Therefore the law was added to discover many hidden transgressions, and to show them the curse they deserved. Now this law is not against the promise or covenant of grace, (ver. 21.) which it behoved to be if it were not given of intention to drive men to Christ. But the 22d verse speaks out clearly the end of it, "the scripture hath concluded all men under sin," and under the curse both. To what end? That the promise by faith in Christ might come, or be given to believers. And ver. 24, "The law" was a "schoolmaster" and teacher, to lead us unto Christ. The very doctrine of a command impossible for man to keep, was, as it were, a proclamation of Christ Jesus to him, a complete teaching of the necessity of some other way of salvation. The law exacted obedience rigorously, even such as we could not perform, and cursed every degree of disobedience. This, if there were no more, speaks that a man cannot stand to such terms, and therefore he must flee to Jesus Christ, who mends the broken covenant.

Again, the apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 13, 14, while he speaks of the excellency of the ministry of the gospel beyond the ministry of Moses, notwithstanding all the material glory that accompanied that ministration, as the shining of Moses' face, &c., now opens up a great mystery here,—Moses' face shining while he was with God upon the mount. This holds forth the glory of the law as in

respect of God. By counsels and inventions they saw no more but temporal mercies in it, and were not able to fix their eyes on that glory; the carnal Israelites did not break through the ministry of the law and death, to see Jesus there, because a vail was upon their hearts. They thought God had been dealing with them in the terms of a covenant of works, and they would stand to all God had said, and undertook indeed very fairly, "All which God hath commanded, we will do, and be obedient." But though<sup>462</sup> they perverted God's meaning of the law, and did not see Jesus intended; for they did not look steadfastly to the end of that mystery. Now what was it the vail hid them from? For the same vail is yet on them to this day, while they read Moses and the prophets, and when they shall be converted it shall be done away in Christ, they shall then see him in Moses' law. So then, the end of this ministry of the law was Jesus Christ, and this they could not behold.

[605]

Now from all this it is very clear, that Jesus Christ, or faith in him, was the great purpose and end of the law, and covenant of works. The world was lying in sin, and none sought God, no not one; neither knew they well what sin was. Therefore God sends his gospel from mount Sinai, and publishes his law in a terrible manner, that they might know the way and manner of the God they served, and see that their obligation was infinitely beyond their ability or performance. But, poor souls! they clearly mistake the matter, and stand to the terms of the covenant of works, as if they were able to perform them. But God did not leave them so. For he adds a ceremonial law, and sacrifices, to shadow out Christ Jesus. Now, says God, though ye have undertaken so well, yet I know you better than ye do yourselves. Ye will never keep one word of what you say. Therefore, when ye sin bring a sacrifice, and look to my Son, the Lamb that is to be slain and offered up, and ye shall have pardon in him.

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<sup>462</sup> [Some words are omitted here, which may be supplied thus:—though *they* said *this*, they perverted God's meaning of the law, &c.—*Ed.*]

II. Christ Jesus apprehended by faith, is the accomplishment and perfection of the law. 1. Because Christ Jesus, or faith laying hold upon him, accomplishes the same end that the law was ordained for of itself. The law was appointed to justify men, that it might be a rule of righteousness according to which men might stand before God and live. Now when the law was weak through the flesh, and could not give life, (Rom. viii. 3; Gal. iv. 21.) and the law ordained to life, wrought more death, and made sin exceeding sinful, (Rom. vii. 10-13.) therefore Jesus Christ came in the flesh, to do what the law was unable to do, and to bring many sons unto glory, that the just might live by faith, Gal. iii. 11. The law should never have gotten its end, no man should have stood before God, but the curse only would have taken place, and the promise would have been of no effect. Therefore, Jesus comes, and gives obedience to the law, and delivers men from the curse of it, and by faith puts men in as good, and even in a better condition, than they would have been by the promise; so that the justified sinner may come before God, as well as innocent Adam, and have as great confidence and assurance, and peace by faith, as he could have had by inherent holiness. Imputed righteousness comes in as a covering over the man's nakedness, and doth the turn<sup>463</sup> of perfect inherent holiness.

2. Christ, or faith laying hold on him, is the end or accomplishment of the law, because faith in Christ fulfils the righteousness of the law, in respect of a believer's personal obedience. Although the believer gave not perfect obedience, and so cannot stand in terms of justice, yet he gives sincere and upright obedience, which the law should never have got. The command wrought sin and death, by occasion of corruption, and never would any point of it be fulfilled by men. For as long as the curse was standing, no obedience could be acceptable till justice was satisfied, and though that might have been dispensed with, yet there is none

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<sup>463</sup> [Serves the purpose.—*Ed.*]

that are righteous, none seek after God. No good principles of obedience were in us, but all are corrupt, and have done abominable works, and all our righteousness is as a menstruous cloth; and though upright obedience could have been yielded, yet the law exacted perfect obedience. But now faith in our Redeemer absolves a man from the curse of the law, so that now he is not looked upon as an enemy, but a friend; and then it puts a man upon obedience to the command from new motives and principles: and thus the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk after the Spirit, Rom. viii. 4. And that imperfect obedience is accepted of God, and received off his hand, by virtue of the sacrifice and atonement of Christ. The law would accept of no less, no not of nine commandments, if the tenth was broken. But now God in Christ accepts of endeavours and mintage,<sup>464</sup> and so is the law in some way or other accomplished. And faith leads a man on till he be perfected. He walks by faith from strength to strength, till he appear before God, and be made holy as he is holy. Faith in Christ is the end of the law.

[606]

3. Because whatever faith wants of perfect and personal obedience, it makes up in Christ's obedience, and thus is the law thoroughly accomplished, for what it wants in the believer it gets in Christ. Paul would have the Romans take this way, Rom. vi. 11: "Likewise reckon ye yourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ." Ye may gather by good consequence, that since Christ hath died to sin as a public person so ye should die with him unto sin, and mortify sin with him. And thus may ye have consolation against your imperfect personal mortification. Ye were thoroughly mortified in Christ. So the believer may look unto Jesus, as one who hath given obedience even unto the death, and that, not in his own name but for us, that the imperfect holiness and obedience of every sound believer, may have his complete righteousness to cover it, and

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<sup>464</sup> [Imperfect attempts.—*Ed.*]

come next the Father's eye. And thus is the law fulfilled, and this way doth faith not make void, but establish the law, Rom. iii. 31. And as the law got better satisfaction in the sufferings of Christ, who became a curse for us, than in all the punishment we could endure, so it gets more satisfaction to the command by his obedience than if our personal had been perfect. Christ was "made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons," (Gal. iv. 4) and the Son's being made under the law is of more worth than all our being under it. Now faith puts that obedience of God Man in the law's hand. When we do God's will, he brings out Christ Jesus, "Lo, (says he) I come, I delight to do thy will," Psal. xl. 7-9. In a word, faith in Jesus accomplishes the law, in the commands, in the promise, in the curse, as might be easily shown, if your time would allow.

(1) In the curse, because it lays hold upon Christ, who was "made a curse for us," (Gal. iii. 13) and so gives complete satisfaction to the Lord's justice in that point. It holds up the sacrifice and propitiation of our Saviour, and justice says, I am satisfied. It holds up the ransom, (Job xxxiii. 24) and therefore Christ says, "Deliver them from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom." Again we also observe, (2) That faith in Christ also fulfils the commandments of the law, because it is the fountain of new obedience unto the law. It hath a respect unto all God's righteous judgments. It purifies the heart into the obedience of them, and it works by love, and so it is the end of the law for righteousness. It not only gives the answer of a good conscience unto all challenges and curses from Christ's blood, but daily derives virtue out of Jesus Christ, to bring forth fruit unto God. What it cannot reach by doing, it supplies by believing, and laying hold upon Christ's obedience. And this is the righteousness of the law fulfilled in us. Let us also,

(3) Look upon the promise of life, and it is accomplished also by faith in Christ. For the law could not have given life, and so the promise would now be in vain; but Christ by faith justifies

the sinner, and he lives, yea, hath eternal life in him, and so all the three are strengthened and established. Faith is the most comprehensive commandment, 1 John iii. 22, 23. It is put for all the commandments, (1) By acknowledgment of the breach of all, and so it magnifies the law, and makes it honourable, and subscribes to the sentence of justice and the authority of the command; (2) By satisfaction, because it gives a price for the breach of it, and puts the Cautioner<sup>465</sup> in the craver's hand; (3) By obedience, because after this, it hath a respect to all God's laws, and endeavours after new obedience to every one of them.

The improvement of all this is extremely plain. It may serve to discover unto us how we disappoint God of his end in giving unto us the command. And the law was given for the best purposes. But, the most part of men have no end, no use of the law. God hath given it for some end, but they know it not. They live without God, and without rule in the world. Men walk as if there was no law, nor command, nor curse. There are but two ends the command was ordained for, the first instituted end which it naturally tends unto is life, (Rom. vii. 10) and the second end for which God hath appointed it since the first is missed, is to pursue men to Jesus Christ, and convince them of sin, to make them once die that they may live, Rom. vii. 9. But the most part know neither of these ends. A carnal profane generation will not seek life by the righteousness of the law; their iniquities testify against them even to their face, and their sin is found hateful. There is not so much as an endeavour among too many Christian professors, either to approve themselves unto men, or their own consciences in their outward walking. They walk without any regard of a command, or rule, as it were by guess. Their own rule is what pleases them best. What suits their humours, and crosses God's word, that they will do, as if they knew not the curse, or were afraid of the sentence of condemnation. They walk

[607]

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<sup>465</sup> [A Scottish forensic word corresponding to *Surety*.—*Ed.*]

in peace, and have no changes, they walk in the imagination of their vain hearts. They cannot say, and none will say for them, they seek life by the law, their contempt of it is so palpable, and yet no other end of it they know so it is to them as if God had never appointed it. Again,

2. There are many wrong and false ends, or uses of the law, when we make it the immediate mean to life and righteousness, and seek justification by it. And this was the end that these false teachers would have made of it. This is the end that the Israelites looked to. "All that the Lord hath commanded, will we do." O that was a great undertaking! Poor men, they knew not what they said. They thought upon no other thing but obedience to the command, and so made it a covenant of works. Thus did the people that followed Christ, John vi. 28. And the young man that came to Christ said, "What good thing shall I do, to inherit eternal life?" Here doing was preferred to living by faith, Rom. x. 1-23. The Jews did so, and missed the right way. And few of you will take<sup>466</sup> with this, that ye seek to be justified by your own works; and yet, it is natural to men, they will not submit to God's righteousness. There is need of submission to take Christ. O would not any think all the world would be glad of him, and come out and meet him bringing salvation? Would not dyvours<sup>467</sup> and prisoners be content of a deliverance? Were it any point of self denial for a lost man, to grip a cord cast unto him? Yet here must there be submission to quit your own righteousness. It were of great moment to convince you of this, that ye are all naturally standing to the terms of a covenant of works, ye who are yet alive, and the commandment hath not slain you, with Paul, Rom. vii. 9, 11. Ye are yet seeking life by the law, if ye have not applied the curse unto yourselves. After application of yourselves to the command, ye are yet seeking

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<sup>466</sup> [Acknowledge this.—*Ed.*]

<sup>467</sup> [A name formerly given to bankrupts in Scotland.—See Act. James VI. par. 23, cap. 18.—*Ed.*]

life by it. Ye adorn yourselves with some external privileges, in some external duties of religion, some branches of the second table duties, and come to God with these. Some think to satisfy God for their faults, with an amendment in time to come. Some think God cannot punish some faults in them, because they have some good things in them. Ask many men the ground of their confidence, and in all the world they know not how to be saved, unless their prayers do it, or their keeping the kirk.<sup>468</sup> But this is not the end that God hath sent out the law for. Ye cannot now stand to such a bargain. The law is now weak through the flesh, and it is now impossible for it to give life. Though you would pray never so much, all is but abomination. And would not many of you think ye were in a fair venture for heaven, if no man living could lay any thing to your charge, but were you unblameable in all the duties of the first and second table? [Could you say,] though you know nothing as by yourselves, that you were frequent and fervent in prayer, reading, and meditation; and as far advanced as Paul, or David, or Moses, or Job, sure ye would think yourselves out of doubt of heaven? Nay, but in this, ye may see ye are seeking righteousness by the law. Though ye were so far advanced, yet God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, would look to your sins, and pass by your righteousness, and all that would be as menstruous rags before him; and therefore Paul was much wiser, who said, “though I know nothing by himself, yet am I not hereby justified.” 3. Many make the law an end, when God hath only made it a mean. God hath appointed the law for some other use, namely, to be subservient to Christ and the gospel. But oftentimes we make the law the end of all God's speaking to us, and so conclude desperate resolutions from it, (Rom vii. 9). “When the law came, sin revived, and I died.” Here the man is slain by the commandment, and not yet come to the healing Physician at Gilead. We use to gather

[608]

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<sup>468</sup> [Attending the church.—*Ed.*]

desperation of the command, when it presses so perfect and exact obedience, such as we cannot yield. When it craves the whole sum, without the abatement of a farthing, we sit down under the sense of an impossibility to obey, and will not so much as mint<sup>469</sup> at obedience. Because we cannot do as we ought, we will not do as we can. Because we cannot do in ourselves we conclude nothing can be done at all. This is to make the command the last word, and the end of God's speaking. Doth not the child of God frequently sit down and droop over his duty, while he looks upon the Egyptian taskmaster, the command, charging the whole work and portion of brick, and giving no straw to work upon? So are many in duties. While the aim and eye is upon some measure according to the perfect rule, the hands fall down feeble, and none is wrought at all, and they do not look if there be another word from God posterior to the command, a word of promise. We use also to gather desperate conclusions of the curse, and make the law according to which we examine ourselves, the end of God's manifesting his mind unto us, and do not look upon it as a way leading to some other thing. When ye have tried yourselves, and applied your own ways and state unto the perfect rule, God's verdict of all men's condition is true in you, "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," "there is none righteous, no, not one," and so if necessitated to apply the dreadful sentence of the judgment to yourselves, ye stay there, and sit down to lodge with the sentence of condemnation, as if that were God's last word to sinners. Is not this to make the law the end, which is but appointed for another end? The curse is not irrepealable. Why then do ye pass peremptory conclusions, as if there was no more hope, but it were perished from the Lord?

II. To discover unto us the right end and use of the law, the great design and purpose of God in making such a glorious promulgation of the law on mount Sinai, and delivering it by the

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<sup>469</sup> [Aim at.—*Ed.*]

ministry of angels, in the hands of a mediator. The end which God hath been driving at these six thousand years, is this only, that men may come to Jesus Christ and believe in him. The end wherefore the covenant of works hath been preached since Adam's fall, is only this, to make way for a better covenant of grace, that men may hearken to the offer of it. Now faith in Jesus Christ hath two special actings, either upon Christ for justification of the person, and eternal life and salvation, or for sanctification of the person and actions, in the fruits of new obedience. And in the text, unfeigned faith is described from both these, and gives the answer of a good conscience, that is, of absolution from the curse, by the blood of Jesus, and makes him as quiet as he had never sinned. And then it purifies the heart, and worketh by love.

Now the law is a mean appointed of God, and instituted to lead to both these, and Christ in these. The law is appointed to lead a man to faith in Christ, for salvation and righteousness, and the suitableness of it to that end, we comprehend thus: 1. It convinces of sin; "The law entered that the offence might abound," and "was added because of transgressions," Rom. v. 20, Gal. iii. 19. This is the end of God's sounding the trumpet, and declaring our duty, "that every mouth may be stopped" before God, and that none may plead innocence before his tribunal. While men are without the law, they are alive, and think well of themselves, but the entering of the commandment in a man's conscience, in the length, breadth, and spirituality of it, makes sin to appear exceeding sinful. Sin was in the house before, but was not seen before, and now when the bright beam of a clear, spiritual, holy law, carrying God's authority upon it, is darted into the dark soul, O what ugly sights appear! The house is full of motes. Ye cannot turn the command where it will not discover innumerable iniquities, an universal leprosy. For all the actions that were called honest, civil and religious before, get a new name, and they being seen in God's light, are called rottenness, and living

without the law, Rom. vii. 9 &c. Think ye, but the woman of Samaria knew her adultery, before Christ spake to her? Nay, but Christ speaks according to the law and makes it a mean of faith. He tells her all that ever she did. He tells her indeed what she knew before, but in another manner. Men know their actions, but the Lord discovers the sinfulness of them, as offensive to God's holy majesty, and pure eyes. It will force a man to give his sin the right name, it will take away all excuses and shifts, and aggravate sin, that it may become exceeding sinful. But further, 2. This is not the last end of it. Not only is it ordained to stop all mouths, but to make all flesh guilty before God, "For by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified," Rom. iii. 18, 19. It convinces of an impossibility to stand before God, and so it kills a man. And now the man asks, "What shall I do to be saved?" He cannot stand before God in terms of justice, where none can stand, and so either must some other delivery come, or he is gone. Now here he is put from making satisfaction, "Who can abide with everlasting burnings?" He sees himself standing under the stroke of justice; and where can he go from God's presence? If he go to heaven, he is there, if to hell, he will find him out, the light and darkness are alike to him, Psal. cxxxix. 7-11. Not only the cries of sinful man, but of wretched and miserable man, are heard from him! Now these are the steps the law proceeds by. But it must not stay there, or else it is not come to the end of it. It must put a man within the doors of the covenant of grace. The law is a messenger sent to pursue a man out of his own house of self confidence and security, he was like to perish in, and not to know it. Now by discovering his sinful and cursed condition, it brings him out of himself, and out of all created things. But the end is not yet attained, till it put him in Christ's hand, and enter him in the border of the city of refuge and this is the end of the abounding of sin by the law, that grace may superabound, Rom. v. 20. And this is the end of the concluding him under sin, and making him guilty before God, that the promise of faith

may be given him, and another righteousness revealed by faith, Rom. iii. 20, 21, Gal. iii. 23. And now he is at peace, being justified by faith, and rests as a stone in its own place (Rom. v. 1, 2), and the law hath nothing to do with him; he is out of its jurisdiction. 3. Now when it hath pursued him unto Christ for salvation, yet the command is still useful, and appointed yet for faith in Jesus, in performing new obedience. The Christian's daily walking is but the turning of the old round, as the sun doth this day go about the compass it did the first day, so his life is but a new conversion still. When he is now settled on Jesus for salvation, he must yet be put by<sup>470</sup> the command. It discovers his dally sins, and so he is put to Jesus, the open Fountain for all sin and uncleanness. And the command comes out in perfection, and discovers his shortcoming and inability, and therefore he is put to Jesus for strength. And this is the end of the perfect rule upon believers, that they, comparing duty with their ability, may be forced to make up their inability for duty by faith in Christ.

III. We may know from this what great encouragement we have to believe, and how great warrant, since not only God commands faith itself (1 John iii. 23.), but he hath appointed faith to be the end of all other commands, and hath given the whole law for this end. For "without faith it is impossible to see God." Faith is that which God loves best in all obedience. What is it that makes faith so precious? Certainly not the act itself, but the precious object of it, Jesus Christ, in whom the Father is well pleased. Faith glorifies God in his justice and mercy most, and abases the creature. Now what an obligation lies on us to believe? It is usual to question a right and warrant of faith, when we have no doubt of other commands. But, in all reason, any command might be questioned before faith. There is no duty admits of less disputing. Hath not God put it out of all controversy? What warrant have ye to pray, or to sanctify the

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<sup>470</sup> [Near the command.—*Ed.*]

Sabbath? Is it not because God commands these duties? And do ye not go about them in obedience to God, notwithstanding of the sense of your own inability? How comes it then that ye make any more scruple of this? Hath not the same authority that gave the ten commands, given also this new command? And shall not disobedience be rebellion, and worse than witchcraft?<sup>471</sup> But when besides all this, it is the appointed end of all the commands, so that ye may say, it is commanded in all the commands and the whole law,—command and curse is a virtual kind of commanding faith,—then what shall disobedience be? When ye break one command, ye are guilty of all. Much more here, not only because of God's authority stamped upon all, but because it is the common end of all. If ye could once come to believe that ye had as good warrant to believe in Christ as to abstain from cursing God's name, and as great obligation, what could ye answer for disobedience? [610]

IV: This is a point of great consolation also. What more terrible than the law? Nothing in all the world. Nothing in all the word so dreadful as the trumpet on Sinai, sounding louder and louder. The judge and law gives voice. Yet if ye could look to the end of it and if the veil that was on the Jews' heart be not upon yours, O how comfortable shall it be! Doth not a command and curse form a dead sound in an awakened man's ears, and strike unto his heart like a knife? But if he knew this, it would be a healing medicine. Would not many sinners wish there would be no such thing in the Bible as a condemning law, when they cannot get it escaped? But look to the end of it, and see gospel saving doctrine in the very promulgation of it. When it was published, it made the Jews all to tremble and cry out, and even holy Moses himself was afraid. But there is more consolation than terror here. This condemning law is delivered in a Mediator's hand,

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<sup>471</sup> [A belief in the prevalence of witchcraft at this time seems to have pervaded all ranks and classes. An Act of Parliament was passed against it on the 1st of February, 1649.—*Ed.*]

even Jesus Christ, Gal. iii. 19, 20. Who was he that spake out of the cloud, and fire, and came and set down his throne on Sinai, accompanied with innumerable angels? Deut. xxxiii. 2, Acts vii. 53. It was Jesus Christ that spoke to Moses in the mount, and in the bush also, Acts vii. 35, 38. Is it then the Mediator's law, whose office it is to preach glad tidings, and the day of salvation? Sure then it needs be dreadful to no man. For if he wound, he shall heal, and he comes to bind up the broken hearted. Ye may look on the command and curse as messengers sent by mercy, to prepare you, and make his way straight before his face. The end of the law is not to condemn you, to stop your mouth, and make you guilty. That is not the last work it is appointed for, but the Mediator hath another end, to bring you to the righteousness of faith, to save you without yourselves. Therefore ye may more willingly accept the challenge, since it comes in so peaceable terms. What should be terrible to you in all God's word and dispensation, since the ministry of condemnation and death is become the port<sup>472</sup> of heaven and life? What must all his other dealings be? Surely there is nothing in the world, but it must lead to this end also. Prosperity and adversity, the end of them is faith, conviction and challenges. Be not then as men without hope, when you are challenged, for the challenge comes from a Mediator who would have you saved.

V: You may see hence how injurious they are to grace who cry down the law. The Antinomian cannot be a right defender and pleader for faith (the end of the command), when he opposes the command that leads to that end. He can not exalt Christ aright, or lead men to him, when he will not come under the pedagogue's hand to be led to Christ. The law, even as a covenant of works, is of perpetual use to a believer, because it lays a blessed necessity upon him to abide with Christ. It is a guard put before the door, to keep him, as it was a schoolmaster to bring him to Christ, and

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<sup>472</sup> [Portal, or gate.—*Ed.*]

makes a man subordinate to the gospel as a mean to the end, and so it ought to be used. So then it is against the truth [to say] that the Israelites were under the law, and not Christians. The law came not to be a mean of life and righteousness unto them, but that the offence might abound, that so grace might superabound. The law was not intended, but Christ was intended, and this end they could not fix their eyes upon, by reason of the hardness of their hearts. It is also false, that Christian believers are wholly exeemed<sup>473</sup> from the command and law. No, he hath use of all that leads to Jesus Christ, and the law itself becomes gospel under that notion. The command stands in its integrity, that he may be convinced of shortcoming and inability, and so may believe in Christ. The curse also stands, and condemns him for new sins, that he may believe in Christ, who justifies the ungodly. Again, it is not truth, that the law is no mean of conversion, though not in its own virtue and power, but as it is delivered in a Mediator's hand, and applied by the Spirit of grace and the gospel. [611]

Use VI: We exhort you not to disappoint God of his end, and if he hath given the law for this end, never rest till ye be at the end. Let the law enter into you once, or enter ye into it. Ye cannot come to Jesus unless it lead you. Let it enter into your consciences, with God's power and authority as his law, and examine yourselves by it, else ye shall never believe in Christ.

2. Accept all the challenges of the law, let it enter till your mouth be stopped. Read your obligation well, that ye may see how much ye owe. 3. Let faith be the issue and result of all the applications of the law to yourselves. Ye go in the law's hand to Christ, but sit not down with it, or else you will not go free till ye have paid the last farthing. Make faith in Christ the end of the curse condemning you, that he may absolve you, the end of the command, commanding, that he may give strength and fulfil in you the righteousness of the law. God never sent a condition

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<sup>473</sup> [Exempted.—*Ed.*]

to you, but that you may believe, and be established. 4. Let it be your exercise to travel between an impossible command, and Christ Jesus by faith, through whom all things are possible. Write always down how much ye owe, that ye may see grace superabounding. Sit not down to examine the duty, or go not about it in your own strength. Be not discouraged though ye find no strength. Ye are called in such a case to believe. Nay, in a word, what is all the Christian's employment? Faith exhausts it all. Look on the command, and it calls for believing. Look upon the curse and it calls also for believing.

## Sermon XII.

1 Tim. i. 5.—“Now the end of the commandment,” &c.

We come now, as was proposed, to observe, *Thirdly*,<sup>474</sup> That faith unfeigned is the only thing which gives the answer of a good conscience towards God. Conscience, in general, is nothing else but a practical knowledge of the rule a man should walk by, and of himself in reference to that rule. It is the laying down a man's state, and condition, and actions beside the rule of God's word, or the principles of nature's light. It is the chief piece of a man. The man is as his conscience is. It is a man's lord. As a wing to a bird, or as a rudder to a ship, so is conscience to a man in all his ways. The office of conscience is ordinarily comprehended in three styles it gets. It is a law or rule, a witness, and a judge, or a light, a register, and a recorder, and an executioner. For the conscience its first act is some principle of nature's light, obliging it as a rule to walk by, or some revealed truth of God, whereof the conscience is informed. Now the conscience, in the second place, comes to examine itself according to the rule, and there it bears witness of a man's actions or state, and faithfully records and deposes.<sup>475</sup> And at length the conscience pronounces the sentence upon the man, according as it has found him, either accusing or excusing, condemning or absolving. Now a good conscience is diversely taken in scripture, I. A good conscience is an honest clean conscience, bearing testimony of integrity and uprightness in walking, such as Paul had, 2 Cor. i. 12, “Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity, and godly sincerity, we have had our conversation in the world.” Heb. xiii.

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<sup>474</sup> [The illustration of the second proposition found in the text, “There is a faith feigned, and a faith unfeigned, a true and a false faith,” (p. 602) is omitted. We may conclude that this was the subject of a separate sermon, which has been lost.—*Ed.*]

<sup>475</sup> [Deposes or testifies.—*Ed.*]

[612]

18, "We trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly." Acts xxiv. 16, "Herein do I exercise myself in having a conscience void of offence, towards God and man." 1 Pet. iii. 16, "Having a good conscience, that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ." II. A good conscience is a conscience calmed and quieted, that hath gotten an answer to all challenges, the blood and resurrection of Jesus, 1 Pet. iii. 21. And this we take to be meant here. The good conscience is the conscience that is sprinkled with Christ's blood, from dead works, to serve the living God, Heb. ix. 14. For the guilty man that comes to Christ, and washes in the fountain opened for sin, hath no more conscience of sins, Heb. x. 2. And therefore it is called a pure and clean conscience, 2 Tim. i. 3, "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers, with a pure conscience," &c.; the stain of guilt is taken away. Now I say, faith only gives the answer of a good conscience. The man that comes to Christ hath an ill conscience, when he hath examined himself according to the law, and given out faithful witness of his own state and condition, and accordingly pronounced sentence,—a sentence condemnatory. He finds himself lying under God's curse, and so the conscience from a judge turns a tormentor, and begins to anticipate hell, and prevent<sup>476</sup> the execution of wrath. All the world cannot answer this challenge, or absolve from this sentence, until faith come and give a solid answer, that may be a ground of peace. And its answer is good and sure, because it dips the conscience in the blood of the Son of God. For the blood of bulls and of goats could not do it, the redemption of the soul was precious. Faith puts the soul over head and ears in the fountain opened, and it comes out like snow, or wool, though it were like scarlet or crimson. The law condemned, and the conscience subscribed itself sinful, and concluded itself lost in sin; but faith

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<sup>476</sup> [That is, foresee or anticipate.—*Ed.*]

in Christ pleads before mercy's throne, where judgment and justice also sit. It pleads its cause over again, and gets the former sentence repealed. The conscience gave in the charge against the man, but faith sits down and writes the discharge; and so he is as free as if all his debt was paid, or never contracted. Faith puts the Cautioner in the creditor's hand, and goes free. As the law writes down a charge of sin and curses, faith sets against it as many sufferings in Christ, as many blessings in the Blessing of all nations. And when the conscience that condemned itself by faith again absolves itself, O what a calm, what a perfect peace is it then kept in! What a continual feast doth it enjoy! Prov. xv. 15. Make him never such a great man in the world, he would utterly despise it, and count himself more blessed in the pardon of sin, and the friendship of God, than all the enjoyments of this world. He is better in some respect than if he had never sinned, for his sin is, as it were, not before God. And withal he hath got not only acquittance from guilt, but acquaintance with Jesus Christ, the Blessing of the nations, and the Desire of all the families of the earth. Now may he triumph and boast in Christ Jesus. Who shall condemn? It is God that justifies, it is Christ that died, and is risen again. He may say with David, "I will not fear, though my iniquities compass me about;" and with Job, "If he cause quietness, who can give trouble?" We observe then that,

I. Before a man come to Christ, he has an ill conscience; for either he is at peace with himself, and absolves himself, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the abominations of my heart, Deut. xxix. 19; or he also says, "Because I am innocent," therefore God will turn away his wrath, Jer. ii. 35. He cries peace, peace, when there is no peace, (Ezek. xiii. 10.) and that is but a desperate condition, and a bad conscience, if any can be so called. This is the secure and seared conscience, that either doth not judge itself, because a man hath beaten it flint hard, or is constantly absolving itself upon false grounds. That is the conscience that in all the creation is nearest the desperate

conscience, that shall never have a good answer. His sin is but lying at the door like Cain's, and shall enter in when judgment comes. He is but flattering himself in his own eyes, till his iniquity be found hateful, and till sudden destruction comes as an armed man. Look upon Deut. xxix. 20, and see such a man's case. There is no peace for him, the Lord will not pity nor spare him, but pour upon him all the curses of the law, even when he blesses himself in his own eyes. In short, he is such as is awakened to see where he is, and condemns himself according to the word; and that is a better and a more hopeful conscience than the former, yet it is but an ill conscience. Conscience doth act its part aright, and in so far it is good, but the man is but in a miserable condition. Withal it gives such a wound to the soul, as none can bear it. All the sad affections which take up men's spirits come in, and this is the worm which never dies in hell, and the fire which shall never be quenched. Anger, grief, hatred, despair, always dwell with an ill conscience. This is both the resemblance of hell, and the sparks which come from that devouring fire. But, II. When the troubled conscience, tossed up and down, and looking upon all hands for help, and all refuge failing them, and no person caring for their soul, when it gets once a look of Jesus, and roweth unto his shore, O what a change! He commands the winds to calm, and the waves to cease, and says unto him, Son, be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven. Faith finds in Jesus ample grounds of answering all challenges, of silencing all temptations, of overcoming all enemies, and commands the soul to go into its place of refuge. "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee," &c. Psal. cxvi. 7-9.

[613]

We shall now shut up all with the application in some uses. Use I. We may learn hence how few have a good conscience. Faith is a rare thing, but a good conscience is much rarer. And here we may notice, 1. That the conscience which is dead and sleeping, is not a good conscience: every quiet and calm conscience is not a good one. Ye may dream over your days

with the foolish virgins, and take rest in a pleasing delusion, and cry peace, peace, and yet the end of it will be worse than the beginning. A conscience that acts not at all, nor judges itself, is, as it were, no conscience; either ignorance hath blinded it, and keeps it in the dark, or wickedness hath stopped its mouth. You think your conscience good because it tells you few of your faults, it troubles you not; but that conscience must once speak, and do its office, it may be in a worse time for you. 2. It is not a good conscience that always speaks good, and absolves the man. God may condemn when it absolves. When ye walk according to false principles and grounds, and either take a wrong rule, or know not how to apply the rule to yourselves, shall God approve of false judgment? Your conscience is erring and deludes you. But, 1. The good conscience is not only a quiet conscience, but a quieted conscience. It not only hath peace, but peace after trouble. Ye then that have no peace, but what ye had all your days, it is but a mere fancy. The answer of a good conscience quiets the distempered mind, it comes by the sprinkling and washing of Christ's blood. He that hath peace on solid grounds with God, hath once taken up his enmity against him. 2. The good conscience hath been once an evil conscience, when it met with the command. The man has once been under the law, before he came to faith, and examined himself, and his conscience condemned him as not righteous, and out of Christ. Ye then that never examined your state, according to the perfect and holy law, and never judged yourselves, ye cannot believe in Jesus, and so can have no good conscience. 3. The good conscience flows nearest from faith answering the challenges of the law. Some have had sore distempers of conscience, and puddling exercises of terror. But how they were eased or quieted they cannot tell, but their spring-tide ebbed, and they bubbled no more. It went away at will, and did wear out with time. This is not a good conscience, that knows not distinctly the grounds of faith to oppose to the law's condemnation. Some turn to build cities with

Cain, and pass the time pleasantly, or in some business, that they may beguile their challenges. But this is not the conscience that faith makes good. Now, set apart all these who do not examine themselves at all, nor judge themselves, but live in a golden dream, who have never been arraigned before God's tribunal, or summoned by his deputy to appear before his judgment-seat; and join unto these all persons who, judging themselves, take other rules of absolution than the word gives, who after trial absolve themselves, and withal those, who, condemning themselves, yet flee not unto this city of refuge, this blood of sprinkling, to get a solid answer in the word to all their challenges, and O how few are behind! It is but as the gleaning after the vintage. Nay, many believers have not a good conscience, though they have a right to it, because they settle not themselves on the grounds of faith, and go not on from faith to faith. There must be some sense of faith, before faith answer rightly, and give peace to the mind.

Use II. Ye see the way to get a good conscience. Believe much, and maintain your faith. It is as simple and poor a mistake as can befall a soul. Ye think because ye have not peace after your believing, therefore it was not unfeigned and true faith: and therefore ye will not believe, because ye cannot get peace. But believe that ye may have a good conscience. Would ye know your sins are pardoned before ye believe? How precious should faith be unto you, when by faith ye may not only overcome the world, but, as it were, overcome God in judging, that the soul may be justified when it is judged? Ye will not get challenges<sup>477</sup> answered by your own integrity and uprightness, or by your performing of duties. No, no, these cannot be sufficient grounds of your peace. Lay down the solid and satisfying grounds of faith, of imputed righteousness, and of salvation by Jesus Christ, and this shall be a foundation of lasting peace. Sense makes not a good conscience, there is much lightness and vanity in it, and

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<sup>477</sup> [Charges, or accusations.—*Ed.*]

the rule it proceeds by is changeable, but faith establishes the soul, and makes it not ashamed.

## Sermon XIII.

1 Tim. i. 5.—“Now the end of the commandment,” &c.

Fourthly, Faith purging the conscience purifies the heart (Acts xv. 9.), and hope also purifies the heart (1 John iii. 3.), which is nothing else but faith in the perfection and vigour of it. This includes, I. That the heart was unclean before faith. II. That faith cleanses it, and makes it pure. But “who can say, I have made my heart pure (Prov. xx. 9.), I am clean from my sin?” Is there any man's heart on this side of time, which lodges not many strange guests? In answer to this we may observe, that there is a legal purity, and a gospel purity. A legal purity is a sincere and full conformity to God's holy will and command, in thought, affections, inclinations, and actions, and, in this sense, who can say, I have made my hands clean? The old corruption sticks to the heart and cannot be thoroughly scraped out, there are many lurking holes for uncleanness to be hid in. Corruption is engrained in him, and it will not be the work of one day to change it. The whole head is sick, and the whole body full of sores. All the corners of the heart are full of filthiness and idols, and though the house be now swept and garnished, and all things look better in it, yet there are many hidden places of rottenness undiscovered, and it is the soul's continual exercise to purify itself as he is pure. But evangelical purity and cleanness is that which God reconciled in Christ takes to be so, and that which in Christ is accepted, and is a fount of his clean Spirit dwelling in the heart. The heart formerly was a troubled fountain, that sent out filthy streams, as a puddle. Corruption was the mud among the affections and thoughts, but now a pure heart is like a clear running water, clean and bright like crystal. Now this purity consists in the washing of regeneration, and sanctification by the Spirit of holiness. Jesus Christ came both by water and blood, 1 John v. 6. He came by blood, to sprinkle and purge

the conscience, that it might have no more conscience of sins, Heb. x. 2, ix. 14. And he also came by water, that is, the washing and cleansing virtue of the Spirit of grace, to purge and cleanse us from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. There are two things in sin that Jesus came to destroy, the guilt and offence of sin, whereby the sinner is bound over to condemnation, and lies under the Judge's curse, and the spot of sin, which also Christ came to destroy. He did both in his own person, and he is to perfect this in us personally, who were judicially reckoned one with him, Rom. vi. 3-12, 1 John iii. 5. Now Jesus Christ hath come with blood to sprinkle the conscience from dead works, and give it a good answer to the challenges of the law, and an ill conscience. And he hath come likewise with water, to wash and cleanse us from the spots, and filth, and power of sin. The first removes the guilt, the latter removes the filth of sin, and both are done by faith, which is our victory over the world, and this is the way how faith overcomes the world by the water and blood. 1 John v. 4-6. The blood of Jesus Christ is holden by faith with a twofold virtue of cleansing, from the guilt, and from the filth of sin, and thus cleanses us from all unrighteousness, 1 John i. 7. [615] According to the promise of the covenant (Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26.), the application of the blood of sprinkling hath two effects. One is for justification, "ye shall be clean," another is, "from all your filthiness and idols will I cleanse you," that is sanctification. I. Now this purity consists in this, that the pure heart regards not iniquity in the inward man, nor delights in sin, Psal. lxxvi. 18. He sets not up his idols in God's place, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. The cleansing of the heart is from idols. Although he cannot get himself purified as Christ is pure, and though iniquity be in his heart, yet he regards it not. He looks not upon it as a guest approved and accepted. Sin may be an intruding guest, but sin is not welcomed with all his heart. He dare not take that pleasure in sin that another man would do. He hath a worm that eats up his pleasure when he departs from God, or his thoughts go a-whoring from

him. The unbelieving man's heart is a house full of idols, but the entry of faith by God's Spirit makes their Dagon to fall. But, II. The pure heart hath much of the filthiness taken away that filled it before, and so it is denominated from the best part. It is washed and cleansed from a sea of corruption, and the body of sin that did reign within the heart was formerly like an impure fountain, that sent out nothing but rotten stinking waters. Unto him were all things unclean, for his heart and conscience was defiled, Tit. i. 15. Nothing was pure to him, it ran continually in a stream of unclean thoughts and affections. But now he is purified, and to the believer "all things are pure:" the ordinary strain and current of his thoughts and affections run more clearly free of the earthly quality they had, more sublimated, more spiritualized, and he is named by that. Though, it may be, temptation may trouble the fountain, and make it run unclean and earthly, yet it will settle again, and come into its own posture, and the dreg fall to the bottom, and the clean water of the Spirit be the predominant. But a standing puddle will run foul as long as it runs, corruption goes through all. It is not a corner of the heart, but the whole heart.

III. A pure heart is like a running fountain, if it be defiled, it is always casting out the filth, and is about returning to a right state. But an impure heart is like a standing puddle that keeps all it gets. If by temptation the pure heart and affections be stirred, and the filth that is in the bottom come up to the brim, it hath no rest nor peace in that condition, but works it out again, and it hath this advantage, that it is purer and clearer after troubling nor<sup>478</sup> it was before. For much of the filth would run out that had been lying quiet before. But an impure heart keeps all, and vents none. If ye trouble it, ye will raise an ill smell, and when it settles, it falls but to the bottom again, and there is as much to work upon the next time. In a word, the believer when he sins, and his heart goes wrong, he weeps over his heart, and has no peace till it be

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<sup>478</sup> [Than.—*Ed.*]

cleansed. He washes in the fountain of Christ's blood. When a natural transgression gets up, he sets himself against it and the root of it both, and bears down the original corruption, which is the fountain of all sin (Psal. li. 5), and at every descent he brings away something of that puddle. He is upon the growing hand by the exercise of faith and repentance. Look upon him after he has seen and been sensible of his sins, and ye would say it is not the man ye saw. He hates sin more than he did formerly. We also notice,

IV. That purity is sincerity and uprightness (James iv. 8), "Purify your hearts, ye double minded." Hypocrisy is filthiness and abominable to God. He then is a sincere man, that hath any honesty of heart toward God. When his actions are not right, his heart doth not approve them, Rom. vii. When he cannot come up to his duty, his desire comes before performance. A sincere man hath a respect to all God's commandments.

V. The pure man is still purifying himself "even as God is pure." As he who hath called him is holy, so he is holy in all manner of conversation. He never thinks he is clean enough, and so he aspires after greater purity, and is named a saint, rather from his aim and endeavour, than from his attainment. He cries, unclean, unclean, am I, and holy, holy, Lord God, art thou. He hath taken up his lodging near the opened fountain, and dwells there, never to remove thence, till he have his robes clean and white in the blood of the Lamb. No unclean thing can enter into heaven, and he is trimming himself against that day, and setting apart all superfluity of naughtiness, and filthiness, and still all his righteousness is as menstruous rags. He is cleansing his house, every day casting out something, searching out all the corners of it, lest the unclean thing, and the Babylonish garment be hid. His pattern is to walk even as Christ walked, 1 John ii. 6.

[616]

Now faith and a good conscience have influence on this purifying the heart. I. Because faith lays hold upon the cleansing virtue of Christ's blood. It applies Jesus Christ who came by

water and blood, and his blood purges the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God. The blood that was offered up by the eternal Spirit, of how great virtue must it be when applied to the heart and conscience, Heb. ix. 14. No wonder it makes that like wool which was formerly like scarlet. Now faith in Jesus Christ applies that blood. It is the very hand that sprinkles it. Faith takes up house beside the opened fountain, and dwells there. Faith takes Jesus for sanctification as well as justification, 1 Cor. i. 30. Faith looks upon a judicial union with Christ crucified, and sees his perfect offering once offered to sanctify all, and therefore makes continual applications with David, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean, wash me, and I shall be whiter than the snow." II. Faith purifies the heart, because it lays hold on the promises, and makes use of the word, 2 Cor. vii. 1. Faith having such promises, cleanses the man from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. The proper order of faith is the word, and the word is the truth by which we are sanctified and made clean, John xvii. 17. There are many precious promises of sanctification and holiness, and faith draws the virtue of purifying the heart out of the promises, and applies the promise to his impure heart, and it is purged. III. Faith purifies the heart also by provocation and upstirring, in as far as it gives the answer of a good conscience. For the man who hath gotten a solid answer to all his objections in Christ's blood, and hath the continual feast of joy and peace in believing, O how will he abhor himself, and repent in dust and in ashes! Faith takes up God's holiness and purity, and loathes itself with Job, and cries, unclean. The believer will thus reason and conclude,—shall I any more delight and live in sin, since I am dead unto it by Jesus Christ? Rom. vi. 1, 2. He falls in with the beauties of holiness, and so cannot abide his own. Faith begets hope, and hope purifies the heart. Shall then the man who expects to see God, and be a citizen of the new Jerusalem, where no unclean thing can enter, shall he walk in his former lusts, like the wicked world, and not make himself ready for the continuing

city he goes to, and adorn himself for the company of the blessed God and angels?

Let us now conclude, by applying all which hath been said in some uses. Use I. We may see from what hath been hinted, how little faith is among you. Faith purifies the heart, but if ye examine yourselves, your hearts will be found unclean, and such as the Holy Ghost cannot dwell in. The temple in which God's Holy Spirit resides must touch no unclean thing, 2 Cor. vi. 16, 17. Are not many men's corruptions rank and lively? Unclean hands are an infallible demonstration of an unclean heart, James iv. 8. These things which proceed out of the heart may teach you what is within the heart. The streams may let you know what is in the fountain Mark vii. 15-22, James iii. 11, 12. What need ye any more proof of yourselves? Sinners, look to your hands, and your outward man, and learn from them to know your hearts. These things proceed out of the heart and defile the whole man. The profanity of the most part of men's practices, cursing and swearing &c., is a bitter stream that cannot proceed from a good fountain. It is a wonder how the world satisfy themselves with a dream of faith. What influence hath your faith had upon your heart and conversation? Are ye not as earthly and worldly as ever, as unclean as ever? Ye think your hearts good, but if your conversation be not good, your hearts are not good. Will any person think his sins are pardoned, when he wallows in them? Do they believe they shall obtain the remission of these sins they are not purging themselves from? No, no, the blood and water must go together and the Spirit's sanctifying with Christ's justifying.

Use II. The children of God may hence gather the ground and reason of their little progress in sanctification. Why are your hearts so unclean, and why is there so much corruption yet living in your thoughts and affections, that it cannot keep within the heart, but, as a full fountain, must run out in streams of external actions? It is even this, ye do not believe much, and though this be told you, yet ye will not believe it; ye take ways of your

own to purge out your corruptions, and it will not do. All your resolutions, prayers, sad experiences, &c., are of no more virtue than the blood of bulls and goats. Ye must then apply the blood of the Son of God, which was offered up by the eternal Spirit. It is but a poor fancy to suspend believing till ye see a pure heart. How shall ye get a pure heart? Is it not folly to forbear planting till ye see fruits, or to pluck up your tree because it bears not the first day? Abide in Christ, and ye shall bring forth much fruit. Believe, and believe, and believe again, till faith be answered by a good conscience, till that sweet echo be given unto the Lord's comforting voice, "Thy sins, which are many, are forgiven thee." Be much in laying hold upon the precious promises, and then your heart shall fall out of love with this present evil world, and shall relish spiritual things. But who will believe this report? Ye go away convinced that this is the only way to purify yourselves, and yet ye continue puddling in your old way. May God persuade your hearts to do better.

## Sermon XIV.

1 Tim. i. 5.—“Now the end of the commandment,” &c.

Fifthly, Faith purging the conscience, and purifying the heart, works by love. Love is the fruit of faith. Love is the stream that flows out of a pure heart and a good conscience. By love, we mean principally love to God, or Jesus Christ, and then love to the saints next to our Saviour. This is often mentioned in scripture, “Hope maketh not ashamed, (Rom. v. 5) because the love of God is shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost.” This love is the consequence of the peace which a justified man obtains by faith, Rom. v. 1, 2; 2 Cor. v. 14. The constraining love of Christ flows from this ground, that a man judges Christ to have died for him, from faith's taking up of Christ in that noble expression of his love, (John v. 40, 42.) “And ye will not come unto me that ye may have life. I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.” Faith works by love. Love is faith's hand put out in action for Christ, and as the mind commands the outward man, whether it will or not, so doth faith command love, Eph. iii. 17. The rooting and building up in love is a fruit of Christ's dwelling in the heart by faith. Love is the branch that grows in faith's root. These are often joined together, and comprehend the substance of the law and gospel, 1 Tim. i. 14, 2 Tim. i. 13. Faith fulfils the obedience to the gospel, and love is the fulfilling of the whole law, (Rom. xiii. 10) so that faith leads a man back again to the command, that he fled to faith from. Faith hath reconciled them and taken up the difference. We shall then show how faith and a good conscience and a pure heart contribute to love.

First, Faith is the eye and sense of the soul to take up Jesus Christ. Nothing is loved but as it is known and apprehended to be good. The affections of themselves are blind, and cannot go forth but as led by the direction of faith. Faith is the mind

to present love's object. The world sees no beauty nor form in the commands, that they should desire them. Even Jesus Christ himself is but foolishness to a natural mind, he neither knows his need of him, nor Christ's suitableness to his need. But faith is the first opening of the eyes, when we are turned from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan unto God, Acts xxvi. 18. Christ becomes the believer's wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30. The day spring from on high visits them who sit in darkness, to guide their feet in the way of peace, Luke i. 78, 79. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God shining in the face of the Sun of righteousness, doth arise and shine into their hearts. The man sees himself in a dangerous condition, and says, Oh I where am I? And faith discovers, on the other hand, all things in Christ Jesus suitable to such a case. He sees nothing but vanity, emptiness, and misery, sin, and condemnation in the creature, he sees grace, mercy, holiness, righteousness and free salvation in Christ. Set these beside one another, and judge ye if the soul cannot choose to run out in affection and longing desire. Oh! says he, to be one with him. Faith presents all the motives and attractives of the heart, and then there needs no more to make it love. Faith discovers a man's self unto himself, and lets him see all misery within, complete woe within doors, and it holds forth bread without the ports<sup>479</sup> for the saint, and salvation for the lost. It brings in an amiable person, who is fairer than the children of men, who is all love, and hath no spot in him. Is it not a sweet word, a Redeemer to captives, a Saviour to sinners? And will not the soul rise up, and go forth out of itself? And will it not choose to flit<sup>480</sup> unto him who is the desire of all nations? Will it not go unto him for food and clothing? Love then is the soul's journey and motion towards Jesus, whom faith hath brought in such a good report of. But,

[618]

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<sup>479</sup> [Gates.—*Ed.*]

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Secondly. When faith hath given the answer of a good conscience, and brought Jesus nearer hand to the soul, or the soul nearer unto him, then love is stronger, and grows like a fire that many waters cannot quench. It is like jealousy, that is cruel as the grave, many floods cannot drown it. Union is the ground of love, union in nature, or sympathy, or likeness, is the ground of affection. According as faith brings Christ nearer to the heart, the flame increases. All things are desired and loved as good, but more desired, as not only good in themselves, but good unto us. Gold in the Indies will not much move the heart, but bring it hither, and ye shall see who loves it. The first act of faith puts a man in great need of a Saviour, and discovers a possibility of redemption through Jesus, and in so far he is loved. But when once faith has gone that length as to make a good conscience, and to calm and silence the woes of a troubled mind, by the actual application of that desired possible redemption, and when it can particularly apply the common salvation, O then what burning affection! “Who is a God like unto thee, who pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of his heritage, because he delights in mercy?” “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.” “I will love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice, I will call upon him so long as I live,” as if it had never loved before. They will love much to whom much is forgiven. Love, without such a faith, is full of jealousies and suspicions, but when faith hath brought in Christ to dwell in the heart, then it is rooted and built up in love, (Eph. iii. 17) and then perfect love casts out fear, 1 John iv. 18. Love before such an assurance, is but a tormenting love, and hath much fear in it, saying, “Oh I may want him, and then I will be more miserable than if I had not known him.” But faith, giving the answer of a good conscience, casts out horror and fear, and then perfects love, and the soul then closes with Christ as a Mediator and friend, and closes with God as a merciful Father, now reconciled unto him through Christ, and not any more as a

stern or severe Judge. But,

Thirdly. When faith hath purified the heart, and cleansed the affections, then the soul burns with a purer flame of affection and zeal to God, and is, as it were, delivered from the earthly weight put upon it. When the heart is purified, love is like the flame, whereas, if he be not so purged, there may be some heat and fire latent in the ashes, covered with corruption. But a pure heart is a spiritual heart, and minds spiritual things, (Col. iii. 1) and it is a heart going back unto its own place, Christ hath touched it with his own heart, and with his salvation, and it looks aye<sup>481</sup> sure to him in the heavens. The love of the world is inconsistent with the love of the Father, 1 John ii. 15. The love of the world plucks the heart downward, and the lusts of the flesh are so many weights upon the believer, that he can not mount up in a spiritual cloud of divine affection to Jesus Christ. But the pure and spiritual heart is now more refined, and delivered from these impediments, and it is like a pure lamp of oil burning upward. When a man's heart is engaged to any thing of this world, love cannot be perfect. For love is a man's master, and no man can serve two masters.

[619]

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<sup>481</sup> [Always.—*Ed.*]