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We all know that antinomianism is ‘a bad thing’. But what is it? What do antinomians think? What do they do? More important, how can believers be protected against antinomianism?

An antinomian is, literally, one who is *anti nomos* – ‘against law’, against any law, opposed to the whole notion of law. Within this debate, strictly speaking, an antinomian is a professing believer who will not submit to God’s law, one who will not be restrained by it in any form.

But this is where we need to be careful. Consider Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 9:20-21. The apostle speaks of those who were ‘under the law’, under the law of Moses; namely, the Jews. He speaks of those ‘not having the law’, those who were destitute of the law of Moses, those who were never given the law of Moses, those who were never under it; namely, the Gentiles. And then he speaks of believers. Referring to himself, Paul explains that though he, as a Jew, had been ‘under the law’ of Moses, having been converted, he is no longer under that law. Even so, as he says: ‘I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law’. What is more, as the occasion might demand, for the sake of reaching Jews with the gospel, he will re-submit himself to the law of Moses.

In terms of the current debate, none of this is antinomianism. The Jews were under the law of Moses. The Gentiles are not under the law of Moses; God never gave it to them; they are, in this sense, law-less. Believers, while they are not under the law of Moses, are under the law of Christ.

I say all that, reader, to show that the issue is not quite as simple as many Reformed teachers would have us believe. I use it also to encourage you not to be disturbed by those who, with their glib remarks and snide innuendoes, attack those who stand with Paul and declare that believers are not under the law of Moses, but under the law of Christ. Attack in what way? Quite often men smear such believers as ‘antinomians’! In so doing, of

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course, they ought to remember that they slate Paul – along with the rest of us who dare to say the same as he!

Speaking of the Reformed, most Christian teachers, preachers and writers – whether they know it or not – are disciples of John Calvin in this matter: they argue that the way to get believers sanctified, the way to stop them being infected with antinomianism, is to teach and preach the law to them; and by ‘the law’, they mean the ten commandments, the so-called ‘moral law’. Though they have no biblical warrant for any of this, they drive on regardless! Some are overt advocates of this law-system, but many are incipient preachers of rules and regulations in the attempt to produce a people that conform to accepted patterns of behaviour. Those who question, let alone refute, this approach are castigated – and worse – for their pains.

Well, I for one do challenge Calvin’s system.¹ I don’t do it for the fun of it, of course. Serious consequences are at stake. I am convinced the New Testament sets out a very different way of sanctification. Believers – being in the new covenant – *believers* should not preach the law; *we* should preach Christ! And in our

¹ I am not alone, of course! Listen to the following from the 1646 Appendix to the 1644/46 Particular Baptist Confession: ‘Though we that believe in Christ are not under the law, but under grace (Rom. 6:14), yet we know that we are not lawless, or left to live without a rule: “not without law to God, but under law to Christ” (1 Cor. 9:21). The gospel of Jesus Christ is a law, or commanding rule unto us; whereby, and in obedience whereunto, we are taught to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world (Tit. 2:11-12), the directions of Christ in his evangelical word guiding us unto, and in this sober, righteous, and godly walking (1 Tim. 1:10-11). Though we are not now sent to the law as it was in the hand of Moses, to be commanded thereby, yet Christ in his gospel teaches and commands us to walk in the same way of righteousness and holiness that God by Moses did command the Israelites to walk in, all the commandments of the second table being still delivered unto us by Christ, and all the commandments of the first table also (as touching the life and spirit of them) in this epitome or brief sum: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, *etc.*” (Matt. 22:37-40; Rom. 13:8-10) (grace-gospel.org). In short: believers are not under the law of Moses, but under the law of Christ.

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own experience, we should not be going to the law; we should be going to Christ. ‘For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ’ (John 1:17). Furthermore, despite the howls of disbelief – and worse – that will greet what I now assert, taking believers to Christ – taking them to grace, not law – far from being the way to antinomianism, is the only way to prevent it!

In my books: *Christ Is All* and *Four ‘Antinomians’ Tried and Vindicated*, I set out my arguments for these claims. I followed up these volumes with some short addresses on my web page (www.sermonaudio.com/davidhjgay), in which I ‘preach’ nine of the almost-countless New Testament passages which make the case. As soon as these short talks began to appear on the web, it was clear that they had struck a chord, and my American friend, Ace Staggs – who manages the site for me behind the scenes – asked me if I had the notes of this material. The answer was in the negative: I had spoken extempore. But there was an obvious implication in his question, and I immediately decided to take it up. It wasn’t long before Ace had used voice recognition software, and – lo and behold – I could read what I had preached! It is those short discourses which, having been transcribed, make up the contents of this slim volume.

Now for an important caveat: I have published this material with an absolute minimum of editing. While this has obvious – glaringly obvious! – disadvantages, it also has certain benefits. For a start, since the talks are printed almost word-for-word, while this book can stand on its own, it also serves as a script to accompany actual listening to the addresses. Thus the reader can take it in by ear and eye at the same time. Again, by using virtually unedited transcripts of extempore addresses, the material may speak with greater life and power. I hope so.

Of course, although the short discourses were extempore, I have spent a considerable time in these passages when writing my aforementioned books. I didn’t say these things off the top of my head! Nevertheless, these addresses were unscripted. Reader, you must bear this in mind. Moreover, if you wish to see my arguments behind what I say, then you should consult

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my previous works. Above all you should check everything by Scripture.

The new-covenant way of sanctification – the New Testament way of sanctification – is not by the law but by grace. That is my claim. That is what the nine scriptural passages, upon which this volume is based, assert. And that is what I have set out in these pages.

Nevertheless, I do not want merely to make a case. I am convinced the case is irrefutable: sanctification – as justification – is by grace and not law; as is every other aspect of salvation – not least assurance! Very well. In my collected works on this subject, I submit that I have made that case.

In this present volume, however, in addition to demonstrating that is what Scripture teaches, I have a more personal and pastoral concern. I want to do what I can to help the many believers who are in serious trouble over this issue. And there is need! Desperate need! Sadly, too many believers are living a life of bondage and misery through being taken to the law instead of Christ – trying to be sanctified by using the law or imposed rules. They are doomed to failure and disappointment! And many live to prove it! As a result, these believers are often sad, afraid, depressed, spiritually dry, and lacking assurance, as well as finding no help from the law, or those rules, in stimulating them to godliness. Above all, the glory of the person and work of Christ is diminished in their hearts and minds: a grim catalogue indeed!

I hope this slim volume may help believers who find themselves imprisoned in that condition. *And I use the word ‘imprisoned’ advisedly; see Galatians 3:23; 4:2-3.* By pointing them to Christ, the only one who can relieve and release them, the only one who, by his Spirit, can sanctify them, I hope to help them come into the full liberty of the gospel, and produce a Christ-like life in this pagan world. In short, I desire to see God’s people edified, liberated and sanctified, and given back their birthright – a sense, *here and now*, of their ever-increasing glory and inexpressible joy in Christ (2 Cor. 3:17-18; Gal. 5:1; 1 Pet.

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1:8-9; for instance). Every believer has – or should have – a triumphant sense of these glorious benefits, NOW! Why? How? Because, in Christ, every believer is perfect in God’s sight, every believer is utterly beyond condemnation, every believer is free from all stain, every believer is liberated from law, sin and death, has glory, is being sanctified, and is certain to be taken at last into everlasting bliss, to be like Christ, and to be with him for ever. In Christ, I say, every believer has all this, and has it now, as the Scriptures plainly declare – and declare again and again:

I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses (Acts 13:38-39).

But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the law and the prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe... A man is justified by faith apart from observing the law... Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes (Rom. 3:21-22,28; 10:4).

We... know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ... We... have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified... Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because: ‘The righteous will live by faith’. The law is not based on faith; on the contrary: ‘The man who does these things will live by them’. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree’. He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit (Gal. 2:15-16; 3:11-14).

For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous (Rom. 5:19).

God made him [Christ] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21).

Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless (Eph. 5:25-27).

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Christ came as high priest... He entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence... He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him... We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Heb. 9:11-12,24-28; 10:10).

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (Rom. 8:1-4).

The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17-18).

Thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness. When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 6:17-23).

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery... So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh... If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law (Gal. 5:1,16-18).

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the

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world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is (1 John 3:1-2).

And so on...

That is my first aim: I want to instruct, encourage and edify believers, by taking them to the Lord Jesus. I hope, also, that unbelievers might read my book and/or listen to my sermons, and – hearing of Christ in the gospel – be converted. If these ends should be met, it would please me beyond words.

Above all, it would meet my greatest aim – which is to bring glory to the triune God who, in his amazing grace planned this glorious gospel, who, in his unspeakable love accomplished it, and, who, in the fullness of time, by his infinite power, will bring it to complete and everlasting fulfilment in all his elect.