

Decision Time for New-Covenant Theologians

This article consists of the unedited Introduction to my *Believers Under the Law of Christ*; hence the references to that volume. Let me explain why I have published this material separately under this title. While some might think my use of ‘decision time’ a bit dramatic, that I am wrong to polarise the issue in hand, or that I am wrong even to raise it, I beg to differ. A division of opinion among new-covenant theologians exists: I am not making that division by addressing the issues involved. And since the question is of great importance, one with far-reaching consequences, which consequences will not go away by wishful thinking or ignoring them, playing the ostrich is not an option. Then again, although I concentrate on new-covenant theology, I know that similar discussions are taking place elsewhere – not excluding among the Reformed. Indeed, there is nothing new under the sun: this debate has raged, more than once, long before our time. Nevertheless, I feel my responsibility to address current trends as they arise within my own circle. Hence the book and this article. And although this article is, as I say, an introduction to the book, it does, I think, stand on its own. I publish it in the hope that it may help crystallise the issue, and encourage many to look further into this vital topic.

Ever since the Reformation, knowingly or not, the overwhelming majority of evangelicals¹ have held a view of the Mosaic law (if they have had any view at all) which has been formed largely by John Calvin’s doctrine of its threefold use; namely, that the law (that is, the law reduced to the ten commandments, the so-called ‘moral law’) restrains sin, prepares sinners for Christ, and serves

¹ But not all; there have been ‘new-covenant theologians’ of one sort or another through all those centuries, and before. See my ‘New Kid on the Block?’ New-covenant theology is, of course, biblical.

as both the whip and the perfect rule for the believer's progressive sanctification.²

During the 1980s, however, things began to change. God raised up an increasing number of teachers who, going directly to Scripture unfiltered by the Reformed Confessions, began to expound the full glories of Christ in the new covenant. The succeeding years have witnessed an explosion in the amount of valuable material on this vital subject. And this recovery – I use the word advisedly – of the biblical theology of the new covenant, has been an enormous blessing to an increasing number of believers. The Holy Spirit surely has been at work, and many can testify to the scriptural liberation, assurance and sense of joy they have found in Christ and his gospel through this resurgence of what has become known as new-covenant theology.

In recent years, however, as has happened before during the long history of the church, some have allowed the pendulum to swing too far; indeed, some have encouraged it to swing too far. We recognise the danger, do we not? When people discover what is to them a new idea, they often become over-zealous and over-emphasise the point. I certainly feel the temptation! In recent years, alas, some who have discovered the distinction between law and gospel have stressed it to the detriment of other aspects of truth.

Rightly rejecting the believer's bondage under the Mosaic law as found in Calvin's teaching, and rightly emphasising the believer's liberty in Christ, the inward writing of God's law – the law of Christ – on the heart, along with the power of the indwelling Spirit, some new-covenant theologians have so stressed these glories that they have been in danger of playing

² The sinner, on coming to faith, is united to Christ and is justified and positionally sanctified. Thus, in God's sight, in Christ he is accounted or made righteous, free of sin and condemnation, and perfectly separated unto God. See, for instance, 1 Cor. 1:2,30; 6:11; Eph. 5:25-27; Heb. 10:10-18; 13:12. In his Christian life, he has to work out his perfection in Christ, and he will be moved to do so by the Spirit under the direction of Scripture; this is his progressive sanctification or holiness of life. But this, alas, is imperfect. The believer will only be absolutely sanctified in the eternal state. See my *Fivefold*.

down other – equally scriptural – aspects of the believer’s life in the new covenant. By stressing the believer’s liberty and laying too little stress on ‘law’ in ‘the law of Christ’,³ by emphasising the Spirit’s work at the expense of the believer’s obligation, duty and accountability for determined and voluntary obedience to Scripture, and by stressing the inward written law of God and the work of the Spirit, while at the same time asserting that the written Scriptures are not an integral part of Christ’s law, they have ended up in an unscriptural place.⁴

In addition, and in tandem with this, some deny the concept of progressive sanctification. They virtually make justification and sanctification one and the same.⁵ This is a serious mistake. For Scripture teaches us that believers are not only justified and positionally sanctified, but that they must be progressively sanctified; that is, they must be transformed into Christ-likeness in their actual lives. Take just one passage to make the point. Peter, addressing believers, commanded them:

Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written: ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’ (1 Pet. 1:13-16).

As John Gill said, this refers to:

...external holiness, holiness of life and conversation, in all the parts and branches of it, both with respect to God and men, in matters both of religion and civil life... To be holy in this sense is an imitating of God, a copying of him... walking worthy of him, who has called us to his kingdom and glory, and walking

³ Or none at all, even denigrating the concept.

⁴ Consider this from one advocate: ‘The spirit has pre-eminence over the written word, or the letter’. Even if we replace ‘spirit’ with ‘Spirit’ it sounds little better! Do not miss the confusion in the unscriptural link between ‘the written word’ and ‘the letter’; indeed, their virtual equivalence. This is wrong. I will deal with it.

⁵ If not making regeneration, justification and sanctification one and the same. They are connected but distinct. See my *Fivefold* pp35-39.

worthy of that calling wherein we are called, and a following of God, as dear and obedient children, and what is according to his will, and what he directs unto and requires.

Believers must not be ‘conformed’ (either passively or actively) to their pre-conversion way of life, but they must ‘prepare their minds for action’ and so be transformed (compare Romans 12:2) to be holy in likeness to God himself. Take the word ‘holy’, *hagios*. God is ‘holy’ (1 Pet. 1:15-16), and believers – or, rather, saints, those who have been sanctified by the Spirit (1 Pet. 1:2) (*hagiasmō*) – have to be ‘holy’ (*hagioi*) because God is ‘holy’ (*hagion* and *hagios*). So the sanctified have to be sanctified, the ‘holified’ have to be ‘holified’; that is, the positionally sanctified have to be progressively sanctified. And as for the progressive nature of this sanctification, see how Peter takes his concept of believers being ‘obedient children’ (1 Pet. 1:14) having been regenerated (1 Pet. 1:23), and almost immediately develops it in terms of their growth and continual edification:

Put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation – if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 2:1-5).

This is what I understand by progressive sanctification.⁶

All this, I fear, is under threat. The debate centres on the role of the Scriptures in the law of Christ, whether the believer is under that law, and whether the believer is passive or active in his progressive sanctification, if, indeed, such a thing exists. For my part, I assert that the believer *is* under the law of Christ, that the Scriptures *are* at the heart of that law, that progressive sanctification *is* both a reality and a necessity, and that the believer *is* responsible and accountable for it. In saying this, I do

⁶ Compare, for instance, Rom. 6:19,22; 12:1-2; Eph. 4:17ff; 1 Thess. 4:3-4,7; 5:23; Heb. 12:10,14; 2 Pet. 3:17-18. For the argument, see my *Fivefold, Positional*.

not, of course, deny the essential power of the Spirit to produce this progressive sanctification. Moreover, this power of the Spirit is not only necessary for the believer's progressive sanctification; in the provisions of the new covenant, Christ gives his Spirit to all his elect. As they are regenerated by the Spirit, united to Christ by faith, justified and positionally sanctified, they are transformed, given a new heart, mind, spirit and will to love and serve Christ by obeying his commands. And this ensures their fruitfulness to the glory of God. See, for instance, Ezekiel 36:25-27; Romans 6:1 – 7:6; 8:1-17.

I freely admit that 'the law of Christ', as a phrase, is rare in Scripture,⁷ and that Christ and the apostles do not often speak in terms of 'law' when addressing believers. But this is not the end of the story. How about 'command', 'commandment', 'rule' and 'instruct'? And when the apostles use 'ought' or 'let', when they 'beseech', 'insist', 'implore', 'exhort' or 'urge', make no mistake: they are commanding! And none of this begins to exhaust the countless imperatives which come thick and fast from the apostles. Nobody can read the New Testament and be left in any doubt that believers are men and women under authority – the authority of Christ, revealed in Scripture by the Spirit through the apostles.

With regard to the objection over the rarity of the phrase, 'the law of Christ', in Scripture, let me quote the answer I gave in my *Christ is All*:

The phrase, 'the law of Christ', appears but once in Scripture.⁸ So it does. In Galatians 6:2. But very close parallels appear in other places: 'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus' (Rom. 8:2); 'under law towards Christ' (1 Cor. 9:21) or 'Christ's law' (NIV)... 'The ten commandments' appears as a phrase but three times in the Bible, and 'new covenant' but four. What conclusion should we draw from *that*? We are told 'we have the mind of Christ', but once (1 Cor. 2:16). The same goes for 'the Spirit of Christ' (Rom. 8:9), 'the sufferings of Christ' (2 Cor.

⁷ But the same may be said of 'the ten commandments', 'the new covenant' and 'the Lord's supper'.

⁸ How many times did Paul use the phrase 'the law of Moses'? Once only (1 Cor. 9:9).

1:5), ‘a letter of Christ’ (2 Cor. 3:3), ‘the gospel of the glory of Christ’ (2 Cor. 4:4), ‘the power of Christ’ (2 Cor. 12:9), ‘the word of Christ’ (Col. 3:16),⁹ ‘partakers of Christ’ (Heb. 3:14), and so on. I am not for a moment suggesting that these phrases are not important, that their equivalent does not appear elsewhere, or – above all – that the ideas they encapsulate are not written large in Scripture. I am simply showing that this first objection to ‘the law of Christ’ is puerile. I am also claiming that although ‘the law of Christ’, as a phrase, is rare, its principles dominate the New Testament. For those who are still hesitant, many things which, though not *explicitly* stated in Scripture, are, nevertheless, true. They can be – and are – properly deduced from Scripture. After all, words and phrases such as ‘the trinity’, ‘unconditional election’, ‘particular redemption’, ‘the righteousness of Christ’ or ‘Christ’s righteousness’, ‘the free offer’, ‘duty faith’, ‘believer’s baptism’, ‘progressive sanctification’, ‘church membership’ and ‘closed communion’ don’t appear at all in Scripture. What are we to deduce from *that*? Surely, we should ask that whether or not the phrase appears in Scripture, does the idea?... Many... will quite happily use such phrases as ‘personal Saviour’, ‘open-air work’, ‘quiet time’, ‘pastoral ministry’, ‘theological college’, ‘Bible college’ or ‘seminary’, ‘Sunday school’, ‘mission’ or ‘missionary’, ‘evangelism’, ‘covenant of works’, ‘covenant of grace’, and ‘Confession of faith’, perhaps without realising that they appear nowhere at all in Scripture. Do they all appear in Scripture as concepts? [The answer is No!] To sum up: What now of the objection about the infrequency of ‘the law of Christ’? What is more, this phrase *does* appear in Scripture. So, if what I have said about it is wrong, what *does* it mean?

Of course, ‘liberty’ and ‘freedom’ are powerful aspects of the new covenant, *but* ‘duty’, ‘obligation’, ‘command’ and ‘law’ are *no less*. To accommodate the words of Christ in Matthew 23:23, those I am writing against should have stressed the one and not neglected to give equal weight to the other.¹⁰

⁹ But see Rom. 10:17 (NIV, NASB); ‘the word of God’ (NKJV).

¹⁰ ‘Contrary to much teaching that wants to pit relationship against word and obedience, the inspiration and application of the written word is no less a work of God and the Spirit than the expression of his indwelling presence’ (David J. Gilliland: ‘New Covenant Theology: Is There Still a Role for the Imperatives?’), being a paper at the Providence Theological

Before I go on, let me repeat what I have just said, so important is it. In this book I am stressing the believer's responsibility to live a godly life under the law of Christ as revealed in Scripture; that is my purpose in writing at this time. But in doing this, I am not in the least going back on what I have said on countless other occasions; the motive, the spring and spur for this holiness of life is the person and work of Christ in the power of the Spirit. Scripture makes it as plain as plain can be that it is as believers set their minds and hearts on Christ that they are enabled by the Spirit to live to the glory of God. The spiritual life is not produced by rule and fear under the Mosaic law (*à la* Calvin with his whip). See, for example, 2 Corinthians 3:18 and Colossians 3:1-17. And that is but two of scores and scores of examples I could choose to make the point. Even so, where do we find the teaching, the instruction, the command that we should set our hearts on Christ? In Scripture, of course! And that is why I deplore any move – however slight – away from maintaining that Scripture is central to the law of Christ. I want to do all I can to ensure that there is not the slightest shift in the biblical balance between, on the one hand, the inward work of the Spirit within believers, and, on the other, the external Scriptures. It is both.

C.H.Spurgeon did not get everything right on all things all the time, but he certainly knew the scriptural balance between the internal and the external, between the Spirit and the Scriptures. Listen to him on the internal work of the Spirit enabling the believer to live experientially in union with Christ:

I do not know a better epitome of Christian experience than this. This is the daily walk of a true child of God. If he lives after any other sort, then he lives not a Christian's life at all! Christ living in us, ourselves living upon Christ and our union to Christ being

Seminary Doctrinal Conference, 2011, p8). See the entire paper. Gilliland returned to the subject a year later, broadening the discussion, in 'The New Heart, The New Covenant, and Not So New Controversies: A Critique of the Modern "Grace Movement"', being a paper at the Providence Theological Seminary Doctrinal Conference, 2012.

visibly maintained by an act of simple faith in him – this is the true Christian’s life.¹¹

Excellent! The maintenance of the spiritual life is down to the believer’s union with Christ. So said Spurgeon. I agree! But now listen to him on the external, the Scriptures. When preaching on ‘To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them’ (Isa. 8:20), Spurgeon declared:

When men leave the sacred book of revelation, ah! my friends, where do they go? We find that in Isaiah’s time they went to strange places... Oh! that we may each of us be more wise, that we may not forsake the good old path, nor leave the way that God has prepared for us... Search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life, and these are they that testify of Jesus Christ. I feel at this particular crisis of religious affairs, it is imperative upon the Christian minister to urge his [hearers] to hold fast the doctrines of the truth – the words of God... What better advice can the minister give in such times as these? To what book shall he commend his hearers? How shall he keep them fast? Where is the anchor which he shall give them to cast into the rocks? or where the rocks into which they should cast their anchor? Our text is a solution to that question. We are here furnished with a great answer to the inquiry: ‘To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them’...

Remember, also, to bring the preachers of the gospel to this standard... Some men always believe like the last speaker... The reason [for] that is because the mass of people do not lay hold upon what is said, but upon how it is said: and if it is said smartly, said prettily, and said forcibly, that is enough for them, though it be a lie... Now, the Christian... does not care about how the man says it; it is the thing that is said that he cares about. All he asks is: ‘Did he speak the truth?’... It is not what I say, but what my God says, that you are demanded to receive. Put myself and put all my brethren into the sieve; cast us each into the fire; put us into the crucible of truth; and what is not according to God’s word must be consumed like dross.

¹¹ Exposition of Gal. 2:19-20, sermon number 2370. This, of course, is by the Spirit (Gal. 3:1-5). Remember, verse and chapter divisions are not inspired but are imposed, and often artificial and misleading.

There is another class of men quite contrary to those I have referred to. These men are their own preachers; they believe no one but themselves... These persons, if they hear a truth preached, judge of it not by the Bible, but by what they think the truth ought to be... Bring, then, I beseech you, your own thoughts and your own sentiments to the touchstone of the truth; for 'if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them'. And just do the same with all books that you read... It is God's word that breaks the fetters and sets the prisoner free; it is God's word instrumentally that saves souls; and therefore let us bring everything to the touchstone. 'To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them'.¹²

In short, as Spurgeon put it: 'Search all questions, try all by the word of God'.¹³

And finally:

It is not the letter which saves the soul; the letter kills many senses, and never can it give life. If you harp on the letter alone you may be tempted to use it as a weapon against the truth, as the Pharisees did of old, and your knowledge of the letter may breed pride in you to your destruction. It is the spirit, the real inner meaning, that is sucked into the soul, by which we are blessed and sanctified. We become saturated with the word of God, like Gideon's fleece, which was wet with the dew of heaven; and this can only come to pass by our receiving it into our minds and hearts, accepting it as God's truth, and so far understanding it as to delight in it. We must understand it, then, or else we have not read it aright.

Having issued that vital warning, Spurgeon came to this:

Love your Bibles. Keep close to your Bibles... Oh, love your Bibles and search them! Take them to bed with you, and when you wake up in the morning... Oh, cling you to Scripture. Scripture is not Christ, but it is the silken clue which will lead you to him. Follow its leadings faithfully... When you have received regeneration and a new life, keep on reading, because it will comfort you. You will see more of what the Lord has done for you. You will learn that you are redeemed, adopted, saved,

¹² Sermon number 172.

¹³ Sermon number 15.

sanctified. Half the errors in the world spring from people not reading their Bibles... It will be for your nourishment, too. It is your food as well as your life. Search it and you will grow strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. It will be for your guidance also. I am sure those go most right who keep closest to the book.¹⁴

As I say, Spurgeon got the balance between the inward and the outward, between the Spirit and the Scriptures, right. It is not one or the other; it is both.

I am grieved that it is necessary for me to write about what I see as a threat to this vital principle of the scriptural union between the internal and the external. But write I must. Warm sentiment is no protection against error. Yes, it is ‘nicer’ to be ‘positive’, and there is nothing new in the demand for ‘smooth [or pleasant] things’ (Isa. 30:10),¹⁵ but sometimes the alarm has to be sounded. I am persuaded that this is one such occasion.

I acknowledge that those I write against would endorse all I have just quoted from Spurgeon, but even so it is the tendency of their doctrine that carries the threat I speak about. And I am thinking of the long-term consequences.

How has this threat come about? I suggest, in part at least, it is because of a faulty exegesis of a handful of major passages of Scripture. And I lay weight on ‘passages’. Proof-texting is useless for coming to a sound exegesis; the context and the big picture are vital.¹⁶ The advocates of this new view founder not only on

¹⁴ Sermon number 1503.

¹⁵ See also 1 Kings 22:8,13-14; Jer. 6:14; 23:17; Amos 7:10-13; Rom. 16:18; 2 Tim. 4:3-4. Christ was not wanted was he? See Luke 8:37; 13:31. I can feel the anguish in the apostle’s words: ‘Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth?’ (Gal. 4:16). John Gill: Paul ‘spoke publicly, plainly, honestly, fully, and faithfully, boldly, constantly, and with all assurance, consistently, and in pure love to their souls, and yet it brought on him their anger and resentment. Telling the truth in such a manner often brings many enemies to the ministers of Christ – not only [among] the men of the world, profane sinners, but professors of religion, and sometimes such who once loved and admired them’.

¹⁶ Let me illustrate the danger of ignoring context. Infant baptisers, wrenching 1 Cor. 7:14 out of its context, build an enormous castle in the air. But as the context makes clear, in a marriage under the

the minutiae of key verses, but in failing to give sufficient weight to the context of those verses. In particular, they miss the big picture.

What I am talking about is not an abstruse nicety, fit only for those who like a good theological knockabout. *Every* believer must be thoroughly grounded in the biblical principles which govern his life in Christ. This is essential. The fact is, I fear that the consequences of the mistake I am addressing, if allowed to go uncorrected, will be very serious. I dread the thought that, if this new teaching gains ground, coming generations may repeat the calamities of former years and fall into the twin errors of antinomianism and perfectionism, or else get close to the old Keswick mantra of ‘Let go, and let God’, quietism¹⁷ or Situation Ethics when talking about progressive sanctification – if, indeed, progressive sanctification is still on the agenda!

As Douglas J. Moo put it:

At the opposite extreme from moralism [here, sanctification by our own efforts] is what we might call the ‘magical’ view of the Christian life... We find sincere and dedicated believers who fall into this trap. They write books and present seminars, all with the basic thrust that the key to the victorious Christian life is simply letting our new redeemed natures take their course. ‘Let go, and let God’ is the slogan. The indicative [what God tells us he has done] is given pride of place in this approach, and is often presented as an alternative to legalism or moralism.¹⁸ But the magical view gives insufficient emphasis to the reality of the imperative [what God commands us to do]. God commands us to act, and the very fact that Paul’s letters are peppered with commands shows that obedience is not automatic... Thus we

circumstances envisaged by the apostle a believer may rest assured that his children are not tainted, are not inferior, and carry no stigma. It has nothing to do with the spiritual standing of the infant in the sight of God, and has not the remotest connection with baptism. Above all, it offers no justification whatsoever for baby sprinkling.

¹⁷ ‘Abandonment of the will as a form of religious mysticism’.

¹⁸ One advocate of the new view asked how I would like it if somebody said: ‘Your view is narrowly law-focused and leads to legalism and a law-keeping religion devoid of Christ’. When challenged by a third party, he said he was speaking ‘hypothetically’.

need to listen to and respond to the commands of Scripture. Particular trouble is the tendency of Christians to think that the indicative is all they need... Paul goes on to make clear that our enjoyment of eternal life is contingent on our obedience (Rom. 8:12-13).¹⁹

Furthermore, I can see close similarities between this new teaching in connection with progressive sanctification and the fundamental error in the hyper-Calvinistic view of conversion, with its denial of duty faith.

As for the long term consequences, I reject any suggestion that I am making a fuss about nothing. When a train passes over points, it takes one route or another, and, depending on which track (or 'road' as the professionals call it) the train takes, the passengers will end up in very different places. But at the points, the difference will be minuscule. Let me try another illustration. When on the high moors, I have often stepped across damp patches in the moss, so small that it would be an exaggeration to call them anything other than moist peat, dribblets at most. But within a few miles, those dribblets will become a deep, wide and fast flowing tidal river leading to the ocean. Large oaks come from small acorns. Do I need to spell the lesson out? Apparently I do.

What is more – in this regard, perhaps above all – we surely realise that it is not only what we say, but what people think we say, what people hear, that counts. What people bring to our words, and then take away with them, carries more weight than what we intend to say. In my works, I do all I can to prevent any mistake here. Sad to say, the proponents of this new view do not seem sufficiently to weigh these two points – the large consequences which stem from small beginnings, and the power of unguarded words. In some cases, they do not even seem to see their likelihood!

So critical is this matter, I say it again, I feel obliged to do what I can to uphold the scriptural balance at the heart of the new covenant, one which plays a vital role in the believer's

¹⁹ Douglas J.Moo: *The NIV Application Commentary: Romans*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 2000, p216.

progressive sanctification; namely, the balance between the Spirit and the Scriptures. Indeed, the balance (inadequate word!) is between Christ the Word (John 1:1-2,14; Rev. 19:13), the Spirit-breathed word in Scripture (Matt. 4:4; 2 Tim. 3:16), and the life-giving words of Christ by the Spirit (John 6:63,68). Balance? Nothing must be allowed to mar *the union* between Christ, the Spirit and the Scriptures.

As Joseph Hart put it:

*Say, Christian, would'st thou thrive
In knowledge of thy Lord?
Against no Scripture ever strive,
But tremble at his word.*

*The Scriptures and the Lord
Bear one tremendous name;
The written and the incarnate Word
In all things are the same.*

Hence this book.

Let me explain how I propose to go about my task.

I gather together a series of my articles on the law and the believer, the most important of which for my present purpose is ‘Believers Under the Law of Christ’. I follow this with ‘One Command or Many in One?’, ‘The Obedience of Faith’, ‘Hans Denck: The Inner and the Outer Word’, ‘Antinomianism Reformed and Mystical’ and ‘Christ the Covenant?’ – all written in response to the tone of a number of Facebook posts which were advocating the new position. These six articles form the first section of this present volume. In these articles, I refer to some of my other pieces on both the law of Moses and the law of Christ, and these make up the rest of the book. Thus I arrive at my threefold division:

The Argument

The Law of Moses

The Law of Christ

Alas, my chosen method inevitably means that this book is somewhat disjointed, incomplete and not so well-structured as it ought to be, with a measure of overlapping material. Nevertheless, accepting these drawbacks, I hope the benefit of gathering these articles in one volume might make a contribution, however small, to the maintenance of the biblical position on the believer and the law of Christ. I certainly pray it may be so.

One last thing. I can well imagine a reader scratching his head and wondering what this is all about. Why this fuss? Hasn't a cat got four legs? Yes. Does it need 350 pages to prove it? No. So why does it take that many pages to prove something so self-evident as the fact that the believer is under the law of Christ, with the Scriptures at the heart of that law? I agree! It doesn't! When I open my Bible and read of the comparison and contrast between Moses and Christ (Deut. 18:15-18; John 1:17), and when, in reading of how Jesus went up 'on the mountain', where 'he opened his mouth and taught' (Matt. 5:1-2), I can hear unmistakable echoes of Moses ascending Mount Sinai to receive his law from God for Israel, and when I read of Jesus saying: 'You have heard that it was said to those of old... but I say to you... (Matt. 5:21-22,27-28,31-32,33-34,43-44), and when I read the way in which Matthew rounds off that discourse (Matt. 7:28-29), and when I read of Jesus, addressing his disciples in his final great discourse which is so full of his commandments (John 12:47-50; 13:1 – 16:33), saying: 'A new commandment I give to you' (John 13:34), and when I meet countless apostolic commands to me as a believer in the post-Pentecost Scriptures, and when I read of 'the endurance of the saints' – 'those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus', 'those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus' (Rev. 12:17; 14:12)... then I need no more. If Jesus, the greater Moses of the new covenant, issues his commandments, his law, to his people, then it really does indeed seem self-evident that believers must be, can only be, under the law of Christ. And where shall we find that law? The very fact that all these statements have come from Scripture would seem, once again, to make the answer self-evident. So, reader, if this paragraph convinces you that the believer *is* under the law of Christ, and

that the Scriptures *are* at the heart of his law, and that the believer *is* responsible and accountable for obedience to Christ in that law by his Spirit, then you really have no need to plough through the next 340 pages proving that this particular cat does, after all, have four legs.