

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

A. **Neither are the forementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the Gospel, but do sweetly comply with it** - Because the Gospel calls us to repentance from sin and ready obedience in following our Lord by loving God and neighbor, it does “*sweetly comply*” with the Law. In fact the whole law is summed up in this love toward God. From page 4 of our lesson... The **two tables of the Law** are summarized by the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 22...

Matthew 22:36-40 - 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37 And He said to him, "**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.**" 38 "This is the great and foremost commandment. 39 "The second is like it, '**You shall love your neighbor as yourself.**' 40 "**On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.**" NASB

Thus, Jesus summarized “*the whole Law and the Prophets,*” (terms referring to the entire Old Testament), under the **two tables of the Law**. To love God and love your neighbor was the Messiah’s interpretation of the entire **Law** and Prophets. This is a profound and simple commentary from God Himself on the *meaning* of the Old Testament **Law**. Christian, you will do well to memorize these verses and understand that the **Law** is fulfilled in and through God’s Love, expressed toward Him first, and then to our neighbor.

Romans 13:8-10 - 8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. 9 For this, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and **if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."** 10 **Love does no wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law.** NASB

This idea then, is a helpful principle in *understanding* and *applying* the **Law** as a New Testament Christian. If it is not an expression of true biblical love, then it is most likely being misapplied. The general nature of the Law is love, because it is God’s Law, and His nature is love.

B. **Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely, and cheerfully, which the will of God, revealed in the law, requires to be done.** – See here the effectual nature of the New Covenant! By the power of the indwelling Spirit, we are enabled and even cheerfully persuaded to obedience to God’s Law. It is our pleasure now to live for God, by the powerful working of the Spirit in our hearts. Christian is it your longing desire to be obedient to God? Let this be a great assuring witness to your regeneration, for without this work of the Spirit you would still be dead in transgression and sins. But the “*Spirit of Christ subdues and enables our will*” to please God. This is what God promised concerning the New Covenant.

Ezekiel 11:19-20 -19 "And **I shall give them one heart, and shall put a new spirit within them.** And I shall take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, 20 **that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances, and do them.** Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God. NASB

Ezekiel 36:23-27 - 23 "And I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. **Then the nations will know that I am the Lord," declares the Lord God, "when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight.** 24 "For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands, and bring you into your own land. 25 "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your

idols. 26 "Moreover, **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you;** and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 "**And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.**" NASB
Jeremiah 31:31-33 - 31 "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "**when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,**" 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them, "declares the Lord. 33 "**But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord, "I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it;** and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.
 NASB

From page 21 of our lesson... It is worth noting that the character of this New Covenant is that its elements are **fulfilled by God alone**. God does a powerful regenerating work in the New Covenant that affects what it commands. God does this by "**writing the law on the heart,**" a reference to the new birth or **regeneration of the Holy Spirit** in the New Testament. This is the power of the New Covenant, that is, that the Holy Spirit now raises us from our spiritually dead state (Eph 2:1-6), opening our spiritual eyes to our great need for a Savior showing us Christ as the provision that God has made to save us, and powerfully re-creates our nature (2 Cor 5:17) so that He even comes to live and dwell in us to work His ministry of sanctification (Rom 8:1-14) in order to glorify Christ in and through us. God says, "**I shall give them one heart, and shall put a new spirit within them. And I shall take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,**" speaking of the work of regeneration. And the result is a **new obedience** that this brings about in our lives, "**that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances, and do them**" (Eze 11:19-20). This is even clearer in Eze 36:27; "**And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.**" Here God says "**I will cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.**" See here the powerful effect of the New Covenant power of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. This power "**enables the will of man to do that freely, and cheerfully, which the will of God, revealed in the law, requires to be done.**" This work begins at **regeneration**, continues in the process of **sanctification** and is ultimately finished at **glorification**.

Belgic Confession

The Confession of Faith, popularly known as the **Belgic Confession**, is a doctrinal standard document to which many of the **Reformed Churches** subscribe. The Confession forms part of the Reformed **Three Forms of Unity**. The confession's chief author was Guido de Bres, a preacher of the Reformed churches of the Netherlands, who died a martyr to the faith in 1567. It was written in 1561 but revised at the famous Synod of Dort in 1619. In the Belgic Confession, Article 25 is a statement about the fulfillment of the Law and its application for the church.

Article 25: The Fulfillment of the Law

We believe that **the ceremonies and symbols of the law have ended with the coming of Christ**, and that **all foreshadowings have come to an end**, so that **the use of them ought to be abolished among Christians**. Yet **the truth and substance of these things remain for us in Jesus Christ**, in whom they have been fulfilled. Nevertheless, **we continue to use the witnesses drawn from the law and prophets to confirm us in the gospel and to regulate our lives with full integrity for the glory of God, according to his will**. - Here we see a very similar and also summarized view which is very much like the Westminster. They see "**ceremonies and symbols**" in the law. These have been fulfilled in Christ being only "**foreshadowings**" which

“have come to an end” and should be *“abolished among Christians.”* See here the **categorization** of the Ceremonial Law and the **abrogation** of it. Further, the *“truth and substance of these things remain for us in Jesus Christ, in whom they have been fulfilled.”* See here that Christ is the finished product of the **Ceremonial Law** for us who believe, and He is the fulfillment of the Law for us and in our place.

Romans 10:4 - 4 For **Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.** NASB
Hebrews 10:14-18 - 14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. 15 And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, 16 "This is the covenant that I will make with them After those days, says the Lord: **I will put My laws upon their heart, And upon their mind I will write them,**" He then says, 17 **"And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."** 18 Now **where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.** NASB

This why the New Testament states that we are not to be judged in regard to Old Testament ceremonial laws such as *“food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day.”* This is because *“Christ”* the *“substance”* has come and fulfilled the *“shadow.”* In other words the **ceremonial laws** and ordinances are no longer required or a standard by which we are to worship God, they have been **abrogated, under the New Testament.**

Colossians 2:16-17 - 16 Therefore **let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day — 17 things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.** NASB

Nevertheless, we continue to use the witnesses drawn from the law and prophets to confirm us in the gospel and to regulate our lives with full integrity for the glory of God, according to his will. – See here that *“the witness drawn from the law and prophets”* is to be *“used”* to *“confirm us in the Gospel and to regulate our lives with full integrity.”* How does the Law and the Prophets confirm us in the Gospel you ask? See how perfectly Christ fits as the fulfillment of the **Priesthood**, the **sacrifice and offering**, how he has **cleansed us** so completely that now the Spirit of God can come to live inside us as His **Temple**, and He has become a **Sabbath rest** for His people from the toil and labor of the Law which can never gain us the righteousness required by the holiness of God. The prophets wrote of this day when God Himself would perform our obedience and save us bringing a forgiveness for our sins and powerfully changing our hearts.

Acts 10:43-44 - 43 "Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name **everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.**" 44 While Peter was still speaking these words, **the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.** NASB

Thus we see Christ’s fulfillment by so many proofs and Old Testament scriptures that our hearts are *“confirmed in the Gospel,”* that He is able to save because He is God’s salvation Himself, sent by God for this very purpose. When this is acknowledged by faith it is *“for the glory of God”* and *“according to His will.”* See here also that the Belgic Reformed churches also saw the Law as a trusty **guide** into the *“will”* of God and a rule to *“regulate our lives with full integrity.”* How does the Law regulate our lives you ask? It teaches us the moral standards of God with which He is pleased and glorified when we heartily obey. It stands as that great light to our path telling us to ever and always love God and to love our neighbor as the rule to measure our conduct, whether or not our actions and words are according to the *“will”* and *“glory of God.”* This the Law does with *“full integrity,”* but without any ability to condemn us when we fail. Moreover, this very Law is now our inward desire as it has been powerfully written on our hearts as our ever indwelling longing and hunger for righteousness in all we do.

Romans 8:3-4 - 3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, **God did:** sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 **in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.** NASB