

The Law of God in the Life of the Christian

Romans 7

(The following is the substance of an address given by Rev David Silversides at Congregational Reformed Church, Belfast on 25th October 1997.)

Our theme is "The place of the law in the life of the Christian." In the days when the Reformed creeds were known, understood and also believed, it was a matter that went unquestioned that while the Christian did not depend upon his personal obedience to the law of God for justification, that is for acceptance as righteous in the sight of God, yet it was nonetheless true that the law summed up in the Ten Commandments defined the holiness which is to be pursued by the Christian. It was a matter beyond dispute that conformity to the law of God, the moral law summed up in the Ten Commandments, was the effect of the work of sanctification in the soul by the Spirit of God. There have been in the past and in the present, however, those who have opposed this view, those who say that in no sense does the Christian have any relationship to the law of God. This position is known as Antinomianism, meaning 'against the law,' the word 'nomos' being the word for 'law.'

This Antinomianism, this rejection of any place of the moral law of God in the life of the Christian, has taken on various forms but all the different forms come down to

this, that the moral law is not the conscious rule of the believer's conduct. This error is deadly. This error when it is believed, though it sounds pious and spiritual, is absolutely deadly and subversive of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. If it is widely believed today, and there are prominent exponents of this doctrine professedly under the banner of the Reformed faith, it will be disastrous for the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So I want us to consider this subject because of its importance. It is important practically for the people of God.

1. The Christian's Sanctification Causes Him to Conform to the Law of God in Thought, Word and Deed.

By sanctification we mean the work of the Spirit of God whereby a Christian is made holy. That work begins at the new birth which is a sovereign work of the Spirit in the hearts of God's elect whereby they are enabled to repent and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. That change of nature in principle at the new birth is caused to progress by the process of sanctification from the new birth until we are glorified and perfected in holiness in heaven. Between the new birth and death there is the ongoing work of the Spirit causing us to more and more conform to the holiness that God requires of us, the Spirit of the Lord working in us to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Insofar as the Christian is sanctified or made holy, and he is not perfectly holy ever in this life, but insofar as he is made holy by the working of the Spirit of God within him,

to that extent he conforms to the law of God. Progress in holiness is progress in conformity to the law of God as summed up in the Ten Commandments as they bear not only on the outward actions and the words but the thoughts and the intents of the heart.

a.) Love to God and Obedience to Commandment are Entirely Compatible.

In the garden of Eden when Adam and Eve were without sin and they loved God with all their heart, there were ordinances of God. There were creation ordinances appointed by God and these creation ordinances are embedded in the Ten Commandments. There is the ordinance of marriage; there is the ordinance of the family; there is the ordinance of the weekly Sabbath. Genesis 2:3, "And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."

So even in that state of perfection there were divine ordinances. Moreover, in that unfallen state, God gave a positive revelation and it was in the form of a negative prohibition with a threat attached. So chapter 2 of Genesis, verse 16, "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." So here in the state of perfection, in the state of sinlessness and of a complete love to God, God gives a commandment, he gives a negative commandment and a negative commandment

with a threat attached. This shows us that there is nothing supposedly unspiritual about the observance of even negative concrete commandment and a sinless love to God. They go together. If we have in our minds any idea that commandment and duty and spirituality and love to God are somehow incompatible, that notion is utterly false. There is no incompatibility between conscious observance of commandment and a true hearty love to the living God.

b.) Love and Law Coincide Rather than Contradict.

Love to God and love to man are commanded in the law of God. This is so basic and so elementary that in discussions of this subject we are apt to overlook it. People talk rather freely about love rather than law, but the law of God commands love to God and to our neighbour. So Deuteronomy 6:5, "Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." And then in chapter 10 of Deuteronomy and verse 12, "And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul." Chapter 11, verse 1, "Therefore thou shalt love the LORD thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, alway." The same is true of love to our neighbour. Leviticus 19:17, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour

as thyself: I am the LORD." Now the point there is that God commands love to our neighbour. Verse 34 of that same chapter, "But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God."

So God in his law commands that men love him and love their neighbour as themselves. If this basic fact were understood, recognized and remembered, much discussion on this subject would dissolve immediately. Love is commanded by God in his law and the specific commandments indicate the concrete expression of love. When we ask how shall we display, how shall we manifest our love to God and our love to our neighbour, then we look to the specific commandments of God.

For example, Romans 13:7, "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." There the apostle is showing that in order to obey the commandment of God's law to love our neighbour as ourselves, we must keep the specific commandments,

the second half of the Ten Commandments. That is the way to fulfil our love to our neighbour.

So true love to our neighbour expresses itself in the keeping of the commandments of God concerning our duty to others, to man, and to keep those commandments from the heart. You see, we are not competent to define what is loving and what is not. We must grasp that. God has done it for us and he has shown us in his law, this is how to love God, this is how to love your neighbour. So any idea that love and law are opposites is nonsense; any idea that they are even alternatives is to be utterly rejected.

c.) Conformity to Christ and Conformity to the Moral Law are the Same.

When we think of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, we say that his life was sinless and it was, and yet he was made under the law, Galatians 4:4. In Psalm 40:8 he says I have "thy law within my heart." The Lord Jesus' life was sinless because it perfectly conformed to the law of God. To suggest that obedience to the law of God from the heart is not spiritual or is something less than true holiness is to attack the righteousness and the spotlessness of the Lord Jesus Christ. To suggest that there is any definition of holiness that is beside or above or beyond conformity to the law of God is an attack upon the honour of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For example, in connection with the Sabbath, the Lord Jesus never defended his actions by saying that the

Sabbath commandment or any other part of the moral law was set aside. He defended his actions by showing that they were compatible with Old Testament teaching. So in Mark 2:24-28 he defends the picking of the corn on the Sabbath by reference to David's actions in the days of Abiathar the priest. He is saying it is biblical, not that the standard has changed. In other words, the Lord Jesus speaks as the true interpreter of the fourth commandment, not the abrogator of that commandment, and he says the Sabbath was made for man, not just for the Jews, not just for people in the Old Testament, but for man as such. It was made **for** man, that is, it is a blessing bestowed upon men and surely therefore not something that his coming has deprived us of. When people resist the fourth commandment and regard Sabbath observance as a bit of a bind, it is not showing their spirituality, it is showing their lack of it. The Lord Jesus taught that the Sabbath was a blessing and if they do not see it as a blessing, there is something wrong with them.

When we think of the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord Jesus was not setting aside the Ten Commandments, he was showing what they really mean. Matthew 5:18, "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of

heaven." In verse 27, for example, we have a contrast, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Now the contrast is not between the seventh commandment and Christ's own teaching; the contrast is not between what God's law says and what Christ says; it is between the rabbinical superficial limitation of the commandment and Christ's exposition of the true meaning of the commandment. The rabbis had decided that, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," meant no more than that the physical act was wrong, but the Lord Jesus is saying, "No. What the commandment means is that not only is the actual act wrong but all thought that would, if followed through, tend towards that act is wrong." He contrasts not with the phrase, "It is written," which he uses when he is referring to the Old Testament itself, but with the phrase, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time." He is saying, "This is what the rabbis say. This is what I say the seventh commandment actually entails." If you look at verse 43, it is even much clearer, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven." Now again, he is not saying, "This is what the Old Testament taught. This is what I am teaching." He is saying, "This is

what the rabbis have taught, but this is the truth of the matter."

Love to our enemy was required in the Old Testament. Exodus 23:4, "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him." God required love to our enemy in the Old Testament and the Lord Jesus is saying, "This is what the rabbis say. This is what I say in conformity to the true meaning of the Old Testament teaching." So conformity to Christ's example and conformity to his teaching will lead the people of God to conformity to the Ten Commandments as they bear upon our thoughts, our words and our actions.

d.) God's Standards no more Change than God Himself.

The moral law is the outshining of God's holy character as it bears upon human conduct in the present world. The changes in the form of worship from the Old Testament ceremonial law to the New Testament form have to do with the progress of his redemptive purpose. The Old Testament ceremonies pointed to redemption to be accomplished by Christ on the cross, whereas in the New Testament the Redeemer has come and redemption has been accomplished. So the form of worship changed with the advance of revelation, whereas the Ten Commandments are fixed definitions of right and wrong and they were written by the finger of God on the tablets of stone.

The form of worship can only be known by positive revelation whereas even the ungodly without special revelation, the Bible, have some knowledge of the moral law of God. Romans 2:13-15, "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another." What that is saying is not that the heathen can love the living and true God, but in certain respects their outward behaviour can conform to aspects of God's law. He says the reason is that, although they do not have the law in written form, they are a law, or the law unto themselves, that is, the way God has made men and women means that some knowledge of his law comes to them through the medium of their own constitution as men and women. They themselves, as men and women, are the medium by which the law comes to them and that is why pagans still have consciences.

The Lord defines what sin is. 1 John 3:3-7, "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth

righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous." Conformity to the Lord Jesus means conformity to not sinning and sin is the transgression of the law. The purity which those who are purifying themselves long for and which they seek on earth is defined in terms of the absence of sin and sin is defined as transgression of the law. So if Christians are not to sin, well, of course they are to keep the law of God. It is so simple. Are Christians to sin? No, they are not to sin. They should not sin. They must not sin. They are commanded not to sin. Therefore they must not transgress the law. A child can understand that.

e.) The Sanctifying Work of the Spirit causes Conformity to the Law of God.

Romans 8:1-4, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Now in chapter 7, the apostle has assured us at the end of the chapter that the sanctifying work of God in the soul of the Christian will triumph. Chapter 7, verse 24, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." He is saying we will be delivered. He is saying sanctification will be completed. On what grounds?

Because "there is now therefore no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

You say, "Well, what has that got to do with it? That has got to do with justification." Why has the apostle gone back to justification? Why has he gone back to deliverance from the guilt of sin and Christ bearing the guilt of sin on behalf of his people? For this reason: the bearing away of the guilt of sin is essential if there is to be deliverance from the power and the practice of sin. Why is that so? It is because of this: the law could not take away the presence of sin in us. The law in itself and on its own cannot make us holy because we have sinful natures. It was weak through the flesh, that is because of our fallen nature. But Christ bearing the guilt of sin actually secures the sanctification of his people because when Adam sinned, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression. When Adam sinned, all sinned. By the offence of one many were made sinners. We were guilty in Adam and God's condemnation and curse upon man for that first transgression included mankind being consigned to the corruption of their natures from which proceed all our own personal transgressions. The deliverance over to the bondage of sin was part of God's curse upon our guilt in Adam in his first transgression. So we were guilty in Adam of his first transgression first, then God consigned us to corruption of nature as part of his judgment upon that first transgression, and from that corrupt nature we increase our guilt by our personal transgressions. We are corrupt in heart as a result of the

guilt of Adam's first transgression so it obviously follows that in order for us to be delivered from the corruption and bondage of sin, there must be the removal of guilt because our corruption is part of God's curse upon us on account of that guilt in Adam. There must be the removal of guilt if there is to be the removal of corruption.

Sanctification is a blessing for the people of God purchased by Christ and the form that that sanctification takes is given in verse 4, "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." That is, the sanctification that has been purchased by Christ for his people is that sanctification that the Spirit of God works in us as we are changed from glory into glory as by the Spirit of the Lord. Walking after the Spirit is not some mystical, airy-fairy business. Walking after the Spirit is not waiting until we feel like doing something. Walking after the Spirit is when the Spirit of God causes us to love the Lord Jesus Christ so that we want to keep the commandments of God. If somebody says, "The Spirit led me to do something," and it is contrary or fails to conform to the Ten Commandments as properly understood in all their bearings, they are deluded. The Spirit of God and walking after the Spirit will cause you to have no other gods before the Lord. The Spirit of God will cause you to worship God his way. The Spirit of God will cause you to reverence his name. The Spirit of God will cause you to keep the Sabbath. He will cause you to honour your parents. He will cause you to not kill and not to hate in your heart. He will cause you not to commit adultery.

And he will cause you to detest all that inclines toward that and so on. That is walking after the Spirit.

f.) The Law was Given to the Church of God.

Exodus 20:1-2, "And God spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." The law was given to the church of God. He says, "I am the LORD." In our Bibles, the word "LORD" is in capitals to show that it is the word 'Jehovah'. The name Jehovah is specially connected with God as the covenant God. The name Jehovah is constantly linked with God as the God of the covenant, his covenant with his people.

But there is more than that, he says, "I am the LORD thy God." **Thy God.** Now that is the language of the covenant. It is God addressing his covenant people. Genesis 17:7-8, "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

Psalms 95:7, "For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice."

Ezekiel 36:25-28, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and

from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God."

Hosea 2:23, "And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God."

John 20:17, "Jesus saith unto her," (that is Mary,) "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

2 Corinthians 6:14-18, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you,

and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

Revelation 21:3, "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." Verse 7, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

All of these verses show us that the terminology, "I will be their God, they shall be my people, I will be thy God," is the language of the covenant of grace in Christ Jesus. God was the God of Israel only in terms of the covenant of grace in Christ Jesus. Any other concept of God's relationship with Israel is dispensationalist error and it dishonours the Lord Jesus. There is only one way in which God is the God of sinners and it is in the covenant of grace in Christ Jesus.

So Stephen at his defence before the Sanhedrin in Acts 7 calls Israel in the wilderness 'the church in the wilderness.' Acts 7:38, "This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us." So when Israel was given the Ten Commandments in the wilderness, it was the church of God that was given the Ten Commandments. Although those commandments are of universal obligation, yet they were given first of all to the church, a corrupt church, a mixed church in its outward form, but the church of God nonetheless, and it is for the people of

God that these commandments were given. They apply to all men everywhere. The one great lawgiver gave his law defining right and wrong, defining sin, binding upon all men in all places in all generations. He has not repealed the moral law when we come into the New Testament, and so it stands as the definition of right and wrong to which the people of God must cleave.

g.) The Christian is under Law to Christ.

1 Corinthians 9:19-21 "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law." This verse has been fearfully abused as if somehow it teaches that the Christian is not bound to keep the moral law. The context is the apostle's declared willingness to give up his legitimate freedoms in the interests of seeking the spiritual welfare of others; things that were legitimate in other circumstances he gave up because they were not legitimate if used contrary to the interests of others. It was not that he was going beyond the law, he was simply applying the law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," and that means giving up lawful things if by using them we are going to harm others. Using lawful things in a manner which harms another is an unlawful use of that which is lawful. It is still a requirement of the

law of God to give up what is lawful when it is harmful to others.

But in illustrating this principle, he shows that he is willing to be as one under the law for the sake of the Jews, that is, conforming to abrogated ceremonial law in order to not give needless offence, but when not necessary, he behaved as one not under the law. In order to avoid misunderstanding, he gives us this little phrase in brackets, "(being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ)." He is saying he conforms to the law of God anyway insofar as it is compatible with the fact that he belongs to Christ. He was under the law of God in every sense compatible with the fact that Christ who had now died on the cross was his living Saviour, and that means three things: firstly, he did not try to keep the law to be accepted with God otherwise he did not belong to Christ at all. His personal obedience to the law was not the basis on which he sought acceptance with God. That was in Christ. Secondly, he knew that Christ fulfilled the types of the ceremonial law and that these were no longer binding so that he did not have to keep them where love to his neighbour did not require it. But then, thirdly, he was under law in the sense that he was obliged to show his love to the Saviour by hearty obedience to the permanent moral law of God. In that sense, he was under law to Christ. He was obliged to keep the moral law of God because that was the way that his love to Christ would express itself.

In Romans 3:31, the apostle says, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the

law." He is at pains at different points throughout the book of Romans to show that while justification is not to be found or sought through personal obedience to the law, yet the effect of a sinner being renewed and brought to faith in Christ and accepted through Christ is that they will begin from the heart in loving gratitude to keep the law of God.

You may have noticed in Romans 7 how the apostle seems to spoil, if we may put it that way, the illustration. He is using the illustration of marriage. He is saying when a woman's husband is dead, the marriage bond is severed. She is free to marry another man. Then he says in verse 4, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ." He is saying that death has caused a change of relationship between the Christian to the law. He is no longer bound to it in terms of the covenant of works or the covenant of life. But he deliberately avoids saying that the law is dead. He says, "having died, having become dead to the law." Now the illustration would fit better if he had said, "The law is like the husband, the husband is dead, therefore you are no longer bound in terms of personal obedience to the law for your standing before God," but he does not do that. He deliberately fails, if you like, to use the obvious way of applying the illustration because he wishes to avoid, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, the idea of the law being dead and totally irrelevant to the Christian.

So then for all of these reasons, we conclude that the Christian's sanctification causes him to conform to the law of God in thought, word and deed.

2. The Christian is to Consciously Regard the Law of God.

There is a view that runs something like this: yes, the work of the Spirit will cause a Christian to keep the law but he will not consciously keep the law as a matter of duty; it will somehow happen without him thinking at all about the law, it will happen as the result of the spontaneous outworking of fellowship with Christ.

Now what are we to say to this? Well, it is a mixture of precious truth and falsehood. It is absolutely true that knowing the law of God on its own will not lead to holiness. Simply knowing what God requires will not make us holy, indeed our sinful natures react in the opposite way. Apart from the saving grace of God in Christ, the effect of knowing what God commands actually makes us want what God forbids. That is how wicked we are. So in Romans 7, "sin taking occasion by the commandment became exceeding sinful." It goes back to Genesis 3: all those trees in the garden we may freely eat of but there is one we cannot eat. What about the one? Never mind the ones you can, what about the one you cannot? With fallen natures, the more we know God forbids something, the more our hearts are inclined toward it. Our hearts are like a stagnant pond that has not been disturbed and the law saying, "Thou shalt not," is like a stick and once you disturb the stagnant pond with this stick, the stench comes up. Or it is like the perverse supermarket trolley. I am sure you have all been to the supermarket and you find a trolley and the wheels are

askew and the more you push it this way, the more the trolley seems to go that way.

That is what our hearts are like and so simply knowing what God commands does not make us holy and every exercised Christian should know that. We can know with absolute clarity what God requires of us and still not do it. It is also true that it is only by the grace of God and through fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ that we have within us a desire and a heart to keep the law of God. It is only as we have a high estimation of Christ and as we are taken up with love to him that we learn to hate sin. We can know that something is sinful but without loving Christ, we do not hate it. It is only as we love Christ that we hate that which offends him. It is only as we look upon him who was pierced that we can mourn for sin.

We are to consciously think of the law of God to direct us as to the channels in which our love to the Saviour must flow. It is a distortion of the precious truth that it is only in fellowship with Christ that we can hate sin, to say that therefore we do not think about the law of God to tell us what sin is. It is a distortion and for the following reasons:

a.) Repentance must mean Loving that Law that we Formerly Despised.

Repentance means a change of mind, a turning around from sin to Christ. If the carnal mind, the unrenewed heart is enmity against God and is not subject to the law of God, loves sin, loves transgression of the law, then the

repentant sinner must begin to say, "Oh, how love I thy law."

b.) The Christian is Represented in Scripture as Delighting in the Law of God.

Romans 7:22, "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man." We are to regard verse 14 to the end of this chapter as referring to the regenerate man, the Christian man and woman, for the following reasons: Firstly, the unregenerate man does not hate sin. Verse 15, "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." The unconverted man does not hate sin. He may, indeed, hate the consequences of sin both in this life and that which is to come, but he does not hate sin as being offensive against God.

Secondly, the unregenerate man's ego is to the fore in sin whereas that is not true of the man in this passage. Verse 16, "If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." That is not true of the non-Christian. He sins with his whole heart. He may sin feeling guilty and bad about it, but he does not have within him that which fundamentally opposes sin. Verse 20 again, "Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." That is not true of a non-Christian.

In verse 18, the qualification "in me" distinguishes him from the unregenerate in whom sin has undisputed dominion. Verse 18, "For I know that in me (that is, in my

flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." He distinguishes his flesh from something in himself that is not the flesh, whereas the unregenerate man's nature is simply the flesh. Yet this man serves the law with his mind in verse 25, "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." The mind here is in contrast to the flesh. The mind here has a moral aspect; it is not a purely intellectual concept.

So when verse 22 says, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man," it is stating something that is not true of the unconverted man. He may approve the things which are excellent out of the law in their outward form but he does not delight in the law of God. The apostle is saying he as a Christian delights in the law of God. That means he thought about the law of God and his love to the Redeemer caused him to delight in the commands of God.

c.) The Law is Appealed to by the New Testament Writers.

Romans 13:8-9, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Or Ephesians 6:1-3 where the apostle addresses the children among the saints at Ephesus, "Children, obey your

parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)." He is saying that these children must obey their parents in the Lord. That is the Gospel motive of love to the Lord on the basis of the fifth commandment. The apostle in these passages is not saying, "I am confirming as an apostle that these commandments still apply." He is appealing to the law of God to confirm his apostolic teaching. He is not saying, "Well, some things in the moral law still carry on." He is saying, "What I am saying is true and here is confirmation because we all agree that the Ten Commandments stand. Here is the commandment that confirms what I am telling you." James 2:9-12 and Galatians 5:13-14 also apply here.

3. How is the Christian to Use the Law?

What conscious uses are we to make of the Ten Commandments in all their vast application so wonderfully set out, for example, in the Shorter Catechism?

a.) To Bring the Knowledge of Sin.

You say, "Ah, but surely that only applies to the non-Christian. 'By the law is the knowledge of sin.' The non-Christian needs to be convinced of his sin and his guilt like the rich young ruler, and the woman of Samaria, and those who crucified the Lord of glory, on the day of Pentecost. They need the law to show them that they are sinners and that they need the Saviour Jesus Christ." Well, of course, that is true but confession of sin and

repentance do not stop when we become Christians. We need to be exposed as to our sinfulness to this day. The Lord Jesus Christ taught his disciples that they should pray, "Forgive us our debts," Matthew 6:12. If confession of sin is a continuing feature of the Christian life in order to repent of that sin and seek mercy from the Lord, so also must be the law of God to act as a mirror to show us our filthiness and sinfulness.

You cannot confess sin unless you pin down what those sins are. You can go through a glib form but we are to confess sins and to confess particular sins particularly. How do we do that unless we face up to those sins? Unless we review the days' proceedings and examine those proceedings in the light of what? The law of God because by the law is the knowledge of sin. So tonight when you go home and you kneel down before God, what are you going to confess? You are going to confess surely those ways wherein in your thoughts and words and actions you have transgressed his law this day and seek mercy from the God of heaven through Christ Jesus. We are to do that for our humbling and to increase our dependence upon the Lord, seeing that so much corruption is still found within us.

b.) To Define the Sins that Must be Mortified.

Colossians 3:5 says, "Mortify your members." We are to mortify, to put to death, sin as it rises up within us. How are we going to recognize this sin that needs to be put to death? By the law of God. The saying is know your enemy. Sin is an enemy. Sin has to be recognized and

apprehended and put to death and how can we recognize sin but by the law of God?

c.) To Define the Channels of Devotion to the Redeemer.

Many people have done weird and wonderful things out of professed love to God. Our judgment is not reliable, even as Christians indwelt by the Spirit of God, because there is still sin within us. Therefore we need God to show us, "This is the way to walk." The light of God's law shows us the channels along which our love must flow.

d.) To Increase our Sense of Gratitude to the Redeemer.

It is this law that we have transgressed so wickedly and so many times. The Psalmist says that his iniquities are more than the hairs of his head. It is this law that we have broken. It is this law that Christ perfectly kept when he fulfilled all righteousness and when he could say to his enemies, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" He was holy, harmless and undefiled and separate from sinners. It is the curse of this law that the Redeemer bore as it is written, "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree." Our gratitude to him is to increase when we recognize our transgressions of this law, his obedience to this law, his bearing the wrath of God upon transgression of this law, and as our gratitude to him increases, so we will be inclined to this law.

e.) It is to Define the Duty of the Civil Powers to which the Church is to Bear Witness.

Not every sin is a crime but sin as it expresses itself in the more public aspect of man's behaviour, must define crime with which the state is obliged to deal by way of punishment. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Prince of the kings of the earth. The rulers are to bear the sword against evildoers and evildoers are to be defined in terms of the law of God. The church is to bear witness to the whole counsel of God toward all men including rulers. So the Psalmist says, "I'll speak thy word to kings."

The church of Christ is to bear testimony to all that is written including all that is written as to the duty of those in authority. 1 Timothy 2:2, "For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." That which we are to pray for, our rulers are obliged to give and that which they are obliged to give, it is the duty of the church to bear witness to their obligation to give it. Law and order must be gained with the acknowledgment of the one, only, continual and universal lawgiver and that is God.

4. The Law and Heavenly Glory.

If this law is the outshining of God's holy character, what will happen to this law in heaven? There is no night there. There is no sequence of days. There is no marriage for in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are as the angels of God in heaven, Matthew 22:30. There is no child-bearing. So what happens to the law of God? The fourth commandment talks about days, the seventh about marriage, the fifth about the family. The essence of the law applied to the life of man on earth

in the Ten Commandments will be beautifully fulfilled in the eternal state. In heaven, only God will be worshiped. In heaven, God will only be worshipped perfectly according to his own mind. His will is done in heaven. His perceptive will, what he requires including what he requires in worship, is done in heaven. His name will never be irreverenced in heaven, not even in the thoughts of unfallen angels and redeemed men. There is a perfect love to God in all the inhabitants of heaven. There is perfection of both service and rest and his servants shall serve him, Revelation 22:3, and they rest from their labours, Revelation 14:13. There is no rebellion such as the fifth commandment prohibits. There is no malice such as the sixth commandment prohibits. All human relations are ordered in perfect love and according to the mind of God as the seventh and eighth commandments indicate. There will be no falsehood in heaven contrary to the ninth. There will be no envy and no covetousness. All the inhabitants of heaven, men and angels, will be perfectly content with their lot. They will love God to the full extent of their given capacity, and they will love one another. They will love all that God loves and so they will love one another with a perfect love, a love free of all malice and all taint of envy. They will be perfectly satisfied with their position in heaven and nothing that defileth shall enter therein. All our longings for Christ and conformity to him according to his law will be eternally fulfilled.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall

appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." Amen.