

# **An Excursus on the Law**

## **IBRI Syllabus #31**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Part of a series of seminary-level lectures on Old Testament History, this syllabus includes some material given in 1952 in the section "In the Wilderness" which was not given in other years: how the Law was given; kinds of law; the Decalogue (Ten Commandments); the purposes of the Law; and the relation of the Law to the Christian. The editors (DCB and RCN) have attempted to preserve Dr. MacRae's distinctive lecture style and anecdotes while eliminating a good deal of the repetition that occurs in teaching a multi-session course.

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## A. The Giving of the Law.

### 1. How it was given.

How was the law given? Of course, everyone who was here last semester knows that the 10 commandments were given; but the first presentation of the law was by direct word of God to all, so that all the people heard Him speaking. They all knew that that was what was happening. We find it very clearly brought out in Deut 4:12, where Moses says to the people,

And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.

God wrote the commandments on two tables of stone, but He did not give them that way in the first instance. He first gave them orally, so that all of the people heard them before the mount. He declared the commandments in such a way that all heard them; and then He wrote them upon the tables of stone so that they would have them preserved. We need both steps. We need to hear the truth, and we need to preserve the truth. It is good for you to hear the lectures; but for most of you it does little good, unless you take good notes down and preserve them after you hear them.

**a. Orally.** But the first step is to hear them; and God gave them the commandments so that they all heard them. That is told us in Ex. 20, in the account of the giving of the Ten Commandments; but it is not brought out quite as explicitly there as over here.

Verse 1 "And God spake all these words, saying," And then verses 18 and 19:

And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.

God had just declared the commandments; and they did not wish to hear further directly from God, except through the mouth of Moses. So from that time on, the direct word of God to all was by God's writing.

**b. By God Writing.** We notice that in Deuteronomy 4:13 that he wrote the ten commandments. And in Deut. 5:22 we find that he says: "These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone and delivered them unto me." Moses prepared the two tables of stone and then God wrote upon them the Ten Commandments and gave them to Moses, and Moses took them down out of the mount.

**c. By God Revealing to Moses.** The people said, "Let God speak to you and then you tell us." And Moses went up into the Mount.

Well, immediately before Moses went up into the mount, in Chapter 20, "And the Lord said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven." Doubtless most of you are familiar with the material in it, and you never can get the full value out of its lessons for you.

Later on Moses went up into the Mount and brought back what God revealed to Moses. Part of it was God talking and part was probably showing him things. He may have shown him, for instance, a picture or a plan of the tabernacle. There is no reason to say that he necessarily gave it all in words. He may have given some of it in blueprint, or in pictures which Moses saw, but He revealed it to Moses. It came from God's mind to Moses' mind, either in words or pictures or in such ways that God chose to give it.

And so these are the three ways that the law was given and then

## **2. Kinds of Law.**

Now that heading doesn't altogether suit me; I don't think of a word that gives exactly the sense that I mean here, in such away that is as clear as this and not confused with something else.

I don't mean that you take a whole law and you break it up into 1,2,3, sections. I don't mean that. I don't mean that you take the law and you divide it up into those sections that deal with man's relation to God and those that deal with man's relation to man, or some such division according to subject matter. My division here is according to types of law; and the word type would perhaps be good here, except that it has other meanings that don't fit in this particular connection.

Our English language is such a difficult one to lecture with and try to be clear, because almost any word that we use has two or three possible meanings; and it is very hard to be sure that you have picked one that someone won't understand to mean a different meaning altogether; because the English language is such a poor language for the transmission of thought. But you don't understand the Hebrew well enough for me to use the Hebrew language (laughter) so we will have to stick to it and do the best we can.

There are these three different types or kinds of law and I will entitle them a. Moral, b. Civil, and c. Ceremonial and you will find examples of all three in the assignment for next Monday. Moral, Civil and Ceremonial.

Now God doesn't say, "Now I want to give you a moral law. Now I am going to give you a civil law; now I am going to give you a ceremonial law." He doesn't say that; it is not a scriptural terminology. But it is an observation about scripture. All three of these types of law are given, but there is a different purpose, and a different

significance, and a different duration to each of them; and therefore it is helpful for us if we classify the law under these headings. And one of the laws may have two or three aspects; that is not common, but it does occur. Usually a law, you can say, is one of the three; sometimes it has aspects under two of these, and even under three.

Now let us think for a minute: what do they mean?

**a. Moral Law.** What do we mean by a moral law? Well, a moral law is something that is right because it is right. It is part of the constitution of the universe. Abraham said, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" That doesn't mean that there is someone or something superior to God. God is supreme. But that doesn't mean that God will change the moral law. The moral law is in the very essence of the being of God. It is the way that he does things. The moral law is what is right, and God does everything right, and he presents what is right. And it is right because God does it and God does it because it is right.

A moral law is that which is essential and lasting and permanent and fixed in the very nature of the universe. Well, now, there are certain principles then that are moral principles; and the moral law cannot be made by any man, nor can it be abrogated by any man. A man may observe it. He may discover what it is. He may try to follow what he has discovered. He may misinterpret it. He may express it wrongly, but that doesn't change the nature of the moral law. The moral law is fixed, although no man has ever altogether understood it. We understand certain portions of it, and we may learn to understand more about it; and it is vital that we understand as much of it as we can; and it is extremely vital that we can follow all of it that we can understand. But the moral law, then, deals with the great principles of right and of wrong.

**b. Civil Law.** Well, you might say it is morally wrong for one man to drive his car in such a way that he makes it difficult and dangerous for other people to drive. That is morally wrong. It is morally wrong for one person to take up all the road, and make it impossible for others to get by. It is morally wrong for one to drive so fast that he is a danger to the life of others by reason of himself. Those are morally right and wrong.

Well now, then you say, a car shall drive always on the right hand side of the road. That is not a moral law; it is a civil law. You could just as well say—as they do in England—a car shall always drive on the left hand side of the road. And it is no more moral to drive on the right hand side of the road, as we do, than it is to drive on the left hand side of the road, as they do in England. One is just as moral as the other. It is not a moral principle. But it is a civil law.

Well, now some people get the impression that a civil law is anything the government decides. The Government decides that it is nice to do this; and that is a civil law, and everybody has got to obey. Well, that isn't really the case. A civil law, in a way, may be anything that the government decides to make; but actually, a civil law should be, and usually is, an attempt of the government to apply the principles of the moral law to a particular situation—to a definite type of situation, which may change and does change from time to time.

It is no more moral for the Americans to drive on the right hand side of the road than it is for the English to drive on the left; but it is utterly immoral for the English to come to America and to drive on the left hand side of the road all of the time; or for an American to go over to England and drive on the right hand side of the road all the time. Either one of those would be utterly immoral. It would be obstructing traffic, and it would be creating danger to those around. It would be an obstinate, selfish disregard for the welfare of the people of the community. It would be immoral.

So an act would be immoral in England which would be moral in America or vice-versa. Because the act is not *per se*—no act is *per se*—moral or immoral; it is its relationship to other acts and to other situations that make it moral or immoral; and civil law deals with this situation. Civil law says under these circumstances, in America to drive on the right side of the road is the moral thing to do. It is the moral thing to do, because it is vital that we all do one or the other. And we can arbitrarily select either one, but then we make a civil law to carry it out; and thus we are carrying out the moral principle. And so, properly, a legislature in a godly community would be concerned with two things. First, what is God's moral law? Second, what are the reasonable ways of making civil laws to carry out this moral law in our community? That is what a legislature should consider.

As a matter of fact, in this world—which is Satan's kingdom—our legislators concern themselves rather with what sort of thing would appeal to my constituency, and get me re-elected, rather than what is the way to carry out the moral law of God in a proper civil law. I don't think it was that way in the early days of our republic. They were interested then in making civil laws which would carry out what the Bible told them to be the correct moral principles.

Well now, in the Scripture, you will find that there are civil laws which are like this one of driving on the right or left side of the road. Laws which, it isn't morally important whether you do it this way or that way, but it is necessary for the welfare of the community that a decision be made; and one is selected and that is carried out. You will find civil laws of that type.

And you will find civil laws which are more closely bound to the moral law; that is to say, it is quite obvious in some cases that there is a certain principle of the moral law; and that that principle of the moral law is carried out in our situation best by certain requirements. In our situation, these are required. So you see then, the civil law and the moral law require them to be just so in a certain circumstance; and the civil law may be one way or the other, but to carry out the moral law properly you should select one of them.

The civil law then is changeable. There may be civil law for the wilderness that doesn't fit at all in the settled land. And there may be civil law in the settled land that doesn't fit in the wilderness. The civil law may be changed from one century to another—and even from one year to another. It varies with circumstances. It should be an attempt to carry out the moral law; it is not always that, but it is always variable, depending on circumstances and situations. There is no reason why a person today should take the civil law of Exodus and try to follow it today. It is not applicable to our circumstances.

There is no reason why anyone today should feel free from any portion of the moral law. It is applicable to all circumstances, it is part of the constitution of the universe.

Now there is a third type of law,

**c. Ceremonial Law.** And ceremonial law is altogether different from these two. Ceremonial law does not relate the way in which people shall treat one another; the way in which they shall live together in harmony; the way they shall handle controversies or troubles that come up among them. It is not something that is described in the details of it, as required by the moral law. It is a different sort of thing.

A ceremonial law is something which God institutes as a ceremony, which he wishes His people to perform; and the purpose of the ceremony is to bring certain truths to their attention. It is to stress certain things to their minds. Now a ceremonial law may be very important at one time, when God wants a certain idea stressed. It may be very important under a certain circumstance, when a certain idea is vital. In other circumstances, it may be His preference that this ceremony be abandoned altogether, or be laid aside for a period.

Ceremonial law may change from time to time as God's desire of impressing certain truths may or not change from time to time. It is not permanently fixed in the constitution of the universe like the moral law; and in addition to that, the ceremonial law is not something that does something in itself. It is something that represents something; which conveys an idea; which impresses something upon the mind.

Now if a person is losing sight of a fundamental idea which the ceremonial law represents, it becomes very vital to stress that ceremony, and to bring back again to that person the idea that God wishes to represent. But if a person puts his stress upon the ceremony, and forgets the thing it represents or misinterprets it, it may be His desire to do away with it altogether.

In the wilderness, the people were bitten at one time with poisonous snakes; and God ordered that Moses should put up a brazen serpent; and that the people, when they are bitten, should look to the brazen serpent and recover. It was a way of showing them that the bite of sin—that the misery that is the result of sin—is something that can be cured only by the provision which God made. And Jesus Christ shows us the full meaning of it, when he said in John 3 that "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, and whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have eternal life." It was a presentation, in symbolic form, of a very vital lesson. It was to bring this thought to the people's mind, and it was done in the wilderness.

But later on, the people began to worship that serpent; and they forgot what the brazen serpent represents. They forgot the lesson, the idea that it contained; and they worshipped the thing itself; and Hezekiah showed his loyalty to God by taking that brazen serpent and destroying it utterly, in order to remove from the people something that had become to them a snare and a source of evil.

A ceremony then is good or bad according as it brings to the mind those matters that God wishes for us; and a ceremony in itself is absolutely nothing. A ceremony, without thought of what it represents, is absolutely worthless. But the ceremony, as a means of representing something in a spiritual sphere, may be extremely important. And of course the ceremonies before the coming of Christ were far more important, at that time, than any ceremony after the coming of Christ; because we knew so much less of the details of God's plan, and of God's method of salvation; and therefore, it was necessary that we use these ceremonies to present the ideas to our minds, and to give us the impressions that God wishes us to have.

A great amount of the ceremonial law looked forward to the death of Christ; it has been done away with; and we have instead of it very, very little ceremony that is ever referred to in the NT. Not one thirtieth as much ceremony is even suggested in the NT as it is in the OT. That doesn't mean that ceremony may not be an excellent thing now; but it is something that we can be more free about. We can use it as a means of impressing on people's minds the great truths; for we have full authority to chose right there; we can go back to it; we can see it; we can study it; but in Israel's case, it was more to impress His ideas on their minds; and consequently there are these great details of ceremony given in order to carry out God's purpose.

Three different kinds of law. If you build a tabernacle, you have various specifications in it; just how all this is to be done. There are men to take spiritual ideas, or prefigurations of what God was going to do in the future, and impress them into people's minds; the instructions how to build the tabernacle that will carry out these laws. You have all this vast amount of ceremony in the OT; and it is very important for them; and what it means is very important to us. But most of what it means, we can find explained clearly enough in the NT; and our impressions can be focused on the explanation rather than upon the ceremony.

God has not fully prescribed any ritual today. Even those that He has suggested are comparatively few today. Well now, today, if you can make a high Episcopal ceremony, which will take the great meanings of the Gospel truth, and of Gospel teachings, and of the Gospel—the important spiritual truths—and present them to the mind, and impress them, and guide them home, I would say that was an excellent thing; but if a person sees a ceremony, and thinks of the ceremony and not of these spiritual truths, it becomes like the brazen serpent that came to be worshipped. I would imagine that many of those elements in the High Episcopal ceremony have been wonderfully used of God, at times, to convey great blessing to those who have thought what those particular ceremonies mean; but I fear that, in a good many cases, it has become merely an end in itself, and has lost its significance; and then it becomes extremely harmful when that happens.

Ceremony is not so necessary now. We can worship God, in the plainest of circumstances, satisfactorily today. We don't have to have all these things, because we have the full presentation. We can also use ceremony, which helps to impress on our minds and drive things home; and that would be a great help to us; but when we do we must be careful; for there is a tremendous danger if we get to thinking that the

vital thing is that you do this ceremony; you do this in this particular way rather than that way; instead of saying the vital thing is that you know the truth that this ceremony represents; that you realize your relationship to Christ and what He means.

Now you could have that danger, of course, before Christ came; but there was more justification for running the risk of the danger then, when you didn't have the full understanding and explanation of it, which we have today.

Now, of course, in the Roman Catholic church there is a great deal of ceremonial; and this ceremonial has this danger of people thinking of the ceremonial instead of the thing that is signified; but in addition to that, there is the fact that a great deal of it signifies something that is not Scriptural and that is not true; and so a great problem of the Roman Catholic system is not that you have so much ceremonial, but that a great deal of the ceremony represents things that are un-Christian.

In Los Angeles, there used to be—as you went to where I lived in Highland Park—as you went into the center of town, you went thru a tunnel; and on that tunnel, there was a big sign which said, "100 dollars fine for riding or driving or propelling any vehicle through this tunnel at a rate faster than 8 miles per hour." And for many years that sign stood there and I never saw a car go through under 40 in my life. (laughter) When that sign was put up, automobiles were probably not even capable of going 40; but the sign stayed there; and the last time I was out there, I was glad to see that somebody had become progressive and had taken down the sign. But the sign was completely out of date.

Circumstances had changed. Now there was once some reason—I don't know what—why they thought it was tremendously important at one time that you shouldn't go more than 8 miles per hour through the tunnel; but circumstances changed such that it would be very harmful if you were to go as slow as 8 miles through it. And circumstances change; and of course, it is much safer to take the revelation, and then to interpret the circumstances. We may make mistakes in interpreting, but we have to attempt to interpret. No act *per se* is moral law. The thing that makes the act belong to the moral law is its relation to other acts or other situations. The act by itself is not. For me to take a knife and stick it into the chest of one of you would be immoral; but for a surgeon to do it, might be a very moral act. (laughter) The act itself is neither moral or immoral; it depends on who does it, and why it is done, and what are the circumstances. So much then for the general explanation of this matter now.

### **3. The Decalogue.**

The ten commandments, the foundation of the moral law. The ten commandments, you will all agree, are primarily moral law. I think that you will all agree that the ten commandments are the foundation of the moral law; but are the ten commandments exclusively moral law? Well, if you take, not simply the ten in this condensed form you all give to me just now, but in the full form that is contained in the Scripture, there are in some of them sections that go into civil applications of the moral law. There may be even ceremonial law involved, but the 10 commandments are primarily moral law.

Now somebody asked which version of the ten commandments did we want? There is a preamble. The Lord thy God is one God. That preamble you may consider to be the first commandment. Many Christians consider that as only the preamble.

Then what we consider as the second commandment, the Roman Catholics and the Lutherans and the Jews consider to be part of the first; and then, when we consider the 10th, the Roman Catholics and the Lutherans divide it in two: the 9th and the 10th. These are just different ways that we say just exactly how to divide the ten commandments. There will be three or four different ways. But I quite agree that it doesn't matter which of the ways we use, as long as we have that material there.

Now this word "Decalogue" is a more accurate word than our English "Ten Commandments," because the phrase "ten commandments" never occurs in the Scripture. Now what is the difference between Decalogue and ten commandments? *Deca* is ten, isn't it. Well, what is *logue*? Decalogue means "10 words." The Scripture says that he wrote the "ten words." Now, of course the Hebrew "word", *dabar*, may mean just a combination of letters that make one brief unit; but it may be a phrase, a matter, an expression, a thing. So it doesn't mean just one individual word. It does not specify that they are commands. They are words of God; and the word of God is naturally to be obeyed, so that being God's Word throughout, they naturally are to have for us the force of commandment. But that doesn't mean that everywhere it must necessarily be what we would usually speak of as a command.

Well, now our problem, of knowing just exactly what is each of these ten words, is somewhat complicated. We know what the collection of them is; there is no difficulty there whatever. We have here in Ex. 20, this statement beginning with verse 2 and ending with vs. 17, a very delimited passage, that is the ten words that God gives; and then over in Deuteronomy, we have it repeated with a few comparatively slight changes; but the basic matters are identical.

And so we have this material here; and in the Scripture and it is called the Ten Words. Now the important thing is that we take this as basic law which God has given; that we study it; that we understand it; that we apply it in the way that He wishes it applied. That is what is basic and vital. It is not extremely vital that we say, "Here ends the second word", and "Here begins the third." That is not vital; but then he calls it "ten words," we would be very lacking in curiosity if we didn't wonder what made up each of the ten words.

Now on this, the Jews had had a certain viewpoint which no group of Christians has exactly followed. This is merely on the matter of the division. When it comes to what is the content of it, we all agree. It is in the Bible. It is said, "That is God's statement; these are the ten words." but yet how to divide into words... The Jews say to begin; "I am the Lord thy God, which hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." They would say that was the first word. That is the first word of God. The Christian groups have always considered that as a preamble to the ten words—introductory to all of them. and not a separate word by itself. They consider verse 2 a preamble to all ten. And certainly this would apply equally to all ten; it is He

who gives us the commandments; and what He has done in the past warrants attention to what He says.

And verses 3–6—four verses—the Jews consider as being the second word:

“You shall have no other gods before Me. “You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

From there, there's no difficulty in seeing how they stake out the rest of them. They would take the third as "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain," and so on, the fourth, "Remember the Sabbath day, and so on; the fifth, "Honor thy father and mother" and so on; the sixth, "Thou shalt not kill"; seventh, "Thou shalt not commit adultery"; the eighth, "Thou shalt not steal"; the ninth, "Thou shalt not bear false witness," and so on; the tenth, "Thou shalt not covet."

Those are the ten words according to the Jewish division. Now no Christian church have I heard of that follows this Jewish division into these ten words. All the Christians have considered that the first verse is a preamble and introduces simply the ten commandments; and actually there's no commandment in the verse. It is a word though, and so it can be considered one, if you want to take it that way. But we consider that as an introduction to the whole ten.

Well then, that being the case, then all groups of Christians have considered that "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" is either the first commandment or the beginning of the first commandment. The first commandment starts there according to the Christians. But then you read on in the next three verses,

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Christians have disagreed on how to divide this. The Roman Catholics say, this is a part of the first commandment. "Thou shalt not have any other gods before thee, or make any images, or anything like that, to any other god to bow down before them." That's a very logical division. And the Roman Catholics and the Lutherans take a very very logical viewpoint, wherein all these verses are of one commandment; and at this point, nothing can be said against the logic of the Roman Catholics and the Lutherans; and they agree on it with the Jews, because the Jews have exactly the same commandment here as the Roman Catholics and the Lutherans, except that the Jews say "This is the second commandment." The Roman Catholics and the Lutherans say

"No, the preceding was the preamble; this is the first commandment," but they agree it was one commandment.

Now the Greek Catholics differ. The Greek Catholics say "No, there are two commandments here." We've not yet reached the point in Church History where there was a split between the eastern and western half of Christendom; and of course in the western half, the Bishop of Rome said he was the supreme head in the church and everybody should obey him. And the eastern half they said, "No, the Bishop of Rome is a patriarch, and has great authority in the west; but in the east we have our patriarchs of Antioch and Constantinople and Alexandria and they are, perhaps, second to the Roman Bishop, but equal to him in authority, and superior in their area to any authority that he would have." The Bishop of Rome has no more right to give commands in their area than they have in his area. And so they differed over that, but the thing came to a crisis when they had a great difference over images. The eastern church said, "It is wrong to worship them; you should have no other images in the church—look at this commandment, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or in earth beneath; thou shalt not bow thyself to them nor serve them." By next Monday [speaking of an assignment], you'll know what the graven image is; that's not our present question; he's speaking about any image here; or, if you take the rest of the verse together, "You shalt not make these nor bow down to them." And so the Greeks went into the churches in the east and destroyed the images; and the west insisted on keeping them in the churches; and that was one of the big things that entered into the division between east and west. Later on, the Greeks departed from their position on which they had separated; and they now have images in all the Greek Catholic churches; but at that time, that was one of the big divisions.

Well it's very natural that the Greeks said that this was two commandments, the first is against having any other god, but the second is against false worship of God; it is against worshipping him under the form of another image. But most scholars today think they are not supposed to represent a false god; it was supposed to represent the God of Israel. They feel that the calf that Jeroboam put up and said, "these are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt," by this he meant to represent Jehovah the God of Israel and not a false god; and they say that he was breaking not the first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," but he was breaking the second commandment, "Thou shalt not make any image or bow down to it."

And so the Greeks say these are two commandments, the first and the second; and in the west the Lutherans have followed the usage of the Roman Catholics and the Jews; but the reformed churches have at this point differed from the Lutherans, and the Reformed churches have here said, "Here are two distinct commandments." They have followed the usage of the Greek Church; and so you have that difference today, between Lutheran and Greek churches, and Lutheran and Reformed churches. And I must say that as far as this point is concerned, it is pretty difficult to make a decision. You can make a good argument either way here; you can make a good argument that this is one commandment, You are to have one God here below, you are not to worship any other god, or any idols or anything like that; and I think, on the other

hand, you could make a good argument and say, "This little brief statement is one command, Thou shalt have no other gods before me"; and then these other three verses together, they make another commandment, which is that you mustn't worship an image—whether that image is intended to worship a false god, or whether it is intended to worship a true god—you mustn't worship with an image; you must worship God alone.

And of course, we found in Israel that when Hezekiah destroyed the brazen serpent, he was not destroying a false idol, he was destroying something that God had instituted, God had ordained; but the people were worshipping it, and consequently it should be destroyed.

You can make a good argument either way. And so on this present point, I would say that you'll have a mighty hard job proving whether the Roman Catholics and the Lutherans on one hand are correct, or whether the Reformed churches and the Greek Catholics on the other hand are correct. And if you study the four verses and seek to follow them, I don't think it makes a great deal of difference at this point whether you call this one commandment or two commandments. The Scripture does not say this is one commandment, this is another. We shouldn't take too much time on this, because this is not a very vital thing how you are going to divide it, but I think you ought to know what the opinions are.

Up to this point we've noticed we have a first verse that doesn't command anything. The Jews say that's the first word; Christians say the words are commandments and that is the preamble to all ten. I think our position there is more logical than the Jews. I don't think it matters particularly, but I think that we are more logical than they are. Now as to whether you have, as the Jews say, a second commandment in the verses 2–6; or whether you have—the Roman Catholics and the Lutherans agree—the first commandment, but you take that as one commandment on one hand; or whether, on the other hand, you say this is two commandments as the Greek Catholic and the Reformed churches say, I don't think that you can say either is necessary at this point. It is a question then on which you cannot decide. Context must enter into it, you must read the context and see if that gives you light.

Always look at a passage first and see what you get from it; and if it is clear, contexts cannot change it and must not change it; but every sentence in every language has more than one possibility of meaning; and if there are two possibilities which are vital at all—if there's a difference between them—if it does not ultimately amount to the same thing; then go on to context and see if it will help you decide. In the end you may decide it doesn't matter; on the other hand, context may show you.

Now we look at the next commandment and every one agrees:

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

That the Jews say is the third word; the Roman Catholics and the Lutherans say it is the second word; the Greek Catholics and the Reformed Churches say it is the third word; but we all agree that it is a unified commandment, there's no question there.

All right then, let's go on to the next one:

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

And then you have in verses, 9–11 an elaboration of this relation to it. But verses 8,9,10, and 11 are one commandment and no one differs on it.

Only is it? Is it one commandment? And the Jews, Greeks and the Roman Catholics and the Reformed say is it the fourth commandment. Or is it, as the Lutherans and the Roman Catholics say, the third? Well it is one commandment anyway.

Now verse 12,

Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Now according to the Jews and the Greek Catholics and the Reformed Churches this is the fifth commandment; according to the Roman Catholics and the Lutherans it is the fourth commandment. They take it the fourth, we take it the fifth, but we all agree that it is one commandment, there's no difference here.

The next,

Thou shalt not kill,

we all agree that is one commandment.

Thou shalt not commit adultery,

we all agree that's one commandment, whether it be the seventh, or whether it be the sixth.

Thou shalt not steal,

we all agree, is one commandment, whether it be the eighth or the seventh,

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor—

one commandment, whether it be the ninth commandment as the Jews and the Reformed Churches and the Greek Catholic Church say, or whether it be the eighth commandment as the Lutherans and the Roman Catholics say.

But now, comes a difficult point. We have one verse left, verse 17; we have one verse left. And according to the Jews we have completed nine words, according to the Greek

Catholic and the Reformed Churches we have completed nine commandments, but according to the Roman Catholics and the Lutherans, we have only completed eight commandments; now how are you going to get two more commandments out of verse 17?

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

Well, we'll have to do it. Well, why not say there are only nine commandments? You can't say that, because the Scripture says that there are ten words. There must be ten; that is Scripture. Well now then, according to the Lutheran view and the Roman Catholic view, verse 17 must be two commandments. Well we say, all right: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house," there's one commandment—that's the ninth one. Now the tenth commandment is, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's." That's the tenth one.

Well now the Greek Catholics and the Reformed Churches said, "No, this is the commandment against covetousness; this is one commandment, the tenth commandment. If you say two commandments, the neighbors house shouldn't be coveted is one and if you covet his wife or his manservant, or his maidservant or his ox or his ass, or anything that is his except his house—where does the furniture belong? With the house, or with the anything else? It might be no matter whether it is the ninth commandment or the tenth commandment. But there are two different kinds of coveting, making two different commandments; and some say it is much more honoring to womankind than the Reformed view, because they give the wife a separate commandment instead of throwing her in with the house, as we do.

Well, they can do that, if the wife was first and then the house; it would be easy to give a commandment to herself; but if it is the house actually, not the wife, that gets the commandment itself, then the wife is thrown in with the manservant and the maidservant and the ox and the ass (laughter). And so it is an argument but not one that stands up on examination.

But now there is one very strong argument against this position; and that is that it doesn't divide very logically. Covet seems to be one specific thing here, which covers whatever you covet; and to divide it up to make the house one thing and the rest another, doesn't seem very logical.

As a matter of fact, in the Scripture the word house, *bayith*, is a very general word that means everything that appertains to a man, that is to say his family, his wife, his property, his possessions—the whole thing is his household; he is the head of the house. That is—spoken of as his house—the house of David is not the building he lived in, but it is the whole family situation including persons and property.

So then, in the normal use of the word "house" in the Old Testament, this includes everything that follows: "covet thy neighbor's house" is a general statement which is

particularized beginning with the most important thing, his wife, and then going on to other features of the man's household. So it is not very logical to divide this last one into two commandments.

And then going back to the statement that, after all, it is much more honoring to consider that coveting the neighbor's wife is different from coveting his house, his manservant, his maidservant, his ox and his ass, and other things that are his; although we decided that it doesn't work out, because the wife is in the middle, neither one end or the other. And in addition to that, it is a little hard to make a sharp difference between "Thou shalt not commit adultery" and "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife." The two would seem so closely bound together that there doesn't seem to be a great deal of reason to give, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house" a separate section.

Well now, the matter seems to me to be clinched when we look at the parallel passages. We find that thirty-eight years later, God gave the commandments in Deut. 5. We find that Moses stood before the people shortly before his death; and Moses reminded them of the fact that they had heard God speak all these words; and then Moses goes on to repeat the words which the Lord had spoken; and these words which the Lord had spoken are here given in Deut. 5, beginning with verse 6 and continuing through verse 21; and it is almost identical with Exodus with a few minor changes. But it is almost identical, the order of the material is identical in most instances, it seems that the changes, the small differences seem to be to bring out some other aspect of meaning, not in any way to contradict.

And there we find that Moses said after the commandment "Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbor," he said, "Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbor's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his manservant or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is thy neighbour's." And here, as arranged in Deuteronomy, the wife comes first, and the house comes second; and the arrangement in Exodus, the house comes first, and the wife comes second. Now if these were two distinct commandments; and when God spoke of ten words, one of these was the ninth and the other was the tenth; we surely would expect that the order of the words would have been kept in the two places; and that at least, would not be confused; whereas we find the most confusion with the other order, although we have some minor differences within the hortatory material.

And so it seems to me that this is a clinching argument, in addition to the others I have mentioned it would seem to me to show that, on this point, the Jews and the Greek Catholics and the Reformed Churches are logical in saying that the commandment on coveting is one commandment, and not two commandments; and if that is the case, then the Roman Catholics and the Lutherans cannot be correct because in that case it only makes nine commandments.

Mr Dayton? No I would think that, in this case, he is possibly—after thirty-eight years of experience with the people in the wilderness, where there was very little property for them to haggle over—very possibly Moses, in giving them, felt constrained to put first the element that had caused the most trouble among the people.

You can include everything under the term "house". Now you can think of the wife as being sufficiently important as to be kept separate from the house, but in both places the wife was put first. I think a good argument possibly could be made that the wife had a separate commandment for herself; but when you have the wife in one place second, and in the other place first, it looks to me if it was not a distinct order; and as to whether the wife would come under the house or not, I don't think that that matters so much. I don't see reason for having one commandment that would include the house and the other that would include both the wife and the other things in the house.

Question (Mr. Buswell: Would the commandments been kept in the order, in the way God gave them?) Well if God said, "I give you ten words" and then Moses repeats, "Here are the ten words which God gave," I would think that he wouldn't take two of the words and mix them up together and put half before and half after the other one.

Deut. 10:4 said that he wrote on the tablets according to the first writing the ten commandments. The word translated "command" there is "words", *dabar*. Many people say, "Why should I learn Hebrew or Greek? Those scholars can make a much better translation than I can make, those men who have given us the Scripture." And that is absolutely right, you can't—you can't expect to make a better translation than they make—but there is no translation of any book that represents it exactly; because very seldom does one word in a language correspond to a word in another language. There is usually some difference in the meaning: a word is not "a word is a word"—and consequently you cannot say that in most cases, "Here is the English word; this is just exactly that Hebrew word." We don't have that.

Of course it is true that the Bible has been used so much, it has entered into the warp and woof of our language; and we've taken over and developed the meaning of a great many words out of the Bible. But that is much less than it was a few years ago. Our world has gotten away from the influence of the Scripture to a very large extent.

But the words have a different significance and you can look at the passage and with a comparatively small knowledge of the language, you can see quite well, how are you going to translate the word or passage into English? Well, what does "matter" mean? In English it is rather vague, the word "matter", isn't it? But yet "matter" has significance to us. I quite agree with Mr. Watson that matter, that word, doesn't exactly focus in English. And the writers of the A.V. thought these are the ten commandments God gave, they reasoned that "word" means the ten commandments, and perhaps they were right.

There is case after case where you have a word, and you know exactly what that word means, but you struggle to find a word to express it in our language. I remember over in Germany when I was first there, I was talking to my landlady; and I saw a man go by and I said, "Oh, there goes a friend of mine." "Oh, is he a friend of yours?" "Well, yes, I was introduced to him yesterday." "Oh," she said, "You were introduced to him yesterday, and you call him your friend?" Why, she was amazed. Well, now in Germany the Germans have a word [*Freund*] and it sounds like our English word "friend"; and

you look up in the dictionary, and it says "friend"; but the German word and the English word are so different that she was utterly amazed when I said that the man was a friend of mine and I had only met him the day before.

"Well," I said, "What would you call a person you had met yesterday?" "Oh," she said, "an acquaintance." "Well now, when does this person become a friend? What is the difference?" "Oh," she said, "A friend is a person whom you address in familiar terms. You say *du*, instead of *Sie*, you use the familiar form of *thou* instead of the formal *you*." Well, we don't have that distinction in English, so the distinction doesn't exist. To them it is a very marked classification. "Well, now, there are these people that live in this next apartment to yours. They have lived there for twenty years and you've lived here." Every day or two, they went back and forth and chatted, and drank coffee together, and so on. I said, "Would you call them friends of yours?" "Oh," she said, "No, just very good acquaintances, I wouldn't call them friends." I said, "How many friends do you have?" "Oh," she said, "I had one, but she died." (laughter)

So, you see the word "friend" to a German, is "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." A friend, to them, is a very intimate relationship. It is almost more intimate than a relative. It often is more than a relative. A friend is someone with whom you have an intimacy. Well, now in English, we don't have a word for that distinction. But when you are reading in German and he says that man is my friend, the only way we can bring it out in English is to put a warm tone into it, like "friend" (laughter). That is a vague idea, but it holds; and to translate German into English, you need a paragraph here and there of explanatory material to tell just what they mean by these words which sound like ours, but the actual meaning is so different from ours; and you find that over and over and over in German. It is more important in the German language than even in the French.

Well, now the Hebrew and the Greek are very different in their usage, and the ten words—what it says is words—actually they seem to be commandments. They are what God gave and wanted us to follow and to obey. And nine of them, at least, are definite things; so that it doesn't seem to me that it would be at all wrong in saying that what He has given is definite commandments for us. But we can't say exactly the precise identification of these ten words or commandments.

The Jews want to say that the preamble is the first word. Well, I would say, "If you can find ten distinct commandments, it would be reasonable to say that is what God has given—ten commandments. If you can only find nine real commandments, then you might say that there is a presentation of an idea which is vital, which is not a command, but might be one of the ten words.

And so it seems to me that actually the Jewish view is much more logical here than the Roman Catholic or the Lutheran view, because they divide up what seems to be very definitely a single commandment. There is no definite logical division at the end, and so they break it up into two in order to get the number ten. It seems to me the Jewish approach is more logical than that.

I think that the Reformed view is somewhat more logical than the Jewish, in that it has all ten of the words to be actually commandments, and not merely words or matter. It is somewhat more logical than the Jewish division; and it is much more logical than either the Roman Catholic or Lutheran. But of course, the vital thing is very definitely not how you divide it, but what you do with the divisions that you have. And I want to say a little bit about them.

**The Preamble.** The first word, as the Jews take it; I don't think there is too much to say about it; it is the beginning or the introduction to them all. It is the ground on which God gives these things. He is Jehovah, their God. He is the one who has redeemed them. He is not saying "Do these things and I will redeem you." He is not saying "Do these things and see what wonderful blessings you get from them." He is saying, "I am the one who has redeemed you," and it is on the basis of a relationship which God already has with them, and in relation to what he has already given them, and to the redemption He has already presented, that he is giving them this law that He wants them to do.

He is not here saying, "Now if you want to be saved here is the way to do it." "You follow these commandments and then see what I do." He is not saying that. He is saying, "I have redeemed you. I have brought you out of Egypt. I have given you wonderful blessings, and here is what I want you to do." It is gratitude, then, to God that is presented. It is the claim of God as our redeemer, as our Savior, that it is presented; not as an offer to us that, if we will do something, then we may hope to receive his favor.

So the first word, as the Jews take it, is very important. The rest we will number as the Reformed churches number them.

**1. Thou Shalt Have No Other Gods Before Me.** Now, the first commandment then is that "thou shalt have no other gods before me"; and, of course, it says in this commandment that there isn't any other God. Some will say that there is no monotheism in this command. This commandment they say is perfectly consistent with there being other gods. That this one doesn't say that you are to believe that there is only one god. But it isn't talking about what you are to believe, but what you are to do.

He is saying nothing else is to take precedence in your life, in your heart, in your mind, over me. Nothing else: no god of the heathen, no image, no idol, no desire of your own, no friend of yours, nothing that means a lot to you is to take the place of a god for you. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. It is a practical command, and it is not a doctrinal presentation. It is not a presentation of monotheism here; it certainly does not contradict monotheism; nor does it assume that there is any other god; but neither does it stress that there isn't any other god. It does state that, as far as you are concerned, your relationship is to only to the one God; no other god is to take a place of precedence before him in your mind; nor are you to attempt to worship anything other than God.

**2. Thou Shalt Not Have False Worship.** Well, now if we divide this section into two commandments—it does not seem to me to be absolutely necessary here; but it does seem to me to be necessary at the end; we have the covenanting of ten commandments; and therefore if the preamble is not the first word, it would seem to me that we must have two words here. If we make that division, then the second commandment here is against false worship; and that would include worship of others, but it would also include worshipping God under a likeness.

Now, of course the Mohammedans take this second commandment in its literal sense; and it is part of the Mohammedan religion in its literal sense. "Thou shalt not make unto me any graven image or any likeness, or anything in heaven above, or earth beneath, or in the water under the earth." Therefore they say, "Sculpture is wrong; painting is wrong; anything that makes a likeness of an actual thing, or person or a natural animal is wrong," they say. And while the Eastern Mohammedans in Persia, and in through there, have not followed it the way the western ones have, you will find that in Egypt, and in Palestine, and in those great Mohammedan lands, that they avoid all depiction, and all representation.

And it is the most marvelous thing in Jerusalem, to go into the dome of that great Mohammedan mosque on the site of Solomon's temple, which took eight years worth of revenue from Egypt to build; a very expensive thing, built in the middle ages by the Mohammedans. It is one of the most beautiful structures anywhere in the world. It is not extremely large. It has a big open space around it, occupying a great part of the area where Solomon's temple was, but it is most exquisitely made. The art of it is wonderful and yet not a picture in it. It is entirely geometric figures; they strictly followed the command, taking it in the literal sense: thou shalt not make any image or likeness of anything.

Well, we do not feel that this is to be taken that way. We do not feel that it actually means what it says in the most literal sense. Thou shalt not make any image or likeness. We feel that verse 5 should be taken in close conjunction with it.

What it is saying is that you must not make an image or a likeness in order to worship it. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them. Let no image or likeness be made as something to worship. And we feel that the Roman Catholics come mighty close to the breaking of this command; and that many of the individuals of that church actually do break it, although the church officially states its belief in such a way as to be very careful to avoid breaking it.

But as you get away from the Catholic leadership, and get the attitude of the great bulk of the people, I fear that it would be very hard to avoid concluding that a great many of them actually do break this command. They bow down and worship statues and images, whether they are supposed to represent God or supposed to represent God's people.

(Student: "Is 'bow down' the same as 'worship'?) Yes, worship is similar to bow down. Well, is worship used in this verse here? It says bow down or serve them. The word here translated bow down is *shachah*. The AV and ASV usually translate this word as

"worship". It means to take an attitude of adoring reverence before one whom you regard as divine.

People sometimes say, "Let us worship God with our collection." That is not worship. That is ridiculous. It is an act of service to God which God desires. We have altogether too little real worship in our churches; we have much emphasis on the service of God, and that is right and fine; but the attitude of adoring contemplation of God, of bowing yourself before Him, and meditating upon and adoring His greatness and His goodness, that is worship.

The attitude of true worship is something that God has commanded; and it should be a very great factor in our lives. It is something which He has promised real blessings to us if we do, but most of us are too busy to bother. We go to him and ask for some present or some gift; if we are real thoughtful, we will thank Him for the gift He gives us; but if we would take the time to truly worship Him as He desires us to do, it is something that leads to blessing.

But on the other hand, there are those who worship not only God, but perhaps more than God in pictures, and so on; and we could learn something from them what it is to actually worship. But we should direct our worship towards God, and not toward anything of any likeness; even a likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ, or of one of his great saints, or even of his blessed mother.

(Student: Do the Catholics worship Mary?) I don't think they would. I think they use two different words. I think they say that it is wrong to worship the virgin Mary; I think they would say that only God, only Christ, can be worshipped, but they would say that the virgin Mary can have great reverence, great reverence. But I think that they technically would deny her any actual worship. [End of class]

[Discussing a homework assignment later in the course; we have moved it up here to fit into this topic.]

And so you look up this word, the graven image; and what did you find the word was for graven image? *Pesel*. There's nothing of the idea of image in that word; the idea of it is the idea of graven. The noun is derived from the verb *Pasal*, to hew or cut. It is something that is graven. We find two kinds of images in the Scripture: graven images (*pesel*) and molten images (*massekah*). The word molten is derived from the verb *nasach*—to pour or cast—and the word (*massekah*) then is not a graven term.

Now that word "graven"; I'm using the old English word, which is never used today, and which nobody knows what it means unless they look it up in an old English dictionary. I use the word referring to a Scriptural teaching; that's the way that many of us use it, in referring to a Scriptural teaching. In that one case where I came across the use of it, I wondered if you were using it correctly, in that particular case. But at least the way he uses "graven" here does not correspond to the Hebrew word.

Now of course our English word "engrave", comes from Old English *grafan*, past *grof*, past participle *grafen* ("f" pronounced as "v"), to cut, carve, sculpt, dig [dictionary.com];

and engrave is to grave into, to hew into, to make marks down into. So a graven image is an image that is made not by taking some mud and molding or shaping it, but an image that is made by carving or cutting. You can do that with wood, or with salt; it might even, in some cases be done with metal, but it's much more difficult than molding.

We refer then not to the material that is in it, but the way in which the material is handled; and did Moses ever "grave" anything? Yes, the English Bible says in Exodus 34:1:

And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee [*pasa*] two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write [*kathav*] upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest.

"Hew thee", that's the word *pasa*, to cut or hew. When God "wrote" on the tablets of stone the ten commandments, in that case the word *pesel* was not used of the engraving or of the making the marks on the commandments, on the stone. The common word for writing, *kathav*, is used; it comes from a root *karath* which means to cut or to hew, and so Moses did that which is involved in the graven image; but he didn't do it to the image, he did it to the ten commandments.<sup>1</sup>

In the previous chapter, Aaron said "I threw the gold they gave me and out came this calf"; but the fact of the matter was, that they put the gold into a mold; the golden calf was not a graven image, it was a molten image.

(Student: "Did this violate the commandment?") Well, we looked at the sixth commandment "Thou shalt not kill" which does not mean to perform the act of hitting someone; it doesn't mean to perform the act of ending a man's life; it means murder, (Student: "just graven?") No, because it continues, "or any likeness".

"Thou shalt not make any graven image"— that is the commonest type of idol worship; and as for the term, the commonest type might be used in a general sense of all kinds of idols; or it might mean specifically only the one kind. If it stopped there, somebody could say, Thou shalt not make any graven image, which covers the principle of making images; they would apply it to molten as well. But he goes on and he says, "or any likeness of any thing". (student: "*any* thing?") No, I think the fifth verse shows that the fourth means an image for the purpose of worship. I don't think it is a condemnation of statues, though some of the Mohammedans think it is.

(Student) Their ability to work with metal is a very interesting question, but I suspect that they were way beyond what we moderns are apt to think of them as having done. There were many regards in which the ancients were extremely good along engineering lines; but in Egypt, at some time before the time of Moses, the casting of metal in a closed mold is one of the greatest achievements I know about. There is

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<sup>1</sup> [dcb] The earliest written alphabetic language in the Near East was cuneiform formed by making impressions by a stylus on soft clay tablets held in the palm of the scribe's hand. So "cutting" "graving" or "digging" would seem appropriate as a root for the word meaning "writing". See MacRae, *Mesopotamian Archaeology*.

considerable evidence in archaeology; and of course we have abundant references in the Scripture. The old attitude toward the Scripture was to assume that everything of civilization was modern; and that, wherever you have a reference to a war or a suggestion of anything that implies that people had advanced knowledge in any way, it must show that that passage is late; that they actually didn't have it in early times. Thus if you turn to the book of Judges for a second, we find an interesting illustration of this. Judges 8:13

And Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle before the sun was up, and caught a young man of the men of Succoth, and enquired of him: and he described unto him the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof, even threescore and seventeen men.

The Hebrew says 77 men, and the KJV says threescore and seventeen men. I remember one student said to me, "It is a strange thing how much briefer Hebrew is than English." He found one word in the Hebrew which it took four English words to represent. The four English words were 'threescore and ten', and the Hebrew word just said 'seventeen.' Well now, in this case it is 77 men. He describes them; and so Gideon brought this description of these seventy-seven men, we read here, and the young man that he caught here described them to him. Now, who here has a Hebrew Bible with them now? Mr. Kim has one right here; and Mr. Kim, could you find quickly Judges 8:13? Could you read here? I will read the English, and you follow until we come to the word that I want you to get. Vs. 14. And caught a young man of the men of Succoth, and enquired of him: and he..." What? *kathav*. Yes, described, *kathav*, and Mr. Wildellan, what is the root of *kathav*? and how would you translate it? "Wrote" Yes you are right. Well, the word is one we mentioned before. It comes from a primitive root which means to *grave*, to cut, engrave, carve.

Now the word *kathav* occurs maybe 150 times—I don't know how many—but a great many in the OT. And in practically every case, it is translated "write", except in the book of Joshua, where it speaks about the border of the tribes; and in this one case here; and in most cases it is translated "wrote". Now as you read this in the English, Gideon said to the young man—he caught this young man—he asked him, and the young man described the princes of Succoth. Well, what the Hebrew says is that he wrote down the princes of Succoth—77 men. I am sure if I were in Gideon's place, I would have asked him to write them down rather than just tell me about them; for if I heard him describe 77 I wouldn't probably remember any of them in a few minutes,

But why then does our English version says he "describes" them when the Hebrew says "wrote down"? And that is the same Hebrew word that is translated write just about everywhere else? I can think of no reason for it, except the 17th century skepticism. That is to say that the translators of the A.V., when they came to this, they said to themselves, "Well now, here is just a young man at random in this little town down on the Jordan valley; and Gideon catches this man up the country there; and he seized the young man, and he asks him; and he gets this information from him. Now would the young man, caught at random like that, write down the names of the princes as early as Gideon? Hardly anybody could write, to say nothing of a man just caught at random there. Why it must really mean that he just described." So they said

that he described. But the Hebrew doesn't say describe, it says he wrote down; and it is an evidence that at that time in the Jordan valley, literacy was much more common than it is there in Palestine today. The evolution in that region has gone backwards instead of forwards from that time. (laughter) Writing was quite common at that time and all through that area and he could just take the young man at random and say, "Here, write this down" and the young man wrote down what he wanted.

And it shows us the advanced stage of knowledge in that regard in that area; and new evidence has come to light—much new evidence—to show that the picture that it gives of civilization at that time is entirely true. A great many people take it for granted that, everything that Christ said, must have been written down a few decades later, as people tried to remember it. Well, how do you know that there were not people there with notebooks? What reason do they have to say that there weren't at that time men who had factories, where they would have a hundred slaves; and they would read to them, and the men would all write it down; and in that way they could prepare a hundred books faster than we could make the lines and set up the linotype for a book in America today?

Of course, once you've got your type set up here today, you can make a few thousand books; but they could have a hundred of them put out like that. Writing was very common as early as the time of Gideon. And we find that in many aspects of technical understanding, the people were as a rule very advanced. The Philistines, for example, were a very advanced civilization at the time of the Conquest; but of course, in other regards they were what we consider very backwards. They didn't have any atom bombs or automobiles or telephones; but they did have some things that in some regards are ahead of what we have made in modern times.

There are points in which their civilization was more advanced than ours is today; certainly vastly more advanced than in Palestine today. And the Israelites going up through the wilderness would make a molten image of a calf—probably cast from a mold—is pretty good evidence that they were not just a bunch of savages. It shows a pretty high knowledge along a good many different lines.

(Review) We are considering the ten commandments or the ten words. It is pretty hard to know just exactly how to express "word" in English: the idea is very clear, but we don't happen to have a word that is exactly the same as the meaning of this Hebrew word *dabar*. But we have looked at different divisions of them last time; and I think it is important that everything you look at in the Scripture, to notice that there are some things that so aren't clear—there may be differences of interpretation—but there are other things that are absolutely clear. Which way of the three ways are you going to divide these commandments into ten "words" is not particularly important; but everything that is included in them is tremendously important.

Now we looked at the introduction to it, which we don't consider to be the first of the ten words; but it is extremely important. I think an argument might be made for making it the first of the ten words on the ground of its importance. It tells what we have here. God tells those who are grateful to him for redeeming them what he wants them to do. He gives them the pattern that He wants them to follow. He shows the

type of life that He wishes for those whom He has redeemed from bondage.

This doesn't tell you how to be redeemed, but it tells you how you are to live after you are redeemed. Well, now the first of the commandments as the Reformed interpretation takes it, is just verse 3, Thou shalt have no other gods before me. We spoke of that briefly last time; an extremely important command, one which does not merely mean not outwardly worshiping gods of other names, but not putting anything else in the position of a god in your life or in your heart. You must have no other gods before Him.

Then verses 4,5,6, whether we take them—as we do, as a second command—or as the Roman Catholics and the Lutherans do as part of the first command, are extremely important in either case. Wrong worship—not to worship a thing which represents God to the point where it becomes an end in itself. God is a jealous God. Jealous even of those matters which represent Him if they become so important to us that they blot out His face.

I heard a statement made some years ago, that you could go down to the corner of a city, and you could blaspheme Christ and God; you could take the name of God in vain; and you could take the name of Christ in vain; and you could say all sorts of wicked things about Him, and it would be very unlikely that you would get into any trouble. But they said, if you would go to the same corner and would start speaking harshly about the Presbyterians and the Baptists, or the Methodists or some other church, or the Roman Catholics, you would probably get knocked down among other things.

Now whether that is a true statement or not, I do not know; but at least, it is typical of the fact that it is so easy for us to put our love to a certain church, or even to a creed, even to the teaching of the Bible, even to the Bible itself, in a place that would become more important to us than our love of God and our desire to follow Him. It would then be something indeed of which God would be jealous. Something that we were putting ahead of Him; something to which we were bowing down and serving.

Sometimes, modernists accuse those of us who believe that the Bible is God's inspired word, of worshipping the Bible. If a person did worship the Bible instead of worshipping God, that would be utterly false and wrong. But I don't think that it is true. More likely, there may be some people who put the Bible up on the shelf, and look at it admiringly and never read it. But I don't think that there are very many who worship the Bible.

And the people the modernists speak of are not that sort of people at all. They are people who are using the Bible as a means of knowing God. They're interested in God; the Bible is God's inspired and infallible way of coming to know Him. We believe that it is entirely true and free from error; but we do not worship it. And I don't think that we have much to fear at this point of worshipping the Bible.

But it is all so easy for us to put a human organization, or a human objective, or a human instrument, or a human institution, in the place which should be occupied by

God alone. Anything that comes between us and Him is wrong. Anything which points us to Him is good. Anything which is a means of making His truth known is good, so long as it remains a means; but oh, how easy it is for it to become an end in itself. I think that there is, perhaps, no greater danger than this. Each one of us should watch carefully that we avoid falling into this, which will really be an infraction of the Spirit.

Here, I think the command is—I don't think it is against making pictures, or against making images—but it is against letting an instrument of worship be something that comes between us and God. In the time of Christ, the Jews would not hesitate to make pictures, in their synagogues. We have a synagogue in Capernaum which has been excavated; it comes from—not the time of Christ, but not very long after, probably the 2nd century—but in that synagogue at Capernaum, we find pictures on the wall of fruit trees, pictures of candlesticks, pictures of various things from the temple. There is art work on the walls of this synagogue. People did not consider that this commandment was against art, but only that it was against bowing down and worshipping representations. In later times, the Jews took the commandment more like the Mohammedans do; and later synagogues do not have pictures and representations of any sort in them. They followed the same tendency which we find so readily in our Protestant churches, that when we get away from the spirit of God's teaching, it is so easy to put an undue importance to various features of the letter, taking them in a way in which they were not intended.

As long as the Protestant churches put Christ and His atonement at the center, they may occasionally use the symbol of the cross; but it was not something that was tremendously stressed. But you will find that among the modernist churches which have given up altogether belief in the saving power of Christ, there is a tendency to put up symbols and to stress that sort of thing much more.

**3. Thou shall not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain.** Now the next commandment is the one that we usually take as the third commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold them guiltless that taketh His name in vain." And this, in its original meaning, has rather disappeared from modern civilization and consequently we do not get at first sight its real significance. It is a prohibition against magic. It is a prohibition against using the name of the Lord for vain purposes. It is a prohibition against trying to use His name as a means to cast spells, or to secure for us the things that we want, using His name as our magical instrument.

It is originally, then, a command against magic, against using the name of the Lord for a vain purpose. And right there we get into what is, I think, basic in all relations—the difference between religion and magic.

We may not have magic in that form today, but we have magic in its reality—in its essence—today. True religion is trying to find what the deity wants you to do, and how you can worship Him in line with His desire. Magic is trying to make the deity do what you want Him to do, for your own interest and your own purpose. There are people today who do not have much belief in the Scripture or in its teachings; but they like to have it preached and taught because it makes a better civilization; it

makes for better order; and it will clean out some of our child delinquency. Many a person who has no belief in the Scripture will give money for the preaching of the Gospel because he thinks it is good for the community. He is using it as a means to get something that he thinks is vital. And to that extent it is magic and not religion. He is taking the name of the Lord God and using it for a purpose of securing this end rather than in order to carry out God's purpose.

I read a story in a very godly paper lately; I don't know whether I told it in this class or not. I came across it a few years ago: the account of a person whose family were away—the father and mother were away in a truck—they were carrying a lot of stuff in a truck; and the children thought "Now, we wonder if there is danger that our parents might have an accident and might not get home?" and so they prayed; and I read in this very godly paper, exhorting people to pray and giving instances of fulfillment, of answers to prayer. And they prayed that God would protect the father and mother and bring them home safely; and then the time came when the father and mother should get there, and they didn't get there; and an hour or two passed, and then they arrived; and they said, "Oh, how fortunate we were," they said, "The truck went over the bank and turned over and was completely demolished and all the stuff destroyed; but it really seemed miraculous; we fell out the window as it went over and landed safely on the soft grass and neither of us was injured at all." And the children said, "Oh, why didn't we pray for the Lord to save the truck as well as the parents when we were praying?" (laughter)

Well, that is magic; that is not religion. In magic, prayer is something that you could do that would get you what you wanted; and if only you had said the right words, and thought to include the truck in it, why the truck would have been saved as well as the parents.

That is not Scriptural prayer. Scriptural prayer is a child coming to his father. It is the one whom God has redeemed, coming to the one who knows better than he does what is good for him, and asking him for His blessing, and seeking to do those things that God wants him to do; and whether we say the words in just the right way or not, or use just the right form, does not make a difference in what God does. It is our attitude toward God. And there are scores of ways of saying things that He has given us to impress on our minds the things that he wants us to have; but the vital thing is our relation to him, and not whether we do the thing in just the right way to get just the right results.

Many a person has an attitude toward salvation that gets mighty magical rather than religious; they have the attitude that if a person will only say a certain word, he is saved. "You just say this and you are saved." Well, salvation is not anything of the kind. Salvation is the heart attitude toward God. It is something that we cannot earn, that God gives us, but the essence is the heart attitude; it is the change of viewpoint toward Him, and it isn't simply saying "yes" to certain words, or even repeating, certain words.

This commandment is an exhortation against magic. Now, of course, in our day it has degenerated until we have something that in our days you might say in a way is worse

than magic. In the middle ages, it was customary when a person wanted to hope for something, they would invoke God to give them the blessing; or they would call upon God to show His wrath upon the person who they thought was acting contrary to what they want. That was a form of magic: it was calling upon God to do this thing for your own selfish interest. Now, when you get to use that phraseology with no thought of its real meaning, and simply use it in a light way as a means or a tool, why it is the same thing, you might say, carried a degree worse, because it is simply regarding God in a very light and meaningless way; and so it starts with magic.

Our cursing and swearing of today is a development from magic; but it is a development in which people have lost faith in its having any potency; and it is really not accomplishing anything, and it takes a superficial attitude toward God altogether. Now, of course, the great bulk of the people who swear and curse today are simply repeating phrases that they have heard other people say; they are not thinking of the significance; but when they do think of the significance, that is what it is.

I think one instance of real magic from the Scriptures is where the sons of Eli said, when the Philistines were defeating them, "Let's take the ark of God; and if you have the ark of God there in the battle, then of course the Philistines can't possibly hurt us, because God's ark is there." And so they bring the ark out into the battle; and they went out with the ark, and said to themselves, "Now we can't help defeating the Philistines; we've got God right here in the ark." But it wasn't God's will that they should defeat the Philistines. They were doing it as magic: trying to use God's instruments for their own purpose instead of putting themselves in line with His purpose; and the result was that the Philistines completely defeated them, and destroyed them, and killed the sons of Eli, and took the ark captive; but after the Philistines had the ark captured, it was not God's will that they should keep it; and God intervened to put the Philistines into such misery that they decided to send the ark back. It is the difference whether it is God's purpose you're seeking, or whether it is a means of carrying out the purpose that you have.

In fact that is true of the great bulk of things that you will find. I've known of some people who are so much determined that it's vital that in all of our church services, every little detail be exactly as the Scripture prescribes it; but the Scripture doesn't prescribe every little detail. I know one man who was very much against singing of regular hymns. We shouldn't sing hymnal words; we must only sing the psalms; so he wanted to sing only the psalms in his church. And he got a book to sing them which had the psalms—not as they are in the King James, in that beautiful language of the King James—but twisted around to make a metric version, which would be fine if you made a good version; but it was atrocious in that particular book. The English of it was terrible, and he was insistent upon so many little points exactly how it should be.

And then he got to thinking this: "What right do we have in the Scripture for preaching in our human voice? We should present the Word of God, and we shouldn't use our own human voice." Well you can see where that sort of thing leads you. God gives us His teaching, and He wants us to present it in any way we can that would make it known to people; and in the days before we had the full details of Christ visible for us, He laid out in great detail a great many ceremonies, in order to present a theistic

mind, and drive them home. We don't need that today, we have the full Scriptures now. (Question) Well, you take the words that are used in scripture; now speaking lightly of God, having a superficial attitude towards God, using His name in light ways is certainly inappropriate. If the person doesn't realize the significance of the words in God's sight it certainly isn't so bad as someone who does.

I remember being at the Presidio in San Francisco; and the fellows around there were training to talk. The language they used actually was horrendous; and I remember a young fellow that came in there from a good moral home—I don't know if a good Christian home or not—but a good moral home; and he had never heard such language as that in all his life; he came in there, and he heard this language all around; and in about a week, he began using a little of it; and at the end of the month, why he used twice as much as anyone else in the camp. I remember one of the fellows saying "My, won't it be interesting to see him when he gets home. He'll say, 'Mother, pass the blankety blank butter' "; and they were quite amused to see what a portion it had become his vocabulary.

Well in that case, he went into it with a background very different from what he experienced. He was shocked by it at first; he deliberately faced it—which is quite different from a person who had just slid into it without being ready to. He faced the thing, and gave into it; and he was more responsible in God's sight than someone who had simply never realized its true significance.

Of course, this is all a degeneration from the idea of actually doing something with the Word of God, using it as a means for your own selfish purposes. As it is now, it's merely a means, you might say, of letting off emotional feeling; but surely one could find a means that wouldn't dishonor God at the same time.

**4. Remember the Sabbath Day to Keep it Holy.** Now the fourth commandment begins very strangely. In Exodus 20, what is the first word of the fourth commandment? In Deut. 5 what is the first word of the fourth commandment?

Exodus 20:8 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."

Deuteronomy 5:12 "Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you."

Now what is the difference? Is one a matter of will, and the other a matter of intellect? Is that the difference? I don't think so at all. "Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it" is a statement you might say of the law: here's God's law: Keep the seventh day, keep the Sabbath day, that is the commandment.

Now here we have a commandment in Exodus that is more than a commandment. In addition to making a commandment, it contains an interesting inference. "Remember the Sabbath day." Now you say, here's what I want you to do, I want you to do this and I want you to do that and don't forget to do this, remember this. The implication is that he is not *now* giving them, in any sense a *new* commandment; it is that he is presenting to them a reminder of something which they have always known was part

of God's law; and he is simply taking up into the unified presentation of the law something which is already familiar. It's an old commandment repeated. Remember the Sabbath day? Now keep the Sabbath day. That would be perfectly all right: give the law, and one feature of the law is the keeping of the Sabbath day; but here he simply reiterates what was previously known. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

Does the Sabbath day begin here at Sinai? Is this where it starts? It is not. If it was he would say, "There is something I want you to do. I want you to establish a sequence of days, so that every seventh day you'll set aside for certain purposes." That's not what he says. He says "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Evidently then, this is something that the people had known long before was God's law, and they are now merely reminded of it. The Sabbath did not begin at Sinai; it is not simply a portion of God's law to Israel. It is a part of God's universal law given long before this time—familiar to the people and stressed to them this time—and placed in its proper place along with the other commandments which he gave them at Sinai. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

Well now, we know that there is a reference to the Sabbath day—though not an explanation of it, it's not a command specifically given—but a reference to it back in Genesis 2; in what is properly the last part of chapter 1, but it comes after our unfortunate verse division here; and so it is placed in chapter 2:3—

Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

Here is a statement of the foundation of it; it rests back upon creation, it was given in the account of creation; and then we go to Exodus 16, before the giving the law of Sinai; we find there in Exodus 16:4–5, the statement was made:

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not. And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily."

The people were to bring in the manna; and the sixth day he gave them twice as much as he gave them on other days; and on the seventh day, they were not to gather any. And in verse 25 we read

"Eat that today, for today is a Sabbath to the Lord; today you will not find it in the field. Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none."

A reminder to the people of the law with which they were already familiar.

We find the reference to the week already in Genesis 29:27 where Laban said,

Fulfill her week, and we will give you this one also for the service which you will serve with me still another seven years." Then Jacob did so and fulfilled her week.

In that case it was a week of years of course; that is, the weeks of years modeled after the week of days. And so while the week is not something that we find in other lands, it is something that the people willingly put out of their minds; and when people nowadays turn away from God, one of the first things they are apt to forget is the Sabbath day and God's command for it. In other words it was a part of God's command, a part of God's will from the very beginning—and definitely so before the giving of the ten commandments at Mount Sinai.

Now you have here the presentation "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work." There is a professor in the Pacific School of Religion who says that most people talk a great deal about verse 8 and verse 10, but they overlook verse nine; and his students say that this is one verse that this man really believes in. Of course I know that there isn't much else in the Bible that this particular man believes, but he does believe this. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work. He says that if we're to have God's blessing, we must not merely rest on the seventh day but we must work on the six.

Mr. Kirkwood? (question) Well as to whether the previous commands before this one had been specifically given before I don't know, Thou shalt have no other gods before me, I'd say that would stand to reason; I don't know that it has ever been expressed, Thou shalt not make any graven image, bow down or serve them; there's no specific presentation of it anywhere before. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, is similar, but when we come to this fourth one, He evidently wanted to stress that this is not a new thing, but that this was something that was already known.

Of course it is true that the ten commandments are the presentation of the moral law of God; and the moral law is inherent in the structure of the universe. The difference between right and wrong is established from all eternity; and consequently, it isn't that this is you say now, "Here are the rules: you are not to park in this particular block; in this block you can park for one hour and no longer; you are to drive on the right hand side of the street"; and other things that you can make it this way or that way; this is the law today; tomorrow you may do it a different way. The ten commandments are not that. The ten commandments are the moral law of the universe; they are in the structure of the universe. They are the difference between right and wrong; and consequently a person should be familiar with all of them. But when we come to this one, for some reason he felt it desirable to stress that one; that this was not a new thing; that this was something that was inherent in the structure of the universe, and which was familiar to them already; and he's merely stressing it to keep them remembering.

If I say "We're going to establish a new system: tomorrow I want you to get here on time"; but now if I say, "Remember to be here on time," that implies that you already know it; the result is the same, but there is an implication in one that isn't in the other. And when he says "Remember the Sabbath day," he implies—you can't remember if you don't already know it, like the Negro who said, "How can I have mo-

lasses, when I haven't had any lasses yet?" You have to already know it, or you can't remember it. It doesn't change the commandment; it's just an implication.

If in Deuteronomy most of the commandments are word for word what we have here in Exodus; and if here it said "remember" and there it says "remember"; if here it said "observe" and there it said "observe," I wouldn't feel quite so convinced that there is a real importance to the fact that this particular word is used. But a different word is used in Exodus. It seems to me that there is some reason for the difference; and the normal thing, the natural thing would be that at the first time he gives it he says "people"; and the second time he gives it, he simply gives the commandments: here they are; here is what they are to do. But instead of giving it, he puts in this other word "remember"; and he is reminding them of those experiences in the wilderness, when the man went out and tried to gather manna on the Sabbath; and it didn't work; and He is reminding them of God's original creation, and he is reminding them of all this.

We don't know the origin of all of these commandments. Certainly there is no question but that the essence of all these commandments was known to them; there is no question about it and the essence of most of them—the essence, you might say—is known to all people; but when the people were in Egypt, and the people around about them would say, "Yes, worship your own God; don't worship some other god," and they would say, "Don't put something else in the way of God." The Egyptians have all these statues of these gods, but those Egyptian gods don't represent the moral nature of these commandments. The Egyptian gods, they steal and kill and commit adultery and incest and so on. These legends of their gods would be known to all people; but when you come to this point, the Egyptians didn't have any gods that followed the essence of the commandments, even though they were well-known to the people. The Babylonians had a somewhat similar situation, but not exactly.

It might seem to some of the Israelites, "Well, now here is something; what business do these gods have ignoring the great moral principles of the universe?"

But now, here is a specific little matter of ceremony, about taking a particular day and treating it in a certain way; what is the idea of putting this in: God says "Remember this"? This is nothing new; this is a part of it. This is something that I need to remind you of, because while the people all around you will recognize the other commandments, they may not be familiar with this. In Rome, we know that they ridiculed the Jews for the keeping of the Sabbath. They thought it was very silly. Why should people not be willing to work seven days? Why should they take one day and set it apart? The Romans ridiculed them. It was one thing that made it difficult for the Jews in those days in Rome. When you have a word here [remember] different from any other, and different from Deuteronomy, you don't want to build too much upon a word; but we want to see whether there is an implication or not; and if we find what may be an implication of it, then we look through the Scripture to see if the implication fits with a piece elsewhere in the Scripture; and if we had no reference to Sabbath before this time; and we have no reference to it in Exodus here, or anything until you get here, well, you might say, "Now He is giving a brand new command

here." It is a new thing, apart from the covenant, why then did He put in the word 'remember'? We can't understand the reason for it, but the implication is that it is not a new thing; it simply is a reiteration of something that was already known.

(Student: "What is our relation today to that command?") Yes, a very good question. Well, what is our relation to the other commandments here? That is an interesting and an important question. What is the relation of the Christian to God's commandments and what is his relation specifically to this commandment? Are all the other 9 effective today? And this one not? Is that the case? Or are none of them effective today? What is the situation? Well, those are rather basic questions and I don't know whether we should plan to discuss them fully at this point. We should discuss the large general questions. We want to do it before we are through, but as to the relation of this to the others, there is one thing I want to ask.

What about those three kinds of law that we mentioned? Moral law, civil law and ceremonial law? Are the ten commandments moral law, are they civil law, or are they ceremonial law? Well, I think you could say the ten commandments are moral law. But that of doesn't mean that they are *only* moral law. There may be elements of the other types of law involved in them. And when we take the Sabbath commandment, there is a moral principle there, that it is God's will that there be a rhythm in life. That things do not go along exactly the same, that there is a point at which you turn aside from the ordinary things of life. There is a certain part of it to be devoted exclusively to His service; and not only that, there is a certain part of it devoted to looking back over what you've done, and looking ahead. There is an interruption; there is a period of looking back; of looking ahead; a period of looking to Him exclusively. There is a moral principle there, which He has established in the constitution of the universe. And even with material things, with regular rests you accomplish more with than without it.

I read that some corporations have said that, if we have a third world war they are not going to do like they did in the second world war, and put their workers on a seven-day basis; they said that they found in the last war that, when they started working seven days a week, at first they increased production, and there was quite a bit more produced in the week; but before very long, it happened that the workmen were actually producing less in the seven days than they had previously been producing in the six days. This is the way God established it. This is a part of the constitution of the universe, and so it is part of the moral law. But it also is part of the ceremonial law.

The ceremonial law is the giving of the means by which we are to worship God, and those principles which we are to use in driving home to our mind things that he wants us to remember. And here we have the Sabbath day which reminds of the fact that God created the world in an orderly fashion. That it is divided into six stages—six definite stages—which reach a climax in a seventh, the point in which He ceased from His labors and looked back over that which he had done. It is a reminder to us of God's creative activity. It is a reminder to us that there is a goal in God's creative activity: that it looks forward to an accomplishment, to an end, to a purpose. It is a reminder to us of the fact that in the constitution of God's universe there is a

purpose. In other words it is eschatological: it shows an end, it shows a goal. It shows a purpose, that God in His creation has not just created the world just to go on and on and on and on, but that it goes on to and reaches the goal for which He has established it.

And so we have a purpose of driving home to the mind certain truths of God's character, of God's purpose, of God's method of working; and we find these driven home to the people's minds all through the OT dispensations; and we now find that it is vital that the same truths be driven home to our minds, but there is an additional truth connected with them today. There is the truth that Christ, after He had accomplished His great work of dying for our sins on the cross, that He ceased from His labors. He said, "It is finished," and he went into the tomb; he ceased from his labors; and then on the first day of the week, He came out from the tomb; He came out from the tomb as proof of our justification—as proof of the accomplishment that is the foundation of our Christian religion—and so it came to be changed in the early days, so that we no longer observe the 7th day, but we observe the first day; and we remember the moral principles and the ceremonial principles that are involved in the seventh day; and we add to them this most important thing, of the centrality of the resurrection of Christ, the foundation of our lives.

The question is, what is moral law, what is ceremonial law, what is civil law? God gives ceremonial law for the purpose of driving truths home to us; and He may change ceremonial law under different circumstances and different situations. Civil law is the enforcement of the moral principle—or should be—and it will vary with different situations.

Now in the NT, the moral principle of the Sabbath is preserved and maintained and stressed again, the moral principle of it; but the civil law of it, is something that is subject to change; and the details of the Jewish tradition, as to how the Sabbath is to be kept or, how other ceremonies are to be carried out, is something from which we are free. We are not to be in any way in bondage to Jewish tradition.

And we do not have in the NT an explicit command of the change of the time from the seventh to the first day; but we have the evidence that it did occur in apostolic days. Evidence that the Christians, who at first observed two days, then came to put it all upon the one day; and it is pretty good evidence that it is not contrary to the Lord's will that that change should be made; for He in no way intervened to suggest they were doing wrong.

The Jewish tradition would be like the laws you have among the Jews today. I was reading just the other day where there was a meeting of Jews somewhere and they were meeting on a Friday evening I believe; and the meeting finished, and they went out of the building; and the janitor, a Gentile janitor, had gone home. And I read in the paper, they were quite upset; they didn't know what to do, because it is against the present Jewish law to do any work, such as lighting a fire or putting out a fire on the Sabbath day; and here was a light on, and how could they turn out the light on the Sabbath day? And yet, being thrifty, they didn't want to leave a burning light on. (laughter) So one of them went out on the street, and he came across a very kindly

Gentile and asked him if he would be good enough to come in and turn out the light. I read that in the paper.

Now Christ said, "You made the word of God to no effect through your tradition." But what He meant wasn't that the principles which were being carried out were wrong; but He meant that there was a tradition in which these principles led to all sorts of little details, so that people paid their attention to the details rather than to the principles. They were not keeping the Sabbath day any better because they wouldn't turn the light switch. It was a matter of making more of the details of the thing instead of the great moral principle that God was presenting.

Now here we find that it is later on given, how far they are on to walk on the Sabbath day. There was a Sabbath day's journey. Now that is civil law. In an agricultural community, in which people were engaged in physical labors through the week, on the Sabbath day there was to be a cessation of physical labor; and it is restricted to a comparatively little physical exertion, on the basis from which they were to have their rest from physical labor. Now in the case of a person who was doing mental labor, a long walk might be one of the best ways of resting—but it should be a rest from mental labor. There are ministers who very definitely break the Sabbath working seven days a week; but under the circumstances Sunday is their busiest day, that is the day when they do most of their work. Well, to carry out the Sabbath principle, they should take some other day in which they take a complete break and a complete change and get their rest.

I think that there is an important point about all of these commandments. The commandment is not a particular way of doing little details. The commandment is a great moral principle; and if you have the spirit of the moral principle, you will apply it in the circumstances in which you find yourself. And the circumstances will change the means of application, but the moral principle remains firm and vital. God never changes the moral law. When it comes to the ceremonial law, we find Him stressing details of ceremonial law before Christ came, But after Christ came, the stress no longer was on ceremonial law.

When it comes to civil law, there seems to have been a great deal of liberty in the OT for people to use their brains in applying the moral law.

And we notice that in that commandment there is a moral principle, a moral principle of rest in rhythm. There is a moral principle there of setting a certain portion of time aside exclusively to the Lord. There is a moral principle there of observing this reminder, of course, that gets over into the ceremonial law. Perhaps you had better put that other under the ceremonial. Then the ceremonial would perhaps be the reminder aspect, reminding one of God's creative activity. Reminding of the fact that God's activity is orderly, and that it has a goal. That it is not just aimless activity, but that the six days of creation looked toward the seventh, the day when He ceases from his labor. And, of course, the NT combines that with the remembrance of the resurrection of Christ: Christ the goal of our life; the return of Christ is that toward which our age moves; that the resurrection of Christ is the foundation of everything.

And so we put it at the very beginning, the very beginning upon which all of our life is based

In most of these laws, you will have no difficulty in telling whether they are civil, ceremonial, or moral. This is one of the few cases where you do have difficulty. The reason you have difficulty here is because there are all three in it. It has a moral principle in it, which perhaps is sometimes overlooked, but which I think we are justified in saying is definitely there. It also has a ceremonial aspect, which is a very important part of it, both before and after the coming of Christ. And therefore it is very easy for that aspect of it to become the most stressed. And then in its application there is civil law. So in this law all three are there—usually only two—but whenever you have a moral law, you may have civil laws going out of it as a means of a promise.

(Student: "Was there a distinction made at the time between civil and ceremonial law?") Well, as Mr. Buswell has pointed out, there is no separation of church and state among the Israelites. God was the ruler; they were God's people; it was God's kingdom; and therefore, what was contrary to God's will was every bit as important as what was contrary to the means of people getting along well together in their ordinary pursuits of life; and so there isn't a sharp distinction there between civil and ceremonial; but I would say that in general, the ceremonial is that which takes religious knowledge and has a particular way of doing things, usually with the purpose of expressing certain ideas which are to be impressed upon the mind.

Well, now, you might say that this is very close to the civil, in that it is something that God does for a purpose, and would change when the purpose changes; but the civil law ordinarily is that which man is rather free to change as he chooses, in order that his object in them should be to apply the moral law. A group of people does not have the right to make any sort of law they want—a law, perhaps, which the overwhelming majority of the country might pass, but which would be immoral.

The people had no right before God to pass laws which were not intended to be in some way an application of moral principles for the benefit of the community; and in back of any law that is a just law, there is a moral principle which it is being attempted to carry out and to apply. But in the application, judgment must be applied; and judgments differ; and in the application, conditions vary from time to time; and therefore civil laws are always subject to change. Moral principles are immutably established and never change.

And in the Sabbath law, we have the moral principle which forms the foundation of the universe, which adheres in the constitution of mankind and in the constitution of the universe as God has made it. But the moral principle is not so obvious there as the ceremonial aspect of it—which, of course, is a very important aspect, both before and after the coming of Christ. And then the civil aspect of it is brought out in many different places.

Where there are civil laws, the civil law is not so much in these cases to carry out the ceremonial aspect of it. It is not so much to impress on people's minds this lesson as it is to enable them to properly secure from it the rest that they need; and so the civil

laws are somewhat variable; and we find a good many of them in the OT connected with the Sabbath laws, as we have civil laws connected also with some other moral principles.

As to our present civil attitude toward the Sabbath law, it rests upon the practice of the NT church—a practice which was a change made during the days of the establishment of the NT church; the apostles, appointed of Christ, were very definitely supervising and directing things as they went on, and the Scripture was being written. And if a vital error had been made, we would expect the Lord to make that clear in His word.

I don't know whether there is much more we need to say about it. I have here a list of maybe 50 verses on it which, if we were further along in our material, I would take time to look up all of them with you; but I think perhaps we will pass on. Maybe I will mention two or three NT references: Romans 14:5, 6; Galatians 4:10, 11; Col. 2:16, 17; Hebrews 3:4. In Hebrews we have considerable stress on the Sabbath principle, "There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God."

**5. Honor Thy Father and Mother.** "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long on the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee." The NT says that it is the first commandment which has a specific promise connected with it—"that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

You might say that, in a way, it is a variation of the Golden Rule: to do unto others as you think they should do unto you. If you would like a long life, why then, do what you can to help your parents to have a long and happy life. Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee.

You notice that he does not say "Obey thy father and thy mother." In the NT, we read "children obey your parents." Some parents get the idea that their children, no matter how old they are, should obey them; but there is no suggestion of a such thing in the Scripture. A parent has a duty to keep the child from lying; to guide his right upbringing; and help him to develop himself to be an independent member of God's family. But when a person is of age, he has, not only the right, but the duty and the responsibility to make his own decisions—and if wrong decisions are made and his life is ruined, he cannot in the end give the excuse that I was doing what my parents told me to do. When a man becomes mature, he reaches the time when it is necessary to make his own decisions; and he cannot shift the responsibility for them onto his parents, even though he would like to do so, and even if they would like to keep on assuming responsibility for him. The command says nothing about a grown person obeying his parents in any regard. His obedience is to the Lord. But there is honor which is due, and properly due, to the father and the mother.

A most silly thing occurred in the Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A. regarding the members of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. The church had to have a moral principle on which to try ministers for belonging to the Independent Board; and they couldn't say, "We are trying you for trying to spread the gospel." They

couldn't give that reason, as it wouldn't sound very good for a reason; so instead, they put it under this command.

They said the members of the Independent Board were disobeying the 5th commandment, "honor thy father and thy mother"—equating the faith and leadership of the Presbyterian Church with the faith of the father and the mother.

It was so absurd; the rule on which they were put out of their churches and expelled from the church was for violation of this commandment; but it is so absurd a claim that it is no wonder that in the Harlem Memorial Church in Philadelphia, when the sexton of the church was appointed by the Presbytery as the prosecutor for the members of the church who were in the Independent Board, and he read his speech, which probably one of them had written for him. When he came to say they had broken the commandment he looked down at the paper and he misread the number of the chapter and he said they had broken the commandment as contained in Ex. 19:12 and he misread the 20 and so he opened the Bible and he read the commandment they had broken "And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed, to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death." And he went right on with his speech and never noticed that anything was wrong. (laughter):

Along with the responsibility to obey the commandments, we have a responsibility to interpret them reasonably.

Now that leads very naturally to the next commandment:

**6. Thou Shalt Not Kill.** And to those of you who are not in 2nd year Hebrew, I assigned that for today. Thou shalt not kill. I asked you to look up in *Young's Concordance* and see what is the word; what other uses we have for the word that is here translated "kill" and what other words are used for it in the OT.

Now those who are in 2nd year Hebrew, and consequently know something of methodology and the study of words, why they had a harder task for today if their curiosity was aroused, including, 3 or 4 minutes for this assignment; but to those who are not that far in Hebrew, I thought it was a fair assignment for these in addition to the outline for yesterday and today.

[dcb: chart for reference]

Strong's #	Word	Meaning	Freq (NASB)	Example
2076	<i>zebach</i>	slaughter for food or sacrifice	121	De 12:15
<b>Hebrew words for killing (kill, murder, slay)</b>				
5362	<i>nagaph</i>	strike, kill	1	Is 29:1
2491	<i>chalaal</i>	slay, fatally wound, pierce	83	Jg 20:31
6921	<i>qatal</i>	put to death, kill, slay	94	Gen 24:14
2026	<i>harag</i>	destroy, murder	163	Gen. 12:12
4191	<i>mowt</i>	kill, put to death	226	Ex. 1:16
7819	<i>shachat</i>	slaughter, kill	70	Ex. 12:6
7523	<i>ratsach</i>	dash to pieces, murder, slay	46	Ex. 20:13 (Decalog)
2873	<i>tabach</i>	slaughter, butcher, slay	11	Ex. 22:1

And so we take the command that is translated in English, "Thou shalt not kill." Our English Bible has the word 'kill' in it a good many times. How many Hebrew words does this English word, represent, Mr. Gilchrist? Ten Hebrew words listed in *Youngs Concordance*. And does it represent the Hebrew word *ratsach* that is translated here in the commandment, more frequently than any other, would you say that? It is not, is it?

I noticed that there is a Hebrew word *harag*, which we all learned in beginning Hebrew, which is translated "kill" once; and that is not the one in the commandment. There is the word to die, *mowt* in the Qal, meaning "to cause to die" which is used a good many times, a very general idea. Or there is the word *shachat*, "to slay," which is used a good many times and is translated kill.

Then there is the word *zebach*, which is very different from the one used here. What is the difference between *zebach* and the *ratsach* of the sixth commandment? Will someone tell me that? We know *zebach* is used a good many times. Surely everyone here knows what it means by this time. *Zebach* is to kill an animal; and it is also translated sacrifice because it is used in connection with sacrifice. It is also used to just kill, as an animal, but it is only translated "kill" about five or six times. It is usually translated sacrifice, but it means to kill an animal.

Well, *zebach* is not the word used here. It is not a command not to kill an animal. There is another word *tabach* which also means to kill an animal. The word *haqsab*, used for a butcher in modern Hebrew, is a word taken from *tabach*, but it is not that word.

It is not the common word for slay, and it is not *mowt*, "to put to death."

It is not *nakah*, to strike or to smite—Cain uses this word in Genesis 4:15 to express a fear of being killed; occasionally it is the process, and means to strike so hard so it is sometimes translated 'kill.' Really, to smite or to strike would be more exact rendering.

Then there is the word *shachat*, which is also used for killing animals. That word is used in Jewish ceremonials today. A participle of it is used today and means "set apart for ceremonial killing.

What is the particular word used in Exodus here? This word *ratsach* is translated "kill" six times in the OT And in these six times, how many of them refer to animals? How

many of them refer to suicide? None of them do. They are always used as a sequel to something else.<sup>2</sup>

Now is this word ever used except in the meaning here translated? Is this word *ratsach* both in Exodus 20 and in Deut. 5, in the ten commandments in both places? Is this word ever used in the Bible with any other meaning? With any other translation? How many know and have looked it up and know? It is a very simple thing to do. In *Young's Concordance* you look in the back where it has all the Hebrew words listed with their translations. For *ratsach* it lists "kill", "murder", "murderer", "be put to death", "manslayer", "slayer", and "be slain". Anyone who can read English letters can look up Hebrew words in a concordance.

So in every case of *ratsach* we have the note of slaying or of murdering; and if you look at the instances under these different heads—you can look them up in *Young's Concordance*—or if you look under this one, where it is translated "kill" by the translators of the A.V., it speaks of the revenger of blood; killing the slayer; the one who should kill his neighbor. "Hast thou killed and taken possession?" Elijah said to Ahab after Naboth had been murdered. It would seem to have a meaning of killing, according to a plan, and as a result of hate. It would ordinarily have that meaning. There are one or two cases where it is used of one killing his neighbor unawares. Well, it would seem to mean accidentally kill someone; but it appears in others as intentional murder. It is used also in cases where the killing is in the result of a feud; someone else has killed a relative, and the revenger of blood seizes the one and kills him; and this word is used. So it is always used of a human being, and it is usually in connection with hatred. It is never used of animals; it is never used of suicide; it is never used of war; it is never used of the action of the state in killing a criminal. And consequently the command in English, "Thou shalt not kill" is poorly translated. It is far too broad, far too vague a meaning, way beyond anything that the Hebrew word here says. When you translate it "Thou shalt not kill," you make it into an act instead of a situation and no moral principle relates to the act itself. There is no act which is *per se* right or wrong. It all depends on what the circumstances are, and the manner in which the act is performed. And in the case of this word, it would be much better if it had been translated "Thou shalt do no murder", "Thou shalt not murder," for that is what the word really means as used elsewhere in the Scripture.

In the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal" does not mean "Thou shalt not carry wood that belongs to somebody else." The act of taking any thing is not immoral. There is nothing in the world that a person cannot, entirely properly, lift up and carry from one place to another; or take to himself, under proper arrangements with the one who owns it. Thou shalt not steal prohibits taking for your own property something that does not belong to you without the free agreement of the owner.

And this commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," does not mean, "put an end to life." It means not to put an end to life under conditions that it is morally wrong to do so. And our English word "murder" comes rather near to expressing the idea. Not exactly

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<sup>2</sup> Num. 35:27 a revenger kills the slayer; Deut. 4:42 Kill neighbor unawares; I Ki. 21:19 Killed Naboth and taken possession of his vineyard; Hos. 4:2 Accusation against Israel: swearing, lying and killing.

the idea, but rather near to it. It has nothing to do with war. It has nothing to do with capital punishment. It has nothing to do with killing of animals.

(Student: "Does this prohibit suicide?") I would say so, yes. I know of no cases in Scripture where this word is used in connection with that; it always used a different word. And consequently, while I think the case is not quite so clear as it is in the other cases; because in the matter of animals, other words than this are always used. In the case of war, God explicitly commands it under certain circumstances. In the case of capital punishment, it is explicitly commanded in the Scripture. In relation to suicide, it is killing of a human being; and there certainly is no permission found anywhere in the Scripture; and therefore I would not be ready dogmatically to say that this verse does not apply; yet, I don't think it is quite the normal use of this particular word.

(Student: "Do any other early translations use the word kill?") You mean that it was just translated "kill" in the general sense? That would be a very interesting question. You will find *Walton's Polyglot* in the library, it's a very heavy book, and you can look into that.

First, you look up this verse; and you will find that he gives two or three different translations of the Septuagint and two or three other Greek translations; that he gives the Old Latin, the Syriac and the Armenian, and several versions; and you'll have no difficulty in seeing what they all say, because under each one of them there's a Latin translation; and you'll be able to see exactly, if you'll look it up and bring it to report. That is not a proof of anything, but it is suggestive and maybe important to check what the ancient versions do with any word.

Now what an ancient version does with a word is extremely important, if the word is one that occurs rarely in the Scriptures, and you have little evidence of exactly what it means; but when you have ten words translated "kill" in the Scripture; and when these words are used a good many times, as we've just pointed out, then you have sufficient evidence in the Scripture to compare Scripture with Scripture and learn what it means. That is the thing that determines what a word means. The versions show you what somebody thought it meant; and this may be someone who got his Hebrew second-hand, or lived long after it had become a dead language; and so the versions are nothing of the importance to the comparison of passages; and so in this connection, I consider that purely a matter of interest, but it is a very interesting matter. So when you get a rare word in the Scriptures, then the versions are just about the only thing you have to decide; and then they become of real importance.

It has been an error in Hebrew study sometimes in the past, to try to derive every word from the verb. In fact, it is a great error in any sort of linguistic study, that people get so interested in the fact that they find certain principles that apply very widely, that pretty soon they start making principles; and trying to make the Hebrew writers, or the writers of other languages, always write in accordance with their principles; then they find that they don't do it.

The trouble is that they don't understand really the situation in the language; the way to understand is not to make up principles, and say the language has got to follow

them; but to study the language, and see what principles are in it itself. And so, when we look at English, we find that a great many nouns are derived from verbs. A building is something that is built; an automobile is something that moves by itself, as far as the formation of the word is concerned. And a great many English words are derived from verbs; but by no means the majority of English words.

In Hebrew, the majority of nouns are derived from verbs; and consequently it has become customary in Hebrew study to usually take the verb form as the root, and then derive words from it. Because in most cases that is the fact, but by no means all. With "father", "son", "house", and a great many other common words, they were very definitely nouns originally and not verbs. But the majority of Hebrew words are derived from verbs.

**7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.** It is very good that in this case, the command has been translated in the English in a way that does not describe an act, but which refers to a relation. Because that is the situation regarding all the commandments. There is no act in itself that is right or wrong. In the early Christian church—we say early, we mean a few centuries after the birth of Christ, but very far back from now—there were large portions of the church which in reaction against the prevalent licentiousness, and the life of low morality of the Roman empire, took an attitude like this to all sexual relationships. That is not what the verse refers to, at all.

And in the Roman Catholic Church, it is today considered the mark of very great holiness, that a young girl her early teens will take a vow of chastity for her whole life; and for that she may be held up as a great saint. In fact, for most of these Roman Catholic saints, that is one of their great claims to holiness. That is not this commandment. The commandment has nothing whatever of that sort of a suggestion. In this, as in relation to sovereignty, in relation to all these other things, it is a matter of whether things are done in a proper fashion and under proper circumstances. And that which God has established as a part of His creation of man, there is nowhere in the Scripture anywhere a suggestion that it could be considered as *per se* wrong. Some people take the verse, "In sin did my mother conceive me," from one of the Psalms, as proof that all conception is wicked, utterly sinful. Of course, David is pointing out the great truth of original sin and wickedness that is in his heart and life and which is true of all men; but it has no relation whatever to a misunderstanding of that which God has established. And so I am glad that in the 13th verse here, the translation made is one which gives a very accurate idea of what is involved rather than give a very general statement that covers all sorts of things that are not intended.

**8. Thou shalt not steal.** The meaning of this is very clear to all. It means to take something that doesn't belong to us. It doesn't mean simply to carry or take away or transfer ownership, but it means to take without proper authorization.

**9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.** The NT says that all liars will be cast into the Lake of Fire. But the Commandment does not speak in terminology that says that it is utterly wrong to say anything which does not give an

absolutely precise and complete presentation of truth. Because that is impossible, with the potency of language, and the difficulty of knowing situations fully.

The commandment here puts the stress on the intent to do harm. That, of course, does not mean that we knowingly may say what is untrue—what is false—that it is permissible, Revelation makes that very clear when it speaks of all liars being cast into the Lake of Fire; but the commandment puts a stress upon the heart. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. Thou shalt not say things about your neighbor which are calculated to injure him and are not true. (end of lecture)

(Review) Now we looked at Honor thy Father and thy Mother, and we looked at the 6th, Thou shalt not kill, and we noticed that that is not a very good translation. It is much too general, it is not the meaning of the Hebrew word. Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal.

At the end we were speaking of "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." And we noticed that the commandment as given here involves two things: It involves the falsity and it involves the "against." It involves the fact that it is not in accordance with truth, and it involves the fact that there is an intention of malice involved in it. This is because these 10 commandments are not an attempt to state all the details of a perfect ideal; but they are to bring out those great moral matters which it is vital for us to take for the foundations of our moral and spiritual life.

And in the matter of truth and falsity, there is a point which is sometimes an extremely delicate one. Rev. 20 says all liars shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, but it is sometimes difficult to define just exactly what a liar is. You can take a true statement which is absolutely true, and yet which gives an utterly false impression. You can say words that are verbally just exact, but the impression given is wrong.

Now there have been leaders and prominent teachers in the Roman Catholic Church—they are not in the majority by any means—but there have been teachers who have claimed that it is all right to say something that deceives somebody else, provided that all the words that you said were true, even though some of them were not audible to the other person. Thus somebody could ask, "Did you take something out of that barn?" And you could say, "Why I didn't even enter that barn," and under your breath, "...during the last half hour." And they wouldn't be able to hear it, but what you said was absolutely true, and you were not a liar.

Now there have been leaders and prominent leaders of the Roman Catholic teachings that have held that that was justified. The Jesuit order has been widely accused of holding that as a part of its principles. The order denies that they go as far as that—it denies it very definitely—but they do go a certain distance in that direction.

The full matter though: if your duty is to give everybody else a full and complete idea of anything that is in your mind at any time that they take a notion to want to know about it, you can spend all your time explaining and re-explaining and going over what you said, because the human language is such that it is very hard to make an exact confession.

I think the Scripture definitely teaches that we are to speak the truth at all times, and that we are not to attempt to deceive; but a great part of the heinousness of deceit rests upon its purpose—a great part of it; and this command says "bear false witness against thy neighbor." A person may say something which is fantastically untrue, but say it with the idea of a joke; and it is probably not the right thing to do, and in some cases very serious injury results from it. Nevertheless, something that is verbally correct, and only gives an impression only slightly contrary to fact, may be done in such a way as very seriously to injure someone else with malice aforethought.

And the motive, in any act of human beings, is a very large part of the basis for judgment; and so this commandment does not say, in any way, that at any time it is permissible to say something that you know to be false. It does not say that, but it does put the stress upon the matter of injuring someone by something which is at variance with the truth.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." If a person is accused of something serious; and in danger of being punished for it; and you know that he is not guilty, and you merely keep quiet, you can be bearing false witness in that way. And you may be breaking the commandment more seriously, in that way, than you would in another infringement of the commandment which involves very definite statements contrary to the truth.

(Student: "Does this cover all lying?") I would say that if this commandment stood absolutely alone, it would be pretty hard to draw from it much conclusion as to the duty of absolute truth at all times; but in the book of Revelation, we have the statement that all liars shall have their place in the Lake of Fire; this is a very very strong statement, and it doesn't stress the matter of the injuries then, but the matter of departure from the truth.

And it seems to me that we have to bring that into consideration, in considering ethical matters; but these ten commandments do not attempt to deal with these things in a full way. They attempt to give us certain great vital principles which are fundamental; and it is an important matter having your word being so dependable that, when you say something, people will know that when you say a thing it is true.

The attitude which the early Quakers took had much in its favor. They refused to swear to the truth because they said, "We will always speak the truth. It is not necessary that we take an oath that this is true, as if it could mean that as long as we didn't take the oath, we could say anything we wanted to. Everything we say is true." And the early Quakers got such a reputation for truth that people would simply say, "Well, will you affirm that this is true?" And if he would affirm it, it was considered sufficient, because of his religious profession, and because of the reputation of the Quakers for truth.

And as a result, right in the Constitution of the U.S., it is stated that a man has the privilege of affirming instead of swearing; but that doesn't mean that somebody simply doesn't want to swear so he affirms; it means that a person who has such

reputation for truth that his word is just as good as somebody's oath, can make that statement; and I believe the law holds that they affirm just as much as they would hold someone else for taking the oath; but of other people they take the practice of making them take oaths—that you can't trust their word except when they are under oath.

Well now, the matter of being one whose word is dependable, is certainly God's desire for us; but the great stress of this commandment is using words in order to injure somebody else. And I think this should be said: that while it is a vital and important thing that the Christian's word should be dependable; and that if he makes a statement the people should be able to depend upon it; that this is not the great objective of the commandment—simply to tell the truth. There are other factors on other matters which are tremendously important; and I think that there is this that can be said: that the objection to the requirement to tell the truth does not mean that we have to disclose all of our affairs to anybody that asks of them.

There are people who have a right to ask; and it is our duty to disclose them to those people, and under those circumstances. There are other people, and other circumstances, which have no right to ask certain questions; and neither do they have the right then to ask a question in such a way that we have to give them an answer, whether we want to or not. The OT has a number of cases where a man was told to make a true statement, which was a vital thing in his activities; but it was far from being the principal reason or the principal thing; and he gives this statement to people who have no right to ask about the principal thing.

God sent Samuel to anoint David; the purpose of Samuel's going to David was to anoint a man to succeed Saul. That was God's purpose. God set David apart for it. It was not God's intention that this should be revealed to Saul at that time. And therefore God sent Samuel to do this, (I Samuel 16:2)

And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the Lord said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the Lord.

Now the statement was entirely true, for he was going there to hold a sacrifice, and he did hold a sacrifice there. Nevertheless it was an evasion, because it was not the whole truth; it was not the primary purpose of his going; but it was a concealment of the primary purpose of his going, given to individuals who had no right in enquire what was the primary purpose of his going.

And so at this point—the point of concealing the full reason—they were evading questions of people who do not have a right to inquire regarding these certain points. And on that point, there is often great difficulty in determining exactly what is moral and correct. And I would say that in general, it is far better to err on the side of being so clearly mistaken that nobody would question that you have told them the truth. It is far better to do that than it is to run any risk of making a statement that errs a little on the other side for the sake of avoiding disclosure.

Well, now, we could take a month on this; I don't think we had better take that long. There are so many special considerations that it is hard to give a full answer. One is this: Rahab was a heathen woman who was not a member of God's people; who was not acting under the command of Moses or Joshua. She is held up to us as an example of one who saw that God was with the Israelites; and that their conquest was part of His will; and who decided to throw her lot, not with those to whom she was related by blood, but with those to whom she saw were God's people; and that this thing about her is very praiseworthy; and is praised in the Scripture, and given a reward; and she becomes an ancestor to the Lord Jesus Christ. But that does not mean that she was a character whom we can take as an example for our actions, as we can take the Lord Jesus Christ; and particularly while she was still a heathen woman, not even an Israelite yet, merely moving in that direction by giving help to the Israelites. All that is true, and perhaps that is sufficient to rule her out, as far as a source of decision on this question is concerned; but nevertheless, I think we also can say in this connection, that it was not her duty to reveal to those who were opposed to God and Israel; to reveal the circumstances which would have the spies at their mercy and have destroyed the life of those who were doing God's will. I think we can say that therefore she was certainly justified in making any proper evasion. Well, now whether her evasion went beyond what was proper or not, the Scripture doesn't state specifically.

(Student: What about Abraham?) Abraham told a white lie. He told something which was true, for Sarah was his sister; and he thought it was just a little white lie that wasn't going to hurt anybody, and so he told it; but as a matter of fact, it concealed the most important fact about her, that she wasn't merely his sister. It concealed a most important fact, and a fact that people have the right to know; because it would naturally tremendously affect her relation to Abraham. And what seemed to Abraham to be merely a white lie, almost caused the death of pharaoh and Abimelech; and the Lord told him that they were almost dead men as the result of what he had done. And he tried to excuse it on the ground that "I realize that you are not altogether trustful in these matters..." But he almost caused very serious injury to other people, with what Abraham thought was a little white lie.

(Student: "Was Abraham at fault because Abimelech drew the wrong conclusion?") Yes, now that question takes up a whole big field. You can say, here is a young man and he comes from a Christian home and he wants to serve the Lord; and he goes to a so-called Christian college; and he gets into a class in philosophy, and the professor begins to ridicule the Bible in a very subtle fashion, as I have seen it done; and I have seen young fellows with the finest kind of Christian zeal, as far as anybody could see outwardly, going to this college with a great reputation for a great Christian School; and I have seen them, in this class, gradually lose their belief that there is anything true in the Scripture; and I have seen them go out into a life of sin, a life of reproach to everything that is right.

And you might say, "Well what does that person have to do with it; after all the professor...?" Well, the fact of the matter is that he comes into consideration very definitely; and a man who deliberately sets out to disobey God is punishable in the Lord's sight far more than the one who is led into it through someone else's lies or

someone else's wickedness. But there is also the responsibility in everyone of us not to follow any other human being's statements, but to find out what the facts are and act on them.

And so Adam threw the blame onto Eve; and Eve threw the blame onto the serpent; and God dealt with the serpent; and then he turned right back, and dealt with Adam and Eve. We cannot escape the consequences of our wrong-doing because someone else has led us; but it is true that God deals differently with human beings today.

(Student "Another instance is the midwives deceiving Pharaoh.") Yes, and there is a question there which is a little difficult to this point. Just as to who these midwives were, we don't know. They certainly are not set up to us as necessarily examples. No human being is perfect, but there was a point here of their disobeying a powerful ruler in his wicked designs and opposing them. And for that, they were regarded: it says (Exodus 1:20)

Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses.

God dealt well with the midwives, but it doesn't say that it was God's will that they should tell the untruth.

There is great danger in any decision that we make; and that is in the conduct of lies, there is great danger. There is danger; it would be much easier if we could just sit back and be perfectly good because we didn't do anything good or bad; but we have to do things, and the Lord wants us to accomplish things; he wants us to be his instruments for carrying on his work here; and the minute you set out to try to do something, you come into all kinds of things that are very difficult to decide. There is a great danger; and once you enter into activity, you have points on the one hand where it will be easier to just sit down and do nothing, but that is not accomplishing anything; and on the other hand, there is a way to do it that is perfectly right, but if you don't find that way, there is a danger of doing wrong.

Now, for instance, I begin to teach a class; and I decide that I am occasionally going to spring an un-announced test; I enter into this danger immediately, because I have to decide this question: Someone for instance may ask—even innocently!—"when is the next test?" Well now, do I have to say the next test is on such and such a day? If I do that, someone will say, "Are we going to have a test next Tuesday in this class?" "Are you going to be away next Tuesday?" somebody says. (laughter) Somebody asked me a question like that. Well, it is not his right to question me about what I am trying to do, and where I am going to be. If I spring a test, it is only fair that it be sprung on everybody; and it would be utterly unfair to tell one or two people, unless I told everybody about it; and therefore I have a duty, if it is going to be sprung un-announced, to conceal it from everybody. Now, when somebody asks me a question, the answer of which would reveal the situation, I have to either give up the idea of giving unannounced tests at all, or else I have to write a statement to him, which will

be true, but which will not give him the answer to the particular thing that he is trying to detect. (laughter)

But I am saying that Abraham had a difficult thing to decide, and he decided wrong. We all have difficult things to decide; and we have a duty to decide them right; but you remember the old story about the man who wanted to hire a coachmen; and he asked, "How close to the edge of the precipice can you drive and not go over the edge?" And one man said, "I can go within an inch," and the next one said, "I can go within a half-inch," and the third one said, "I don't know, because I always keep as far as possible from the edge." And the man doing the hiring said, "That is the one I want, the one who doesn't take chances. I will hire him instead of the other two."

Well, now if he was always going to drive on big wide roads, that certainly was the wise thing to do, to take the man who was always careful; but I am not sure that that question necessarily proves whether a man was careful or not. But if you are going to drive in places of danger, you would like someone who had been through some places of danger and has an idea how near he can safely go. To keep well over in on the inner edge all the time is good as long as it is possible; but there are times when the road is narrow, and you have to make a decision; and it is vital to know how to make the right decision.

And we cannot make as our whole objective in truthfulness, that everybody I ever taught I am going to give a whole and complete picture of everything; and unless we do that some people are sometimes going to think that we have told them an untruth. I have had this happen. I have made the statement, "I don't expect to give a test next week." I have made that statement, and I have made it with absolutely no intention in my mind of giving a test (laughter). Then I have looked over a paper, or something that has come in, and I have decided that now it is about time that there was an unannounced test; and I have forgotten that I have made that statement, and I have given the test; and I have had people think that I have told a deliberate mistruth in this connection.

Well now, there are many cases which people are going to have a misunderstanding about; and the question is, just how often is it necessary that we take our time trying to clear up all such matters? Or whether it isn't right that we decide before the Lord how to keep just as close as we possibly can to the standard of truth, but to act in such a way that we will accomplish something through Him. We have the problem to decide. Now Abraham, in this situation, had a circumstance which it was people's right to know. This woman was his wife, and there was a situation there of relationship between them which was wrong to conceal. It probably is wrong for any one at any time to conceal the fact of marriage. A secret marriage is probably just as bad as what Abraham did. It is something that people have a right to know. And under those circumstances, Abraham should either keep out of Egypt or trust the Lord to protect him in Egypt.

But if Abraham had sometime, up in the land of Mesopotamia, told the people there that he didn't like Egyptians, it wasn't his duty when he got to Egypt to tell anybody, "Now, I don't like you." He would have a perfect right to take as pleasant an attitude

towards them as he could; and when statements were made about Egypt, if he detested the flies there and if he hated the terrific heat there, it would be much wiser for him to talk about the beautiful sunset and about the attractive things and just keep quiet about the other matters. (laughter)

(Student: "But if he is protecting someone else...") You say, if he had just been protecting someone else; it may be his duty to protect someone else. Now as to whether that duty would ever involve making a statement which is contrary to fact, I wouldn't want to say. I certainly am not ready to say that; it is a matter that the individual will have to decide. But I believe such a serious situation as that is no warrant for telling somebody that you like their hat just because you are afraid you will offend them if you don't, when actually you think that it is the most terrible thing you ever saw. (laughter) That is a statement which is contrary to truth.

Well now we could spend a month on this, but I think that we have touched upon the main principles; and I think that if any of you will meditate upon these principles, and think them through a good bit, and examine the Scripture on them, I think you will find them helpful. As far as my understanding of them is concerned, it is a result of thought over a good many years. Now possibly if you will think over these for a few years you will find ways in which you can improve my understanding of them; and I will be very grateful to have them from you, but I don't think we have the time now to take a month or so on it, as much as I would like to do it. But we have touched upon all that I think of what are the basic principles involved in them. Well, then shall we go on then to the next commandment,

**10. Thou shalt not covet...** thy neighbor's house, thy neighbor's wife or his manservant or his maidservant. Now this is certainly a far more difficult command than the command about lying, about giving false witness. Take the "false witness" not that way, but take it as lying, take it as saying anything contrary to truth in any way, shape, or form, to give anybody any possible misunderstanding, and it still is easier to manage than this 10th commandment.

Thou shalt not covet, literally, thou shalt not desire. Are you completely satisfied with what you have? Will you ever wish that you had the amount of stature that somebody else has, or the amount of strength he has, or the amount of brains he has, or the amount of money he has, or something else that is his?

That is, if you take this commandment to the extreme, it is something that is absolutely impossible for a human being to live up to. Of course, the monks try to live up to this. They go out into the wilderness and say, "I don't want anything. I want absolutely nothing. I want to just live here with as little as possible of everything. One meal every two days, and then a couple of crusts of bread and no butter of any kind." (laughter) "No human companionship, just abstaining from anything, I don't want any sort of desire."

Well, that is not the idea of what the Scripture presents. God wants us to desire. "Covet earnestly the best things," the Scripture says; and the Lord wants us to desire better things in every way. He wants us to be advancing and seeking improvement. It

is the mainspring of all activity, and he wants us to have it; but he wants our desires to be placed on that which is to the advancement of his kingdom and his purpose.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven." If you seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, then you will be able to live without ever wishing you had anything to eat or anything like that. He didn't say that. He said, "and then all these things shall be added unto you." He said, "God has made the sparrows and not a sparrow can fall to the ground without His knowledge." He knows what you need. He knows that which is necessary for your life and for your happiness, for your continuance in this life. He knows that, and He can take care of that if you will prefer his honor, his glory, his purpose, his desires.

And there are too many people who are so moved by the desire to have it just as good as the next person in regard to the physical things of this life that, even though they may be sincere in their heart, desiring to serve the Lord, they will let all sorts of things matter, and at all sorts of points. Besides, the matter of what it means to them decides what decisions they are going to make. There is many a man in a church doing a good work, who sees the hand of God leading him to go to another church just as soon as he hears that the salary there is quite a bit bigger than the salary in the church where he is.

Well, now, that doesn't mean that he wants you to go to the extreme that I have known some to do; people who say, "Well now, I must take the church and the situation that has the least of this world's goods." That is a monastic idea; and I don't think that is the idea of the Scripture. The idea of the Scripture is to decide which is the greatest opportunity for service to God. Which is the situation in which you can most effectively serve Him? And salary enters into that. It is not something that is left out, but it is one of the lesser considerations; and sincerely decide on the basis entirely of where you can more truly and effectively serve the Lord; and when you decide that, the Lord will provide for you just as many of the things of this world as He desires you to have. And so this commandment is a difficult one, because it strikes not at our external acts but at our internal motives. As a matter of fact, that is true to a large extent of all the commandments. The thing that is vital in them is our internal motive. It is our true desire; it is what we are really trying for; whether we are really trying to work for the glory of God, or whether we are really trying to get that which feeds either our personal lust for the flesh, our personal comfort, our personal enjoyment of the physical things of this life, or our personal pride.

And some of the men who are freest from seeking personal pleasure in this life as an end in itself; and some of those who are freest from the sins of the flesh as we describe them; are finding that they fall at this point of human pride, which is after all, one of the worst of all, the seeking of your own prestige and of your own reputation. God can take care of that too.

I remember hearing Dr. R. A. Torrey, the great evangelist, at the end of his life, tell this story. He said that one time a man said to him, a man much younger than I am and engaged in mission work, I believe at the time. "Torrey," he said, "do you realize that you and I are the two men who will be most used of the Lord in America today?"

And he said that he turned to the man and said, "Don't you ever say such a thing and don't even think it." He says that "If you get the idea that you are so important to God's service; it is your praying; your standing is so great that you are justified in making a statement like that," he says, "the Lord can lay you on the shelf so quick you won't know what happened." And he said that, within a year, that man absolutely disappeared from any public ministry. He doesn't give the details. I don't know what happened, or what the situation was; but in a year, he had completely disappeared from interest in Christian work; and he said that, when he told the story, we wouldn't even know the name of the man if he were to mention it; because although the man had been very prominent, he had just completely disappeared from sight as a result of his giving over to this desire of personal pride, personal prestige and personal honor.

Now the Lord won't allow you to do that. The Lord may use a person regularly, and to a very very great extent, but you may be sure that it enters into God's judgment of the person. He may not seemingly give him any rebuke in this life, but you may be sure that there will be some. And the commandment here is very very similar to the great commandment that Christ made: it is to put Christ first; and it doesn't mean you notice something and you say, "My, wouldn't it be nice if I had that?" It doesn't mean that. It means that your interest is so fixed upon God's will, and upon God's purposes in fulfilling His great desires in this wicked age, that it is comparatively indifferent whether you have these good things of life.

And it doesn't mean that you necessarily will be without them. God may choose that you should live a life in which you have very little of these. He may choose that you should glorify Him by the happy way in which you submit to all sorts of privations and troubles in life. And on the other hand, He may choose that you have as much or more of these than the next fellow. We don't know His will. But His desire that these not be the primary things in our lives. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you." And they certainly will, but whether it will be in this life, or whether it will be in the next, we do not know.

## **B. The Purpose of the Law Negatively.**

Well, now I was hoping to make big progress on this today, but I see that we have only one minute and so we will say the purpose of the law negatively,

### **1. It does not supplant the Abrahamic covenant.**

And we find that in Exodus 19. The chapter begins when Moses said, verse 3

And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.

He says nothing here about any of the five points that we will mention as negatively not being the purpose of the law. And so this passage is introductory to all these points, because he implied He is going to give them the law, and He does not say that it is in any sense to supplant the Abrahamic covenant. There's no suggestion anywhere in the Scriptures that the Israelites were given a choice, "Do you want to continue under the wonderful covenant of promise to Abraham? Or do you want to exchange this promise for something else? Do you want to adopt a different relation to God? Would you be willing to enter into this different attitude, or do you prefer to stay by the other?"

Nothing of the kind is ever suggested. He says you have seen what I've done. Now if you will indeed obey me and keep my covenants, then you will be a peculiar people for me and a kingdom of priests; here is what I want you to do.

That is brought out very clearly by the Apostle Paul in various places. One example is Galatians 3:6-18 where he says,

Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

Verse 16:

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made .... And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

God gave it to Abraham by promise; the promise given to Abraham is still a promise to us today. It is a promise to all of Abraham's seed; and Paul says that they which are of faith are the children of Abraham in all periods; and he says that the law four hundred and thirty years after the time of Abraham could not disannul the promise of God. That doesn't mean, of course, that the law tries to disannul the promise of God; God never attempted to do such a thing; but people sometimes misunderstand the purpose of the law, and think it in some way disannulled the promises of God.

## **2. It does not precede God's grace to Israel.**

That was made very clear in the introduction to it in chap 19 where he says to them

Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

You have seen my wonderful grace to you, and now here is law; and we find in the beginning of Chap 20, it is at the very beginning of the ten commandments, where it said,

I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Now if you will obey my law, then I will give you wonderful grace and bring you out of Egypt. No, they are already brought out. God has shown His grace, He has given His redemption, He has performed His mighty works for them; before He gives them the law, and in beginning to give the law, at least He states clearly that it is based upon His relation to them. It is not a means of entering in relation with Him.

### **3. It was not conditioned on Israel entering the promised land.**

He nowhere here says, "If you will keep my law, then you will be permitted to enter the Promised Land." No such thing is ever stated. God brought them out of Egypt in order to bring them into the Promised Land. It was His will and His purpose to bring them into the Promised Land. He nowhere says if they would obey Him they would come into the Promised Land.

In fact Jeremiah says that quite the opposite is true; and in Jer. 7:23:

Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward. Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them: Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear,

In other words Jeremiah is saying, "If keeping the law is the condition of entering the Promised Land, your fathers would never have entered the Promised Land." It was not the condition of entering the Promised Land.

### **4. It was not conditioned on Israel continuing to be God's People.**

He doesn't say, "If you won't keep my law, I will cast you off." He doesn't say, "If you keep my law, why then you will continue to be the ones whom I will bless." He tells them in various places that when they have sinned, then He has sent them into captivity; then if they will repent, and turn back to Him, and confess their sins, and ask for mercy, He will deliver them and will bring them back to the Promised Land. Deliverance is upon repentance and prayer for mercy, it is predicted that they will fall and that they will fail was expected of them. The law is not given at that which will determine whether they will continue to be God's people.

### **5. The Law is not represented as the means of securing salvation.**

It is nowhere stated in the OT that if you will keep the law you will then be saved. There isn't anywhere in the NT stated that anyone ever had the opportunity of being saved through keeping the law. We are lost in Adam's sin. We are all afflicted with a sinful nature as a result of Adam's sin, which makes it impossible for anyone to keep

the law, and God knows that very thoroughly; and He redeems us by bringing us the knowledge of salvation; whereby He gives us justification; whereby He gives us freedom from the guilt of the law by His own act of unmerited favor; and then by this He proceeds to cleanse us; and to sanctify us as a gradual process, until that wonderful time when we shall be like Him, when we shall see Him as He is.

And nowhere in the Old or New Testament is it represented that there was ever any other means of securing salvation. Nor is there the slightest suggestion in the Old or New Testament that anyone ever did secure salvation by any other means, except through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. A greater part of the space which is given to the law, then, in the OT is taken up with the ceremonial law; and specifically, with the sacrifices, which prefigured in advance what Jesus Christ would do on Calvary's cross; they showed the people that the only possibility of salvation was through faith in the unmerited grace of God, represented by the sacrifices which they would perform, signifying in advance the means which God would provide of saving them from their sins.

See the note on page 93 of the [Old, 1917] *Scofield Bible*:

It is exceedingly important to observe: (1) that Jehovah reminded the people that hitherto they had been the objects of His free grace; (2) that the law is not proposed as a means of life, but as a means by which Israel might become "a peculiar treasure" and a "kingdom of priests"; (3) that the law was not *imposed* until it had been *proposed* and voluntarily accepted. The *principle* is stated in Gal. 5. 1-4.<sup>3</sup>

This is a very excellent statement of the fact that the people were saved, they were redeemed, they were brought out of Egypt, *before* God gave them His law; and then He gave them the law, not as a means of salvation, but as that which, if they should follow, they would be a peculiar treasure and a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

The man who wrote the footnotes in Exodus did a very excellent job in the *Scofield Bible*, in writing that note, and there are very excellent notes at many many points in the *Scofield Bible* which give all of the Christian doctrines in the understanding of Scripture. Occasionally we find them most written by a particular contributor who did not have nearly as good an insight, and over in Genesis 12 somewhere there is another note which contradicts this point in Ex. 19.

Note 1 on Genesis 12:1 The Fourth Dispensation: Promise. For Abraham, and his descendants it is evident that the Abrahamic Covenant (See *Scofield* "Genesis 15:18") made a great change. They became distinctively the heirs of promise. That covenant is wholly gracious and unconditional. The descendants of Abraham had but to abide in their own land to inherit every blessing. In Egypt they lost their blessings, but not their covenant. The Dispensation of Promise ended when Israel *rashly accepted the law* ...

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<sup>3</sup> *The Scofield Reference Bible* (1917 Edition), note 3 on Ex. 19:3, p. 93

Whoever was the writer of the notes in Genesis there probably didn't realize he was contradicting the writer of the notes in Exodus, but he says that Israel rashly accepted the law, in that note, sharply contradicting the note in Exodus. Israel was rash in doing what God wanted them to do? As if God gave them any choice in the matter whatever. God said, "You have seen what wonderful things I have done for you, my redemption, my deliverance in Egypt; now here is what I want you to do for me," giving them His law. Now how was it rash for them to say, "all that you say we will do?" How was that rash? In fact, if they had done the opposite, it would have been ungrateful; it would have been a sign of utter disrespect for Israel to have been any way disposed to refuse the law here. God was giving it to those to whom He had redeemed; whom He had brought forth out of Egypt; giving a statement of the law which He wished them to observe for His great goodness to them in giving them the clear presentation of the type of life which He desired them to live. It is never represented in the Old or the New Testament as a means of securing salvation.

### **C. The Purpose of the Law Positively.**

What then was the purpose of the law?

#### **1. It gave a comprehensive and detailed statement for the guidance of a nation as God's own people.**

He says (Exodus 19:4,5)

Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people ... And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.

In other words He is giving a comprehensive and detailed statement for the guidance of a nation of God's own people. God dealing with one man Abraham, might tell Abraham specific matters for particular occasions; what he wants him to do; and He will rebuke Abraham for his disobedience to those great moral principles which are clearly written in the constitution of the universe; over those matters that he had already revealed to Abraham. We did not yet have the written Word. But now God was dealing with whole nation; and it was His desire that every individual in the nation should not have to work out, from the few moral principles of the universe, the details and exact application and every point of guidance as to the way in which God's people should live.

It shows the path of sanctification and blessing. It was never meant as a means of salvation; or what we must do if we are to be saved; or what we must do if we are to continue to be God's people. The Roman Catholic idea is utterly false—watch your step, and go to confession, and get the proper indulgences, and in every way make up for whatever sins you commit and must have; in order to be sure to get away from the sins you've committed. And afterwards you may be sure that will you go to purgatory instead of to heaven; that you may have only a few thousand years, or many thousands of years, in purgatory. There is nothing about it in Scripture.

The Scriptural teaching is that those whom God has redeemed are His own. That those whom He has saved from sin are saved. That the obedience of Christ is laid to their account; that His death on Calvary is in their stead; and they are saved; that their sanctification is a gradual process; and that the light of blessing that God wishes them to live can only be lived if they are listening for his voice and seeking to follow His will.

And so He gives a full statement of His law in order to show the path of sanctification, the path of blessing which He wishes His people to follow.

## **2. The law is a schoolmaster to show us the path of sanctification and blessing.**

But that is not the meaning of that particular passage, we will mention it in a different sense, but we will come to that later. There were other uses of the law, these are the first two.

## **3. It represented in typical and symbolical form great truths of God's nature and of God's plan.**

The erection of the tabernacle, for one thing, had a typical and symbolic form. It took great truths and made them evident to all. It represented in typical and symbolic form great truths of God's nature and of God's plan so as to impress them upon the minds and hearts of His people. The tabernacle was a good example of that. Here in the tabernacle we have a lot of details of it.

God does not give the details today as to how He wishes our churches to be built. Some use one form; some use another form; and there are all sorts of forms. In these days we have the gospel; we have the full story of Christ. We can read it; we can study it, in full detail; and then work out our own method of presenting it to the minds and hearts of the people in order to make it living to them. And sometimes it is best to have a church that is empty and cold and very unattractive, in order that there will be nothing to distract from the Word of God, and paying attention to God Himself. And others make their church such that there are all sorts of pictures and decorations and elaborate things, that are supposed to take the things of the Scripture and drive them home to people's minds and impress them upon them.

And for one type of person, one sort of church is much more effective; for another, the other type is better. And God leaves us free to work out the type of building that will be useful for our own purpose, depending on the type of people with whom we are going to have to deal.

But in dealing with the Israelites He gave in His law precise commands and reasons for every detail of the Tabernacle; and the reason for this was that they did not yet have the whole story, of the life of Christ, and of His death, and the full detail of God's wonderful way of salvation. And so He provided in the tabernacle a visible picture of it, in order that from that picture there would be impressed upon their minds and hearts many of the great truths of God's way of salvation. So you have the various

parts of the tabernacle which represent in a wonderful way, various aspects of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ; and of His wonderful work for us; and of His way of salvation through justification, right into the very Holy of Holies, where we come into the presence of Him. The tabernacle is one outstanding work, but there are many features of the law.

#### **4. It gave a picture of the ceremonial aspects of the law.**

It provided a step forward in God's revelation to the individual by widening his knowledge of the righteousness of God. By widening his knowledge of the righteousness God requires.

Of course, we need to know a few simple principles; and then, when we come to know more about God, then it is vital that we learn more of the details of His will; and as we proceed in grace and the knowledge of God, we are naturally expected to advance in sanctification; and that which might have been excusable error on our part before, becomes absolutely inexcusable because we are to move forward in our understanding of His righteousness and of what He requires.

#### **5. It gave men a measuring stick.**

Now this is nowhere mentioned in the giving of the law, but it is something which can be observed about it, and which the New Testament gives out clearly. It gave a measuring stick to show man his failure, and unworthiness, and necessity of a Savior. It was not a means of salvation. It was not presented as salvation. It is never suggested anywhere in the Old or the New Testament, that a person, if they would keep the law, will be saved. It is given for an entirely different purpose, and this particular purpose of the law is not mentioned in the OT. It comes out, of course, in its actual application; because you have the whole, tremendously involved system of sacrifices, which is to impress upon the person's mind that they need a Savior; they need redemption; they need the grace of God.

In the NT (Gal. 3:24) the Greek word *paidagogos*, of which an English transliteration is "pedagogue", was used of a slave who took a child of a well-to-do family in Rome, and conducted him to a schoolhouse where he would learn something. Our English translation, "schoolmaster" is not a good translation at all for that word; though the word pedagogue has come to mean a schoolmaster, and not one who guides or leads one, who brings the boy to the school. And Paul says the law is like the one who brings the boy to school. That is to say, it shows him his meaning; it brings him to the point where he is ready to get the answer to his reason for existing. It is something which shows or teaches him the way of sanctification and blessing. This picture of the righteousness God provides, of necessity—inevitably, becomes a measuring stick even though that is not stated in the statement on the surface. But it is given, and as we look back, we can see it; and Paul looked back, and saw what it was, and how people were misunderstanding it in his day; and then, that they should not have misunderstood it; that as far as salvation was concerned, the only function of the law would be that it would be a measuring stick to show a man his failures, and his unworthiness, and his need of a Savior; and that when he would see how far short

he fell of God's law, he would realize his need of sacrifice; his need of redemption; his need of the grace of God; and so the law becomes a *paidagogos*, to bring us, to lead us to Christ. It becomes something that points us in the direction of the grace of God but redemption is not its primary purpose, and that is never mentioned in the OT as its purpose.

The OT gives its purpose as to show us the path of sanctification and blessing, and to show us the line along which we are to proceed if we are those who are to be a peculiar people, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Well now.

There is a great deal of confusion which can easily come into the understanding of NT teaching on this point, because of the fact that the word "law" in the OT, is used in many different ways. Paul says that there is within me a law that leads me to witness and he means by that that there is a "force." The word "law" is used in a number of different senses. He said in I Timothy 1:9, there are some,

desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;

He says the law is good if a man keep it lawfully. He doesn't mean there, if an unrighteous man, a murderer, uses it lawfully; he means that if anyone uses it lawfully. The law is good if it is used properly, if used rightly; but the law as far as any means of salvation is concerned, is not a means of salvation. A righteous man does not look for the law for salvation; a righteous man is righteous because God has redeemed him. The righteous man looks at its picture of the sacrifice; and then, he looks to the law not for salvation, but he uses it lawfully as showing him the path of sanctification and of blessing. The unrighteous man heeds the law, and sees himself pictured in a mirror there; and sees thereby that he does not attain salvation; and so Paul says the law does not bring salvation to anybody. The law is good, if a man use it lawfully. It doesn't mean the law is the means by which the godless, the disobedient, the murderers and so on, obtain salvation; because certainly, a man that had murdered his mother, and began immediately to keep the law perfectly the rest of his life, nobody would ever suggest that his keeping the law would erase the responsibility for murdering his mother.

Paul's language here is just a bit rhetorical; and he doesn't try to give the whole scope of his meaning here, but I think in line with his teaching elsewhere, it is easy to see how it fits in.

In verse 8 it says that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully. What does he mean? Use it lawfully? Does he mean: Well, then it must be that the law is a good thing for the righteous man because he uses it lawfully? But the only possible interpretation of verse 9 is that the law, if it be used in an incorrect way, has no significance to the

righteous man; but that it might be a help to the unrighteous man. They are not to steal, murder, commit adultery, or have other gods before Him, or to break any of the commandments. Society is certainly better if unrighteous men do not do these things.

## **6. Dispensationally, the Law marked a step forward over the previous stages.**

But it was itself later superseded by another forward step.

**a. The law is a blessing not a curse.** A person can be under the curse of the law. Now I will give you two or three references under this head. This is something that is perfectly clear to everyone who stops to think about it; and it is something that is not realized, and is often forgotten in discussion. The law is a blessing not a curse.

Deut. 4:7,8:

For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?

... and which you have been so rash as to accept. That would be absurd wouldn't it? He said, "Isn't it wonderful the law that God has given us? No other nation has been so blessed to be given such a law as this. It is a blessing and not a curse. It is something that God gives as a sign of God's wonderful love to them."

Psalm 147:19-20:

He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord.

Praise the Lord for His wonderful goodness in giving us the law, which we were so rash as to accept.

**b. The law is a sign of God's love.** Now Romans 9:3-5: He is telling of God's wonderful goodness to Israel:

For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

**c. It is not merely external but spiritual in its intention.** There are many passages that we might look in this connection, but we call your attention just to one passage, Rom. 2:28,29:

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

There are the people who take the attitude, there were the Jews and God gave them a means of salvation, an earthly means by keeping the law; and here are the Christians, contrasted with the Jew. The Christians are the higher spiritual people and the Jews are the earthly physical people. The Jews have to keep the law to be saved, the Christian is saved through grace.

Now there is no such teaching in the Scripture anywhere of that; but Paul says he is not a Jew which is one outwardly. Here are people who come to the temple very solemnly, wearing certain kind of clothes; but for all that they are not necessarily Jews. That doesn't make a man a Jew, he says; he is not a Jew which is one outwardly. So the law, then, was not merely external, but was spiritual in its intention, as brought out in many many passages in the NT.

Circumcision is one of the outstanding features of the law and when the Christian church was no longer under the OT law, one of the evidences of it was that they ceased to require circumcision as you correctly pointed out [assignment?]. Circumcision did not begin at Sinai, it was given to Abraham before; but circumcision came to be considered as particularly a sign; and it was Paul's great fight that the Gentiles do not need to practice circumcision; so it is a sign of the law, a representation of the law, even though, it, like all other features of the law, really flow out of the covenant of God with and His blessings to him.

It is the spirit of the law which matters and not the letter. Now you can not ordinarily have the spirit without the letter. You may have the spirit without having correctly observed every detail of it; but you can have a great deal of the letter without having the spirit; and the letter is absolutely worthless without the spirit. Like some people say, "Oh, I wouldn't tell a lie for anything in the world." They observe the letter of being truthful in their statements, and yet they will make fun of someone whom they think is perfectly silly and ridiculous.

I know Mr. Chapman, when they left this person who had been in a tour they had been on, they said, "You have made an impression me that I will never forget." And now, the statement as it sounded to them, sounded as if they were praising him; when actually the other people were snickering behind their backs. It was a lie, though verbally it was the truth. But as far as the letter is concerned, it was true; but as far as the spirit was concerned, it was another lie because it was calculated to give an impression the exact opposite of what was really meant. The letter doesn't matter if the spirit matters.

You can rarely have the spirit in anything without having at least a part of the letter; and if you truly have the spirit, then you are pretty apt to have all the letter in most cases; but you can get a great deal of the letter without having the spirit itself; and that, of course, is never favored by God at any time or any place. To say that the letter is what matters and not the spirit!

Now the Mohammedans take the letter and not the spirit. They consider that it is commanded that they must fast for the Ramadan. For a whole month they don't eat. There is not a single day of that month on which they touch food, nor water. They don't touch food or water on any *day* of the month of Ramadan. But as soon as the day is over—and you hear the call announcing that the day is over—if you are in Moslem Jerusalem, you will hear the cry, "Praise the Lord, the day is over! Now we can eat!" (laughter) So they proceed to feast during the night; and then the next day, they fast again all day; and thus they fill the letter.

And in Roman Catholicism and in Judaism there are all sorts of things exactly like that; which are observing the letter and ignoring the spirit; and they are absolutely worthless. So in that regard we can say, "The letter kills," that is if you are trying to carry out specific details of the letter without any interest in spirit, any interest in purpose, the letter kills. But if you are going to observe the spirit of almost any law, you will find that if you fully observe it, you will as a rule carry out the letter.

It is not merely external, but spiritual in its intention. In fact, it is primarily spiritual. Paul says, he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, he is a Jew who is one inwardly. Circumcision is that in the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter

**d. it is a forward step in training.** The law is a forward step in training. It is a step forward in showing us how we can live as God wants us to live. What are the details of the working out of His righteousness in our hearts and in our lives? It is a step forward in training. He gives the simple commands to Abraham; there is the comparatively simple method of leading; and then we now have the nation involved, and we have the more detailed law given, in order that people can study the details of God's law, and can work out a better understanding of the sort of lives that God wants us to live. It is a forward step in training.

**e. It is a forward step in testing.** Now this, of course, gets nearer to the aspect of it which Paul describes as a schoolmaster. God has used through the ages various means of testing humanity, and of showing the failure of humanity; the inability of humanity; the wickedness of humanity; the fact that humanity deserves the punishment which he is going to give the unredeemed. And so God at various periods used various methods of testing humanity, and of making evident and clear his righteousness in dealing with humanity, as he does here. It is a forward step in testing.

He tested Abraham by a very simple personal relationship with him; and the Israelites He tested by giving them the law in full detail, and they failed. He tests people in our age in giving them just the simple means of coming and accepting that which we can understand more fully since it has already happened; and our age has failed

miserably. And in the millennium, He will give us a situation in which everything external will be such as is calculated to promote righteousness and peace. People today say, "Oh I can't help it; my companions make me do it. I am not responsible; it is just the situation that I have been in." So what? That is no excuse before God; and He is going to make that abundantly clear in the millennium, when men will have all the external circumstances to be such as conduce to goodness rather than wickedness, and promote an external attitude of righteousness on everyone's part; and yet with Satan released for a little season, you will find that there is a great multitude which is ready to fall. Even under that dispensation, as under the earlier dispensations, that mankind has failed and has failed miserably.

(Student: "What do you mean by dispensation?") This is not a word which occurs much in the Scripture—it does not occur in the OT at all. But it is a word that has been used in certain Christian circles. Some have written and spoken in such a way as to lead others to think they mean something different; but no true Christian has ever held that God at any time has ever made it possible that any individual would ever be saved in any other way than through Christ; it is clearly taught in the Scripture that there is no other name given under heaven whereby a man has ever been saved, or ever can be saved, or ever will be saved, except through the Lord Jesus Christ. There is the unity of the covenant all through the ages. And a dispensation is not a period when there is a different method of salvation; and just about any writer on the subject who is a Christian will make that clear.

Some, I think it is right to say—no one is fully consistent, and some of us will say a thing, and then write as if we didn't believe it in other portions of our writing—but that much is clear in the Scripture: that Christ, the light of the world, the Son of God, is the one who takes the sins of the world away; and He is the only one; and no one was ever saved, and ever will be saved, from Adam down to the very end of the millennium, except by belief in the Lord Jesus Christ and what He has done as the means of salvation, even though it is not always possible to know the full details of it. But as Christ said, "Abraham saw my day, and was glad." And without fully understanding what it was, the Israelites brought a lamb; yet as the writer of the Hebrews says, "the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin." They did not get rid of sin by the blood of bulls and goats; but it symbolized that in which they had faith, in the provision God was going to make that they didn't fully understand; but that they knew they were symbols; and so we have the unity of the covenant. We have the unity of the covenant; and we have salvation through one person and through one means at all times; but there are different periods in which God uses various means of testing humanity, and of making evident man's state and man's sin; and these different periods have very generally been called dispensations. Now, how many different dispensations are there?

Now the number 7 is a beautiful number—a number which is much stressed in certain portions of the Scripture—and therefore there are many who feel that if there are going to be dispensations there ought to be 7 dispensations; and I remember hearing a lecture in which a young man stood up, and described the seven dispensations; and he gave a discussion of them, and it was very interesting; and he found it very logical. And then I heard another equally noted Bible teacher give another lecture the next

month on the 7 dispensations; and the arrangement was different from that which the first one had made; and when it comes to dividing up into seven dispensations, you will find that there are points which you have to arbitrarily twist in order to get seven dispensations.

God nowhere says that everything is going to be arranged exactly in sevens. It may be that there are only seven dispensations; but He has not given us a clear evidence of such a thing, that there are seven specific and distinct dispensations. He has given evidence that there are distinct dispensations; at certain points the division is absolutely clear. There is no question that there is a separation, that there is a distinction between the dispensation that preceded the death of Christ and that which follows. There is no question that there is a distinction between the present dispensation and the dispensation which will come in with the return of Christ. We have there at least three definite and distinct dispensations. Now before the giving of the law, just where you are going to draw the line is sometimes rather difficult to say; the lines are not strictly clear; and the Lord does nowhere say that there are just so many dispensations; and that they are arranged just exactly this way. He has nowhere said that.

And there are some that hold that all human beings, regardless of viewpoint or approach, have a tendency to try to get everything into systematized arrangements; and where things don't fit they force things into the arrangement.

I don't know of any school of thought that doesn't tend to do that in certain places; but I think that that which is most honoring to the Lord is for us to see what is clear in the Scripture and stand upon it; and where things aren't clear not to try to push them into a groove; but to say at this point, "I don't know, the Scripture doesn't make it clear."

Now yesterday we noticed that the different periods when different methods of application are used, are spoken of as dispensations. If you will take the *Scofield Bible* and read the Introduction to it, you will find in there a discussion of what is meant by dispensation:

"A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God."

Scofield Reference Bible (1917 Ed.) Note 4 on Gen. 1:27

It is pointed out there, that what is meant in that book by dispensations, is periods in which people are tested in different ways. But as to the method of salvation, it is common throughout all periods. There is one covenant; there is one method of salvation; no one was ever saved in any way except through the Lord Jesus Christ; and there never will be in any other way; for there is one name under heaven through which man may be saved and that is the name of Lord Jesus Christ. That is the unity of the covenant through all periods.

Some have so stressed the unity of the covenant that they have overlooked the differences of dispensation. As the result of that, there has been confusion and

misunderstanding at various points. Others have reacted against that, and have so stressed the differences at different periods that they have failed to put proper stress on the unity of the covenant; and thereby have been led to make many statements which are self-contradictory, contrary to one another and often—if carried out logically—extremely harmful.

And so on this, as on so many other points, it is very dangerous and harmful to go to an extreme one way or the other. One must find the correct situation in regard to it, and it may not be an exact point; but there may be an area within which you somewhere locate the exact situation. There is diversity in the Scripture. There are differences in dispensation. On the other hand, there is unity in the Scripture. There is one method of salvation. The Scripture is all given for all of God's people at all times. Some parts of it have special relevance to the people at one particular time. The detailed commandments about how to perform the sacrifices were of great importance, in order that the priests could perform every detail exactly right; and it was very vital that they performed every detail exactly right, because otherwise they might miss some point that carried a lesson, a prefiguration of how those who believed in Christ would be saved through what He would do.

Now that we know the full story of what Christ did, and we have the full meaning clearly, and do not need these particular types and ceremonies, it is not nearly so important for us to be familiar with every detail of the sacrificial rules of the Book of Leviticus; but they still have great value for us with their picture of the sacrifice of Christ and with the things that they stress about it.

So every part of God's word is of importance, of value, to all the people throughout all ages; else God would not have included it in His word. Some parts of it are of tremendous importance in one period, or in one particular situation; and some in another situation; and some which may at one time have been a tremendous importance to God's people, may at present be not of such great immediate relevance, but may become that in the future.

## **7. Erroneous Interpretations of Dispensation.**

Now thus far in what I have said, I have touched upon two distinct aspects of this matter of dispensation, because there are two lines along which these errors may be made; although in both of them, equally serious errors may be made if the proper point is not noticed, and one goes to the opposite extreme.

These two points are:

**a. Imagining that God has or ever suggested more than one method of salvation for His sinful people.** After the fall of Adam there is only one way of salvation; and that way was when it was declared that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head; and that one way is the way by which Adam was saved, if he was saved, and we believe that he was. It was the way by which Abraham was saved; and the way by which everyone of God's people who have ever been saved through all the

ages, and from now on to the very end of the millennium. And the other point in this connection is that of

**b. Dividing up the Scripture into divisions in such a way as to think that certain parts of it have no relevance for God's people at particular times.** There is a group that has a lot of churches in Chicago—North Congregational Church—and which has quite active meetings in different parts of the country; they follow an Englishman named [Ethelbert William] Bullinger, an Englishman who was a very acute student; and he worked out some very excellent things. He made some very fine distinctions of the Scripture at points where perhaps Scripture is unclear; and some of the erroneous parts of Bullinger's teaching have been stressed by this particular group, which is often spoken of as Bullingerites. They hold meetings in different parts of the country and have quite a few outreaches here and there; and they cling to a good many points that the true gospel teaches. There is much that is good in what is presented, but they make their central emphasis on something that is definitely unbiblical. They divide the NT up into five or six different dispensations; and they have—when they get through with it—they have three or four dispensations between the time of Christ and the present; and certain books of the OT are of no value for us; and if we quote a prayer from the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, they will say that is one of the different dispensations that has no relevance to the Christian. Our Lord Jesus Christ said to one of his disciples, "When you pray, here is the way you are to pray."

But reaction to that must not lead us to go to the opposite extreme, and put all the Scripture on a dead level in such a way as to confuse it. I have known people to whom the very word "dispensation" has been an error; they have considered that if anyone used this word dispensation, or was in any sense a dispensationalist, that such a person was *per se* very wrong; and many people who have taken such an attitude, and who have been very great admirers of Charles Hodge, have evidently never read his works; because he insists on at least four dispensations.

The Scripture clearly commands us not to forsake the assembling together with others of God's children; and true Christians will seek out a place which is not merely a church building, but is a place where God's people gather and worship. And when any group thinks they are too good to go to church....

Charles Hodge says that there are four dispensations, and we all must agree that there are four dispensations. Now whether there are four or more is a matter on which people may differ. Hodge is very definitely wrong when he makes this age of grace the last dispensation. You can only do so by twisting a number of different passages in such a way so that, if you carried it through logically, you would twist others in the same way; and you would be rid of the bodily resurrection of Christ, and salvation through Him. But I don't think that Hodge on that particular point of Eschatology ever devoted a great deal of time and study to that particular matter; with such a tremendous amount of work and with such excellent work, both he and Warfield neglected that aspect; they simply laid it aside and touched upon it comparatively slightly. But when he speaks of this as the last dispensation, he is definitely wrong; but he speaks of the fact that before the coming of Christ was a

distinctive dispensation, he is simply giving a generalization which is necessary if one is to understand anything at all.

There are differences of dispensation, there are at least four dispensations, but that the number seven is applicable here it is extremely questionable. In order to get seven you have to twist things around a bit and I question very seriously if we have the information to do that. But the important thing is not how many dispensations there are; the important thing is when are they? And they are not periods in which something is given of God which is of no relevance to other periods; because everything that He gives, that He caused to be given in His Word, is important for all periods; and they are not periods in which man was offered salvation by any different method, because salvation has always been, and always will be, by simple faith in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The trouble with the word "dispensation," as it is with good many other words, is that people put it up as a banner instead of something to study; and there are some people to whom, if you are not a dispensationalist, you are anathema; and there are others to whom, if you are a dispensationalist, you are anathema; and in both cases the question as to just how to interpret the word is often very hazy. If we examine exactly what the Scripture says on this particular matter I don't think you will go wrong.

## **8. The law gives greater knowledge.**

You've seen that the law is spiritual; it is a forward step in two ways, and so all that presumes the law gives greater knowledge. This, by its very nature, may lead to either of two harmful consequences. Can a good thing lead to harmful consequences?

God gave Adam the power of deciding whether he would obey God or not; and the good thing that God gave Adam—the freedom of the will—could lead to the fall and to sin. A good thing can lead to harmful consequences. There is always that danger in any good thing; but that is no reason to avoid the good thing; there are too many of us that avoid good things because we see bad possibilities in them. We should take the good and use it for the Lord's glory. Now the law, while giving knowledge, might by its very nature lead to either of two harmful consequences.

**a. The danger of Externality.** This is what is sometimes spoken of as following the letter instead of the spirit. Externality: that is a danger which is very great in connection with any kind of law. A law is an attempt to secure a certain result; it is an attempt to lay down a principle, which will follow out into a definite result; but the difficulty is that you would have to put your principle in human words; and human words are a very weak instrument; and when people go by the letter instead of the spirit, what we mean isn't that you should abandon the letter and follow the spirit—there's no such thing; if you follow the spirit properly, you will properly follow the letter. But what it means is they take aspects of the letter which may be misunderstood; or it may be applied in such way as to leave the true spirit of meaning out of it, and thus to get something that is utterly contrary to its purpose.

A good example of externality is the case of certain men in Africa, who were zealous; they went about in bands in North Africa, and they opposed very vigorously those who differed with them; but they never used swords, because Christ said to Peter, "Put up thy sword." And so, following the words of the Lord, "Put up thy sword," they never used swords; but they used clubs. Now that of course is the sort of thing that is so easy to fall into at any point. You take something and apply its letter in such a way as to remove its spirit; or, on the other hand, to say, "Oh, it's the spirit and not the letter that matters," and to abandon or ignore the letter. This is utterly false. But you should see what the true spirit and purpose of any statement is, and to seek to carry out that purpose. That is the right thing to do in all cases and in all relationships.

And there are instances in connection with the Scripture, or in connection with any law, where we may find it necessary to abandon the word, even go against what was the apparent letter, in order to reach the true meaning, the true spirit.

Now such cases are—fortunately—comparatively rare; and when we follow such a case, we are taking upon ourselves a great responsibility of interpretation; and we may easily miss it there; and sometimes, it is safer to follow the letter just as printers do. When you send a book to be printed, the printer takes what you write; and he linotypes it; and the result is that he has this type which is made, in which he put those things which you've written on to the type; and then he takes a piece of paper, and puts it over, and takes a proof of it, and then sends it to you. And you look over the proof and see what words he's misspelled, and mark them for him to correct; and in each case of correction, he has to do the whole line over; and my observation is that you usually have to do one line in six over, because he's very careless about misspelling the words; he just doesn't bother about them; and of course, he has to do over whatever you mark wrong; and you don't have to pay for it, for it's up to him to do it the way you said. But if you decided that you didn't express yourself just right, and you ought to make a change—then for doing that line over, you have to pay and pay heavily, because that is an correction and that is very heavily charged; and there are always author's corrections, but you try to keep them to a minimum.

Now there's this about it: I've heard it remarked, and it's been my observation also, that while the printer may take what you write and misspell it in any conceivable way, and you have to go over and over to catch all the things that he did; but if you should misspell a word in what you've done, he would assume that you spelled it that way for a purpose; that was part of your intention; and do it exactly the way you did it; and then, if you tell him to change it, that is an author's correction; and therefore, of course, you have to pay for it. In other words he follows the letter very very closely.

Now you see the danger there: if he didn't follow the letter very closely, he could easily make a change at a point where you spelled something a certain way with a definite purpose; you mean it to be this way. I've given things to typists occasionally—not in recent years—but I've given things to typists, which have been returned to me with something on where they have changed the thing, because they thought it wasn't the way I meant it; and it didn't look sensible to them; and sometimes their judgment has been faulty on the matter, and the way I put it was exactly the way I did mean. Now if I had mis-expressed myself, or if I had mis-stated, I was very very thankful for

this suggestion or correction or the change; but if I exactly wrote what I meant; and if someone misunderstands what I mean and does it another way; and you may not even notice it in reading the proof, until the last minute; or you may not notice it at all; it's rather irritating, and so the safe thing is to follow the letter; but the wise thing—the proper thing to do—is to seek what the spirit is, and then to follow the letter; but to follow it in such a way as to carry out the spirit.

Now you see with any law that you make, there's a possibility under certain circumstances that the letter can be exactly followed, and can give just exactly the opposite of what the spirit or the purpose is. And it is possible to put so much stress on the details of the letter that you simply overlook the thing that is the real purpose of the statement. In other words, that is its spirit; and so there is this danger in law, by its very nature. It doesn't mean that law is bad; it's much better to have law than it is not to have it.

Without law, civilization would be in a very bad situation; but any law you make there is this danger of externality in interpretation; and it is a danger into which the Roman Catholic Church and the Jews both have fallen very, very severely. One of the outstanding errors of those two groups is the externality in application of the law.

I remember hearing about a monk in Mexico who, when he became a monk, took a vow that his hands would never touch money, as before he became a monk he had been a great gambler; and after a short time as a monk, he found the urge of gambling returned upon him; but he had taken this vow never again to let his hands touch money; and consequently he had a new gown made for himself that had very big sleeves; and he developed, with a little practice, the ability to pick up the money in his sleeves, and hold it there and he became one of the outstanding gamblers of Mexico, and well-known wherever gambling was carried on, as a very shrewd and careful and outstanding gambler; but he never broke his vows; he never picked up money with his hands; he always used his sleeves. Now, *that* is externality. So that is the danger of all law; it is inherent in the very nature of law, this danger of externality; and when people go to an extreme on this point in externality; and when they interpret law, or pay such attention to the little minute details of it, that they neglect and lose the spirit and the purpose of the law, there is a very helpful reaction; but it could very easily become unhelpful by going to the opposite extreme, and taking an attitude that the details of the words do not matter.

Now Paul never went to this extreme; Paul never took the position that the details of God's law do not matter; he never took that position; but he did become extremely excited, and rightly so, over the externality shown toward the law and over the attitude of carrying out the precise letter while ignoring the spirit; and our Lord Jesus Christ also became very excited about this matter; and the result was that each one of them used language in rebuking the externality of people's attitude toward the law which can easily be misinterpreted to show an attitude of dislike toward the law *per se* or of opposition to any attempt to say what words mean.

**b. The danger of Lack of freedom.** Another danger can easily follow from the giving of any law, but a danger which should not follow. It, too, is a danger inherent in the

nature of the law. And this second danger is the danger of lack of freedom, and an attitude of fear rather than of love.

Now it was not the purpose of the law to destroy people's freedom; and it was not the purpose of the law ever to produce a harmful fear in the heart. There is no reason why God's law should ever produce an attitude of anxiety or fear within a Christian. Of course there is a true fear. There is the fear of God, which we are commanded to have; it is all in reverence before God. There is the fear of breaking God's commandment; the fear of displeasing Him; it is something that we are all commanded to have. But perfect love casts out fear; and this doesn't mean the fear of God; it means an attitude of anxiety, or hesitation.

"Have I made a little mistake here? Have I done this just exactly right? Did I miss this thing?" And that is not what God desires; and the OT law was never intended to cause a lack of freedom, or to engender an attitude of fear. But it is in here—the nature of law—that it may do so; and it did so in many cases, the misinterpretation of the law given; and consequently, this was another point which the apostle Paul stressed at various times: that a wrong attitude toward law relates to a life of freedom and could lead to an attitude of fear which is not God's desire for his children at any time whatever.

Now you find Paul writing with the greatest praise for God's law, describing it as a blessing to Israel, speaking of the man who performs the law of God and has God's blessing as the OT constantly speaks. You will find Paul, in other places, speaking of the law in such a way as, taken by itself, might lead people to think that he thought that it was an awful curse that God had put upon the world in giving his law, and a very foolish thing for the people of Israel at Sinai to rashly accept God's law.

Any such description is based upon misinterpretation of the real meaning of Paul's words; and upon taking a particular emphasis which is vital and true, and tearing it out of proportion, and disregarding other aspects of Paul's teaching. The law then can lead to these consequences; and it did in OT times; in the present Jewish body; and in the Roman Catholic Church. But that doesn't mean that law is bad; it means that we must avoid these dangers, which are real. And it is, of course, one of the glories of the present dispensation, that it introduces means of emphasizing the freedom of the Christian from these two harmful consequences, and emphasizing the privilege of the truth, of being entirely free from these consequences; as he should be, and the Jews also should be, if they interpreted the law correctly. I guess that much then will cover this topic.

#### **D. The relation of the Law to the Christian.**

Under that we should note

##### **1. The unity of the Church.**

##### **2. Salvation is always is through Christ.**

That is, anyone who is a member of God's church, at any time from Adam on to the end of the world, is saved through Christ and through Him alone.

### 3. The believers in all ages form one organism.

Not one Federal Council or one National Council; not one unified material organization; but one organism is formed by the believers; by those whom God has saved, in all ages and in all dispensations; and that of course is very clearly brought out by the apostle Paul in Romans 11:17–24, where he speaks about an olive tree; and he's not talking about an olive tree, even though he talks about an olive tree. If anyone takes all the Bible literally, they interpret it that he was actually talking about an olive tree. Of course no one can take the Bible literally, any more than they take any other writing as entirely literal; but you must seek to see what it does mean; and the great bulk of it would be literal, but it will contain figurative expressions, as any literature or writing will. And the figurative expressions will always contribute to clarity not to obscurity.

And so here he says in verse 17

And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

Now here we have definitely something from the agricultural sphere, except for one word. He used the word "thou" and it's strictly an agricultural presentation. Here is an olive tree; and some of the branches of this olive tree have been broken off; and some other branches from a wild olive tree have been grafted in among these branches; and both sets of branches are partaking of the roots and fatness of the olive tree. They are both partaking, but one is gone and it has been replaced by another? No such thing; it doesn't say that one has been knocked off and another put on; he says *some* of the branches are broken off, and branches of a wild olive tree have been grafted in among them, and with them are partaking of the root and fatness of the olive tree; and the only thing that is to make us think it's not literal, but figurative, is that he says "Thou" and he is quite evidently not speaking to an olive branch. He's talking to some human being and we find back in verse 13:

For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

And so quite evidently, he is here talking to Gentile Christians; he is talking to those Gentiles who have believed on Christ; and he says that Thou—those Gentiles who have believed— thou art from a wild olive tree, but are now grafted in among the branches of a different olive tree; and with these branches are partaking of the roots and fatness of the olive tree with them—not after them—not succeeding them, but with them. There is a unity there, and a combination, in which the branches of the olive tree have been mostly from one race before, but now some of them are from a different origin, but have now become by a grafting, part of the same tree; that is one tree.

And he says in verse 18:

Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.

Let us turn away from the Jews and turn to the Gentiles; they're broken off and we're grafted in. But Paul says,

Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God:

We'll skip the next as not being germane to our present point

And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved:

And so the picture here is very clear, there is one olive tree and from this olive tree certain branches have been broken off and others grafted in; and after the fulness of the Gentiles comes, the other branches will be grafted in; and so all Israel will still be saved.

And so you have, as Paul presents it, one continuous organism. One continuous organism, and the unity of God's people—an organism which began with Adam, and which includes Abraham and Jacob; which includes the people of God in all ages; and included all who were saved through the Lord Jesus Christ, whether long before His coming, or long after His coming. The believers in all ages then form one organism.

#### **4. The manner of presentation may change.**

Although the same truths are vital in all ages with the one organism—we need the same truths, if we were saved in the same way; we need the same truths, if salvation is the same, if the organism is the same, if the relation to Christ is the same, we need the same truths—so although the same truths are vital in all ages the manner of presentation may change for any of three reasons. As Adam and Abraham and David were saved exactly the same, and the same truths are vital in all ages, but the manner of presentation may change for any of three reasons.

**a. Due to Change in External Circumstances.** They had a tabernacle in the wilderness; and this tabernacle was used of God as a center for his worship, and as a means of typifying to the people salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ, and that the

Lord Jesus Christ would be for the people. And then after Jerusalem was taken, a great temple was built; and God put this blessing upon the building; there was no new dispensation; there was no great change in God's economy. But there is a change in external circumstances. The people had wandered through the wilderness; the people had a life in Palestine somewhat nomadic, and subject to frequent conquests, frequent fleeings, frequent changes of the headquarters of their worship; but now they are established in one place, and the temple is more appropriate than the tabernacle was before. And so changes of external circumstances may lead to a change in the manner of presentation.

Another matter relating to change in circumstances: in an agricultural community, the people do heavy manual labor all week. There is a stress in the civil law about the Sabbath, that they are to avoid manual labor; labor of a physical type on the Sabbath day was forbidden because the Sabbath day was a day of rest. Now when a change comes in external circumstances, in such a way that a person's activity is primarily an activity of nerves and of mind, the way of honoring God's Sabbath and resting oneself is not any longer primarily a matter of rest of the physical body; it is a matter of rest of the nerves and of the mind—the same type of activity in that regard as we did throughout the week; but one does not do physical labor on that day and didn't on the other days either.

The external circumstances may change but the vital thing is the principle involved.

**b. Due to Progress in Revelation.** "Now we see through a glass darkly." Eventually, on account of further revelation from God, on account of the progress of revelation, things are now made clearer, and it is not made necessary to portray them in the same way.

The progress of Revelation of course, never means that any previous revelation of God is shown to be false. God doesn't tell us one thing and then later change it; but God gives us a certain amount of knowledge, and then he later gives us further knowledge; and in the light of the further knowledge, we may see where we may have mis-interpreted the significance of the knowledge previously given; but if we would take it exactly as He gave it, we will find that it is entirely true—everything He gave—only it was incomplete. And, of course, what we have now is incomplete. We will never know Him fully until we see Him as He is, that day when "we know even as we are known."

**c. Due to Occurrence of an event typified.** The typifying of an event in advance may be intended to present certain great principles, certain great purposes, and these great matters that God is going to accomplish. When they have occurred and are in the past, a different method of observing them ceremonially may be desired; or even this particular aspect of ceremonial law may be laid aside altogether since it is no longer necessary—we now have the whole story and the full detail.

**5. Application of these principles to the Christian.**

**a. The Moral Law.** The moral law is always binding on all people at all times. The great moral principles of God's universe can never be changed. They are always binding, and it is vital that we study God's law for the light it gives on them. Now the great body of them are repeated in the NT. There is stress on the moral law of God in the NT—on most aspects of it—and we can get further light on it, further understanding of it as we study it in the OT as well.

Well, of course, there is the civil law; and the civil law is application of the moral law. The particular circumstances may change in an individual life; they may change in the situation of a community; they may change in the situation of a country; they may change in the particular points that involve the economy. And so civil law is extremely important, but it is subject to change from time to time.

And then in ceremonial law, particularly with the progress of revelation and the occurrence of the event typified, these may cause a change in ceremonial law. There was one great change which was made, which was not explicitly commanded in the NT, but which the NT church under the leadership of the apostles carried out gradually; within a few years, it was definitely and completely carried out. That is the change from the observation of the seventh day to the observation of the first day, observing the vital principles of the Sabbath, observing its vital purpose, but binding with it the understanding of the resurrection of Christ and observing it on the first day.

Now there are two ceremonies which are specifically commanded in the NT. One of these is the substitution of the Passover by the Lord's Supper. Christ is our Passover, and in the Lord's Supper we remember exactly the same principles as those which were observed by the Jews in the Passover; but we use a different form, as being more fitted to our greater knowledge of the precise details.

The other is the substitution of circumcision by baptism. The latter brings out more definitely the relation to Christ than circumcision does, which was the central entering rite of the Jewish church—the sign and seal of the faith that Abraham had in God, the sign of God's cleansing him by virtue of the sacrifice of Christ which was to occur—and has been substituted since the time of Christ by baptism which means exactly the same thing which circumcision meant.

And so we have these as still valid; the ceremonial law is still valid, although changed. Some Christian groups don't observe baptism at all. The Quakers do not baptize, and the Salvation Army, I believe, does not baptize; and I think that these groups are in error on this point. I think that the ceremonial law is binding on us; but now that we know the full teaching on these things, the most vital thing is to have the truth that these symbols signify. If they do have, I believe the Lord will overlook, far more readily, their error on the symbol than He will the error of someone else, who misinterprets the meaning of the symbol even though he observes it.

**b. The Civil Law.** The children of Israel found a man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath day. That, of course, is an historical event thus far; and they brought him and put him in the guard house, as it was not yet determined what would be done to him;

so they are, up to this point, inquiring "What is the law?" Now the Lord gives the law: The man shall be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. This is an indication of the particular punishment given for this particular sin in these particular circumstances. That would be civil law. That is, the punishment would vary tremendously according to the circumstances. The moral principle: that when God has given the command that they were not to gather on the Sabbath day, when he had laid down this law from Israel—the moral principles here are assumed rather than stated. Here you are dealing with civil law on the basis of the already established moral law.

It would stand to reason that they would not stone everybody that gathered sticks on the Sabbath day in general any more than God strikes dead every one who tells a lie, as He did in Acts 5. But here, at the beginning of the Christian church, it was vital that God's great standard of purity and truthfulness within the church be made evident and clear to everyone, by giving that striking manifestation of God's hatred against ungodliness and lying in the death of Ananias. And here, too, in this early wilderness journey, where God was stressing the importance of the things that were to be followed, it was important to take a striking case and deal with it right immediately. It does not lay down a permanent law, and it is not the declaration of a moral principle, but it is the civil application of this moral principle in this particular situation.

And, of course, in addition to that, when a man does a thing like that on the Sabbath day, there are various considerations that should enter in. Here, he is not giving a final law; but he is stating that this particular man is to be treated in this particular way; and all the circumstances, of his mind, heart, background, everything is in God's mind when he gives it. It is very definitely civil law, rather than the declaration of great moral principle.

(Question) No, not at all. Not any more than is his intention to let go free the people who lie to the Holy Spirit in this age. God, at the very beginning of the church, wished to make manifest to all of us the nature of His hatred against lying; and of his hatred against misrepresentation in the things of God; and therefore put Ananias and Sapphira to death. He made a definite example of them, showing in the way he treated them the treatment which we all deserve, and which would follow upon us all, if it were not for His mercy. And this is not a matter of an exact punishment for an exact sin; it is not that. You won't find that in this life anywhere. God will do that in His time. But in this life, to a very great extent, governmental actions are for their effect upon others rather than that they are an exact manifestation of justice in a particular case.

And in these two cases—Ananias and Sapphira—the Lord did not go a bit beyond the deserving of the men; we all deserve punishment; and the shortening of the life here is a very small part of the punishment—but it didn't go a bit beyond the actual just punishment; but it did go beyond the usual application which he makes in such cases; and He went beyond it for a specific purpose. I think those are very good questions; and I think they are getting to the heart of some of these matters. Are there any further questions at this time?

We were looking at the relation of the law to the Christian; and the question that we have just been looking at illustrates the point, that the law is not a matter of just exactly following these particular details; but it is a matter of the application of the moral law and of the great principles of God's dealings in the hearts of people; and consequently it is a spiritual matter.

And there are any number of vital lessons for the Christian in the light of these laws, and in observing just how and to what extent they apply to our own lives.

And so we notice

**(1) the Unity of the Church**, that the believers in all ages form one organism; and salvation always is through Christ; and therefore, while there are different matters of presentation, yet there is a relevance to it of everything in the Scripture—a greater or less relevance to every one. And then, although the same truths are vital in all ages,

**(2) the manner of presentation may change.** Because of the change of external circumstances, or the progress of revelation, or occurrence of the event particularly typified, of course, as with the manner of the ceremonial law, so to some extent with the moral law, the external circumstances may require differences of application in particular situations, and so also does the progress of revelation.

"Moses permitted this for the hardness of your heart." Jesus didn't mean that hearts were a great deal harder in the day of Moses than they are in the days of Christ, and now everybody is much softer-hearted and a different situation applies; He didn't mean that at all. He just meant that a further revelation has been given; that we have more understanding of the things of God; that we can see more specifically and exactly the outworking of that which God has described and has typified; and that therefore, in the light of this, the moral principles are exactly the same; that it is altogether reasonable that we are expected to show a somewhat higher attainment in our moral activities and in our moral standards by which we live, than might be expected of those who have less light. And the application of these principles to the Christian—the moral law, of course, is always binding at all times upon everybody—but the application of the moral law varies to some extent, although the principles are always true and always vital.

The civil law varies greatly, and it requires careful thought to see how to apply it in a particular situation. The ceremonial law is a matter of taking the great truths and guiding them home to people's hearts. And in the old dispensation the Lord gave the Passover, and in the new dispensation He gave the Lord's Supper as two outstanding ceremonies, among many that he gave. The two most outstanding, the Passover and circumcision He gave to the hearts of drive home these ideas to the people; and so He has given us baptism and the Lord's Supper.

As far as any period of which we have any knowledge is concerned, truth is always taking that which is not contrary to the great moral principles. Denying them is always wrong at any time for anybody.

(Student: "Could you distinguish again between moral and civil law?") Well, as far as that is concerned, you might say it in this way. In Los Angeles when I was there ten years ago, there was a law on the books that the conductors must not shoot rabbits when they are riding along on the streetcar. (laughter)

Well, now there are reasons why it would not be desirable for streetcar conductors to be shooting at rabbits as the car goes along, and there are moral principles involved there that will always be. But as far as the application is concerned, when I was in Los Angeles, the city had grown up so extensively that there are no rabbits within reach of the streetcars; and that particular lawlessness—the purpose of the law—would apply to other relations and other desires; but that particular civil application of the law is no longer of any special importance.

There are a good many civil laws of which the particular situation will no longer exist, but I think that the principle would still be applicable in most cases. Certainly the first commandment will always be valid, "thou shalt have no other God before me" and not to use the Lord's name in vain.

(Student: "Is it the responsibility of a minister—in order to uphold morality—to marry a person if he is not a believer?") This is a problem for every minister at some time in his life. Here is a minister, and he says, "Here is the law; people have to be married according to the law; people have to go through a ceremony; they will have to do certain things." Now the minister says, "It is sinful—anything that the wicked man does is sin. He is in sin, in our regard. Well then, what is the point of going through a ceremony with this man, and having him go through the form with the blessing of the church, the blessing of being married, when he actually is in sin in everything he does?"

What he needs is to accept the Lord Jesus Christ. What right does he have to come to a minister and ask to be married before he accepts the moral teachings of the church? You might say the minister has no reason to concern himself with anything about the person who has not first accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his savior.

Well, now, the Scripture clearly teaches us that that is true; that morally, a person is lost and everything he does is wrong unless he accepts the Lord as his Savior. But nevertheless, there are certain standards which are binding upon all people, whether they are God's people or not; and people are condemned if they don't obey them—things which are necessary for ordinary good orderliness, even in the world in which sin is rampant. And a minister has the duty to uphold right and moral principles; to do what he can to make his community better; and to do what he can to show in the external things what God's standards are; and he should try to stress them more.

But he has a proper place—his place in the world is primarily that of leading people to accept Christ, and then showing them how to live after they have accepted Him. But his place is not only that. There is a definite adjustment of relationship to those who are not Christians. The church has a definite relationship; the individual minister has a definite relationship; to the person who is going to live in the community which is under God's law; he has an obligation to quite an extent to conform to it—whether or

not he is a believer. And it is honorable that he should be brought in line with the moral law to the point where he will see his sin, and where he will accept Christ, and become a full fledged member. So this is my answer: "Yes, it is the minister's responsibility to uphold moral law—even as it applies to a willing unbeliever."

A man said to me once, "What do I care about prohibition? If a man is going to hell, what is the difference whether he goes drunk or sober?" Well, there is lot of truth to that—What difference does it make if he is going to Hell whether he goes drunk or sober? But on the other hand, God has a purpose for Christians to exemplify righteousness in a world in which they live; to be a light in darkness; and so people will see that these people are standing for what is right; and will perhaps be convicted of their own failure and of their own falling short; and be brought to desire what the Christian has. We have a definite purpose in trying to make this world as good a world as we can while we are here, even though our primary purpose is to lead the whole world to be received into the kingdom of God.

All of these laws, all of these customs have—as Mr. Fowler put his finger on—a very vital point here; and you will find a great many vital points in this. We could spend a year going through these laws, and get much that would be of tremendous value for our lives today, and for our service to Christ. I wish that we had the time to do it. But I think that you can pick up a good many things if you would go through them yourselves, while you are getting the main factors of it which I think are vital.

### **c. Ceremonial Law.**

#### **(1) Baptism and**

#### **(2) The Lord's Supper.** Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ceremonial laws.

(Student: "What about circumcision?") Well, that is different. You don't find that the stranger in Israel is circumcised unless he accepted the law; unless he realizes his need of a Savior and desires to come under the provisions that God made, and that are presented in the sacrifices. They would not circumcise a person who is just visiting.

In this regard, though, I do think that, when we undertake to say who is saved and who is lost, we can run into some very serious dangers. I think that it is best to present the principles and in general to let the person—to place upon the person himself the obligation of making the discrimination in his own heart.

There are those who feel that the minister should examine the man and decide whether he is worthy of the Lord's Supper; and perhaps there is something to be said for that; but this is very important. The Lord's Supper is not simply passing out some grape juice to just everybody who feels like it. The Lord's Supper is for Christians, believing that they are lost sinners; deserving eternal punishment; showing the Lord's death until he comes by giving a visible example to the world; a symbol of their belief. That they are saved only by partaking of Christ and what he has done.

Now, if a man does this unworthily "he drinketh unto damnation" rather than unto salvation. I think it is very important to stress that; but there is many a time when a person will seem to us to be a very very fine person, who actually in his heart is on the path of perdition; and it is pretty hard for us to be sure. The man ought to know; and the Lord knows; but another person can be deceived. And the opposite of this is true too; a person can be a sincere earnest Christian in his heart, and yet can be one that externally it is hard for us to realize the true situation.

There are some, as far as externally, there are some who find it very easy as the result of their background, of their temperament, of their training, of their general experience, who find it very easy to live a life that seems very excellent to bystanders, but that actually may be life lived in selfishness and greed. And there are others, who are moved with tremendous passions and tremendous temptations, that don't even assail the ordinary person; and the Lord can give them victory over those; and the Lord will if they repent; but to how great an extent or effect that repentance is, is something very hard for the bystander to see.

But to say that the Lord's Supper is something that just anyone can partake of, I wouldn't say that. I do say that a good argument can be made, that it would be better to permit the people to partake of it to their own damnation, if we have warned them and they insist; than to exclude one who properly deserves to partake of it, because we were not capable of making a proper judgment.

Well now, you see we are getting into the matter of civil law: what shall be done to determine who shall partake of the Lord's Supper, and who shall not? I don't think that is a particularly a great problem today with most us. If you were in a place like Geneva at the beginning of the Reformation—Geneva as a city, adopted certain standards. Or take early New England in this country; a person who did not partake of the Lord's Supper was putting himself in the position of dishonor before the community. They would wonder, "What is the matter with the person?" He would disgrace himself, more or less. Now in a situation like that, it might be wise and right to make a civil law in the church, that a person should not partake unless the minister, or the elders, had discussion with him, and that they had some sort of credible evidence that he was a true believer.

In our present day when society doesn't give any particular notice in most cases, I think that we still are not absolved from the duties of making very clear to the people the responsibility that they take not to make a false statement.

## **E. Concluding Remarks.**

All the moral principles are not simple. They are confused by the situation of our present world. They are so confused that it is often difficult to tell; and the duty is upon us to study them, and to find out how they apply. If we are looking for excuses, we will find excuses anywhere; but if we are looking for a true presentation of what the moral law is, then you will find that the Lord will help us.

Now when I was studying in Germany, I knew some very very fine Christians in Germany. It was between the World Wars. Over in Germany, if you saw a woman who would dress up with a lot of flashy clothes, and vivid coloring on her face—would go that way on the streets—everybody would immediately conclude without question that she was a fraud; because nobody there would think of dressing that way in Germany. I remember going to the American Express Company over there in Germany with a Christian friend; and we got in there, where there were maybe 30 American woman standing around; and when he saw these altogether, he was horrified. (laughter) He had never seen anyone in Germany dressed that way, except for immoral women. And if you'd go down the streets in Berlin 20 years ago, you would see such women; and they were just utterly different from the German women and their faces. Well, now, under those circumstances there, I would say it would be very, very wise to conform to the German custom (laughter), very, very wise. Even if the same custom was accepted in America.

What the general attitude is; what people take from it; what they consider it to mean; makes a big difference in what we should do about it—aside from the question of whether these people are believers or unbelievers. Now, I don't think that the Lord wants us to look like scarecrows; I don't think that honors the Lord in any way shape or form. I think he wants us to do that which will fit in with the general attitude of our area, but avoiding anything morally wrong or suggesting moral wrong.

Now this is not a simple thing, that a person can simply decide right off-hand. You have got to consider circumstances and situations. But the great moral principles apply in all cases. But—Paul discusses this rather fully in Romans—the Lord does not want us to have an attitude of fear on little minor points. The Lord wants us to do the best we can, and leave the results to Him; but the best we can is not being done, unless we give a certain amount of serious thought to it. And it is true, that there is practically nothing that you can do but it will offend somebody; and it is not a person's duty to be too much interested in what everybody else thinks. We are interested in what the Lord thinks, not what everybody else thinks.

But I think we should keep our eyes open to what there is in a practice which is inherently harmful, regardless of the attitude of the community. Now here is a point: you will find that today, among Christian groups of people—people that are absolutely, thoroughly Christian—you will find that, in their amusements, they often do things which, if they would stop and think about it, they would recognize them as wrong; but there is so much in our whole civilization that we just don't realize; and I think that we have a duty to think through all of these things; and to decide for ourselves whether there is something in them that is intensively harmful, and that we should avoid. I think that we have a very definite duty there.

But then, we have this other matter about it: of thinking what impression is it going to make on people as a whole in our particular area or our particular civilization; and I don't think we have to conform our lives to every particular individual, or even every particular group of individuals, to what they may think. I think that would be utterly contrary to God's will. We have to think what is the purpose involved in it; and then, if

we find some people that have a strong feeling against something, we should stop and think the thing through and decide on the best response for ourselves.

In the first place, is the thing definitely wrong, and we haven't realized it? Well, if so, then let's make a change.

In the second place, does the thing bring offense, because of its suggestion, to the way a good many people regard it? And consequently, even though not wrong in itself, is it something that we ought to avoid?

Thirdly, is the thing something which is not wrong in itself? Something that does not do harm in the impression it makes on our community? But of which people have a rather silly idea in regard to it? Now, if we come to this third conclusion, I don't think that we should enter into a big argument; or make it a big point of issue; but I think that we should simply, in a quiet way, go ahead and do what we feel is in accordance with God's will; and not be too much concerned about what people are going to think.

Just because Satan has taken a thing over is no reason why we should give it to him. On the other hand, if Satan has so taken a thing over so that, as it is used in our civilization, it is connected in everyone's mind with the harmful aspects of the thing, it might be wise course for us to avoid it. I think personally that it is important that we distinguish that in the matter of liquor. The Scripture definitely teaches that drunkenness is wrong. It is definitely contrary to the Lord's will. It is sinful for a person to become drunk. Well now, that does not say that if you take a little bit of material that has alcohol in it into your system, it is *per se* in any sense a sin against the Lord. And it would be very foolish to let anybody think that you thought that that had become a sin. It has not become a sin. It never has become a sin. If your taking of liquor has a danger of leading someone else into drunkenness, to that extent it may be sinful.

Well, you have to consider the situation and circumstance, the civilization or period in which you live; what is the situation as far as this is concerned? If you are living in a community like it was in Germany before the war, when there were thousands of people who drank a little bit of weak beer or weak wine; and you felt that you would like to partake in this, which was the ordinary practice of the mass of the people, who never thought of drunkenness or going to an extreme on it, I would not accuse anybody of being a sinner in that regard.

Now in this country, there are comparatively few who drink for purely social purposes; most drink not for the taste, but for the kick. (laughter) What is the attitude in this country? Therefore in this country I don't see how there is any question that for the Christian in this country, drunkenness is sin; but for the Christian in this country, the wise and expedient policy is absolutely keeping themselves removed from any kind of liquor or alcoholic beverage.

I used to feel that I could, when I went to Germany, make a very sharp distinction that way between the social situation in this country and in Germany. After I had studied there some time, I came to the conclusion that the distinction was still there, as I

thought it was before, but not nearly so definite as I thought it was before; because I ran onto cases in Germany, where people considering that it was just a perfectly proper custom; everybody did it; took a little light wine, and thought nothing of it; yet under certain conditions, became drunk very quickly, when they never would have dreamed of doing such a thing. And I knew cases where they actually were mistreated by it, as the result of their having absolutely no expectation of the thing; gotten into the situation that they never would have gotten into if they simply had stayed absolutely away from it. And when I saw the result of it, as you would see it upon people on the streets of Berlin, I couldn't help thinking that the course which would be the expedient course in this country would probably also be expedient and right course to take over there, even though the situation wasn't quite as clear in that regard as it is here.

Well, so much then for the relation of the law to the Christian. We are not under law, in the sense that we have to take little commands and say, "Am I doing this just right? Is there danger that I have made a mistake here? Is there danger that I have made a mistake there?" We are not under the law in that sense. We are under the law in the sense that it is God's desire that we study the principles that He has laid down; that we study their application as He has explained it; that we study the circumstances involved in situations; and that we try in all things, whether we eat or whether we drink, to do it to the glory of God; and to try to be sure what will be to His glory.