

The Law and the Saint 3. the Positive Side

by A.W. Pink

The Law is not abolished for Christians, but is still binding on them, and is fulfilled in them through love.

Scripture: Matthew 5:17

Topics: "The Law", "Christian Obedience"

Description

A.W. Pink emphasizes the enduring relevance of the Ten Commandments for Christians, arguing against both legalism and antinomianism. He asserts that the Law is not abolished but is a reflection of God's unchanging character, serving as a moral standard that Christians are obliged to follow. Pink highlights that Christ came to fulfill the Law, not to destroy it, and that true obedience stems from love, which fulfills the Law's requirements. He encourages believers to recognize their moral obligation to obey the Law, as it is integral to their relationship with God and their conduct as Christians. Ultimately, Pink calls for a heartfelt delight in God's Law, which should guide the believer's life.

Transcript

THE LAW AND THE SAINT

3. THE POSITIVE SIDE

What is the relation of the Law (the Ten Commandments) to Christians? In our previous chapter we pointed out how that three radically different answers have been returned to this question. The first, that sinners become saints by obeying the Law. This is Legalism pure and simple. It is heresy of the most dangerous kind. All who really believe and act on it as the ground of their acceptance by God, will perish eternally. Second, others say that the Law is not binding on Christians because it has been abolished.

This is, we are fully assured, a serious error. It arises from a mistaken interpretation of certain passages in the Epistles. The inevitable tendency of such an error is toward Antinomianism, the "turning of the grace of God into lasciviousness" (Jude 4). Third, others affirm, and the writer is among the number, that the Ten Commandments are an expression of the unchanging character and will of God: that they are a moral standard of conduct which we disregard at our peril: that they are, and will ever be, binding upon every Christian.

In our last chapter we sought to prepare the way for the present one. There, we dealt with the negative side; here, we shall treat of the positive. In the former, we sought to give the true meaning of the principal

passages in the New Testament appealed to by those who deny that the Ten Commandments are now binding on Christians. In the present chapter, we shall endeavor to expound some of the many passages in the New Testament which affirm that the Ten Commandments are now binding on Christians.

We, therefore, invite the reader's most diligent and prayerful attention to the scriptures cited and our comments upon them. "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:17-19).

It might appear to the disciples of Christ that their Master intended to set aside Moses and the Prophets, and introduce an entirely new standard of morality. It was true indeed that He would expose the error of depending on the work of the Law for acceptance with God (as Moses and the prophets had done before Him); but it was no part of His design to set aside the Law itself. He was about to correct various corruptions, which obtained among the Jews, hence He is careful to preface what He has to say by cautioning them not to misconstrue His designs.

So far from having any intention of repudiating Moses, He most emphatically asserts: first, that He had not come to destroy the Law; second, that He had come to "fulfill" it; third, that the Law is of perpetual obligation; fourth, that whoso breaks one of the least of the Law's commandments and teaches other so to do, shall suffer loss; fifth, that he who kept the Law and taught men to respect and obey it should be rewarded. "I am not come to destroy the Law"--the Prophets simply expounded the Law, and rebuked Israel for their failure to keep it, and forewarned them of the consequences of continued disobedience.

"I am not come to destroy the Law." Nothing could be more explicit. The word "destroy" here means "to dissolve or overthrow". When, then, our Lord said that He had not come to destroy the Law He gave us to understand that it was not the purpose of His mission to repeal or annul the Ten Commandments: that he had not come to free men from their obligations to them. And if He did not "destroy" the Law, then no one had destroyed it; and if no one has destroyed it, then the Law still stands with all its Divine authority; and if the Law still abides as the unchanging expression of God's character and will, then every human creature is under lasting obligation to obey it; and if every human creature, then the Christian!

Second, the Son of God went on to say "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill". The word "fulfill" here means "to fill up, to complete". Christ "fulfilled" the Law in three ways: first, by rendering personal obedience to its precepts. God's Law was within His heart (Psa. 40:8), and in thought, word and deed, He perfectly met its requirements; and thus by His obedience He magnified the Law and made it honorable (Isa. 42:21). Second, by suffering (at the Cross) its death-penalty on behalf of His people who had transgressed it.

Third, by exhibiting its fulness and spirituality and by amplifying its contents. Thus did Christ, our Exemplar, "fulfill the Law." So far from Christ having repealed the Law, He expressly affirmed, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled." In these words He announces the perpetuity of the Law. So long as heaven and earth shall last, the Law will endure, and by necessary implication, the lasting obligations of all men to fulfill it.

But this is not all that our Lord here said. With omniscient foresight He anticipated what Mr. Mead has aptly termed "The Modern Outcry against the Law", and proceeds to solemnly warn against it. He said, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven". "Do we then make void the Law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the Law" (Rom. 3:31). In the previous part of the chapter the apostle had proven that "there is none righteous, no not one" (v. 10); second, he had declared "By the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified" (v. 2); then in verses 21 through 26 he had set forth the Divine way of salvation--"through faith in Christ's blood".

In verse 28, he sums up his argument by affirming "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law". In verses 29 and 30 he proves that this is true for Jew and Gentile alike. Then, in verse 31, he anticipates an objection: What about the Law, then? This was a very pertinent question. Twice had he said that justification was apart from the deeds of the Law. If, then, the Law served no purpose in effecting the salvation of sinners, has it no office at all? If we are saved "through faith" is the Law useless?

Are we to understand you to mean (Paul) that the Law has been annulled? Not at all, is the apostle's answer: "We establish the Law." What did the apostle mean when he said "we establish the Law"? He meant that, as saved men, Christians are under additional obligations to obey the Law, for they are now furnished with new and more powerful motives to serve God. Righteousness imputed to the believer produces in the justified one a kind and an extent of obedience which could not otherwise have been obtained.

So far from rendering void or nullifying the authority and use of the Law, it sustains and confirms them. Our moral obligation to God and our neighbor has not been weakened, but strengthened. Below we offer one or two brief excerpts from other expositors. "Does not the doctrine of faith evacuate the Old Testament of its meaning, and does it not make law void, and lead to disregard of it? Does it not open the door to license of living? To this the apostle replies, that it certainly does not; but that, on the contrary, the Gospel puts law on a proper basis and establishes it on its foundation as a revelation of God's will" (Dr.

Griffith-Thomas). "We cancel law, then, by this faith of ours? We open the door, then, to moral license? We abolish code and precept, then, when we ask not for conduct, but for faith? Away with the thought; nay, we establish law; we go the very way to give a new sacredness to its every command, and to disclose a new power for the fulfillment of them all. But how this is, and is to be, the later argument is to show" (Dr. Handley Moule). "Objection. If man is justified by faith without works, does not that do away with law entirely, i.e. teach lawlessness?

Answer: By no means. It establishes the law. When a man is saved by grace, that does not make him lawless. There is a power within him which does not destroy, but it strengthens the law, and causes him to keep it, not through fear, but through love of God" (H. S. Miller, M.A.). "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man...with the mind I myself serve the Law of God" (Rom 7:22-25). In this chapter the apostle does two things: first, he shows what is not and what is the Law's relation to the believer--judicially, the believer is emancipated from the curse or penalty of the Law (7:1-6); morally, the believer is under bonds to obey the Law (vv. 22,25).

Secondly, he guards against a false inference being drawn from what he had taught in chapter 6. In 6:1-11 he sets forth the believer's identification with Christ as "dead to sin" (vv. 2,7, etc.). Then, from verse 11 onwards, he shows the effect this truth should have upon the believer's walk. In chapter 7 he follows the

same order of thought. In 7:1-6 he treats of the believer's identification with Christ as "dead to the law" (see vv. 4 and 6). Then, from verse 7 onwards he describes the experiences of the Christian.

Thus the first half of Romans 6 and the first half of Romans 7 deal with the believer's standing, whereas the second half of each chapter treats of the believer's state; but with this difference: the second half of Rom. 6 reveals what our state ought to be, whereas the second half of Rom. 7 (vv. 13-25) shows what our state actually is. [1] The controversy which has raged over Rom. 7 is largely the fruitage of the Perfectionism of Wesley and his followers. That brethren, whom we have cause to respect, should have adopted this error in a modified form, only shows how widespread today is the spirit of Laodiceanism.

To talk of "getting out of Romans 7 into Romans 8" is excuseless folly. Romans 7 and 8 both apply with undiminished force and pertinence to every believer on earth today. The second half of Romans 7 describes the conflict of the two natures in the child of God: it simply sets forth in detail what is summarized in Galatians 5:17. Romans 7:14,15,18,19,21 are far short of the standard set before him--we mean God's standard, not that of the so-called "victorious life" teachers. If any Christian reader is ready to say that Romans 7:19 does not describe his life, we say in all kindness, that he is sadly deceived.

We do not mean by this that every Christian breaks the laws of men, or that he is an overt transgressor of the laws of God. But we do mean that his life is far, far below the level of the life our Saviour lived here on earth. We do mean that there is much of "the flesh" still evident in every Christian--not the least in those who make such loud boastings of their spiritual attainments. We do mean that every Christian has urgent need to daily pray for the forgiveness of his daily sins (Luke 11:4), for "in many things we all stumble" (James 3:2, R.V.).

The second half of Romans 7, then, is describing the state of the Christian, i.e. the conflict between the two natures within him. In verse 14 the apostle declares, "We know that the Law is spiritual". How different is this language from the disparaging way that many now refer to God's Law! In verse 22 he exclaims, "I delight in the Law of God after the inward man". How far removed is this from the delusion that the Law has been abolished, and that it no longer serves any purpose for the Christian!

The apostle Paul did not ignore the Law, still less did he regard it as an enemy. The new nature within him delighted in it: so, too, did the Psalmist, see Psalm 119:72, 97, 140. But the old nature was still within him too, warring against the new, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin, so that he cried, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death" (v.24)--and we sincerely pity every professing Christian who does not echo this cry.

Next the apostle thanks God that he shall be delivered yet "through Jesus Christ our Lord" (v. 25), not "by the power of the Holy Spirit" note! The deliverance is future, at the return of Christ, see Philippians 3:20, etc. Finally, and mark that this comes after he had spoken of the promised "deliverance", he sums up his dual experience by saying, "So then with the mind I myself serve the Law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin". Could anything be plainer? Instead of affirming that the Law had nothing to do with him as a Christian, nor he with it, he expressly declared that he served "the Law of God".

This is sufficient for us. Let others refuse to "serve" the Law of God at their peril. "For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit" (Rom. 8:3,4). This throws light on Romans 3:31, showing us, in part, how the Law is established". The reference here is to the new nature.

The believer now has a heart that loves God, and therefore does it "delight in the Law of God". And it is ever at the heart that God looks, though, of course, He takes note of our actions too. But in heart the believer "fulfills" the holy requirements of God's Law, inasmuch as his innermost desire is to serve, please, and glorify the Law-giver. The righteous requirements of the Law are "fulfilled" in us because we now obey from the heart (Rom. 6:17). "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the Law.

For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law" (Rom. 13:8-10). Here again, the apostle, so far from lending the slightest encouragement to the strange delusion that the Ten Commandments have become obsolete to Christians, actually quotes five of them, and then declares, "Love is the fulfilling of the Law".

Love is not a substitution for Law-obedience, but it is that which prompts the believer to render obedience to it. Note carefully, it is not "love is the abrogating of the Law", but "love is the fulfilling of the Law". "The whole Law is grounded on love to God and love to man. This cannot be violated without the breach of Law; and if there is love, it will influence us to the observance of all God's commandments" (Haldane). Love is the fulfilling of the Law because love is what the Law demands.

The prohibitions of the Law are not unreasonable restraints on Christian liberty, but the just and wise requirements of love. We may add that the above is another passage which serves to explain Romans 3:31, for it supplies a practical exemplification of the way in which the Gospel establishes the Law as the expression of the Divine will, which love alone can fulfill. "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the Law; as under the Law, that I might gain them that are under the Law; to them that are without Law, as without Law, (being not without Law to God, but under the Law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without Law" (1 Cor. 9:19-22).

The central thought of this passage is how the apostle forewent his Christian liberty for the sake of the Gospel. Though "free" from all, he nevertheless, made himself "the servant" of all. To the unconverted Jews he "became a Jew;" Acts 16:3 supplies an illustration. To those who deemed themselves to be yet under the ceremonial law, he acted accordingly: Acts 21:26 supplies an example of this. To them without Law: that is, Gentiles without the ceremonial law, he abstained from the use of all ceremonies as they did: cf.

Galatians 2:3. Yet, he did not act as "without Law to God", but instead, as "under the Law to Christ"; that is, as still under the moral Law of God. He never counted himself free from that, nor would he do anything contrary to the eternal Law of righteousness. To be "under Law to God", is, without question, to be under the God. Therefore, to be under the Law of Christ, is to be under the Law of God, for the Law was not abrogated but reinforced by Christ. This text, then, gives a plain and decisive answer to the question, How the believer is under the Law of God, namely, as he is "under the Law to Christ", belonging to Christ, as he does, by redemption.

"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Gal. 5:13,14). Here the apostle first reminds the Galatian saints (and us) that they had been called unto "liberty", i.e., from the curse of the moral Law (3:13). Second, he defines the bounds of that

liberty, and shows that it must not deteriorate to fleshly license, but that it is bounded by the requirements of the unchanging moral Law of God, which requires that we love our neighbor as ourselves.

Third, he repeats here, what he had said in Romans 13:8-10, namely, that love is the fulfilling of the Law. The new commandment of love to our brethren is comprehended in the old commandment of love to our neighbor, hence the former is enforced by an appeal to the latter. "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another" (Gal. 5:13). We quote here part of the late Dr. George Bishop's comments on this verse: "The apostle here emphasizes a danger.

The believer before believing, relied upon his works to save him. After believing, seeing he is in no way saved by his works, he is in danger of despising good works and minifying their value. At first he was an Arminian living by law; now he is in danger of becoming an Antinomian and flinging away the law altogether. "But the law is holy and the commandment holy, and just, and good. It is God's standard--the eternal Norm. Fulfilled by Christ for us, it still remains the swerveless and unerring rule of righteousness.

We are without the law for salvation, but not without the law for obedience. Angels are under the law 'doing God's commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word' (Ps. 103:20). The law then is immutable--its reign universal and without exception. The law! It is the transcript of the Divine perfection: the standard of eternal justice: the joy and rapture of all holy beings. The law! We are above it for salvation, but under it, or rather in it and it in us, as a principle of holiness" (Grace in Galatians).

"Children obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Eph. 6:1-3). Once more we have a direct quotation from the tables of stone as the regulator of the Christian conscience. First, the apostle bids children obey their parents in the Lord. Second, he enforces this by an appeal to the fifth commandment in the Decalogue. What a proof this is that the Christian is under the Law (for the apostle is writing to Christians), under it "to Christ".

Third, not only does the apostle here quote the fifth commandment, but he reminds us that there is a promise annexed to it, a promise concerning the prolongation of earthly life. How this refutes those who declare that our blessings are all spiritual and heavenly (Eph. 1:3). Let the ones who are constantly criticizing those who press on the children of God the scriptures which have to do with our earthly walk, and who term this a "coming down from our position in the heavenlies" weigh carefully Ephesians 6:2,3 and also 1 Timothy 4:8--"For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come"; and let them also study 1 Peter 3:10.

In the administration of His government, God acts upon immutable principles. [2] "But we know that the Law is good, if a man use it lawfully" (1 Tim. 1:8). The Law is used unlawfully, when sinners rest on their imperfect obedience to it as the ground of their acceptance by God. So, too, believers use it unlawfully, when they obey its precepts out of servile fear. But used lawfully, the Law is good. This could never have been said if the Law is an enemy to be shunned. Nor could it have been said if it has been repealed for the Christian.

In that case, the apostle would have said, "The Law is not binding upon us". But he did not so say. Instead, he declared "The Law is good". He said more than that, he affirmed, "We know that the Law is good". It is not a debateable point, rather is it one that has been Divinely settled for us. But the Law is only "good" if a man (Greek, any one) use it lawfully. To use the Law lawfully is to regard it as the unchanging

expression of the Will of God, and therefore to "delight" in it.

To use the Law lawfully is to receive it as the corrector of our conduct. To use the Law lawfully is to "fulfill" it in love. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah...this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people" (Heb. 8:8,10).

Let it be carefully noted that this passage unmistakably demonstrates two things: first, it proves conclusively that the Law has not been "abolished"! Second, it proves that the Law does have a use and value for those that are saved, for it is saved Israel that is here in view! Nor is there any possible room for doubt as to whether or not this applies to Gentile Christians now. The passage just quoted refers to "the new covenant". Is the new covenant restricted to Israel? Emphatically no.

Did not our Saviour say at the Holy Supper, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28, R.V.)? Was Christ's blood of the new covenant limited to Israel? Certainly not. Note how the apostle quotes our Lord's words when writing to the Corinthians, see 1 Corinthians 11:25. So, too, in 2 Corinthians 3:6 the apostle Paul declares that God has made us (not is going to make us) "ministers of the new covenant". This is proof positive that Christians are under the new covenant.

The new covenant is made with all that Christ died for, and therefore Hebrews 8:8-10 assures us that God puts His laws into the minds and writes them upon the hearts of every one of His redeemed. But so anxious are some to grasp at everything which they imagine favors their contention that in no sense are believers under the Law, this passage is sometimes appealed to in support. It is argued that since God has now (by regeneration) written the Law on the believer's heart, He no longer needs any outward commandments to rule and direct him.

Inward principle, it is said, will now move him spontaneously, so that all need for external law is removed. This error was so ably exposed fifty years ago by Dr. Martin, we transcribe a part of his refutation: "How was it with our first parents? If ever outward law, categorical and imperative, might have been dispensed with, it might in Adam's case. In all the compass of his nature, there was nothing adverse to the law of God. He was a law unto himself. He was the moral law unto himself; loving God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself, in all things content, in nothing coveting.

Was imperative, authoritative, sovereign commandment therefore utterly unnecessary? Did God see it to be needless to say to him, Thou shalt, or, Thou shalt not? It was the very thing that infinite wisdom saw he needed. And therefore did He give commandment--"Thou shalt not eat of it". "How was it with the last Adam? All God's law was in His heart operating there, an inward principle of grace; He surely, if any, might have dispensed with strict, imperative, authoritative law and commandment.

'I delight to do Thy will, O God; Thy law also is within My heart". Was no commandment, therefore, laid upon--no obedience--statute ordained--unto Him? Or did He complain if there was? Nay; I hear Him specially rejoicing in it. Every word He uttered, every work He did, was by commandment: 'My Father which sent me, He gave Me commandment what I should say and what I should do; as He gave me commandment therefore, so I speak'. "And shall His members, though the regenerating Spirit dwells in them, claim an exemption from what the Son was not exempt?

Shall believers, because the Spirit puts the law into their hearts, claim a right to act merely at the dictate of inward gracious principle, untrammelled, uncontrolled by outward peremptory statute? I appeal to Paul in the seventh chapter of the Romans, where he says: "The law is holy", and adds, as if to show that it was no inward actuating law of the heart, but God's outward commanding law to the will: 'the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, and just, and good'. And I appeal to the sweet singer of Israel, as I find him in the 119th Psalm, which is throughout the breathing of a heart in which the law of God is written, owning himself with joy as under peremptory external law: 'Thou hast commanded us to keep Thy precepts diligently'".

If ye fulfill the royal Law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well" (James 2:8). The immediate purpose of the apostle was to correct an evil--common in all climes and ages--of which his brethren were guilty. They had paid deference to the wealthy, and shown them greater respect than the poor who attended their assembly (see preceding verses). They had, in fact, "despised the poor" (v.6). The result was that the worthy name of Christ had been "blasphemed" (v.7).

Now it is striking to observe the method followed and the ground of appeal made by the apostle James in correcting this evil. First, he says, "If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: but if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the Law as transgressors" (vv. 8,9). He shows that in despising the poor they had transgressed the Law, for the Law says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself".

Here then, if proof positive that the Law was binding upon those to whom James wrote, for it is impossible for one who is in every sense "dead to the Law" to be a "transgressor" of it. And here, it is probable that some will raise the quibble that the Epistle of James is Jewish. True, the Epistle is addressed to the twelve tribes scattered abroad. Yet it cannot be gainsaid that the apostle was writing to men of faith (1:3); men who had been regenerated-- "begotten" (1:18); men who were called by the worthy name of Christ (2:7), and therefore Christians.

And it is to them the apostle here appeals to the Law! --another conclusive proof that the Law has not been abolished. The apostle here terms the Law, "the royal Law". This was to empathize its authority, and to remind his regenerated brethren that the slightest deflection from it was rebellion. The royal Law also calls attention to the supreme dignity of its Author. This royal Law, we learn, is transcribed in the Scriptures--the reference here was, of course, to the Old Testament Scriptures.

Next, the apostle says, "For whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou are become a transgressor of the Law" (vv. 10,11). His purpose is evident. He presses on those to whom he writes that, he who fails to love his neighbour is just as much and just as truly a transgressor of the Law as the man who is guilty of adultery or murder, for he has rebelled against the authority of the One who gave the whole Law.

In this quotation of the 6th and 7th commandments all doubt is removed as to what "Law" is in view in this passage. Finally, the apostle says, "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the Law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment" (vv. 12,13). This is solemn and urgently needs pressing upon the Lord's people today: Christians are going to be "judged by the Law"! The Law is God's unchanging standard of conduct for all; and all alike, saints and sinners, are going to be weighed in its balances; not of course, in order to

determine their eternal destiny, but to settle the apportionment of reward and punishment.

It should be obvious to all that the very word "reward" implies obedience to the Law! Let it be repeated, though, that this judgment for Christians has nothing whatever to do with their salvation. Instead, it is to determine the measure of reward which they shall enjoy in Heaven. Should any object against the idea of any future judgment (not punishment but judgment) for Christians, we would ask them to carefully ponder 1 Corinthians 11:31, 32; 2 Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 10:30--in each case the Greek word is the same as here in James 2:12.

It should be noted that the apostle here terms the Law by which we shall be judged "the Law of liberty". It is, of course, the same as "the royal Law" in verse 8. But why term it the Law of liberty? Because such it is to the Christian. He obeys it (or should do) not from fear, but out of love. The only true "liberty" lies in complete subjection to God. There was, too, a peculiar propriety in the apostle James here styling the Law of God "the Law of liberty". His brethren had been guilty of "respecting persons", showing undue deference to the rich; and this was indeed servility of the worst kind.

But to "love our neighbour" will free us from this. Other passages in the New Testament which show more directly the bearing of the Law on believers might be quoted, but we close, by calling attention to 1 John 2:6: "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (1 John 2:6). This is very simple, and yet deeply important. The believer is here exhorted to regulate his walk by that of the walk of Christ. How did He walk? We answer, in perfect obedience to the Law of God.

Galatians 4:4 tells us, "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law." Psalm 40:8 declares that God's Law was in His heart. Everything recorded about the Saviour in the four Gospels evidences His complete subjection to the Law. If, then, the Christian desires to honor and please God, if he would walk as Christ walked, then must he regulate his conduct by and render obedience to the Ten Commandments. Not that we would for a moment insist that the Christian has nothing more than the Ten Commandments by which to regulate his conduct.

No; Christ came to "fulfill" the Law, and as we have intimated, one thing this means is that, He has brought out the fulness of its contents, He has brought to light its exceeding spirituality, He has shown us (both directly and through His apostles) its manifold application. But whatever amplification the Law has received in the New Testament, nothing has been given by God which in any wise conflicts with what he first imprinted on man's moral nature, and afterwards wrote with His own finger at Sinai, nothing that in the slightest modifies its authority or our obligation to render obedience to it.

May the Holy Spirit so enlighten our sin-darkened understandings and so draw out our hearts unto God, that we shall truthfully say, "The Law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver...O how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day" (Psa. 119:72-97). ENDNOTES

[1] Verses 8-12 are more or less in the nature of a parenthesis.

[2] That some obedient children are short-lived no more belies the Word of God than that some diligent men are poor, yet Proverbs 10:4 says, "The hand of the diligent maketh rich:" The truth is, that these promises reveal the general purpose of God, but He always reserves to Himself the sovereign right to make whom He pleases exceptions to the general rule.

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