

# The Law and Love

by Ernest C. Reisinger

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*The sermon explores the vital connection between God's law and love, emphasizing that true love is expressed through obedience to His commandments.*

**Duration:** 59:55

**Scripture:** John 13:34, John 14:15, John 14:21, John 15:10, Romans 13:8

**Topics:** "Love", "Obedience to God", "Law and Love"

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## Description

Ernest C. Reisinger emphasizes the inseparable relationship between God's law and love in his sermon 'The Law and Love.' He argues that true love for God is demonstrated through obedience to His commandments, as highlighted in John 14:15 and 21. Reisinger warns against the false dichotomy that separates law from love, asserting that love is not merely an emotion but is expressed through adherence to God's moral standards. He stresses that the essence of Christian conduct is rooted in both love and law, which are meant to complement each other rather than exist in opposition. The preacher calls for discernment in understanding this relationship to avoid the errors of antinomianism and sentimentalism.

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## Transcript

I'd like you to turn in the scriptures to John chapter 14. By the way, this is more or less of a paper and I'm not meant to teach it to you, to speak to the subject that's been assigned to me. John chapter 14.

There's one thing sure, that for a godly pastor to do his work properly, among other things, he must distinguish between the things that differ, but he must also properly join together what God has joined together. And I believe that our, my subject tonight, God has joined his law and his love together. Not a disjunction.

John chapter 14, verse 14, and then we'll skip down to 21. Or verse 15, rather. If you love me, said Jesus, keep my commandments.

There's an inseparable relationship between those two things. Verse 21. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him.

And there again you see that relationship. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. Verse 22.

Judas said unto him, not Ascarion, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not to the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings, and the words which ye hear are not mine, but the Father's which sent me. Jumping over to chapter 15, verse 10 and 14.

If you keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. Verse 14. Ye are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you.

And one more text, I have two texts tonight, I would say. John 14, 15 and John 13, 34. And I hope to get to this last part at the end of the message.

John 13, verse 34. A new commandment that I give unto you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you. Martin Luther said, Love God and do as you please.

Now his point, obviously, was that if we love God properly, we will do what he pleased. So that still leaves the question, what does God please? The problem with Luther's statement is an oversimplification, and it needs some explanation. I recently read an article on John 13, 34, a rather long article by an author, and he said, The Lord Jesus Christ stands as the focus of our obedience.

He later said in the article, Christ stands as our constant example which is to serve as a model for Christian behavior until the end of time. That too is a good statement, pious statement. But it needs, it's also an oversimplification, it needs some explanation.

We must know what Christ is like, if he's our example. What was his ethics? You say, well he was a perfect man. Well how do you know he was perfect? There had to be some standard by which he was judged.

When he looked at the crowd and said, None of you convinces me of sin, there had to be some sin to know that he was perfect. One of the great difficulties of my assignment tonight, Dr. DeWitt complained about how difficult his assignment was, and that is a difficult assignment on that big subject of assurance. And I think Dr. Ferguson said his subject was difficult, and it is.

And I want to say my subject is difficult, my assignment is, because these two words themselves, the word law and love, have so many uses in the Bible. The Bible speaks of the law of God, the law of Christ, the law of Moses, the law of sin, the law of love. Sometimes it speaks to the law in respect to the ceremonial aspect of the law.

Sometimes it speaks law in respect to those civil duties, those judicial aspects of the law. And of course the moral, in the same way with the word love. There is the law of love, and there is the love of Christ, there is the love of God, there is the love of our wives, that is a different kind of love, love of our neighbors, love of our enemies, so the words themselves, there have been volumes written on one word, volumes of books written on the words, that makes the subject difficult.

Now every true Christian wants to know how he can please God. If he loves God, he wants to please God. This comes with the new birth.

And the question comes then, but does God express His will simply by saying to us, love? Or does He express His will by giving some fixed commandments? Since there is a proper relationship between law

and love, we must inquire, or at least make some effort, to try to understand what that relationship is. I remember I was taking some people to hear a great preacher, I didn't agree with everything he said, but he was a great preacher, Dr. Donald Gray Barnhouse. He spoke with a heavy voice, and he was an excellent teacher.

And I remember, because of his gruff voice and the way he spoke with authority, this one lady said, the only thing he doesn't have any love is because of the way he spoke. Or sometimes when people are speaking on doctrinal issues, they'll say, well there was no love in that message. So we all have had that problem to deal with.

Now, that relationship between law and love, by the way, when I speak of the law tonight, I'm going to use it and refer to the Ten Commandments as the law. I know that the law is broader than that. The Ten Commandments is an expression of God's moral law.

But I'm going to refer to the Ten Commandments as law, and I'll be using that synonymously. But we must make a serious effort. If there's a relationship, then there's a proper relationship between law and love.

And I pray that as I seek to make evident to your minds and to your understanding, I pray that God the Spirit will assist me and assist you to make real to our hearts what's on my heart about this subject, because it's very relevant right today. I pray that He would give us discernment to distinguish between things that differ and to properly join together things that are joined together by God. You know, every heresy and cult waves the word around love around.

That's one of their favorite words. But they never want to connect fixed and objective duty to that in many occasions. Christian science, one of their big words is love, love.

The hippie movement, their big word is love. They paint it on their vans. The liberals, the liberals, their big word is love.

I remember reading more than once many aspects of the separation from Princeton when Westminster was formed and Dr. Machen and many of those men left Princeton over liberalism. One of the charges, one of the things that the liberals did in appealing to the people in the pew was saying it was love that mattered. These men didn't express love for the church and they charged them as not having love.

Some time ago I read an article in Time magazine. It was a time-giving report on 900 ministers and students who met at Harvard School of Divinity on the new morality. Now the title of the article that Time put on it was this, Law in the Place of Love.

And the very title sets up a false antithesis. Law in the Place of Love. It doesn't manifest any kind of a connection at all but an antithesis.

Rather than trying to show that law and love have some kind of a relationship to each other. And in that article under one of the heads it says in caps, We are delivered. And I'll read the quote from Time, what it said.

Inevitably, this is the quote, inevitably the speakers reach no definite conclusion. But they generally agree that in some respect the new morality is a healthy advance. As a genuine effort to take literally Saint Paul's teaching that the love of Christ, that through the love of Christ we are delivered from the law.

And there you have either or. The then president of Princeton, Paul Ramsey, they quoted him of saying, Lists of can's and cannot's are meaningless. Now, we are not surprised that this danger is destroying ignorance and error when we find it among the cults.

Or when we find it among the liberals. Or when we find it in agnostics. But when bible-believing preachers, reformed preachers, use illustrations and teach and preach in such a way to leave an idea that there's some antithesis a false antithesis between law and love, we are shocked and appalled and saddened and pained.

One of the most subtle attacks on the Ten Commandments and biblical morality and true Christianity are by those who set up a false antithesis between love and law rather than seek a proper relationship between them. Now, of course there's a difference between love and law. We all agree on that.

But there is also an immutable, unchangeable relationship between the two. And failing to see that relationship is the mother of many errors and heresies and confusion and spiritual shipwrecks. I want to give you a few passages of scripture for one purpose only.

To further undergird and underline that fact that there is a relationship. And if I don't get clear on anything else, if I can leave you with that idea that there is a relationship and any teaching or preaching or illustrations that drive you from that idea that there's a relationship ought to be shunned. And if you don't get anything else, I trust that you'll see yes, the Bible does have a relationship.

And if it takes you the rest of your life to try to establish that proper relationship, so be it. And what these scriptures ought to do is show that there's a relationship. Romans 13, verses 8 to 10.

Oh, no man anything but to love one another. For he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. What law? The apostle goes on to tell us.

For this, thou shalt not commit adultery. So we know what law he's talking about. We know what law love fulfills.

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 that is briefly comprehended in this thing, namely, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Now listen to this. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore. And when you see therefore in the Bible, you're meant to look wise.

Therefore. Therefore. That's the punchline coming up now.

Therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. And there again you see an inseparable relationship and connection. 1 John chapter 5, verse 3. This is the love of God.

The definition of the love of God? This is the love of God. That we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not grievous.

And again you see a connection and a relationship. Even as in my text, where Jesus said, if you love me, keep my commandments. Now the closer, I say these clear passages, I should say, if there's anything that they show apart from any exposition of the passages, I only want to make this point that they do show a

vital connection between law and love.

And I say again, and therefore if there is a connection in any teaching, any illustration, any preaching, that would leave an audience with the idea that it's law or love. Either or. It certainly should be shunned.

It is the connection and the relationship between law and love that is of vital importance. And if there was ever a day in our home, and in our nation, and in the church, where we need some biblical teaching about the commandments, we need it now. Law is a bad word to some people, even in the church and outside the church.

And by the way, it's always the lawless who sing the love songs. The draft dodgers. The flag burners.

I remember in my college back home, I remember years ago, who was standing out in front of the libraries with the big love signs? The rebels. There were Christians on the campus, but they weren't doing that at all. Who was it? I used to go by and I know they were rebels, they were rebelling against the college, they were burning their draft cards and burning the flags.

And I said, love for whom? Do they love their neighbors? Of course not, they wouldn't do that. Do they love their families? They were disgracing their families. Do they love God? They live in an open rebellion against God.

What does it mean? This love only doctrine is the enemy of Christianity. It's the enemy of the Bible. And it's the enemy of men's souls.

And it's not Bible love at all. Because Bible love and God's law are close relatives. And they are inseparably joined together.

They are friends, not enemies. I think the lawless love is not Christ-like love at all. You can see that from any part of the New Testament.

It's closely related to the worst. I think this love only doctrine is closely related to the three curses in the Christian church. The three greatest curses I know to the Christian church.

You know what they are? Well, one is sentimentalism. And that's a sentimental attachment apart from any objective standard. Sentimentalism.

All this pious talk without any objective standard of righteousness. Sentimentalism is a curse to the church. And then superstition.

It's closely related to that. Superstition. What's that? Fruitless speculation about the gospel.

Going through life with religious externals week after week. Going to the communion. Whatever you have.

All the externals without knowing the first point of true religion. Superstition is an enemy of Christianity. And the third great enemy is antinomian abuse of the gospel.

That is grace without government. Like the prodigal son who said to the father, give me the goods that falleth to me. He wanted his father's goods but he didn't want his father's government.

So as any other rebel is a prodigal who wants his father's goods without his father's government. Now I wouldn't want to be misunderstood by you or anyone. The gospel of Christ we all know, I hope, breathes,

breathes the spirit of love.

Love is the fulfilling of all its precepts. Love is the prepledge of all gospel joys. Love is the evidence of gospel power.

Love is the ripe fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5. The first one on the list is the fruit of the Spirit is love. Now, we believe that. But never, never, never at the expense of law and truth and never apart from biblical directions and holy duty as set out in an objective standard in the Decalogue.

I say love and law are friends and therefore they must not be separated. 1 Corinthians 13, that's the love chapter of the Bible. In verse 6 it says love rejoices in the truth.

It's not love period, it's love and truth. You see, love has no eyes but God's holy law. Love gives no direction apart from God's law.

Love is a motive, not a directive. Saint Paul said, the love of Christ constrains me. It constrained him to duty.

But love does not define duty. We must look elsewhere if we want to know our duty. Yes, love is the only true motive for all worship and duty and duty but it does not define duty or worship.

Therefore it's not a proper question to ask is conduct to be governed by law or love? It's not a proper question. And the immediate, immediately sets up a false antithesis supposing that law or love are opposites contrary to one another. Let me remind you that the connection between law and love is a truth that's deeply, deeply embedded both in the Old Testament and the New.

Before God gave the commandments on Sinai Exodus chapter 20 verse 1 and 2 He reminded them of His love. I am the Lord thy God that brought thee out of the land of Egypt. What was that? That was an act of redemptive love.

And before He ever gave any law He set forth His love. Love, law are inseparably joined together. And the great apostle joined them in that passage I read from Romans chapter 13.

It might be said that love is both motive and emotive. That is, love expresses itself in action. The action is the fulfilling of the law.

Romans 13.10 again. Love worketh no ill to its neighbor. Therefore love, and here's the emotive aspect of it, love is the fulfilling of the law.

Motive and action cannot be more tightly joined than they are in that passage in Romans 13.10. Love is feeling and motive but it expresses itself in action. Love does not impel the fulfillment of law. It is not the love that the Bible speaks of if it doesn't do that.

If love does not impel the fulfilling of the law it's not the love that the Bible speaks of. The action which love impels is vividly set out in that passage by the great apostle in Romans 13. It is the love of God that carries into effect the law of God.

Love is to be intensely, if it's real love, it'll be intensely preoccupied with God as the supreme object of love and therefore intrinsically active in doing His will. This is true in the Old Testament and true in the New. Did you ever think that love itself is obedience to a command? Love the Lord thy God.

That's a command. So love itself is obedience to command. We are commanded to love God with all our hearts and strength and mind and our neighbor as ourselves.

So love itself is a command. Therefore you can't set up some antithesis between law and love and overlook this very elementary fact that love is exercise in an obedience to a command. Thou shalt love.

Now the commandment to love by itself will not create or regenerate love in us. The command like every other command, it doesn't create a disposition or a will to do it. And this fact alone that love is a command should expose the ignorance and the error of those who would set up any kind of a disjunction.

Beware of anyone who sets up any kind of a disjunction when they are so related, intimately related, inseparably related. Jesus said on these two commandments hinge all the law. He told what he had just told the lawyer when he said that.

When the lawyer asked him a question, what's the great commandment in the law? Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like an unto it.

On these two commandments hinge all the law. And he summarized the Decalogue. Paul said the same thing in the passage in Romans.

Love is the fulfilling of the law. John said the same thing. And this is the love of God that we keep as commandments.

You see, there is content in the law that is not defined by love. And there is direction in the law that cannot be defined by love. Therefore, when we speak of law and love, or do we mean, we can't mean love by itself.

Love is the principle of action. It's the principle of action in us. Just the same as Paul in one occasion refers to the law.

He's not talking about the law of God in the sense of the commandments or anything else. In Romans 7.23 where he says, I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind. That was a principle of action in him.

Sometimes love is a principle of action. Love cannot be equated with law. Love cannot be defined.

I mean, law cannot be defined in terms of love. It's sheer ignorance to think that love can spontaneously decide the standard of its own expression. Love is the fulfilling of the law.

Now we must examine the scriptures to find the standard of behavior that the scripture approves. And you will find in the scripture that love, love dictates, you will not find, I should say, you will not find in the scripture that love ever dictates its own standard of conduct. Rather, Jesus said, if you love me, keep my commandments.

He didn't say, if you love me, love. Jesus didn't say, if you love me, love. He said, if you love me, keep my commandments.

And by the way, his commandments are not contrary to the Father's commandments in respect to morality. Otherwise you'd have war in the Trinity. And we have enough difficulties with our mind in the mysterious acts of the Trinity without creating a war in the Trinity by thinking the Father has one standard

of righteousness and Jesus another.

A true Christian does not let his own heart, though it's a renewed heart, spontaneously decide what is perfect conduct and just say, I'm directed by love. Love is not an autonomous, self-facing agency which of itself defines the norms or standards of conduct and just say, well, I'm directed by love. This is exactly what we have illustrated in the hippie van and the college rebel.

What standard of conduct does it set for them when they hold up the love signs, love? We cannot teach our people the will of God by going to our pulpits on Sunday and holding up love signs. They won't know the will of God. The signs on the hippie sex wagons doesn't define any standard of conduct.

Love which is fulfilling, the love which is the fulfilling of the law is always operative. It's operative in respect to doing God's will. And we cannot and must not subtract love from the context of all the revelation in which we find love, and that's the whole Bible.

Another very important point about this is this. When we have the prophecy of the New Testament, of the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31, and we have it repeated in Hebrews chapter 8 and Hebrews chapter 10, we find what the Spirit does in the New Covenant. What does the Spirit do? The Bible says, I will put my laws in their minds, in their hearts will I write them.

So you see there's no war between the Spirit and the law. The Spirit writes the law in the heart. I will put my laws, not my love in their minds.

I will put my law in their minds, in their hearts will I write them. You see, that's what the Spirit does. Not that we can come to know what the law is by reading some inscription on our heart.

The teaching here is that there is generated in the renewed heart an affinity with and a love to the law in order that there may be cheerful, cheerful, loving, fulfilling of the law. For this is the love of God that we keep His commandments. And they're not grievous.

They're not grievous. And here again we see that affinity. They're not grievous.

That's an affinity with law and love. Just the same as we have Paul's expression, I joyfully, I joyfully concur with the law of God, Romans 7.22. I joyfully... There's an affinity. Oh, my dear friends, if fallen man, if fallen man has the work of the law written on his heart so that he does by nature things of the law, and that's what we have in Romans chapter 2, think how much clearer it was written on Adam's heart in his original state.

And if the renewed man is said to have the law written on his heart, Hebrews 8 and 10, surely it cannot be a different principle than what was written on the first heart of Adam, our father, when he was created. It couldn't be anything different. You see, sometimes people focus so much on the prohibitions of Eden as on the tree to the extent that they overlook some other things that was written on Adam's heart besides the tree, the sin of the tree.

There were other commands that had to do with basic interests in life in this world. For instance, Genesis 1, 27, we have the creation ordinance of procreation. God blessed them and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply.

We have the creation, the cultural mandate in that same passage. Multiply and repennish the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish. There's the cultural mandate over the fish and the sea and the fowls of the air.

This is all before the fall. We have also in that creation ordinance Genesis 2, 2-3 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he made and he rested the seventh day from all his work which he made and blessed the Sabbath day. And then in Genesis 2, 15 we have the ordinances of work and the Lord God took a man and put him into the garden and even to dress it and keep it.

The ordinance of work. Genesis 2, 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and shall please his wife and they shall be one flesh. We have the ordinance or the law of marriage.

Now, listen to me. God did not leave these instincts and duties to subjectivity to be governed or directed by love. And think of it.

Think of it. This was in the state of sinless integrity where there was no sin to blind Adam's vision. No depravity to pervert his desires.

And if he didn't leave it to subjectivity then how much more, how much more an objective directions are necessary in the state of sin where the understanding is blinded and the feelings are depraved and the conscience is defiled and the will is perverted. How much more do we need than that objective standard? Oh, brethren, we are driven by the Scriptures from that ignorant, erroneous idea that love is its own law and the renewed conscience needs no monitor. We are driven by Scripture from that wicked, erroneous idea.

And this wicked fancy has no warrant from Scripture. In fact, it is contrary to the revelation of Scripture. Well, for the rest of the time I want to look at that difficult passage.

John chapter 13, verse 34. A new commandment that I give unto you that you love one another as I have loved you, as I have loved you, that you also love one another. Now, this is one of the big verses used by those who set up a false antithesis between law and love.

One publication I read recently devoted almost the whole publication or a great part of it to this very verse. I say it's a big verse. It's a favored text of the liberals who want love without truth, who want love without doctrine, who want love without defining any objective standard in respect to duty.

This is one of their favorite passages. It's also a favored text for incipient antinomianism. Now, bear in mind we're dealing with a question of conduct.

We're dealing with a question of the standard of righteousness. And I ask the question in respect to this verse. Jesus set a new commandment, I give unto you.

I ask the question, what is the biblical standard of morality or conduct or ethics that come from this text? Can we take this verse and answer far as conduct, love? Far as moral conduct, what does it? We might say, but what is love? Well, we've already said love is the fulfilling of the law. How does love act? What is the direction? Where does it go? How does love manifest itself toward God and man? Well, first, and this is always important to apply that rule that we learned at the beginning of our pilgrimage, that is to consider every text of scripture in its both immediate context and its remote context. Now, if we do that with this verse, this verse is so perverted, a new commandment that I give unto you.

Now, if we do that, if we apply that simple rule that we learned at the beginning of our pilgrimage to interpret all scriptures in the light of its immediate and remote context, what do we have? Well, the verse is part of chapter 13. That's obvious. And the lesson that our Lord's teaching in chapter 13, if you look at verses 3 to 16, is servanthood.

The whole chapter is devoted to his servanthood, which he illustrated by washing the disciples' feet. But nowhere, nowhere in the whole chapter is the Lord giving a moral code of conduct or ethics. Nor anywhere in the chapter is he given an objective standard of righteousness for Christian behavior.

This is not our Lord's subject in John chapter 13. And we learn this from the very next chapter that I read to you and you're hearing tonight. We could read John 13 till we die and we'll never find anything in there about how we're meant to worship God.

Or it's a command to worship. We won't find in there that we're not meant to steal. We won't find in John 13 that we're not meant to murder.

We won't find in John 13 that we're not meant to commit adultery. Or we won't find in John 13 that we're meant to honor our father and mother. We won't find in John 13 that we're not meant to bear false witness nor covet.

Our Lord's subject is not morality. When He gives that verse, the new commandment I give unto you that you love one another, our Lord's subject is servanthood. And the key to the verse, the key to the verse is found in these words.

As I have loved you. And that immediately, when we say how did He love us, that as I have loved you, that immediately takes us to that supreme act of the suffering servant. And that takes us to the cross.

And a cross without a broken law is a cross without sin. And a cross without law and sin is a jigsaw puzzle with the key pieces missing. A cross without law and sin is a jigsaw puzzle with the key pieces missing.

The very base of the cross is our Lord Jesus Christ satisfying divine justice for sinners. And the spirit of the cross is Christ manifesting divine or eternal love. But the base of the cross, the first message of the cross is not God loves you.

No. The base of the cross is eternal justice. Christ satisfying that divine justice.

It's the spirit of the cross that manifests divine love. The next verse tells us, verse 35, By this will all men know that you are my disciples. Will men know that we are Christ's disciples by running around with love signs saying I love you, I love you, I love you? Is that how men will know that we are Christ's disciples? Of course not.

Love is expressed in holy duty and they will know that we love Jesus if we love what He loved and hate what He hated. And I remind you, He was a law-keeping Savior and He was a law-fulfilling Savior. And these people run around and have nothing to do with the Old Testament saying just hear Him, hear Him.

I remind them that if we would be like Him, we would be law-keeping because He was a law-keeping Savior. And He was a law-fulfilling Savior. And therefore the statement of my friend who wrote the book, that statement, Christ stands as a constant example, and I'm quoting him again, Christ stands as a constant example which is to serve as a model for Christian behavior until the end of the age.

Sounds very nice and pious, but what does that tell us about our objective standards of ethics or moral duty? Absolutely nothing. They say be like Him. Be like Him.

Hear ye Him. He's our prophet. Why, certainly He's our prophet.

Yes, the Christian is to order his life in the light of that all-encompassing demand of love. No doubt about that. But what does love demand as conduct? Indeed, love is a moral demand.

That's true. Love is a moral demand. But what morals does it demand? Well, we had it in John 14.

If ye love me, keep my commandments. Verse 21, He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him.

And manifest myself to him. Verse 24, He that loveth me keepeth my sayings, and the words which ye hear are not mine, but the Father's which sent me. They were the words of the Father.

Well, what were the words of the Father as far as moral conduct? God spake all these words. That was the words of the Father. The Father's moral standard.

And I want to underscore this again. The Father's moral standard of righteousness is not something different than our Lord's moral standard of righteousness. Otherwise there would be war in the Trinity.

John 15, 10, 14, If ye keep my commandments, ye abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments. Oh yes, Jesus is that prophet they speak of. And Acts, one of the verses people use who want to throw out any connection between the moral law and Christ, they use that verse in Acts where they quote from Deuteronomy where it says, For Moses truly said unto our fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you like unto your brethren.

Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And so they say, Hear him, hear him, be like him. Well if they hear him, they got to read his sermon.

Matthew chapter 5, 6, and 7. If you hear him, it sounds very pious. Hear ye him, don't have anything to do with Moses. Hear him! Well hear him as he preaches that longest sermon that's in the New Testament.

Matthew chapter 5, 6, and 7. And see what you hear. When he gave us the moral standard, what did he say? What did he say? Love, love, love, love, love, love, love, love? That doesn't have any meaning. That has no meaning whatsoever.

I read recently one of these teachers who are sowing antinomian seeds asked a question in respect to in the same article asked a question in respect to sexual purity. Here's his question. This is quote, What perspective, and that's why I say it's relevant, this stuff is not something I got from the purity of these people, or some antinomians of 50 years ago, or a thousand years ago, or a hundred years ago.

This is right now. The question he asked this was, here's the question, What perspective does St. Paul press on the Corinthians to dissuade them from sexual immorality? It's that section in 1 Corinthians 6 where the great apostle says flee fornication. Well the brilliant young author answers his own question.

Now get the question. What perspective does St. Paul press on the Corinthians to dissuade them from sexual immorality? Well the brilliant young author answers his own question, and he said the death of Christ by which they were purchased. Well, what the author ignores is this.

How did Paul, or the Corinthians, know that sexual immorality was immoral? How did they know? When it says flee fornication, how did Paul or the Corinthians know that that was wrong? You can't separate that. It is one thing to use the death of Christ whereby we were purchased as a motive of obedience to flee fornication, but it's quite another thing to know there is a duty to be chased. And the duty is not found in the word love.

The duty is found in the seventh commandment. And the same author said, obedience flows from the redemptive work of Christ. Surely a motive to obedience is of gratitude, is out of gratitude for the redemptive work of Christ.

A motive for obedience is out of gratitude. This is evangelical motive of obedience. But obedience to what? To what? Some mystical standard floating around somewhere? There must be an objective standard.

Motive is one thing. Duty is another. And they are both vitally related and not antithetical.

There must be a standard of obedience before we can even talk about obedience or motive to obedience. There is a distinction between a proper motive for duty and duty itself. There is a distinction between a proper motive for duty and duty itself.

And I say again, by shouting, love, love, love, love, tells me nothing of duty. And that's why our Lord Jesus Christ joins them together. If you keep my commandments, if you love me, keep my commandments.

It's one thing to press right motive for a parent and child relationship. But it's another thing to have a right standard for parent and child relationship. And that standard is found in the fifth commandment.

It's one thing to press a right motive for sexual purity. But it's another thing to have a right standard for sexual purity. And that standard is expressed in the seventh commandment.

It is true. I don't want to be misunderstood. It is true that the Christian life is not initiated or sustained by commandment or law.

But Christian duty is defined and directed by law. And the redemptive event, as my young author put it, the redemptive event tells me nothing about duty apart from first knowing what duty is. Therefore I say that love cannot be a rule of duty or a definition of duty.

Thus we have the objective standard, God's holy law. Our Lord does not run around and hold up love signs. He, like all the Bible teaching, connects love and law.

If you love me, keep my commandments. Well, I must come back to this text because I haven't even touched in closing. I'll come to an end shortly.

I'm on third base. I'm coming home. John chapter 13.

A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another even as I love you. Now let me ask you a very simple question. Was love a new commandment? What do you have in Deuteronomy 6, 4 and 9? Hear, O Israel, the Lord God is one Lord.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might. Thou shalt love. Is love a new commandment? Was it new when you have it in Deuteronomy? Was it new when you have it

when the lawyer asked Jesus what is the great commandment in the law? He already said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God and thy neighbor as thyself.

So it wasn't new in that sense. What could be clearer to show that this love is not a new commandment? It's not new at all. Nor is it a new standard of right conduct.

Nor a standard of morality. There already was a perfect standard of morality. How can you improve on perfection? The law of the Lord is perfect.

And though that may refer to all the scripture, then that still includes the Ten Commandments. What's new about it? The key word in that text, and I hope you get this tonight, the key word in that text, a new commandment I give unto you that you love one another, the key to it is in those words, As I have loved you. And I remind you the context is servanthood.

And in the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ, love was manifest. Manifest, personified before their eyes as never before. That was new.

The manifestation of it was new. Never had eyes gazed upon love personified. As I have loved you.

Never before had human eyes gazed upon the manifestation of a perfect man. A perfect manifestation of love. And a perfect manifestation of law keeping.

As I have loved you. Our Lord displayed a superior love to its object. A love that was superior to all its objects.

A love that never varied. A love that deemed no sacrifice too great. He gave Himself.

Greater love hath no man than a man lay down his life for his friends. A love that did not subordinate. A love that did not abrogate.

A love that did not mitigate God's holy law or His truth. Christ explained and manifested love which was always commanded but never demonstrated. Never illustrated.

Never personified. That's what was new about it. That was one thing that was new about it.

I say He explained and manifested love that was always commanded but never demonstrated. Never illustrated. Never personified.

As I have loved you. But I think the real, probably the real interpretation of the text is this. There was something else about it that was new.

It was brotherly love. Brotherly love is that special kind of love that is intended to procure your character. Brother.

John, the same John in Brighton's epistle says Brother, I write no new commandment unto you but an old commandment to you. You see, as I have loved you, this is a new dimension. It's a new dimension of an old commandment.

New in respect to manifestation. New in respect to its object. Now we have kindly affections toward all men as Christians.

That's very plain from the Bible. This is just plain Christian benevolence. Genuine love to our neighbors.

It's extended to all according to their circumstances. But brotherly love, it is love that's different. It's a love that godly men and women have for their godliness only.

It is an affection which is directed toward the excellency of true religion and delight in holiness and truth. In other words, it's a love that loves the image of god as it's reflected in his true sons and his true daughters. It's a love that attracts the eye and wins the heart because it speaks of that divine nature of born again men and women.

It's peculiar in that sense. God imparts to his own people some portion of his own love and his own loveliness. He's made us new creatures of his own distinguishing grace.

And that's a peculiar love too. That's a distinguishing love. God loves them in a special way.

Christ loves them. He calls them my sheep. The Holy Spirit loves them.

And they're meant to love each other. And I'm talking about this kind of love where all distinctions vanish. Name, nation, rank, party, color.

All lose their character. All lose that. And they become and have that common name called Christian.

That's the peculiar love of that verse. Whether they be Gentile or Jew or bond or free or rich or poor. They're one in Christ and there's that special love you must have for the brethren.

We were reminded of it the very first night of our conference by Brother Daniel Ray. That's that peculiar love. It is by this standard.

That's what the next verse says, you see. It's by this standard that his disciples were not only to judge themselves. We know we've passed from death into life.

Why? Because we love the brethren. That's not the only thing that they were meant to judge themselves by. But it was also the criterion by which he, Christ, would have the world judge the sincerity of his religion and his truth of his gospel when he used verse 35 where he said, By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples.

This is what he prayed for in John chapter 17, verse 21. That they may all be one as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee. That they also may be one in us.

That the world may believe that thou hast sent me. That's the same thing. This kind of brotherly love is new.

It's new. But Jesus is not doing away with the moral law or giving some new code of ethics. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples.

My dear friends, the godly pastor must distinguish between things that differ. But he, like his Lord, must also join things that are meant to be joined and never separated. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.

If you love me, keep my commandments. I say the godly pastor in his work must join what Christ joins and never separate what Christ has joined. And therefore, any separation, any illustration, any preaching,

any teaching that makes a disjunction between law and love is to be shunned.

Whether it's a Reformed Baptist or some liberal or Mary Baker Glory Patterson Eddy, when God hath joined together that no man put... Oh Lord Jesus Christ, some of the lines are so fine. And especially when we think of the whole subject of law and gospel and law and love. Oh, grant to each one of us as we would seek to be godly pastors doing your work in your way.

Oh, help us. Help us, we pray thee, to have that kind of discernment, to know that which is of heaven, which we pray that you'd seal to our hearts forever. Help us to know that which is of man, whose breath is in his nostrils.

And we pray that you'd blow that away like chaff from a threshing floor for the glory of your name, for the good of your people, and for our own good.

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