

The Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments

By Roderick C. Meredith

Modern society is in conflict over the Ten Commandments. Have they been “done away” by divine fiat or by mankind’s march toward scientific knowledge? Should they be displayed in public places, or reserved for church? Are they a burden to “enlightened” people, or a blessing to those who obey them?

King David said, “Oh, how I love Your law!” and called it perfect. The Apostle Paul called it holy, just, and good. Jesus Christ honored, magnified, obeyed, and commanded obedience to the Ten Commandments. But to most people, the Ten Commandments remain an enigma. This booklet explains plainly this inexorable living law, soon to become the basic law of tomorrow’s peaceful, prosperous, joyful world!

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Preface

More than 40 years ago, I had the privilege of writing the first edition of this booklet, *The Ten Commandments*. It was adapted into a booklet from a magazine serialization and was sent to hundreds of thousands who requested it over several decades. It has been out of print for more than a decade, but I have now updated it for *Tomorrow's World* viewers and subscribers. Even so, it is very much the same booklet as was first offered more than 40 years ago. This is no surprise, for it is describing the unchanging laws of God. As He said, "For I am the LORD, I do not change" (Malachi 3:6).

Even secular scholars recognize that the very first Christians based their lives on following the great spiritual law of God—the Ten Commandments. When they said, "The Lord Jesus Christ," they recognized that the word "Lord" means "Boss"—the One you should obey! Jesus reminded them again and again of this vital relationship, as in Luke 6:46: "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?"

It is my hope and prayer that you will study this booklet carefully and come to appreciate that God's law—the very law that will be in effect during the soon-coming Millennium—is a blessing for those individuals, families, and nations that keep it, following the perfect example of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

The Keys to Understanding

This is a lawless age. Crime and violence are increasing at a fearful rate because among millions of people there is practically no respect for law or constituted authority—either of God or of man! On the international scene, nations live in fear because they know very well that the so-called “guarantees” and treaties of peace are not worth the paper on which they are written. There is no law—no respect for authority—among the nations of the world. This is the world in which you live!

The Real Source of Law

Men have lost all deep respect for law because they have forgotten the very *source* of all law and authority! Your Bible says, “There is *one* Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy” (James 4:12). That lawgiver is Almighty God. In their modern search for a man-devised “peace of mind” or a “religion that satisfies,” men have totally forgotten about the great God who *rules* this universe! No wonder some of our young people—the leaders of tomorrow—have such a lawless attitude. One of the world’s foremost educators warned a group of military leaders of this very problem. He was the late Dr. Rufus von KleinSmid, former chancellor of the University of Southern California. He stated, “I have no quarrel with the present emphasis placed on science, but today we are paying for support of schools which act from September 1 to June 30 as if there were no God.” Dr. von KleinSmid noted the “absence of moral values” in our youth resulting

from this attitude. When you leave the true God out, there is no real standard of behavior left. The result is spiritual chaos, lawlessness, and wretchedness in the human heart. In nearly all present-day religious denominations, the tendency is to try to “modernize” and “democratize” God and do away with His authority to **rule** His creation—and us, His creatures. There are very few truly “God-fearing men” left on earth today! Having made their imaginative pet “god” in their *own* image, men certainly do not stand in awe and deep respect of such a “god.” They do not fear their “god.” And they certainly do not **obey** this creature of their own imagination! Yet the real message of Jesus Christ was about the God who created this earth! His was the God who blessed men for obedience to His laws—and who punished for disobedience. The Jesus Christ of your Bible **always** preached the Gospel of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:14; Luke 4:43). In modern language, He preached the happy news of the **government** of God—the **rule** of God. He said, “**Repent**, and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15). Before you can sincerely believe and accept Jesus Christ as your Savior, and have His shed blood cover your sins, you must repent. But repent of **what?** Repent of **sin!**

What **is** sin? Despite the contradictory ideas and generalizations of organized religious denominations, the Bible clearly states that “sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4, *KJV*). Sin is **breaking God’s spiritual law**—the Ten Commandments. That is definitely and specifically what sin is! Before God will forgive your past sins, you must first repent of breaking His law! You must learn to fear and respect God as the Supreme Ruler of this universe—and as **your** King and Ruler. Solomon, one of the wisest men who ever lived, was inspired to write, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge” (Proverbs 1:7). This godly fear is by no means a personal dread, but a deep respect and reverence for the great office and authority of God—for His divine power, His wisdom, and His love. Without faith in such a great and real God, mankind is incomplete. Cut off from the true God of law and order, mankind is purposeless, empty, frustrated, confused. The way out of modern man’s emptiness and confusion may sound trite or simple to some people, but it is real! It is simply that mankind must quit worshiping false gods. Mankind must return to the God of the Bible, the God of creation, the God who rules this universe! Summarizing His way to the fulfillment of man’s desire for

a happy, abundant, and purposeful life, God inspired these words at the end of the book of Ecclesiastes: “The end of the matter, all having been heard: fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole man” (Ecclesiastes 12:13, *JPS 1917*). Mankind is frustrated and incomplete without this living, vital contact with God—walking His way, keeping His commandments. Obedience to God’s commandments would bring peace, fulfillment, and joy to all the nations and peoples of this earth. It is the real answer to all of our problems, individually and collectively. It is the way of life Jesus Christ is going to teach when He returns to rule this world (Micah 4:2).

Do You Really Understand God’s Commandments?

Ancient King David was a man after God’s own heart (Acts 13:22). He is used as a type of Christ and will rule directly under Christ over the entire nation of Israel in the soon-coming Millennium (Ezekiel 37:24), when Christ will bring peace to this earth. David wrote, “Oh, how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day” (Psalm 119:97). David studied and pondered God’s law all day long! He learned how to **apply** God’s law to every situation in life. This gave David wisdom. “You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies” (v. 98). God’s law showed David the **way** to go—a **way of life**. “Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path” (v. 105). Throughout Psalm 119, David declared how he loved God’s law and used it as his guide in life.

Do you? You probably do not. Most have been taught that God’s law was “done away”—or simply have not realized that it is the only way of life that will bring mankind true happiness and joy. Most have not realized that God’s law reveals the very nature and character of God Himself. And God commands us, “Be holy, for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:16). Remember that the true Christians, those in the “little flock” of Jesus, are described as those “who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12). If you are to be counted among God’s true saints who will escape the seven last plagues, you will have to have this living faith—this **obedient** faith—in Almighty God through Jesus Christ living His life in you! You will have to understand and keep God’s spiritual law as revealed in the Ten Commandments! Please **really** study this booklet, look up each scripture quoted, and live by His spiritual and holy law.

The Almighty God of Israel

To properly understand and feel the real impact of the Ten Commandments, let us notice the setting in which they were given. Remember that Moses and the Israelites had preserved the knowledge that their God was the Creator of heaven and earth. He was the great *ruler* of the earth who had brought about the Flood in the days of Noah, their forefather. And now the true God, the God of Israel, had delivered them from Egyptian bondage by tremendous miracles. He had brought them out of Egypt and through the waters of the Red Sea that rose on either side of them as a mighty wall (Exodus 14).

Since the time they had passed through the Red Sea, God had begun to deal with them and to remind them of His laws that they may have, in part, forgotten. Before they ever reached Mount Sinai, God erased all doubt about which day was His Sabbath by performing a series of miracles to remind them (Exodus 16). In Exodus 18, Moses was already judging the people according to God's laws and statutes (v. 16). Now that they had come to Mount Sinai, God proposed *not* to give them a new law, but to enter into a covenant or *agreement* with them so that they would be His special people and He would be their God whose laws, statutes, and judgments they would obey. Since the Ten Commandments were—and always will be—God's basic *spiritual* law (Romans 7:14), they were made a part of this agreement between God and Israel.

Long before Sinai, God specially blessed Abraham, the “father of all those who believe” (Romans 4:11), because “Abraham *obeyed* My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws” (Genesis 26:5). So Abraham certainly understood and obeyed the Ten Commandments.

Since the Ten Commandments were God's holy and spiritual laws, He proclaimed them with great power and, unlike the rest of the covenant, wrote them with His own hand. Notice the setting in Exodus 19. God commanded the people to clean themselves up and be ready for the third day when He would come down to them (vv. 10–11). “Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp *trembled*” (v. 16). God was here showing His power as the Creator of this earth as He began to speak with His own voice

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the Ten Commandments! As the Creator Himself descended upon Mount Sinai in His glory, its “smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and *the whole mountain* quaked *greatly*” (v. 18).

In this setting of great glory, majesty, and power, God spoke the Ten Commandments to the people who were trembling in awe below the mountain. His voice must have literally shaken these people with its power as it boomed across the land like the sound of thunder (Psalm 104:7).

The First Commandment

And so God began speaking the Ten Commandments—revealing to His people the *laws of life* that bring success, happiness, and peace with God and with man. In our day of human reason, agnosticism, and creeping materialism, it is important to notice that the Almighty spoke first not about the “brotherhood of man,” but about obedience and worship to God, the Creator and Ruler of heaven and earth—and the personal God of those who serve and obey Him! “And God spoke all these words, saying: *‘I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me’*” (Exodus 20:1–3). That is the first and, as we shall see later, greatest commandment. Study the wording of this commandment carefully—and meditate on it as David did! “I am the LORD your God” is a more revealing phrase than meets the eye. The “I” who was speaking with such tremendous power was quite evidently the great Creator of heaven and earth. In His very manner of appearance, He had demonstrated His power as Creator by sending forth thunder and lightning and literally shaking Mount Sinai as if it were a wet dishrag!

The First Commandment and You

Now that we have seen the power and might with which God revealed Himself when He spoke the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai, let us see how each one of them—beginning with the first commandment—applies to you personally. If you make any claim to being a Christian,

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remember that Jesus Christ, the *Founder* of Christianity, said that you shall live by *every* word of God (Matthew 4:4). And certainly—through God’s help—you must walk according to the *commandments* of Almighty God if you would enter into eternal life (Matthew 19:17). How, then, does the first commandment apply to *you*? “I am the LORD your God,” the Creator states. Is the God of creation—the God of Israel, the God of the Bible—really *your* God, whom you serve and obey? Have you conjured up your own false “god” or “gods”? Are you falsely worshiping according to the “traditions of men,” which Jesus said would cause you to worship God *in vain* (Mark 7:7)? These are issues that *you* need to consider!

To Christians, God says that He is the One who has “brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” Throughout the Bible, Egypt is used as a “type” to represent sin. All the unconverted are held in slavery to the organized, paganized system of this world and to their own personal lusts. When a person is really converted, God brings him *out* of that bondage—and he comes out willingly and gladly! You need to examine whether or not you have ever really come out from the false traditions and ways of this world and have also repented of your own personal sins.

God commands, “You shall have no other gods before Me.” Have you put something else in place of God? Is your time, your interest, your service, mostly taken up by something other than the true God? What idol have you placed between yourself and the true God, studying His word, and living by it? God says, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork” (Psalm 19:1). Throughout its pages, the Bible declares that God is the real Creator of this earth and of the universe. He is the one who gives life and breath to all creatures (Genesis 1). Do you honestly think of and worship God as your Creator and the One who gives you every breath of air you breathe? You should, for that is part of worshiping the true God and having no false gods before Him!

Today, the greatest deception of all is not communism or atheism, but the false, pagan doctrine of evolution preached by the false god of science. Evolution is an attempt to explain the creation without the Creator. It denies the true God and His very nature and office, and is the very basis of most of this world’s “education”! But the wisdom of this world is *foolishness* with God (1 Corinthians 1:20). In the Bible, God is revealed not only as the Creator, but the One who sustains and rules His creation—intervening in the affairs of His servants to guide, to bless, and

to deliver them. David said, “The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold” (Psalm 18:2). Literally hundreds of times, David called upon God to intervene and deliver him from some trouble or calamity. Do you go to God with these matters, or do you trust in your own strength and in purely human devices?

Understand God’s Purpose

In Matthew 6:9, Jesus tells us to address God as our “Father” when we pray. Throughout the New Testament, He is revealed as the One to whom we should go with all of our trials and problems. Like a human father, He watches over His children and blesses and protects them. He also chastens every son He loves (Hebrews 12:6). From the beginning, God has been the ultimate Father of mankind. In creating man, God said, “Let Us make man in *Our image*, according to *Our likeness*: let them have dominion... over all the earth” (Genesis 1:26). Human beings were made in the physical image of God—the outward form and shape of God. Mankind was given certain responsibilities and prerogatives like God Himself—dominion or rule over all the creation on this earth. We were given certain limited powers to make—or “create,” so to speak—new things that had never existed before in that exact form.

In this limited way, human beings exhibit some of the very abilities of God, for God plans and purposes that we shall ultimately be like Him—glorified as He is glorified (1 John 3:2)! Mankind is ultimately to be born of the spirit—made of spirit, composed of spirit (John 3:6). We will be part of the spirit-born, ruling Family of God. God plans that those who overcome human nature in this life and learn—through the help of His indwelling Holy Spirit—to keep His perfect laws shall be made like Him, born into His very Family and Kingdom! Then, *after* this life of growing and overcoming, *after* this spiritual *rebirth*, we will be able to exercise some of the prerogatives of God Himself! We will be qualified as additional members of the ruling Kingdom of God! (If you would like a detailed exposition of this spiritual rebirth, write for our free booklet *Your Ultimate Destiny*.)

Yet, even in this regard, science and this civilization compete with God and therefore become *false* gods! Modern scientists are trying desperately to give mankind power far in excess of its mental and spiritual capabilities for handling such forces! As former President Dwight Eisen-

hower said in his first inaugural address, “Science seems ready to confer upon us, as its final gift, the power to erase human life from this planet.” Now—realizing that what they have already done forebodes destruction of this earth—scientists are working feverishly to colonize the very heavens! And here on earth, our civilization continues its paganized teaching that *mankind* is the ultimate judge of what is right or wrong and puts human beings completely in the place of God and His laws! Whether we realize it or not, this carnal attitude—this God-*rejecting* attitude—permeates every phase and facet of our civilization today!

What You Serve Is Your “God”

Most people who just go to church once a week and take their religion for granted do not actually know what real worship is. They think “worship” is something you do once a week in church, not realizing that it should affect every thought, word, and action every day of your life! In everything you think, say, or do, you either serve God or serve your *own lusts* and Satan the devil! The Apostle Paul was inspired to explain this: “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?” (Romans 6:16). There is no middle ground! You either delight in God and His law and serve and obey Him all day long, or you serve and obey your own lusts! One key to this situation is how you use your time, for your time is your life! The Bible commands us to be “redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:16). How much time do you actually spend each week studying and meditating on God’s word and law as David did? How much time do you spend in earnest, prevailing prayer to Almighty God? How much time do you spend in discussing the Bible with others, teaching it to your family, writing words of spiritual edification to others as well as words of purely social interest?

Most professing Christians think of their religion as just occupying a corner of their lives. But in all fairness and love, we say that the day will come when they will realize that that type of religion is *false* religion and *false* worship! What is the most important thing God commands you to do? When Jesus Christ your Savior was asked this question, He answered, “‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love

your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 22:37–40).

The destiny of all nations and individuals rests on these two commandments! If men will obey these two commandments as they are magnified throughout the Bible, they will be blessed! If not, they will be cursed and will become wretched in their own confusion and frustration! As Jesus said, the very writings of the prophets hang on whether or not nations obey or disobey God’s law. Every prophecy written against a nation shows that God foresaw that the nation would disobey and turn away its eyes from His law and obedience to His commandments! These are *living* laws—like the *law of gravity*—that *rule* the world in which we live!

Learn to Love and Worship God Above All Else

Jesus said that the great commandment is to love God with all of your heart, soul, and mind. You are to worship and serve God with all of your being! Whenever you think, speak, or hear of anything good, beautiful, or wonderful, you should think of God! Remember this inspired statement of James: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning” (James 1:17). Because you love Him, because you know His way is right, because you truly worship Him, you should meditate on God’s law and on His word daily, as David did. You should study your Bible regularly to live by every word of God. You should pray to God regularly, with sincerity and with all your heart, as Jesus did, setting us an example. Whenever you find that God commands you in His word to do something, you should immediately say, “Yes, Lord”—and not argue, “reason,” or evade the issue, as so many falsely professing Christians do today.

Knowing that He made you and that your life really belongs to Him, you should present your body as a *living sacrifice*, as God tells you to do (Romans 12:1). You should serve and obey God with all your being—with a willing heart—and do all in your power to prepare yourself for and to further the work of reaching others with the message of the soon-coming government of God that will finally bring real peace to this earth. Your attitude should always be that of Jesus Christ, your example, when He was called upon to give His very life: “... not My will, but Yours, be done” (Luke 22:42). This is what true worship really means! This is how to keep the first commandment, the *great* commandment!

The Second Commandment

In His teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus stated, “Whoever therefore breaks one of the *least* of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever *does* and *teaches* them [even the “*least*” commandments], he shall be called *great* in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:19). Throughout the entire message, Jesus was explaining, expounding, and magnifying the Ten Commandments. He was showing that this *spiritual law* was a *living law*—like the law of gravity or inertia. When you break it, it *breaks you!* We have seen, therefore, that when men or nations break the first commandment—“You shall have no other gods before Me” (Exodus 20:3)—they bring an inevitable penalty of suffering and wretchedness upon themselves and their posterity, cutting themselves off from the source of their being, from the purpose of life, from the laws that would give them happiness, peace, and joy. Men cut off from the true God are empty, frustrated, and miserable. And whether by the awfulness of war, personal violence, sickness, or simply the rotting of corruptible human flesh, the ultimate fate of all men cut off from God is an ignominious death—with no hope or promise of eternal life thereafter (Romans 6:23; Revelation 21:8).

The Second Commandment Stated

Man is incomplete, having cut himself off from the true worship of the true God. Yet, as we have seen, he is to worship that God alone: “You shall have no other gods before Me” (Exodus 20:3). The second com-

mandment tells us how to worship the true God, what pitfalls to avoid in our worship, and of the continuing blessing or penalty that comes to our progeny as a result of the way in which we worship Almighty God: “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” (Exodus 20:4–6).

The natural physical mind cries out for something to help in the worship of God. Physical human beings want some physical object, some “aid” to worship, something to “remind” them of the invisible God. Yet that is exactly what is forbidden in this commandment! Jesus said, “But the hour is coming, and *now is*, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in *spirit and truth*; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him” (John 4:23). Notice that it is only the “true” worshippers who are able to worship the Father in spirit and truth. Many others attempt some form of worship, but, because they limit their worship by a false concept of God, it is largely in vain. “God is *Spirit*: and those who worship Him *must* worship in spirit and truth” (v. 24). The instant that human beings set up any representation of God, they deny what is essential in God. God is the essence of all power, all wisdom, and all love. God is *limitless*. When a man invents his own mental or physical *image* of God, he automatically limits in his own thought and worship the God who will *not be limited!*

The Basis of Idolatry

Many times after reiterating the Ten Commandments, God again warned Israel against any form of idolatry. “You shall not make idols for yourselves; neither a carved image nor a sacred pillar shall you rear up for yourselves; nor shall you set up an engraved stone in your land, *to bow down to it*; for I am the LORD your God” (Leviticus 26:1). God was continually against *every* form of idol or image used in worship. However, lest some misunderstand, let us pause at this point to note that God does *not* condemn art or sculpture, but rather the setting up of any picture or image or representation “to bow down to it.” In the original command in Exodus 20:4–6, God is *not* condemning

every picture and image, but, as the command continues, “you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.” So it is the use of art or sculpture as a form of worship or “aid” to worship that God condemns! The real *basis* of all idolatry is that self-willed, rebellious mankind refuses to surrender himself to worship the true God *in the way that He commands!* Not really knowing the true God, then—not having His Spirit—human beings think they need some “aid” or “representation” to help them worship their humanly devised concept of God. This second commandment forbids the use of physical “aids” or “helps” in worshiping the invisible God.

A Truly Converted Person Knows God

No one who really *knows* God as Father—no one who is living in daily communion with Him—needs a picture or image to help with prayer. If someone thinks he needs this kind of help, it is simply because he has not come to know God—and undoubtedly is not filled with and led by the Holy Spirit of God. In order to worship God in spirit, you must have the Holy Spirit. “Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, *he is not His*” (Romans 8:9).

But God gives His Holy Spirit only after *genuine* repentance and baptism—and only to those who “obey Him” (Acts 2:38; 5:32). Very few men in this day and age have truly *surrendered* themselves to obey God, to walk with Him, to let Him rule their every thought, word, and action. Therefore, they are not actually acquainted with God. He seems far off—unreal—nebulous. They look instead to a physical “reminder” in front of them to help them realize that He exists and is there to hear their prayers!

Pictures of Jesus

Thousands of professing Christians employ representations or pictures of a so-called Jesus Christ in their worship—and even display them in their homes. What does your Bible say about such pictures? First of all, the second commandment itself obviously prohibits the use of anything that represents God or could easily become an object of worship. Certainly, since Jesus Christ is God (Hebrews 1:8), this would *directly prohibit* any picture or likeness of His person! In addition, for those who might wish to “reason” or argue about this point, these so-called pictures of Christ have no similarity whatever to the

way Jesus Christ really looked! Jesus—when in human flesh—was a Jew (Hebrews 7:14). The features in most of His supposed pictures are obviously not Jewish! As the Word of God, Christ inspired the Apostle Paul to write, “Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a *dishonor* to him?” (1 Corinthians 11:14). Yet these pictures invariably show a man with long hair, feminine features, and a sentimental, sanctimonious look in His eyes. This is *not* the Christ of your Bible!

Actually, Jesus was undoubtedly very masculine in appearance. As a young man, He was a carpenter who worked outdoors. And He continued spending most of His time outdoors even during His ministry. So most crucifixes, pictures, and images of Jesus are in total opposition to every description given of Him in the sacred word of God! They give a *false impression* of the true Jesus Christ in every respect. Jesus’ face must have had a rugged, sunburned appearance. He was not womanish in appearance, but rather had short hair like a man. He did not have beautiful, aristocratic features, but as He inspired Isaiah to describe His human appearance, “He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him” (Isaiah 53:2). As a human being, Jesus was a normal, healthy, perhaps somewhat rugged-looking Jewish carpenter in His early thirties. With earnestness and conviction, He began preaching the message of God’s soon-coming Kingdom or rule over this earth. However, if we think of Jesus’ appearance at all, we should think, in general terms at least, of the way He looks today. He has described this for us in Revelation 1:14–16: “His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire... and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.” As God, Jesus’ face now shines with *radiance* and *power*. As a human being, you would not dare to look directly into it! Many will claim they do not worship these pictures or images. Perhaps that is so. But this *false* picture and *false* concept of Christ undoubtedly comes into their minds quite often when they think of Christ or pray. These false pictures and statues actually come between them and Christ. They separate the worshiper from Christ! If you use such images or pictures of Christ, you are *breaking* the second commandment! And you are greatly limiting your concept of the living Christ—who now sits glorified at the right hand of God in heaven with His face shining like the sun in full strength!

Worship of Systems and Institutions

One of the most common forms of modern idolatry is making an idol out of one's church or society. For many people, this world's society—its dictates, customs, and traditions—becomes a god. Many people are desperately afraid of doing anything that might be regarded as different or “odd.” They feel they must conform to this world and its ways. But God commands, “And ***do not be conformed*** to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2). This command must seem very hard to obey for people who get to thinking that ***other people*** must be right in what they think, say, and practice. The Bible shows that many people in Jesus' day failed in their worship, for “they loved the ***praise of men*** more than the praise of God” (John 12:43).

If you blindly obey the customs and traditions of your family, your church, or society, instead of the commands of the word of God, you are guilty of idolatry. That group or institution becomes an ***idol*** to you in place of the true God! Even ritual in a church service may become dangerous, for however refined the ritual of some institutions may be, it begins and ends in the physical senses of human man—and is not a valid substitute for the true worship of God “in spirit.” The Bible directly describes people of our day as “having a ***form*** of godliness but denying its ***power***” (2 Timothy 3:5).

The true God is the invisible, eternal Creator and Ruler of the universe. How should you worship Him? He answers, “But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word” (Isaiah 66:2). You must worship God directly—and with a humble and willing heart. You must ***study*** God's word, willingly be corrected by it, and tremble before its authority over your life! With a heart proven to be submissive through repentance and obedience, you must pray to God in heaven many times each week on your knees and in silent prayer as you go about your daily tasks. You must come to ***know Him*** and ***love Him*** as your Father. As this entire booklet explains, “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3). So you will genuinely ***love*** and honor your Creator by living an obedient life based on following the way of the Ten Commandments—just as Jesus did.

As Enoch, Noah, and Abraham did, you must learn to “walk with God”—and be in constant and increasing communion and submission to Him throughout every day of your life. Then—guided by His

Spirit—you will *never even begin to consider* using an image, idol, or picture as an “aid” to prayer and worship of the great sovereign Ruler of this universe and your personal Father in heaven!

A Solemn Warning and Promise

We have seen that God forbids the making of *any* image or idol to represent Him: “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 [of generations], to those who love Me and keep My commandments” (Exodus 20:5–6). The Masoretic Text, unlike most modern translations, preserves the point that God’s mercy extends to the thousandth generation (see Psalm 105:8).

Because God is our Father, He is lovingly zealous for our eternal welfare. He is jealous over us in that He will not countenance His children worshipping false gods. This, of course, is for our own good! If we persist in an idolatrous and vain form of worship, God says He will visit our iniquity upon our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. There are many ramifications to this statement and principle. But there is one obvious direct meaning in this context: If, in worship, men put an idol, image, or something else in place of God and come under the influence of that false worship, then they are not only harming themselves, but their children and grandchildren! The *principle* is that their false idea of worship will be transmitted to their children, damaging and wrecking their lives and happiness! It is a solemn and terrible thing to pass on to your children a *false concept* of God. It is one of the most awful things a parent can do, for it should be obvious to any Bible-believing person that the worship of idols and false “gods” has absolutely wreaked havoc in the lives of billions of people. Cut off from the knowledge of the Creator, untold millions have been deceived by Satan (Revelation 12:9), and as a result have experienced wars, broken homes, mass starvation, slavery, and all manner of human suffering and degradation beyond description!

But together with this warning, God gives a merciful promise to those who are willing to worship God as He commands. In their case, He is a loving and merciful God, “showing mercy to thousands” who love Him and keep His commandments. Here is a remarkable contrast. God only visits the iniquity of the fathers to the third and fourth

The Ten Commandments

generations before intervening with merciful punishment and awakening to truth. But He shows mercy to the *thousandth* generation! God calls men into His own immediate spiritual presence—to worship their Creator *directly*. Men can come to really *know* the great God of the universe as their personal Father. They can daily walk with Him and talk with Him. Whenever a man stops short of that face-to-face worship of the Eternal God, he is working ruin in his own character—breaking the commandment of God. This is the meaning and force of the second commandment.

The Third Commandment

Is God really first in your personal life? Results of a poll of 1,500 college students showed that they had two sets of values toward which they professed allegiance: on the first level, to self, family, and friends; on the second level, to mankind (in general) and God. It is notable that God was least regarded by these “educated” young people! Yet, in this same poll, 90 percent of those questioned indicated a belief in God. This prevailing spiritual lethargy and passive disrespect toward God—and toward the great magnitude of His office and power—is indicative of a growing trend even among churchgoers and professing Christians. People like to talk about religion and God, but they do not stand in awe of His position and His name. And this spiritual cancer has within it the seeds of the destruction of our Western civilization!

The Third Commandment Stated

In discussing the first and second commandments, we found that we must guard against making a god out of *anything* and putting it in place of the true God. And we learned that God commands us to worship Him *directly*—to walk with Him, to talk with Him, to really know and worship Him in spirit and truth, and to avoid using any image, picture, or physical object as an “aid” to worship or to “remind” us of the great Creator.

The third commandment deals with God’s name, His office, His position as the great sovereign Ruler of the universe: “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him

guiltless who takes His name in vain” (Exodus 20:7). In the Bible, personal names have a meaning. The original Hebrew name of *Abram* was changed to *Abraham*, for Abraham means “a father of many nations.” And Abraham was destined to become just that—“a father of many nations” (Genesis 17:5). So it is with *God’s name*.

God’s Name Reveals the Kind of God You Worship

Every name or title of God reveals some attribute of the divine character. In studying God’s word, we learn new facts about God’s nature and character with each new name by which He reveals Himself. In other words, God names Himself what He is! If men use the *name* of God in a way that denies the true *meaning* and *character* of God, they are breaking the third commandment. God declares through Isaiah, “Hear this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel, and have come forth from the wellsprings of Judah; who swear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth or in righteousness” (Isaiah 48:1).

People to whom this prophecy applies use the name of God, but fail to obey the revelation of God contained in His name. And shocking though it may be, many religious people repeat over and over the name of God in sermons or prayers. They are taking God’s name *in vain*—to no good use or purpose! The original command says that “the LORD will not hold him *guiltless* who takes His name in vain.” The Hebrew word here rendered “guiltless” may also be translated “clean”—“the LORD will not hold him to be *clean* who takes His name in vain.” The test of spiritual cleanliness is our attitude to the name of God! We are clean or unclean according to whether we take the name of God in truth or for vanity. Do you realize what this means? It certainly indicates that someone is better off who—because of sincere religious doubts—has dropped the name of God from his vocabulary, than a professing Christian who talks about God continually, but denies Him in daily life!

According to what many call “the Lord’s Prayer,” we are instructed to “hallow” God’s name. And the third commandment with which we are dealing has directly to do with showing the proper respect for the name of God. One of the ten great points of God’s eternal spiritual law is devoted to this very thing! First of all, however, let us make it clear to those who may have been misinformed on the subject that reverencing God’s name does not mean trying to speak Hebrew

or Greek or learning to pronounce God's name in the original biblical languages! There are certain sects that make a great matter out of this. Some claim that "Jehovah" is the Father's name. Others claim that it is "Yahweh," others "Yahveh," and others use still different variations. The truth of the matter is that since all admit that the Hebrew vowels have not been preserved, no one knows exactly how this Hebrew name of God should be pronounced! (For more on this topic, read the free article "The Truth About Sacred Names" at LCG.org.)

Describing the significance of one's name, James Moulton and George Milligan's *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* states, "By a usage similar to that of the Heb.... [*onoma*, "name"] comes in the NT to denote the *character, fame, authority* of the person indicated" (1972, p. 451). Also, and even more important, God Himself inspired Daniel and Ezra to use the Aramaic word for God in nine chapters of the Bible that they wrote in this language, and the New Testament writers all were inspired to use the *Greek* words for the Deity. The real importance of the matter, of course, lies not in the phonetic sound that is used to describe God, but in the meaning that His names convey! Thus, this respected authority on biblical linguistics clearly shows that one's name signifies one's office, one's authority, and especially one's character. The names of God show us what God is like—they reveal His character! Do you really know what God is like? Do you respect His various offices and His name as you should? Turn to your Bible and check!

God's Nature and Character Revealed

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). In this very first verse of the Bible, God reveals Himself by the Hebrew name *Elohim*. There is one God—but more than one member in the Godhead, or God Family! This same word *Elohim* is used in Genesis 1:26: "Then **God** [*Elohim*] said, 'Let Us make man in **Our** image, according to **Our** likeness....'" Here it is clearly seen—in context with the passage itself—that more than one person shares the name of God, *Elohim*. In the New Testament, this is made clear by the revelation that God the Father created all things by and through Jesus Christ—who was with God and was God from the beginning (John 1:1–14; Ephesians 3:9).

In these passages, therefore, it is revealed that God is more than one person—God the Father and the "Word" or *Spokesman*, who later

became Jesus Christ when born in human flesh. This Father-Son relationship shows that God is a *family*. And the way the word *Elohim* is used in these early passages in Genesis and elsewhere certainly indicates that God is the creating Kingdom or Family! Interestingly, *Elohim* is plural in form but is used either in the singular or plural, depending on the context. God, by virtue of being Creator, is also the Ruler over His creation. We find that immediately after creating the first man and woman, God gave them both a blessing and a command: “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28).

Yes, the true God is Ruler—and you should obey Him because He made you and gives you every breath of air you breathe! In dealing with Abraham, God sometimes called Himself *El Shaddai*, which means “*Almighty* God.” God is the source of *all* power! His name should be revered because it stands for the one who is the source of all power, all might, and all authority. The name most commonly translated “LORD” in the Old Testament is translated from the Hebrew letters YHWH, sometimes rendered YAHWEH or YAHVEH. The original Hebrew word means the “Eternal” or “Self-Existent One.” The word is both used and defined in Genesis 21:33: “Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there called on the name of the LORD [YHWH], the *Everlasting* God.” This Hebrew word, incorrectly rendered as “Jehovah” in some translations, shows God’s character as the *ever-living* God and is used to show His everlasting office in a covenant relationship to those whom He has created. God has always existed and will always exist to carry out His blessings, His promises, and His covenant with His people! Our God is the *Eternal*—the Self-Existent One. Throughout His word, God’s name is connected with His attributes—His power, His eternal existence, His mercy, His faithfulness, His wisdom, His love. Notice how King David connected God’s name with His creative power: “O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth, who have set your glory above the heavens!... When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?” (Psalm 8:1–4). Here God is pictured as setting His glory above the heavens. Then David proceeds to show that God has created the heavens, the earth, and man. No wonder God’s name and office are to be respected!

In our everyday speech, many of us are damning the very name of our Creator and our God! We are using our breath to curse and damn the name of the very One who gives us our life and the very breath with which we curse His name! An expression used with terrible frequency is asking God to “damn” someone. Poor men and wealthy men alike give ready tongue to this vile oath—and often think they are proving their “manhood” or getting away with something by doing it! Yet it would be hard to find any normal human being anywhere who would like to see this phrase carried out with respect to others in all of its terrible meaning. Using this expression is trifling with the name of our God—asking Him to do something that He has never intended to do. God never “damned” a person in the way many seem to think! This idea is an awful heresy! God’s work is the work of salvation, and God will deprive no one of eternal life, except that one who, by his own volition and will, rejects God’s way. God says, “On this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word” (Isaiah 66:2). The very same may be said about the deep respect and godly fear we should have for God’s name—which directly represents God’s character, His word, and His purposes.

Should You Swear?

Men today are accustomed not only to profane swearing and invoking God’s name to back up their oaths, but also to many legal ceremonies that invoke the name of God in a form of swearing or an oath. Jesus Christ said, “But I say to you, *do not swear at all*: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King” (Matthew 5:34–35). God’s name is so sacred and holy that we are commanded not to invoke it to back up our words or our oath! We can be glad that the American nation was founded by men who read their Bibles and made great allowance for religious liberty and freedom. Therefore, even though many public officials will, on occasion, ask someone to raise their hand and “swear,” provision has been made so that many can employ the word “affirm” instead of swearing. And actually, as we should all know, the simple affirmation or formal word of a God-fearing Christian is far more to be relied upon than ten thousand oaths given by a liar on the witness stand! The travesty of businessmen, politicians, and even college professors taking God’s name in vain on the witness stand in this manner bears ample proof of this statement!

Religious Titles to Avoid

Speaking of using certain expressions as religious titles, Christ said, “Do not call anyone on earth your *father*; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven” (Matthew 23:9). Although there is a flagrant and obvious abuse of this command in some large religious organizations, this statement of God’s word is clear to anyone who wishes to obey it: Our only spiritual Father is God! Any application of this word as a religious title to a man is simply direct blasphemy against the Creator who has made all men—even the weak, corruptible human beings who impudently take to themselves and falsely assume that which is a divine title. Of course, we *should* call our human parent “father,” as God Himself does in the fifth commandment. Another common misuse of the divine name is the application of the term “Reverend” to any human being—be he a minister or otherwise—for God applies this title to Himself alone: “He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: *holy* and *reverend* is his [God’s] name” (Psalm 111:9, *KJV*). “Reverend” applies to someone to be revered—someone worthy of worship! No mortal human being is worthy of such a title! Even so great a servant of God as the Apostle Paul himself was inspired to write, “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells” (Romans 7:18). *Anyone* who considers himself worthy of worship—deserving of the title “Reverend”—is someday going to have to repent of breaking the third commandment!

The Most Common Sin of All

In teaching His disciples, and us as Christians, how to pray, Jesus Christ set forth the right manner to approach Almighty God and the attitude of reverence in which we should hold His office and His name. In Matthew 6, in the opening phrases of what is commonly called “The Lord’s Prayer,” some translations of the Bible are falsely punctuated. After the invocation, “Our Father in heaven”—the approach of mankind to God—there are three requests linked together, and then a clause following that conditions all three, not the last one only. A correct rendering would be as follows: “Our Father which art in heaven, thy name be hallowed, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.”

The phrase “on earth as it is in heaven” has reference not merely to “Your will be done,” but also to “Your kingdom come” and to “hal-

lowed be Your name.” These thoughts contained in what is called “the Lord’s Prayer”—the hallowing of God’s name, the coming of His Kingdom, and the doing of His will—are simply different phases of the same thing, for we hallow God’s name by submitting to His Kingdom and government, by doing His will, and by obeying His laws. Simply holding the phonetic sound of God’s name in reverence is only a small part of fulfillment of the third commandment. Jesus asked, “But why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46). Prayer without obedience is a subtle form of blasphemy! The supposedly religious people who talk about religion and God but refuse to obey His word are guilty of greater sin than those who admittedly go the way of the flesh and at least refuse to pretend otherwise. The hypocrisy of religious denominations and religious people is infinitely worse than the profanity of the street. Praise offered to God that is counteracted by rebellion against His ways and His laws is certainly blasphemy—and it is taking the name of God in vain! One who preaches or prays with eloquence and a devotional attitude, but then proceeds to break the least of God’s commandments (Matthew 5:19), *blasphemes* when he prays! Even if such a one deceives the world, he never deceives God!

Speaking of the “religionists” of His day who refused complete obedience to the will and law of God, Jesus declared, “This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is *far from Me*. And *in vain* they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (Mark 7:6–7). In like manner, many today profess God with their lips, but their worship is vain! “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who *does the will* of my Father in heaven” (Matthew 7:21).

May God grant you the willingness to *obey* His will and law! May you learn to worship Him in spirit and in truth. May you learn to honor and reverence His great name—for it represents His creative power, His wisdom, His faithfulness, His love, His kindness, His patience, and His infinite mercy. It represents the character, office, and dignity of the great *God* who sits at the controls of the universe!

The Fourth Commandment

Why were you born? What is the meaning of your life? What is the true goal of life—and what are the laws of life by which that goal can be attained? How much time do you spend each week in considering these very important questions? Most people are so busy with the day-to-day cares of making ends meet that they devote almost no time at all to the spiritual issues of life. If questioned about Bible study or prayer, most people reply that “there just isn’t enough time” for these religious activities.

Because he is so engrossed with his job during the day, and with television, movies, parties, and sports in the evenings and on weekends, the average American is totally lacking in even a rudimentary knowledge of his own religious beliefs. And he is childishly ignorant of the fundamental truths of the Bible—so much so that in the Pew Research Center’s U.S. Religious Knowledge Survey, less than half of those polled were able even to name the four gospels correctly (“Who Knows What About Religion,” *PewForum.org*, September 28, 2010)! God seems far away to most Americans. The Bible is “for old folks and preachers” to read and understand. Yet many proclaim that they “hope to do better” someday. The big question is—when? When will someone take the time to really get to know God? When will he take time to study his Bible, to pray earnestly to the Creator as his Father, to meditate on the laws and purposes of life? For most people, the true answer will probably be “never”—unless they learn to obey the fourth commandment of

Almighty God! Obedience to this little-understood commandment is a powerful factor in bringing the lives of men and women close to the Creator God—and to His blessings and direct guidance.

The Fourth Commandment Stated

We have already discussed the prevalent sin of putting another god in place of the true God. We learned that God commands us to worship Him directly and to avoid using any image or picture to “remind” us of the great Creator or as an “aid” to worship. And we were warned against the vain use of the name of Almighty God, which stands for His position, His character, His power, His office as the great Ruler of this entire universe. The fourth commandment completes the first section of the Ten Commandments, which deals with man’s relationship to God. It provides for the perpetual observance of a sign of the relationship between God and man. “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it” (Exodus 20:8–11).

This command is, in its wording, the longest of any of the ten. It is placed—protectively, as it were—in the very midst of the Ten Commandments. Yet, sad to say, it is the one command about which men “reason” and argue most, and which they would most quickly tear asunder and try to separate from the rest of God’s law. Notice that it starts out with the injunction to “remember.” This very statement proves that the Sabbath command was *already* understood by God’s chosen people and that, in incorporating it as part of His covenant, God was *reminding* them of a spiritual command of which they already had knowledge. “**Remember** the Sabbath day, to **keep** it holy.” You cannot “keep” cold water hot! And mortal *men* cannot make anything holy. Therefore, to fully grasp the significance of this divine command, we need to learn *who* made the Sabbath day holy and *when!* Jesus said, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27–28). Notice that Jesus said the Sabbath day was “*made.*”

Whatever was made has a Maker. Note also that Jesus did not say that the Sabbath was made only for the Jewish people, but for *man*—for all mankind, in other words. Then He stated that He—Christ—is “Lord” of the Sabbath. In this statement, He claims to be not the destroyer of the Sabbath, but the *Lord* of the Sabbath. In His human life, Jesus kept the Sabbath, and many verses in the four gospels are devoted to His instructions to the disciples in how it should be kept and in freeing it from the traditions that the Jews had added. But, before continuing, let us answer this question: “Who made the Sabbath day?”

Who Made the Sabbath?

In understanding the command to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy, and in understanding who made the Sabbath in the first place, we need to turn to an account of the very beginning of God’s creation. The New Testament gives such an account in the first chapter of the gospel according to John. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. *All things were made through Him*, and without Him nothing was made that was made” (John 1:1–3). Here we find Jesus Christ described as the “Word” (or “Spokesman,” as the original Greek may more properly be rendered). This passage reveals that Jesus has been with the Father from the beginning, and that nothing was made without Him—without Jesus Christ! As the second person in the Godhead, the Father used *Him* as the instrument through whom the creation was brought into being. The Apostle Paul was inspired to speak of how God “created *all things* through Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:9).

In Hebrews, we find Christ described as the Son of God, “whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds” (Hebrews 1:2). These and many other scriptures show that the person in the Godhead who later became Jesus Christ was who actually carried out the job of creation! He was the one who said, “Let there be light,” and there *was* light. He was the one who created man and set him on this earth in the Garden of Eden. So speaking in particular of Him who did the creating, the inspired writer of Genesis states, “And on the *seventh* day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. *Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it*, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made” (Genesis 2:2–3).

Jesus said that the Sabbath was made *for* man. Here we see that the Sabbath was made *when* man was made. And it was made *by* the divine Being who later became Jesus Christ! It was made as an intrinsic part of the environment that surrounded mankind and was made by God in the seven days of creation. Notice that God “blessed” the *seventh* day and “sanctified” it. Such an honor was not conferred on any of the preceding six days. When God blesses something, He bestows His divine favor upon, and His divine presence in, that thing. The very word “sanctify” means to *set apart* for holy use or purpose. Thus, we see that in the very act of creation, the Almighty God put His divine favor upon, and set apart for holy use and purpose, a certain space of the most enduring thing there is—time.

The Sabbath Is a Blessing

Certainly this insight into the background of the Sabbath gives added meaning to God’s command to “*Remember* the Sabbath day, to *keep* it holy.” Through Jesus Christ, God made the seventh day of the week holy—and on His authority as our Creator He commands us to keep it that way! The Sabbath, then, is holy time. Yet it was made *for* man—as a great blessing to all mankind!

Our Creator knew that we would need a period of rest and worship every seventh day, and this is the basic purpose for which the Sabbath was created. Each of us tends to become overly absorbed in our daily cares, work, and pleasure during the week. Our Creator foresaw this, and set apart His Sabbath day as a consecrated time when we can completely forget our daily routine and draw closer to the Creator God in study, meditation, and prayer. Modern mankind desperately needs this period of time in which to have real communion with its Maker and God. Taking time to think about God, to worship Him, to pray, to study, and to meditate upon the purpose for human existence and upon God’s revealed laws of life—all this adds great strength and meaning to human life the other six days of the week. The Sabbath is one of the greatest blessings that has ever been bestowed upon the human family!

The Command Expounded

Understanding that the Sabbath command is just as binding as the commandments against murder and adultery, let us proceed to analyze and expound this commandment of God and its application

to our personal lives today. Besides the explanatory and expository statements, the fourth commandment consists of two basic injunctions: First, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” Second, “Six days you shall labor and do all your work.”

It is by the authority of God that the first six days of the week are appointed for man’s business and labor. It is the will of God that human beings should work and earn their daily bread. One who continually idles away time in the six days is as guilty in the sight of God as one who works on the seventh! The idle person is ordinarily clothed with rags, and his idle mind and hands lead him into many wretched vices and sins. This second part of the Sabbath command is just as binding as the first! One who never works is totally unfit for worship! The honest, purposeful work of the six days is in itself an act of worship and obedience to God. We are placed in a world that contains all that is necessary for our physical being, but to obtain it we must work! It is part of the original intention of God, for mankind was placed in the Garden of Eden “to tend and keep it” (Genesis 2:15).

However, in like manner, one who never pauses from daily business and pursuits to worship as God has commanded on the seventh day that He has made holy and set apart is—through lack of contact with his Maker—rendered incapable of the highest potential achievement in work, in service, and in the joy of accomplishment. Since the very Creator has so commanded, we can keep the Sabbath day of rest and spiritual rejuvenation with complete confidence that God will bless and prosper us because we have done so!

A Paid Vacation

Normally speaking, if you would quit working every few days to take a needed rest, you might naturally expect to get behind with your work and finances. But God Himself has set in motion a great law. God’s Ten Commandments are living, active laws in operation—they work automatically. The law of the Sabbath, backed up by the very power of the Creator, says that if you will pause to rest and worship Almighty God on the seventh day every week, you will be so blessed during the work of the six days that this will more than make up for what you might have accomplished by laboring on God’s Sabbath!

Do you realize what this amounts to? In one way of looking at it, God is giving us a paid vacation every seventh day! But this vacation is

not only for the purpose of physical rest—it is also a time for worship, for spiritual rededication, for the contemplation and exercise of the spiritual purposes and laws of life that God has set. In the observance of the *seventh* day, which God has made holy—and which *alone* points to creation—man is brought into close communion with his Maker and his God. For God’s very presence and His divine blessing are especially evident in this day that He has set apart and sanctified.

These are the busiest days that humanity has ever seen. These are days in which most men seem to have little or no time for the contemplation of the spiritual purposes and goals of life—the most important questions that mankind ought to be considering. The tremendous blessing of God’s true Sabbath is that it enables human beings to take time to fully consider and weigh these most important of all questions in life—and to commune with our God and Creator in a way that few in this age have ever experienced. The true observance of the Sabbath would keep mankind in contact with God! Without that contact, we are cut off from the very purpose of our existence, from the laws that govern our success or failure in life, from an understanding of what we are, where we are going, and how to get there. Without this contact with the Creator God, human life is emptiness, frustration, and a thing of vanity. In this age above all others, mankind needs the contact with God, the spiritual strength and understanding, and the divine blessing and guidance that proper observance of God’s true Sabbath provides.

Jesus’ Example

Jesus Christ, the inspired example of how every true Christian ought to live, taught by His own life and actions that the Sabbath is a holy convocation—commanded assembly—for God’s people, as is taught in Leviticus 23:3. Jesus’ example and customary practice is recorded in Luke 4:16, where we read that Jesus, “as His custom was... went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.” Certainly, the *true* Sabbath is a day for the worship and adoration of God by His called servants. And it is a time for the preaching and expounding of God’s word and His living laws. It is the duty of every true Christian, then, to find out where that Church is in which he can really worship God “in spirit and in truth,” a Church that properly observes the true Sabbath of the Creator God and in which Christians are taught to live “by *every* word of God” (Luke 4:4).

The Ten Commandments

There are a number of churches that believe in keeping the fourth commandment. But most of these churches, in their teaching and practice, directly break one or more of the other commandments. Jesus founded only one Church (Matthew 16:18), and it alone keeps all of God's commandments. You need to find out about this Church. Write immediately for the informative *free* booklet *God's Church Through the Ages*. We also offer personal services to help you understand where God's Church is and to help you with any questions you may have. The Living Church of God has ministers available across the United States and many other parts of the world, ready to counsel with you personally to answer any questions you may have about the Church or how to keep the Sabbath. Of course, none of them will call on you uninvited. But if you of your own volition want to discuss these vital subjects with a qualified and dedicated servant of God, please write and let us know. We would be happy to send one of our ministers to see you.

Rejoice in God's Sabbath

Learn to keep the Sabbath in a positive way! Use the seventh day that God has sanctified and made holy as He has intended—to rest from worldly labor, to pray, to study, and to meditate on God's word and the purpose for human existence. Take time to do good to others, to care for the sick, to visit the afflicted. Assemble with other true Christians on the Sabbath if this is possible. The seventh day, which God made holy, is the commanded and God-blessed time for rest, for worship, and for contemplation of the vital keys to the meaning of life. If you have any doubt whatsoever about the day on which the Sabbath should be observed, write for our free booklet *Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath?* Properly understood and properly observed, the fourth commandment—the keeping of God's holy Sabbaths—is one of the greatest blessings that the Creator has ever bestowed upon the children of men! It is an identifying sign between mankind and the true God. Remember it—keep it holy!

The Fifth Commandment

Youthful violence and insolence characterize the age in which we live. Broken homes are increasing. Teenage crime is absolutely skyrocketing! Years ago, one of America's most respected authorities on juvenile problems, Judge Samuel S. Leibowitz, set out to find the answer to the frustration of America's youth. He decided to go to the Western nation with the lowest reported incidence of juvenile crime: Italy. He sought the reason from police and school officials throughout the nation. From every part of Italy, he received the same answer: young people in Italy respected authority. Judge Leibowitz had to go into Italian homes to find out *why*. He found that even in the poorest home, the wife and children respected and honored the father as its head. He found that the modern do-as-you-please, permissive world does not really make a child happy and balanced. Rather, a child wants the solid walls of discipline and rules around him, defining his world—telling him exactly how far he can go. Just as will be expected of him in the adult world, a child must be disciplined to do things he does not necessarily want to do. From infancy, a child must be taught to respect and obey his parents. Judge Leibowitz concluded his investigations with a nine-word solution to juvenile delinquency: ***Put father back at the head of the family*** (“Nine Words That Can Stop Juvenile Delinquency,” *The Daily News of the Virgin Islands*, January 20, 1959).

The remarkable answer to juvenile problems given by this eminent authority goes deeper than might be realized, for it goes to the very source of the problem—a lack of deep-seated respect for author-

ity, beginning in infancy and continuing throughout life. This problem has its origin in childhood—in the home! Long before a child is even aware of the existence of church, school, or nation, he is forming attitudes and habits toward those who are his superiors in the nursery, the home, and the neighborhood. Developed from infancy, this part of a child's character will undoubtedly affect his thoughts and actions for the rest of his life!

The Fifth Commandment Stated

The first four commandments define man's relationship with God. They teach us the magnitude of God's power and name—and exhort us to remember Him as the Creator of all that is. The fifth commandment is placed first among those that govern our human relationships. It is not only chief in importance among these, when we understand its full meaning, but it acts as a "bridge" between the two sections of God's law, for true obedience to the fifth commandment is inevitably linked with obedience and honor toward God Himself! Our Creator knew this when He inspired it to be "the first commandment with promise" (Ephesians 6:2). "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you" (Exodus 20:12). Why honor our parents? The true answer reveals the depth of this commandment and its true import.

If only every parent on earth might come to realize the tremendous influence upon a child's later life that automatically comes as a direct result of obedience or disobedience to this God-given command! This commandment is one of the ten great points of God's eternal, spiritual law. Under the Old Testament dispensation, the penalty for directly and flagrantly violating this law was death! "And he who strikes his father or his mother shall be surely put to death.... And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death" (Exodus 21:15, 17). That is how important this command is in God's eyes! *The home and the family unit are the basis of all decent society.* And the relationship of children to their parents is an exact type of the spiritual relationship between true Christians and God. The lessons of character learned in that relationship may last children the rest of their lives—and for eternity! In the eyes of a small child, a parent stands in the place of God Himself, for the loving and affectionate parent is the child's provider, protector, teacher, and lawgiver.

A child's early training and response to this relationship will in large measure determine his later response to the larger relationships with society. And, ultimately, it is certain to affect his relationship with his spiritual Father in heaven.

Honor and Respect for Parents

The New Testament magnifies this command in many places. The Apostle Paul wrote, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother,' which is the first commandment with promise" (Ephesians 6:1-2). The original command to honor father and mother applies to all of us throughout our lives. But in this place children specifically are told to obey their parents "in the Lord." Because of his total lack of experience and judgment, it is absolutely necessary that a child be taught to obey his parents instantly and without question. Explanations and reasons for this may and should be given to the child from time to time, but, at the moment a parental command is given, there may not be time or opportunity to give the reason why! Therefore it is imperative that a child be taught the habit of unquestioning obedience to his parents. For, until the young child develops, his parents stand to him in the place of God. And God holds them responsible for teaching and directing the child properly.

Obedience "in the Lord"

By direct implication, parents are bound by the fifth commandment to make themselves honorable—for to be honored, one must be honorable. All parents need to realize that they represent God to their children! Parents should live lives worthy of a child's deep respect and reverence. Then they should teach their children to honor and respect *both* of their parents. As their children mature, parents should instruct them about the existence of the great spiritual Father of all life, the Creator of heaven and earth, the sovereign Ruler of the universe—Almighty God. Christian parents should teach their children to honor and obey their spiritual Father with even more implicit faith and love than they do their earthly parents, for the greatest lesson that a child or anyone can be taught is that of fear and obedience to the One who set in motion all life in the first place! Thus, children will be taught the habit of obedience. They will learn to respect authority. In due time, if their minds are opened to know the Supreme Father of

all life, they will already have learned the very basis of godly character—loving obedience to God, and deep respect and reverence for all law and constituted authority.

Blessing for Obedience

The Apostle Paul reemphasizes the blessing attached to the fifth commandment: "... that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth" (Ephesians 6:3). Obedience to the fifth commandment automatically results in the building of habits and character that tend to long life. A young person so trained will avoid the recklessness, the violence, the wrong companionship, and the rebellion against authority that often result in untimely death. And, in its ultimate meaning, those who learn to respect and obey their parents— and, later, because of this training, God Himself—will certainly "live long on the earth," for, as Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek [the humble and obedient], for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5).

There are also many everyday blessings to the obedient child. Certainly not the least of these is a sense of security. As Judge Leibowitz pointed out, a child is confused if he is not told the bounds of his activities. But if a child is told what those bounds are by his parents—and stays within them—he is then relieved of the responsibility that he innately realizes his parents must shoulder. Frustration is another problem that is alleviated. The disobedient child is a frustrated child—for his mind is constantly plagued with feelings of guilt and rebellion. A child who loves, honors, and obeys his parents is a blessed child indeed. He will tend to live a more truly happy, carefree, and purposeful life. And in his spiritual life, he will pass through the natural and beautiful sequence from the honoring of his parents to the joyful worshiping of his God!

Thus far we have dealt primarily with the application of the fifth commandment to children and young people. But the original command to "honor" our parents is not addressed just to children, but to everyone.

Even Adults Should Honor Their Parents

The time may come when it is no longer necessary or right that a person should strictly obey his parents. But the day should never come when he ceases to honor them. The word "honor" has a much larger

meaning than that of obedience. It indicates a high respect, as for worth, merit, or rank. It denotes a feeling of high esteem and reverence. A person who has properly obeyed his parents in childhood later expresses his honor for them in a deeper appreciation of the comforts and training they provided him as a child. This honor expresses itself in courtesy, thoughtfulness, and kind deeds. As we mature, it becomes increasingly evident that untold hours of work, anxious thought, and agonized prayer were bestowed for our welfare by faithful and loving parents. It should become the delight of every decent man and woman to return this love that our parents showered on us. In the evening of life, many parents long for this affection and fellowship with their children—more, perhaps, than for any other blessing. Let us think and act on this opportunity to return the love our parents so freely gave!

To the everlasting shame of our professing Christian society, thousands of elderly parents are reduced to living on a mere pittance that comes to them through governmental agencies. In all too many cases, the children are able but simply unwilling to provide additional comforts for their parents. Jesus Christ gave one of the most forceful interpretations of the fifth commandment in its application to this very problem. In His day, men were excusing themselves from providing for the necessities of their parents. They were saying that funds that might have been used in this way were “Corban”—that is, dedicated to the service of the altar. These funds were not part of God’s tithe, but rather an additional offering that was used to gain favor in approaching God. Reproaching these hypocritical religionists, Jesus said, “All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death’” (Mark 7:9–10). Now notice how these hypocrites “reasoned” their way around this commandment! Jesus continued, “But you say, ‘If a man says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban”—’... then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, making the word of God of no effect through your tradition” (vv. 11–13). Jesus condemned these hypocrites. His words plainly teach that a Christian must give material and financial assistance to his aged parents if it is possible and their needs so require. He must not excuse himself by saying that all his extra funds are “dedicated to God”! This is a part of our obedience to the fifth commandment.

Jesus' Own Personal Example

Jesus Christ *lived* the message He taught. His own personal life is a dramatic illustration of *obedience* to the fifth commandment. Just before His death, Jesus said, "I have kept My Father's commandments" (John 15:10). Through obedience to His heavenly Father, and to His human parents as well, Jesus grew in wisdom and maturity even as a youth. Even in His dying moments, while suffering one of the most agonizing deaths ever devised by men, Jesus honored and loved His mother to the very end. Just before He died on the stake, John records, "When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, 'Woman, behold your son!' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother!' And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home" (John 19:26–27). Here Jesus made final provision for John to take care of His mother after His death.

At a time when the thoughts of all other men would have been of *self*, Jesus still remembered the fifth commandment and extended love and honor to the woman who gave Him birth, who nourished Him from infancy, who taught Him the Scriptures, and who now stood in this awful place—unashamed—weeping at His death. Remember the *perfect example* of Jesus Christ! "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you" (Exodus 20:12).

The Sixth Commandment

This is an age of hate and violence. It is an age of intense competition, strife, and personal tensions. Individuals in all nations of the earth are conditioning their minds and consciences to the likelihood of wholesale murder and possibly world suicide. Naturally, this situation is devastating to the spiritual principles and ideals of our people. The effect of this is being felt now—even as you read this booklet. We have seen the blessings that come through awe and respect for the one true God, through reverencing His name and office, through hallowing His Sabbath day and keeping it in the true knowledge of Him, and through honoring our fathers and mothers in their high office that directly reflects God’s fatherhood and love for all creation. In all these commandments, we have seen love, wisdom, and blessings. And so it is with the sixth commandment.

Amid the thunder, lightning, and literal shaking of Mount Sinai, God’s voice *thundered* the sixth commandment: “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13). Biblical authorities agree that “murder” is a more correct reading of the original inspired Hebrew than the word “kill,” for it is possible to *kill* yet not *murder*. And it is important to understand that only the letter of God’s law was given to ancient Israel, whereas Christians are to live by the spirit and fullest intent of that law as magnified by Christ Himself. Under the original letter of the law, it was intentional killing or murder that was forbidden. Remember that in this same “book of the covenant” given to Israel, God commanded them to kill or execute those guilty of major

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crimes (Exodus 21:12–17). Also, the instructions in Numbers 35:9–34 show that accidental killing was not regarded as murder. Even here, though, manslaughter was obviously a terrible offense—and the careless or unwitting slayer had to remain in a city of refuge for perhaps many years until the high priest died. Just as God commanded capital punishment for serious crimes under the letter of the law, so the commanded wars of Israel should be viewed not as acts of wholesale murder but the carrying out of the divine will through human instruments. Notice in Deuteronomy 7:1–2 that God directly commanded Israel to exterminate the heathen tribes in the land of Canaan. This was not humanly devised warfare, nor was it personal vengeance or malice. It was the express will of Almighty God who gives life—and who alone has the right to say when it shall be taken.

Incidentally, it should be noted that the history of the time indicates that these nations occupying Canaan were absolutely wicked in the extreme, *burning alive their own children* in human sacrifice to their pagan gods. This was part of the intelligent reason why the Creator ordered their extermination at that time. Notice that in all these cases where God permitted human beings to take life, it was only as His agent—at His express will. God’s original purpose was that mankind should learn not to kill. And although it was permitted in certain instances to the carnal, unconverted people of Israel, we shall see that God is now developing in His Spirit-begotten children the character to love, to serve, and to save life—not to destroy it.

The Source of Life

“Then God said, Let Us make man in *Our image*, according to *Our likeness*; let them have *dominion*” (Genesis 1:26). Man is given life by his Creator. He does not give it to himself. Neither may he take it from himself—or from others. Life is sacred because it is God-given. Mankind has been made in the very image and likeness of God. Of all the physical creation, only human beings have the type of mind that God possesses. God is the Ruler of all that is. But out of human flesh He is forming literal sons who will someday share in that rule. So God said they were to “have dominion....” Human beings need experience in order to develop the character God purposes for us. Experience requires time. And a human life consists of just so much time. God gave that life for the supreme purpose of preparing another son to be in

His Kingdom and Family forever. The giving of life, breath, and ability includes all mankind. It is the most wonderful gift of which physical mankind has knowledge. The taking of life ends all. It cruelly and unexpectedly crushes all the hopes, dreams, and plans of a being made in the very image of the Creator Himself. It is a wicked usurpation of a prerogative belonging to God alone, who gives life in the first place—and who alone has the authority to take it away (Job 1:21). That is why *any* form of murder is one of the ten great sins; it is destroying the highest creation of Almighty God! In effect, it is an attempt to thwart the very purpose of the great sovereign Ruler of the universe! The Giver of all life is God, and puny, mortal human beings have no business whatsoever interfering with God's *greatest gift!*

Personal Application of the Commandment

Jesus Christ came into this world to “exalt” God’s law and “make it honorable” (Isaiah 42:21). Jesus cast a spotlight, as it were, on the Ten Commandments, and showed their real spiritual intent and meaning in the full Christian life. Jesus said, “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’ But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire” (Matthew 5:21–22).

Here murder is traced to its source—hate and anger. Christ declared that if personal anger fills the heart of one of His subjects, such a person is in danger of judgment. If that anger leads a man to have utter derision and contempt for a fellow human being, that man shall be “in danger of the council”—of God’s punishment. If in bitterness and scorn one shall say of his fellow, “You fool,” such a one shall be “in danger of hell fire.” *This* is Jesus Christ’s application of the sixth commandment to us. If we harbor hate and anger in our hearts, we are harboring the spirit of murder. Action follows thought. First we think, then we do! The Spirit of Christ guides us not only to control our actions, but to control our thoughts and our attitudes. In part, the New Covenant is the process of God writing His law in our hearts and minds (Hebrews 8:10). God spoke through Paul, “Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord” (Romans 12:19).

Mankind is incapable of taking vengeance with proper wisdom and justice for all concerned. God alone has the wisdom, the power, and the right to take vengeance on human beings—to the extent of executing them if need be.

The true Christian must learn that God is real—and that His protection and His vengeance are just as real! How, then, should you deal with your enemies? “Therefore ‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (vv. 20–21). It takes real strength of character to help and serve your fellow human being when he has directly tried to harm you! It takes the spiritual wisdom to realize that he is a fellow human being, made in the image of God, and simply misguided for the time being in his thoughts and actions.

Humanity’s Greatest Crime

Perhaps the greatest international crime of humanity is the scourge of war. Millions of human lives created in the image of God have been mercilessly slaughtered down through the ages in useless, senseless, idiotic wars that in most cases failed utterly to accomplish their stated purpose! The spirit of God’s law as magnified by Jesus Christ is totally opposed to every form of war! Nearly all the really great religious and political leaders of the world have acknowledged the utter futility of war. Before the outbreak of World War II, Pope Pius XII declared, “Everything is gained by peace; nothing is gained by war.” One of the most respected statesmen and military leaders of our time, General Douglas MacArthur, stated the following:

Men since the beginning of time have sought peace.... Military alliances, balances of power, leagues of nations, all in turn failed, leaving the only path to be by way of the crucible of war. The utter destructiveness of war now blots out this alternative. We have had our last chance. If we do not now devise some greater and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at our door. The problem basically is theological and involves a spiritual recrudescence and improvement of human character that will synchronize with our almost matchless advance in science, art, literature

and all material and cultural developments of the past two thousand years. It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh (“General Douglas MacArthur: Radio Broadcast to the Nation Following the USS Missouri Surrender Ceremony,” *AmericanRhetoric.com*, delivered September 2, 1945).

Humanity’s “last chance” is to repent of the sin of war before human annihilation removes every vestige of life from this planet! As General MacArthur acknowledged, the problem we face is theological—it is a spiritual problem involving a true knowledge of the true God and “an improvement of human character.”

The greatest statesman of all times was Jesus Christ. He was the Spokesman for the government or Kingdom of God. Christ said, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you” (Matthew 5:43–44). There is a great deal of highly respected, cultured, and educated paganism abroad in the world today under the name of “Christianity.” But can even this sophisticated paganism face these clear words of Jesus Christ without confessing that His life, His teaching, and His Spirit condemn the very essence of war? More lives have been snuffed out prematurely, more suffering has been endured, more homes have been wrecked and broken, more time and property has been utterly wasted through the scourge of war than through any other means in the history of man! And war has never solved the problems of men or brought permanent peace. Instead, it only breeds more war, “for all who take the sword will *perish* by the sword” (Matthew 26:52).

The Bible Teaching

Jesus Christ came into this world as a messenger of the government or Kingdom of God. He took no part in this world’s politics or wars. On trial for His very life before Pontius Pilate, He said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here” (John 18:36). As we have stated, only God who gave life has the right to take life. Therefore, only God has the right to wage war! And, as Jesus taught, God does not choose to have

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His children wage war for Him during this age. Jesus said that His servants would fight if His Kingdom were of this world. But it is not. Through the Apostle James, God shows that war results from a type of spirit exactly opposite of what He wants His servants to have. “Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask” (James 4:1–2).

God’s Government Will End War

Jesus Christ came preaching the good news of the government or rule of God. That rule is based on the Ten Commandments—God’s spiritual law. Jesus magnified that law and showed its spiritual intent and purpose. He taught that if we even hate our brother, we are spiritually guilty of murder! Jesus taught that men should obey the laws of God and prepare for His coming Kingdom by yielding themselves to let God’s laws—His character—be placed within them. When God’s government does come very soon now to this earth, His law will go forth as the standard of conduct of all nations (Micah 4:1–2). At that time, God alone will wage war to punish rebellious nations in perfect wisdom and justice. As for the peoples of the world themselves? “Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (v. 3). War involves learning to hate and kill. Young men will no longer be forced to learn an attitude that is diametrically opposed to the rule of God’s law of love. Dwight D. Eisenhower once said, “Man’s hope for world peace does not rest in opposing armed camps, but in an idea. That idea is the concept of a rule of law as the means of settling disputes among sovereign states” (*Congressional Record*, 1960, vol. 106, part 8, p. 10929). Whether this former President realized it or not, he pointed out the fact that only the government of God, based on His laws, will solve the problems of men and nations! But meanwhile, true Christians must work and pray for God’s Kingdom of peace, and we must realize that the spirit of war is the spirit of murder—and avoid it with all of our strength.

Speaking before the League of Nations, American clergyman Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick years ago put this thought in a very powerful way that still rings true today:

We cannot reconcile Jesus Christ and war—that is the essence of the matter. That is the challenge which today should stir the conscience of Christendom. War is the most colossal and ruinous social sin that afflicts mankind; it is utterly and irremediably unchristian; in its total method and effect it means everything that Jesus did not mean and it means nothing that He did mean; it is a more blatant denial of every Christian doctrine about God and man than all the theoretical atheists on earth ever could devise. It would be worth while, would it not, to see the Christian Church claim as her own this greatest moral issue of our time, to see her lift once more, as in our fathers' days, a clear standard against the paganism of this present world and, refusing to hold her conscience at the beck and call of belligerent states, put the Kingdom of God above nationalism and call the world to peace? That would not be the denial of patriotism but its apotheosis (*Best Sermons 1926*, ed. Joseph Newton, 1926, pp. 17–18).

The essence of the matter is that Jesus Christ is against the spirit of murder in every form. He is against war—and someday He will put an end to it forever! He is against all malice, envy, and hate. Jesus Christ taught the dignity of mankind and the sacredness of human life, created in the image of God. And the great Father of Jesus Christ, the Almighty God who governs the universe from His throne in heaven—that God thunders at an age of violence and rebellion, “You shall not murder.”

The Seventh Commandment

Is “sexual compatibility” the all-important thing in marriage? In this age of broken homes, juvenile delinquency, and modern psychology, many will say that the answer is “Yes.” But the fact remains that the more “modern” theories about marriage are put into practice, the faster the divorce rate climbs and the more little children are doomed to grow up without the blessing of a stable, happy home. It is a painful fact that almost half of all marriages in America end in the divorce courts—and while the marriages end, the suffering, anguish, and grief do not. For the little children of such broken homes, the years of frustration and emptiness are only beginning. Is there a real meaning to marriage that modern men and women need to understand? Are there God-given laws and principles that can safeguard a Christian marriage and make it happy and purposeful?

The Seventh Commandment Stated

The Creator God devoted two of His ten great spiritual laws—the Ten Commandments—to protecting the relationships in the home and family. In this booklet, we have already discussed the first of these: “Honor your father and mother....” The other law directly governing the home and family is contained in the seventh commandment: “You shall not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14). Almighty God gave this commandment to protect the honor and sanctity of marriage. Immediately after the sixth command, which declares the sacredness of human life, God gives this law to safeguard the highest earthly relationship, for marriage

and the home are the basis of all decent society. The words of the command directly forbid adultery as violating the sacred rights of the marriage relation. Its spirit makes evident the fact that all unchaste conduct before marriage is a wrong done to the future marriage and unfaithfulness before marriage is violating the command as much as adultery committed after marriage. The seventh commandment covers in principle all forms of illicit sex, including male and female homosexuality—now an *enormous sin* in the Western world. Marriage is in God's sight such a precious, righteous, holy thing that it must not be defiled! The meaning of marriage and its great purpose in God's plan needs *desperately* to be understood in this age of unhappy marriages and broken homes.

The Purpose of Marriage

It is impossible to understand the true meaning of marriage without first understanding that sex and marriage are God-given and God-ordained. To leave God out of the picture—as this modern age is doing—is to degrade the marriage union to mere animalism. Notice *God's* purpose in creating man and woman! “And the LORD God said [after He had made only the man], ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him’” (Genesis 2:18). God saw that a man was incomplete by himself, and so He decided to make a “helper” *suitable* for a man—one with whom a man could really share his life. So the first and primary purpose of marriage is to make man and woman complete. Each is incomplete without the other.

Man alone was not able to fulfill the purpose for which God created him—was not able to learn the lessons of character that God intended. So God created the woman as a “helper” to the man and, in that very creation, showed that they were to dwell together as man and wife in one fleshly union—to share everything in this life and so make their lives meaningful and complete (in a physical sense, at least). The second purpose of sex and marriage is the begetting and training of children, for God had told the man and woman, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28). With begetting children comes the responsibility of protecting and training them. A stable, happy home and marriage are indispensable to the correct nurture and training of a child. And God commands, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6). The home and family form the basis of

all decent society! The lessons of character learned in the home—patience, understanding, kindness—all of these are qualities that God wants in us for all eternity, and the family relationship is one of the best places in which they can be learned! Better than in any other place, the lessons of decency, loyalty, and a sense of responsibility are learned in a happy and well-balanced home. And so, in addition to making us complete and the begetting and training of children, a third great purpose of sex and marriage is the building of character in the home and family relationship. The Kingdom and law of God are based on love. Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). To obey God’s law of marriage, man and wife must give themselves to each other in every phase and facet of their lives.

Marriage Pictures Christ and His Church

As ordained by God, the marriage union is holy. It is so holy that, in His word, Almighty God uses the marriage union as a type (a model or parallel) of the relationship between Christ and His Church! Notice Ephesians 5:22–24: “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, *as also* Christ is head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.” Here, God shows that in the Christian home the wife is to submit herself to her husband as the head of that home, just as she must learn to submit to Christ Himself for all eternity! In this holy relationship, she is learning a lesson of lasting faithfulness!

Then the husbands are addressed: “Husbands, *love* your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her.... So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself” (vv. 25, 28). Jesus Christ served, helped, trained, protected, and eventually gave Himself for His Church. So husbands are to protect, to provide for, to guide, to encourage, to love, and to give to their wives! A Christian man is to be the head of his house. Yet he is to use that office to serve and to give protection, guidance, and happiness to his wife and family. And Almighty God holds him responsible for being the right kind of head! Because of this great lesson and purpose in marriage, God says, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh” (v. 31). In the marriage union, man

and woman are made one. Their relationship is then to picture the eternal, loving, and serving relationship of Christ and His Church. Therefore, nothing should come between them.

The lesson of marriage is to teach us eternal faithfulness to Jesus Christ as our Head! To separate from one's God-given mate is to fail to learn the lesson that God intends for us to learn in marriage. It is a reproach to Almighty God—for it denies His wisdom in ordaining the marriage union in making us truly “one flesh” with our mate! How can we ever be faithful to the living God throughout all eternity if we selfishly refuse to be faithful to the mate to whom we are bound in this life for only a few years and fail to learn the lessons of patience, kindness, longsuffering, self-control, love, and faithfulness in the sacred marriage union?

What Jesus Christ Taught

Now it becomes increasingly clear why Jesus Christ taught the enduring quality of the marriage vow. When Jesus was asked by the hypocritical Pharisees why Moses allowed divorce in Old Testament times, He answered, “Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery” (Matthew 19:8–9). Divorce generates divorce! The commonplace granting of divorces, as is so prevalent today, was practically unheard of even 50 years ago. The religious leaders of that time and before warned us that if divorce were once tolerated, there would be no restraint powerful enough to keep it within the limits then fixed. Today we see the truth of this warning! We now behold the sad and miserable spectacle of as many as one half—or, in some areas, more—of all marriages ending in failure in the divorce courts of men! And after divorce, what? It is a matter of record that most divorced persons seek a second mate, and many find a third or a fourth mate to satisfy a desire that God intended to be satisfied, channeled, and uplifted in the holy and sacred marriage with their first mate—who in most cases is still living at the time of the remarriage. This is a pitiful spectacle and a national disgrace!

Even though God *permits* divorce in certain instances, it is far better for each marriage partner to learn to help, serve, and *forgive*

the other, and thus preserve the sacred marriage bond. Jesus' famous exception clause, "except for sexual immorality [*porneia*]" (Matthew 19:9), should be employed *only* as a last resort and even then after much prayer, counsel, and sincere attempts to save the marriage. And the same would apply to the Apostle Paul's permission for the Christian to remarry if *deserted* by an unconverted mate (1 Corinthians 7:15).

Marriage Is Ordained of God

We now see that marriage is not something that just evolved through the reasoning and gradual civilization of man. Rather, marriage was ordained by the Creator God. He ordained it as a holy union picturing the everlasting faithfulness between Christ and His Church! And every form of adultery is so very wrong and evil because marriage is holy and sacred in the sight of Almighty God. Adultery is not only an offense to the aggrieved husband or wife involved; it is an offense to their home and their children. It is an offense against society—because it strikes at the very *basis* of all decent society. But, most of all, it is an offense against God Himself and against an institution that He has ordained.

In America and Britain today, a God-rejecting society all too often seeks a Hollywood-type romantic ideal in marriage. Thus men and women are subtly encouraged to break the marriage covenant if their selfish, sensual desires are not fulfilled with the wife or husband of their youth. In a "marriage-go-round" society, they fail to learn the basic lessons of character that marriage can and should teach—outgoing concern for their mate, patience, mercy, humility, service, and lasting faithfulness. In addition, they fail to consider the suffering and frustration of the children from their original marriage—the irreparable damage done to their lives and minds that will carry over into yet future generations and future marriages.

Truly, even though God *allows* some marriages and homes to be shattered by divorce, it is something our Creator abhors. "For the LORD God of Israel says that He *hates* divorce" (Malachi 2:16). Again, "the LORD has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant" (v. 14). There is no question, then, that God hates divorce—even though He allows it. To learn the lessons God intends in marriage, true Christians should seek to "cleave" to their mates in body, mind, and attitude. They should seek earnestly to under-

stand each other—to share freely and joyously their plans, their hopes, their dreams. And, with God’s help, they will crush any adulterous and lustful thoughts that present themselves. The sin of lust is more fully understood when you realize how righteous and holy the proper use of sex in marriage is to Almighty God the Creator. The process of adultery, and the process of divorce and remarriage, usually begin in the heart.

Notice how Jesus Christ covered this point in magnifying the law of God and making it holy: “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matthew 5:27–28). Jesus taught that you break the seventh commandment when you even so much as entertain thoughts of sexual lust toward another person. Action follows thought. So it is part of the development of Christian character for every God-fearing person to learn to guide and to channel his thoughts away from all lust and illicit desires.

Meanwhile, in the industries that control the most realistic, lifelike media that influence and move young people to action—movies and television—the emphasis in an ever-increasing number of productions is upon sex or violence, or a combination of both. But modern society is paying a terrible penalty for these widespread sins and abominations! More and more homes are made miserable and wretched because of adulterous relations of one or both mates. Increasing numbers of homes are broken in divorce. More children are being left without the love and guidance of both parents! And illicit sexual intercourse before marriage—called “fornication” by God—is becoming an epidemic among young people in today’s society. Yet any and all of these things constitute breaking the seventh commandment! Those young people who are cheapening and damaging the happiness of their future marriages through illicit sex before marriage are seriously injuring their entire future in this present life. And unless they repent and stop this vile practice, they will force God by an eternal necessity to exclude them from His Kingdom and everlasting life and happiness (1 Corinthians 6:9–10). God’s laws are always for our own good and the good of those around us. They should be obeyed. We should fear being counted with the “abominable” and “sexually immoral” who will have their part in the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death (Revelation 21:8)!

Obey the Seventh Commandment

God gives some important advice to those who are tempted to commit fornication or adultery. In this age of sexual stimulation and lust, it is invaluable to *heed* this advice if you would enter into the Kingdom of God and eternal life. God says, “*Flee sexual immorality*” (1 Corinthians 6:18). He does not say to let your mind dwell on sexual ideas or desires. He does not say to place yourself alone with another person’s mate or with a single person with whom you might be sexually tempted. He does not say to watch movies or television or read books that wrongly stimulate the sexual appetite. God does say to get as far away from these things as you possibly can! He says to run away—flee—from temptation to sexually sin.

Sex is not a toy to be played and experimented with. It should be regarded as a God-given blessing in the holy and sacred marriage union that the Creator Himself has ordained. It should always be thought of with reverence and as an expression of unselfish love in a Christian union that pictures the everlasting faithfulness of Christ and His Church! This generation needs desperately to learn the lesson of lasting faithfulness in marriage and in the home! It needs to obey both the letter and the spirit of God’s seventh commandment: “You shall not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14).

The Eighth Commandment

After the God of heaven thundered from the top of Mt. Sinai the commandments ordaining the true worship of Him and laws protecting the most sacred human relationships—the home, the family, and human life itself—God gave the eighth commandment. This is God’s law protecting all private property and possessions: “You shall not steal” (Exodus 20:15).

Because men do not think the God who gave this commandment is real—and do not fear to disobey His law—we have more physical theft than ever before. But we also violate the eighth commandment in hundreds of ways through a watered-down system of morality. After discussing some debased scheme by which to cheat a business competitor or customer, executives shrug their shoulders and say, “Well, that’s just business.” Or, after a meeting involving false measurement, poor quality, or misleading advertising, a businessman will say, “What’s the difference? If I don’t do it, somebody else will.”

When cheating the government or falsifying an income tax return, the common American phrase to salve one’s conscience is, “Let Uncle Sam sweat this time. The government is taking too much money anyway. So what?” Yes, so what? Is that “just business”? Well, it also happens to be God’s business—and He has set in motion a law stating, “You shall not steal.” When you break God’s law, the punishment is automatic and it is sure.

The Right to Property

According to God's word and His law, there are only two right ways by which you can come into possession of anything. The first is by a free gift—or an inheritance—from another person, or from God Himself. The second is by honest labor, which earns something as a legitimate return. Any other way is theft—the taking from another that which belongs to him.

The eighth commandment recognizes the legitimate acquisition of property and forbids theft. It is important to note that, in principle, the eighth commandment forbids all forms of communism that deny man's right to property. It also forbids international thievery, in which governments forcibly confiscate and steal the property and possessions of their own or other nations' citizens. And, to our lasting shame, *all* nations stand guilty of breaking God's law in this respect! Young people today are learning to steal in an immensely large and organized fashion. Not only are they purloining articles by the thousands from stores, shops, schools, and even churches, but they regularly organize an intricate system of cheating on tests and exams in schools and colleges. Because it is generally looked on without too much alarm, this practice is growing at an unprecedented rate. But what the young people may not have been told is that cheating is taking a score or grade illegally—and is stealing. It is directly breaking the eighth commandment of God!

The industrialist or merchant who uses false weights and measures or a poor quality of material or workmanship to deceive the public is just as guilty of breaking the eighth commandment as a common thief! He is trying to get something more than a legitimate return for his product. Viewing the illegal profits he hopes to receive, he is trying to get that extra something for nothing. In principle, he is simply stealing! Yet, in how many thousands of cases this type of lawlessness and deception is practiced, God alone knows.

Thievery Through False Advertising

One of the great commercial sins of our age is the common practice of false advertising. The consumer is led to expect that a certain "pill," for instance, will cause him to lose weight, gain weight, increase his potency, restore his thinning hair, or whatever the case may be. And, in most cases, this statement is a direct, willful lie without any doubt.

Such a practice is, in effect, stealing from the people who pay money to achieve the promised result. In many cases, the victims of these gigantic frauds are not only robbed of money, they are robbed of health, happiness, and peace of mind. Many a “respectable” businessman and community leader has attained his position largely through this type of mass deception and theft!

Our nations and peoples need to wake up! Even when a sin can be made outwardly to appear “respectable,” remember that God is the real Judge. The Almighty has this to say: “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators... nor *thieves*... will inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 6:9–10). Lest any misunderstand, remember that it is God’s will that His servants prosper in material wealth—as long as they gain it honestly and do not set their hearts upon it. The Apostle John wrote, “Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers” (3 John 2).

Tarnished Wealth

Moreover, we must realize that an industrialist’s wealth that is tarnished by an unnecessarily high death rate in his plants or factories is ill-gotten gain—and he is branded in the light of God’s law as a thief, if not a murderer! The principle behind the eighth commandment is broken again and again in the relations of capital and labor. James was inspired to warn the dishonest employer, “Indeed the wages of the laborers... which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries... have reached the ears of the Lord” (James 5:4). It is also equally true—and especially so in this era of corrupt unionism—that many an employee robs his employer! He does this by taking his wage and yet withholding his full share of honest labor. And that is stealing! All too often one laborer tells his coworker, “Slow down, buddy, you’re working too hard. If you keep on working like that, we’ll *all* have to work hard around here!”

British and American laborers, spending an undue proportion of their working time on “tea breaks,” “coffee breaks,” and “cigarette breaks,” are causing their industries to be badly beaten in the worldwide trade war now going on. This lack of productivity is affecting the destiny of the American and British people! The eighth commandment of Almighty God has a message for both capital and labor. To

capital: “A fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work.” To labor: “A fair day’s work for a fair day’s wage.” But just stealing from a fellow human being is not the only principle involved in the eighth commandment. God owns far more property than any man (Haggai 2:8).

Stealing from God

Speaking to modern-day Jacob or Israel, God declares, “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In *tithes* and *offerings*” (Malachi 3:8). God here indicts our modern English-speaking peoples for robbing our very Creator and His Work! No wonder there is so little true religion left on earth today! No wonder there is so much confusion and deceit going about in the name of Christianity! God continues, “‘You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such *blessing* that there will not be room enough to receive it’” (vv. 9–10).

Here is a bold challenge from Almighty God! God says He will bless you if you begin tithing—as He commands—through faith in Him and in His word. Countless case histories may be cited to show that God certainly does bless the tither even in material ways. He may not always do so immediately. You may have to obey Him and exercise faith for a while. But as you serve Him, obey Him, and trust Him, God will keep His part of the bargain. Your blessing is certain to come! Notice this joyful letter from someone who took God’s promise literally: “A few weeks ago I was absolutely broke financially. I received ten cents. I was tempted not to tithe the one cent. I did. Then a few days later I received one dollar. Again, I was tempted to keep the tithe because of many needs. I just received 40 dollars and am getting the tithe off to you as soon as possible. I have been faithful and so has God.”

The Command Applied Positively

The definite positive application of the eighth commandment is stated in the New Testament letter to the Ephesians. “Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need” (Ephesians 4:28). On the one hand, this passage condemns stealing. On the

other, working and giving are outlined as the way of life the positive application of God's command dictates. Property and possessions are to be gained by honest work—not merely to satisfy personal desires and needs, but so that any excess may be freely given to the brother in need. In the real intent or spirit of God's law, a man not only steals by taking from another that which is his, but by refusal to work in order to share and give to others in need! The true Christian should be “distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality” (Romans 12:13).

As God's begotten children, we are to become like Him (Matthew 5:48). And Jesus said, “My Father has been *working* until now, and *I have been working*” (John 5:17). The *positive* lesson of the eighth commandment is also summarized in these all-inclusive words of Jesus, the Christ: “It is more blessed to *give* than to receive” (Acts 20:35). If, through God's Spirit, we can truly learn to live by those words, we will have indeed fulfilled the spirit of the eighth commandment!

The Ninth Commandment

This is the age of the sophisticated lie, the double standard of morality, the “Enron” syndrome. This is the age of respectable-appearing lawyers, industrial leaders, government officials, and college professors perjuring themselves on the witness stand and even before the United States Senate. This age also presents a peculiar spectacle—of millions of people who believe in evolution attending churches that, nominally at least, believe in the Creator God of the Bible. The Christ of the Bible thoroughly condemned the hypocrites of His day. What would He say about our generation?

Society Living a Lie

In his book *Sex, Vice and Business*, noted author Monroe Fry wrote of “the willingness of communities to accept vice when it brings an indirect profit to their respectable businessmen.” His book shows plainly what thousands of sophisticated adults know: that “respectable” church and civic leaders are often ready and willing to support gambling, prostitution, and narcotics if it is to their financial advantage to do so. To the community at large, they appear as the pillars of virtue and respectability. To the procurers of prostitutes, narcotics, or big-time gambling czars, they are ready to make an “undercover deal.” They are ready to use their civic influence or position to let organized vice and crime flourish in their community—so long as they get a financial cut. In plain language, they are living a lie! The revelation

of how much our entire “Christian” society is based on this type of hypocrisy is absolutely astounding! But we are paying a stern penalty nevertheless—for we are breaking the ninth commandment of God.

In this booklet expounding the Ten Commandments, we have seen that the greatest sin of all is putting something else in place of the true God. This, in turn, leads to idolatry, to blaspheming God’s name, to breaking His Sabbath, to dishonoring our human parents, to murder, to adultery, and to stealing. And the exact same principle applies to the ninth commandment of God.

The Ninth Commandment Stated

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor” (Exodus 20:16). It is only in seeking and bearing witness to the truth that man is associated with God, for, in fact, God is truth! Jesus said, “Your word is truth” (John 17:17), and “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). No matter what other faults and weaknesses a person may have, if he is willing to speak the truth, live openly and truthfully what he really is, and acknowledge the truth when it is shown to him, that person can be respected and helped to overcome personal weaknesses.

The far-reaching spiritual applications of the ninth commandment are tremendous. There is a personal, living Almighty God of this universe whose ways and laws are intrinsically right. Therefore, an honest person—one who is willing to speak the truth and acknowledge the truth when it is revealed—must eventually be converted to the true God and His ways! But if one’s word is no good, and one is in the habit of lying to others (and oneself), one’s very character and mental processes are so twisted and perverted so as to prevent understanding the truth of God until one’s lying mind is cleaned up! That is why it is so vitally important that—even though people may have honest differences of opinion on many matters—we all learn to live and speak truthfully. Yet we are living in a society that is increasingly permeated by various forms of untruth, hypocrisy, and self-deception. If we are ever to build the character of God—and inherit eternal life—we must consider the ninth commandment in all of its ramifications and learn to obey it.

The ninth commandment protects every upright and decent person in that it helps guard reputations. Perhaps there is no more despicable sin than that of slander, the lie invented and spread with intent to harm another human being. A thief takes only material goods,

which may usually be replaced. But a false witness who slanders may rob one of esteem and reputation in the eyes of others—and chances are slim that a lost reputation will ever be fully regained.

The Practical Value of Honesty

The immediate value of being able to rely on a man's word would not only guard every decent man's reputation and eliminate millions of wasted hours from the burden of investigating every statement and report several times over, it would also prevent unworthy men from ever being placed in high positions of responsibility. It would absolutely clean up our society! Often, today, entire nations are guided by leaders who are in power only because of their ability to delude and deceive their own people! Throughout the world, we see dictators arising and promising their followers something for nothing. By means of clever propaganda, a leader makes the people believe what he himself knows to be a big lie. Then follow many months or years of uncertainty, anguish, and frustration, until ultimate disaster strikes and the truth is finally made plain only by force of circumstance.

Even in our democratic nations, men are all too often recommended for high office not because of integrity and ability, but because of what seems expedient at the moment in party politics. The political and governmental leaders who countenance this are certainly "bearing false witness" against their fellow countrymen! They are living a lie—as well as helping tell one. In the field of industry and business, think of the tremendous benefit that would come to the public if each company would really tell the truth about its own product and honestly seek to serve the consumer's real needs! The effects of this would be absolutely astounding! Think of a society where each brand of toothpaste and breakfast cereal, for example, is not just an imitation or needless variation of another, but is the only and best of its particular type, honestly priced and truthfully advertised! Apply this to every phase of society and you get something near utopia. But this is not a far-fetched or fantastic suggestion. It is simply the blessing that would come if the entire society really and literally obeyed the ninth commandment of God! If you would live forever in the society of God, you are commanded by Him who gives you life and breath, "Therefore, putting away lying, 'Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,' for we are members of one another" (Ephesians 4:25).

Apply the Ninth Commandment in Your Life

The very root principle of all sin is vanity. “‘Vanity of vanities,’ says the Preacher; ‘Vanity of vanities, all is vanity’” (Ecclesiastes 1:2).

The real reason most men reject the true God is that they want to be “gods” in their own eyes and the eyes of their fellow men. It is vanity. Every sin that is committed by human beings has its ultimate roots in this one principle. And so it is with every form of lying.

People lie because they are more concerned with their own self-esteem and sense of importance than they are with the ultimate good of their neighbor. They speak and act falsely because they fear the opinions of men much more than that of Almighty God Himself! The daily actions and words of nearly all men bear eloquent testimony to the literal truth of this statement. John said even of the religious leaders of his day that “they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God” (John 12:43). Men and women are often ashamed of what they call “failure” in a business or social sense. They will cheat, falsify, and lie in order to avoid this “failure”—or to cover it up.

But from the point of view of what is intrinsically “right”—and of eternal values—the thing they should fear is sin. For, as the Apostle Paul said, “If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31). Jesus said, “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake” (Matthew 5:11). We all had better quit worrying so much about what puny, mortal men think—and become far more concerned about what Almighty God thinks! Then we will learn to cease from all hypocrisy in business, in social life, in politics—and yes, in our religious and scientific endeavors. Remember that many whom this deceitful world condemned have received God’s blessing and are heirs of eternal life. Never forget that it was through the sin of false testimony and lying that Jesus Christ was murdered! “For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree” (Mark 14:56).

Since, through vanity, men want to believe what is popular at the moment, they will kid themselves and their associates into believing even religious and scientific theories that have no basis whatsoever in actual fact! God warns against all such hypocrites: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (Romans 1:18).

Men *suppress* the truth. God is condemning those who knowingly suppress the truth of His existence and His purpose on this earth! God says the vain philosophers and scientists of this world are “without excuse” for denying that He literally created this universe and is now ruling it through His power (v. 20). Most scientists and theologians who believe in the Satan-inspired theory of evolution ought to know better. Some of them do know better! But they are going along with what pleases men and they are living a lie! God says they are “without excuse”!

And in the same category are those ministers and Bible students who continue to teach and practice what they know are ancient heathen and pagan beliefs and customs condemned in the word of God. In all too many cases, they know better! They are “without excuse.” The continued teaching of these basic scientific and spiritual lies is the very thing that is blinding most of this world from the real nature of God and from His true plan and purpose here below. This is the truly terrible result of bearing false witness, self-deception, and lying. As long as supposedly “educated” leaders keep deceiving themselves and others about the very existence, power, and plan of God, our civilization is doomed!

Live by the Truth

In your own personal life, then, learn the importance of telling the truth, believing the truth, living the truth. Be careful not to base your whole life on a series of lies—whether they be personal, political, scientific, or religious distortions of truth. Remember, it is the *truth* that will make you free (John 8:32). In your personal speech, guard your words carefully. Never forget that a person is only as good as his word. It is almost impossible to help one who has become a habitual liar, because any response to help may simply be another deception. One of the basic qualities of God’s character is that He is truth. If we could not rely on God’s word, there could be no real assurance of forgiveness from past sins, of present help in time of need, or of future reward and eternal life.

If God had tremendous, well-meaning love, and all wisdom and power, but you could not rely on His word, where would you be? Have you ever thought of it that way before? The very diametric opposite of God’s character is that of Satan the devil. As Jesus Christ revealed,

“When he [Satan] speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, *for he is a liar* and the father of it” (John 8:44). Those who follow Satan in his refusal to live by truth have a terrible fate awaiting them: “But the cowardly, unbelieving... and *all liars* shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8). Remember, there are no “white lies” in God’s sight. Half-truths, distortions, and deceptions are condemned throughout God’s word. Jesus said, “Your word is *truth*” (John 17:17). Let us live by that inspired word that we may inherit eternal life in the kingdom that is based on what is literally true and right. This is the message of the ninth commandment.

The Tenth Commandment

Did you know that the financial troubles plaguing most families are not the result of low income? Rather, they are directly caused by overextending a normally adequate income for luxuries and personal indulgence, and by the habit of installment buying! “Buy now and pay later,” say the advertisements. But do you really need to buy this item now? And are you sure you will be able to “pay later”?

A Society Based on Lust

“Keeping up with the Joneses” is a popular American slogan. High-pressure advertisements constantly encourage this idea. It is made to seem backward or wrong not to strive and compete and lust after as many material possessions as your neighbor owns. The modern idea is to “get all you can while the getting is good.” The incessant pressure to get ahead—which usually means to acquire more money and material property—has spawned more and more idolatry. It is blinding the minds and hearts of millions to the life of God.

Years ago, *The Canadian Churchman*, a prominent religious publication, ran a sobering article revealing the effect of this material idolatry on young Africans studying theology in the United States and Canada. One such young man said, “Before I came to study here, I was a good Christian. I dreamed someday of becoming a medical missionary. Now I’m an atheist.” “Why?” asked the shocked interviewer. “Since coming here,” he replied, “I’ve discovered that the white man has two

gods. One that he taught us about, and another one to whom he prays. A Presbyterian mission school taught me that the tribal doctrines of my ancestors who worshiped images and believed in witchcraft were wrong and almost ludicrous. But here you worship larger images—cars and electrical appliances. I honestly can't see the difference."

Surprising? It should not be—except that most people get so close to their own sin that they cannot see it. We live in a society that in actual fact is based on lust and greed for more and more material things! The frenzied effort to compete with others and get ahead is not only the source of most financial problems, but the real cause of much physical and mental illness, broken homes, and frustrated lives. Most important of all, this form of idolatry leaves one with almost no time, strength, or desire to ever become acquainted with the true God—whose living laws and ways alone would bring real inner peace and joy.

The Tenth Commandment Stated

Most people fail to realize that the Ten Commandments are living, moving, active laws. So it is with the final commandment of God's law. Even though it may be broken without the knowledge of any other human being, the penalty for its violation is absolutely certain! "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's" (Exodus 20:17).

Of all the commandments, the tenth refers most specifically to man's relation to man. The force of the commandment lies in these words: "your neighbor's... your neighbor's... his... his... his... his... your neighbor's." This is a *sevenfold* guarding of the interests of another. It is not wrong to lawfully desire a wife, a servant, an ox, or a donkey. But where the object admired is legitimately out of reach of the one admiring, admiration merging into desire to possess breaks the commandment. Although this commandment deals most obviously with human and physical relationships, the *spiritual requirement* of the command is in some ways more rigid than any that has preceded it. This command regulates even the thoughts in the mind and heart of man. Most men look on sin as an outward or physical type of thing. They do not realize that the holy, righteous character that God purposes in us necessitates that even our thoughts be completely purified and made like His. Action follows thought. What you think, you

are. If you secretly reject God's standard and His way, if in your heart you lust after something that you either cannot or will not come to lawfully possess with His blessing, then—sooner or later—this mental rebellion will prompt outward sin. The actions will then proceed to defy God—to break His law—because the thoughts have been doing this all along!

This command pierces through all “surface Christianity” and shows whether a person has really surrendered his will to his Maker! It is a searching and fearful principle. But it is a command you must learn to obey if you are ever to receive eternal life and glory in the Kingdom of God. “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5). Through God's Spirit in us, we must fight the fight of faith—put down the lustful human nature within us—and ultimately succeed in “bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5). This is the ultimate goal of true Christianity, to be fully attained in the resurrection.

But we are to grow in God's character during this life. We must learn—as did righteous Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and other servants of the Most High—to “walk with God.” We must go His way, do as He does, think as He thinks. But the normal mind of the human being is filled with selfishness, vanity, competition, greed, hate, and lust. It is a mind cut off from the ways and thoughts of God (Isaiah 55:8–9). That is why Jesus emphasized how important it is to get our minds changed—converted, cleaned up—when He said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8).

Where Do We Stand?

Especially since World War II, life in Western society has sped up. People are rushing to make more money. People are in a hurry to have a good time, to get everything they can out of life. On every side, people are taught to compete with their neighbors for social honors and material advancement. People have come to literally crave material luxuries that were in some cases completely unknown just two or three generations ago. People are urged to spend more than they make—to do more than they ought. “You owe it to yourself,” the subtle advertisement reads, putting over the idea that one would be foolish not to buy a bigger car, eat at a more expensive restaurant, or take longer and more costly trips. The emphasis is on getting and

on self. On an international scale, the nations of the world fight and kill because of this same attitude of heart. “Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask” (James 4:1–2).

All too often, the capitalist lusts for more money than he can easily attain by paying fair wages. So he robs his employees by paying too little and spending too little on improving working conditions and safety. Likewise, the modern laborer—often misguided by unscrupulous union leaders—learns to lust after more money than he can honestly earn. Through organized pressure and political trickery, he thinks he can get something for nothing.

Why do many so-called “authors” write novels based on nothing but filth, obscenity, and juvenile stupidity? Why do publishers print such corruption that degrades the human emotions of love, kindness, and idealism to a level lower than the animal? You can quickly see *hundreds* of other major examples of covetousness in our society if your eyes are really open. But be willing to see your **own** covetousness as well! Be willing to repent of it and ask God for the love and strength to overcome it. Our generations need these words of the Son of God: “Take heed and beware of covetousness; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses” (Luke 12:15). Do you *understand* that? Your real success and happiness in life, Christ said, cannot truly be measured by how new or powerful a car you drive, the kind of home you live in, the clothes you wear, or even the food you eat. Happiness is a state of mind. It comes from having the very Spirit and mind of Christ inside your own mind. Jesus said, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head” (Luke 9:58). The love, joy, and peace that Jesus exemplified came from giving and serving—not from any material thing Jesus was able to get. Jesus, the Son of man, was able to overcome human vanity and covetousness because He put the service of God far ahead of anything and everything else. After telling how the unconverted seek after—and worry about—the material necessities and comforts, He commanded us to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33).

The Commandments Join Together

And so at this point the last commandment joins hands with the first, for whatever you seek contrary to God's will, you covet. If in your mind and heart you covet something more than to obey the Creator and receive His blessings, that thing becomes an idol to you, for "covetousness... *is* idolatry" (Colossians 3:5). Then, whatever you idolize you put in place of the true God and break the first commandment: "You shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). The Apostle Paul said, "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?" (Romans 6:16).

When you begin to covet material things, you "serve" them. You spend most of your time, your energy, and your money for these things. In such a situation, you have neither time nor energy to really study the Bible, or to spend an hour in earnest prayer before the One who gives you life and breath. And you find yourself being stingy and jealous of the money you owe your Maker to finance the proclamation of His truth. By this simple process, the material things you lust for and covet become your actual "god," for you truly serve and worship them—and find in your life little time, strength, and resources with which to serve the true God with all of your heart, strength, and mind.

Do you see? Covetousness is a terrible thing—for it cuts you off from the fellowship, blessings, and love of the great God of heaven who made all that is, intending that this material creation be used in His service and for His glory. And, in practical daily life, covetousness violates the basic principle of the way of life set forth by all the commandments of God and by Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus summarized this principle when He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

In learning to lovingly, sincerely, and intelligently serve your fellow man, and to serve and worship the true God, you will find the only real sense of fulfillment and joy in this life. And in tomorrow's world, you will be given eternal life and glory in a divine government based on the Ten Commandments—the true way of love, of giving and serving your fellow man, and of worshiping and exalting the living God who gave these commandments for our eternal good.

The New Commandments of Jesus

Many teach that Jesus Christ substituted some sort of “new” commandments to take the place of the law of His Father. What is the *truth*? Are the Ten Commandments still to be obeyed?

This is an age of *rebellion* against all law and constituted authority. Nations and governments are being overthrown, and homes and schools thrown into chaos by various forms of *rebellion*.

A revealing insight into modern man’s reaction to the phrase in the Lord’s Prayer, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done,” was given by an Ohio minister, David Redding, who said, “We do not mean it. We don’t like authority, nor will we give in easily even if He is the King of heaven.... It is all too obvious that most men over most of the years have prayed earnestly: ‘Thy kingdom *not* come, *my* will be done’” (“Editorial: The Lord’s Prayer,” *Life*, April 18, 1960).

The Ten Commandments Abolished?

In the previous chapters of this booklet, we have explored the positive application of the Ten Commandments to every aspect of our personal lives as *living, active* laws. But today, many professing ministers and Bible teachers are wrongly proclaiming that the Ten Commandments are “done away”—as they say—or that they have been *replaced* by the “new” commandments of Jesus.

First of all, let us notice one of the all-important purposes for Jesus Christ’s coming to this earth in the human flesh. Isaiah proph-

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esied of Jesus, “He will *exalt* the law and make it honorable” (Isaiah 42:21). Here we find that Christ came *not* to abolish the law, but to “*magnify*” it (*KJV*).

To exalt, or to magnify, has just the opposite meaning of changing or abolishing something. It means to *reveal* in the most minute detail—to *enlarge* upon. Certainly the life and teachings of Jesus do just that with the Father’s law.

Jesus said, “*Do not* think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I *did not* come to destroy but to fulfill” (Matthew 5:17). Jesus did just what these words imply. Both in His life and teaching, he *fulfilled* the law. He *magnified* it by His perfect example. He *filled it to the full*, passing beyond the mere letter to observe even the minutest spiritual intent and purpose of the Father’s perfect law.

Those who knew Him as a teacher could never charge Him with having substituted the traditions of men for the commandments of God. He *obeyed* the Ten Commandments in word and in deed. He taught and lived them as the perfect *way of life*.

He said, “Whoever therefore breaks one of the *least* of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whoever *does* and *teaches* them [even the “*least*” commandments], he shall be called *great* in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:19).

Certainly, we should all aspire to be “great” in God’s Kingdom, for we should want to overcome as much as we can and have the opportunity to serve the most we can! Therefore, we should earnestly and fervently strive to do and teach even the “least” of God’s commandments. Do you think the Sabbath commandment is “least”? If so, you had better do and teach God’s Sabbath *just as He commanded*, following Christ’s perfect example in keeping holy the *seventh* day—not the “day of the sun”!

The Way to Eternal Life

When a young man came to Him asking the way to eternal life, Jesus said, “But if you want to enter into life, *keep the commandments*” (Matthew 19:16–19).

The young man asked, “Which ones?”

Jesus proceeded to list several of the *Ten Commandments*. Jesus Christ *knew* the way to salvation! He said that way was *obedience* to the law of God the Father and *surrender* to His will.

Jesus declared, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who *does the will* of my Father in heaven” (Matthew 7:21).

Far from abolishing the Ten Commandments, Jesus *obeyed* them (John 15:10). Christ was the “light” that God sent into the world to show men *how* to live. After His death and resurrection, Christ sent the Apostles out with this command: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe *all things that I have commanded you*” (Matthew 28:19–20).

The Apostles had been there when Christ told the young man to “keep the commandments.” They had heard Him magnify the commandments of God in what is called the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7).

The Apostles had witnessed the *obedience* of Christ to the Ten Commandments, and knew that His was the *perfect example*. Therefore, when Jesus Christ sent them out to every nation with the order to teach them *all things He had commanded them*, there could be no possible doubt in their minds but that this included the Ten Commandments of God.

Obedience to the Ten Commandments, then, was the very *basis* of the teaching of Christ and of His original Apostles. But what about the “new” commandments of Jesus? Did they not alter or abolish the necessity for literally keeping the Ten Commandments that were revealed in the Old Testament?

A “New” Commandment

Actually, in spite of what many think, there is only one place in all the Bible where Jesus said He was giving a “new” commandment. The other references—by the Apostle John—are to the exact *same* principles, as we shall see.

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; *as I have loved you*, that you also love one another. By *this* all will know that you are My disciples, *if you have love for one another*” (John 13:34–35).

Jesus gave this “new” commandment during the last night of His physical life on earth. He had—by teaching and example—already shown the disciples that keeping God’s commandments was simply an expression of *love*.

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We show real love toward God when we truly worship and obey Him, allowing no other “gods,” idols, pictures, or *anything* else to come in His place, and always honoring His name and keeping holy His seventh-day Sabbath—which He made holy and which Jesus and the Apostles always kept! And we show love to those around us when we zealously obey the last six commandments.

Christ had already summarized God’s law into the two great principles: “You shall *love* the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.... You shall *love* your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37, 39). In fact, in the latter part of this summary of God’s law, Jesus quoted directly from the *Old Testament* (Leviticus 19:18)!

What, then, was “new” about Jesus’ command to love our neighbors?

The answer is plain. The principle of loving our neighbors was *not* new, but Jesus’ *magnification* of that principle in His own perfect life shed a completely *new* light on the spiritual intent and depth of this commandment.

Remember Jesus’ emphasis: “... *as I have loved you*, that you also love one another.”

Jesus’ own *perfect example* of *love* and *service* was the greatest and most meaningful magnification of the love of neighbor as commanded by God. In His life, He demonstrated *how* that love actually functions in day-to-day life.

How to Love Your Neighbor

Three times the divine voice broke the usual silence of the heavens in announcing the satisfaction of God in the life of Jesus. Even the Roman Procurator Pontius Pilate declared, “I find no fault in Him” (John 19:4).

This was because Jesus lived a life of *giving* to others. Whether in His constant teaching of the multitudes, His healing of the sick, His feeding of the hungry crowds, or in an act of humility such as washing the disciples’ feet, *He was always giving of Himself.*

This loving and giving Jesus Christ also said to the religious leaders of His day, “Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?” (Matthew 23:33).

Are these strange words from a man of *love*? No. Rather, they are manifestation of how *perfect love* sometimes says and does things for the good of others which at the time they may not appreciate.

Jesus loved these Pharisees! It was in love that He **thundered** these words to wake them up from a life of religious hypocrisy and perversity that was damning their souls. Remember, it was also for these same Pharisees that Jesus **died**. It was for these men and others like them that Jesus prayed, “*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do*” (Luke 23:34).

It was in that perfect, understanding love that Jesus withdrew Himself occasionally from the multitude to rest, to meditate, or to pray, for He knew that only by keeping close to the Father and being an instrument in His hands could His human presence and teaching enrich the lives of others.

Jesus did not just **act** like He loved others. He **did** love them with a perfect love. Through God’s Holy Spirit within Him, He desired *from the heart* to love and serve His fellow beings for their highest good.

He literally *lived* the words Paul later showed He uttered: “*It is more blessed to give than to receive*” (Acts 20:35). In this way, His command that men love one another “*even as I have loved you,*” certainly does become a “new” and more all-encompassing command in governing human relationships.

Did Jesus Literally Obey the Ten Commandments?

Many religious people think that Jesus had a sentimental type of “love” in His heart, but that He did not really **obey** God’s commandments literally.

The truth is that Jesus Christ *kept* and *obeyed* every one of the Ten Commandments in the letter **and** in the Spirit—just as His followers today should do. As we have already seen, He declared that He had *obeyed* the Father’s commandments (John 15:10).

To make it perfectly clear, Jesus Christ *never* had another god before the true God. He *never* committed idolatry or blasphemed God’s name. Jesus *kept holy* the Sabbath that God had made holy and often worshiped in the synagogue on that day as was His custom (Luke 4:16).

Jesus *honored* His parents, and He *never* killed, committed adultery, stole, lied, or coveted. He set us an **example**, that we should follow in His steps (1 Peter 2:21).

Today, a true Christian is one so *surrendered* to God that Christ is actually living *His* life in that person through the indwelling power of

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the Holy Spirit, for the Apostle Paul said, “*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but **Christ liveth in me**: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me*” (Galatians 2:20, KJV).

A true Christian should not only have faith *in* Christ, but should live by the very faith *of* Christ placed in him by the Holy Spirit. Christ—through the Spirit—should be *living in* the true Christian. Remember, Christ will live the *same* life in you today that He did more than 1,900 years ago—setting an example. “*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever*” (Hebrews 13:8).

Jesus, in His flesh, “was in *all points* tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). Tempted, yes, but in His fleshly life He *obeyed* the Ten Commandments. Dwelling now in His true disciples through the Holy Spirit, He *will* keep the commandments in them.

It is *Christ’s* love. It is *His* power *in* us that can keep the spiritual law of God, for Jesus Christ *was* and *is* obedient to God the Father.

Did John Give a “New” Commandment?

In an epistle of John—“the disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 21:20)—we also find reference to a “new” commandment.

“Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning. Again, a **new** commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining. He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now” (1 John 2:7–9).

Here the Apostle refers his flock first of all to the “word” of God which they had from the beginning. But then he mentions one “new” thing. He proceeds to explain this is the deep spiritual love which brethren in Christ should have for one another. There is simply *no room* in this love for hate, envy, or malice.

But does this Christian love “do away” or *change* the Ten Commandments of God?

Of course not!

It only *emphasizes* and *magnifies* the personal love Christians must have toward their fellow men. This love goes *far beyond* the letter of the Ten Commandments—but *by no means replaces* them!

As John wrote in his second epistle, “And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another. This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it” (2 John 5–6).

Here John very plainly defines Christian *love* as *keeping the commandments!*

We are not just to love the *persons* of God and Christ. We are to love their *way*—their very *character*—which is expressed in the *Ten Commandments*. Christ not only *taught obedience* to the commandments, He *lived* them!

And so John adds, “Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son” (v. 9).

What the “New” Commandments Actually Teach

When we examine the positive side of the “new” commandments, we find that they simply reinforce and make more *binding* the old! They outline a way of *love*—of *giving* and of *servicing*—which can only be attained through Christ Himself living in us.

In perfect unselfishness, we are to learn to love others *as* Jesus loved us. That is *New* Testament doctrine! It is *far more* binding than the letter of the commandments stated in the *Old* Testament.

But it does *not* replace them. Rather, it magnifies them to their full spiritual intent. And these “new” commandments themselves refer to the perfect magnification in the life of Jesus.

And Jesus *obeyed* the Ten Commandments *literally* in spirit as well. He is to be our “light,” our *example*.

Describing the principle of how we should love our neighbor, the Apostle Paul stated that “love is the fulfillment of the law” (Romans 13:10), for God’s spiritual love flows down the riverbed, or channel, of the Ten Commandments.

In perfectly *obeying* the Ten Commandments—in their every phase and facet—Jesus’ entire life was a radiant life of love itself, and *love is the fulfillment of law*. The “new” commandment He gave called attention to His perfect example of *obedience* to the Father and of *kindness* and *service* to all men.

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Millions of professing Christians have been taught that all they need to do is “love Jesus” or have the “love of God.” What is that “love”? How does God Himself tell us how His love is to be expressed? At the very end of the Apostolic Age, decades after Jesus’ resurrection, God inspired the Apostle John (Jesus’ dearest friend among the Apostles) to tell us, “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3).

Remember, Jesus lived God’s law in everything He thought, said, and did. In this flesh, none of us will keep God’s law perfectly. But God’s law must be our “pattern” of life. We are commanded to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18)—patterning our lives after Christ’s life ever more perfectly as each year goes by.

May God help you to follow the example of His Son in obeying His law. And may you, through surrender and obedience, develop the very character of God. Thus, by His mercy through Christ’s sacrifice, and through your total surrender to let Christ live His obedient life within you through the Holy Spirit, you may be granted everlasting life in the Kingdom of God!

Regional Offices

United States

PO Box 3810
Charlotte, NC 28227-8010
Phone: +1 (704) 844-1970

Australasia

PO Box 300
Clarendon, SA 5157, Australia
Phone: +61 8 8383 6266

Canada

PO Box 409
Mississauga, ON L5M 0P6
Phone: +1 (905) 814-1094

New Zealand

PO Box 2767
Shortland Street
Auckland 1140
Phone: +64 9-268 8985

Philippines

PO Box 492
Araneta Center Post Office
1135 Quezon City, Metro Manila
Phone: +63 2 8573-7594

South Africa

Private Bag X3016
Harrismith, FS 9880
Phone: +27 58 622 1424

United Kingdom

Box 111
43 Berkeley Square
London, W1J 5FJ
Phone/Fax: +44 844 800 9322