

REDEEMING THE TIME

“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:16).

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EXODUS 20

for the 2020s

Introduction

BY ROBERT W. ANDERSON

The world is full of conflicting voices about what is morally right and wrong. With one person stridently asserting one view and another man the opposite, who shall decide the question? Shall each man do what is right in his own eyes, or shall some group of men appropriate to themselves the office of deciding the matter for all? Or, is there one voice above all men, and infinitely superior, that declares absolutely, infallibly and justly what is, for all people and all of time, the one perfect, immutable rule of moral rightness?

Happily, Scripture answers that question: there is the voice of the eternal, sovereign God. In the Ten Commandments, historically spoken by God to the

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“For the law was given by Moses, BUT GRACE AND TRUTH CAME BY JESUS CHRIST.” JOHN 1:17

The LAW and the GOSPEL

BY BRAD K. GSELL

Discerning the relationship between the Law of God and the Gospel of Christ is foundational to understanding everything else in the Scriptures. As we read through the Old and New Testaments, we find God’s teaching concerning these on virtually every page.

To deny the integral connection between the Law and the Gospel, as they have been instituted in the eternal purposes of God, is to profane and misrepresent God’s redemptive plan — the unifying theme of all the Scriptures.

One such false teaching has been called Antinomianism. It teaches that following Christ’s sacrifice for our sins, there is no place for the Law, since we are saved by faith alone. The Law has been abrogated.

On the other side, Legalists take the Law of God and make rote obedience to it essential to one’s salvation, often even adding rules to Biblical teaching for good measure.

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World Evangelical Alliance Theological Journal Looks to the Pagan Deity Artemis to Explain Away a Passage of Scripture Which It Finds to be “Troublesome”

BY BRAD K. GSELL

1 Timothy 2:9-15 is a passage greatly resented and opposed by many in our modern society wedded to radical feminism. Verse 12 reads: “But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.”

The August 2020 issue of the *Evangelical Review of Theology*, a publication of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), includes an article by Gary G. Hoag, Ph.D., entitled “Demystifying Gender Issues in I Timothy 2:9-15, with Help from Artemis.”

Hoag informs us that this passage of Scripture “is quite controversial today,” has “long mystified interpreters,” and is “often troublesome.” He further tells us that we should be careful about “approaching texts with divisive readings” (*i.e.* ones that do not suit the thinking of natural man).

Hoag turns to an ancient romance writing, *Ephesiaca*, by Xenophon of Ephesus, “that has been heretofore outside our view.” Since Ephesus was famous for its Temple to Artemis (the Romans called her Diana), he proposes that Paul was merely teaching that the pagan practices were not to carry over into the church, although that is nowhere stated in 1 Timothy 2.

The Historical-Grammatical Method of Biblical Interpretation

The historical-grammatical method of Biblical interpretation is the

only sound method for understanding the Scriptures. Knowing the historical context, with the cultural mores at the time and place of the writing of the various books of the Bible, is indeed quite important to a proper understanding. Likewise, understanding the usage and meaning of the Hebrew and Greek languages at the time is crucial.



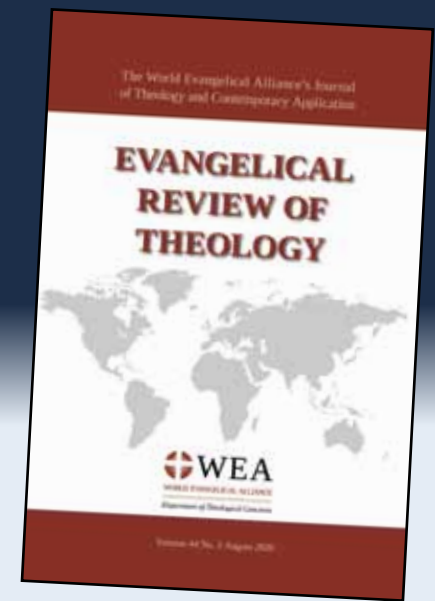
In addition, it is important to apply what has been called “the Golden Rule of Scriptural Interpretation”: “When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense.”

The Problem

There are several considerations that should alarm us:

1. The Bible was written using the personality and cultural understanding of the writers, yet fully under the superintendence of the Holy Ghost (see 1 Peter 1:21). Thus, all Scripture is the perfect, inerrant Word of God. To say that God allowed Christians to err for two millennia, because they did not have a secular writing available, is preposterous, if not blasphemous.

2. Biblical archaeology and historical discoveries are the friend of true Bible scholarship. However, we are told that this one writing, *Ephesiaca*, “provides important clues that have been heretofore outside our view, and that it provides “factors that have



evaded us until now.” It contains no facts to warrant this “fresh approach” to understanding this passage, only unsubstantiated “clues.” Hoag writes: “A growing number of scholars unwilling to place limits on gifted female Bible teachers contend that this injunction may be related to a local heresy linked to Artemis, who was mystically associated with Isis.” So, if you are unwilling to accept the plain meaning of the Greek text, simply explain it away by conjecture, which cannot possibly be verified.

3. Hoag tells us that the teachings of Scripture concerning the place of women in the church “seem to contain contextual instructions rather than universal commands.” What other clear teachings may we dismiss as being “contextual”? We may only do so if the Scriptures tell us that certain things have been abrogated.

4. Although the writer speaks in terms of “mystified,” “clues,” “may be,” and “seem to,” he nonetheless concludes by asserting without qualification that “this text does not actually prohibit women from teaching God’s Word to men or women.” “We must stop contending that this text is about the role of women in ministry.”

If you disagree, he says you “may be guilty of promoting tradition rather than truth.” Proper Biblical scholarship is good. Misusing it to contradict the plain sense of the text, without clear warrant, is not.

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Sadly, these and other terms are often misused against those teaching Scriptural truth that the hearer doesn't like to hear.

In truth, the Law and the Gospel are in perfect harmony throughout both testaments. One of the Founders of the Bible Presbyterian Church, Dr. J. Oliver Buswell, often taught his students that "God's redemptive plan" of offering up His Son as a sacrifice for our sins is a "scarlet thread" running from the beginning to the end of the Scriptures.¹

He also stated: "I insist that there is only one way in any age whereby God has even hypothetically offered to give eternal life to anyone who did not possess it, namely, through the covenant of grace."²

The Law: God's Perfect and Holy Standard

The Law of God reflects the holiness of God — a standard that He requires of all people. Sin is the violation of that Law. The Bible teaches that we are all sinners, because Adam, as the federal head of the human race, sinned against God. It is referred to as the fall of man. Romans 5:12 tells us: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

The Apostle Paul shows the unity between the two testaments, when he quotes David in Romans 3:10: "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one" (see Psalm 14:3). This is just one of many Old Testament passages concerning sin which is quoted or confirmed in the New Testament.

The rich young ruler proudly presented himself to Christ as being exemplary in his keeping of the Law. Christ showed him that even being a very "good" person can never be

enough. The Apostle James confirms this: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10).

The Law as Our "Schoolmaster"

Paul tells the Galatian Christians: "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Galatians 3:24-25).

In Romans 3:20, we read: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

Later, Paul writes: "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression" (Romans 4:15).

Paul expands this in Romans 7:7, where he specifically makes reference to the 10 Commandments in showing us our sin: "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."

The Law of God is what shows us our sin. It shows that we are fallen men and women. It shows that we have no hope in ourselves. Only when the Spirit of God works in our hearts and we confess and repent of our sins, trusting in the righteousness of Christ alone, can we have salvation.

The second verse of the hymn "At Calvary" deals with this theme:

*By Gods word at last my
sin I learned;
Then I trembled at the
law I'd spurned;
Till my guilty soul imploring
turned to Calvary.*

*Mercy there was great
and grace was free;
Pardon there was
multiplied to me;
There my burdened soul
found liberty at Calvary.*

Christ Taught the Eternal Nature of the Law of God

I believe some of our brethren err when they try to separate the Beatitudes (Matthew 5-7), as if Christ's teaching should be relegated exclusively as part of the Old Covenant. Christ taught the Law, not as something which belonged in the past, but something which continued on. God's righteous judgments are immutable, and thus His Law does not change.

In Matthew 5:17-18, Christ stated: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

When Christ revealed Himself to the people, He did not seek to overthrow the Old Testament Scriptures, including the Law. Instead, He said: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:25-27). He not only gave credence to the Law, He showed where it revealed the redemptive sacrifice of the Messiah!

It is interesting to see that the Apostle Paul likewise "expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening (Acts 28:23).

In the Beatitudes, Christ makes clear that the sinful practice of taking pride in the outward keeping of the Law was an offense to God. Obedience of the HEART is what pleases God. He goes down through some of the 10 commandments and says: "Ye have heard that it hath been said...." He then shows how the obedient heart is to keep these commandments.

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This teaching was clearly against the beliefs and proud practice of the Pharisees. In Matthew 5:20, Christ's words were instructive in showing that even the PHARISEES were not good enough to inherit the kingdom of heaven. Christ stated: "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

For those who unnecessarily try to separate the Beatitudes from the New Covenant, we can see that the Apostle Paul — long after Christ's completed work on the cross — did not do this. In Romans 13:9, Paul quotes many of the 10 Commandments. He then mirrors the words of Christ that the Law "is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Near the end of His life, Jesus continued to uphold the Law. When one of the Pharisees sought to trap Him, asking which commandment was the greatest, He replied: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40).

The Law of God and Salvation

John 3:16 is one of the most beloved verses in the Bible. We sometimes forget that the words in this verse are not those of John, but are the very words of Christ. In this chapter, Christ presents man as evil and under condemnation, but presents Himself as our glorious Saviour from sin! At the end of this chapter, John the Baptist tells us: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that be-

lieveth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Salvation is by faith alone, by grace alone, by Scripture alone, through Christ alone, to the glory of God alone, to quote the "Five Solas" of the Protestant Reformation.

The Apostle Paul makes this quite clear in his epistles. In Romans 3:28, he writes: "Therefore we conclude that

"Jesus shows that the Law of Moses is not merely negative, but positive, for upon the Two Great Commandments, utmost love for God and man, do hang all the law and the prophets. Hence, the Law is a rule of life for the church and for every Christian, for by it he is not only prohibited to do evil but exhorted to do good, toward God and his fellow men."³

Dr. Timothy Tow

a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

Not only is the Law found throughout the New Testament, but the Gospel is found throughout the Old. One example is Paul's writing in Galatians 3:8: "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." I love these words that the gospel was preached to Abraham — in the Old Testament!

Romans 4:3, quoting Genesis 15:6, says: "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."

Christ's perfect righteousness is imputed to those who by faith trust Him for salvation: "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes" (Romans 10:4).

The Law of God for the Believer

Any of our attempts to keep the Law of God have absolutely NO MERIT in gaining our salvation. Indeed, the Bible tells us that "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6).

Yet, as Christians, we are "to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Romans 8:29). The Law of God is the perfect standard of God's infinite holiness. 1 Peter 1:16 quotes the words of God recorded in Leviticus 11:44: "Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

In Romans 7:12, Paul writes: "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."

Paul made quite clear earlier, that our salvation in Christ in no way abrogates our duty to obey God's Law: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1-2).

Earlier still, he wrote: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Romans 3:31).

Jesus Christ Himself tells us: "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

Even in the last days, Revelation reveals to us that the saints are those who "keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 12:17).

We can rejoice in the glorious truth presented in Romans 5:19: "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Christ died to fulfill the Law. Only by His perfect righteousness can we be saved unto life eternal. •

¹J. Oliver Buswell, "A Premillennialist's View," *The Presbyterian Guardian*, November 14, 1936, p. 46.

²*Ibid.*, p. 47.

³Timothy Tow, *The Law of Moses & of Jesus*, (Singapore: Christian Life Publishers, 1986), p. 143.

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man Moses nearly 3,500 years ago, and written with God's finger on two tables of stone, we have the moral law that binds every man to obedience. It is summarily comprehended in Exodus 20. No one is allowed to opt out from the rule of the one true and living God, who has revealed Himself and His will in the Bible. It is not the place of any person to take issue with God, or make himself the judge of God and His law. It is man's place to humble himself under God and ask, "What wilt thou have me to do?" The Decalogue (Ten Commandments) spells out the whole duty of man — every man. It is to be revered, loved, laid up in the heart, and obeyed.

The first four commandments stipulate the duties of man to God; the last six declare the duties of man to man. They are to regulate our thoughts, words and deeds — the whole inward and outward life. In them all, as Micah tells us, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee ..." (Micah 6:8). Christ Himself, speaking of the first and great commandment (love the Lord), and the second like unto it (love your neighbor), said "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:40). When Christ said "Think not that I am come to destroy the law ..." (Matthew 5:17), He Himself thoroughly sanctioned it.

The purpose of this article is to hold up our culture in the 2020s to the standard of each commandment, that we may evaluate our own thinking and living, as well as that of the world we live in. While the Ten Commandments (of which there is currently widespread ignorance, rejection and hostility) can never be a way of salvation for anyone ("by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified [declared righteous]" Galatians 2:16), they shall

ever be a rule of duty for every man, as born with a conscience from God, which binds him to obedience.

Stand back! Consider the excellence of the commandments from every perspective: "The commandment is holy, and just and good" (Romans 7:12).

Consider God, the righteous Lawgiver: "... the kingdom is the LORD's, and He is the governor among the nations" (Psalm 22:28). "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne ..." (Psalm 89:14).

Consider the character of the Lawgiver: "He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment, a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he" (Deuteronomy 32:4).

Consider the happiness of those who embrace and obey His law: "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord" (Psalm 119:1). Those who love His law praise it. Only those who hate God denigrate it. From whatever vantage point they are viewed, the commandments are magnified. "Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them" (Psalm 119:129).

I THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME.

BY ROBERT W. ANDERSON

Like a coin, there are two sides to each of the Ten Commandments: what is required and what is forbidden. What Moses says in the negative, "thou shalt have no other gods before [instead of or alongside] me," Christ casts in the positive, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:37).

The First Commandment requires us "to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly" (Westminster Shorter Cat-

echism [WSC] 46). Forbidden is "the denying, or not worshipping and glorifying the true God as God, and our God; and the giving of that worship and glory to any other, which is due to him alone" (WSC 47).

The Bible teaches there is but one true and living God: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD" (Deuteronomy 6:4). It also tells us that in the one, eternal Godhead there are three persons, "The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ... one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory" (WSC 6; Matthew 3:16,17; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

Benjamin B. Warfield states, "When we have said these three things, then — that there is but one God, that the Father and the Son and the Spirit is each God, that the Father and the Son and the Spirit is each a distinct person — we have enunciated the doctrine of the Trinity in its completeness."¹

In our nation, many people claim to worship God, but who is the God they worship? This triune God, whom Charles Hodge (quoting W.F. Gess) called "the adorable Trinity,"² is the one to be acknowledged and loved, and against whom we transgress if we deny Him or worship anything else alongside or instead of Him. The Christian loves and reveres the three persons of the Trinity when he sings hymns like "Holy, Holy, Holy" or "Come Thou Almighty King."

Most of the great world religions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and the cults (like Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses) utterly bypass, deny or pervert the Bible doctrine of the Trinity. Denominations and institutions which once held the Bible to be the infallible rule of faith and practice have forsaken it, even to the point of, for example, confessing their sins to plants, not to the Triune God.³

Even professing evangelicals have espoused ideas of God that run counter to the Bible doctrine of the Trinity. A Lifeway Research Survey showed

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that “78% of ‘Evangelicals’ believe that Christ is a being ‘created’ by God”⁴ — which flatly contradicts the Bible’s teaching that Christ is God manifest in the flesh, fully God and fully man. The same poll also reported that “57% of ‘Evangelicals’ believe that the Holy Spirit is a ‘force,’ rather than a ‘person’ of the Godhead.” They do not know He is truly the third person of the Godhead, who knows, who wills, and who may be grieved.

On the importance of the doctrine of the Trinity, Johannes G. Vos remarks, “Christianity stands or falls with the doctrine of the Trinity... Where the doctrine of the Trinity is abandoned, the whole Bible teaching of the plan of salvation must go with it.”⁵

Likewise, true morality stands or falls by how men keep the First Commandment. Paul’s remarks in Romans 1 show in melancholy detail the results of mankind’s departure from the God of the Bible: “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful ... their foolish heart was darkened” (Romans 1:21). And they were “Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, ... haters of God...” (Romans 1:29). In all its graphic details, our nation’s religious and moral behavior is a mirror image of Romans 1:18-32.

Mankind is in desperate need of embracing and practicing the First Commandment. May the God of saving and sanctifying grace work in us “both to will and to do of his good pleasure” — which logically commences at the First Commandment.

¹Benjamin B. Warfield, *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol 5. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1939), p. 3016.

²Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Reprinted 1981), p. 431.

³Brad K. Gsell, “‘Today in Chapel We Confessed to Plants’: Union Seminary and the Road to Apostasy,” *Redeeming the Time*, Fall 2019, p. 4.

⁴“Christian, What Do You Believe? Probably a Heresy About Jesus, Says Survey,” *Christianity Today*, October 16, 2018.

⁵Johannes G. Vos, *The Westminster Larger Catechism, A Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1998), pp. 26,27.

II

THOU SHALT NOT MAKE UNTO THEE ANY GRAVEN IMAGE, OR ANY LIKENESS OF ANY THING THAT IS IN HEAVEN ABOVE, OR THAT IS IN THE EARTH BENEATH, OR THAT IS IN THE WATER UNDER THE EARTH. THOU SHALT NOT BOW DOWN THYSELF TO THEM, NOR SERVE THEM: FOR I THE LORD THY GOD AM A JEALOUS GOD, VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN UNTO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION OF THEM THAT HATE ME; AND SHEWING MERCY UNTO THOUSANDS OF THEM THAT LOVE ME, AND KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS.

BY DOUGLAS R. ARDIS

The vital connection between the First and Second Commandments is unmistakable. In Deuteronomy 4:12-19, Moses makes clear that the Lord is an invisible Spirit and can only be worshipped as He has revealed Himself. In verse 12, he says concerning God that they “saw no similitude [form; or likeness]” and verse 15 says “no manner of similitude.”

Theologian R.L. Dabney states, “As the first commandment fixes the object, so the second fixes the mode

of religious worship.”¹ Charles Hodge agrees: “The first commandment, therefore, forbids the worship of any other being than Jehovah; and the second, the worship of any visible object whatever.”² Any endeavor to worship Him by any means other than His revealed will is a transgression.

Any attempt to circumvent the Second Commandment is an offense to the Lord God, who gave it to us. He mocks all who would worship idols rather than Himself (see Isaiah 40:17-26).

Throughout Biblical history, man’s refusal to worship God only as He has revealed Himself brought generational judgment. Jeroboam’s faithless, idolatrous transgression of the Second Commandment resulted in calves of gold in Dan and Bethel, and his own priesthood (1 Kings 12:26-33). Jeroboam’s sin brought God’s judgment throughout several generations, “Until the Lord removed Israel out of his sight ...” (2 Kings 17:23). This is a timeless warning for all who sin against this commandment.

In the New Testament, Paul declares the judgment of God upon those “Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator ...” (Romans 1:25). The unchangeable nature of the Second Commandment is clear and unambiguous. Jeroboam’s sins and the Gentiles’ sins prove the timeless nature of this commandment.

Notice in Exodus 20:5, “not bow ... nor serve” is identical to “worshipped and served” in Romans 1:25. Those who break the Second Commandment are experiencing the wrath of God. Notice the phrases: “visiting the iniquity of the fathers” and “of them that hate me” (Exodus 20:5). Humanity’s reaction to the witness of God is a warning to all who transgress this commandment (see Romans 1:24-28).

False religions such as Roman Catholicism, Mormonism, Hinduism and Islam reject the Scriptures as “the only infallible rule of faith and practice.” Roman Catholicism has her

Divine Tradition, Islam the Koran, Mormonism The Book of Mormon, and Hinduism The Vedas. These false religions reject the clear prohibitions of the Second Commandment, thus denying the Holy Scriptures. The answer to Westminster Shorter Catechism Question 50 states, “The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his word.”

The answer to question 51 is: “The second commandment forbiddeth the worshipping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in His word.” These false religions cannot serve the Lord God because they reject the Bible as the only supernatural revelation from Him who “... created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

The Lord Jesus Christ, who is “God manifest in the flesh” (1 Timothy 3:16), condemned the Pharisees because they did not worship Him according to the Scriptures. Jesus said, “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:9). Concerning this passage, John Calvin writes: “... since God chooses to be worshipped in no other way than according to his own appointment, he cannot endure new modes of worship to be devised.... Christ declares them to be mistaken who bring forward, in the room of doctrine, the commandments of men, or who seek to obtain from them the rule for worshipping God.”

If we are to have the Lord’s favor upon us, we must worship the great “I am” (Exodus 3:14 and John 8:58), only as He has revealed Himself in His holy Word. How dreadful to consider that the pains of Hell await all who believe they are worshipping God, but refuse to limit their worship to the revealed will of God. False religions worship false gods, which is transgressing the First Commandment, and they refuse the restrictions the Lord God declares in the Second Commandment.

¹R.L. Dabney, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Co., 1985), p. 361.

²Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1981), p. 290.

³John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke*, Vol. 2, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Co., 2006), pp. 253-254.

III THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN; FOR THE LORD WILL NOT HOLD HIM GUILTLESS THAT TAKETH HIS NAME IN VAIN.

BY MARK W. EVANS

The First Commandment reveals that the God of the Bible is the only true God and that He alone is the object of worship. The Second Commandment regards the way in which God is to be worshipped. Worship is regulated by the Word of God, not by the devices and imaginations of men. God is to be worshipped only as the sacred Scriptures warrant. The Third Commandment regards the state of the heart in the use of God’s name and in regard to all that makes Him known.

The answer to Westminster Larger Catechism Question 112 states that “the third commandment requires, that the name of God, His titles, attributes, ordinances, the word, sacraments, prayer, oaths, vows, lots, His works, and whatsoever else there is whereby He makes Himself known, be holily and reverently used in thought, meditation, word, and writing; by an holy profession, and answerable conversation, to the glory of God, and the good of ourselves, and others.”

For the believer in Jesus Christ there are rich blessings within this solemn commandment. The sinner saved by grace alone, through faith

alone, in Christ alone, is able to come boldly to the heavenly Father through his great High Priest. The first petition of the Lord’s prayer is, “Hallowed be Thy name.” This reveals the sacred privilege possessed by the blood-bought people to exalt the name of God. The elect angels rejoice to praise and glorify Him.

Believers, this side of heaven, share in the immense privilege, as they behold with sanctified eyes the glory of God in salvation, providence, and creation. To them their God is *Jehovah-jirah* [the Lord will provide], *Jehovah-shalom* [the Lord our peace], *Jehovah-tsidkenu* [the Lord our righteousness]; *Jehovah-roi* [the Lord my Shepherd], *Jehovah-nissi* [the Lord our banner], and *Jehovah-sabaoth* [the Lord of Hosts]. They know the truth of the promise, “the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits” (Daniel 11:32).

What exaltation and praise there will be in heaven! The Apostle John wrote: “I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb” (Revelation 7:9,10). This side of heaven, believers cry, “why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing.” Yet, they also rejoice, “He hath set His King upon His holy hill of Zion” (see Psalm 2).

What we think of God in our hearts as well as what we outwardly express is perfectly known to our Maker. David said of God: “Thou understandest my thought afar off.... For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, thou knowest it altogether” (Psalm 139:2,4). The breaking of this commandment is often thought to be limited to using God’s name in vile cursing and swearing. This practice

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is, indeed, a violation of the Third Commandment. Yet there are many other branches to this corrupt tree. The Puritan writer Thomas Watson listed the following transgressions of this commandment: speaking lightly and irreverently of His name; professing God's name, but not living answerably to it; using God's name in idle discourse; worshipping Him with our lips, but not with our hearts; praying to Him, but not believing in Him; profaning and abusing His Word; swearing by God's name (that is rashly and sinfully); prefixing God's name to any wicked action, [as when] mentioning God in connection with a wicked design; using our tongues in any way to the dishonor of God's name; making rash and unlawful vows; speaking evil of God; and falsifying a promise, as when we say, if God spare our life we will do a certain thing.¹

This sin is especially heinous because it is rarely punished by man. In today's context, it has become acceptable and popular to engage in careless, light, and blasphemous uses of God's names, attributes, institutions, doctrines and commandments, even among some professing Christians. Yet, God promises that He "will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain." The Bible states, "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (Numbers 23:19).

John Calvin wrote: "The end of this Precept is that the Lord will have the majesty of His name to be held inviolably sacred by us. Whatever we think and whatever we say of Him should savor of His excellency, correspond to the sacred sublimity of His name, and tend to the exaltation of His magnificence."²

¹Thomas Watson, *The Ten Commandments* (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, reprinted, 1970), pp. 86-91.

²Cited by Arthur W. Pink, *The Ten Commandments* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), p. 27.

IV REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY. SIX DAYS SHALT THOU LABOUR, AND DO ALL THY WORK: BUT THE SEVENTH DAY IS THE SABBATH OF THE LORD THY GOD: IN IT THOU SHALT NOT DO ANY WORK, THOU, NOR THY SON, NOR THY DAUGHTER, THY MANSERVANT, NOR THY MAIDSERVANT, NOR THY CATTLE, NOR THY STRANGER THAT IS WITHIN THY GATES: FOR IN SIX DAYS THE LORD MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH, THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IN THEM IS, AND RESTED THE SEVENTH DAY: WHEREFORE THE LORD BLESSED THE SABBATH DAY, AND HALLOWED IT.

BY BRAD K. GSELL

The Fourth Commandment is the only one of the commandments stated both positively and negatively. Particularly in the United States, our lives are known for their busyness. In fact, the average American has become so busy that he or she believes, in practice, that there simply is no time to "waste" a whole day each week for rest and worship of God. Sports, entertainment, and work have totally overtaken the Christian sabbath day. Sadly, it has become just another day. Even many who name the name of Christ will attend the early service at their church, so the main part of the day can be devoted

to leisure and other earthly pursuits. Businesses have largely spurned the sabbath day and it is increasingly more difficult for Christians to keep their jobs and also observe the sabbath.

Yet, the command of God from Sinai to "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy" has never been abrogated. Jesus Christ told His disciples: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:17-18).

God further instructs us: "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates..." (Exodus 20:9,10).

We are then shown the parallel to God's grand work of Creation: "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it" (verse 11).

The sabbath day has been an integral part of God's purpose and design since the Creation. Genesis 2:3 tells us: "And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."

From that time forward through the Book of Revelation, the importance of God's holy sabbath, once each week, is emphasized by nearly every Biblical writer. Revelation 1:10 speaks of "the Lord's Day." Particularly in days past, many Christians and churches often spoke of "the Lord's Day," rather than "Sunday."

Isaiah wrote: "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor

finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it” (Isaiah 58:13-14).

Both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, without interruption, the sabbath day was strictly observed as a day to set aside the cares of this world, and to gather together to worship God, sing His praises and come before Him in prayer.

After Christ’s crucifixion, some of the women who were His disciples went to see the sepulchre and how His body was laid therein. Luke 23:56 tells us: “And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.”

Later, following Christ’s ascension, we read in Acts 16:13 that when Paul and Silas entered Philippi, they went on the sabbath to the riverside, where it was the practice to pray to the Lord.

Again, in Acts 20:7, when Paul had arrived in Troas, we read: “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.” Here we see reference to the Christian sabbath being changed to the first day of the week, from the seventh day. This was in commemoration of the glorious resurrection of Christ on the first day of the week.

Like any purpose of God, sinful man will always find a way to twist it into something sinful. Christ condemned the Pharisees when they opposed Him for healing on the sabbath, and even in eating by the roadside. Christ rebuked them with these words: “The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath ...” (Mark 2:27-28).

Except for acts of “necessity and mercy,” it is God’s purpose for man to rest, not only physically, but par-

ticularly in a spiritual sense. It is to be a day of communion with God, a day of prayer and meditation, and a day of the heart crying out in trust, thanks and worship of God. This is essential to a godly Christian walk.

The Hebrew word for sabbath literally means “to cease or stop,” or “to rest.” Hebrews 4 says that rest is given to those who believe in Christ. Matthew 11:28-30 records the words of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

The Christian sabbath is also a picture of our glorious future in heaven. Hebrews 4 refers to this Fourth Commandment, speaking of God’s creating the world in six days, and resting the seventh. Then, in verse 9, it states: “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.” Verse 10 talks of those who have left this earthly life: “For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.”

Colossians 2:16-17 tells us that our sabbath in this life is a “shadow of things to come.” John Newton, in his hymn “Safely Through Another Week,” expresses this well: “Day of all the week the best, emblem of eternal rest.”

May the sabbath be a “delight” to us. May the words of Psalm 100 burn in our hearts and be our guide: “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.”

V HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER: THAT THY DAYS MAY BE LONG UPON THE LAND WHICH THE LORD THY GOD GIVETH THEE.

BY BRAD K. GSELL

In writing to Timothy, his son in the faith, Paul warns him that “in the last days perilous times shall come.” He then gives a whole list of the sins that will be common among those living in that day. One of these is: “disobedience to parents” (2 Timothy 3:1-2). From the time Cain slew his brother Abel, parents have grieved at the sins and rebellion of their children.

We are all familiar with the epic account in 1 Samuel of Absalom rebelling against his own father, David. Even as David sent forth his army to put down the rebellion, his expression of love for his son was overwhelming. In 2 Samuel 18:5 he instructs the three men commanding his forces: “Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom.”

Absalom, riding on a mule, got his head caught in the bough of a giant oak tree. The mule kept going, and Absalom met with sudden death. David’s troops had been victorious in the battle, but even after that, we see that he bore the grief that only a father could have. 2 Samuel 18:33 tells us: “And the king [David] was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!”

The family relationship is so fundamental to God’s plan for mankind that He included this as the first commandment in the second table of the Decalogue — man’s relationship with one another. It is the only one of the

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commandments that is stated from a positive standpoint alone. In the New Testament, Paul points out in Ephesians 6:2-3 that it is “the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.” None of the other commandments carries with it a direct promise from God.

In this Ephesians passage (verses 1 and 2), Paul ties obedience to parents with honoring them, as stated in the Fifth Commandment. He also states clearly that this is to be done “in the Lord.” A child should never disobey God in the process of seeking to obey His parents.

Paul further ties this teaching to servants obeying their masters, just like he ties the duty of citizens to civil authority in Romans 13 and elsewhere. In Ephesians 6:5-7, he says that we are to serve “in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men....”

God has placed various levels of lawful authority in our lives on this earth, and we are to be subject, with humility and lowliness of mind. As our last issue of *Redeeming the Time* pointed out, this is not talking about unbiblical tyranny, but to proper and lawful authority.

Paul does not just give instruction to those in the lowest positions. He also instructs those who have authority. He writes in verse 4: “... ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” In verse 9, he writes: “And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that YOUR Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him”

(emphasis ours). We must all remember that God is the Master of us all.

All that we do as children, employees, citizens, or in whatever capacity, must conform to the teaching expressed in 1 Corinthians 10:31: “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

The Book of Proverbs has much to say about the family relationship. Proverbs 1:8 instructs: “My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother.” Proverbs 13:1 tells us: “A wise son heareth his father’s instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke.”

On Mother’s Day we often hear sermons about the “virtuous woman” from Proverbs 31. However, few realize that this was instruction to King Lemuel from his mother. Among other things, she tells him the importance of finding a godly wife.

Thomas Watson writes that children are to honor their parents “by a reverential esteem of their persons,” “inwardly by fear mixed with love,” “when speaking to them and in speaking about them to others,” “in gesture,” “careful obedience,” “hearkening to their counsel,” and “complying with their commands.”¹

In 1 Kings 2:19, we see that when King Solomon’s mother came to him, he “rose off his throne, and bowed himself unto her.” The Bible gives many examples of children who were an honor to their parents, but also of those who rebelled and lived sinful lives which were a shame unto them.

Another important part of honoring our parents is in attending to their needs, particularly in old age. Genesis 47:12 tells us: “And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father’s household, with bread, according to their families.”

There is no finer example in all the Scriptures than the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, while hanging in agony on the cross, bearing the sin of His people. John 19:26-27 tells us: “When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple [John] standing by, whom

he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.”

In our age, despising of parents, and all authority, is ubiquitous. The very pillars of Western civilization are crumbling as rebellion and anarchy hold sway in many quarters. Some of the new socialists are seeking to tear down the noble history of their parents and ancestors as something totally evil, and telling others to “unlearn” what their parents have taught them. In the United States there is a definite disrespect shown to elders, and a dismissiveness of their views. May all who love the Lord “Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.”

¹Thomas Watson, *The Ten Commandments* (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, first published 1692), pp. 112-119.

VI THOU SHALT NOT KILL.

BY MARK W. EVANS

The Sixth Commandment states, “Thou shalt not kill,” which means, “Thou shalt not murder.” Undergirding the duties of this commandment is the Scriptural truth that life is a precious possession that comes directly from God. “The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7). The answer to Westminster Shorter Catechism Question 68 states, “The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life, and the life of others.” The answer to Question 69 lists what is forbidden: “The sixth commandment forbiddeth the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbor unjustly, or whatsoever tendeth thereunto.”

The Bible declares that death entered the world as the result of Adam’s

sin. “Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12). Every time we see a hearse or a cemetery before us, we view a universal, visible sermon that declares “the wages of sin is death.” Sin and death entered the world through Satan’s temptation. He is “a murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44). After Adam and Eve’s sin, Cain, their firstborn, committed the first murder. Abel had presented before God an acceptable sacrifice from “the firstlings of the flock.” Cain had presented fruit from his labors. “The Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering” but had no regard for Cain’s offering. “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain” (Hebrews 11:4). Cain’s envy produced anger, and anger produced hatred that led him to slay his brother (see Genesis 4:3-8).

The crime of murder includes inward motives. Arthur W. Pink wrote: “Cain first enviously repined at the success of his brother’s sacrifice, and this quickly prompted him to murder. So, too, unjust and inordinate anger, if it be allowed to lie festering in the heart, will turn into the venom of an implacable hatred. Such anger is not only a cause, but is actually a degree of murder, as is clear from the teaching of Christ in Matthew 5:21,22.”¹

The Pharisees and Sadducees hated Christ because of His rebukes and teachings that threatened their position and power. Their hatred led to the crucifixion of the innocent Son of God. It was the vilest and most heinous transgression of this commandment ever committed. Such is the dreadful result of sinful envy, hatred, and anger in our hearts.

The Lord Jesus taught in the sermon on the Mount, “But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment ...” (Matthew 5:22). The Apostle John wrote in 1 John 3:15, “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.” It is difficult

to hate our brother or sister when we remember the Lord’s grace in saving our own souls. The glorious truth that we are no longer under condemnation, but free from the penalty of our sin, should humble us. Reading and memorizing the Word of God also keeps us close to our Savior and in the right spirit of praying for our enemies. Prayer is essential. It is most difficult to pray while we are angry. The Scriptures teach, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:18). It also instructs us: “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21).

There is also a fearful disregard for the sanctity of life throughout our land. One of the more alarming examples is the number of suicides. There are 123 Americans that die from suicide every day.² The most horrific violation of the Sixth Commandment comes from the decision of our Supreme Court, that murdering babies in the womb is no longer a crime. However, the Highest Court has immutably decreed, “Thou shalt not kill.” The estimated number of abortions in the USA from 1973-2018 is 61.8 million.³ This statistic is based only upon surgical and medical abortions. There are other methods as well that murder the unborn. Although some decline of reported abortions has occurred, such murders are still our country’s greatest cause of death. The barbaric taking the life of little ones portends God’s wrath and judgment. This wicked deed also hardens the heart and prepares the way for other grievous crimes. Cities are now in the throes of riots, looting, and senseless murders. No government agency can extinguish this flame of hate. Only God can change the sinner’s heart. We desperately need a “Great Awakening.”

Once again the Ten Commandments point us to our only refuge and hope — the Lord Jesus Christ. We are helpless to change even one heart, but our Redeemer is mighty to save. He

said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

¹Arthur W. Pink, *The Ten Commandments* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), pp. 44,45.

²<https://save.org/about-suicide/suicide-facts/>

³<https://www.all.org/learn/abortion/abortion-statistics/>

VII THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.

BY DOUGLAS R. ARDIS

The Seventh Commandment, “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14), is founded upon Genesis 2:21-25. Here God establishes the marriage covenant between man and woman. This original relationship immediately follows the creation of Adam and Eve.

The Lord God had just said that He would make Adam “an help meet for him,” (Genesis 2:18). He would now put Adam to sleep and make Eve from his rib. Because Eve was made from Adam, there is a leaving and cleaving forever — uniting them before God (Genesis 2:24).

In Matthew 19:3-5, the Lord Jesus Christ, knowing the true motive of the Pharisees regarding divorce, appeals to this same passage. He declared that because God had joined them together, a man must not divorce his wife. “Put asunder” clearly means divorce in Matthew 19:6. In Matthew 19:7-9, Jesus declares that sin, “hardness of your hearts,” was the reason for Moses giving a “writing of divorcement.”

The Lord Jesus knew that the Jews of His day sinfully divorced their wives for any cause. The only reason Jesus gives for one “put[ting] away his wife” is fornication. The last book of the Old Testament warns the generation that returned from exile that the Lord God “hateth putting away”

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(Malachi 2:16). Some 400 years later, Jesus rebuked his tempter's abuse of Moses' writing of divorcement.

This commandment not only forbids adultery but all sins against the body. Paul warns, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess [guard] his vessel [body] in sanctification and honour" (1 Thessalonians 4:3-4). We must guard our body against sexual immorality.

Again the Apostle says, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). Here the word "effeminate" means soft, gentle.

The Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament tells us that "The vice catalog of 1 Corinthians 6:9 mentions the μαλακοί, soft people/weaklings, as reprehensible examples of passive homosexuality; also, Romans 1:27; Leviticus 20:13. Also, 'abusers of themselves with mankind,' is the translation of one word which is, ἀρσενοκοίται, male homosexual ...: 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Timothy 1:10."¹

Twice, Paul warns that the kingdom of God is closed to these sins against the body (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). Our bodies are the creation of God, so fashioned that God, the Holy Spirit, can abide within us: "...ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15). The graphic language of Jeremiah tells us that the adulterer is like a male horse looking for a mate: "They were as fed horses in the morning; every one neighed after his neighbour's wife" (Jeremiah 5:8).

Not only does the commandment warn of sins against our bodies, but also sins of the heart. Jesus said in Matthew 5:27-28, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Jesus declares that adultery comes from our sinful hearts. "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matthew 15:19).

The Pharisees did not take heed to the many Old Testament warnings that

How timeless are God's warnings against what potentially comes into our hearts by way of television, the internet, Facebook, Twitter, etc. We must be very careful. "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me" (Psalm 101:3).

adultery is a matter of the heart. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

What we do with our bodies comes from how we think within our hearts. The answer to Westminster Shorter Catechism Question 72 tells us that we must protect and guard ourselves from "all unchaste thoughts, words and actions."

How timeless are God's warnings against what potentially comes into our hearts by way of television, the internet, Facebook, Twitter, etc. We must be very careful. "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me" (Psalm 101:3).

Solomon devotes considerable attention to the horrific consequences

of sexual sins. Proverbs 5 is a warning against the whorish woman. He continues his warning in 6:20-35.

Today, what God says regarding sexual immorality is rejected by many in our culture. However, Scripture warns us that God judges those who lack understanding concerning adultery and whoredom. Untold harm is done to human life when we act out our lusts rather than repent of the sinfulness that lies within our hearts. Solomon warns in Proverbs 6:25-26, "Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids. For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life."

Multiple examples from today's culture warn us that to reject the authority of Scripture is sin against God. We know that fornication has resulted in millions of unborn children murdered in the womb. Families are torn asunder by adultery. "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4).

God does not ignore sexual immorality ("the bed"), but judges sin. Many have family members and friends who refuse to marry before bearing children, often resulting in the father's disobeying the Seventh Commandment and abandoning his responsibilities. We must be willing to do all that is necessary to guard our bodies and souls from sexual sins of heart and body. "The seventh commandment requireth the preservation of our own and our neighbor's chastity, in heart, speech and behavior" (WSC 71).

Marriage of man and woman is the sacred emblem of Christ's love for His church. Ephesians 5:23-33 not only teaches the sacred nature of the marriage bond, but also that Christ's relationship to believers is represented in the marriage bond. Transgressing the Seventh Commandment is an insult to Christ.

Paul is clearly referring to Genesis 2:23 ("bone of my bones and flesh of

my flesh”) when he says in Ephesians 5:28-32: “So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”

Can adultery be forgiven? Yes. Paul said, “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

Jesus Christ told the adulterous woman, “Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin nor more” (John 8:11). Our nation is under the judgment of God because the Ten Commandments are no longer regarded as absolute truth. “In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes,” (Judges 21:25).

¹*Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., PC Study Bible Online, 1990).

VIII THOU SHALT NOT STEAL.

BY ROBERT W. ANDERSON

When Christ healed the man with the impediment of speech, Mark 7:37 reports that the astonished people said, “He hath done all things well.” Such is our response when we stand before the implications of the Eighth Command-

ment, “Thou shalt not steal” (Exodus 20:15).

How very well God has done in hedging a man and his property in with this provision. Lawful ownership and use of property is one way in which the individual seeks to meet his chief end — “to glorify God and enjoy him forever.”

Rather than stealing another’s work, Scripture requires our own personal labors. Proverbs 27:23 and 26 teach us, “Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.... The lambs are for thy clothing, and the goats are the price of the field.”

While Scripture enjoins diligence in labor, it also enjoins generosity instead of self-indulging parsimony: “And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay ... thou shalt relieve him ...” (Leviticus 25:35). When the obedient exercises mercy, Psalm 112:9 says he is a good man: “He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor.”

Furthermore we have the command for the year of Jubilee, which came to Israel every fiftieth year. “Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound ... And ye shall ... proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof [words cast on the iconic Liberty Bell] ... and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family” (Leviticus 25:9,10).

The New Geneva Study Bible sums up the year of Jubilee as “a year in which all the poor who had fallen into debt were given a fresh start. Loans were written off. Land that had been sold was returned to its original owner, and slaves were released.”¹

Long after the establishment of the laws of Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy, kings came on the scene in Israel. But the coming of a king did not bring a God-sanctioned change to the law of ownership.

God had already given Moses commandments for a king: “And it shall be when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of the law ... and he

shall read therein all the days of his life: That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment (Deuteronomy 17:18-20). The throne existed, not for the king to take property as he willed, but instead for him to render his subjects secure in the possession of their own. Seizure of property was never the divine right of kings or princes.

Over time the thinking of kings changed on that subject, as illustrated by king Ahab in the account of Naboth and his vineyard (see 1 Kings 21). The prophet Micah exclaimed, “Woe to them that devise iniquity ... because it is in the power of their hand. And they covet fields, and take them by violence” (Micah 2:1,2).

Because socialism is vigorously promoted today, we note the conflict with this commandment. “Socialism ... calls for public rather than private ownership of property ...” (britannica.com). The words of Johannes G. Vos, commenting on the question “Is socialism contrary to Christianity?,” are pertinent today: “God instituted civil government to promote the welfare of men by maintaining justice in human society (Romans 13:4), not to develop into a colossus of collective enterprise in competition with its own citizens.”²

The “thou” in the Eighth Commandment is singular. What it requires and forbids begins at the individual level. As over against the crime of stealing, the individual is clearly invested by God with the right to acquire, own and distribute property. God owns everything. He makes the individual a steward. The individual, not the government or society collectively, is the steward of what God has entrusted to him.

Though God makes all individuals equally responsible to Him for their stewardship, He does not endow every individual equally, as is illustrated in the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30). Unto one ser-

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vant was given five talents, to another two, and to another one. God follows that same principle in the distribution of spiritual gifts. The Spirit divides “to every man severally [individually] as he will” (1 Corinthians 12:11).

On this principle, the commandment is antagonistic to socialism, which holds that “society as a whole ... should own or at least control property for the benefit of all” (britannica.com). Socialism presumes to correct what it judges to be the inequities of God’s arrangement.

Let us think better of God’s arrangement. On the basis of the Bible’s teaching, Christians have long supported the right of individual ownership and opposed socialism. In the introduction to his 1923 book, *Christianity and Liberalism*, the brilliant J. Gresham Machen wrote, “a socialistic state would mean the reduction to a minimum of the sphere of individual choice. Labor ... under a socialistic ... government would be prescribed, and individual liberty would be gone.”³

In 1946, Carl McIntire wrote that God’s law “guarantees individualism. With it the individual is protected and preserved.... It repudiates and disposes any notions of collectivism, communism, and the totalitarian state.”⁴

The New Testament teaches the same code of moral conduct as the Old. Jesus told the rich ruler, “Thou knowest the commandments.... Do not steal” (Luke 18:20). Paul told the Ephesian church, “Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Ephesians 4:28). To the Thessalonians, Paul wrote, “... study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without,

and that ye may have lack of nothing” (1 Thessalonians 4:11,12).

In his second epistle to the same church, he wrote, “For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat” (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Referring to James, Cephas, and John, Paul writes in Galatians 2:10: “they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.”

The Bible has much to say about the implications of the simply stated Eighth Commandment, as it commends industriousness (Proverbs 31:15) and thrift (Proverbs 12:27) on one hand, and condemns slothfulness (Proverbs 26:14) and wastefulness (Proverbs 18:9) on the other.

We need to call attention to the Eighth Commandment in our day, as the prophets and apostles in the past lifted up their voices against violations of it and promoted its right observance.

¹*New Geneva Study Bible*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995), p. 184.

²Johannes G. Vos, *The Westminster Larger Catechism, A Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1998), p. 380.

³J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, (New York: The McMillan Co., 1923), p. 10.

⁴Carl McIntire, *Author of Liberty*, (Collingswood, NJ: Christian Beacon Press, 1946), p. 93.

IX

THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY NEIGHBOUR.

BY MARK W. EVANS

The Ninth Commandment teaches God’s requirements concerning truthfulness in speech, especially in regard to our neighbors. Arthur W. Pink observed: “But as with the previous Commandments, so it is here: much more is implied and inculcated than is specifically stated. As we have so often pointed out, each of the Ten Commandments enunciates a general principle, and not only are all

What Satan says and what he offers is “what is not.” All that God reveals is “what is.”

other sins forbidden which be allied to the one named and prohibited, together with all causes and tendencies thereto, but the opposite virtue is definitely required, with all that fosters and promotes it. Thus in its wider meaning this Ninth Commandment reprehends any word of ours which would injure the reputation of our neighbor, be it uttered in public or in private.”¹

Especially in today’s context, it is important to understand that truth is an eternal and immutable attribute of God. The first slander took place in the Garden of Eden. Satan was the slanderer and God was the object of the slander. Through that slander, Eve ate the forbidden fruit and Adam, who was the covenant head and representative of mankind, transgressed God’s commandment. The answer to Westminster Shorter Catechism Question 16 states: “The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity; all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression” (see Romans 5:12,19). The prophet Jeremiah lamented this particular curse upon mankind: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9).

Some years ago, a radio preacher (name unknown) gave a definition of truth. He said, “Truth is what is. A lie is what is not.” Satan is a liar. Jesus Christ said of him: “He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father it” (John 8:44). What Satan says and what he offers is “what is not.” All that God reveals is “what is.” “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or

hath he spoken, and shall He not make it good?” (Numbers 23:19). The liar commits a grievous sin because he assaults God’s holy nature and becomes Satan’s instrument for evil.

The answer to Westminster Shorter Catechism Question 77 states: “The Ninth Commandment requireth the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and our own and our neighbor’s good name, especially in witness-bearing.” This includes the endeavor to be truthful in what we say and to avoid hasty judgments against our neighbors. We are to promote and defend our neighbor’s good name when it is right to do so. It is especially important that we not circulate falsehoods. We are required to stand for the truth, even when it brings opposition and separates us from our friends and associates.

Thomas Ridgely, in his *Commentary on the Larger Catechism*, stated: “[L]et us always value their opinion most who are Christ’s best friends, and expect little else but ill-treatment from His enemies. And let us not, out of fear of reproach, decline anything which is our duty, in which the honor of God and the welfare of His people is concerned; but in this case, let us leave our good name in Christ’s hand, whose providence is concerned for and takes care of the honor, as well as the wealth and outward state, of His people.”²

The Ninth Commandment forbids “whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own or our neighbor’s good name” (WSC 78). This summary forbids such sins as concealing the truth and remaining silent when we should defend the truth. Neither should we condone or commend evil-doers. We are not to speak lies, engage in slander or tale-bearing, or pronounce unjustified condemnations. Our own testimony should be honest and frank, avoiding the use of duplicity or distractions to obscure the truth. We should not exaggerate the faults and failures of others, or take pleasure in their disgraces or failures.

God’s law examines us, even to the depths of our souls. For those outside of Christ, the law reveals the stern reality of God’s certain judgment and compels the sinner to obey the Apostle’s plea, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:31). For the believer, the law convicts and, through Christ, brings confession and restoration, enabling him “more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness” (WSC 35).

¹Arthur W. Pink, *The Ten Commandments* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), p. 58.

²Thomas Ridgely, *Commentary on the Larger Catechism*, Vol. II, (Edmonton: Still Water Revival Books, Reprint of 1855 edition), p. 404.

X
THOU SHALT NOT
COVET THY
NEIGHBOUR’S HOUSE,
THOU SHALT NOT
COVET THY
NEIGHBOUR’S WIFE,
NOR HIS MANSERVANT,
NOR HIS MAIDSERVANT,
NOR HIS OX, NOR HIS
ASS, NOR ANY
THING THAT IS
THY NEIGHBOUR’S.

BY BRAD K. GSELL

The Tenth Commandment is unique in that it really is at the root of the violation of all of the other nine commandments. The violation of the other commandments ALWAYS begins with covetousness — whether it is to have the glory which belongs to God alone, or to take something from our neighbor which is not ours.

David expresses this in his prayer to the Lord in Psalm 119:35-36: “Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.”

The law of God is antithetical to selfishness and evil desires. Jesus Christ tells us: “Thou shalt love the

Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:37-40).

The great Apostle Paul was a wonderful example of a servant of Christ who found his satisfaction in whatever the Lord gave him at any given time. In 1 Timothy 6:6-8 he writes: “But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.”

To the church at Philippi, he wrote: “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:11-13). Rather than living a life of resentment and desiring to have what others had, Paul placed his complete trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We may think of covetousness merely as a sin within ourselves. But, it is far more than that. Envy, based on greed and unholy desires, can destroy a man or woman and is a sin against God. It displays a lack of contentment, a lack of thankfulness, a lack of humility, and so many other sins.

The Apostle Paul tells us in Colossians 3:5 that covetousness is actually “idolatry.” Our sinful desires take the place of what belongs to God alone.

Thankfulness should always be in a man’s heart. As I was growing up, my parents taught us to honor all who labored diligently and honestly — whether they be sanitation workers, doctors, lawyers, or whatever. The

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company CEO who lived in a mansion was never disparaged. We were never once taught that he should not have that, and that we should have some of his wealth.

Even complaining that the wicked sometimes have more material posses-

When traveling to other countries, I have been struck with the observation that wealth and possessions do not create happiness. I have been in very small homes of humble construction, with barely any amenities, where the families are beaming from ear to ear with the love of Christ.

sions and less suffering than we do is a sin against God. David wrote in Psalm 73:2-3,5: “But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.... They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.”

Sadly, the belief in entitlement (one of the worst forms of covetousness) has firmly taken root in many families today, and is taught to children from their earliest days.

The violation of the Tenth Commandment is at the root of much of the turmoil and destruction that we see in America today — as well as in the dangerous surge toward socialism. The desire to steal a disproportionate amount from “the top 1%” is based on covetousness. Many of the social welfare programs of our government, even if coming from sincere motives to help the poor, actually are based on principles of covetousness and theft.

The Bible tells us that instead of coveting, we should work hard and be satisfied with God’s provision. King Solomon tells us in Ecclesiastes 3:13 that: “every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.” “For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee,” is the advice we receive from the psalmist (Psalm 128:2).

Yet, even earning wealth legally and devoting inordinate attention to it, can involve the sin of covetousness. Paul warned Timothy: “For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Timothy 6:10).

When traveling to other countries, I have been struck with the observation that wealth and possessions do not create happiness. I have been in very small homes of humble construction, with barely any amenities, where the families are beaming from ear to ear with the love of Christ.

Then, we see Hollywood stars on fourth and fifth marriages, addicted to drugs, and even committing suicide — despite their millions. Jesus Christ made this quite clear when He warned: “Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luke 12:15).

Rather than amassing wealth for selfish gains, the child of God is to “[work] with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Ephesians 4:28). Whereas socialist leaders set themselves up to decide what each person should have, and seize and redistribute wealth according to their judgments, the Biblical model is for us — rather than coveting — to voluntarily help those in need, as God has blessed us.

Let none of us be foolish like the rich man in Luke 12:16-21. Christ taught the people with this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he

thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

May the words of the great missionary C.T. Studd be forever in our hearts. He grew up in a wealthy family. Yet, he went out in faith — trusting Christ for all his needs. Even when he received an inheritance, he gave it to help others. He wrote: “Only one life, ’twill soon be past, Only what’s done for Christ will last.”



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