

107. The Purpose and Uses of the Law.

Thy Word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against Thee. *Ps. 119,11.*

Not only unbelievers cannot fulfil the Ten Commandments, but not even Christians can fully keep them. Why, then, do we preach the Law? "Wherefore, then, serveth the Law?" What purpose does it serve? In the first place, it, in a measure, checks the coarse outbursts of sin and thereby helps to maintain outward discipline and decency in the world. True, it is not in the power of the Law to make men Christians, but it awes and bridles the sinner by its threats and curses and punishments, so that the pent passions of the heart may not have unbridled course. Is not this our common experience? How often are even we Christians, who delight in the Law of God after the inward man, kept from sinning grossly, to which our sinful flesh would seduce us, because the Word of the Lord made a deep impression on our minds and we feared the terrible torments of hell.

It is God's will that we do the works commanded in the Ten Commandments. As the psalmist says: "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." This is another purpose of the Ten Commandments: God wants them to be a rule for us in every walk of human life and endeavor. The Spirit, who kindles faith in the heart, also works the new life of love to God and prompts man to voluntary obedience to His will. The divine Law is the perfect rule of right living, which of all men the Christian seeks to follow more and more.

But the chief purpose of every commandment is to be for us a mirror which is to show us, in strong contrast to divine perfection, our own unrighteousness. Men have by nature a certain knowledge of their sin, but they can come to a true and full knowledge of the deep dye of their sin only when they look into the mirror of the perfect Law of God. The purpose of the Law is to disclose to you the misery and wretchedness of your sinful condition and the fact that on account of it you have merited eternal damnation. And thus the Law serves to prepare you for the reception of the Gospel.

Prayer.

Lord God, heavenly Father, we pray Thee so to enlighten our hearts that in the mirror of Thy Law we may duly perceive our many and great sins. But grant also that we may ever in true faith lay hold of the all-sufficient merit and obedience of Thy dear Son, trust in Thy grace, and obtain that peace which the world cannot give. Amen.

If in the best of all my actions,
In works that are admired the most,
I must perceive great imperfections,
I surely have no right to boast;
Yet this sweet comfort doth abide:
In mercy only I confide.

It is that mercy never ending,
Which all conception far transcends,
Of Him, who, with love's arms extending,
To wretched sinners condescends;
Whose heart with pity still doth break
Whether we seek Him or forsake.

This devotion is one of 318 taken from *Daily Bread* by F. E. Pasche, published by CPH in 1926, but now in the public domain. They have been copied and reformatted by Rev. Bruce G. Ley and made available for distribution by pastors and missionaries.

You may contact Rev. Ley at: pastorley@leychalet.com.

You are invited to go to www.scholia.net for the other devotions from *Daily Bread*.