

## Sabbath School Lesson #13 – Love is the Fulfilment of the Law – 22-28 March 2025

**C**hrist would have us heed the apostle's exhortation to "owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law" (Romans 13:8). "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (verse 10). "Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (1 John 4:7). "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" (1 John 5:3). To fear God and keep His commandments is the whole duty of man (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Since he who loves his neighbour from the heart must first love God, thus keeping of the commandments, the apostle in Romans has set forth in that exhortation the whole duty of man. He who heeds this exhortation can never do anything for which earthly governments can justly condemn him, even though he be ignorant of their laws. He needs not come in conflict with earthly powers; if they oppress him, they fight not against him but against the King whom he serves.

**Sunday: The Law of Love** – How did the Israelites at Mt Sinai perceive the law and what can we learn? The law of God is spoken of as "a fiery law" (Deuteronomy 33:2). Such it was to the congregation of Israel assembled round Mount Sinai, beholding with fearful eyes the lightnings and the smoke and the "devouring fire" upon its summit, and listening to the awful voice which proclaimed in tones of thunder the ten words. Terror-stricken by the terrible display of Divine majesty, they removed afar off, and said to Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die" (Exodus 20:19). And yet this fiery law is a law of love; for we read that "love is the fulfilling of the law," even the "royal law," which says, Do not commit adultery, and, Do not kill (Romans 13:10; James 2:8-11). It commanded only love, and only by the manifestation of love can it be kept. But this truth the Israelites did not then perceive. This was not the fault of God, but of themselves. The fault was in their hearts. The law spoke to them as it speaks to all who are unconverted – who have not the love of God in them. They received it from the standpoint of the sinner, from which the law presents only its negative side, expressed by the words, "Thou shalt not." It cannot be otherwise; for the law speaks death to sin. But it is a law of life to him from whom sin has been separated. Until the heart is open to God by faith, so that He can come in and dwell there, the law of God will ever appear to the individual as it did to the congregation of Israel at Mount Sinai. It will be a fiery law, speaking Divine wrath and awful judgments upon the transgressors. Yet this very fact proclaims it to be the law of love and life, for to these, sin is utterly antagonistic. Either sin must be destroyed or love and life must cease. And so, in the terrible lightnings and thunders and the devouring fire upon the top of Mount Sinai so terrible to the assembly of Israel, we have a most striking exhibition of God guarding with jealous care the happiness of the universe. The devouring fire for sin, is the preservation of love and life and happiness for every being whom God has made, and therefore but a manifestation of love toward sinful man. "Love is the fulfilling of the law," and "God is love." This is the very nature of God; and in Him love has its source. He is the fountain of love and of life. He has these in and of Himself; but His creatures have them only because He has put them in their hearts by putting Himself there. Love is a manifestation of the presence of God. It does not come by the exercise of the will, but is God's gift. We cannot love by promising to love or trying to love. We cannot create love by our exertions. Love can spring up in the heart only through its being opened to God, so that He who is love can come in. And this we do by the exercise of faith. "Faith worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6), and faith and love are inseparable. And he who has the love of God in his heart will love righteousness. The law will be to him the royal pathway, wherein is found life and happiness and peace. He will say as Jesus said, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is within my heart" (Psalms 40:8). He will love the Lord his God with all his heart, mind, and strength, and his neighbour as himself. "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching" (John 7:17).

**Monday: The Law Is Holy and Righteous and Good** – How does the apostle refute the claims that grace replaced the law after the cross? The Apostle Paul never taught that the law of God which was engraved in stone, was abolished at the crucifixion. No, never. Read what he says of it in a letter to the Romans, dated AD 60, more than twenty years after the "ministration of condemnation" was "done away" (2 Corinthians 3:6-18). "For we know that

the law is spiritual.” “For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.” “So then with my mind I myself serve the law of God.” “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.” – “Wherefore the law is holy and the commandment holy, and just and good.” “For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.” “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law.” “The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (see Romans 7:7-25; 2:13; 3:31, 8:7).

**Tuesday: Law and Grace** – What is the relationship between God’s law and grace? There is nothing made more clear in the Bible than that no man is justified by works, but that justification is wholly by faith. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9). “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:3-7). “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). “The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Romans 8:7). “We are all as an unclean thing; and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6). “Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth, to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law” (Romans 3:24-25, 28). These texts show plainly that no works of man have any effect in securing his justification. But do they discredit the law? – not by any means. “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law” (Romans 3:31). The law is the only standard of justice; because, “not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified” (Romans 2:13). Christ’s righteousness is perfect obedience to the law, which is within His heart (John 15:10; Psalm 40:8). Christ dwells in the heart by faith (Ephesians 3:17), and it is His presence in the heart that justifies us, as we by faith take His life instead of our own. So, we are justified by faith, because faith brings Christ and His obedience into the heart and life.

**Wednesday: Love Is the Fulfilment of the Law** – Does a man who gives for charity fulfil the law? “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13:10). The Saviour said to the young man, “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor” (Matthew 19:21). In Colossians 3:14 we are told that love is the bond of perfectness. So, the Saviour simply pointed out to the man that although he had outwardly kept all the commandments, he lacked the essential element of commandment keeping, which is love. Without love there is no keeping of the law. True charity is not simply almsgiving, but it is love. Now, remembering that love is the fulfilling of law, and that without love there is nothing of any value, read the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, and we shall find out what constitutes the keeping of the commandments. When we understand that love, and that alone, is the fulfilling of the law, we can see in this chapter the statement that the keeping of the commandments means kindness, patience, unselfishness, thoughtfulness for others, forgetfulness of self, and labour to build up others, meekness, and gentleness, and true courtesy. In short, it means perfection. Without love in the heart, there is no keeping of the law of God. The law was given in love (see Deuteronomy 33:2-3), and the law is love.

**Thursday: Above All, Love One Another** – We do well to heed the advice of Peter, for he says, “And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8). While for the Lord, we are to see to it that we lose not our love for each other, and if any are departing from the word of God, we must exhort them in love to return to their first love, not love them any the less, but exhort them more. If we heed this advice, we shall avoid everything that will bring reproach on the name of God; for we are to live and act, “that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 4:11).