

And in the third place, we now live in a new relationship to the Law of God. It continues to be a revelation of God's will for our obedience, but now we delight in knowing it and obeying it! It informs us what righteousness is and what sin is, so that we can practice the former and avoid the latter.

Just as the Law was given to chosen and redeemed Israel as a rule by which to live, so the moral Law of God is our Lebensregel, our rule of life.

Of course, those aspects of God's Law that prefigured and foreshadowed Christ, and therefore were fulfilled when Christ the substance came; those offerings and ceremonies and ordinances that were given specifically to Israel as proper forms of worship; and those judicial regulations that were given specifically to Israel to provide good order in the civic sphere, and protection from and punishment for crime -- these aspects of God's Law do not bind our consciences today, except for such principles as carry over into what the Westminster divines called the New Testament dispensation of the covenant of grace.

But those aspects of God's Law that govern our moral duties to God and our fellow human beings, those that are summarized in the Ten Commandments and epitomized by our Lord in the two great commandments to love God with all of our being and to love our neighbor as ourselves -- these aspects continue to bind our consciences and define right conduct for us, and continue to be our rule of life, together with other revelations of the will of God recorded in the New Testament.

The Law of God in any age is the will of God addressed to our obedience. It is the rule of life for those who are justified!

Thus it is eminently true, as the beloved John says in I John 2:17, that "the man who does the will of God lives forever." He who does the will of God experiences true life now as he walks in righteousness; and he will experience true life forever in that place where righteousness will characterize not only our environment but will permeate and fill us through and through!

Then and only then will we fully experience and appreciate that eternal life which is the gift of God's grace through the atoning work of His dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ!

This brings us to our third step in sanctification.

C. Step Three in sanctification is recognizing and acting upon our new relationship to innate righteousness: that of life.

As in step one, this new relationship may be seen in three phases or stages, and the first of these is that:

1. We are completely alive to the mastery of innate righteousness.

Let us note three references in this section of the epistle.

6:17-18 -- "But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves