

Institutes of the Christian Religion by John Calvin
(Translation by Henry Beveridge)
Men's Theology Study – June 16, 2021– 6:30 pm

Book 2 – Of the knowledge of God the Redeemer, in Christ, as first manifested to the fathers, under the law, and thereafter to us under the gospel.

Discussion Video:

Chapter 8a (s. 1-12) – Exposition of the Moral Law

Sections 1-2: The Written Moral Law and Natural Law

- Section 1: Two Purposes of the Law
 - First, in the Law God calls man to revere him and prescribes the conduct by which this reverence is manifested.
 - Second, in the Law God points out impotence to keep it and transgressions for violating it.
- Section 1: Why isn't the natural law enough to accomplish these two things?

- Section 2: Why do we owe God obedience? Who is at fault for our inability to keep the Law?

Sections 3-5: What We Learn from the Law

- Section 3: When we examine ourselves against the Law we conclude two things:
 - First, we are very far we are in being in accordance with God's will and how unworthy we are to be counted as his sons.
 - Second, we see our own powers are "not only unequal to fulfill the Law, but are altogether null (2.8.3)."
 - What should these conclusions produce within us? What should they produce in a sinner?

- Section 4: The Law contains both "promises and threatening" from God.
 - Why do we need promises and threatening? Shouldn't we just be attracted to the beauty of the Law?

 - What do the threatenings and promises attest to us about God?

- Section 5: In the Law, God reveals the acceptable way to worship and obey him. However, human history tells the story of mankind trying to devise methods for procuring righteousness—so-called "good works". What is the best cure for the vice of good works?

Sections 6-10: The Spirit of the Law

- Section 6: What does it mean for the Law to be spiritual (Rom 7:14)?
 - We are inclined to think if we are not killing, committing adultery, or stealing that we are keeping the Law. What is wanting (i.e. lacking) in this which is actually the “principal things which the Law requires?”

- Section 7: What erroneous idea of the Law did Jesus correct?
 - Some people pretend that Jesus was giving a new evangelical law because the Mosaic Law was deficient. Why does Calvin call this idea pernicious?

- Sections 8-9: Calvin proposes his hermeneutical (i.e. interpretive) method for interpreting the Law. Be guided by the principle of the commandment, considering in each case the purpose for which the specific commandment was provided, with each commandment either requiring or prohibiting.
 - What is the principal purpose for *Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy? Honor your father and mother? Do not commit adultery? Do not take God’s name in vain?*

 - How does the Law go further than merely calling us to avoid vice and commend virtue (Section 9)?

- Section 10: Why did God deliver the commandments using elliptical expressions with a larger meaning than that actually expressed?

Sections 11-12: The Two Tables of the Law

- Section 11: The Law has been divided into two tables, or parts: Commandments 1-4 reveal our duties to God and Commandments 5-6 reveal our duties to man.
 - Why is it vain to talk of righteousness apart from religion? Put another way, what is lacking if you divide the two tables of the Law and have only duties to man?