UPLOOK

MAR-APR 2007

Assess the Need • Catch the Vision • Take the Challenge

THE BOOK OF THE LAW
Jesse Gentile

THE CURSE OF THE LAW
Wesley Ferguson

FULFILLING OF THE LAW
Jack Baker

THE TRAP

LIVING UNDER THE LAW

www.uplook.org

Montage: John Nicholson

The Law is perfect. And perfect for the Perfect Man. But what about us?

The Trap

I saw it coming but was caught by it just the same. Are you?

Not long after I was saved, several of us were at the home of an older believer when another brother and I were invited into the office—the sanctum sanctorum. This was never a good sign. That is to say, in the light of eternity it was beneficial, but at the moment it instilled panic. For it meant that we were about to have some sort of Bible question posed to us. A seemingly innocent question. A deceptively simple question. The kind of question that, but for experience, we might have naively—even cheerfully—answered. By this point, I was beginning to be able to smell a trap. The friendly smile, the gracious tone, the casual air—none of these could any longer fool me into thinking that I was being afforded the safety of an easy question.

"What role, brethren, do you feel the Law ought to play in the life of a believer today?" Relief! This time, I could see the trap, and so I artfully dodged it. "Well, certainly nobody gets saved by keeping the Law. Also, the ceremonial portion of it has been fulfilled in Christ. So, instead, we keep the moral portion of the Law in order to please the Lord after we are saved."

A part of me was confident that I had evaded both the obvious trap (salvation by law) and the subtle trap (the ceremonial law). And yet, my adversary did not seem at all discomfited. He received my explanation peacefully. Too peacefully. If I had eluded his trap, why the calm smile? And why was my sense of impending doom growing instead of diminishing?

At this point, my cunning opponent revealed the real trap. A trap that to this day ensnares vast numbers of genuine believers without their even knowing it: the bondage of living under the Law; of thinking that the Law can somehow produce godliness in the lives of God's people. That day I had my introduction into a biblical understanding of God's purpose for the Law. I was given a copy of a little booklet in which was explained the true role of the Law today (see The Pump, on the back cover) and the folly of life under law.

Don't misunderstand. There is nothing wrong with the Law itself. It is holy and righteous and good (Rom. 7:12). It is spiritual (Rom. 7:14). The Law perfectly accomplishes its goal: exposing sin. *"What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law"* (Rom. 7:7). The Law is excellent, provided one uses it, well, lawfully (1 Tim. 1:8). But the Law has a fatal flaw: us! Although the Law is spiritual, we are carnal (Rom. 7:14).

Romans 1-5 teaches us that we cannot look to the Law for justification. But Romans 6-8 stresses that neither can we depend upon the Law for sanctification. God has a far better plan. And, as always, God's answer is His Son: *"For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"* (Rom. 8:3f).

Christians know that the Law cannot save. It was never intended to. But how many believers understand that the Law is not the standard or source of day-by-day Christian living? Do you, as a believer, attempt to live the Christian life in slavery, caught in the trap of bondage to the Law?

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FEATURES

COLUMNS

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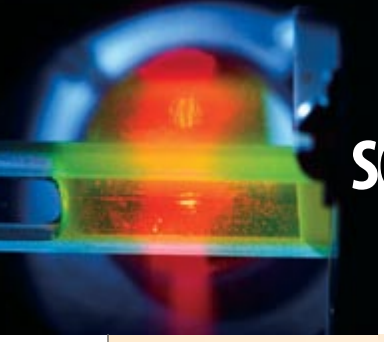


The World as We Know It

Strange how men use intelligence in attempting to disprove intelligent design.

The Hawaiian Islands are volcanic in origin. Molten lava from deep below the ocean floor escaped into the cool Pacific waters and hardened into mountains, only the tops of which break the surface and appear to us as islands. Occasional volcanic eruptions spill hot lava down the mountainside, threatening everything in its path with incineration. The lava eventually cools and hardens, becoming a dark rock of jagged shapes. Along the coastal highway appear patterns of white rocks against the black lava. These are actually chunks of coral skeletons made of white calcium carbonate that have been arranged into letters and words. Some send birthday wishes and some exalt the most recent senior class. One formation simply says, "WE GO BEACH."

Could these patterns and words be caused by waves randomly tossing coral chunks onto the lava? We quickly dismiss this as nonsense. Still, we are invited by evolutionary theory to believe that matter has the natural tendency to self-assemble into living machines much more complex than coral words. And that structures such as the feathers and hollow bones needed for birds to have arisen from reptiles were not intentionally designed but are the result of undirected chance and natural selection. Intelligent design theorist William Dembski has developed a three step method, or algorithm, to determine whether a given pattern exists by necessity, chance, or by deliberate design.[1] He calls the "characteristic trademark or signature" of intelligence, "specified complexity." To be considered the result of intelligent action a pattern must first be rare—one of many possible choices of patterns; then complex—improbable; and finally, specified—following independent rules like those of English grammar.

We are sure the coral words on the lava did not form by chance because they are rare, complex, and specified. A similar application of Dembski's method to the biological world makes it difficult to support a non-intelligent source for all of life. Yet this is exactly what standard evolutionary theory asserts. Here, then, is one of the core problems many people have with the whole idea of evolution: it simply does not fit the reality of the world as we know it. Intentional dog or orchid breeding has never resulted in a dog becoming a reptile or an orchid becoming an oak tree. That is, even deliberate, selective, and intensive breeding cannot cross the boundaries between genetic types. How then could undirected chance accomplish this so easily and so often?

Photo: Michael Windheuser

Today we see life coming only from pre-existing life rather than coming spontaneously from non-life. Like coral words on lava, living things show the marks of having been designed. Intelligent choices appear to have been made between competing biological design options. Complex biological structures are used where they are needed. And levels of organization, integration, and regulation exist between cells, organs, and organisms that seem to be imposed on them. Life is specified complexity and specified complexity, like the coral words "WE GO BEACH," does not happen by chance.

—Michael G. Windheuser, Ph.D.

1 M. Behe, W. Dembski, S. Meyer, *Proceedings of the Wethersfield Institute*, vol. 9, *Science and Evidence for Design in the Universe* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2000).

New Assembly in Seymour, MO

Group of encouraged believers 40 miles southeast of Springfield.

Five years ago, a group of believers who attended Southeast Bible Chapel in Springfield, Missouri began a midweek home Bible study near Seymour. After a period of time, the study grew and moved into a nearby building, which was later given to the group and was named, "Little Finley Fellowship Center." The Bible study was moved to Sunday evenings and a few more local residents began attending. During this time the Seymour area believers were assisted with outreach in the area by the first *Good News on the Move* Team.

In 2006, as gas prices began to skyrocket, seven families in the Seymour area who were attending Southeast Bible Chapel, decided to break bread every other Lord's day at Little Finley. One week they would meet at Little Finley and the next week they would meet at Southeast Bible Chapel. This was done with the blessing and direction of the Eldership from Springfield. The Seymour believers continued to meet in this manner for approximately one year when it was decided that they should begin meeting regularly and commit to a full time presence in the community.

The believers in Seymour covet your prayers and extend a hearty welcome to all who might be traveling in this area to join them. **Contact:** Daron Wilkins at 417-935-2157 email: *Kids4us@wildblue.net* or Brian Thompson at 417-683-4237 Little Finley Bible Chapel, 4567 State Hwy "K", Seymour, Missouri 65746 **Meetings:** See times listed on photo above.

LADIES MISSIONARY CONFERENCE

The 30th Annual Ladies Missionary Conference will be held, Lord willing, on Saturday, May 5 at Turner Road Bible Chapel, 2100 Turner Road, Windsor, ON, commencing with registration and refreshments at 9:30 AM. Speakers expected are Karin Flock (Austria), Leisa Suarez (Bolivia) and Christina Harangozo (Ezekiel Project - MI). Child-care provided for children 2 years of age and younger. **Contact:** Jan Gillis 519-967-1075

SCHENECTADY SPRING CONFERENCE

The believers at Bellevue Gospel Chapel in Schenectady, NY and Northway Bible Chapel in Clifton Park, NY will hold an Annual Spring Conference at Northway Bible Chapel on May 5-6 beginning Saturday at 3:30 PM. The speaker is planned to be Randy Amos (NY).
Contact: John E. Smith 518-861-6486 email: *johnesmith@aol.com*

ANNUAL LOUISIANA CONFERENCE

Lake Park Chapel in Belle Chasse, LA will hold its 62nd Annual Bible Conference May 5-6, beginning on Saturday at 3:30 PM. Rex Trogdon (NC) and Peter Rosborough (AL) will be the speakers. Join with other believers for a spiritually refreshing weekend in God's Word. **Contact:** Ray Cummings 504-394-3087 email: *ibelievegodslove@juno.com*

CLAREMONT, CA CONFERENCE

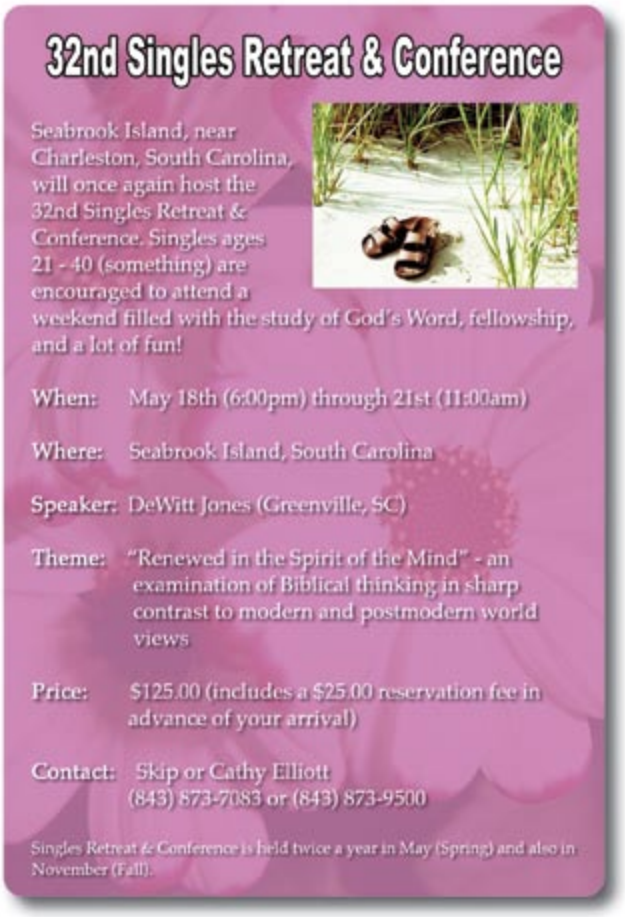
Claremont Bible Chapel is pleased to announce the Sixteenth Annual Conference to be held May 18-20. The invited speakers are Harold Summers (BC) and Craig Shikarji (MD). The conference begins Friday evening at 7:30 PM and continues Saturday at 10:00 AM and 1:30 PM with lunch provided. It will continue on the Lord's Day with the Breaking of Bread, the Family Bible Hour, lunch served, and the final message at 1:30 PM. We extend an invitation to all to join us, with great fellowship and ministry promised. For accommodations, contact Harry Elliott at 909-621-1064 or email: *jhdelliott@aol.com*

VESSELS OF HONOR 2007

A Young Adults Conference convened by East Tulsa Bible Chapel is to be held May 25-28 on the campus of Park University, Parkville, MO. The theme will be "Pure Light in a Dark World." Speakers expected at this time: John and Bobbie Heller, Jonathan and June Peck, John Bjorlie and Larry Sherraden. **Contact:**
Jim Lindamood 918-663-1121
jimlindamood@vesselsofhonor.org
Dan Moffitt 918-744-6484
danmoffitt@sbcglobal.net
www.vesselsofhonor.org

BUCKIT WEEK IN MARYLAND

Held in a hotel in Maryland, Buckit Week (Bible University - Christian Knowledge - Intensive Training) is neither a conference nor a camp.



Rather, it is intensive classroom and hands-on training in key doctrinal areas. Jabe Nicholson and Craig Shakarji will be the main teachers, Jul 22-27. For more details, please visit *www.buckitweek.org*

UPWARD BOUND

Upward Bound will be held again this year from Aug 12-19 (the Bible conference at Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, ON) and continuing through Aug 19-24 (canoeing and camping trip in Algonquin Park, ON). Speakers expected are: Brian Russell (UK), Charlie Tempest (ON), Dennis LeBlanc (NB), Craig Shakarji (MD) and Sandy McEachern (NS). **Contact:** 902-830-1305 email *sandymceachern@hotmail.com*

DEARBORN, MI CONFERENCE–REVISED

Please note that the dates for the first Annual Conference to be held at Dearborn Chapel have been changed to Sep 15-16. The speaker will be Jim McKendrick (MI) on the subject "Commitment." The conference begins Saturday at 4:00 PM. **Contact:** Ross Rainey 734-453-8585 David Donnelly 313-618-4791

CONFERENCE IN TENNESSEE

The 50th anniversary of Mid-South Bible Conference will be held at Horton Haven Christian Camp Aug 31 thru Sep 3. Assistance is needed in obtaining names and address of those who attended in the earlier days. Please forward information to *Matt@hortonhaven.org* or mail to: Horton Haven, P. O. Box 276, Chapel Hill, TN 37034

HOME FOR SALE

There is a home for sale on the Greenwood Hills Bible Conference grounds in PA. It is a newly renovated 2BR ranch with family room, spa room and includes all major appliances. **Contact:** Howard Wooler, 7 Pine Way, Fayetteville PA 17222 717-352-9463 *Howard20@pa.net*

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Middle Eastern Bible Fellowship in Hazel Park, MI is an Arabic speaking assembly and is in urgent need for a couple to help with their youth ministry. There are about 25 senior high school and college students from seven different Middle Eastern nationalities who speak fluent English, in addition to over 80 boys and girls in the Sunday school program. The assembly is willing to help out financially any commended worker who has the burden to serve these young men and women. **Contact:** Ata Mikhael 248-703-6565 (Cell) or 248-740-9057 email: *ata6565@comcast.net*

Believers Stewardship Services, Inc. is a ministry designed to glorify God by assisting Christians accomplish their financial and estate planning goals in fulfilling biblical stewardship. As it expands its nationwide ministries, *Believers Stewardship Services* is seeking additional Trust Officers. If you think that the Lord may call you to serve Him in this capacity, please review the position description and qualifications at *www.believerstewardship.org* or call Dave Allison at 888-338-7810.

COMMENDATION

Steve and Teresa Roys

After serious consideration and much prayer, the believers at Lake Lanier Bible Chapel, GA are commending Steve and Teresa Roys to the Lord's work at Camp Hope. Steve and Teresa have been serving the Lord in Gainesville, GA area for four years. As well as being fully involved in the work at Camp Hope, Steve and Teresa have also been extremely active in the work at Lake Lanier Bible Chapel where Steve serves as one of the elders. Please join us in praying for Steve and Teresa and encourage them in their service to the Lord.

HOMECALL

Donald W. Pelon, 78 years of age, was called Home to Heaven Feb 5, 2007 after a long illness. Donald and his wife Frances served the Lord with ministry primarily in the southern states and the Bahama Islands. He had been a resident of Pittsboro Christian Village for the past five years.

The Use of "Law" in Romans

One must not assume that such a key word always has a uniform meaning.

The law of God *commands* us to do what we cannot do in ourselves, *condones* nothing of our failure, *commends* itself to our conscience, but *condemns* us before God. O praise Him for His matchless grace!

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One cannot travel far along the Romans Road without bumping into the word "law." In fact, it occurs 52 times in the book. In each case, the word is *nom'-os* with only three exceptions: in Romans 2:12, the first two uses are the negative *anomos*, meaning "without law"; in 9:4, it is the compound *nom-oth-es-ee'-ah*, meaning law-giving.

The word *nomos* is defined as "anything established, anything received by usage, a custom, a law, a command." However, in general useage, *ethos* was retained for unwritten customs, while *nomos* was used for codified laws "decreed and used as the established standard for the administration of justice" (Vine).

As we carefully examine the contexts of the various times the word "law" is used, it would appear that the apostle Paul finds it useful to express a spectrum of related ideas. However, distinguishing the sometimes subtle differences is obviously important if we are to carefully follow his arguments.

LAW IN GENERAL

Paul begins in 2:12 (the first two references) with a broad use of the word, meaning "a prescribed standard of righteousness" without distinguishing what that standard or its source might be. This also seems to be the useage in the first and last occurence in 2:14, in 3:27, and in the second occurence in 4:15.

THE WAY SOMETHING WORKS

In Romans 7:21, Paul writes, *"I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me."* Here he is using the word "law" as a force or influence that impels an action. This also is the sense in verse 23a. We also see this idea in 7:23, *"the law of sin,"* and in 8:2, where the animating influence of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus breaks the domination of sin and death (much like the "law of gravity" is overcome by a bird in flight through a superior law in the bird—the law of life).

THE MOSAIC LAW

When used with the definite article, "the Law" is used for that given by the Lord to Israel at Sinai, but it primarily refers to the moral precepts (2:15, 18, 20, 26, 27; 3:19; 4:15; 7:4, 7, 14, 16, 22; 8:3, 4, 7). Without the definite article (2:14a; 5:20; 7:9) it is "stressing the Mosaic law in its quality as 'law'" (Vine).

THE BOOKS OF MOSES

As well, the apostle uses "law" the way it is often used by the four Evangelists. By metonomy, it refers to the Pentateuch, those books authored by Moses which contain the law. For example, we read of a righteousness which is: *"witnessed by the law and the prophets"* (3:21).

THE TWO EQUATIONS: THE PRINCIPLE OF LAW

Most importantly, the apostle explains the two ways in which one may attempt to find peace with God. One is by the principle of law; the other by the principle of grace. The principle of law may be written as follows:

command + penalty if you break it
(no power to live it)

The principle of grace is so different:
command + power to live it (no penalty)

The principle of law can only condemn; it has no power to transform. Yet by the principle of grace, apart from law, we are now able to fulfill *"the righteousness of the Law"* (Rom. 8:4).

God Wants My What?

We're enriched not by what we take up but what we give up.

At first glance, it might appear that God is struggling to fund many programs people claim to execute in His name. "Ministries" abound over the airwaves, soliciting money and offering incentives such as anointing oil, prayer cloths, CDs, books, "club membership", on-air recognition, commemorative bricks, or the promise of repayment with interest by God—most credit cards are accepted! In my hometown, a preacher laundered drug money through his "church" to finance a huge facility. Meanwhile, across town, another gathering hired a man for $20,000 dollars to "energize" the saints and increase their giving. Is God financially bankrupt? Does He need our financial assistance?

The condition of your bank account could never interest Him as much as the condition of your heart.

A review of God's financial portfolio In Psalms 104:24, we read, *"Oh Lord...the earth is full of thy riches."* Just how rich is God? Psalms 89:11-12 tells us: *"The heavens are Thine, the earth also is Thine: as for the world and the fullness thereof, Thou hast founded them..."* God is rich beyond our comprehension! David recognized God's wealth, praying in 1 Chronicles 29:10-14, *"...all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine; ...all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee."* The truth is, all we are able to give to God was His to begin with!

Old Testament giving: the tithe Tithing (From a Hebrew word meaning "a tenth part") involved giving a tenth of one's income or property as an offering to God. The first occurrence of tithing in Scripture is seen in Abram's offering to Melchizedek (Gen. 14:17-20). Next, we read of Jacob promising to the Lord a tenth of all he received (Gen. 28:22). During the time of the Law, there were three main passages that taught mandatory tithing for the Israelite: Leviticus 27, Numbers 18, and Deuteronomy 12, 14, and 26. The Israelites were instructed to give 10% of such things as the seed of the land, fruit of the tree, corn, wine, oil, herds, and flocks. The tenth portion was allocated to meet the material needs of the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow (Deut. 26:12). Tithing was to be done joyfully and with thankfulness (Deut. 12:11f). They were also exhorted to tithe in order to receive the Lord's blessing (Mal. 3:8-12), although Malachi records their failure (Mal. 3:8).

New Testament giving In the New Testament, there is no express command to "tithe" or give 10% of one's property or income. It appears that God is not concerned with a percentage but rather with the heart. Giving was to be done inconspicuously (Mt. 6:1-4), in love (1 Cor. 13:3), cheerfully (2 Cor 9:7; Lk. 19:8), purposefully and voluntarily (2 Cor. 9:7), honestly (Acts 5:1-11), sacrificially (2 Cor. 8:2f), and must accompany practical godliness (Mt. 23:23). This was seen in Jesus' reaction to the widow's giving in Luke 21:1-4: *"And [Jesus] looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And He saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And He said, 'Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all. For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her poverty hath cast in all the living that she had.'"* The New Testament also teaches that giving should be done liberally (2 Cor. 9:6), proportionately (Mk. 12:44), and regularly (1 Cor. 16:2). Giving was a sign of good stewardship (Lk. 16:11), caused *"fruit to abound to your account"* (Php. 4:17), and was a means of worship or *"...an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God"* (Php. 4:18). Monies collected were then used to help widows (Acts 6:1-6; 1 Tim. 5:3-16), poor saints (Gal. 2:10; Rom. 12:13; Acts 11:28f), and those devoted to the work of the Lord (Php. 4:16-18; 1 Cor. 9:11f).

God is not bankrupt. The condition of your bank account could never interest Him as much as the condition of your heart. But where is your heart? Giving is meant to be a positive, worshipful outpouring of the believer's heart to God. *"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"* (Mt. 6:21).

The Work of the Law

What about those who have never heard?

The Old Testament Law, given to the Jews, and the work of the Law, written on the hearts of Gentiles, are God's gracious provision of light.

As a child, I remember asking my mother what happened to people who died before Christ went to the cross. In my youth, I couldn't have imagined what a difficult question I was asking! And, as an adult, one of the most difficult questions I get asked is, "What about those who have never heard?" As a Christian, sooner or later someone will ask you this question. Thankfully, the Scripture provides answers through the work of the Law.

The first three chapters of Romans provide a very carefully crafted argument. Their purpose is to demonstrate that all mankind are sinners. Romans 1:17-20 starts by telling us that salvation is by faith, and the remainder of the Epistle elaborates on this theme. In Romans 1:18-32, we read of the condemnation of the pagan Gentile. This is the kind of man who chops down a tree and uses half the wood to make a fire and then fashions the other half into a god. The pagan Gentile is condemned because he has the testimony of creation (v. 20). If a man can stand under the star-filled sky at night and declare that there is no God, he is condemned and without excuse.

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In Romans 2:1-16, we see the condemnation of the moral man. He's a good man by earthly standards. But earth's standards aren't good enough for the divine Judge. So the good, moral man is also condemned. But it is the good, moral man that most of us self-identify with. Most of us are not living in the degradation of the pagan Gentiles. We live what we consider good lives: we love our families, we pay our taxes, and we contribute to our communities. So why is the good, moral man condemned? We'll consider this further in a moment, but first we need to complete the argument found in the last half of Romans 2.

Not only are the pagan Gentile and the moral man condemned, but Romans 2:17-29 shows that the religious Jew is also under God's condemnation. But how can this be? The Jews have a God-given religion. Why are they also under the condemnation of God? The answer is simple: they didn't keep the Law but allowed it to become a set of external regulations. They had been given a special revelation from God. But they allowed the Law to become a set of dead rules rather than seeing the need for God's Law to touch the very heart.

Now let's be clear: they were condemned because they didn't keep the Law, but this does not mean they were saved by keeping the Law. Salvation has *always* been by God's grace through a response of faith. In Old Testament times, salvation was by faith, but the way this faith was to be subsequently demonstrated was through keeping the Law. Keeping the Law didn't save, but a failure to keep the Law was a sign of a heart out of tune with God.

So we see all the great divisions of mankind—the pagan Gentile, the moral man, and the religious Jew—are all under God's condemnation. Romans 3:23 is a fitting summary of this idea: truly all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

But now we should return to the good, moral man. Why is he under the condemnation of God? Unlike the pagan Gentile, he isn't living a life of sinful degradation. Unlike the religious Jew, he isn't being disobedient to a revelation from God. So how can God condemn a good man who doesn't know the way

See the gripping courtroom drama. The guilty sinner is condemned by the witness of his own conscience.

of salvation? Here we return to one of the great questions of our age, and a question you are going to be asked in your school, place of work, or neighborhood.

Let's lay aside the fact that all have sinned, although it's true that all people have sinned. Let's also, for sake of argument, lay aside the concept of original sin, even though original sin really is imputed to all mankind. Most of our neighbors won't question the fact that we are all sinners, to a greater or lesser degree. But many struggle with the issue of those who have never heard. How can God condemn those who have no light? The answer is that such a question misrepresents the case. This question makes the mistake of assuming God has not given light. But He has given light, by writing the work of the Law (or some translations say "the requirements of the Law") on their hearts.

Romans 2:14-15 says, *"For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them."* Now let's be clear on what this passage does not say. It does not say there is a separate means of salvation for those who have not heard the gospel. Their thoughts may be defending them, but this is in their own minds and not in God's great court. That they are a law to themselves simply means they have been given light. The Old Testament Law, given to the Jews, and the work of the Law, written on the hearts of Gentiles, are God's gracious provision of light; neither are a means of salvation. After all, Romans 2:12 says, *"For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law; and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law."* Cement firmly in your mind that Romans 2:14-15 does not speak of a way of salvation.

So what does this passage mean? Simply this: It means all men have been given light through their conscience. The conscience can be developed into a sensitive barometer to sin, or it can be seared by sin. It can be heeded, or it can be ignored. A conscience can become unreliable, excusing sin. But God has placed a conscience in every human being. Every human being is given a basic sense of right and wrong.

William MacDonald's comments in the *Believers Bible Commentary* are well worth considering. He writes:

> *Now Paul explains that although the Law was not given to the Gentiles, yet they have an innate knowledge of right and wrong. They know instinctively that it is wrong to lie, steal, commit adultery, and murder. The only commandment they would not know instinctively is the one concerning the Sabbath; that one is more ceremonial than moral.*

The existence of the conscience is a powerful weapon when the Christian uses it properly. At some level, each human being knows he or she is a sinner. Perhaps he cannot explain why, perhaps he doesn't know which specific moral code he has broken, but he knows he is a sinner. No matter how much he lies to you, no matter how much he lies to himself, this is something he knows at the core of his being.

This is also useful when confronting today's moral relativists. What do you say to the person who declares, "Everything is relative; there are no moral absolutes"? Thankfully, even within sin-seared consciences, God has still allowed sensitivity towards children to remain. So you can respond with a question such as: "Do you believe it is morally acceptable to harm a child for no reason?" This is where the conscience is awakened. It is never acceptable to gratuitously harm a child.

The work of the Law is written on men's hearts. They have a conscience, and so they have some sense of right and wrong. Their conscience, this work of the Law, is not a means of salvation. Yet it is God's merciful provision of light in the hearts of all mankind, and particularly in the heart of the man who is "good" and "moral," but who lacks salvation. And this gracious light is intended to lead him to search for the One who can save him from his sin.

The Deeds of the Law

If you're expecting a defense attorney, think again. The law is the prosecutor.

"For by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified…"
Romans 3:20

I am not sure where the idea of community service as a form of punishment came from, but I know the concept is as old as breaking the law itself. It fits right in with human nature. You broke the law. Now, instead of serving jail time or paying a fine, you perform community service, and those good deeds will make up for the bad deeds you have done. Community service handed down as a sentence is mandatory, or the perpetrator will have to face other forms of punishment.

God doesn't issue community service sentences. Nonetheless, countless people are trying to earn God's favor through doing good works or trying to keep the Law. But every time the Scriptures mention the deeds of the Law, they explicitly state that it is impossible to be saved by those deeds (Rom. 3:20, 28; Gal. 2:16; 3:2, 5, 10). Furthermore, Paul makes it plain in Romans 3 that merely keeping the Law does not excuse us for the times we have broken the Law. That would be like saying to a judge, "Why are you just focusing on this one time when I did rob a bank? Think of all the days I was a law-abiding citizen and didn't rob any banks!" Yet this is exactly what a sinner does when he tries to justify himself before God by using the Law. This is why Paul says that, *"all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"* (Rom. 3:23).

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The purpose of the Law is not to make one righteous. The Law is there to manifest the standard of what is right and how we fall short of that standard. If we break the standard, we are no longer in the right and must pay the penalty. But praise God, it doesn't end there! On the cross, our Lord Jesus Christ paid the penalty that was ours. In His substitutionary death on the cross, He took the punishment that we deserved and, by faith and trust in Him, we are saved from judgment (1 Pet. 2:24).

What about good works?

There is another way men look at the deeds of the Law. They think that if they go beyond merely keeping the Law and perform good things for their fellow man or for God, then this will somehow please God and atone for their sins. Once again, we go back to the court room for an analogy.

Suppose I had broken the law of the land, perhaps by stealing. If, when called before the judge, I said, "Your honor, I know I stole. But I want you to know that I really am a good person. Just to prove it, I went to your house today and mowed your lawn and washed your car." What would the judge's response be? If he were a good judge, he would say something like, "I appreciate those things you did, but that does not excuse you from the crime that was committed. You will still have to serve

the sentence for your crime, and your attempts at bribery are cause for additional punishment." Men don't think of the idea of doing good works to earn God's favor as a bribe attempt, but really that is all it is.

A higher standard

It all comes down to the heart. This is why simply keeping the Law does not save any more than going out of our way to do good. We have all inherited heart trouble. It is the sin nature passed on from Adam. We sin because we are sinners. We cannot possibly keep God's law. And even if we could live a life where we constantly obeyed the Law and did good, we still would be sinners. Why? Because our good deeds and our abstinence from sin would be tainted by bad motives. Unbelievers attempt to do good in order to earn favor with God. That is self-serving and sinful.

The only proper motivation for doing good is love for our Lord Jesus Christ. We love Him because of what He did for us in dying on the cross. So instead of doing good to earn salvation (which is bribery), we do good because of our salvation (which is thankfulness and love).

No community service. No bribe attempts. There is no need! The sentence has already been carried out; the penalty has been paid by none other than God's Son, Jesus Christ.

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The only proper motivation for doing good is love for our Lord Jesus Christ.

Elements of Law

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- *ordinance of the law – Num. 19:2; 31:21*
- *sentence of the law – Dt. 17:11*
- *book of the law – Jsh. 8:31, 34; 23:6; 24:26; 2 Ki. 14:6; 22:8, 11; 2 Chr. 17:9; 34:15; Neh. 8:1, 3, 18; 9:3; Gal. 3:10*
- *words of the law – Jsh. 8:34; 2 Ki. 23:24; 2 Chr. 34:19; Neh. 8:9, 13*
- *scribe of the law – Ezr. 7:21*
- *portions of the law – Neh. 12:44*
- *custom of the law – Lk. 2:27*
- *reading of the law – Ac. 13:15*
- *hearers of the law – Rom. 2:13*
- *doers of the law – Rom. 2:13*
- *work of the law – Rom. 2:15*
- *righteousness of the law – Rom. 2:26; 8:4*
- *deeds / works of the law – Rom. 3:20, 28; 9:32; Gal. 2:16; 3:2, 5, 10*
- *giving of the law – Rom. 9:4*
- *end of the law – Rom. 10:4*
- *fulfilling of the law – Rom. 13:10*
- *curse of the law – Gal. 3:13*
- *transgression of the law – 1 Jn. 3:4*

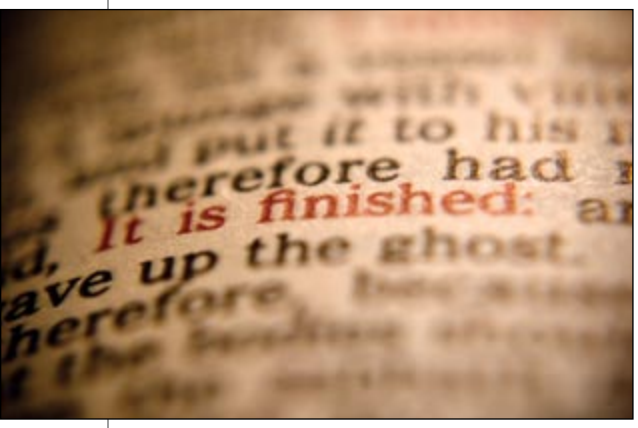
The End of the Law

Is the Law finished?

The Law was designed to point us to Christ; it had Christ as its goal. Christ is the consummation and fulfillment of the Law.

In Romans 10:4, Paul makes a statement that is essential to our understanding of the Law. Without understanding the point of this verse, we will misunderstand the Law in general and the relationship of the believer to it today in particular. The verse states: *"For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth."* What does Paul mean that Christ is the end of the Law?

The first point to note as we examine this verse is the sense of the word "end." It is the Greek word *telos* and it refers not to termination, but to culmination. If we want to study the termination of the Law, we might turn to Hebrews 7:12, but that is not the point of Romans 10:4. Rather, Paul is speaking of the conclusion, or goal, of the Law. This word for "end" is also used in 1 Timothy 1:5: *"Now the end* [telos] *of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."* As we see, "end" is being used to speak of the goal of the apostles' teaching, not the termination of the apostles' teaching. Therefore, it is essential to our understanding of the Law to keep in mind that the Law was designed to point us to Christ; it had Christ as its goal. Christ is the consummation and fulfillment of the Law.



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In light of that, we might now ask ourselves a question: In what sense is Christ the culmination of the Law? Let us consider seven ways.

1. Christ fulfilled the works of the Law—positively, He always obeyed it. In Matthew 5:17f, our Lord states, *"Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. 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."* He clearly stated that He would keep the Law down to its smallest detail.

We should be careful to remember this. It is occasionally asserted—even by well-meaning believers—that Christ didn't completely keep the Law. For instance, it is sometimes said, when addressing a passage like Matthew 12:1-8, that Christ, as Lord of the Sabbath, was allowed to break it. There are many reasons why such an explanation needs to be rejected, but the main reason is that Christ specifically stated that He would fulfill every last detail of the Law. Had He broken the Sabbath, He would have been a Law-breaker, for James 2:10 says that to break the Law in just one point is to become guilty of all. So let us be clear from the start: although Christ felt no obligation to keep every man-made rule concerning the Sabbath, we will search the Scriptures in vain for any God-given law that He broke. He perfectly obeyed the Law.

We see this in picture in the Old Testament. The first time God gave the Law on tablets of stone (Ex. 31:18), Moses didn't even get off the mountain before Israel was breaking the commandments en masse. So, Moses smashed the tablets at the foot of the mountain in order to illustrate how Israel "kept" the Law (Ex. 32:19). The second set of tablets were stored, safe and undamaged, in the ark of the covenant (Dt. 10:1-5). And, as the ark is a picture of the Lord Jesus, this illustrates for us that in Christ the Law was perfectly safe—unbroken.

2. Christ fulfilled the curse of the Law—negatively, He assumed its punishment. The Law was a double-edged sword. Not only did it contain commands to be obeyed, but it also consisted of punishments for when it was broken. Christ fulfilled both "edges" of this sword. In His life, He perfectly obeyed the Law, but in His death on Calvary, He endured its full punishment, satisfying God with respect to our sins, and, not only for the sins of believers, but also for the sins of the whole world (1 Jn. 2:2). *"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree"* (Gal. 3:13).

3. Christ fulfilled the book of the Law—He is the embodiment of its prophesies. Before returning to heaven, He assured His disciples, *"These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me"* (Lk. 24:44). The prophesies of Messiah, the pictures—the sacrifices, the priesthood, the rock, the lamb, etc.—find their embodiment in Christ.

4. Christ fulfilled the giving of the Law—His death marked the termination of the dispensation of the Law. The dominant factor of Jewish life until Christ was the Law. The nation officially lived "under Law." Christ lived under Law: *"But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law"* (Gal. 4:4). But, through His work, He ushered in the dispensation of grace. *"For the Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ"* (Jn. 1:17).

5. Christ fulfills the work of the Law—the Law drives us to Him. Our consciences, even though imperfect, are sufficient to reveal our sin and our need for a Saviour (Rom. 2:15). But over and above our consciences, the Lord gave the Law as written, objective evidence that we stand condemned. *"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"* (Rom. 3:20). And so the Law stands as a tutor to lead us to the Saviour; as a sign to point to Him. *"Wherefore the Law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith"* (Gal. 3:24).[1] It prepares us for the gospel by exposing us as sinners and then identifying the Saviour.

6. Christ fulfills the requirements of the Law—He establishes righteousness in the believer. God demands righteousness both in our standing and in our state. Through Christ—and only through Him—the believer can enter into the righteousness that the Law demanded but could never produce. *"For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"* (Rom. 8:3f).

7. Christ fulfills the fulfillment of the Law—He is the embodiment of love. Repeatedly the Scriptures ensure us that if we will truly love the Lord and our neighbor, we will indeed (and in deed!) fulfill the Law (Rom. 13:8, 10; Gal. 5:14; 6:2; Jas. 2:8). But as soon as we speak of love, are we not automatically drawn to think of the greatest Lover in the universe? The One who not only is loving, but is love (1 Jn. 4:8, 16). He is the standard (e.g. Eph. 5:2, 25; 1 Jn. 4:11) and the source of love. In fact, if we love at all, it is only because He first loved us (1 Jn. 4:19).

In these, and no doubt many other ways, our Lord Jesus is the true culmination of the Law. God's purpose in instituting the Law was that, in every detail, it would find its consummation in Christ.

The best thing about the Law is the end of it.

As soon as we speak of love, are we not automatically drawn to think of the greatest Lover in the universe?

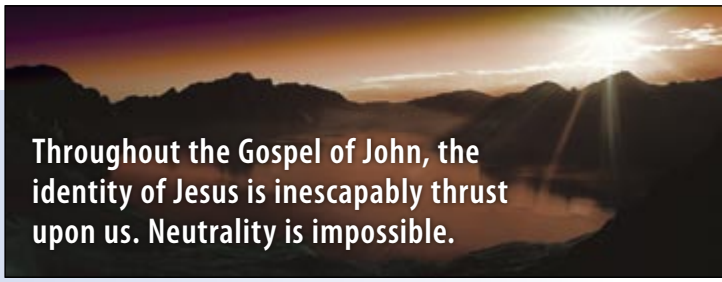
Endnote

1 The Law was, of course, primarily given as Israel's tutor. But we understand that God intended others to benefit from it as well (see 1 Cor. 10:11; Rom. 15:4).

FOR PREACHERS *by Alan Gamble*

The Gospel of John

We beheld His glory.



Throughout the Gospel of John, the identity of Jesus is inescapably thrust upon us. Neutrality is impossible.

The great themes of John's gospel demand a preacher's attention. There are six features which are crucial to understanding and proclaiming its message.

It is evangelistic in its aim

John spells out his purpose explicitly in 20:31. The evangelist wishes each reader to come to stand in the shoes of Thomas and cry out, *"My Lord and my God."* (20:28) He emphasizes the conflict between belief and unbelief, between light and darkness. John stresses the work of the Holy Spirit in new birth (1:12-13; 3:1-8) and the believer's personal, present possession of eternal life (5:24). Our eternal destiny turns on our personal attitude to Christ (3:36; 8:24). In our pluralistic society, this clear-cut message needs to be underlined.

It is systematic in its arrangement

John works from a definite plan: to display the glory of Christ in His words and works. In these, Christ reveals the glory of the Father (1:14, 18; 2:11; 14:7, 9; 17:4, 6, 26). The gospel can be outlined as a development of that plan. Note that the narrative flows towards its climax at the cross and resurrection.

The Prologue (1:1-18). This unique paragraph introduces the theme of the gospel—God's full revelation in Christ—and also the book's leading terms e.g. life, light, the world, and belief.

The Revelation of Christ's Glory to the world (1:19-12:50). This lengthy history records the public ministry of our Lord from His baptism to just prior to His betrayal. Most of the events take place in and around Jerusalem.

The Revelation of Christ's Glory to the apostles (13:1-17:26). The upper room ministry is a distinctively private ministry to the apostles (13:1; 14:22). In it, the Lord Jesus unfolds the features of the present age, especially the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Revelation of Christ's Glory in His cross and resurrection (18:1-21:25). John uniquely presents the crucifixion as the first stage in the Saviour's glorification. His humiliation resulted in His exaltation. In His death, the Lord Jesus supremely revealed and glorified the Father (8:28; 12:23-24; 13:31-32). This section concludes with an epilogue recording a resurrection appearance at the Sea of Galilee.

It is distinctive in its content

The first three gospels are called the synoptics because they share the same viewpoint. John presents the life of the Lord very differently. 92% of his material is unique. He alone records Jesus' conversations with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman. The upper room discourse is only found here. He especially stresses the sayings of the Lord Jesus. Approximately 80% of his content records the spoken words of Christ. Also notice the omissions: the nativity, the temptation, all the parables, most of the miracles, the agony in Gethsemane, and the ascension. John has nothing to say about the Lord casting out demons.

It is factual in its character

John is written as a narrative of historic events. "Witness" is a key word (1:8, 15; 5:30-47; 15:26-27; 18:37). The evangelist himself is presented as an eye-witness (1:14). This is especially so in the accounts of the crucifixion (19:35) and resurrection (20:8, 20; 21:24). He is writing for those who did not see these great events so that they might believe on the strength of his testimony (20:29). Christianity rests on objective facts based upon credible evidence. We must proclaim that Jesus physically died and rose again as we face the denials of these truths from Islam, religious liberalism, and a revived Gnosticism. John was probably combating similar errors.

It is reflective in its style

This gospel is the fruit of long years of meditation. John probably wrote it as a very elderly man towards the end of the first century. He not only records facts but their spiritual meaning. The promise of the ministry of the Holy Spirit given in 14:26 is especially fulfilled in the writing of this gospel. On several occasions,

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we are explicitly told that the apostles did not understand the significance of certain events until after the resurrection (2:22; 12:16; 20:9). Throughout the gospel, John reflects on the inner import of the history he records. This is particularly seen in the prologue. He always calls the miracles "signs" (2:11, 18, 23; 6:2; 12:37; 20:31), a point obscured in the King James Version. They are not only deeds of power but have definite spiritual significance. John is very selective in his choice of the "signs" which he records. There are only eight in all, seven before the resurrection, and one after it: the turning of water into wine (2:1-11), the healing of the nobleman's son (4:46-54), the healing at the pool of Bethesda (5:1-15), the feeding of the five thousand (6:1-15), the walking on the water (6:16-21), the granting of sight to the man born blind (9:1-41), the raising of Lazarus (11:1-57), and the miraculous catch of fish (21:3-11). A key point is that in four of these signs there is a close link between the sign and the saying of Christ which bring out its significance. The incident at Bethesda leads on to a series of sovereign claims made by the Lord Jesus (5:16-47). The feeding of the five thousand precedes the sermon on the Bread of Life (6:25-29). The healing of the blind man comes after the declaration by Jesus that He is the Light of the World (8:12; 9:5). Finally, the Lord affirms that He is the Resurrection and the Life in the context of the climatic sign of the raising of Lazarus (11:25-26).

It is Christ-centered in its challenge

Throughout John, the identity of Jesus is inescapably thrust upon us. Neutrality is impossible. Do we accept His claims, supported by His signs, or not? The prologue asserts the Lord's full deity (1:1) and no less clearly His real incarnation (1:14). John presents the Lord Jesus as truly human with the physical needs and emotional responses of a man (4:6; 11:33, 38; 12:27; 13:21). Nonetheless He is truly God, claiming a unique relationship with the Father which implies His deity—a point which His opponents grasped only too clearly (5:17-18). The seven "I am" sayings of Christ represent an assertion of His right to the unique title of the God of Israel (6:35; 8:12; 10:9, 11; 11:25; 14:16; 15:1). These could form an excellent basis for a series. Even more striking is the unqualified claim of 8:58, *"Before Abraham was, I am"*—a declaration by the Lord of His eternal and uncreated self-existence. Yet Jesus did not act independently of the Father (5:19; 8:28). Rather, He always brought Him pleasure (8:29). He was conscious that He had been sent by the Father into the world to fulfill His purposes of revelation and redemption (10:36). He summed up His whole ministry in these words: *"I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father"* (16:28).

The Holy Spirit is sent to glorify the Lord Jesus (16:14). May He fulfill that ministry by enabling us to expound this gospel so that our hearers may behold the glory of Christ, the Word and Lamb of God, and receive from His infinite fullness grace upon grace (1:16).

John reflects on the inner import of the history he records… [Signs] are not only deeds of power but have definite spiritual significance.

Further reading

There is a vast amount of literature on John's Gospel. I have found the following books especially helpful.

D. Carson, *The Gospel According to John,* Pillar Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991). Well worth referring to for detailed exegesis.

D. Gooding, *In the School of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Gospel Folio Press, 1995). An outstanding treatment of the upper room ministry.

B. Milne, *The Message of John,* Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England: IVP, 1993). Contemporary paragraph-by-paragraph exposition.

H. St. John, *Behold My Glory,* vol. 2 of Collected Writings of H. St. John (Glasgow, Scotland: GTP, 1989). Devotional development of the theme of Christ's Glory in John's Gospel.

The Fulfilling of the Law

Being freed from the Law, we now have the possibility of fulfilling it.

Love has fulfilled the Law and God's heart is revealed.

Having taught the great doctrines of salvation—universal sin (Rom. 1-3a), justification by faith (Rom. 3b-5:), sanctification in love (Rom. 6-8), and glorification in hope (Rom. 9-11)—Paul now goes on to teach how to live this new life.

Chapter 12 focuses on the church and chapter 13 focuses on society. We must submit to God's plan for our lives in the church (12:1-8) and in society at large (13:1-7). Such submission requires love for God. It is the sum of the first table of the Law which is to love the Lord God with all our hearts. Then we must love one another in the church (12:9-21) and in society (13:8-15:13). Such love is said to be the fulfillment of the Law with specific reference to the second table of the Law (13:8-10). It is summed up as loving your neighbor as yourself (Rom. 13:9). But who does love in such a way?

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Christ fulfilled the law

Our Lord's purpose was not to destroy the Law but to fulfill it (Mt. 5:17). The Law is not fulfilled by mere obedience. There would never be the end of the Law (Rom. 10:4) for righteousness in this way. Fulfilling the Law required love. That love was demonstrated at Calvary. There our Lord Jesus Christ satisfied all the demands of justice, and He made God's love available to us.

James says, *"He who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' also said 'Do not murder.'"* (Jas. 2:11) In other words, the Law is not a moral code or even a religious text. It is God talking to us. He speaks out of the fullness of His heart (Mt. 12:34). His Word is a revelation of Himself. God is love. So His law is a revelation in words of His heart of love and must give way to it. There is far greater glory under grace than there ever was under law (2 Cor. 3:6-11).

Romans 13 talks about the second table of the Law. It says, *"You shall not commit adultery"* (Rom. 13:9). Needless to say, our Lord never committed adultery. Neither did He rest content in His own example. Self-righteousness could not fulfill the Law. Instead, He loved us unto the shedding of His blood. God's love changes adulterers (whether physical or spiritual) into His own bride. He will present us to Himself as a bride without spot, wrinkle, or blemish (Eph. 5:27). The Law demands purity. Grace purifies. Love has fulfilled the Law, and God's heart is revealed.

Then the Law says, *"You shall not murder"* (Rom. 13:9). Our Lord never murdered anyone. Instead, He abolished death (2 Tim. 1:10). He did this by dying, being buried, and rising again the third day. In so doing, He has brought life and immortality to light. All who believe in Him shall never die but have everlasting life. The Law demands death. Grace brings life out of death to us in Christ. Love has fulfilled the Law, and God's heart is revealed.

Next the Law says, *"You shall not steal"* (Rom. 13:9). Our Lord never stole a thing. He did not even consider His own life of equality with God to be robbery. On the contrary, He was rich but became poor that we might be rich in Him (2 Cor. 8:9). We do not yet appreciate the fullness of the riches we have in Christ. The Law demands contentment with what we have. Grace makes us rich. Love has fulfilled the Law, and God's heart is revealed.

The Law also says, *"You shall not bear false witness"* (Rom. 13:9). Our Lord never lied. In fact, He is the truth (Jn. 14:6). Eternal truth was revealed when He died for us. It is the Son (Jn. 8:32, 36) who is the truth that sets us free (note the context of the cross). It is through death that He destroyed him who has the power of death, even the Devil (who is a liar and the father of lies). In this way, we cannot be deceived any more. Read 1 John 2:26-27, Mt. 24:24, and Mk. 13:33. The Law demands truth. Grace gives the light of eternal truth in our hearts. Love has fulfilled the Law, and God's heart is revealed.

Finally, the Law says, *"You shall not covet"* (Rom 13:9). There are few things further away from our Lord Jesus Christ than covetousness. He never struggled to avoid coveting. Rather, in love, He desired to please His Father above His own self. In that same love, He desired our eternal well being above His own pleasure. So He suffered the cross with its shame and unspoken horrors. The Law demands we respect our neighbors. Grace loves even its enemies (Rom. 5:8). Love has fulfilled the Law, and God's heart is revealed.

Paul's example

Paul lived what he taught. He learned to walk in the freedom of grace. The Law says not to commit adultery, but Paul lived to present his children in the Lord as "chaste virgins" to Christ (2 Cor. 11:2). The Law says not to murder, but Paul poured out his own life as a sacrifice (Php. 2:17; 2 Tim. 4:6) that all might live. The Law says not to steal, but Paul felt indebted to Jew and Gentile (Rom. 1:14) to bring eternal life and riches to all. The Law says not to lie, but Paul was committed to protecting us from liars (2 Cor. 11:2f) and their lies. The Law says not to covet. Paul learned the hard way (Rom. 7:7-11) that to stand in the light of God's glory and desire any other thing is evil. He turned to the Lord (Rom. 7:25) and marched triumphantly into chapter 8. He was free from the Law. He was free to love others as himself (Rom. 13:9). The Law had no claim upon him.

Our lives?

Shall we not live in the liberty that Christ won for us at such great cost? The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5) so that we might be free in practice as well as in position. If the Law tells us to love our neighbor, Christ says to love our enemies (Mt. 5:44) and overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:19-21).

Adultery lies in the heart (Mk. 7:21-23), as also do murder, theft, lies, and covetousness. Such is not the heart of God. Nor is it the new heart that He gives us in Christ (2 Cor. 3:3, 16-18). Let us challenge our own hearts. Do we believe merely the teachings of salvation, or do we believe the Saviour? Have we received teachings or the teacher? Are we still struggling to live up to a standard, or are we free to live for God's glory and our neighbors' well-being?

Romans 13:8 says that we have a debt. There is value in being free from material debt. We cannot live for the world's riches and for the Lord too. So we must occupy ourselves with paying our debt of love. Some teachers emphasize freedom from financial debt (to which I am sympathetic) but then ignore the rest of the verse. The point is not financial freedom so much as it is the urgency of loving others as Christ has loved us. We must not allow this to degenerate into mere natural politeness to one another. We are indebted to a greater liberty and calling.

So Romans 13:10 concludes that love does no harm (cf. 1 Cor. 13:4-8). It is the fulfillment of the Law. Only in Christ can we live this way. In Him we are not under Law but under grace. Let us live accordingly.

We cannot live for the world's riches and for the Lord too. So we must occupy ourselves with paying our debt of love.

The D. R. Congo Container Project

A report by Bill Letkeman of Everyday Publications

In the '50's, Ed and Gertrud Harlow served as missionaries in what is now known as the D.R. Congo. Their interest from the start was to promote Bible knowledge with the help of the printed page. Ed was one of the co-founders of Emmaus Bible School, and Gertrud helped in the translation of the Swahili Bible in her earlier missionary career. Everyday Publications (EPI) was born because of the sense of need for good literature in third world areas.

Left: Congolese worker with books

Harold MacDougall & Bill Letkeman pack books in the container for shipment

Photo: Rachel Brooks

Through political maneuvers, the Congo became known as Zaire and then, more recently, changed its name into what we know today as The Democratic Republic of Congo or "D. R. Congo." It is a dramatic oversimplification to put into so few words what actually occurred to bring events to where they are today. Thousands fled from towns and villages to form refugee camps in Uganda. Lives were senselessly taken, including those of many Christians. Entire towns and villages were pillaged and ransacked. It seemed that nothing was sacred or spared by this inter-tribal warfare that has been going on for more than ten years.

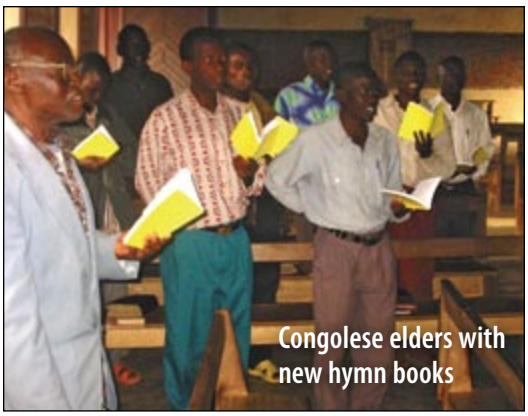
Gertrud Harlow, now residing in Florida, comments, "We need to remember that the folks out there lost virtually *everything*, including Bibles and books."

Evangelists in the D.R. Congo

In 2006, with a lull in the fighting and the scenario somewhat calmer, the idea was presented (with the influence of Gertrud as well as missionaries from those parts) to send a bulk supply of literature from EPI via ocean container to help replace at least some of the materials that had been vandalized, burned, or otherwise destroyed by plundering militants.

Harold MacDougall, production manager of EPI, was enlisted and soon had a 20-foot container in place at the back of the shop. Gertrud supplied a suggested list for the literature that should be shipped. Most of the literature for the project had to be printed in the EPI shop on the new digital presses. This included a variety of Swahili commentaries written earlier by the Harlows, as well as several thousand EPI Bible commentaries that had been translated and that Gertrud had typeset in French. A special printing of 7,000 copies of a devotional called *Daily Light* was done commercially, along with approximately 5,000 copies of a Swahili hymnal. With the help of volunteers from several area assemblies and fellow EPI staff, the books were shrink-wrapped for protection against humidity, packed into boxes, and lovingly loaded onto the container.

When the unit, now weighing 13 tons, was full, a heavy-duty crane was rented to lift it onto a flatbed truck. It was driven from Port Colborne to Montreal and shipped to the African continent. In about three months, the container arrived in Kampala, Uganda, and from there was taken overland to Bunia.


Congolese elders with new hymn books

One of the African brethren reported, "All the books arrived safely on October 22, 2006. Now we must decide how to allocate them as God's field these days is very large—larger than before. There are more than 220 assemblies now."

Pearl Winterburn stated in her November 2006 praise and prayer letter, "Praise the Lord the container from Everyday Publications of much-needed literature has arrived and is being distributed and received with much joy."

Gertrud Harlow further reported, "Two of the [African] brothers visited a central location in the area from where they made literature available to the assemblies in that region. They also made up packages for all the preachers and evangelists who work with assemblies of 100 people or more."


Elders and Deacons

In a recent letter, Mert Wolcott wrote, "One of the unfortunate outcomes of these ten years of war has been the destruction of Ngbulanzabo and the wonderful Bible school facility that had developed there. That has resulted in the formation of three Bible schools in our area (Nyankunde/Bunia)...all struggling to survive. ... While I was in Congo, I was approached by the director of the Aveba Bible School, pleading for funds to buy $150.00 worth of basic French books (concordance, commentaries, etc.) for the start of a library. All of the Ngbulanzabo library had been destroyed, and these Bible schools are restarting from zero. The books EPI sent are a special blessing, especially for the Bible schools."

"The much-needed literature has arrived and is being distributed and received with much joy!"

The shipment consisted of approximately 71,000 books in French and Swahili, and the Lord marvelously provided the funds and the help to make it possible to print and ship the entire project without cost to the believers in D.R. Congo. We are grateful to the Lord for giving us this window and for His dear people who prayed for us. Continue to pray with us that the books will be read and bring forth fruit in the lives of the readers for the glory of the Lord! www.everyday.on.ca

'Bama in the Balance by Jabe Nicholson

I'm no golfer, but I understand that what is true in golf is also true with the gospel—follow-through is crucial. The Lord has graciously opened many doors in both Huntsville and Tuscaloosa. A total of about 160 hard-working servants of God, at great personal sacrifice, came and invested in these two cities. We found what seems to be true everywhere—lots of religion, lots of broken hearts, few with certainty of heaven based on the Word of God. In both cities, the Lord provided a kid's club with about 30 children, a college Bible study (30 signed up in Huntsville; 50 in Tuscaloosa), and about 100 others in the community to contact. Some of the team have stayed back to help the local brothers with the follow-up. As well, brother and sister Eric and Elaine Kalmbach (ON) has joined us for a few days with the hope of setting up some "Christianity Explored" evangelistic studies in these cities. **Your prayers are needed now** more than ever that the "fruit should remain."


Kids Club, Tuscaloosa

Photos: John Nicholson / www.uplook.org


College work, Huntsville

The Book of the Law

An ancient storehouse of treasure

The book of the Law made the character of God become visible so that the offense of sin appeared (Rom. 5:20).

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In his epistle to the Galatian assemblies, Paul corrected the erroneous teaching that, to "make perfect" the salvation begun by the Spirit (Gal. 3:3), one must continue keeping certain commands of the Law. In doing so, he quoted Deuteronomy 27:26 by saying, *"Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the Law, to do them."* (Gal. 3:10) What is the "book of the Law" to which Paul refers?

It may be helpful to view the book of the Law as the "Bible" of the Old Testament believer, also known as the book of Moses or the book of the covenant. It was this book (lit. writing; *sepher*[1]) that guided the Israelites of old from their wilderness wanderings until the postexilic reforms under Ezra and Nehemiah. It represented the heart of God's Word in those days. There were no gospels for Isaiah to meditate upon, no epistles for David to exegete, and no Acts of the Apostles for Elijah to preach. From generation to generation, the Israelite who hoped to know the mind of God had to find a true prophet of the Lord or meditate upon the book of the Law (Isa. 8:19-20). As years passed, this "book" was combined with other scrolls, including the Prophets (*Nebi'im*) and the Psalms or Writings (*Kethubim*)—the three categories our Lord mentions in Luke 24:44b.

What the book of the Law was

Traditionally the book of the Law was another name for the Pentateuch. More specifically, it referred to the scroll(s) on which Moses progressively recorded the events of the Exodus, and the laws by which Israel was guided until Christ came. The reader might not be aware of the many scrolls available and used in the days of Israel (Num. 21:14; Josh. 10:13; 2 Sam. 1:18; 1 Ki. 11:41; 14:29; 1 Chron. 29:29; 2 Chron. 9:29; 33:19; Neh. 12:23, Ecc. 12:12). As Dr. Luke may have consulted certain written accounts in his writing of the gospel (Lk. 1:1), so the "holy men of God" may have been led of the Spirit to consult these scrolls in writing an account of God's dealings with His people. They were certainly led to mention them. (Notice also Dan. 9:2; 2 Tim. 4:13). Yet, none of the books referenced above, unless they represent alternative names to books in the Hebrew canon, held the status or importance of the book of the Law.

What the book of the Law accomplished

The book of the Law was holy, just and good (Rom. 7:12). It was spiritual (Rom. 7:14), perfect (Ps. 19:7), and the delight of the psalmist (Ps. 1:2). To read it was to hear God! It was a holy lamp to the feet and light on the dark path (Ps. 119:105). And, as a light, it performed a second role that was by no means unintentional: the book of the Law continually revealed the condition of Israel as having fallen short of the righteous standard of God (Rom. 3:20). It forced her to acknowledge her need for a Saviour (Rom. 7:7; Gal. 3:24). Paul's epistle to the Romans is quite instructive on this point: the book of the Law was not given to the Gentile nations, but to Israel. Romans 2:12-16 and 3:19 clearly teach that ancient Gentiles will not be judged by the Law, for it was not given to them, nor were they under it (Ac. 14:14-17; 17:29-31). Israel was under it (Rom. 3:2, 19) and responsible for it. It was to Israel that God revealed His righteousness and, thus, her transgressions (Rom. 4:15). The book of the Law made the character of God become visible, so that the offense of sin appeared (Rom. 5:20). Sin had a sort of dominion by the Law (Rom. 6:14; 7:1,

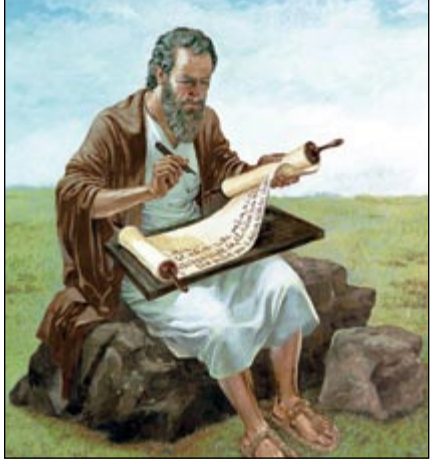

Illustration: New Tribes Mission

5, 6 "held", 8-10), the goal of which was to force Israel to see that sin was sinful (Rom. 7:13). As our incarnate Lord exposed the guilt of man by revealing the moral glory of God, so did the book of the Law before Christ. The revelation of the one brought knowledge of the other.

On a more practical level, the book of the Law showed Israel how she could enter into the good of the Abrahamic Covenant. The keys to blessing in "the land," or cursed removal from it, were clearly spelled out in Deuteronomy 27-28. The instructions for the tabernacle, priestly service, sin, and sickness were minutely recorded in Exodus and Leviticus. The criteria for identifying true prophets and false prophets are made plain in its pages (Deut. 13, 18). All the laws for civil life, justice, and national holidays were written in the book of the Law that Israel might be a testimony to the nations. Finally, and most importantly, the book pointed the illuminated reader to the coming Christ (Lk. 24:27, Jn. 5:46).

How the book of the Law was compiled

It is not clear whether Moses wrote the book of the Law in several scrolls that were later combined or continuously added to one long scroll during the wilderness journey. The physical length of scrolls and Moses' ignorance as to how much revelation God would impart, imply the former. Whatever the case, several passages clearly speak of Moses physically writing (Ex. 17:14; 24:3-4; 34:27; Lev. 26:46; Num. 33:1-2; Deut. 31:9, 24; Jn. 5:46). The clear implication is that Moses penned the book of the Law at points throughout the wilderness. Numbers 33:2 is helpful in that we are told that God commanded him to write down geographic information and not just commands of the Law. Deuteronomy 31:24 hints at a completion of Moses' writing of the book of the Law, and Joshua 24:26 clearly suggests Joshua also had a hand in writing the book.

The actual phrase, "book of the Law," occurs 19 times in Scripture. 2 Kings 23:2, 21 suggests that the "book of the Covenant" was synonymous with the "book of the Law" mentioned in 2 Kings 22:11. A comparison of 2 Chronicles 25:4 and 2 Kings 14:6 shows that the book of the Law was also called the "book of Moses." After completing the book of the Law, Moses instructed that it be kept in the very presence of the Lord beside the ark (Deut. 31:26). Prior to this command, Moses instructed that each new king must make a personal copy from this original (Deut. 17:18). The book of the Law was to sit at the center of the nation to show its leaders the way of the Lord from which they were not to stray (Josh. 1:8). Regrettably, Israel's history indicates that these commands were most certainly not obeyed.

The book of the Law is mentioned during the reforms of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 17:9) and Amaziah (2 Ki. 14:6). Sadly, in a graphic illustration of the dark history of Judah, the book of the Law was lost (likely during the reign of Manasseh or Amon), like an old heirloom in the attic. During repairs to the dilapidated temple under the reign of Josiah it was rediscovered, almost as if to announce that the curses it predicted (Deut. 27, 28) were about to be fulfilled.

There is both devotional and preaching potential for the reader who will spend time thinking upon God's words as to how His people were to handle the book of the Law. Two examples will suffice. Deuteronomy 28:58 teaches that fearing the Lord is accomplished, not by having an isolated reverence for the Lord, but by "observing to do all the words" in the book of the Law. Fearing the Lord is as much a lifestyle as it is a mindset. Secondly, Joshua 1:8 merits an article all its own. It is God's will that His people meditate day and night upon the book of the Law. One cannot obey the book without knowing its words. One cannot know the Word without meditating upon it. Since Luke 24:27 tells us that the book of the Law speaks to us of Christ, then to meditate upon its many types and figures of Him is to enter into its spiritual importance for us today.

Endnote

1 *Sepher* is not the Hebrew word for scroll (*megillot*) but was most certainly a scroll when translated "book." A sepher could be a writing in the form of a certificate of divorce (Deut. 24:1), official document (Jer. 32:14), or longer writing in scroll form. In Jeremiah 36:2, both words are used to refer to a scroll. Bound books as we know them are first recorded as showing up in 1st century A.D. They were written by hand and are called codices (codex; singular) by scholars. The codex was popularized by Christians in the 3rd and 4th centuries. The printed book eventually replaced the codex. See also *Vine's Expository Dictionary* on the OT word for "book."

The Curse of the Law

Who but Christ could turn such a curse into so vast a blessing?

***Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree* (Gal. 3:13).**

In his epistle to the Galatian Christians, Paul was concerned to steer them away from any temptation to accept second-class status because of their Gentile origins. They had not come from idolatry into Judaism or even into neo-Judaism dressed up as Christianity. For this reason it was important that they should not be forced to be circumcised to acquire parity with Christians from Jewish origins.

It is against this background that Paul can write, in chapter 4 verses 4-5, of being redeemed from legal bondage into the freedom of sonship. Redemption in Scripture is seen in different contexts—from iniquity, from futility, and from enemies. It may seem odd, therefore, to read of its being from bondage to law, or, even more strangely, from the curse of the Law (Gal. 3:13).

The Demands of the Broken Law

We have to ask, "What is the effect of seeking to relate to God under a strictly legal system?" What does God require from those who would seek acceptance on a legal basis? Deuteronomy 27:26 makes the requirement clear, and this is the verse which Paul quotes in Galatians 3:10: *"Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them."* It was not a matter of knowing the Law or giving mental assent to it; what was required was the doing of it. Moreover, it was not a question of obeying a selection of items required by the Law on a cafeteria basis. The Law in its entirety was God's standard. One must keep it all or become a law-breaker. James 2:10 spells this out: *"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."* The Law is like a chain: it is either sound in all its links or it is broken.

Have we any indication in the story of the life and death of Christ that He experienced the curse of the broken Law? Yes indeed, says Paul. We have an eloquent expression of His experience of this dreadful curse: *"Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."* (Gal. 3:13) The detailed circumstances of the sufferings of Christ have been so ordered by God that we have vivid reminders of how God has intervened in grace to redeem us. Christ *"became a curse for us"* (v. 13, RV). The relevant law is found in Deuteronomy 21:22-23: *"And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance."* He who hung on a cross for us wore that day a crown of thorns, the sign of the curse. It is the curse aspect of Christ's sufferings which is emphasized when we read of the cross as "the tree."

The Law which requires complete obedience in deed as well as word is not a discussion document; it is an inflexible decree, demanding unwavering obedience to the last detail. God is utterly holy in Himself and cannot tolerate compromise of His perfect demands. He is the Judge of all mankind, living and dead. His Law is *"holy and just and good"* (Rom. 7:12). We sinful people know that we cannot approach God on the basis of what we are or how we live. When His law is applied to us, we are exposed as defiled and can only experience the curse of a broken law.

We remember that when Adam sinned, Genesis contains its first reference to a curse and to visible signs of that curse.

Yet Genesis also contains references to people whom God blessed. God's law is inflexible, but He moves in wonderful grace to find ways to bring sinful, erring people into blessing. After the flood, on a cleansed earth, He blessed Noah and his sons. He called Abram out of Ur, gave him promises, and blessed him. Scripture says that Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. David wrote of the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord does not impute sin. God's law is inflexible, but His grace is abundant and flows freely. But a question arises: how does He retain His integrity as righteous Judge while showing mercy to sinful people? Even the best of God's people in the Old Testament sinned and failed. What right has God to show mercy to people like that?

There was one Man on earth who was different. He was conceived uniquely in a virgin's womb. He was the only person ever born who could be said to be an essentially holy baby. He was the only boy who ever grew to manhood without ever straying from absolute holiness and devotion to His God. He was brought up in a Jewish home and delighted in the law of God as He heard it in the synagogue. He delighted in it simply because it was the law of God and therefore perfect. Other men resented His being different. They could sense that His integrity showed up their sin and selfishness. His devotion to His Father caused Him to clash with men who sought to make a profit of religion, even a God-given religion. Their resentment intensified until they began to seek means to get rid of Him. Could God forgive men like that? Could He order circumstances for their blessing?

The Result of the Curse

Calvary provides answers. God needed no help from any human person or group to achieve a just solution to the problem of human sin. He was perfectly in control in the events leading to the crucifixion. Men's contribution to those events was sinful and shameful and brutal and cowardly. In the midst of an array of manifestations of sin, the Christ moved in perfect harmony with His Father's plan to provide salvation for sinful people of whatever type. Men were guilty of deeds that day which are monstrous to contemplate. Even the disciples were not blameless. Judas betrayed Him. The Romans failed to uphold even their own standards of justice. Jewish leaders were guilty of perverting the course of justice and bribing false witnesses. The mob were without mercy or any kind of integrity. Yet God was in control.

Men did what they could to get rid of Christ. Yet He was crucified in the way God planned, fulfilling Scripture. He was crucified at the time God planned, fulfilling the Passover. God was active at the cross in laying on His Son what men could never have laid on Him—our sins. He bore all that needed to be borne, paid all that needed to be paid, *"suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust."* It was at the hands of God that He bore the curse of a broken law. Only this interpretation of the cross can explain how God can retain His integrity and yet pardon the transgressors. At the cross, as nowhere else, we see the attributes of God shine forth in perfect balance. His holiness and righteousness are seen. His grace and mercy have full scope. His wisdom planned, and His hand executed, this wonderful way to put right what sin had distorted and defiled. To God alone be the glory!

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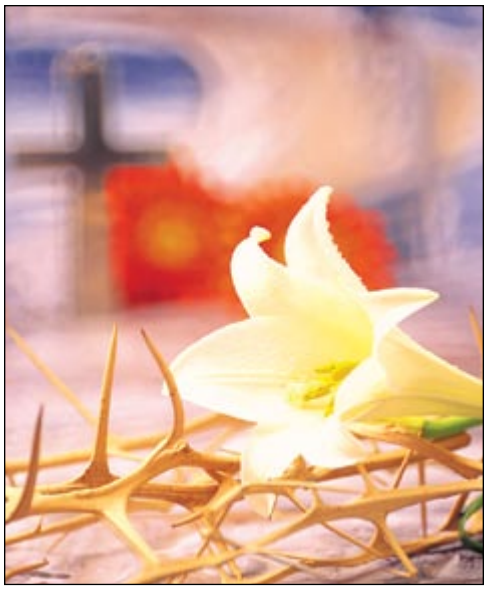

At the cross, as nowhere else, we see the attributes of God shine forth in perfect balance.

This is why we cannot mix law and grace as means of approaching God or living for God. He redeemed us to make us free to serve Him as sons, enabled by His Spirit and upheld by His promises. May we know His grace to live like this!

TRUESTORY

An interview by Jack Spender

Grace

The refreshing contrast

JACK SPENDER Hello, Teekie. Thank you for your willingness to share your story with us. In hearing your testimony, we were blessed by the strong emphasis on God's grace, and I know others will be encouraged to read it. Why don't you tell us a little about your early years, and how you came to know the Lord?

TEEKIE SAWYER I grew up in the city, in the "projects." A Baptist church with a bus ministry used to round up some of us kids and take us to their AWANA program where we heard about the Lord, learned verses, and played games. I was probably 4-5 years old and in the "Sparks" program. Even though I loved the verses and the rewards we received, I was becoming rebellious against my mom, who was pretty strict.

When I was nine, I started going to a different church that also had a bus ministry because they offered donuts on the bus! When I was 13, I went to Bible camp, and, after hearing a fire and brimstone message, I got saved. I truly accepted the Lord Jesus Christ, but the motivation was to avoid going to hell. I was the only person in my family that was saved.

JS Tell us a little about your teen years.

TS As a Christian, I had a real yearning for the Word, and I read my Bible but didn't understand most of it. In a teen program, we learned verses, and I prayed for understanding. I was drawn to the Psalms; I could understand them. A pivotal point came when I made a decision to walk with the Lord in my life. I decided to go to Bible College for one year so that when I entered secular life, I'd be grounded in Scripture, and the world wouldn't mess me up.

I stayed in Bible College two and a half years, but, without realizing it, I was also becoming grounded in legalism. I had a growing conviction that God had a plan for my life, but, as a Christian, I was in bondage; you know, pride, judging others, rules, and more rules as the way to be accepted by the Lord.

"You cannot edify people if you are living under the Law. The Law brings condemnation."

JS Why did you leave school?

TS As the only black girl, I became increasingly discouraged by the comments and practices of the school. At one point, they raised money by selling "slaves for a day" where you would be bought by a student and have to wash their car, clean their room, etc. The judgmental atmosphere was weighing me down. I decided to leave and work for a while. You know, Jack, for years after that, I lived under a cloud and felt like a failure because I didn't graduate and marry a Pastor, so God was displeased with me. That's what legalism will do to you.

Returning to the church of my teen years, I continued to study my Bible. The passage in Ezekiel 34 about the lack of shepherd care of the flock by the shepherds really spoke to me. I actually went and read it to the Pastor. He was not receptive at all. Where could I find a church where I could grow and be cared for?

JS How did you finally come to Waterbury Christian Fellowship?

TS A friend called and asked how things were going for me. I was honest. Weighed down and burdened, I was totally discouraged. "Your friends Chris and Anne are going to a new place. They seem happy. Give them a call." I called. Anne told me they were in a church that had "love unbounded." They brought me to Waterbury Christian Fellowship (WCF).

JS What were your first impressions?

TS Scary! They sat in a circle, and the sisters had these things on their heads (Anne had warned me). Remember now, there was no time in my background to focus on Christ and what He had done for me; all was centered on my performance. Anyway, the first

brother spoke about God's grace. Wow! Then others spoke Christ-exalting words. I thought, "Look at all these men with real meat; something to chew on for the soul. If these men know these things, what must their women be like?"

But then, a setback. Some of the men read from versions of the Bible other than the King James. In my background, this was not a matter of preference: it was forbidden. I was livid, hurt, upset that these Christians could be so wrong.

Then they passed the bread. Another setback. I couldn't believe my eyes—a loaf of bread with leaven! Why would they do such a thing? How many sermons had I heard that leaven was evil, and the rules for communion required unleavened bread. Everything was controlled by laws.

JS What was the outcome? Why did you stay?

TS Love; simply love. They loved me. If you can imagine being the only black person in an assembly, and all they saw was a hurting and broken person to love. The first week, people called to check on me. They accepted me, spent time with me. I thought, "How can this be real? These people must be fake; a church cannot love like that." Then I thought, "If they can love me that way, I want to love them that way." I wasn't convinced about the doctrines, but the Lord gave me peace to stay.

JS What part did grace play in all this?

TS Grace is not a part; it's everything. Every area of my life began to change. I thank God for the ministry of the Word that taught me about grace, especially Romans. I learned that God loves me, Teekie, and not for what He gets out of me. I had been in choirs, teen work, the bus ministry, but it was for outward appearance, other people's expectations. But the Lord has given me undeserved kindness, so I love being kind to others for Him. I live to please Him. In the past, I couldn't always tithe (a church requirement), so I felt unloved. Now I give as He provides, and I am loved regardless of the amount!

Each day, I want to apply what I learn in the Bible. And I'm not held back by the bondage of living under the Law. I think on lovely, virtuous things. I can put away all bitterness. I can love someone even though I may not agree with them. I can accept my Christian brothers and sisters for who they are, not who I want them to be. I have courage to face what's wrong with me because it won't change God's acceptance of me. Under grace, I learned that He loved me when I was in my mother's womb! It's all about Christ now. Prayer is not hard; it's heart communication with Him.

JS And your witness?

TS You know, I'm an outgoing person. I never had a problem with boldness. But grace is making me a softer, gentler person. It has put me into the place of the listener. And I'm learning to keep the gospel simple. The world lives in confusion, but they don't want to hear it.

JS Does grace hold up in hard times too?

TS That's when it shines. Not long ago, my Mom died. My Christian family was there for me. They came to the funeral and were kind to my family and all my friends from where I work. They brought all kinds of nice food to my apartment and served those who came. My family and coworkers said, "Teekie, these people really, really love you. Now we see why you are the way you are." It's true.

JS What message is there here for the church?

TS The church is to edify God's people. You cannot edify people if you are living under the Law. The Law brings condemnation. Grace is not compromise; it's letting God bring you along at a pace you can handle by His Word through His Spirit.

JS Thanks so much.

TS Can I add one more thing? I can't close without thanking the Lord for bringing me to WCF, and I pray that He never takes me away. I might have spent my life in bitterness. I needed someone to love me; I needed to heal from many years of hurt. Now I am a light. I take those principles of grace out into the world and live them for Him. And His grace is sufficient for every need. I pray that we will abound in grace, more and more.

Shepherding from the Good Shepherd (part 2)

Principle Number Two: The Good Shepherd knows the sheep (Jn. 10:14–16).

"I am the Good Shepherd and I know My sheep and am known by My own" (Jn. 10:14). As far as shepherding is concerned, knowledge of the sheep is fundamental. The word "know" (*ginsko*) pertains to an understanding that is gained through experience and is the kind of familiarity born out of mutual struggle. I recall when a younger brother and I labored together in a week of gospel work. We forged a bond that superseded other friendships, for we learned of each other strengths and perseverance in the heat of spiritual battle. I am now able to predict many of the decisions and movements of my fellow soldier as a result of the first-hand insight gained from observing the patterns of his behavior. But while I might somewhat reliably predict my brother's thoughts and actions, the Lord has omniscient anticipation of our doings.

The Saviour's comprehension of His sheep is further expanded with His statement: *"...and the sheep hear His voice and He calls them by name"* (v. 3). The Lord's familiarity has roots that extend to the intensive study of each individual sheep. Due to His flawless insight, the Shepherd formulates a name that bespeaks the sheep's peculiar personality. The same is practiced by all animal owners: shepherds with their livestock, ranchers with their horses, and homeowners with their pets. How enlightening to appreciate the exhaustive study required of the owner. Indeed, the Lord hints that His depth of understanding of the flock parallels His intimacy with the Father: *"As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father and lay down My life..."* (Jn. 10:15).

We must pause to ask a probing question: Do we possess an extensive knowledge of the sheep in our folds? Are we merely satisfied with their presence, or will we expend ourselves in the effort required to truly know a person? Such knowledge might be bewildering for we may discover an individual's profession to be merely that—a profession and not a possession of Christ. Indeed, we may uncover more problems to bear and more trials to endure, but this never prohibited our Saviour from knowing us, His sheep.

If the principle of knowing the sheep seems formidable, being "known by the sheep" is likewise an involved process. Jesus states: *"...and the sheep hear His voice...and He brings them out...for they know His voice"* (vv. 3-4). A soothing quality characterizes the shepherd's voice, for the sheep have learned to associate His voice with calm and provision. It is my understanding that sheep stir quite actively as they hear the early morning whistle of the shepherd approaching the fold. Over time they have associated His voice with gentle and tender care. This same voice is also heard when they have gone astray and need rescuing, when they require painful medical therapy, and when they are in danger from the predator. Their shepherd's voice bursts with compassion. No wonder the sheep are anxious to follow such sounds. No wonder the sheep do not follow strange voices. Visitors to a fold are surprised when the sheep do not shadow them, even if they mimic the shepherd's words and inflection. The reason for their wariness is simple: No years of care have been established with the visitor's voice.

The under-shepherd, therefore, must cultivate the same atmosphere with his voice and presence. We must judiciously guard our own words and their mode of expression to instill a sense of confidence and peace in the sheep. Saints have frequently expressed that they were never visited by the elders until there a problem. Unfortunately, such visits have often not been prepared for by simple visits of love and concern, and an adverse reaction becomes far more likely. Let us devote the time required so that sheep and shepherds might know and love one another.

Under Law or Under Grace?

The law may bring reformation, but we need transformation.

The author explains the role of death and resurrection, both in deliverance from the law's grip and in victory over sin.

Reformed theology has long given great importance to the "moral" law given to Moses on Mount Sinai. Reformed teachers argue that obedience to this moral law is an indispensable principle in the life of a Christian. These teachers fully concede that the ceremonial law and civil ordinances and statutes have been done away with by Christ on the cross of Calvary (Rom. 7:4-6; 10:4). However, they contend that the moral law is God's method of leading a Christian into a life of holiness.

Representative of this perspective, the late Reformed preacher David Martyn-Lloyd Jones writes, "The Christian has been delivered from the curse of the Law. But that does not release him from the Law as a rule of life. Holiness means being righteous, and being righteous means keeping the Law. The ten commandments and the moral Law have never been abrogated."[1] Similarly, Anthony Hoekema, a former professor at Calvin Theological Seminary, writes, "The Christian life must be a law-formed life. Though believers must not try to keep God's law as a means of earning their salvation, they are nevertheless enjoined to do their best to keep the Law...the Law is one of the most important means whereby God sanctifies us."[2] The question naturally arises: What was the purpose of the Mosaic law? Does the New Testament teach that the Christian is under the Law today? Let's take a closer look at these, and other, questions.

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Mt. Sinai and nearby mountains in foreground

The Purpose of the Law

The Mosaic law provided man with God's timeless moral standards in written form. These holy principles had, in part, already been revealed since the time of Noah (Gen. 9:4-6). The Mosaic law was in harmony with what God had already revealed to the patriarchs. However, now the Mosaic law would regulate all moral, civil, and ceremonial life in the nation of Israel. These standards were "holy, righteous, and good" (Rom. 7:12). God's ethical standards were incorporated in the law of Moses so that *"every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God"* (Rom. 3:19). The ultimate purpose of the Law was to demonstrate the exceeding sinfulness of sin and to be our tutor to lead us to faith in Christ.

Nevertheless, the cross of Christ brought an end to the obligation of the believer to the Mosaic law in its entirety. Paul tells us that, *"Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth"* (Rom. 10:4). The believer in Christ is no longer under the Law but under grace (Rom. 6:14). The Law has power over a person only when he is alive. Since the Christian has died and is risen in Christ, then the Law has no more power over him. In the language of the New Testament, *"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the Law by the body of Christ and married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God"* (Rom. 7:4). Although the Christian is no longer under the Law, this does not mean he does not have a responsibility to meet the righteousness contained in the Law.

Dispensationalists have long recognized that, except for the commandment to keep the Sabbath, all of the Ten Commandments are

included in the New Testament. As a result, dispensationalists are concerned about maintaining this biblical standard of morality. However, the New Testament never charges the believer to return to the Old Testament Mosaic system of law. This leads us to the issue of the Ten Commandments and the moral law.

The Moral Law and the Ten Commandments

We may describe the "moral" law as the eternal principles of righteousness, reflecting the mind and heart of God. This law has always existed and is the essence of the will of God for all believers in every dispensation. Its standards are as high as the glory and character of God. This truth is seen in Paul's definition of sin when he writes, *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Rom. 3:23). Reformed leaders teach that the civil and ceremonial components of the Mosaic law have passed away but not the Ten Commandments.

While Reformed leaders use the Ten Commandments and the moral law of God almost interchangeably, they are not the same. Although it is true that the Ten Commandments, and indeed all of the Mosaic law, are based upon God's moral law, we must not make the mistake of equating the Ten Commandments with the moral law of God. The moral law is eternal: a higher, more glorious, and fuller reflection of His nature than the Ten Commandments. This is seen in our Lord's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount when He said, *"You have heard it said of old...but I say to you..."* (Mt. 5:33-48).

Reformed leaders suggest that the Ten Commandments apply to Christians as fully as they ever did to Israel and are still binding upon us. However, if the laws of the Ten Commandments are still binding, then all of the penalties must also be in force. The penalty of death was imposed for adultery, idolatry, Sabbath-breaking, and disobedience to parents. The death penalty was imposed on the first four of the Ten Commandments. To change a law's penalty is to change the law. Martin Luther, the Reformer, said that a law without its penalty is only good advice.[3] This is not merely theological hairsplitting, but is the very point of the apostle Paul when he describes the Ten Commandments as *"the ministration of death, written and engraved in stones"* (2 Cor. 3:7). Strikingly, it is declared three times in 2 Corinthians 3:6-16 that the Mosaic system, including the Ten Commandments, is done away with or abolished (vv. 7, 11, 13). The participle used in each of these three verses is from the verb *katargeo*, which means "to abrogate, to cancel, to bring to an end." No stronger term could be used to describe the abolishing of the Mosaic law.

Since the day of Pentecost, the spiritual walk of the believer is no longer under any part of the Mosaic law, but it is through the power of the Holy Spirit of God. The negative precepts of the Ten Commandments have been replaced with the positive requirements of the ethics of heaven. The Christian is to *"bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ"* (2 Cor. 10:5). Every step of his walk is to be by faith, *"...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin"* (Rom. 14:23); *"for we walk by faith, not by sight"* (2 Cor. 5:7). Such a standard of life is as high as heaven itself and has never been perfectly attained, except by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Yet the failure to meet these requirements does not change or lower God's high standard. The ability to reach, in some measure, God's standard is only through the power and ministry of the Holy Spirit of God. We read, *"...walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh"* (Gal. 5:16), and *"but if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law"* (Gal. 5:18).

The law can condemn, penalize, and punish, but it can never make a Christian more holy.

The passing away of the Mosaic law does not mean the end of the eternal law of God. Only a

divinely instituted theocracy could enforce the ten Mosaic laws with their death penalties, and no such government exists today. Yet, the moral law of God belongs to all ages, and its authority extends to all men. The infinitely high and holy demands of the moral law are more clearly seen in the New Testament than in the Old. The believer's standard of conduct is the standard of heaven (Col. 3:1). He is not without law but is under the "law of Christ" (1 Cor. 9:21), the "royal law" of love, and "the law of liberty" (Jas. 2:8, 12).

The Law of Moses and Sanctification

The New Testament makes it clear that a Christian is not under the Law in regard to his salvation or sanctification. The Law in its entirety (moral, civil, and ceremonial) has been done away with (Rom. 6:14). Time and again, the New Testament states that we "are not under law but grace." This truth includes our justification and sanctification. The law can condemn, penalize, and punish, but it can never make a Christian more holy. Just as our nation's system of law does not empower men to live moral lives but punishes transgressors; so, too, God's law cannot make a believer more holy but reveals him as a sinner. The believer is not under the Law for his salvation nor for his sanctification. The way to be free from sin's power and dominion is through the grace of God and the cross of Calvary (Rom. 6:1-13), not through the Law at Sinai. In another place, the apostle Paul writes, *"I through the Law died unto the Law that I might live unto God"* (Gal. 2:19). The believer is delivered from the Law and its bondage through the death of the old man, under the dominion of sin, and is then free and empowered to live for Christ. The Bedford prison's preacher-poet John Bunyan has written:

Run, run and do, the Law commands.
But gives me neither feet nor hands.
Better news the grace-gospel brings.
It bids me fly and gives me wings.

How then can a Christian live a righteous life? Through grace's empowering work within, he is able not only to fulfill the righteousness of the Law, but to exceed the righteousness of the Law. This transforming grace produces a dynamic, living relationship with the resurrected Christ. It is this power and life flowing from the indwelling Christ that fits the believer to live for Him. The Spirit of God in the souls of men does not set the believer's affections upon ordinances, statutes, and regulations, but rather fills him with a vital, living relationship with the Lord Jesus. This love relationship so completely empowers the Christian that, with a holy desire, he finds himself yielding to the holy and righteous requirements of God. The apostle Paul describes this spiritual phenomenon when he writes, *"...that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"* (Rom. 8:4). This powerful reality is surely the New Testament's teaching concerning our new life in Christ. Listen to the apostle: *"...for me to live is Christ"* (Php. 1:21); *"looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith"* (Heb. 12:2); *"the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God"* (Gal. 2:20). It is focusing upon Christ that empowers the believer. As a Christian is taken up with Him, he is transformed *"from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord"* (2 Cor. 3:18). This is the secret to power and holiness in the Christian's life.

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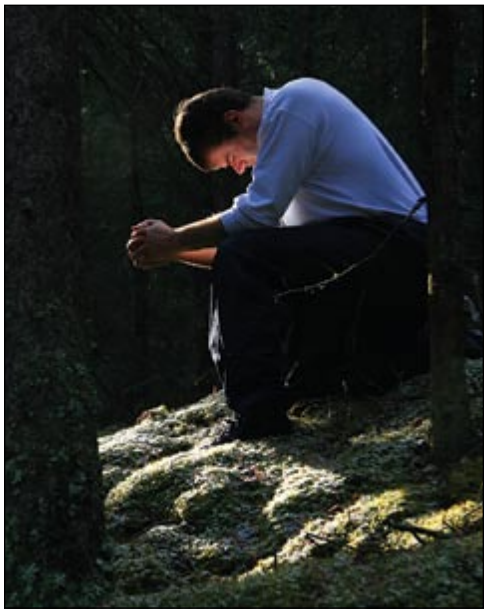

Transforming grace produces a dynamic, living relationship with the resurrected Christ.

Endnotes

1 D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Sermon on the Mount* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), p. 179.
2 Anthony Hoekema, *Five Views of Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987), p. 88.
3 Martin Luther, *Commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (Westwood, NJ: Revell, 1947), pp. 158-159.

The 10 Commitments

Not the have-to of Sinai but the want-to of Golgotha

You've heard the old clichés: "Aim at nothing; you'll likely hit it." Or "If you aim at the sun, you have a good chance of at least hitting the moon." But the fact that they're clichés doesn't mean they aren't true. What are you aiming at?

He would have been upper class, part of the intelligentsia, a shaker and mover in society. In a matter of weeks, it all changed. He described the trauma of it as the strange climax of a long list of excruciating circumstances. Stripes. Prison. Beaten with rods. Stoned. Shipwreck. Robbers. Hunger and thirst. Nakedness. To name a few. And then the one he saved for the last, but which was his first indignity as a believer: *"through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall"* (2 Cor. 11:33). Intending to ride into Damascus with head held high, he left the city by being unceremoniously dispatched over the wall in what was probably a trash can. Thus began the far-reaching ministry of the Apostle Paul with its eternal implications.

What kept him going—when even his converts distanced themselves? What dried his tears after he had wept *"night and day"?* What sustained his resolve? What will sustain ours? Listen now to Paul's *ten commitments,* and pray them up to your Father that they also may be yours.

1. A commitment to spend my all in the pursuit of evangelism: *"I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians ... So as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel ..."* (Rom. 1:15).
2. A commitment to be focused on Christ, and refuse to be distracted by petty personal issues: *"I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified"* (1 Cor. 2:2).
3. A commitment to keep the past in the past and daily aim for the Best: *"This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"* (Php. 3:13-14).
4. A commitment to always live with the shadow of the cross upon my life: *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me"* (Gal. 2:20).
5. A commitment to accept how God has made me, and watch for Him to use my liabilities as assets: *"Most gladly ... will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities ... for when I am weak, then am I strong"* (2 Cor. 12:9-10).
6. A commitment to seek the glory of the Lord in all things: *"That with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death"* (Php. 1:20).
7. A commitment to work and pray for the spiritual well-being of the saints: *"We ... do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will ... that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work ..."* (Col. 1:9-10).
8. A commitment to be thankful, uncomplaining, and content with what the Lord has given me: *"I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need"* (Php. 4:12).
9. A commitment to endure present sufferings in light of future bliss: *"For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day"* (2 Tim. 1:12).
10. A commitment to pass on this commitment to others: *"And the things that thou hast heard of me ... commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also"* (2 Tim. 2:2). Amen!

THE PUMP

BY GEORGE CUTTING, FROM *"FREEDOM FROM SIN: WHAT IS IT?"*

A MAN HAS A WELL OF WATER near his house, and a splendid pump placed over it. Although this pump is in itself a perfect piece of mechanism, he has for years never been able to get a drop of good water out of the well. Nay, the more he pumps the worse appears the water brought up.

One day a visitor in the locality, and an expert in such matters, tells the man that if he were to bore into a large rock close by he would get an ample supply of pure water. The experiment is tried, and after a few days' boring the expected spring is tapped, bringing forth a gushing stream of sparkling pure water.

Now do you think he will remove his pump from the bad well and place it over that gushing stream? Certainly not. It is not that he has any fault to find with the pump. It is as good as ever it was. But he now gets from a new source, without the pump, what he could never get from the old source by the pump.

Now let us apply this simple figure, "The Law is not made for a righteous man" (1 Tim. 1:9). In itself it is "holy, just, and good"; but when it was applied to man in the flesh, like the perfect pump applied to the polluted well, it only made manifest what was there.

What then was the requirement of the law?

Galatians 5:14 tells us: "All the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Yes, it demanded love, but there came out perfect hatred; yea, hatred to the One who deserved nothing but love. "They hated Me without a cause."

So much then for the old well, and the pump that made its polluted condition more and more apparent.

Let us now look at the other side. And what a refreshing contrast it is to turn from the old to the new. But what, it may be asked, is the new spring? It is nothing less than the Spirit of God—the Spirit of life in the soul of a believer (Jn. 4:14; 20:22; Gal. 5:22-25).

And what do we get from this source? Why, the first fruit produced by the Spirit is the very thing which the Law demanded, but could not produce; namely, love. (Gal. 5:14, 5:22.)