

No MORE LAW?

INTRODUCTION.

To many people, Paul seems to be speaking out of both sides of his mouth, especially in relation to “law and “grace”. The two verses immediately below appear to be totally contradictory, at first glance, and from each view flows two different streams of doctrine.

Galatians 5:4 *Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.*

But then Paul also says:

Romans 2:13 *For not the hearers of the law are justified before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.*

In both verses “*justified*” is the same Greek word *dikaioo* which means, “to show, “to exhibit”. In the first verse we have the active **present tense** “*are justified*” whereas in the second verse we have the passive **future tense**, “*shall be justified*”. In all the “*grace*” and “*faith*” verses, tense cannot be overlooked if we want understanding. Also, we need to understand what “Law” means.

THE WORD “LAW” CAN MEAN DIFFERENT THINGS.

In both Gal. 5:4 and Romans 2:13 above, the word “law” is *nomos*. This word can mean differing kinds of laws, for instance, it is not the same word as “*commandments*” which is how the Greek word *entole* is usually translated. Many of such apparently opposing statements are easily cleared up with the understanding that Paul speaks of different kinds of law, usually either:

- [a]. The *sacrificial* law versus the *moral* law.
- [b]. The *commandments of men* versus the *commandments of God*.
- [c]. *National* laws versus *personal* laws.
- [d]. Law as a *principle*.

Overall context usually allows us to determine what is being spoken about, so we will be looking at this.

Obviously, no one is justified by trying to come to God through the Old Testament *sacrificial* law now that Christ has come. Without separating these things that are different, and searching out and applying context, we cannot iron out the common confusion about what “*law*” means. This paper will not divide up the *moral* law into its main components, namely the ‘commandments’, the ‘statutes’ and the ‘judgements’, or the moral, economic and the political.

PUTTING TENSE AND “LAW” TOGETHER.

When we come to God “*without the law*”-[Rom.3:21], that is, outside of the *sacrificial* law, we cross a threshold whence from that point believers in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus are to become, “*doers of the law*”, that is, doers of the *moral* law, through the enabling of God. When we come to God, righteousness does not come to us through the old *sacrificial* law, “*But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification*”-[Rom.4:23].

From thence, “*If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin*”, applies. Note that the “*if*” is the condition.

This is well expressed in the verse below, where the “*have believed*” tense is ‘active’ and the mood is ‘perfect’, that is, it relates to an action in the past that affects our actions in the present, “*maintain*” being present tense.

Titus 3:8 *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.*

In the multitude of books on faith and law, what is seldom considered is the change of status from having been ‘unjustified’ to the aorist tense “*being justified by faith*”-[Rom.5:1] This is a major area of doctrinal problem today. It is not the purpose here to discuss works and faith in detail, except to say,

1. Grace is not the remedy for law, but for sin.

2. Being free from the law is being free from the old *sacrificial* law from the wages due from breaking God's *moral* law, not with the *moral* law itself.
3. The law is not a curse as many teach. Jesus came to redeem us from the curse of the death penalty that is the wages of disobedience. Since "*the law of God is perfect converting the soul*", it could not be a curse. The curse applies to those who place themselves under the old *sacrificial* law who insist that the sacrifice of Jesus is insufficient.

THE REFERENCES TO KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT.

One purpose of this paper is to consider what all the references to "*keep the commandments of God*" mean, as we find them through the New Testament.

We find that references to God's *moral* commandments continue through the New Testament which determines that these are still to be kept, despite the popular but wrong misuse of Gal. 5:4 above.

1 John 5:2-3 *By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, AND keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.*

Here John is talking about the *moral* laws. It is the *sacrificial* laws and the laws of the Pharisees that were the heavy burden. In this verse there is an "*when*" and an "*and*" which show *love* and *obedience* still go together, just as the moral law and love did in the Old Testament. Commandments is "*entole*" which some take as meaning the commandments of Jesus rather than the commandments given as a covenant through Moses, as if there were a difference morally. Jesus said in Matthew 5:17 "*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil*". where "*fulfil*" means to make them abound [*pleroo*]. It is NOT the word *teleo* which means, "*to bring to a close*", even if teachers try to say it is, or to use it that way.

We will look at some more verses about keeping God's commandments in the New Testament.

Revelation 22:14 *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.*

In this verse we see confirmation as to what is necessary to have the right to the tree of life and to live forever in the presence of God.

Revelation 12:17 *And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, AND have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

In this verse above, again we find an "*and*" in the middle of the verse, showing these two things as both being necessary. "*Keep*" means "*to attend to carefully, take care of, to guard*"

A supposed "*testimony of Jesus Christ*" without the fruits of repentance through not applying "*keep the commandments of God*", that is, the moral law, is a false testimony. A false testimony is part of "*another gospel*" with its attendant curse -[2 Cor 11.4] and is what Paul calls a perversion of the gospel-[Gal.1:6-7].

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN REPENTANCE?

As we see from 1 John 3:4 "*Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law*". "*Transgression*" relates to the *moral* law, and Paul set forth no change in the moral law. Paul is not slow to say, "*as also saith the law*"-[1 Cor. 13:34]. He confirmed this saying, "*Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid*"-[Rom. 6:1]. So repentance involves a change of heart about keeping God's moral laws, but it does not include what Judaisers demand.

The Scribes and Pharisees had instituted their own interpretations of the Law of God, requiring the keeping of "*days, and months, and times and years*"-[Gal.4:10], these being the "*commandments of men*". These "*works*" of this law are in vain, and any man-made laws can only bring bondage. Paul called this "*Agar in Mount Sinai*" and he calls these Judaisers, "*Jerusalem which now is*"-[Gal.4:25]. The keeping of man-made days, months, times or years, as well as any of the *sacrificial* law was and still is in vain.

THE SETTING OF PAUL'S WRITINGS.

This is most important as understanding context is vital. Because the churches, through tradition, choose not to believe verses like the one below, they have to insert a manufactured universal context and ignore the real context of Paul's writings, that is, that they are not all-inclusive.

Acts 13:32-33 *And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again.*

To begin understanding Paul, much of the New Testament writings are set in the context of The Lord's reconciliation with the people of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and the controversy sparked by the remnant of the House of Judah surrounding that event-(See Luke 2:25; Acts 13:23-27; Acts 26:6,7). **This is the context of Rom.6:15 "We are not under the law, but under grace"**, even if the churches ignore the real divorce context. As many know, Israel was "married" to the Lord-(Jeremiah 3:14). Israel was divided into two kingdoms in the days of Solomon's son, Rehoboam-(I Kings chapter 11). The Northern House of Israel was given a bill of divorcement because of her adulteries-(Jeremiah 3:6-8) and sent into captivity-(2 Kings 18:11-12; also Isaiah 50:1). And the Lord said to them "*ye are not my people, and I will not be your God.*"-(Hosea 1:9). The law regarding divorce was then activated as found in:

Deuteronomy 24:1 *When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled, for that is abomination before the Lord: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.*

Paul explains how this applies to the divorced Northern Kingdom of Israel, speaking to them - his brethren, or fellow Israelites.

Romans 7:1-4 *Know ye not brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?
2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.
3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she is called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from the law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.
4 Therefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ,- that ye should be married to another even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto death.*

Paul did not repeat the part in the law stating that a woman given a bill of divorcement was allowed to marry again. But he clearly showed the principle of one who had gone and married another **prior to** a bill of divorcement and was not released from the law until her first husband dies: In Israel's case (the adulterous woman) she had done just that: married other gods **prior to** the divorce. Then when He finally divorced her, she could not return to the Lord - even if she divorced them also-(See Deut. 24:4 above). As Ezekiel 37:1 says about this, "*Our hope is lost: we are cut off*"). This is why Jesus died: to release Israel (his bride) from the law - so she could marry another - this time Immanuel or "*God with us*", i.e. Christ after He was raised from the dead. For this reason Israel looks forward to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb-[Revelation 19:9]. This is what the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven is about. Jesus is the Redeemer of Israel.

Another passage showing reversal of the judgement Israel is under is found.

Galatians 4:4 *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

"Adoption" here is *huiosthesia* which means "*placing in a position as sons*" or putting the redeemed of the House of Israel back where Israel was before they were divorced, not now as '*children*', but as '*sons*'. Paul shows the need to redeem God's people from being "*under the law*," which the context in this passage shows as being the law of divorce as in Deuteronomy 24.

The reality of the redemption was so powerful that it created this great controversy between the remnant of the House of Judah and the "gentilised" House of Israel who were accepting Jesus as their Redeemer. Paul calls these two parties, "*the Jew*" and "*the Greek*", or the "Judean" and the "Greek" (speaking). In the next section we will see how Paul faces this, the Judeans tending towards *the commandments of men* -[Matt. 15:9].

THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN.

Colossians 2: *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ*

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, In putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of god, who hath raised him from the dead.

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out Of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

*Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using-) **after the commandments and doctrines of men?***

The “spoiling” is done, “*through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world*”.

“**PHILOSOPHY**” “is given by Strong as, “*rather theosophy, of certain Jewish Christian ascetics, which busied itself with refined and speculative enquiries into the nature and classes of angels, into the ritual of the Mosaic law and the regulations of Jewish tradition respecting practical life*”.

“**RUDIMENTS**” is given as, “*any first thing, from which the others belonging to some series or composite whole take their rise, an element, first principle*”.

“**TRADITION**” [*paradosis*] is giving up or surrender to these things.

The word "spoil" in verse 8 means "rob." In other words, let no man rob you of something. The whole text is based on someone being robbed of something by and through the above things .

Then we come to, “*after the commandments and doctrines of men*” (vss. 20-22) where “commandments” is “*entalma*” and “doctrines” is “*didaskalia*”. Now we are seeing something about different kinds of “law” as pointed out in the second section of this booklet. For example, when Jesus was tackled by the Pharisees in Luke 6 about things they claimed were not lawful to do on the sabbath day, Jesus pointed out to them the difference between the *commandments of men* and the *commandments of God*. For example, the sabbath day’s journey which is a commandment of men, not one of the commandments of God”. It is the commandments of men that rob Israelites of “*the redemption which is in Christ Jesus*”.

Such “*commandments of men*” are not to be followed, and are to be rebuked.

Titus 1:14 *Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and **commandments of men**, that turn from the truth.*

Jesus put it this way in Matt. 15:9,

*“But in vain do they worship me, teaching for commandments the doctrines and **commandments of men**”.*

Back to Colossians again, we see these are of no value at all.

Col. 2:20 *Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using;) after **the commandments and doctrines of men?** Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.*

In not separating the “**commandments of God**” from the “**commandments of men**” the churches almost as a whole have disallowed the “**commandments of God**”, both *sacrificial* and *moral*, thinking that the word “*law*” was inclusive always of both.

It is true that worship and humility as they apply to man’s ordinances [*dogmatizo*] can appear to be denying the flesh, as indicated in the verse above. But when churches engage in what they call today “worship” and “praise” yet exclude the “**commandments of God**” at the same time, they are deceiving themselves. When they pray for so-called revival for a city, for instance, they think we will be heard for their “*much praying*” ignoring that revival concerns God’s people only.

It is not generally appreciated that the blessings of God follow obedience that is, to “*keep **the commandments of God***” , but they do not come by sacrifice. “*To obey is better than sacrifice*”-[1 Sam. 15.22]. Thus we see that the saying, “All we have to do is love Jesus and nothing else”, is “*another gospel*”. In every revival given as examples in

Scripture, conviction through the *moral* “**commandments of God**” features bringing repentance, followed by joy.

THE JUDAISERS.

These who troubled the early disciples of Jesus were concerned with the *commandments of men* and not the *commandments of God*. Several of Paul's letters deal with circumcision of the flesh, just as the above passage in Colossians. This is because of problems the local *ecclesia* were having with the "Judaisers".

Acts 15:1-2 *And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.*

Those men of Judah were robbing the uncircumcised 'gentilised' House of Israel of "redemption" i.e., restoration from their alienated (divorced) condition to fellowship with the 'circumcised' during the sabbaths, new moons, holy days (Col. 2:16). The Judaisers were saying in essence, “*don't come near us, we are holier than thou because we're circumcised and you're not.*” Recall that Peter was rebuked by this same group for even eating (sitting down to meat and drink -Colossians 2:16)- with the uncircumcised of the House of Israel-[Acts 1 1:2-3].

Paul circumvented this problem by showing that Abraham obeyed God's commandments **before** he was circumcised!

Romans 4:9-10 *Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.*

Abraham obeyed God **prior to** circumcision.

Gen. 26:5: *Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.*

Paul laid the foundation for Romans 4 in Romans chapter 2

Rom 2:14-15 and 26-27. *For when the Gentiles [i.e. ethnos - House of Israel], which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;*

Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfill the law, judge thee, who by the letter and the circumcision dost transgress the law?

Before we go on, two important phrases here should be noted, namely “*by nature*” and “*written in their hearts*”. There is no promise or fulfilment about the Law of God “*written in their hearts*” and do “*by nature*”, the things contained in the moral law, applying to other than Israel. This is made clear in the context of the verse below.

Hebrews 8:9-11 *Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.*

Continuing, circumcision of the flesh was a sign of the covenant that was added **after** Abraham proved his faith by obedience to the Lord's Laws. Because of this, when the divorced House of Israel (i.e., "uncircumcised Gentiles") showed the work of the law written in their hearts, they proved their faithfulness just as Abraham did - without circumcision of the flesh. But those who were circumcised in the flesh and not in the heart were exposed as hypocrites.

“BLOTTING OUT THE HANDWRITING”.

Back to Colossians, the “*blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us*” is blotting out the *commandments of men* which may also contain the *sacrificial* law. It is not the *moral* law as those who want to lump both together teach.

The word ‘*ordinances*’ here-(Strong's # 1378 -1379) is **dogma** in the Greek, which is where we get the word dogmatic, synonymous with '*traditions of men*.' It is nothing like the same Greek word for **ordinances** as used in Luke 1:6 speaking of Zacharias and Elisabeth who “*were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and **ordinances** of the Lord blameless.*” The latter word is Strong's number 1345-*dikaioma*, clearly implicating the Lord's moral ordinances.

It was the **dogma** of these Judaisers that had long kept uncircumcised and divorced Israel from being "saved" and brought back into fellowship. First, they held these Israelite "gentiles" under the judgement of divorce-(John 4:9). Then, even after Christ, the Judaisers thought that the only way these "gentiles" could come into fellowship was through circumcision. But, by the sacrifice of Jesus, in spite of the Judaisers, He "saved" His people anyway, nailing their dogmatic requirements to His cross (Col. 2:14) and fulfilling the judgement of divorce (Deut. 24:1-4 and Romans 7:1-4), thus bringing the uncircumcised House of Israel, ["gentiles" in dispersion], back to himself and into fellowship with the House of Judah. This is vividly demonstrated:

Ephesians 2:11 *Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called ncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;
That at that time you were without Christ, being aliens [Greek: alienated- i.e. divorced] from the Commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world,
But now in Christ Jesus ye who some times were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances [**dogma**]; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;
And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:
And came and preached peace to you which were far off, and to them that were nigh.
For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.
Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.*

The "middle wall" is the enmity between the Houses of Judah and Israel-(see Isaiah 9), and not between "Jews and Gentiles" in the popular concept. The House of Israel was "far off" and the House of Judah was "nigh".

This passage perfectly sets forth fulfilment of the prophecy of the "two sticks" found in Ezekiel 37:15-28 where the "sticks" or "sceptres" of Joseph, representing the Houses of Israel and Judah becoming joined as one in the prophet's hand, symbolic of re-uniting the divided kingdom-(See especially Ezek. 37 verse 22).

WHERE DO THINGS LIKE THE SABBATH COME IN?

Consideration is not made here as to which day of our present week is the Sabbath

The important point here is perhaps at the very heart of questions about law and whether the Sabbath was abolished in Christ. Paul says:

Colossians 2:16-17 *Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.*

Many believe that because the *sacrificial* laws were closely tied to the Sabbaths and feasts and that when Christ came to be the final sacrifice, that all holy days or shadows, had fulfilled their purpose. Further proof, they say, is that Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70 thereby bringing a crashing end to the sacrifices, with the sabbaths and feasts, ending them also. This argument uses Paul's words above to try to prove it. The passage is convoluted to mean, "don't let anyone judge you if you don't want to keep the sabbaths, holy days, new moons, or if you do eat pork." This doesn't take into account, however, that the Lord said as recorded in Exodus 3 1:

The sabbath is a sign between Him and His people for ever,

1. It is a perpetual covenant,
2. It is tied directly to the pattern of His resting after He made heaven and earth, which was long prior to the ritual sacrifice being codified.
3. There were sacrifices every day. The apparent contradiction between that sign/perpetual covenant and verse 16 above is easily resolved with the understanding of the Judaisers' purpose, and the following concepts.

Paul wrote to the Colossians some 30 years after the New Covenant was established by the crucifixion and resurrection. Notice he doesn't say they "were" a shadow of things which came when Christ gave us the New Covenant. He says "are" a shadow of things to come. We cannot say that sometime between Paul and the 21st Century we left the "shadows" and now clearly see the object creating the shadow.

I Corinthians 13:12 "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face" is speaking of a time "when that which is perfect is come." Indeed, that which is perfect has not yet come, otherwise Paul would not have spoken of a *future day*.

Paul's words in Colossians 2:16 were simply encouraging these 'gentilised' Israelites to keep the holy sabbath day as was determined by the Apostles, in spite of the Judaisers. Peter in his vision where unclean animals appeared on a sheet was told to "*rise, kill and eat.*" Peter, knowing that the Lord would not contradict His well established law-("*I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean*")- states unequivocally that the vision meant "*God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean*"- (Acts 10:13-19 and 28). [It is strange how some can refuse what was shown to Peter in order to try to prove that God has changed his mind about pork and shell fish being unclean!].

Lastly, if verses 16 and 17 of Colossians 2 are read together properly, they would say, "*Let no man therefore judge you . . . but the body is of Christ.*" The word "*is*" in vs. 17 is not in the original Greek text. In other words, the body of Christ (the circumcised in heart under the New Covenant) is the only group of people capable of judging whether one may sit down to meat and drink on the holy days, based on whether one is obeying His Laws. We can see this acted out where Paul exhorts believers during the Feast of Passover/Unleavened Bread in the following verse

I Corinthians 5:11 *But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.*

We will not go into detail here but look at "law" from another perspective.

WHAT GOD HAS JOINED.

John 14:15 *If ye love me, **keep my commandments***

1 John 5:3 *For this is the love of God, that we **keep his commandments**: and his commandments are not grievous.*

In order to serve the Lord faithfully, we must not only distinguish things that differ but also preserve the connection of things God has joined. *Law* and *love* are two such things that God has joined. They are inseparable.

What is pleasing to God? This needs some explanation, lest the issue be oversimplified or confused. One of the greatest difficulties in dealing with this subject is the many ways the words themselves, *law* and *love*, are used in the Bible. "Law" has differing meanings. Likewise, in Scripture we read of the love of Christ, love for your wife, love for our neighbour, love for our enemies, and a special and peculiar love for the brethren. Volumes have been written on these two little words, *law* and *love*.

Every true Christian wants to know how to please God. This desire comes with regeneration and immediately thrusts us into the Bible, where God's will is expressed. But how does God express His will? Does He simply say, "*Love . . .*" or does He express His will by giving us His commandments? The Bible clearly does both, all the while teaching us the proper relationship between *law* and *love*. We must exercise our best efforts to discern what that relationship is. In terms of discerning what the will of God might be, the answer in the form of the "**commandments of God**" may be staring the churches in the face as the first step. Some churchgoers almost desperately want to know the will of God, but in doctrine their church hides the "**commandments of God**" from them.

"ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE"?

Every heresy and cult waves the word love around like a banner of virtue. It is their favourite word, but it is never connected to God's law. The hippie movement of the sixties also proclaimed this word-painted on vans and placards-often in the form of "*free love.*" Political and religious liberals continue to speak of *love* divorced from individual responsibility.

In March of 1965, Time magazine reported a meeting of nine hundred ministers and students at Harvard Divinity School in which they considered the subject of the "*new morality.*" The title of the article, "*Love in Place of Law?*" set up an antithesis. Under the heading, "*We Are Delivered,*" the article said, "*Inevitably, the speakers reached no definite conclusion, but they generally agreed, that, in some respects, the new morality is a healthy advance as a genuine effort to take literally St. Paul's teaching that through Christ we are delivered from the law.*"

Though these words do come from the New Testament, they certainly do not teach what the Harvard speakers implied. Some questions need to be asked about the context of Paul's words: In what respect are we delivered from the law, and, from what laws are we delivered? At times the deliverance is from the individual law of the context. We are delivered from the old *sacrificial* law. People who are motivated by genuine love are certainly not lawless. They love the moral and ethical standard that Jesus loved and kept, contrary to the words of Princeton president, Paul Ramsey, who said in the same article, "*Lists of cans and cannots are meaningless.*"

Now, we are not surprised at this dangerous, destructive ignorance when we find it among cults, liberals, and agnostics. But when Bible-believing preachers set up a false antithesis between law and love, we should be shocked, appalled, saddened, and greatly pained.

Setting up a false antithesis between *law* and *love* (as if they are conflicting, opposing ideas) is one of the most subtle ways to undermine the Ten Commandments, biblical morality, and true Christianity. Granted there is a difference between *law* and *love*; but there is also an immutable connection. The failure to see this unchangeable relationship has led people into countless errors, heresies, and spiritual shipwrecks.

AN IMMUTABLE CONNECTION.

There is no antithesis between law and love unless they are separated. Yet, churches create this antithesis! Let us consider a few passages that show the immutable connection between law and love. Notice how love is joined to the Ten Commandments in the following teaching of Paul:

Romans 13:8-11 *Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*

Moreover, what better definition of love could we give than the biblical one we have from John, the great apostle of love himself?

1 John 5:3 *For this is the love of God, that we **keep his commandments**: and his commandments are not grievous.*

Observe, also, our Lord's conversation with the lawyer in Matthew 22:35-40. When asked in verse 36, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" our Lord immediately connected God's commandments and God's love. Jesus always connected *law* and *love*. What could be plainer than the following examples?

John 14:21,23; 21:5 *He that hath **my commandments**, AND keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep **my words**: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

NOTE:

Jesus is saying here that obedience to the "commandments of God" is the proof of love, and the condition for Him to manifest Himself. All the "prayer/worship" meetings in the world will not cause God to make His abode with us if the "hath my commandments and keepeth them" is not being done. Many churches thus are denying and preventing the presence of God through their insistence that "not under the law" means the "commandments of God" are no longer relevant. If we do what is asked of us, and we 'searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so'-[Acts 17:11], we may come to the conclusion that what is manifested and considered as "the anointing" may come from the spirit of lawlessness and not from God at all !

John 15:10,12,14 *If ye **keep my commandments**, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Ye are my friends, if ye do **whatsoever I command you**.*

These statements should settle forever the fact that there is an eternal relationship between God's law and God's love, and what is involved in being, "a friend of Jesus".

To emphasise that love itself is a command is consistent with many New Testament passages:

- "Love your neighbour" (Matt. 5:43);
- "Love your enemies" (Luke 6:27,35);
- "Love one another" (Rom. 13:8);
- "Love your wives" (Eph. 5:25);
- "Love the brotherhood" (1 Peter 2:17).

These passages are sufficiently clear to show that there is a vital connection between *law* and *love*. They should cause us to renounce any teaching, whether packaged in clever illustrations or dispensed via subtle implications, that would separate *law* and *love*. If ever the biblical teaching about the commandments was needed in the home,

the church, and the nation, it is now! With lawlessness rampant, we certainly do not need preachers and teachers who separate what God has joined together.

The “love only” doctrine is the enemy of true Christianity, of the Bible, and of the souls of men. It is not biblical love at all. Nor is lawless love Christ-like.

The gospel of Christ breathes the Spirit of holy love, namely:

- Love is the fulfilling of all gospel precepts.
- Love is the pledge of all gospel joys.
- Love is the evidence of gospel power.
- Love is the ripe fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23).

The Spirit of genuine love is never, never, at the expense of law and truth. Nor is love ever separated from the biblical directives for holy living that are objectively and eternally set out in the Ten Commandments. This is underscored in that great love chapter in the Bible, where Paul says that “*love rejoices in the truth*” (1 Cor. 13:6).

The connection between *law* and *love* is deeply embedded in the Old Testament, as well as the New. This is illustrated in Exodus 20, where God gave the Decalogue at Sinai. Before giving the Ten Commandments, God reminded the Israelites of His redemptive love. “*I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt*” (v.2). That was a loving redemptive act. Not only does the prologue to the Ten Commandments speak of God’s redeeming love, but later, in reference to the second commandment, verse 6 speaks of God’s “showing mercy” to His people. Love and mercy are harmoniously tied to the Decalogue.

Jesus reaffirmed that connection in John 14:15: “*If you love Me, keep My commandments.*” His summary of the law in Matthew 22:37-40 – the law of love for God and neighbour – echoes the love command given with the law in Deuteronomy 6:5. Not only our Lord and His apostle, but the whole Bible joins God’s *law* and God’s *love*.

LOVE AS MOTIVE

Love has no eyes except the holy law of God, no direction apart from God’s commands. Paul spoke of the love of Christ constraining us. It moves us to duty. Love is the only true motive for all worship and duty, but by itself it does not define either. Therefore, we may not put love “in place of law.” They belong together. Christian behaviour springs from love to God and our neighbour. If we loved them perfectly, our character and behaviour would be perfect because it would conform to God’s will. Love is a motive for and expresses itself in obedient action.

Such action fulfils the law:

Romans 13:10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Motive and action cannot be more tightly joined than they are in this passage. If love does not constrain us to fulfil the moral law, it is not the love of which the Bible speaks. The apostle Paul made this very clear when he said that “*the love of Christ constrains us*” (2 Cor. 5:14). **It is the love of God that puts the “commandments of God” into effect.**

Genuine love for God is intensely preoccupied with Him as the Supreme Object of love. It is, therefore, intrinsically active in doing His will. **Love itself is commanded in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament.**

Jesus said,

John 15:17 These things I command, that you love one another.

Love is described as a command in Deut. 6:5-5 “*And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*”

We must be very clear that the command to love will not create love or generate love. This command, like every other, cannot create the disposition or will to obey. But the mere fact that love is a command should silence those who argue for an antithesis between law and love. Moses, Jesus, and Paul all connected law and love, as does John

1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

It is “*the commandments of men*” that are grievous!

Woe to anyone who separates *moral* “law” and “love” which the Father, Jesus, Moses, the Prophets and the Apostles have said are married together! What God has joined together, let no man put asunder!

God’s personal dealings with man in the garden joins “love” and “law“. The Bible starts and finishes with reference to the “*tree of life*”.

Revelation 22:14

Blessed are they that **do his commandments**,
that they may have right to the tree of life, and
may enter in through the gates into the city.

If you believe this and your church does not, how can you walk together?