



# Bible Student's Notebook™

## The Herald of His Grace

Presenting every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

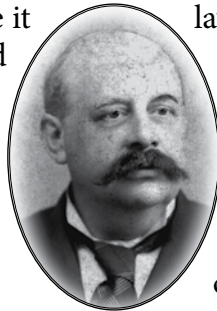
Volume XVI  
Issue 380

# The Purpose of the Law

by — A.P. Adams (1845-1925)

Now we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully (I Timothy 1:8).

To misapply a good thing is to make it in effect a bad thing, hence we need to be sure not only that which we use is good, but that we use it for the right purpose and in the right manner.



There is such a thing, then, as using the law unlawfully, and thus,

*That which is good is made death unto us (Romans 7:13).*

Turn we then prayerfully and earnestly to study the purpose of the law, that we may use it for that purpose and no other.

I shall consider the subject briefly, for I am very sure that most of the readers are not in bondage to the law, and yet they may need clearer light on its real purpose. I will try first to show what is meant by the word "law," then the purpose of the law, negatively and positively.

From the Scriptures we find that "law" is used in a very broad sense to express the great body of God's precepts, rules and directions, given through Moses.

Some have tried to make a distinction between the Ceremonial law (or Temple Ordinances) and the Moral law (or Ten Commandments), the former, as they claim, being the law of Moses and the latter the law of God. This distinction is not a scriptural one. The ceremonial laws were as much the

laws of God as were the Ten Commandments; and both were in the same sense the law of Moses (*i.e.*, God gave them through Moses).

When Paul says, for instance, in his epistle to the Romans that we are "not under the law" (Romans 6:14), we know that he includes the Ten Commandments, for in the next chapter (7:7) he quotes one of the Ten Commandments as a specimen of the requirements of the law to which he referred.

Now, what is the purpose of the law? In other words, why did God lay on man any commands at all? We are certain, in the first place, that God knew beforehand that none of His laws would be kept. From the first one given in Eden down to the last precept of Holy Writ, every one of them has been transgressed again and again – and God knew this when He gave them. Hence we conclude that God did not give the law for the purpose of having it kept or obeyed. That is why man is in his present condition. He knew it would not be obeyed; He knew it would be repeatedly broken by all generations; hence it is impossible that He could have given the law for a purpose that He knew would not be carried out. I will notice presently the difference between keeping the law and fulfilling the law. The law will all be strictly fulfilled, thus it is impossible that it should not be

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## **Bible Student's Notebook™**

*Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal*

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This free weekly electronic publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
  - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
  - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6);
  - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

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## Strictly Personal

I am writing this the day after my 54<sup>th</sup> birthday. I am in a car traveling to NC. Nathan, my youngest son, is doing the driving while I write.

### My Sister Rose

My oldest sister Rose died the day before my birthday, and we are headed to her funeral. It will afford us opportunity to reconnect with family members that we have not seen in many years – sharing comfort and hope. My sister was one of the sweetest and happiest people you would ever meet – always.

She was 28 years older than me.<sup>1</sup> I was the baby of the family. My father was 48 when I was born. She was already married with two sons at the time, so I was born an uncle. We lived in VA and she in NC, so we didn't see each other often.

She loved to play the piano. Some of my fondest memories of her were with different family members gathered around her at the piano, singing. My dad loved this! He enjoyed family and music – singing songs about God and His Son. There were many hours of sweet times that could be drawn from this activity alone.

### My Parents

I miss my father and mother greatly today. Death is a relentless enemy that incessantly robs us of our loved ones. Thank God that this enemy will one day be destroyed. However, in God's enigmatic wisdom He has reserved this enemy as the last which He will remove. Meanwhile death continues to rip those who are near and dear to us from our lives. My mother died at 83 and my father at 85, both far too soon.

1. My father was 17 years older than my mother, it was a second marriage for both of them. They each had children from their first marriages. Rose and Billy (discussed on page 3412) were my dad's children. I also have a sister 13 years older than I - she was my mom's daughter.

### The Parental Bulwark

My parents were irreplaceable. They had embedded in their hearts something very special for me. There is nothing else on earth like it, and no one else can ever really fill their unique roles.

Regardless of my age, as long as they were still alive they were there – standing, as it were, between me and the world – with unconditional support. Even after I became a parent myself, if it is possible, their roles seem to become even more significant and grand – they were still parents, but then they became grandparents. They were here first, and regardless of the passage of time they help to provide wisdom, protection and stability in a very confusing, frightening and insecure world.

### Adult Orphans

For those of us blessed with such parents, as long as they are alive, there is this unseen wall surrounding us. When they are gone, however, there can be this strange, cold wind that seems to blow on our exposed, vulnerable soul. Nothing can remove this, it is natural. Regardless of our age, when one loses both parents to death it dawns on us that we have been orphaned.

### The Changing of the Guard

If that was not hard enough, we are then thrust, by God's natural design, into that same role which our parents once bore in our life. A generation has fallen. Now, we are to others what our parents were to us. We are the bulwark against all of the pressures and frightening unseen world around us.

When our parents are not here, we become parents to the next generation. This is just what our parents had to do before us: take up the generational frontline from their parents. Before long, we who are now on the family-forefront will give up our place as death takes us and leaves this cycle of transference to our descendants.

This could be a teaching moment. After all, one of God's wonderful roles is as *"a father of the father-*

*(see EDITORIAL, page 3412)*

*LAW (continued from front page)*

fulfilled; but it has never been *kept* by anyone excepting the Lord Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, if the law was not given for the purpose of being obeyed, then surely it was not given to make man holy, pure and good, and acceptable to God. If the law had been perfectly kept it might have made man pure and good; but it has never been kept, as we have already observed, and this was not the purpose for which it was given. Hence it could not have been given to make man good or to recommend him to God. This position is perfectly scriptural, for we are distinctly told that righteousness does not come by the law (Galatians 3:21), and that,

*The law made nothing perfect* (Hebrews 7:19).

Again we are told that “*the law is not of faith*” (Galatians 3:12), nor of grace (Romans 6:14). If we are under the law, we are not under grace; if we are living by law, we are not living by faith; and if we are not living by faith we are not justified, for,

*A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law* (Romans 3:28) and,

*The just shall live by faith* (Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11).

All of this is very positive, and clearly indicates what the purpose of the law is *not*. We turn now to consider what it *is*.

### **TO MAKE MAN KNOWN TO HIMSELF**

We have several passages of Scripture that set forth in formal terms the purpose of the law, so that we need not be in the least doubtful about the subject.

The first passage we will notice is Romans 3:20-21. This passage declares two purposes of the law:

1. By the law is the knowledge of sin;
2. The righteousness of God is witnessed by the law and the prophets.

The first purpose of the law, then, is to give knowledge of sin; or, in other words, to bring us to a true knowledge of ourselves. The law is the perfect standard to be set up alongside of imperfect man that he may know how far he is out of the way,

*That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God* (Romans 3:19).

Paul says,

*I had not known sin but by the law* (Romans 7:7), again,

*The law worketh wrath* (Romans 4:15), and again,

*The law entered that the offense might abound* (Romans 5:20), and yet again,

*That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful* (Romans 7:13).

Thus the law aggravates the offense and makes it more prominent and conspicuous until its bondage becomes hateful and intolerable, as set forth in Romans 7, and the poor “*servant of sin*” cries out,

*O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* (Romans 7:24).

Thus, also it is seen that,

*The strength of sin is the law* (I Corinthians 15:56).

The law gives to sin a strength that makes its deadly grip unyielding:

*Where there is no law there is no transgression* (Romans 4:15);

*Sin is not imputed where there is no law* (Romans 5:13);

(see *LAW*, page 3410)



**PENNSYLVANIA REGIONAL  
Quarterly Gathering**  
February 17, 2013, 1-4 p.m.

**TEACHERS:** James Baskin (Lock Haven, PA); Steve Hill (Du Bois, PA); Martin Zender (Windber, PA); Clyde Pilkington (Windber, PA)

**TOPICS:**

*Who's Greater? Adam or Christ?*

Is Adam's sin greater than Christ's Righteousness? Did Christ come to do what the Father sent Him to do? Was His work at Calvary successful, or was it a failure?

*Does God Have Free-Will?*

Is God really sovereign? Can and does God do whatever He wills? Including saving all His creation?

*Was the Savior a Substitute or Sacrifice?*

Exactly what is the relationship of God and Christ in the work at Calvary? Was the angry God appeased? Does Christianity even have a clue as to what happened in the death of Christ?

*The Believer: Forgiven or Justified?*

Believers often struggle with their true identity and union with Christ because they think they are "forgiven." They don't apprehend that they are not partakers of Israel's "pardon" from sins. Instead, the cornerstone of Paul's gospel is *justification!*

**LOCATION:** John Murtha Johnstown Airport  
479 Airport Rd, Johnstown, PA 15904  
(Conference Room)

**ADDITIONAL FELLOWSHIP:** For those who would like to arrive early, we'll be meeting 10:00 a.m. - Noon at: Ponderosa Restaurant (2-½ miles from the airport) 406 Galleria Dr Johnstown, PA 15904 (The breakfast buffet is \$4.99; the lunch buffet is \$7.99 beginning at 10:45 a.m.). RSVP

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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**FORT LAUDERDALE**  
**Spring Gathering of the Body of Christ**  
March 1-3 2013

**TEACHERS:** Martin Zender; Dan Sheridan; Waylan Dabbs; Clyde Pilkington

**SCHEDULE:**

*Friday March 1*

Evening Meet & Greet (at the Courtyard Marriott Hotel)

*Saturday March 2*

9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Teaching & Fellowship (at Tigertail Lake)

*Sunday March 3*

9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Teaching & Fellowship (at Tigertail Lake)

**LOCATION:**

Tigertail Lake  
580 Gulfstream Way, Dania Beach, FL 33004  
Southeast corner of Griffin Rd. and Anglers Ave.,  
Right next to: Fort Lauderdale Airport, I-95, Tri-Rail Train Station

**ACCOMMODATIONS:**

There are two hotels within walking distance:

*Courtyard Marriott Hotel*

400 Gulfstream Way Dania Beach, FL 33004  
954-342-8333 (Airport Shuttle Available)

*Fairfield Inn and Suites*

2081 Griffin Rd Dania Beach, FL 33312  
954-981-2700 (No Airport Shuttle)

**CONTACT:**

Kate Horne - [chorne61@bellsouth.net](mailto:chorne61@bellsouth.net)

LAW (continued from page 3408)

*But when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died (Romans 7:9).*

Hence we read again that the law was a “*ministration of death*” (II Corinthians 3:7) which was “*written and engraved in stones*” (i.e., the Ten Commandments, for that was the only part of the law that was engraved on stones; Deuteronomy 22; 10:1-5), and we are told also that it was a “*ministration of condemnation,*” and was to be “*done away*” (II Corinthians 3:9, 11).

Paul further tells us when it is “*done away,*” viz., “*after that faith is come*” (Galatians 3:23-25). The law is a “*schoolmaster*” (i.e., “*child-leader,*” Galatians 3:24) until we get along far enough for Christ to take us up. He opens up the way of “*righteousness by faith*” (Romans 1:17), and “*we are no longer under a schoolmaster*” (Galatians 3:25).

*For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth (Romans 10:4).*

Thus the law brings us to perfect self-despair, and we cry out,

*O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me ... (Romans 7:24).*

Then the work of the child-leader is done and the work of Christ begins:

*I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 7:25);*

*Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 15:57).*

Thus Christ is “*the end of the law*” (Romans 10:4) and the beginning of grace, for “*grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,*” (John 1:17); and hence the believer is “*not under the law but under grace.*” (Romans 6:14).

By faith the believer has passed out of the “*ministration of death and of condemnation,*” into “*the ministration of the spirit and of righteousness,*” (II Corinthians 3:7-11), thus,

*The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, makes us free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2).*

This purpose of the law, then, is to give “*knowledge of sin,*” and thus to reveal man to himself so as to destroy pride, self-trust and false security, that God may “*work in us*” (Hebrews 13:21) through Christ “*to will and to do of His good pleasure*” (Ephesians 1:9).



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*by — E.W. Bullinger*

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We cannot walk the way of “*grace through faith*” until the law has accomplished this purpose in us:

*We have the sentence of death in ourselves that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God that raiseth the dead* (II Corinthians 1:9).

Now there is one other passage that I would notice in this connection that fully confirms the foregoing. In Galatians 3:19 Paul asks the very same question that we are considering: “*Wherefore then serveth the law?*” and he answers,

*It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.*

Notice in this passage how the temporary, transient character of the law is indicated: it was “added” for the time being, “until” a certain further step in the development of God’s plan, and then it was to be “done away.” Notice also that “*it was added because of transgressions,*” *i.e.*, as we have endeavored to show, to give “*knowledge of sin,*” that “*sin might become exceeding sinful,*” that “*the offense might abound.*” Sinful man needed this sort of discipline for a while, as we have seen, “*until the Seed should come,*” *i.e.*, until Christ should come (Galatians 3:16), and then He would “*become the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*” (Romans 10:4). Thus this formal enunciation of the purpose of the law is in perfect harmony with the view we have deduced from other Scripture.

## TO MAKE GOD KNOWN TO MAN

The second purpose of the law is that of a witness to “*the righteousness of God*” (II Corinthians 5:21). There is a deeper meaning in this expression “*the righteousness of God*” than I now have time to address. I will say only that perhaps it has not occurred to some of my readers that God is on trial as well as humanity – as strange as it may seem, it is even so. Does not the apostle say,

*Let God be true, though every man be false; as it is written, that “Thou mightest be justified in Thy sayings, and mightest overcome [or be victorious] when Thou art judged”* (Romans 3:4).

Young renders it,

*That Thou mayest be declared righteous in Thy words, and mayest overcome in Thy being judged.*

The idea here may seem very strange to some who have not thought of it before, but it is a great truth, and is fully confirmed by other Scripture:

*Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation [trial] in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted [tried] Me, proved Me; and saw My works forty years* (Hebrews 3:8-9).

Most have probably thought that it was the children of Israel who were being tried and proved during that forty years, but the above passage seems to indicate that it was God. I throw out this thought simply as food for consideration, and will say now only by way of explanation that, in the outcome of the work of creation, God’s honor and credit is at stake as well as man’s well-being, and the result will fully vindicate His wisdom, power and love. He will be fully “*justified in His words, and be victorious when He is judged,*” and His righteousness (*i.e.*, His rightness) will clearly appear, and even now is this righteousness “*witnessed by the law and the prophets*” (Romans 3:21-22).

That is to say, in plain language, the law and the prophets are mediums through which God is made known to man – they are His witnesses – and thus of these two purposes of the law that we have thus far considered, the one is to make man known to himself, the other is to make God known to man.

It is not difficult to see how the law and the prophets witness to the rightness of God. The history of God’s dealings with his ancient people Israel under the law, and during the times of the prophets, reveals to us the character of God, His kind- ►



ness and good will, His long suffering and patience, His mercy and faithfulness, His tenderness and compassion.

It also reveals God's hatred of sin, His severity and wrath, His unswerving justice, and His firm chastisements. All of these, and much more, do the law and the prophets witness, and all of these when rightly understood, as they will be by all ultimately,

*For God will have all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4).*

All of these clearly show the true character of God, His undeviating righteousness, His changeless love, so that men will at length cry out,

*Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him; He will come and save us (Isaiah 25:9).*

## A SHADOW OF GOOD THINGS TO COME

There is one more purpose of the law that we will notice:

*The law has a Shadow of good things to come in (Hebrews 10:1).*

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*EDITORIAL (continued from page 3407)*

less" (Psalm 68:5). I will leave it to Him to make the full impression on your heart.

### My Brother Billy

I will see my only brother Billy today. He is 25 years older than I. Today will be harder for him, as he grew up with Rose and was very close to her. Billy is not a nickname for William; it's his given name. That is probably very rare.

I love to be with Billy, for not only is he my brother, but I hear our dad in his voice, and I see him in his expressions. He is the one "place" where I am close to my dad. So, I have that to look forward to today.

As for my birthday, unbeknown in the planning of visitors to our home, an impromptu weekend of

This is an important purpose of the law. It is a system of types, allegories, patterns, figures, and shadows whereby the "good things to come" are clearly set forth.

Everything in the law – all of its ceremonies and ordinances – were typical, foreshadowing the "better things" (Hebrews 6:9) and "the heavenly things themselves" (Hebrews 9:23).

In this purpose of the law we find its great value and utility to the Christian. How dry and uninteresting it is to read the details of the law as laid down in Exodus, Leviticus, etc., if we see nothing but the letter. Many of the laws thus viewed seem trivial; some seem exceedingly harsh and severe and even cruel, and others seem perfectly meaningless and foolish. Yet how full of significance and interest these dry details become when we see their typical import!

For instance, take the law of the Passover, of the Atonement, of the Sabbatical cycles and the Jubilees, of the Sacrifices, the Tabernacle with all of its apartments, veils, furniture and ceremonies. All of these and everything else in the law, down to "every jot and tittle," is pregnant with meaning as types and shadows of "good things to come."

fellowship emerged: Dan Sheridan from Chicago, Sheree Morris from Maine, Matt Rohrbach from Ohio, Steve Hill from Du Bois, and Bill Morgart from Richland. These dear saints joined our family for a day of spiritual and bodily refreshment. **They** were my birthday presents. Who could have asked for more?

Rambling on in my absence from snowy, cold Windber,

I remain yours for Him,



Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.



This brings me to notice the difference between keeping and fulfilling the law. The law has never been kept by any being excepting One: the Lord Jesus; but,

*Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled (Matthew 5:18).*

Keeping the law is obedience to its requirements. Fulfilling the law is the performance or accomplishment of that to which it points, or typifies.

As we have seen, the law is a perfect system of types and patterns; it *“has a shadow of good things to come,”* and these types and shadows are just as sure of being carried out as God is sure. In this respect it is not possible that the law should fail, for,

*It would be easier for heaven and earth to pass away (Luke 16:17).*

The fulfilling of the law is in God’s hands; it is one of the purposes for which the law was established:

*“For see,” saith He, that thou make everything according to the pattern showed thee in the holy mount (Exodus 25:40).*

The law was to be a pattern of spiritual things; hence, of course, the fulfillment of the law is an absolute certainty, for in God’s economy nothing is incomplete. In His great workshop there never could be a pattern without the real thing sometime appearing that the pattern was intended to pre-figure. Hence, the fact that the law is a system of patterns is an absolute guarantee of its ultimate fulfillment; but that has nothing whatever to do with keeping the law.

We have found then that the purposes of the law are three:

1. It gives knowledge of sin.
2. It witnesses of the righteousness of God.
3. It is a system of patterns of heavenly things.

I find no other purpose of the law laid down in Holy Writ. If we use the law according to these

three purposes, we shall use it *“lawfully”* and shall find it *“good.”* If we use it for other purposes for which it is not intended, we shall find *“that which is good made death unto us”* (Romans 7:13).

## AN ILLUSTRATION OF A MIRROR

The law is likened to a mirror (James 1:23). Mr. Moody’s little boy was going away with him. Mr. Moody told the boy that he must first have his face washed, as it was dirty. The boy said that mother had already washed his face that morning and that it was clean. “No,” said the father, “You have got it dirty since it was washed, you must have it washed again before you can go with me.” “It does not need washing, it is clean,” insisted the boy.

Then the father without another word took him up in his arms and let him look into the mirror where he could plainly see the reflection of his face, streaked with dirt where he had been playing in the street; at this sight the boy was silent and quietly submitted to his washing. “But,” significantly remarks Mr. Moody, “I did not wash his face with the mirror.”

So the law shows us what manner of person we are, and *“every mouth is stopped and all the world becomes guilty before God”* (Romans 3:19). It is vain to try to wash yourself with the mirror. *“By the law is the knowledge of sin”* (:20). Cleansing does not come by the law; nor life, nor improvement, nor deliverance from the bondage of corruption, nor salvation of any kind or in any degree.

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To use the law as a means whereby to lift ourselves out of sin is to use it unlawfully, and the result can be nothing but failure and loss; let no one try to wash their face with the mirror!

You cannot keep the law perfectly, try ever so hard. No one ever kept it but our Lord Jesus Christ, and the keeping of the law would be of no benefit to you, not a particle, unless you could keep it perfectly.

*For it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Galatians 3:10).*

*Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all (James 2:10).*

What can you, then, poor, weak, sinful man, expect from such a law? Can you satisfy its rigid, absolute requirements? "But," says one, "though I cannot keep the law perfectly, I can keep it partially, and it is no reason because I cannot do the former that I should not do the latter."

Well; and how, then, will you get rid of the "guilt" of the partially broken law? "Oh, by faith in Christ, and by the grace of God, of course we need that to cover our short-comings, and to make up for our defects."

*Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? (Galatians 3:3).*

Do you think you can unite that which God has divided – law and grace? – and so partially earn heaven by keeping the law and partially receive it by the grace of God? That salvation is some kind of 50/50 accomplishment between God and yourself?

Are you not then "climbing up some other way" (John 10:1), and so showing yourselves to be "thieves and robbers" (John 10:8)? You need no Savior, no "door," if you can climb over the fence in this way.

*For if righteousness come by the law, Christ is dead in vain (Galatians 2:21).*

Either you are wrong, or the death of Christ was a gigantic mistake. God help us all to see the truth on this subject and to "have no confidence in the flesh" (Philippians 3:3).

How wonderfully God has simplified this whole subject and brought all of the great tangle of the law down to one luminous point when He says, by the mouth of His servant,

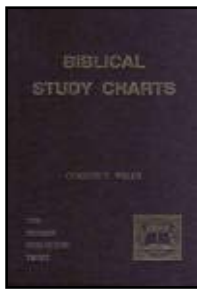
*All the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Therefore love is the fulfilling of the law (Galatians 5:14; Romans 13:10).*

Oh, blessed simplicity! Let the whole ponderous ritual of the law go; cast off the bondage of all legal requirements, not to give license to sin (Romans 6:15), but to turn our whole thoughts and aspirations to the "more excellent way" (I Corinthians 12:31) – the way of love.

*God is love; and He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in Him (I John 4:16).*

One who dwells in the love of God will experience, not the righteousness "which is of the law" (Philippians 3:9), but the righteousness "without the law," even "the righteousness of God."





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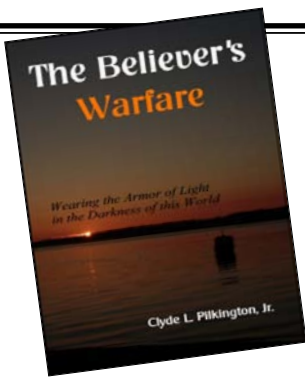


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