

*The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul... (Psalm 19:7)*

The most broad and comprehensive definition of law is: “Any manifestation or revelation of the will of God.” Thus in the laws of physics, of sciences and of life we see what God has willed for the order of the universe. Without such laws there would be utter chaos. Gravity would not always work. You might plant squash and reap potatoes. Two plus two might sometimes equal five. But God’s laws are absolute. They are uniform and can always be counted upon. They are *perfect*.

A more narrow meaning of law is: “That which binds the conscience of rational creatures and orders their behavior.” In this sense men are to be governed by God’s law, and it is in their power to obey or disobey. A rock thrown into the air will always fall as soon as it loses its upward momentum. It obeys the law of gravity. But men do not always obey God’s law. They kill, steal, lie, hate, envy, commit adultery. They are, in fact, in a state of rebellion and lawlessness. The breaking of God’s law is their *normal* behavior. They have all gone astray according to their own ways. The word “sin” means to “miss the mark,” to come short of the perfection revealed in God’s law.

In what sense, therefore, are we to understand that God’s perfect law converts the soul? Certainly we are not to understand that the law saves men from their sins. Only God Himself can do that. We have truly broken the law, but our offense is against God Himself, and He must be placated for that offense. Only He has the power and right to forgive sins.

Nor could we say that the law itself converts, or turns, all men from the wrong way to the right way. The law is a plumb line that reveals the crookedness of the wall, but it has no power to correct the crookedness. It is a compass that reveals the right direction to take, but it has no power to correct the rudder and sails of the ship. It shows man what right behavior is, but cannot compel man to change his perverse ways.

The law, then, converts or changes the ways of those persons who truly desire to please God and do right. If you have truly been converted in your heart to love God with all your heart, and desire to please Him in all your deeds, then the revelation of God’s law is all you need to perfect your ways. To know Him is to love Him, and to know His will is to do it. If you know His will and law and yet refuse to obey Him, then you likely neither know Him nor love Him.

-C.M.