

Grace and Truth Came

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ (John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”) ¹⁶ For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God; God the only Son, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.

John 1:14-18

“His wondrous works and ways He made by Moses known;
but sent the world his truth and grace by his beloved Son.”

Isaac Watts, “Psalm 103”

Be Perfect

Back in 1996 I was [on a mission trip in Mexico](#), talking with one of the high school boys we were working with whom I had known since he was little. I asked him what he thought it meant when Jesus said, “[You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect](#)” ([Matt 5:48](#)).

He thought for a moment and said, “[I think it means God wants us to try to be the best people we can be. We are to try hard and be sincere in obeying him.](#)”

I said, “[That isn’t what it says. It doesn’t say try hard. It doesn’t say be sincere. It says *be perfect*.](#)”

He answered quickly, the way almost everyone answers: “But that’s impossible. God wouldn’t command us to do something we couldn’t do.”

From there the conversation went where such conversations always go if you let them — into sin, human inability, and why God would ever talk like that. I want you to notice three things about it, because that boy is not a curiosity from a mission trip. He is us.

First, notice the reflex. We take the demand of God and grind it down until it fits in our pocket. “Be perfect” becomes “try your best.” If you listen to most of what passes for Christian encouragement in our day, you will hear that line constantly. God is treated as a coach who wants your best effort, not as the Holy One who requires the thing he commands. That’s the essence of what many sermons convey.

Second, notice where the change originates. It does not come from the text. The Bible never says, “God would not command what you cannot perform.” That is our sense of fairness talking. *We* have decided in advance what a reasonable God is allowed to require, and then we make the verse behave as we command it. The law comes, and the first thing our heart does is renegotiate.

Third, learn how this compromise is not new. That same sentence was said by Pelagius. When he took on Augustine,

he wrote that God would not command a man to do what the man cannot do, and he called the opposite claim “**blasphemy**.”¹ His logic was simple: if God commands it, we must be able to do it; otherwise God is unfair. Augustine, on the other hand, was not listening to the little voice in his head, but to Paul who said: “**The law was added so that the trespass might increase**” (**Rom 5:20**); “**Through the law comes knowledge of sin**” (**Rom 3:20**); and “**When the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died**” (**Rom 7:9**). God can command what we cannot keep, and still be just, because one of the reasons he commands it is **to stop our mouths**. The church condemned Pelagius. Yet, we still quote him every time we turn “be perfect” into “be the best you can be.”

I asked the boy that question **for one reason**. I wanted to reveal **a chasm**. Not a void between the Old Testament and the New. Not a gorge between a mean God and a nice Jesus. An abyss between **what God demands and what God gives**. It is in seeing the abyss that you are prepared to be flown over it safe to the other side by someone else. But if “be perfect” is the last word you hear from God, you will either deceive

¹ “We do also abhor the blasphemy of those who say that any impossible thing is commanded to man by God; or that the commandments of God cannot be performed by any one man.” (Pelagius, [*Confession of Faith* §21](#)).

yourself like the rich young ruler and say you have kept it all (**Matt 19:20**), or you will walk away sad as the ruler eventually himself did after Jesus exposed his deceit (**22**).

But “**be ye perfect**” is *not* the last word. Thank God there is another. We are embarking on a five-week series in honor of Reformation month because that other word has a name, and because confusing the two words is how people **become bewitched** (**Gal 3:1**).

I am not going to resolve the boy’s answer yet. Let it sit there in your mind. “**Be perfect.**” That is a real command from the real Christ. It has not been repealed. If that is all God ever said to you, you would have no hope. The question is not whether God said it. **The question is whether that is the only kind of word God speaks.**

What Kind of Word Has God Spoken?

The boy in Mexico was not just confused. He was stumbling into a dark forest with the **oldest fork in the road** the church has ever walked into: What kind of word has God spoken? What is the essence of his word distilled to humans? How are we to properly distinguish this word that he has spoken?

Recovery, not Invention

The idea is as old as Scripture. John will say it with a clarity that should end the argument: “The *law* was given through Moses; *grace* and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). Law; grace. Contrasts. Opposites. And yet friends. John *does not make Moses a villain* of the Old Testament. *Nor does he make the Son a late idea* of the New. Law is not “the Old Book.” Grace is not “the New Book.” Louis Berkhof explained what John’s verse already implies: *Law* and grace are not two Testaments; they are *two kinds of words* running through *both* testaments, often even together, but never confused with one another.²

Church history has put John’s “law and grace” a little differently: *law and gospel*. “Grace” and “gospel” are very closely related. “Gospel” is *the announcement* of God’s grace — the message of good news that what John says came in the Son is given to us as a gift instead of a demand.

Many people think that the distinction of law and gospel as the two words of Scripture was the invention of Martin

² “The Churches of the Reformation from the very beginning distinguished between the law and the gospel as the two parts of the Word of God as a means of grace. This distinction was not understood to be identical with that between the Old and the New Testament, but was regarded as a distinction that applies to both Testaments. There is law and gospel in the Old Testament, and there is law and gospel in the New. Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans publishing co., 1938), 612.

Luther. But the church **did not have to wait until** the Wittenberg door to understand this.

The **first great abuse** of these two ideas was *not mixing them* and confusing them as so often happens today. It was *tearing them apart* until you needed two gods to hold the Bible together. Tertullian said Marcion's "**special and principal work**" was "**the separation of the law and the gospel.**"³ This separation was a great evil—not because he distinguished the two (which is proper), but because he said *law was the OT* written by a mean God and *gospel is the NT* (well, parts of it) written by a nice one.

But the church's answer was already the same as Paul. Tertullian says this clearly, "**He who had engraved its letter in stones is the same as He who had said of its spirit, 'I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh'**" (Joel 2:28) ... and both belong to the one God who said, '**I kill and I make alive**' (Deut 32:39)."
"Killing,' he said comes 'in the letter' through the law, and 'quickenings in the Spirit' through the Gospel," attributes that "have already been found to meet in One [God]" in the Old Testament itself.⁴ You see, you must first know **who** is speaking before you ask **how** he speaks. **One God wrote both Testaments.** Only then is it safe to say that this one God addresses

³ Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 1.19.

⁴ Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 5.11.

us in two ways in both Testaments. The irony is that the heresy which most violently “separates” law and gospel is what makes the church least able to distinguish them.

While heretics separated the God of his Word, the orthodox answer was to confess one God who both kills in the letter of the law and makes alive in the Spirit through the gospel. [Chrysostom](#), on 2 Corinthians 3: “The Law, if it lay hold on a murderer, puts him to death; the Gospel, if it lay hold on a murderer, enlightens, and gives him life” [emphasis mine].⁵ And [Augustine](#) against Pelagius: “The law, indeed, by issuing its commands and threats, and by justifying no man, sufficiently shows that it is by God’s gift, through the help of the Spirit, that a man is justified.”⁶ That “gift” is the gospel and it led to his famous saying that made Pelagius so angry, “Give what you command, and command what you will.”⁷

Contending for the Faith

These distinctions must always be contended for. They are learned through careful study. It was true in the early

⁵ [Chrysostom](#), *Homily on 2 Corinthians 3:5-6*.

⁶ [Augustine](#), *On the Spirit and the Letter 15[9]*.

⁷ [Augustine](#), *Confessions 10.29.40*.

church when legalists and antinomians (lit. “against law”) attacked Paul. It was true in the medieval mass which often treated the gospel as a kinder Moses: love God from the heart, and you will have done the easier law. Calvin’s comment still stings here: “As if we could think of anything more difficult than to love God with all our heart, all our soul, and all our strength! Compared with this law, everything could be considered easy.”⁸ It was true in the 18th century when Reformed Scottish pastors were condemned as antinomians for saying a sinner may come to Christ as he is, with the only warrant being the promise of God in the Gospel, not a heart previously prepared by the sinner. It is true when some pulpits made every text a lesson (“Dare to be a Daniel” or “Slay the Goliaths in your life”), and other pulpits are accused of antinomianism for refusing to preach that way. It can even be true when brothers who agree on paper with the “law and gospel” distinction do not mean the identical things by the words, or when a sermon can speak often of Jesus and still never offer the gospel, feeding him rules as a substitute.

This became so confused by the Reformation that it became one of the most important parts of their recovery of

⁸ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, vol. 1 & 2, The Library of Christian Classics (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 421.

biblical theology. Luther said: “Whoever knows well this art of distinguishing between Law and Gospel, him place at the head and call him a doctor of Holy Scripture.”⁹ Theodore Beza, Calvin’s successor said, “We divide this Word into two principal parts or kinds: the one is called the Law, the other the Gospel,”¹⁰ followed by the line that should make every pastor take notice: “Ignorance of this distinction between Law and Gospel is one of the principal sources of the abuses which corrupted and still corrupt Christianity.”¹¹ Ursinus, who gave us the *Heidelberg Catechism*, called it the chief division of Holy Scripture, and to confuse them is to corrupt the faith at its core.¹² The great Puritan William Perkins called it, “The foundation of application” to know whether the place propounded is a sentence of the law, or of the gospel.”¹³ Charles Spurgeon said, “There is no point upon which men

⁹ Martin Luther, *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel: Thirty-Nine Evening Lectures*, ed. F. W. Walther, trans. W. H. T. Dau (St. Louis: Concordia, 1897), [Third Evening Lecture p. 23](#). Similarly, “Whoso then can rightly judge between the law and the Gospel, let him thank God, and know that he is a right divine.” Martin Luther, *Commentary on Galatians* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 122; on Gal 2:14.

¹⁰ Theodore Beza, *Confession of Faith* (1560), 4.22.

¹¹ Ibid., 4.23. If you can get your hands on it, Theodore Beza, *The Christian Faith*, trans. James Clark (East Sussex, Eng.: Focus Christian Ministries Trust, 1992), 40-41.

¹² The law-gospel distinction has “comprehended the sum and substance of the sacred Scriptures,” and are “the chief and general divisions of the holy scriptures, and comprise the entire doctrine comprehended therein.” Zacharias Ursinus, *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*, trans. G. W. Willard (Cincinnati, OH: T. P. Pucher, 1851), 2.

¹³ William Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng* (London: Felix Kyngston, 1607), ch. 7, p. 100 [spelling modernized]. See Michael Horton, “Knowing God: Calvin’s Understanding of Revelation,” John Calvin and Evangelical Theology: Legacy and Prospect, ed. Sung Wook Chung (Colorado Springs, CO: Paternoster, 2009), 6.

make greater mistakes than upon the relation which exists between the law and the gospel.”¹⁴

What the Distinction Is

But what do they mean? What exactly is it about this distinction that is so important? What does it even mean? Spurgeon begins to help us,

Some men put the law instead of the gospel—others put the gospel instead of the law. Some modify the law and the gospel and preach neither law nor gospel—and others entirely abrogate the law by bringing in the gospel. Many there are who think that the law is the gospel and who teach that men, by good works of benevolence, honesty, righteousness, and sobriety, may be saved. Such men do err. On the other hand, many teach that the gospel is a law—that it has certain commands in it by obedience to which men are meritoriously saved. Such men err from the truth and understand it not. A certain class maintains that the law and the gospel are mixed and that partly by observance of the law and partly by God’s grace men are saved. These men understand not the truth and are false teachers!¹⁵

¹⁴ Charles Spurgeon, “[Law and Grace: Introduction to the Relationship Between the Law and Gospel](#),” *New Park Street Pulpit*, vol. 1 (Pasadena, Tex.: Pilgrim Publications, 1975), 285.

¹⁵ Ibid.

John Calvin explained it this way,

The Gospel is the message, the salvation-bringing proclamation concerning Christ that he was sent by God the Father ... to procure eternal life. The Law is contained in precepts, it threatens, it burdens, it promises no goodwill. The Gospel acts without threats, it does not drive one on by precepts, but rather teaches us about the supreme goodwill of God towards us. Let whoever therefore is desirous of having a plain and honest understanding of the Gospel, test everything by the above descriptions of the Law and the Gospel. Those who do not follow this method of treatment will never be adequately versed in the Philosophy of Christ.¹⁶

And Perkins explains, “The law declares the disease of sin, and as a side-effect stimulates and stirs it up. But it provides no remedy for it ... The gospel teaches what is to be done, so it has the efficacy of the holy Ghost adjoined with it, by whom we are regenerated, and have strength both to believe the gospel and the perform those things which it commands. The law is, therefore, first in the order of teaching; then

¹⁶ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion, 1536 Edition*, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; The H. H. Meeter Center for Calvin Studies, 1995), 365.

comes the gospel.”¹⁷ And Berkhof, “The law comprises everything in Scripture which is a revelation of God’s will in the form of command or prohibition, while the gospel embraces everything, whether it be in the Old Testament or in the New, that pertains to the work of reconciliation and that proclaims the seeking and redeeming love of God in Christ Jesus.”¹⁸

Michael Horton, who I cut my teeth on as it regards this doctrine some thirty years ago summarizes why this distinction is so [pastorally vital](#):

While the Law continues to guide the believer in the Christian life ... it can never be confused with the Good News. Even after conversion, believers are in desperate need of the gospel because they read the commands, exhortations, threats, and warnings of the Law and often waver in their certain confidence because they do not see in themselves this righteousness that is required. Am I really surrendered? Have I truly yielded in every area of my life? What if I have not experienced the same things that other Christians regard as normative? Do I really possess the Holy Spirit? What if I fall into serious sin? These are questions that we all face in pastoral ministry, as in our

¹⁷ Perkins, *ibid.*

¹⁸ Berkhof, *ibid.*

own lives. What will restore our peace and hope in the face of such questions? The Reformers, with the prophets and apostles, were convinced that only the gospel could bring such comfort to struggling Christians.¹⁹

Think about it this way. The gospel is simply **the announcement of good news**. That's all it ever is. You hear it and receive it by faith. This is the opposite of "doing." Whatever command may be attached to the announcement (such as "obey the gospel;" **2Th 1:8; 1Pe 4:17** or "repent and believe in the gospel;" **Mark 1:15**) is a command to believe *the gospel*. The gospel is the thing believed. It is not the believing. It's not the repenting. If the command were the gospel, "in the gospel" would be nonsense. You cannot believe in a command to believe. "Believe" requires. It does not announce. The reason a dead sinner can obey it is not that the requirement has turned into news. The reason is that the news, when the Spirit uses it, creates the life that can answer it.

In the Confessions

This distinction made its way **into the Protestant confessions and catechisms**. The **Lutheran Formula of Concord** says,

¹⁹ **Michael Horton**, "The Sola's of the Reformation," *Here We Stand: A Call from Confessing Evangelicals for a Modern Reformation*, ed. James M. Boice, Benjamin E. Sasse (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1996), 109-110.

“We believe, teach, and confess that the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is to be kept in the Church with great diligence as a particularly brilliant light, whereby, according to the admonition of St. Paul, the Word of God is rightly divided” (*Formula of Concord*, Epitome V.1, “Law and Gospel”). The **Reformed** Second Helvetic Confession says, “The Gospel, indeed, is opposed to the law. For the law works wrath and announces a curse, whereas the Gospel preaches grace and blessing. John says: ‘For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ’ (John 1:17). Yet ... those who were before the law and under the law were not altogether destitute of the Gospel” (2HC 12-13). And the **Baptist** *Orthodox Catechism* (following the *Heidelberg’s* lead) asks, “How many things are necessary for thee to know, that thou injoying this comfort, mayest live and die happily? Three. The first, what is the greatness of my sin and misery. The second, how I am delivered from all Sin and Misery. The third, what thanks I owe unto God for this delivery.” “Whence knowest thou thy misery? **Out of the Law of God.**” “Whence knowest [thy comfort]? **Out of the Gospel** which God first made known in Paradise, and afterwards did spread it abroad by the Patriarchs and Prophets: shadowed it by Sacrifices and other Ceremonies of the Law; and

lastly accomplished it by his only begotten Son Christ our Lord.” (OC and *Heid.* Qs. 2, 3, 19).

The Westminster and London Baptist Confessions deal with this distinction in a slightly different way, through the covenant of works and the covenant of grace where life is promised upon condition of perfect and personal obedience through the law, while God offers to sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ in the covenant of grace (WCF 7.2-3).²⁰ But we then go on to add something the Lutherans had, but did not make explicit. This is that the law still has relevance in a Christian’s life. For example, believers are “not under the law as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned,” yet the law is “a rule of life” and gives “a

²⁰ It is worth considering Ursinus in his larger Catechism here as well. He asks, “What is the difference between the law and the gospel?” “A. The law contains the covenant of nature established by God with man in creation; that means, it is known by man from nature, it requires perfect obedience of us to God, and it promises eternal life to those who keep it but threatens eternal punishment to those who do not. The gospel, however, contains the covenant of grace; that means, although it exists, it is not known at all from nature; it shows us Christ’s fulfillment of that righteousness which the law requires, and its restoration in us through Christ’s Spirit; and it promises eternal life freely on account of Christ to those who believe in him” (Ursinus, *Larger Catechism* Q. 36). Attaching the law to the covenant of nature (i.e. works) is important when talking about the first use of the law and how as Christians we are no longer under this aspect of the first use as Christians. However, that does not tell us everything about the first use. More on this next time. Likewise, connecting the covenant of grace to the Gospel is important, with two caveats. First, I’m not an infant Baptist in my covenantal reading of Scripture, so I don’t take the entirety of the Old Testament after the fall to be “the covenant of works,” but rather see that as the new covenant. Second, this does not mean the Gospel is not in the OT, because the covenant of grace was always present in type and shadow in the OT, and God always and only ever saved people through the Gospel because in his forbearance, he knew what Christ would later do.

clearer sight of the need they have of Christ and the perfection of his obedience” (LBC 19:6) and “Neither are the aforementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the Gospel, but do sweetly comply with it; the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely and cheerfully which the will of God, revealed in the law, requireth to be done” (19.7). **This, we will discuss more fully, next time.**

The Word Who Was Already There

Now that we *have* our distinction and a little of the necessary history behind us, what I want to do now is actually preach the distinction. This will be the **main burden** of **each of our sermons in this series**, as it is always easy to talk about a thing while forgetting to actually put it into practice. For **John 1:1-18**, I want to show you that the one God who was already the Word now speaks *two words*: the law given through Moses, grace and truth came in the Son. The Word is a Person, not a slogan. Confusion about those two words is not only a school fight. It is how the age of the evil eye talks.

The Word, the Life, and the Light

“In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). These famous words introduce us to the Lord Jesus Christ, but in *his OT form*. This is the point of alluding to Genesis 1:1. John goes on to explain that nothing that exists exists apart from him (3).

John uses a fascinating word in vs. 1 that is familiar to many: *logos*. This translates into English as “word.” Many people hear “logos” and think Greek philosophy, as if John were writing against proto-Gnosticism in his Gospel. But this is a deeply OT idea where one of the persons of the God-head is called the word. Here is just one example, “*After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision*” (Gen 15:1). Words do not come in visions. They come to ears. But not this Word. This Word then speaks, “*Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.*” Later in the chapter, the Word is called “*he*” and he brings Abram outside to look at the stars of the sky and receive the promise of the Gospel, “*Look toward the heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.*’ Then he said to him, ‘*So shall your offspring be*’” (5). John understands this.

From this point forward in his prologue, John will identify Jesus with **seven more words** or ideas that all have direct reference to the person of Christ in the OT, each of which he will explore later in his Gospel as being identified with the incarnate Jesus of Nazareth (see table below). This is not just Christ in prophecy. It is Christ *in person*. Remember, the Word was already with God and he created all things that were made.

Prologue word	In 1:1–18	Picked up later as Jesus
Word	1:1, 14	Almost not as a <i>title</i> . The Gospel does not keep saying “the Word.” You get the <i>function</i> : he speaks the Father’s words (8:28; 12:49–50; 14:10, 24). The title returns in 1 John 1:1.
Life	1:4	5:21, 26; 6:35, 48, 63; 10:10; 11:25; 14:6; 20:31
Light	1:4–9	3:19–21; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35–36, 46
Glory	1:14	2:11; 11:4, 40; 12:23, 28, 41; 13:31–32; 17:1–5, 22, 24
Son	1:14, 18	Throughout: 3:16–18, 35–36; 5:19–26; 17:1; 20:31
God	1:1, 18	5:18; 10:30–33; 20:28 (“My Lord and my God”)
Name	Not the noun; “grace and truth” = Ex 34	5:43; 10:25; 12:28; 17:6, 11–12, 26 (“I have manifested your name”); 20:31
Face / seeing	1:18: no one has seen God; the Son has made him known	14:9 “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father”; 6:46; 12:45; 15:24

The next word John uses is “**life**.” It is combined with another word, “**light**.” “**In him**,” that is in the Word, “**was life, and the life was the light of men**.” **Psalm 36:9** says, “**With**

you is the fountain of *life*; in your light we see *light*.” Notice that life and light are “*with*” God, just like the word is *with* God in **John 1:1**. If that psalm were written in the NT, you would say it must be talking about Jesus. And, in fact, this is exactly what John is saying.

In **vs. 9**, John says, “The True light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.” This is foreshadowing **vs. 14**. But in the meantime, “He *was*” (notice again the pronoun) **in the world already**. Metaphorically, he is the light of Day 1, and the sun and stars Day 4 (see **Mal 4:2; Rev 22:16**) that the whole world sees yet does not know (**John 1:10**). (And no, I’m not trying to confuse the creation with the Creator). Yet, the Psalmist says, “The LORD is my light” (**Ps 27:1**). How could the Psalmist know? John says, “He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him” (**John 1:11**), referring to the many times they rebelled against God and his Angel-Word of Light. Yet some, like the Psalmist, *did receive him* and he gave them the right to be called children of God (**12**).

The Name, the Glory, the Son, and God

These people, John says, “believed in his Name” (12). “Name” is a fourth OT word that is deeply associated with Christ in the OT. Of the Angel of the LORD, God says, “My name is in him” (Ex 23:21). That this Name is a person is seen easily in Isaiah 30:27, “Behold, the Name of the LORD comes from afar, burning with his anger, and in thick rising smoke; his lips are full of fury, and his tongue is like a devouring fire...” The Name is a *him*.

In vs. 14, we learn that in the days of John, “the Word became flesh.” And John says, “We have seen his glory.” “Glory” is a fifth OT term used often of Christ in the OT. For example, in Ezekiel 1 the prophet sees the glory of God and he looks like a human being (Ezek 1:26-28). John combines this with “Son” (“... glory as of the only Son from the Father;” John 1:14b) a sixth OT title for Christ in the OT. “You are my Son; today I have begotten you” (Ps 2:7). And notice that John says of this Glory-Son that he is “full of grace and truth.” We will come back to this idea in a moment.

Vs. 18 gives us a seventh word that is identified with Christ in the OT: “God.” “No one has ever seen God; God the only Son, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.” The Son is identified as God, which in the OT is

elohim. Psalm 45:6-7 says, “Your throne, O God (*elohim*), is forever and ever ... Therefore God (*elohim*), your God (*elohim*), has anointed you” (cf. Heb 1:8-9). And Amos 4:11, referring back to the two-Yahwehs verse of Genesis 19:24 says, “*I overthrew some of you, as when God (elohim) overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.*” Notice, the speaker (“I”) is Yahweh (Amos 4:10), but speaks about another Elohim overthrowing (the Greek is even stronger, with a first person singular “overthrow” followed by a third person singular of the same verb).

Finally, we have an *eighth* implicit idea being unfolded by John in this verse, for he is riffing off Exodus 33-34 when Moses asks to see the “glory” of God (Ex 33:18). God replies, you cannot see my “*face*” (20) and live. Like “glory,” “*face*” is explicitly identified with Christ in the OT on many occasions (cf. Ex 23:21, etc.). But John takes this problem of Moses seeing God and we learn that *Jesus incarnate* now makes God visible, for in him, we have seen God.

Given through Moses, Came through the Son

The purpose of walking through these eight ideas is that *understanding them is the best way to hear verse 17*

properly. “The law was given through Moses. Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” This verse gives us our law-gospel contrast. John has shown you in eight different OT ideas that Jesus is God of the Old Testament. Still only one God, but in distinct persons—the Father and the Son. He has shown you that *the gospel is in the Old Testament*, because this Word, this Light, this Glory, this Name, this Son was already there. In vs. 17, he tells you *how* that one God speaks, and in doing so, he gives you the key to unlocking everything.

Moses the Servant, Not the Source

“*The law was given through Moses.*” Moses went up the mountain. Moses came down with tablets. Moses spoke to the people what God had spoken to him. If you stop there, you will think the law is Moses’ word and the gospel is someone else’s. John has already made that impossible. The Word who was in the beginning is the one who was already in the world. He came to his own. The Name was in the Angel who went before them. The Glory stood on the mountain. The same Person who tabernacles in **vs. 14** is the one

who wrote the law with his own finger and put the law into Moses' hands.

Paul says as much in **Galatians 3:19-20**, “[The law] was put in place through angels *by an intermediary*. Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.” The only way this makes sense is if the one God is the intermediary. For if Moses is the intermediary, why tell us that God is one? Heiser explains the problem, “**Galatians 3:19** informs us that there was an intermediary between God, the angels, and Israel. Most scholars assume this is a reference to Moses. Other scholars have noted that, in light of the very next verse, this is problematic (“Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one”).” Why would Paul feel the need to clarify that God’s uniqueness wasn’t disturbed by this intermediary if it was just Moses?”²¹ Instead, that intermediary must be the High Angel, the Angel of the LORD, Christ in the OT. So Moses is merely the servant. He is not the source of the law.

But that is precisely why **the law is not contradictory to the gospel**, for God does not contradict himself. The law is not a second God. It is not the Old Testament as a whole. It is command, and command does what command does. It tells you what God requires. It stops your mouth. It is holy

²¹ **Michael S. Heiser**, *The Unseen Realm: Discovering the Supernatural World of the Bible*, Expanded Edition (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2025), 205–206.

and good and it cannot give you the life it demands. But the God who gave it is the God who already speaks of the gift.

The Ten Words (Commandments) do not open with “try harder.” They open with, “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.” That is an **announcement**; it is not a commandment. That is the gospel sitting in the doorway of the law. The announcement isn’t the law; it is the gospel. *Then* come the commands. They are not the same sentence. It isn’t that the Ten Commandments *are* both,²² as if there is no distinction, but rather that they *contain* both. The prologue is not a milder law. The commands are not a second gospel. If you confuse them, you will turn Egypt into a wage and faith into the one small work.

Grace and Truth are a Person

“*Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*” Importantly, John has already used “grace and truth,” back in **vs. 14**. “*The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen*

²² Some Reformed writers ask whether the Decalogue is law or gospel and answer that it is both (cf. **John Frame**, “**Law and Gospel**,” *Frame-Poythbress.org* [June 4, 2012]). The better account is that the *preface* to the Decalogue is announcement, even gospel, and the *commandments* are commands, imperatives, law. The tablets *contain* both. They are not a merging of the two into one word.

his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, *full of grace and truth*.” Grace and truth are not a slogan John invented for verse 17. They are the Name that passed before Moses on the mountain — merciful and gracious, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness (**Ex 34:6**) — now standing in front of us as a human. We *beheld* him, John says. That is the point of the language. The law was given. Grace and truth came. One is handed down on tablets. The other arrives as a Person.

But we do not see that Person the way John saw him. We are not standing in Galilee. The way grace and truth come to us now is the way Paul says the crucified Christ is publicly portrayed: by the announcement, the message, the good news. The gospel is not a second Moses. It is not a list of things to do once you have seen Jesus. It is the news that this Son has come, that from his fullness we have received, that the God no one has ever seen has been made known. Faith receives *a Person* who is given. The commands that follow are the walk of the living, not the ladder of the dead.

Who Has Bewitched You?

But this is **precisely where many have been bewitched**. “Bewitched,” you say? Yes, that is Paul’s word, not mine.

Paul does not treat the mixing of these two categories as a small academic mistake. “**O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?**” (**Gal 3:1**). This is essentially Paul’s preface to the intermediary I spoke of a moment ago, the one who stood between Moses and God in the giving of the Ten Commandments.

Paul does not say, “**Who has fooled you?**” or “**My, how you have been duped,**” or “**You are sure gullible.**” The word is much more otherworldly than this. The word “**be-witched**” is *baskaino*. It means “to slander” or better, “**to cast the evil eye**” upon someone through magic and spells. One dictionary notes that, “**Superstitious people believed that great harm might result from the ‘evil eye’ or ‘from being looked upon with envious and malicious stares.’**”²³ The Greeks imagined that rays came out of the eyes, and had serpentine figures of their mythology such as the Gorgon, the Medusa, or the Basilisk (note the similarity to *baskaino*) that did just this. He is speaking about **a kind of deception** that has come from listening to the teachings of the circumcision

²³ Spiros Zodhiates, “940. βασκαίνω *baskainō*,” *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

party. This deception has **demonic** origins. And its content stems from a deep confusion between the law (of circumcision in this case) and gospel.

This is why his very next words are, “**Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?**” (**Gal 3:2-3**). This is the same contrast John gives—law and gospel. It is found all over the NT: “**You are not under law, but under grace**” (**Rom 6:14**). “**The law is not of faith**” (**Gal 3:12**). And so on.

For the Galatians, the portrayal of the crucified Son was taken off the wall and a different picture was hung in its place: Christ *plus* the law as the way you finish what grace began. They had begun by the Spirit. They were being told to be perfected by the flesh. That is using the law to do what only the coming of the Son can do. They are mixing the law and gospel together.

The **supernatural point** is not decoration. John has been telling you that the Word, the Light, the Glory, the Name are a living Person. Paul is telling you that there are **other powers** glad to un-preach that Person. Bewitchment is how you look at a church that is full of “Jesus-talk” and yet never

actually manage to be given the gospel. You still have commands. You may even have “be perfect.” What you no longer have is the Son publicly portrayed as crucified, given for you.

William Tyndale, the great translator of the NT wrote long ago these comments on John 1:17,

“The law” (says the gospel of John in the first chapter) “was given by Moses: but grace and truth by Jesus Christ.” The law (whose minister is Moses) was given to bring us unto the knowledge of ourselves, that we might thereby feel and perceive what we are, of nature. The law condemns us and all our deeds; and is called of Paul (in 2 Corinthians 3) the administration of death. For it kills our consciences, and drives us to desperation; inasmuch as it requires of us that which is impossible for our nature to do. It requires of us the deeds of a perfect man. It requires perfect love, from the low bottom and ground of the heart, as well in all things which we suffer, as in the things which we do. But, says John in the same place, “grace and truth is given us in Christ:” so that, when the law has passed upon us, and condemned us to death (which is its nature to do), then we have in Christ grace, that is to say, favor, promises of life, of mercy, of pardon, freely, by the merits of Christ; and in

Christ have we verity and truth, in that God for his sake
fulfills all his promises to them that believe.²⁴

Ralph Erskine, one of those Scottish pastors condemned
for saying a sinner may come as he is, put the two words in
verse so plainly that I want you to hear them before we
close.

The law supposing I have all,
Does ever for perfection call;
The gospel suits my total want,
And all the law can seek does grant.

The law could promise life to me,
If my obedience perfect be;
But grace does promise life upon
My Lord's obedience alone.

The law says, Do, and life you'll win;
But grace says, Live, for all is done;
The former cannot ease my grief,
The latter yields me full relief.²⁵

²⁴ William Tyndale, "A Pathway into the Holy Scriptures," *Doctrinal Treatises and Introductions to Different Portions of the Holy Scriptures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1848, English modernized). Cited in Tom Wenger, William Tyndale, "William Tyndale's Pathway into Holy Scripture," *Modern Reformation* (Sept 1, 2010).

²⁵ Taken from Ralph Erskine, *Gospel Sonnets, or Spiritual Songs* (London, G. Terry, 1793). Spelling modernized with original notes. The full poem is an appendix to this sermon. And it is fantastic!

From His Fullness

I told you I would not resolve the boy's answer earlier. I will resolve it now.

“Be perfect” still stands. It has not been sanded down. It has not become “do your best.” The Holy One still requires what he requires. If that command is the only word you have when you leave church, you will do what the boy did, and what Pelagius did, and what the rich young ruler did. You will either shrink the demand until you can live with yourself, or you will walk away knowing you cannot, and you will call that honesty. Neither one is faith.

Here is **the other word**. The Word who was already there — the Word who spoke to Abram, who put his Name in the Angel, who was the Light Israel would not have, who is the Glory Ezekiel saw, who is the Son the Father addressed, who is God and has made God known — **that Word became flesh**. He did not come to repeal the command. He came to keep it. For himself to be vindicated as God. And for you. He loved the Lord his God with all his heart and his neighbor as himself. He was perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect. Yet he was numbered with the transgressors. The law that kills laid hold of a murderer and put him to death,

and the murderer was not you. It was the Son standing in your place.

From his fullness you have received. Not from your sincerity. Not from a renegotiated commandment. From his fullness: grace upon grace. The God no one has seen **has been made known in a man** you may have today. For he is alive. You do not stand in Galilee to behold him with your eyes. You stand where the crucified Christ is still publicly portrayed — in **the announcement** that he has done it, that it is finished, that the righteousness the law demanded is his and is counted to the one who does not work but believes.

That is not a milder Moses. That is not Jesus as the closer on a talk about your godly effort. That is a Person given. Receive him. Do not let anyone stare him off the wall and hang in his place a picture of *you* finishing what *he* began. The law was given through Moses. Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. The first word still searches you. The second word still saves you. Hear both. Then go home with the Son of God in full assurance that your salvation rests in his hands—the one who has chosen you and called you to himself in grace and truth.

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The sermon's chiasm

A Mexico, 1996. “Be perfect.” The demand is not renegotiated. The question is left open: is that the only kind of word God speaks?

B What kind of word? Recovery, not invention. One God, two words, both Testaments. Marcion tears them into two gods. The church confesses one God who kills and makes alive.

C These distinctions always have to be contended for. Early church, medieval pulpit, Marrow, exemplarism, brothers who say the words and do not mean them. Reformation recovery: Luther, Beza, Ursinus, Perkins, Spurgeon.

D What they mean. Law commands and cannot justify. Gospel announces Christ and gives what it commands. Confessions and catechisms. Third use named and deferred.

E The center: Exposition. John 1:1–18. Eight OT names for the Son who was already there. Then verse 17: given / came. Moses the servant, Christ the source. Prologue of the Decalogue is gift; the commands are still commands. Grace and truth are a Person we behold; we receive him now in the announcement.

D' Galatians 3:1–3. The same contrast. Bewitchment: the evil eye takes the crucified Son off the wall and hangs Christ-plus-law in his place. Tyndale on 1:17: the law passes sentence; in Christ, grace and truth.

C' (*implicit in the close*) The fight is not a schoolyard. Mixing the words is how people lose the gift while keeping Jesus' name.

B' Two words, one God, one Son. The law still searches. Grace and truth still save. Hear both.

A' The boy again. “Be perfect” is not repealed. It is not the last word. The Word became flesh and kept it, and was slain, and from his fullness you have received. Go home with the Son.

Appendix

Ralph Erskine

The Believer's Principles

In Four Parts: The Mystery, the Difference, the Harmony, the Place and Station.²⁶

Section I.

The Mystery of Law and Gospel

Though law-commands and gospel-grace
Agree in mutual joint embrace;²⁷
Yet law and gospel in a shock
Can never draw an equal yoke.²⁸

The law of works, the law of grace,
Can't stand together in one place;
The brighter scene destroys the dark,

They harmonize like married pairs,³⁰
Yet are at odds, and keep not squares;³¹
As mercy stands from merit far,
The letter and the Spirit jar.³²

The law does gospel-comforts harm,
The gospel breaks the legal arm;³³
Yet both exalt each other's horn,

²⁶ In, **Ralph Erskine**, *Gospel Sonnets, or Spiritual Songs* (London, G. Terry, 1793). Spelling modernized with original notes.

²⁷ **Romans 3:31**. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law. **Galatians 3:21** Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

²⁸ **Psalms 130:3-4, 7-8**. If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities. **Psalms 143:2, 8**. O Lord, enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified. Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.

³⁰ **Galatians 3:24**. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

³¹ **Romans 11:6**. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

³² **2 Corinthians 3:6**. The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.

³³ **Hebrews 2:15**. And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. **Philippians 3:7-9**. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

As Dagon fell before the ark.²⁹

I through the law am dead to it,
To legal works and self-conceit;³⁵
Yet, lo! through gospel-grace I live,
And to the law due honor give.³⁶

The law great room for boasting makes,
But grace my pride and boasting breaks;³⁷
Yet all my boasts the law does kill,³⁸
And grace makes room to boast my fill.³⁹

And garlands bring their head to adorn.³⁴

The gospel makes me keep the law;⁴⁰
Yet from its painful service draw:⁴¹
It does all law-demands fulfill,⁴²
Yet makes them wholly void and null.⁴³

The gospel gives me no command,⁴⁴
Yet by obeying it I stand.⁴⁵
To strict obedience though it call,⁴⁶
Does bind to none, but promise all.⁴⁷

²⁹ **Romans 6:14–15.** For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. **Romans 7:4–6.** Wherefore, 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 God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. **2 Corinthians 3:6–11.** Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious, had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.

³⁴ **Galatians 2:19.** For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

³⁵ **Romans 7:6, 9.** But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. For I was alive without the law once: But when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

³⁶ **Romans 7:4.** Wherefore, 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 God. **Romans 10:4.** Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

³⁷ **Romans 3:27.** Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

³⁸ **Romans 3:19.** Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

³⁹ **1 Corinthians 1:29–31.** That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

⁴⁰ **Titus 2:11–12.** For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

⁴¹ **Galatians 5:1.** Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

⁴² **Romans 8:3–4.** 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.

⁴³ **Romans 6:14.** Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace. **Galatians 4:4–5.** 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.

⁴⁴ **Galatians 3:8.** And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

⁴⁵ **Mark 16:16.** He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.

⁴⁶ **2 Thessalonians 1:7–8.** The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴⁷ **John 3:17.** God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. **John 12:47.** And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not; For I came not to judge

The law does strict commandment give,
That I the gospel-news believe;⁴⁸
But yet it teaches no such thing,
Nor ever could gospel-tidings bring.⁴⁹

When I the gospel-truth believe,
Obedience to the law I give,⁵⁰
And when I don't⁵¹ the law observe,
I from the gospel-method swerve.⁵²

Yet, if I do the law obey,⁵³
I am not in the gospel-way,⁵⁴
Which does to new obedience draw,⁵⁵
Yet is the gospel no new law.⁵⁶

As precepts to the law belong,
Yet in the gospel field are throng.⁵⁷
Curs'd ev'ry gospel-slighter is,⁵⁸

the world, but to save the world. **Heb 7:10-12**. 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 God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: For all shall know me from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

⁴⁸ **John 3:18**. He that believeth on him, is not condemned: But he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

⁴⁹ **Romans 10:5**. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doth those things, shall live by them. **Romans 3:19**. Now we know that what things forever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: That every mouth may be sopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

⁵⁰ **John 3:18**. He that believeth on him, is not condemned.

⁵¹ That is, as it is a rule.

⁵² **Titus 2:11-12**.

⁵³ Another edition, "If I the law as a covenant obey..."

⁵⁴ **Galatians 5:3-4**. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

⁵⁵ **Romans 16:25-26**. The mystery which was kept secret since the world began—now is manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.

⁵⁶ **Galatians 3:21**. Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid; For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

⁵⁷ **Matthew 5:17-18**. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 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. **Psalms 119:96**. I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad.

⁵⁸ **Hebrews 10:26-29** For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? **Hebrews 12:25**. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.

It from the law has power to kill,⁶⁰
Yet saving does its power fulfill:⁶¹
No favor but of life it has,⁶²
Yet most the favor is of death.⁶³

Weakness perfection doth exclude,
The law is perfect, just, and good:⁶⁴
Yet can it nothing perfect make,
But all the comers to it break.⁶⁵

Strength to the gospel does belong,

The gospel gives the law, I see,
Sufficient strength to justify;⁶⁷
Yet I may say in truth it is
The law that gives the gospel this.⁶⁸

For as the law no sinner clears,
But who the gospel-garment wears;
So none are justified by grace,
Unless the law-demand have place.⁶⁹

Again the law, which yet seems worse,

⁵⁹ **Romans 15:29.** And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. **Acts 3:26.** Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

⁶⁰ **John 3:18.** He that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. **Mark 16:16.** He that believeth not, shall be damned. **Hebrews 2:3.** How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?

⁶¹ **Ephesians 1:13** In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. **1 Timothy 1:15** This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

⁶² **Php 2:16** Holding forth the word of life. **2Tim 1:10** But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

⁶³ **2 Corinthians 2:16.** To the one we are the savor of death unto death...

⁶⁴ **Psalms 119:96.** I have seen an end of all perfection: But thy commandment is exceeding broad. **Romans 7:12.** Wherefore the law is holy; and the commandment is holy, and just, and good. **Hebrews 7:19.** For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by which we draw nigh unto God.

⁶⁵ **Hebrews 7:19. Hebrews 10:1** For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

⁶⁷ **Romans 8:1, 3-4.** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit ... For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God did, 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.

⁶⁸ **Romans 3:31.** Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: Yea, we establish the law. **Romans 10:4.** For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

⁶⁹ **Romans 3:19-22.** Now we know that what things forever the law saith, is saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 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. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference. **Romans 5:19, 21.** By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous ... Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Mighty through God it is, and strong;⁶⁶
It to the law does strength emit,
Yet 'tis the law gives strength to it.
Dread threatenings to the law pertain,⁷²
Not to the gospel's golden chain;⁷³
Yet all law-threats and Sinai's ire
To gospel-grace are wall of fire.⁷⁴

The righteous law sets free none
Of Adam's guilty race, save one;⁷⁵
Who being charged, for this cause
By God's just law condemned was.⁷⁶

Yet free of guilt it did him see;

Gives gospel-news condemning force;⁷⁰
Yet they are news that never can,
Nor ever will condemn a man.⁷¹
But he withal condemned and spoiled
The law of works, which him assailed;⁷⁹
And now the law is (in these views)
The marrow of the gospel-news.⁸⁰

The law can justify no man
That is a sinner;⁸¹ yet it can
Thus favor sinful men, and free
The chief of sinners, guilty me.⁸²

The gospel too acquits none

⁶⁶ **Romans 1:16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. **2 Corinthians 10:4-5** For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

⁷⁰ **John 3:18.** He that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

⁷¹ **Luke 2:10-11.** And the angel said unto them, Fear not: For behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. **John 3:17.** For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. **John 12:47.** And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

⁷² **Galatians 3:10.** For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse: 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.

⁷³ **Acts 13:26.** Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

⁷⁴ **Mk 16:16.** He that believeth not, shall be damned. **Heb 2:3.** How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?

⁷⁵ **Romans 5:19.** For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. **John 17:4.** I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

⁷⁶ **Isaiah 53:6.** All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. **Galatians 3:13.** 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.

⁷⁹ **Colossians 2:14-15.** Blotting out the hand-writing 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 show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. **Romans 8:3.** For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God did, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.

⁸⁰ **Rom 10:4.** For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth. **Isaiah 45:24.** Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength. **Jer 23:6.** In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

⁸¹ **Romans 3:19-20.** Now we know that the things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 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.

⁸² The law of works as fulfilled by Christ, can and does so, **Romans 8:3.** For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God did, 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. **Romans 8:33-34.** Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Hence fully cleared, and set him free:⁷⁷
Yet, had not guilt his soul involved,
By law he could not been absolved.⁷⁸

Those that with gospel-clearance meet,
Must by the law be found complete;⁸⁵
Yet never could (again I grant)
The gospel justify a saint.⁸⁶

That have not put perfection on;⁸³
And yet it clears none (I grant)
But those who all perfection want.⁸⁴

The law withstands the gospel path,⁹⁰
Which yet its approbation hath:⁹¹
The gospel thwarts the legal way,⁹²
Yet will approve the law for aye.⁹³

Hence though the gospel's comely frame

⁷⁷ **Hebrews 7:26.** For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. **Daniel 9:24.** Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. **1 Timothy 3:16.** And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto glory. **Romans 2:13.** For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. **Isaiah 50:7.** He is near that justifieth me, who will contend with me? Let us stand together: Who is mine adversary? Let him come near to me.

⁷⁸ **2 Corinthians 5:21.** God hath made Christ to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. **1 Peter 3:18.** Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust (that he might bring us to God), being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.

⁸³ **Romans 3:21-22.** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference.

⁸⁴ **Rom 4:5.** To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

⁸⁵ **1 Cor 1:30.** But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. **Col 2:10.** And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.

⁸⁶ **Matt 9:13.** I am come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. **Rom 3:10.** There is none righteous, no not one. **Rom 9:30-32.** What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling stone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. **1 Tim 1:15.** This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

⁹⁰ **1 Corinthians 15:56.** The Strength of sin is the law. **Romans 6:14.** Sin shall not have dominion over you: For ye are not under the law, but under grace. **Romans 10:3.** Israel being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

⁹¹ **Isaiah 42:21.** The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make *it* honourable. **Matthew 3:17.** And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

⁹² **Romans 9:31-33.** But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling stone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

⁹³ **Rom 7:7, 10, 12.** What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin but by the law: For I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet ... And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death ... Wherefore the law is holy; and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

All perfect persons it controls;⁸⁷
And justifies ungodly souls;⁸⁸
Yet still no man its grace partakes,
But whom it truly godly makes.⁸⁹

Thus gospel-grace, and law-commands,
Both bind and loose each other's hands:
They can't agree on any terms,⁹⁵

Does openly the law condemn;⁹⁴
Yet they are blind, who never saw
The gospel justify the law.

Those that divide them, cannot be
The friends of truth and verity;⁹⁷
Yet those that dare confound the two,

⁸⁷ **Matthew 22:31.** Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. **Luke 18:9-14, 21-22.** And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted ... And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up. Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

⁸⁸ **Romans 4:5-6.** But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.

⁸⁹ **Titus 2:11-14.** For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. **Titus 3:4-5, 8.** But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost ... *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.*

⁹⁴ **Romans 10:5-9.** For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*;) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

⁹⁵ **Galatians 4:21-26.** Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman *was* by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

⁹⁷ **Matthew 13:23.** Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: These ought ye to have done, and not leave the other undone. **Romans 2:23, 25-26.** Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Therefore, if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? **Matthew 19:6.** What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. **Matthew 3:15.** And Jesus answering, said unto him [John], Suffer it to be so now: For thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him. **Matthew 5:17, 19-20.** Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill ... Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: But whosoever shall do, and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven. **1 John 5:6.** This is he that

Yet hug each other in their arms.⁹⁶

Destroy them both, and gender woe.⁹⁸

This paradox none can decipher,
That plow not with the gospel-heifer.

Section II.

The Difference between the Law and the Gospel

The law, supposing I have all,
Does ever for perfection call:
The gospel suits my total want,
And all the law can seek does grant.

The law could promise life to me,
If my obedience perfect be:
But grace does promise life upon
My Lord's obedience alone.

The law says, Do, and life you'll win;
But grace says, Live, for all is done;
The former cannot ease my grief,
The latter yields me full relief.

The legal trumpet war proclaims,
In wrathful threats, and fire, and flames:
The gospel-pipe, a peaceful sound,
Which spreads a kindly breath around.

By law convinced of sinful breach,
By gospel-grace I comfort reach:
The one my condemnation bears,
The other justifies and clears.

The law is weak through sinful flesh;
The gospel brings recruits afresh:
The first a killing letter wears;
The last a quickening spirit bears.

The law shows my arrears are great,
The gospel freely pays my debt:
The first does me the bankrupt curse,

The law that seeks perfection's height,
Yet gives no strength, nor offers might;
But precious gospel-tidings glad

came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood: And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

⁹⁶ **Psalm 85:10.** Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed *each other*.

⁹⁸ **Galatians 1:6-8.** I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. **Zephaniah 1:4-5.** I will cut off them that worship, and that swear by the Lord, and that swear by Malcham. **Acts 15:7, 10-11.** And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago, God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe ... Now therefore why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved even as they. **Galatians 5:1, 4.** Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage ... Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

The last does bless and fill my purse.

The law will not abate a mite,
The gospel all the sum will quit:
There God in threatenings is arrayed,
But here in promises displayed.

The law and gospel disagree,
Like Hagar, Sarah, bond and free:
The former's Hagar's servitude,
The latter Sarah's happy brood.

To Sinai black, and Zion fair,
The word does law and grace compare.
Their cursing and their blessing vie
With Ebal and Gerizim high.

The law excludes not boasting vain,
But rather feeds it to my bane;
But gospel grace allows no boasts,
Save in the King, the Lord of Hosts.

The law still irritates my sin,
And hardens my proud heart therein;
But grace's melting power renews,
And my corruption strong subdues.

The law with thunder, Sinai-like,
Does always dread and terror speak:
The gospel makes a joyful noise,
And charms me with a still, calm voice.
Yet does it many duties teach,
Which legal light could never reach:
Thus faith, repentance, and the like,
Are fire that gospel-engines strike.

They have acceptance here through grace,
The law affords them no such place:
Yet still they come through both their hands,
Through gospel-teachings, law-commands.

The law's a house of bondage sore,
The gospel opens the prison-door:
The first me hampered in its net;
The last at freedom kindly set.

The precept craves, the gospel gives;

Declare where all is to be had.

From me alone the law does crave,
What grace affirms in Christ I have:
When therefore law-pursuits enthrall,
I send the law to grace for all.

The law brings terror to molest,
The gospel gives the weary rest;
The one does flags of death display,
The other shows the living way.

The law by Moses was expressed;
The glorious gospel came by Christ:
The first dim nature's light may trace;
The last is only known by grace.

The law may rouse me from my sloth,
To faith and to repentance both:
And though the law commands each,
Yet neither of them can it teach.

Nor will accept for current coin
The duties which it does enjoin:
It seeks all, but accepts no less
Than constant, perfect righteousness.

The gospel on the other hand,
Although it issue no command,
But strictly viewed, does whole consist
In promises and offers blessed;
There viewing how diseased I am,
I here perceive the healing balm:
Afflicted there with sense of need,
But here refreshed with meet remedy.

The law's a charge for what I owe;
The gospel my discharge to show:
The one a scene of fears does open;
The other is the door of hope.

An angry God the law revealed;
The gospel shows him reconciled:
By that I know he was displeased;
By this I see his wrath appeased.

The law thus shows the divine ire,

While that me presses, this relieves;
And or affords the strength I lack,
Or takes the burden off my back.

And nothing but consuming fire.
The gospel brings the olive branch,
And blood the burning fire to quench.

The law requires on pain of death;
The gospel courts with loving breath:
While that conveys a deadly wound;
This makes me perfect, whole, and sound.

The law still shows a fiery face,
The gospel shows a throne of grace;
There justice rides alone in state,
But here she takes the mercy-seat.

In sum:

Lo! in the law Jehovah dwells,
But Jesus is concealed;
Whereas the gospel's nothing else
But Jesus Christ revealed.

Section III.

The Harmony between the Law and the Gospel

The law's a tutor much in vogue,
To gospel-grace a pedagogue;
The gospel to the law no less
Than its full end for righteousness.

When by the law to grace I'm schooled;
Grace by the law will have me ruled:
Hence, if I don't the law obey,
I cannot keep the gospel-way.

When once the fiery law of God
Has chased me to the gospel-road;
Then back unto the holy law
Most kindly gospel-grace will draw.

When I the gospel-news believe,
Obedience to the law I give:
And that both in its federal dress,
And as a rule of holiness.

When law and gospel kindly meet,
To serve each other both unite:
Sweet promises, and stern commands,
Do work to one another's hands.

What in the gospel-mint is coined,
The same is in the law enjoined:
Whatever gospel-tidings teach,
The law's authority does reach.

The divine law demands no less
Than human perfect righteousness:
The gospel gives it this and more,
Even divine righteousness in store.

Here join the law and gospel hands,
What this me teaches, that commands:
What virtuous forms the gospel please,
The same the law does authorize.

Whatever the righteous law require,
The gospel grants its whole desire.
Are law-commands exceeding broad?
So is the righteousness of God.

And thus the law-commandment seals
Whatever gospel-grace reveals:
The gospel also for my good
Seals all the law-demands with blood.

How great soever the legal charge,
The gospel-payment's equal large:

The law most perfect still remains,
And every duty full contains:

No less by man the law can bray,
When grace provides a God to pay.

The law makes gospel-banquets sweet;
The gospel makes the law complete:
Law-fruits to grace's storehouse draw;
Grace decks and magnifies the law.

Both law and gospel close combine,
To make each other's luster shine:
The gospel all law-breakers shames;
The law all gospel-slighters damns.

The law is holy, just, and good;
All this the gospel seals with blood,
And clears the royal law's just dues
With dearly purchased revenues.

Lo! in my Head I render all
For which the fiery law can call:
His blood unto its fire was fuel,
His Spirit shapes me to its rule.

The law commands me to believe;
The gospel saving faith does give:
The law enjoins me to repent;
The gospel gives my tears a vent.
Law-threats and precepts both, I see,
With gospel promises agree;
They to the gospel are a fence,
And it to them a maintenance.

The law will justify all those
Who with the gospel-ransom close;
The gospel too approves for ay
All those that do the law obey.

The righteous law condemns each man
That dare reject the gospel-plan:
The holy gospel none will save,
On whom it won't the law engrave.

When Christ the tree of life did climb,
I see both law and grace in him:
In him the law its end does gain;
In him the promise is Amen.

The gospel its perfection speaks,
And therefore gives whatever it seeks.

Next, what by law I'm bound unto,
The same the gospel makes me do:
What preceptively that can crave,
This effectively can engrave.

All that by precepts Heaven expects,
Free grace by **promises effects:**
To what the law by fear may move,
To that the gospel leads by love.

To run to work, the law commands;
The gospel gives me feet and hands:
The one requires that I obey;
The other does the power convey.

What in the law has duty's place,
The gospel changes to a grace:
Hence legal duties therein named,
Are herein gospel-graces famed.

The precept checks me when I stray;
The promise holds me in the way:
That shows my folly when I roam;
And this most kindly brings me home.
The law makes grace's pasture sweet,
Grace makes the law my savory meat;
Yea, sweeter than the honeycomb,
When grace and mercy brings it home.

The precepts of the law me show
What fruits of gratitude I owe;
But gospel-grace begets the brood,
And moves me to the gratitude.

Law-terrors parch the putrid sore;
And gospel-grace applies the cure:
The one plows up the fallow-ground;
The other sows the seed around.

A rigid matter was the law,
Demanding brick, denying straw;
But when with gospel-tongue it sings,
It bids me fly, and gives me wings.

In sum:
Both law and gospel close unite,
Are seen with more solace,
Where truth and mercy kindly meet,
In fair Immanuel's face.

Section IV.

The Proper Place and Station of the Law and the Gospel

Note. That in the four following paragraphs, as well as in the three preceding sections,
by Law is mostly understood the doctrine of the Covenant of Works;
and by Gospel, the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace.

Paragraph I.

The place and station of law and gospel in general

When we the sacred record view,
Or divine Testaments old and new;
The matter in most pages fixed,
Is law and gospel intermixed.

Yet few, even in a learned age,
Can so resolve the sacred page,
As to discern with equal eye,
Where law, where gospel severed lie.

One divine text with double clause
May speak the gospel's voice and law's:⁹⁹
Hence men to blend them both are apt,
Should in one sentence both be wrapped.

Wherever in sacred writ we see
A word of grace or promise free,
With blessings dropped for Jesus' sake,
We these for gospel-news may take.

But that we may the truth pursue,
And give both law and grace their due,
And God the glory there displayed;
The following rules may give us aid.

But where a precept strict we find,
With promise to our doing joined;
Or threatening with a wrathful frown,
This as the law we justly own.

⁹⁹ For example, **Leviticus 20:7-8**. Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: For I am the Lord your God. And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am the Lord which sanctify you. **1 John 4:7**. Beloved, let us love one another: For love is of God; and every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God. **Romans 5:21, 23**. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord ... For the wages of sin is death: But the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Mark 16:15-16**. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned. **John 3:18**. He that believeth on him, is not condemned: But he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God, etc.

Paragraph II.

The Place and Station of Law and Gospel in particular.

Where the difference is noted between the Gospel largely viewed in its dispensation, and strictly in itself; and between the gospel and from faith receiving it.

Wouldst thou distinctly know the sound
Of law and grace, then don't confound
The dispensation with the grace:
For these two have a distinct place.

The method of dispensing here
Does law and gospel jointly bear;
Because the law's subservient
Unto the gospel's blessed intent.

The gospel thus dispensed we see,
Believe, and thou shalt saved be;
If not, thou shalt be damned to hell,
And in eternal torments dwell.

Precepts and threatenings both make way,
The gospel blessings to convey;
Which differs much (though thus dispensed)
From laws and threats whereby 'tis fenced.

Here precepts in it are dispensed,
With threatenings of damnation fenced;
The legal sanction here takes place,
That none may dare abuse free grace.

Believe, and thou shalt saved be,
Is gospel, but improperly;
Yet safely men may call it thus,
Because 'tis so dispensed to us.

Yet nor does that command of faith,
Nor this tremendous threat of wrath,
Belong to gospel, strictly so;
But to its dispensation do.

But sure, the gospel-news we sing,
Must be some other glorious thing,
Than precepts to believe the same,
Whatever way we blend their name.

The gospel-treasure's something more
Than means that do apply the store:
Believing is the method paved,
The gospel is the thing believed.

If then we won't distinguish here,
We cloud, but don't the gospel clear;
We blend it with the fiery law,
And all into confusion draw.

The precious thing is tidings sweet
Of Christ a Saviour most complete,
To save from sin, and death, and wrath;
Which tidings tend to gender faith.

The law of works we introduce,
As if old merit were in use,
When man could life by doing won,
Even though the work by grace were done.

Faith comes by hearing God's record
Concerning Jesus Christ the Lord;
And is the method Heaven has blest
For bringing to the gospel-rest.

Old Adam in his innocence
Derived his power of doing hence:
As all he could was wholly due;
So all the working strength he knew,

The joyful sound is news of grace,
And life to Adam's guilty race,
Through Jesus' righteousness divine,
Which bright from faith to faith does shine.

Was only from the grace of God,
Who with such favour did him load:
Yet was the promise to his act,
That he might merit by compact.

The promise of immortal bliss
Is made to this full righteousness:
By this our right to life is bought;
Faith begs the right, but buys it not.

True faith receives the offered good,
And promise sealed with precious blood:
It gives no title to the bliss,
But takes the entitling righteousness.

This object great of saving faith,
And this alone the promise hath;
For 'tis not made to faith's poor act,
But is the prize that faith does take:

And only as it takes the same,
It bears a great and famous name;
For self, and all its grandeur, down
It throws, that Christ may wear the crown.

But if new laws and threats were all
That gospel properly we call,
Then were the precept to believe,
No better news than do and live.
From whence soever we borrow powers,
If life depend on works of ours;
Or if we make the gospel thus
In any sort depend on us;

We give the law the gospel-place,
Rewards of debt the room of grace;
We mix Heaven's treasures with our trash,
And magnify corrupted flesh.

The new and gospel covenant
No promise to our works will grant;
But to the doing of our Head,
And in him to each gospel-deed.

To godliness, which is great gain,
Promise is said to appertain:
But know, lest you the gospel mar,
In whom it is we godly are.

To him and to his righteousness
Still primarily the promise is;

No merit but of paction could
Of men or angels e'er be told;
The God-man only was so high
To merit by condignity.

Were life now promised to our act,
Or to our works by paction tacked;
Though God should his assistance grant,
'Tis still a doing covenant.

Though Heaven its helping grace should yield,
Yet merit's still upon the field;
We cast the name, yet still 'tis found
Disclaimed but with a verbal sound.

If one should borrow tools from you,
That he some famous work might do;
When once his work is well prepared,
He sure deserves his due reward;

Yea, justly may he claim his due,
Although he borrowed tools from you:
Even thus the borrowed strength of grace
Can't hinder merit to take place.
The law of grace overturns the scale,
And makes the quite reverse prevail:
Its promise lights not on the deed,
But on the doing person's head;

Not for his doing, but for this,
Because in Christ his person is;
Which union to the living Prince,
His living works and deeds evince.

Good fruits have promise in this view,
As union to the BRANCH they show;
To whom the promises pertain,
In him all Yea, and all Amen.

Observe, pray; for if here we err,
And do not Christ alone prefer,
But think the promise partly stands
On our obeying new commands;

The old covenant-place to works we give,
Or mingle grace with do and live;

And not even to the gracious deed,
Save in and through the glorious Head.

Pray let us here observe the odds
How law and grace take counter roads,
The law of works no promise spake
Unto the agent, but the act.

It primarily no promise made
Unto the person, but the deed:
Whatever the doing person shared,
'Twas for his deed he had reward.

We overcloud the gospel-charms,
And also break our working arms.

More honour to the law profess,
But giving more we give it less.
Its heavy yoke in vain we draw,
By turning gospel into law.

We rob grace of its joyful sound,
And bury Christ in Moses' ground:
At best we run a legal race
Upon the field of gospel-grace.

Paragraph III.

The Gospel no new Law, but a joyful sound of Grace and Mercy.

Law-precepts in a gospel-mold,
We may as gospel-doctrine hold;
But gospel-calls in legal dress,
The joyful sound of grace suppress.

If only precepts we present,
Though urged with strongest argument,
We leave the wakened sinner's hope
In darkness of despair to grope.

The man whom legal precepts chase,
As yet estranged to sovereign grace,
Mistaking evangelic charms,
As if they stood on legal terms,

Looks to himself, though dead in sin,
For grounds of faith and hope within;
Hence fears and fetters grow and swell,
Since nought's within but sin and hell.

But faith, that looks to promised grace,
Clean out of self the soul will chase,
To Christ for righteousness and strength,
And finds the joyful rest at length.

Proud flesh and blood will startle here,

Faith and repentance may be taught,
And yet no gospel-tidings brought;
If as mere duties these we press,
And not as parts of promised bliss.

"I know thou hast no good, and see
"I cannot stand on terms with thee,
"Whose fall has left thee nought to claim,
"Nor aught to boast but sin and shame."

The law of heavy hard commands
Confirms the wakened sinner's bands;
But grace proclaims relieving news,
And scenes of matchless mercy shows.

No precept clogs the gospel-call,
But wherein grace is all in all; No law is here
but that of grace,
Which brings relief in every case.

The gospel is the promise fair
Of grace all ruins to repair,
And leaves no sinner room to say,
"Alas! this debt I cannot pay;

"This grievous yoke I cannot bear,

And hardly such report can bear,
That Heaven all saving store will give
To them that work not, but believe.

Yet not of works, but 'tis the race
Of faith, that it may be of grace:
For faith does nothing but agree
To welcome this salvation free.

"Come down, Zaccheus, quickly come,
"Salvation's brought unto thy home:
"In vain thou climbest the legal tree;
"Salvation freely comes to thee.

"Thou dreamest of coming up to terms,
"Come down into my saving arms;
"Down, down, and get a pardon free,
"On terms already wrought by me.

"Behold the blessings of my blood,
"Bought for thy everlasting good,
"And freely all to be conveyed
"Upon the price already paid.

"This high demand I cannot clear."
Grace stops the mouth of such complaints,
And store of full supply presents.

The glorious gospel is (in brief)
A sovereign word of sweet relief;
Not clogged with cumbersome commands,
To bind the soul's receiving hands.

'Tis joyful news of sovereign grace,
That reigns in state through righteousness,
To ransom from all threatening woes,
And answer all commanding do's:

This gospel comes with help indeed,
Adapted unto sinners' need:
These joyful news that suit their case,
Are chariots of his drawing grace:

'Tis here the Spirit powerful rides,
The fountains of the deep divides;
The King of glory's splendour shows,
And wins the heart with welcome news.

Paragraph IV.

The Gospel further described, as a Bundle of good News and gracious Promises.

The first grand promise forth did break
In threats against the tempting snake;
So may the gospel in commands,
Yet nor in threats nor precepts stands:

But 'tis a doctrine of free grants
To sinners, that they may be saints;
A joyful sound of royal gifts,
To obviate unbelieving shifts:

A promise of divine supplies,
To work all gracious qualities
In those, who prone to rebel,
Are only qualified for hell.

Courting vile sinners, even the chief,
It leaves no cloak for unbelief;

Good news of Heaven, where angels dwell,
To those that well deserved hell;
Of strength too weak for work and war,
And access near to those afar.

Glad news of joy to those that weep,
And tender care of cripple sheep;
Of shelter to the soul pursued,
And cleansing to the hellish-hued:

Of floods to sap the parched ground,
And streams to run the desert round;
Of ransom to the captive caught,
And harbour to the foundering yacht;

Of timely aid to weary groans;
Of joy restored to broken bones;
Of grace divine to graceless preys,
And glory to the vile and base:

But even on gross Manassehs calls,
On Mary Magdalens and Sauls.¹⁰⁰

'Tis good news of a fountain ope
For sin and filth; a door of hope
For those that lie in blood and gore,
And of a salve for every sore.

Glad news of sight unto the blind;
Of light unto the darkened mind;
Of healing to the deadly sick;
And mercy both to Jew and Greek.

Good news of gold to poor that lack;
Of raiment to the naked back;
Of binding to the wounds that smart;
And rest unto the weary heart.

Glad news of freedom to the bound;
Of store all losses to refund;
Of endless life unto the dead;
And present help in time of need.

Of Christ exalted as a Prince,
Pardons to give and penitence;
Of grace overcoming stubborn wills,
And leaping over Bether hills.

Faith comes by hearing these reports;
Straight to the court of grace resorts,
And free of mercenary thought,
Gets royal bounty all for nought.

Of living water pure, that teems
On fainting souls refreshing streams;
Of generous wine to cheer the strong,
And milk to feed the tender young:

Of saving faith to faithless ones;
Of softening grace to flinty stones;
Of pardon to a guilty crew,
And mercy free, where wrath was due.

Good news of welcome kind to all,
That come to Jesus at his call;
Yea, news of drawing power, when scant,
To those that fain would come, and can't.

Glad news of rich mysterious grace,
And mercy meeting every case;
Of store immense all voids to fill,
And free to whosoever will:

Faith's wing within the clammy sea
Of legal merit cannot fly;
But mounting mercy's air apace,
Soars in the element of grace.

But as free love the blessing gives
To him that works not, but believes;
So faith, once reaching its desire,
Works hard by love, but not for hire.

¹⁰⁰ Saul, surnamed Paul, the Apostle.

