

# LAW AND GOSPEL

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## Thesis I.

The doctrinal contents, of the entire Holy Scriptures, both of the Old and the New Testament, are made up of two doctrines differing fundamentally from each other, viz., the Law and the Gospel.

## Thesis II.

Only he is an orthodox teacher who not only presents all the articles of faith in accordance with Scripture, but also rightly distinguishes from each other the Law and the Gospel.

## Thesis III.

Rightly distinguishing the Law and the Gospel is the most difficult and the highest art of Christians in general and of theologians in particular. It is taught only by the Holy Spirit in the school of experience.

## Thesis IV.

The true knowledge of the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is not only a glorious light, affording the correct understanding of the entire Holy Scriptures, but without this knowledge Scripture is and remains a sealed book.

## Thesis V.

The first manner of confounding Law and Gospel is the one most easily recognized and the grossest. It is adopted, for instance, by Papists, Socinians, and Rationalists and consists in this, that Christ is represented as a new Moses, or Lawgiver, and the Gospel turned into a doctrine of meritorious works, while at the same time those who teach that the Gospel is the message of the free grace of God in Christ are condemned and anathematized, as is done by the papists.

## Thesis VI.

In the second place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the Law is not preached in its full sternness and the Gospel not in its full sweetness, when, on the contrary, Gospel elements are mingled with the Law and Law elements with the Gospel.

### **Thesis VII.**

In the third place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the Gospel is preached first and then the Law; sanctification first and then justification; faith first and then repentance; good works first and then grace.

### **Thesis VIII.**

In the fourth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the Law is preached to those who are already in terror on account of their sins or the Gospel to those who live securely in their sins.

### **Thesis IX.**

In the fifth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when sinners who have been struck down and terrified by the Law are directed, not to the Word and Sacraments, but to their own prayers and wrestlings with God in order that they may win their way into a state of grace; in other words, when they are told to keep on praying and struggling until they feel that God has received them into grace.

### **Thesis X.**

In the sixth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the preacher describes faith in a manner as if the mere inert acceptance of truths, even while a person is living in mortal sins, renders that person righteous in the sight of God and saves him; or as if faith makes a person righteous and saves him for the reason that it produces in him love and reformation of his mode of living.

### **Thesis XI.**

In the seventh place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when there is a disposition to offer the contrition of the Gospel only to those who have been made contrite by the Law, not from fear of the wrath and punishment of God, but from love of God.

### **Thesis XII.**

In the eighth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the preacher represents contrition alongside of faith as a cause of the forgiveness of sin.

### **Thesis XIII.**

In the ninth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when one makes an appeal to believe in a manner as if a person could make himself believe or at least

help towards that end, instead of preaching faith into a person's heart by laying the Gospel promises before him.

**Thesis XIV.**

In the tenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when faith is required as a condition of justification and salvation, as if a person were righteous in the sight of God and saved, not only by faith, but also on account of his faith, for the sake of his faith, and in view of his faith.

**Thesis XV.**

In the eleventh place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the Gospel is turned into a preaching of repentance.

**Thesis XVI.**

In the twelfth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the preacher tries to make people believe that they are truly converted as soon as they have become rid of certain vices and engage in certain works of piety and virtuous practices.

**Thesis XVII.**

In the thirteenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when a description is given of faith, both as regards its strength and the consciousness and productiveness of it, that does not fit all believers at all times.

**Thesis XVIII.**

In the fourteenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the universal corruption of mankind is described in such a manner as to create the impression that even true believers are still under the spell of ruling sins and are sinning purposely.

**Thesis XIX.**

In the fifteenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the preacher speaks of certain sins as if they were not of damnable, but of a venial nature.

**Thesis XX.**

In the sixteenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when a person's salvation is made to depend on his association with the visible orthodox Church

and when salvation is denied to every person who errs in any article of faith.

**Thesis XXI.**

In the seventeenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when men are taught that the Sacraments produce salutary effects *ex opere operato*, that is, by the mere outward performance of a sacramental act.

**Thesis XXII.**

In the eighteenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when a false distinction is made between a person's being awakened and his being converted; moreover, when a person's inability to believe is mistaken for his not being permitted to believe.

**Thesis XXIII.**

In the nineteenth place, the Word of God is not right divided when an attempt is made by means of the demands or the threats or the promises of the Law to induce the unregenerate to put away their sins and engage in good works and thus become godly; on the other hand, when an endeavor is made, by means of the commands of the Law rather than by the admonition of the Gospel, to urge the regenerate to do good.

**Thesis XXIV.**

In the twentieth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the unforgiven sin against the Holy Ghost is described in a manner as if it could not be forgiven because of its magnitude.

**Thesis XXV.**

In the twenty-first place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the person teaching it does not allow the Gospel to have a general predominance in his teaching.