

The Future of the Church

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The future of the church is well known. Ultimately it is to be part of the new heaven and the new earth. “The home of God is among mortals.” And “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more.” There will be no temple, nor sun or moon, nor need of them.

Let me add to the picture that, at that point, freedom and love will be perfectly integrated. Indeed, that may be what makes it paradise. Until then, the church’s future includes a struggle to integrate freedom and love. I do not mean in the abstract, but in the concrete. In the earthy, even bodily, ordinary problems of human life, the Church wants to have something helpful to say to people about these things. To guide good behavior, but not without losing Christian freedom. But then what: to legislate *from the Gospel*? That may be the attempt, but that will lose both Law and Gospel. And that does not bode well for the near-term future of the church, or of its faith or mission.

My own church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, is undertaking a moral study linking freedom and love. Its title is, “Free in Christ to Serve the Neighbor.”

This present conference is celebrating the saving distinction of Law and Gospel. But love and freedom are not the same as Law and Gospel. Or are they? “Love is the fulfilling of the Law” we are told, and the Gospel is freedom. There must be a connection.

The connection is worked out in the two documents from which the study begins. Each of them is about freedom and also love, and each of them is founded on elaborately distinguishing Law and Gospel. One document is Paul’s Galatians, which along with Romans is the clearest scriptural distinguishing of Law and Gospel. Galatians also is called the Magna Carta of Christian freedom, saying “For freedom Christ has set us free” and “for you were called to freedom.” The other document is Luther’s “On the Freedom of a Christian” (hereafter simply “Freedom”). This treatise famously confesses the paradoxical theses on freedom and love, that “a Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none; and, a Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.”¹ But Law and Gospel are the heart of this treatise, as he uses that distinction to explain this paradox of freedom and love.

While in both Galatians and “Freedom” the connection of Law and Gospel with love and freedom is addressed, the precise nature of this connection is sometimes misunderstood, to the loss of Law or Gospel or both. So this paper will first explain one way the misunderstanding happens. The second half will follow Paul and Luther more closely to see how they more correctly connect the Law and Gospel distinction to the Christian life of freedom and love.

¹Luther, M. (1999, c1957). *Vol. 31: Luther's works, vol. 31 : Career of the Reformer I* (J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works (Vol. 31, Page 344). Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

The ELCA study—and this is the last paragraph in which I will refer to it, since my intention is not to dialogue with it—begins with freedom. It is not a moral study of the national economy questioning whether the markets should have more freedom. Nor is it an investigation of environmental morality, wondering if we are too uptight concerning the environment and should have more freedom. Nor is it about freedom in the morality of personal firearms. This study is about human sexual activity. Now, contemplating the many and various human sexual activities in our country today, one might wonder if there really is need for greater freedom. One also might wonder why the study wants to begin with Galatian freedom rather than 1 Corinthians, which unlike Galatians directly addresses several matters of sexual behavior. Do we need to fear that the study-designers want a pre-determined outcome, and so have set 1 Corinthians aside because its ethic of sexual restraint does not help that cause? I confess I am uncharitably suspicious here. I have not read the study and it may in fact not promote greater sexual “freedom.” But the study’s impetus from freedom to service, made in the context of questions about sexual morality, puts me in mind of what I fear may be a common misunderstanding of Paul’s reasoning in Galatians, even beyond this particular study, a misunderstanding that I should like to put right.

The faulty reasoning goes like this. Paul is discussing in Galatians the freedom that Christ gives. As part of this, he chides Peter and company for their sticking with old Jewish ritual laws. Circumcision is included, but more pointedly the matter was eating kosher and for that reason not eating with Gentiles, even Gentile Christians. The upshot being that the same Gentile Christians begin to believe that they, too, must live kosher in order to be really justified. In his conclusion Paul sounds this trumpet blast in Gal 5:1: “For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.” In vv. 2-12 he argues against circumcision then in verses 13-14 puts his lips again to his trumpet:

For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (NRSV)

The misunderstanding starts from the juxtaposition here of freedom from ritual law (circumcision or dietary laws) with his summary of the Law as love of neighbor. From this juxtaposition one could get the impression that when he says that love is the fulfilling of the Law, he is setting aside those ritual laws, which always had as their purpose a personal religious status of no value to one’s neighbor. That is, *that the content of Christian freedom is liberation from quirky cultural laws and customs in order to get on with the real business of loving our neighbors*. Thus Christian freedom is the nullification of laws that do not help our neighbor.

This is the danger of trying to legislate from the Gospel. That is, using the Gospel to *reduce* the Law. “Because of the Gospel” to *change* the Law from what it is to something kinder and gentler, perhaps even more reasonable. This loses both Law and Gospel. The misunderstanding comes to re-interpreting morality and justice, even the biblical commands of God (the law), in the light of God’s love for the world in Jesus Christ.

There are two problems in this conclusion. One, that is not Christian freedom. Two, the divine will that applies to Christians still includes many laws that do not pertain to loving one's neighbor. I will probe this second problem first. A review of what Luther and Paul mean by Christian freedom will come later. Then can come an untangling of this confusion regarding Galatians.

There is a faulty reasoning regarding love. It begins with Paul's statement, Love is the fulfilling of the Law. Love here is correctly seen not to be an emotion. As our Lord explains love of neighbor by means of the story of the Good Samaritan, love is more like helping than feeling; an action to someone's benefit rather than an unexpressed emotion toward that person. The other side of the same coin is to say, since the opposite of keeping the Law is sin, then sin would be harming the neighbor. Sin could also be, since love is not optional, a sin of omission in not helping one's neighbor, e.g., the priest and Levite who passed by on the other side. So in this way of thinking, fulfilling the Law is helping one's neighbor and not harming her. While this understanding of the Law seems to follow, this understanding is incorrect. There is more to the Law than this.

As an aside, one can note that this provides for a "leftist" rather than a "rightist" ethics. That is, morality is thought to concern only one's treatment of others. Even advocating certain social programs or holding certain public policy opinions could be viewed as a righteous action, whether anything comes of it or not. In this view public morality is important, and not private morality. Morality in this description has nothing to do with personal conduct *when it does not affect others*.

One problem with this conception of the fulfilling of the Law is the glaring omission of one's relationship with God: fear, love and trust. Another omission is personal integrity. Honesty with oneself is left out of view. The judgments of our Lord in His Sermon on the Mount are omitted: "If you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment." Again, "Everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart." Notice that the woman is herself utterly unaffected by this lustful look. In fact, our Lord's precise point is that sin happens not only in outward acts but even in internal thoughts that are not acted upon.

In the faulty reasoning, sin always has a victim. But does it? Picture an Amsterdam heroin addict with no dependents. She is harming no one, other than the relatively small cost to the nation which non-judgmentally provides her her drugs. Since she is harming no one else, is it sin? Most of us would say she harming herself. But since she is doing so willingly, is there a victim? Does she have a "right" to use heroin because there is no victim? Not a right according to the Netherlands's public policy that there is no "vice," no crime without an unwilling victim, but a right according to God? Does God have a right to judge her for her waste of the life He gave her? Is her victim-less use of heroin a sin?

American culture today is sensitive to the harm, to oneself or society, of drug abuse, so that we can easily see the sin even though there is no obvious victim. Americans of the 19th century also saw sin, even crime, where there was no unwilling victim. Curiously, the 20th century and the 19th saw these sins in very different places. In the 19th there were no drug laws. Cocaine and opium had no legal restrictions. They were regarded as victimless crimes, in fact no crimes at all. However, in that century there were many, many laws regulating sexual acts. Sodomy was a capital offense. Adultery was a punishable crime. What we have by the end of the 20th century is a fascinating

switch: opiate use has been given severe legal punishments, and sexual acts of any kind have received legal permission (in Nevada even prostitution is legal). Speaking of Nevada, because gambling is seen as victimless, it is on the track of sex, not drugs: it is not only legal everywhere but our states are dependent upon it.

But in reality sin does not need a victim. We can see that as clearly regarding opiate use today as our 19th century forebears saw it regarding sex. While it is good and lawful to help one's neighbor and not to harm him, that is not the extent of the Law, whatever Paul may have meant.

This is clear enough in Galatians itself, in which freedom from the Law and love as the fulfilling of the Law are most extolled. Hear first Paul's list of obvious works of the flesh. While many of these works have victims, the first ones, all five of them, do not victimize others but are sin for other reasons (Gal. 5:19f): "Fornication; impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery." And from the opposite side, consider the fruit of the Holy Spirit. While some of these benefit the neighbor (kindness, generosity), others do not or at least need not, including some of the first such as joy and peace.

The same point can be made by reference to the Beatitudes. While not a legal code, they do present the will of God for human life. Some refer to benefiting other people (merciful, peacemakers). Others have to do only with oneself and one's own attitude without reference to any affect upon other people: poor in spirit, mourn, hungry for righteousness, pure in heart.

Therefore, whatever might be meant by "Love is the fulfilling of the Law," we cannot deduce therefrom that any action without a victim is permitted by God. Christian freedom, then is not the removal of all restrictions except the requirement to serve and not victimize one's neighbor.

Let me now offer another conception of how to distinguish Law from Gospel in order to integrate love and freedom. I will propose it by following Paul and Luther more carefully. First we will see how Christian freedom is not freedom from OT ceremonial laws. Second, see what Christian freedom is, as Paul puts it, freedom from the curse of the Law. With those understandings, we will be able to understand why there is confusion in reading Galatians. Finally, we will see how Luther integrates freedom and love.

OT ritual Law was controversial in the beginning of the Church. In His ministry the Lord was cavalier about Sabbath laws and dietary laws. The first, He said, is to be a benefit not a burden (Mk 2:27) and the second He abrogated "declaring all foods clean" (Mk 7:19). On the other hand he insisted He had not come to abrogate the law and the prophets (Mt 5:17). Indeed He tightens the Law, extends it, raises the bar: not only are murder, adultery and perjury crimes, so are murderous feelings and adulterous fantasies and oath-taking of any kind (Mt. 5:21-37). Alms, prayer and fasting are not only required, but these good acts must be done with the proper motivation, for reasons of piety and not of public approbation, else they lose their goodness.

This confusing and distressing inconsistency—playing fast and loose with some laws and redoubling others—has traditionally been resolved by the expedient of distinction. He denigrates only ritual laws and increases only moral laws. To define these terms, could one say that He fills in those laws that protect other people, which proscribe our treating them proprietarily, without the dignity they have as images of God? While that

is part of it, we must recall what we have already learned, that the moral Law is misunderstood if taken to refer only to affecting other people. We must be sure to include also internal anger and lust as well as the need for private praying and anonymous alms-giving. The other set, ritual laws, is perhaps easier to define. The Lord dismisses those laws that pertain only to limiting certain habits of food and work. These ceremonial laws are arbitrary: there is no reason why resting on Saturday is better than on Wednesday, or relaxing every sixth or eighth day inferior to every seventh. And, as Jesus argues in Mark 7, no food can defile a person. Thus ritual laws are made null and void, even one that is one of the Ten Commandments.

As we are attempting here to understand the value of such OT ceremonial laws, in order to see that Christian freedom is not about them, let us see another way to discriminate between ceremonial and moral laws. This way is based not on content but upon application; a very different means of discriminating, but remarkably yields the same two sets. This analysis comes from Luther.

Briefly, the problem he took up in “How Christians Should Regard Moses” (1525) was of some excited Christians, newly liberated from papal hermeneutic authority but lacking in theological perspicacity, who upon reading the five books of Moses found all sorts of laws they had never heard before and began to cry, “This is the Word of God; we must therefore obey them!” and sought to impose Levitical laws on the German people. To this Luther brought a most helpful discrimination. Yes, he said, that is God’s Word; but it is not God’s Word to you. To illustrate, he went on, God told David to make wars and conquer lands. That was God’s Word. But it was the Word to David, not to you, and so you would be as wrong to do so as David would have been not to do so. “We must deal cleanly with the Scriptures.” For that matter, Luther says, even the Ten Commandments do not apply to us Germans. Why do I say so? Look at how they begin: “I am the Lord, your God, Who brought you out of Egypt.” Now, did God ever bring you out of Egypt? No? Well, then He is not talking to you, is He?

Now, the notion that the Ten Commandments do not apply to us because we are not Jews strikes us as odd, even while we admit that historical-critically Luther has a very telling point about original context. Further oddness is added as soon as we recall that Luther begins his own catechism with a trenchant explication of the Decalogue; plainly he does think after all that they apply to us. And in “Moses” he says as much, with this explanation. The Decalogue is God’s will and law for all human beings. It is, in fact, part of the way we are made. We are simply constituted in such a way that murder, adultery, divorce, dishonesty, hypocrisy etc. are wrong, bad for us, or in today’s parlance, “inappropriate” to what we are, and that piety, prayer, worship, faith, respect for authorities, charity, care for others’ reputations, etc. are good for us, right, even righteous, appropriate for what we are, “good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life” (Eph. 2:10). Because these laws pertain to our very nature, they are called, traditionally and by Luther, natural laws. This is very much divine legislation. As Luther puts it, the Gentiles do not have the Law written on stone tables but have it written in their hearts. This is the phenomenon Paul remarks upon in Romans 2:14f “When the Gentiles, who do not possess the Law, do instinctively what the Law requires, these, though not having the Law, are a Law to themselves. They show that what the Law requires is written on their hearts, to which their own conscience also bears witness. . . .” Paul points to the empirical evidence that all cultures prohibit impiousness, disobedience,

murder, adultery, perjury. The Formula of Concord expresses the same understanding of the Law thus:

We unanimously believe, teach, and confess on the basis of what we have said that, strictly speaking, the Law is a divine doctrine which reveals the righteousness and immutable will of God, shows how man ought to be disposed in his nature, thoughts, words, and deeds in order to be pleasing and acceptable to God.²

Luther says the great thing about the Ten Commandments is that Moses there has worded the divine will so well. Thus the Decalogue is after all divine Law and will for all people, *not because God gave those laws to Moses* but because God gave those laws to all people in their very nature.

At least 90% of them. There is the exception that--in this rarest of cases--actually does prove the rule. While nine of the ten are practically universal, there is no people other than the Jews that make it immoral to work on Saturday. Luther in the catechism therefore does exactly what you would expect, he completely ignores the requirement of rest, already voided by the Lord and His apostles, and speaks instead about the need to hear and devoutly heed the preaching of the Word.

Here is a decisive thing. Luther discriminates between divine laws for followers of Moses and divine laws for all people, such as Gentile Christians. By this discrimination, whom do laws regulate, he finds two sets of laws. These are the very same two sets that our Lord indicates, by dismissing some and amplifying others, even though the Lord discriminates on the basis of the content of the laws, not on the basis of for whom they are authoritative Law. We conclude that ceremonial laws (diet, clothing, bathing, circumcision, Sabbath, etc.) are arbitrary regulations for the body and regulate only Jews who are under Moses. Obeying them has no value with God for anyone else. Moral laws, which are for the conscience, have authority over all humans: Jew, Gentile, Christian, whatever. In keeping these there is great reward.

It is worth noticing that as arcane as this historical-critical investigation may seem to be, it is a real, contemporary search. For example Ralph W. Klein has somewhere framed the question this way. In the church's questions about which sexual relations are licit and which illicit, he draws attention to Leviticus 18:19-23. In this passage there are five prohibitions: sex with a woman during her period; sex with a kinsman's wife; sacrificing one's child to Molech; sex with a male as with a woman, and sex with an animal. Klein says, sex with an animal is universally condemned. Sex during a woman's period is culturally relative. In between these two is homosexual intercourse. The question is, he says, is that prohibition merely cultural, like the latter, or universal like the former? Notice this question uses Luther's discrimination.

For our investigation of love and freedom, the point is this. Christian freedom is not freedom from Jewish rituals. As one curmudgeonly professor put it, Christ did not die to free us from the liturgicians—though that would have been a help indeed.

²Tappert, T. G. (2000, c1959). *The book of concord : The confessions of the evangelical Lutheran church* (The Formula of Concord: 2, V, 17). Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

What then is Christian freedom? It is freedom from the Law's evaluation, freedom from the need to be righteous according to the Law, freedom from having to live up to the Law's standard in order to have life. The moral Law continues to describe and demand what is good and holy and right behavior (Ps. 19, 1, 119, e.g.), and to threaten with death those who do not conform. Christ frees us from that threat. Paul writes in Galatians:

For all who rely on the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not observe the obey all the thing written in the book of the Law." . . . Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us.

Luther is more expansive, and clearer yet. I quote him at some length, for the benefit of those who think it is Lutheran to say the Christians do not need to use the Law. Here is how he explains Paul in Luther's "Galatians:"

Therefore whoever knows well how to distinguish the Gospel from the Law should give thanks to God and know that he is a real theologian. . . . The way to distinguish the one from the other is to locate the Gospel in heaven and the Law on earth, to call the righteousness of the Gospel heavenly and divine and the righteousness of the Law earthly and human, and to distinguish as sharply between the righteousness of the Gospel and that of the Law as God distinguishes between heaven and earth or between light and darkness. . . . Therefore if the issue is faith, heavenly righteousness, or conscience, let us leave the Law out of consideration altogether and let it remain on the earth. But if the issue is works, then let us light the lamp of works and of the righteousness of the Law in the night. So let the sun and the immense light of the Gospel and of grace shine in the day, and let the lamp of the Law shine in the night. These two must be distinguished in your mind in such a way that when your conscience is completely terrified by a sense of sin, you will think of yourself. "At the moment you are busy on earth. Here let the ass work, let him serve and carry the burden that has been laid upon him; that is, let the body and its members be subject to the Law. But when you ascend into heaven, leave the ass with his burdens on earth; for the conscience has no relation to the Law or to works or to earthly righteousness. Thus the ass remains in the valley; but the conscience ascends the mountain with Isaac, knowing absolutely nothing about the Law or its works but looking only to the forgiveness of sins and the pure righteousness offered and given in Christ."³

More exactly on the issue of Christian freedom in Galatians 5, Luther writes—and I quote again at length for the same reason:

In what freedom? Not in the freedom for which the Roman emperor has set us free but in the freedom for which Christ has set us free. The Roman emperor gave

³Luther, M. (1999, c1963). *Vol. 26: Luther's works, vol. 26 : Lectures on Galatians, 1535, Chapters 1-4* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works (Ga 2:15). Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House.

. . . freedom; but it is a political freedom . . . In addition, there is the freedom of the flesh, which is chiefly prevalent in the world. Those who have this obey neither God nor the laws but do what they please. This is the freedom which the rabble pursues today; so do the fanatical spirits, who want to be free in their opinions and actions, in order that they may teach and do with impunity what they imagine to be right. This is a demonic freedom, by which the devil sets the wicked free to sin against God and men. . . .

This is the freedom with which Christ has set us free, not from some human slavery or tyrannical authority but from the eternal wrath of God. Where? In the conscience. This is where our freedom comes to a halt; it goes no further. For Christ has set us free, not for a political freedom or a freedom of the flesh but for a theological or spiritual freedom, that is, to make our conscience free and joyful, unafraid of the wrath to come (Matt. 3:7). This is the most genuine freedom; it is immeasurable. When the other kinds of freedom—political freedom and the freedom of the flesh—are compared with the greatness and the glory of this kind of freedom, they hardly amount to one little drop. For who can express what a great gift it is for someone to be able to declare for certain that God neither is nor ever will be wrathful but will forever be a gracious and merciful Father for the sake of Christ? It is surely a great and incomprehensible freedom to have this Supreme Majesty kindly disposed toward us.

We have established two important points. One, there is freedom from OT ritual regulations, but that is because those regulations never pertained to Gentiles in the first place. Second, that the specific freedom that Christ has bled to obtain for Jews and Gentiles is freedom from the Law's power to separate sinners from God. With these, now we can untangle that confusion about Paul's Galatians.

One could think, reading Galatians, that the freedom Christ gives is from ritual Law. The reasons are these. The word "*nomos*" (in all declensions) appears nearly two hundred times in Galatians' six chapters, but it is not always obvious what Paul means. At points Paul discusses circumcision explicitly, at others dietary laws and the need to segregate from Gentiles, at another the observation of holidays. When Paul says Law he is sometimes referring to just such ritual laws. Other times he refers more comprehensively to the entire Law, Decalogue and all. Many times it is not obvious which. And since his more explicit discussions are of ritual laws, it would be understandable to take that as his usual reference. But that leads to the unfortunate confusion. Let us sort this out.

There are three questions to be answered concerning the issues raised in Galatians:

1. Do people need to keep the Law to be justified? No.
2. Do people need to keep the ceremonial Law at all? No.
3. Do people need to keep the moral Law on earth? Yes (but see #1, not for justification, but for the sake of the neighbor).

See that there are two freedoms. One is from the ceremonial Law and one from the whole Law, because of justification in Christ. It is unfortunate if these two very different freedoms are confused.

Paul is perhaps responsible for the confusion. For he argues simply that the Law cannot justify--and in fact does not need to because of Christ. With the insight we have from the Lord we see that the ceremonial Law is simply void since His advent, and with the insight from Luther we see that it never obtained for Gentiles in the first place. With the ritual laws out of the question, it remains to ask whether the moral Law might be necessary for justification. However Paul never parses the difference between the laws. He is arguing with judaizers and their disciples so he simply attacks the main point—not to trust in Law-keeping of any sort—in order to turn the folks from Law to Christ.

But for us the confusion of the two freedoms can create problems. For example, an old medieval misinterpretation said that Christ has freed believers only from OT rites, meaning that to be justified still required keeping the moral Law. Again, an antinomian interpretation would say that just as Christians do not need to obey the ritual Law for any reason at all, so they do not need to obey the moral Law. Again, that Gospel freedom has reduced the Law to only the parts that concern neighbors.

Now we can see how Luther in “Freedom” integrates freedom and love. It is not according to the slogan, free in Christ to serve the neighbor. In Luther’s explanation, as we see in the opening paradox of “Freedom” and in the quotation from his Galatians above, freedom is only in the conscience. It pertains only to heaven, to our standing before God, to whether or not we have righteousness enough to live off of, which in Christ we do. The opposite part of the paradox is not freedom but bondage. “A Christian is perfectly free lord of all, subject to none, and perfectly dutiful servant, subject to all.” Or in his Galatians, “This is the freedom with which Christ has set us free, not from some human slavery or tyrannical authority but from the eternal wrath of God. Where? In the conscience. This is where our freedom comes to a halt; it goes no further.” See, freedom is not for living, but for conscience. For living, Luther says: “At the moment you are busy on earth. Here let the ass work, let him serve and carry the burden that has been laid upon him; that is, let the body and its members be subject to the Law.”

Actually, Luther first discusses the freedom of faith and then Christian living, but even here subjection to the Law for the sake of neighbor is only the second part. In “Freedom” he begins with the distinction in a human between spirit and soul. The spirit is free from the fear of God’s wrath because of the justification the believing soul has in Christ. But, Luther says, echoing Paul in Romans 7 and Galatians 5, humans also have sinful flesh, an unruly body which fights and resists the fresh spirit of Christ living in one. “Works reduce the body to subjection and purify it of its evil lusts, and our whole purpose is to be directed only toward the driving out of lusts” (LW 31:359). So, the Christian uses the Law to subject the body to submission. Then, finally, “he lives only for others and not for himself. To this end he brings his body into subjection that he may the more sincerely and freely serve others.”

What I think we have seen is this. A view of Christian freedom, or Gospel-based freedom, that teaches that the only Law yet to be obeyed is to help neighbors and not victimize them, is wrong on several counts. First, it misreads Christian freedom from the Law as the nullification of some provisions of the Law. In truth, some provisions, the ritual elements of the Law, are void to Gentiles even without Christ. The moral Law abides in its fullness until heaven and earth pass away. Second, that view reduces the

moral Law to helping neighbors and not harming them. But actually the Law also commands many things that do not directly affect neighbors: faith to God and love, worship and prayer, attention to the Word, and lives of holy integrity: self-control, humility, chastity, honesty, peace and joy.

The distinguished pair, Law and Gospel, are the foundation of love and freedom, and *respectively so*. The Gospel gives freedom in the conscience, though not freedom of behavior. The Law binds our bodies to love. Though we may resent the sound of that, Luther points out how in one sense, in our hearts, the freedom can lead to the love: since Christ has completely lived and died for me, giving me riches beyond what I could ever achieve any other way, why should I not be content with that and now in turn live and die for my neighbor?

That is a future for the church worth hoping for.

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