

## LAW AND LOVE

Priscilla Jane Owens (1829–1907) penned several hymn poems, among them, “Give Me the Bible.” She wrote these lyrics in the 19<sup>th</sup> century before it became popular—even among theologians—to debunk, demote, and attempt to destroy the authority of Holy Writ.

Near the end of her refrain, Owens summarized the basic character of Scripture: “Precept and promise; law and love combining....” In these few words, she captures the essence of the Word of God. It is a book of precepts/commands from our Creator along with promises for both our present and future lives. The Bible combines Divine law with incomparable love for all mankind. To this truth we now turn our attention.

Growing numbers (again, including theologians) in the Western world have been influenced by naturalism, humanism, ism, and Darwinism over the past century and a half. Correspondingly, they gradually, but certainly, have lost their faith in the Bible as God’s Word. Contrary to Owens’ song title, their theme has been, “**You** Take the Bible” (for we don’t want it). The “respectable” infidels (AKA “theologians”) dared not launch a frontal attack on the faith of those in the pews. Rather, they slyly advanced their antinomian (i.e., anti-law) dogma. Such averments as *under Christ no spiritual law exists, grace excludes law, The Old Testament was law—the New Testament is grace, we are saved by grace—not by law*, became the theme of thousands of pulpiteers. Consider only two of the many problems with this assertion:

- **It is a lie.** The New Testament plainly depicts itself as Divine law (Rom. 8:2; 1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2; Jam. 1:25; 2:12). More-over, in the context of James 1:25, the writer clearly equates the inspired Word that saves (vv. 21–23) with that “perfect law.” Further, since it is the Gospel that saves (Rom. 1:16), *the Word* and *the perfect law* are therefore references to the “Gospel,” thereby identifying the Gospel as the perfect law.
- **It renders grace irrelevant and unnecessary.** The need for grace presupposes sin, and sin, both logically and theologically, presupposes the existence of law: “But where there is no law, neither is there transgression” (Rom. 4:15b); “But sin is not imputed when there is no law” (5:13b). Note the ultimate error of antinomians: *No law—no sin; No sin—no need for grace*. Eradication of law eradicates all need of grace.

No mere man will perfectly keep God’s law. Sin—violation of God’s law (1 John 3:4)—creates the need for God’s grace and mercy if men are to be saved (John 3:16;

Eph. 2:8–9; Tit. 3:5). The Gospel is God’s perfect combination of **law and love**.

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