

The Two Parts of the Word of God: *Law & Gospel*

by Theodore Beza (1519-1605)

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That which we call The Word of God: Its two parts -- the Law and the Gospel

On this subject we call the "Word of God" (for we know well that the Eternal Son of God is also so named) the canonical books of the Old and New Testament; for they proceed from the mouth of God Himself.

We divide this Word into two principal parts or kinds: the one is called the "Law", the other the "Gospel". For, all the rest can be gathered under the one or the other of these two headings.

What we call Law (when it is distinguished from Gospel and is taken for one of the two parts of the Word) is a doctrine whose seed is written by nature in our hearts. However, so that we may have a more exact knowledge, it was written by God on two Tables and is briefly comprehended in ten commandments. In these He sets out for us the obedience and perfect righteousness which we owe to His majesty and our neighbours. This on contrasting terms: either perpetual life, if we perfectly keep the Law without omitting a single point, or eternal death, if we do not completely fulfil the contents of each commandment (Deut. 30:15-20; James 2:10).

What we call the Gospel ("Good News") is a doctrine which is not at all in us by nature, but which is revealed from Heaven (Matt 16:17; John 1:13), and totally surpasses natural knowledge. By it God testifies to us that it is His purpose to save us freely by His only Son (Rom. 3:20-22), provided that, by faith, we embrace Him as our only wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption (1 Cor 1:30). By it, I say, the Lord testifies to us all these things, and even does it in such a manner that at the same time he renews our persons in a powerful way so that we may embrace the benefits which are offered to us (1 Cor 2:4).

The similarities and the differences between the Law and the Gospel

We must pay great attention to these things. For, with good reason, we can say that ignorance of this distinction between Law and Gospel is one of the principle sources of the abuses which corrupted and still corrupt Christianity.

The majority of men, blinded by the just judgement of God, have indeed never seriously considered what curse the Law subjects us to, nor why it has been ordained by God. And, as for the Gospel, they have nearly always thought that it was nothing other than a second Law, more perfect than the first. From this has come the erroneous distinction between precept and advice; there has followed, little by little, the total ruin of the benefit of Jesus Christ.

Now, we must besides consider these things. The Law and the Gospel have in common that they are both from the one true God, always consistent with Himself (Heb. 1:1-2). We must not therefore think that the Gospel abolishes the essence of the Law. On the contrary, the Law establishes the essence of the Gospel (Rom 10:2-4); this is what we shall explain a little further on. For both set before us the same God and the essence of the same righteousness (Rom 3:31), which resides in perfect love to God and our neighbour. But there is a great difference in these points which we shall touch on, and especially concerning the means of obtaining this righteousness.

For, in the first place, as we alluded to before, the Law is natural to man. God has engraven it in his heart from creation (Rom 1:32; 2:14,15). When, a long time afterwards, God made and exhibited the two Tables of the Law, this was not to make a new law, but only to restore our first knowledge of the natural law which, because of the corruption of sin, was little by little becoming obliterated from the heart of man (Rom 7:8-9). But the gospel is a supernatural doctrine which our nature would never have been able to imagine nor able to approve without a special grace of God (1 Cor. 1:23; 2:14). But, the Lord has revealed it, firstly to Adam shortly after his sin, as Moses declares (Gen 3:15), afterwards to the patriarchs and the prophets in increasing degrees as seemed good to Him (Rom 1:2; Luke 1:55,70), until the day in which He manifested Jesus Christ in Person. It is He who has clearly announced and accomplished all that is contained in the Gospel (John 15:15; 6:38). This Gospel God still reveals today and will reveal it until the end of the world by the preaching instituted in His Church (John 17:18; Matt 28:20; 2 Cor. 5:20).

In the second place, the Law lays bare to us the majesty and justice of God (Heb. 12:18-21). The Gospel sets forth this same justice to us, but there it is pacified and satisfied by the mercy manifested in Christ (Heb. 12:22- 24).

In the third place, the Law sends us to ourselves in order to accomplish the righteousness which it commands us, that is to say, the perfect obedience to its commandments, which is necessary in order to escape guilt. That is why it shows us our curse and subjects us to it, as the Apostle declares (Rom 3:20; Gal 3:10-12). But the gospel teaches us where we shall find what we do not have and, having found it, how we shall be able to enjoy it. That is why it delivers us from the curse of the Law (Rom 3:21,22; Gal 3:13,14). In conclusion, the Law pronounces us blessed when we accomplish it without omitting anything; the Gospel promises us salvation when we believe, that is to say, when, by faith, we take hold of Jesus Christ who has everything which we lack, and still more that we need. Now, these two terms -- to do what the Law commands, or to believe what God offers us in Jesus Christ -- are two things which are not only very difficult but totally impossible to our corrupt nature. This latter, as St Paul says, cannot even perceive what is

of God (2 Cor. 3:5; Phil 1:29). That is why it is necessary to add a fourth difference between the Law and the Gospel.

Thus, the fourth difference between the Law and the Gospel is that the Law, by itself, can only show us, and make us see, our evil more exceedingly, and aggravate our condemnation; not through any fault of its own (for it is good and holy), but because our corrupt nature burns for sin the more it is reprov'd and threatened, as St. Paul has declared through his own example (Rom 7:7-14). But the Gospel not only shows us the remedy against the curse of the law, but it is at the same time accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit who regenerates us and changes us (as we have said above); for He creates in us the instrument and sole means of applying to us this remedy (Acts 26:17,18).

In order to speak even more clearly, let us expound these words "letter" and "spirit" which some have taken in the wrong sense. I say, therefore, that the Gospel is not "letter", that is to say, only a dead doctrine which sets before us in their bareness and simplicity (I do not say those things which it is fitting for us to do -- for that is the office of the Law) the things which it is necessary for us to believe: that salvation is promised freely in Jesus Christ to those who believe; but it is "spirit", that is to say, a powerful means full of efficacy from the Holy Spirit, and He uses it to create in us the power to believe the things which He teaches us, that is to say, to embrace free salvation in Jesus Christ. It is thus that the Law itself, which kills us and damns us in ourselves, justifies us and saves us in Jesus Christ, taken hold of by faith (Rom 3:31).

This is the reason why I have said that the Law and the Gospel are not contrary in that which concerns the essence of the righteousness with which we must be clothed in order to be accepted before God and to participate in eternal life; but they are contrary with regard to the means of having this righteousness. For the Law justly seeks in us this righteousness; it has no regard to what we can do but to what we ought to do (Gal 3:12). Man, indeed, by his own fault alone, has made himself unable to pay; nevertheless, he does not cease to be a debtor even if he is unable to pay. And consequently, the Law does us no wrong in demanding from us that which we owe, although we cannot pay it. But the Gospel, softening this righteous rigour as with the honey of God's mercy, teaches us to pay by Him who has made Himself our Surety, who has put Himself, I say, in our place and paid our debt, as principal debtor, and to the last farthing (Col. 2:13,14). So that the rigour of the Law which made us tremble in ourselves and struck us down completely, now confirms us and accepts us in Jesus Christ. For, since eternal life is due to those who have obeyed the Law perfectly, and Jesus Christ has fulfilled all righteousness in the name of those who should believe in Him and take hold of Him by faith (1 Cor. 1:30; Phil. 3:9), it follows that, even according to the rigour of the Law, salvation cannot fail those who, by faith, have become united and incorporated with Jesus Christ.

For what ends the Holy Spirit uses the preaching of the Law

Having carefully understood this distinction of the two parts of the Word of God, the Law and the Gospel, it is easy to understand how and to what end the Holy Spirit uses the preaching of the

one and the other in the Church. For there is no doubt that He employs them for the purpose for which they have been established.

We are then all so blind, whilst our corruption reigns in us, that we are ignorant even of our ignorance (John 9:41) and, not ceasing to smother the little light of knowledge which has been left to us so as to render ourselves inexcusable (Rom. 1:20,21; 2:1), we are pleased about that which ought to displease us most. It is necessary, before all things, that God, all good and full of pity, makes us know clearly the cursed pit in which we are. He could do it no better than by informing us, by the declaration of His Law, what we ought necessarily to be. Thus, blackness can never be better known than in being placed beside white (Rom. 3:20; 7:13).

This is why God begins with the preaching of the Law. In it alone we can see what we ought to be; and yet we cannot fulfil a single point of it. In it alone, we can see how near we are to our damnation, unless there comes to us some very strong and sure remedy.

And indeed, the stupidity which has reigned in the world at an times and reigns now more than ever, shows clearly how necessary it is that God begins at this point in order to draw us to Himself: by making us know what great and certain danger those are in who think least of it. The fact is, the Law was not given to justify us (for if this were so, Jesus Christ would have died in vain, as St. Paul says; Gal 2:21; 3:18-21), but, on the contrary, to condemn us, and to show us the hell which is opened wide to swallow us, to annihilate and totally abase our pride, in making the multitude of our sins pass before our eyes and showing us the wrath of God which is revealed from Heaven against us (Rom 1:18; 4:15; Gal 3:10,12). However, for a long time men have been blind and senseless. Not only do they seek their salvation in that which condemns them wholly or in part, that is to say, in their works, instead of running to Jesus Christ by faith, the only remedy against all that they can be justly accused of before God; but, what is more, they do not cease to add law upon law to their conscience, that is to say, condemnation upon condemnation, as if the Law of God did not condemn them enough (Gal 4:9,10; 5:1; Col. 2:8,16-23). It is like a prisoner to whom the prison door would be opened, but who, turning away from a freedom which he does not understand, goes away and voluntarily locks himself in a prison which is even more secure.

There then is the first use of the preaching of the Law; to make known our innumerable faults so that in ourselves we begin to be miserable and greatly humble ourselves; in short, to beget in us the first degree of repentance which is called 'contrition of heart'; this produces a full and open confession toward the Lord. For he who does not know that he is sick will never come to the physician. 'Mere are none more unfit to receive the light of salvation than those who think they see clearly by themselves, through lack of understanding how thick is the darkness in which they are born; so great that they must come out of it. On the contrary, they have always made it thicker from then on, and have not ceased to rush on willingly in it (John 9:41).

The other part of the Word of God called "Gospel": Its authority, why, how and for what end it was written

After the Law comes the Gospel, the use and necessity of which cannot be better understood than by noting the following points:

Firstly, even as there is only one Saviour (Matt 1:21; Acts 4:12; 1 Tim 2:5), there is also only one doctrine of salvation which is called Gospel, that is to say, Good News (Rom 1:16). It was fully announced and declared to the world by Jesus Christ (John 15:15) and the Apostles (John 17:8; 2 Cor. 5:19,20), and faithfully recorded by the Evangelists (Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet 1:25) so as to prevent the wiles and craftiness of Satan who, without this, would have more easily put forward to men his dreams under the name of the gospel; however, he has not entirely failed to do so, by the just vengeance of God who has been provoked to anger against the men who, in their accustomed manner, have always preferred darkness to light. And when we say that the Apostles and Evangelists have faithfully recorded all the doctrine of the Gospel, we understand three points:

1. They have truly added nothing of their own as far as the substance of the doctrine is concerned (Col. 1:28; 2 Tim 3:16,17), but they have obeyed with precision and simplicity what the Lord had said to them: "Go, preach all that I have commanded you" (Matt 28:20); and St. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, confesses that he does so (1 Cor. 11:23).

2. They have omitted nothing of that which is necessary to salvation. For, otherwise, they would have been disloyal to their commission which is not possible. And we see also St. Paul (Acts 20:27; Gal 1:9) and St. Peter (1 Pet 1:25) testify how conscientious they have been and how particular in this area (John 15:15; 16:13). That is why St. Jerome, writing on this subject, says, "Chatter and babbling must not be believed without the authority of Holy Scripture." And St. Augustine says even more clearly, "It is true that the Lord Jesus did many things which have not all been written down; for the Evangelist himself testifies that Jesus Christ said and did much that has not been written down. But God has chosen to have written down those things which are sufficient for the salvation of those who believe. (John 20 :30- 31)

3. What they have written, is written in such a way that the most uncultured and most ignorant in the world, if it is only held out to them, can learn there what is necessary for their salvation (1 Cor. 1:26,27). For otherwise, why would the Gospel have been put in written form in a language which everyone was then able to understand (1 Cor. 14:6-40), and even in the most familiar and popular manner of speaking which it had been possible to choose (1 Cor. 2:1). That is why St. Paul said that if the Gospel was hidden, it was hidden to those who were perishing and whose mind the god of this world had blinded, that is to say, the unbelievers (2 Cor. 4:3). And, indeed, the experience of all times has shown that God has not called the most wise and most learned, but, on the contrary, mostly of the most ignorant of the world (Is 29:14; Luke 10:21; 1 Cor. 1:26,27; 3:18); so far from the truth is it, that He wished to hide or cover His doctrine so that it should be understood by no-one.

We draw, then, two conclusions from this discourse which are very useful to what we are discussing:

The first is, that it is not necessary to reckon as Gospel anything which men have added to the Word of God written, that is to say, the doctrine contained in the books of the Old and New Testament; but that all additions are merely superstitions and a corruption of the only true Gospel of our Lord (Matt 15:9); St. Paul, has also spoken of this (Gal 1:8-9; 2 Tim 3:16,17). And St. Jerome wrote on this subject, "What is said without the authority of Holy Scripture is also easily set aside, as has been said."

The second conclusion is that those who say that it only belongs to certain persons to read Scripture, and who, for this reason, do not want it to be translated into the common language, for fear that simple women and other people may read it (Rom 1:14; Gal 3:28; Matt 11:28), are the true antichrists, and instruments of Satan (Matt 23:13); they are afraid that their abuses be discovered by the coming of the light.

The manner in which the Gospel includes, in substance, the books of the Old Testament

Moreover, by this word Gospel we are far from meaning what is commonly called such, i.e., certain extracts which are disconnected without reason, neither discourses from the books of the four Evangelists or from the Epistles of St. Paul. On the contrary, we understand under this word Gospel, not only all of the New Testament but also all that has been promised or predicted in the Old Testament on the subject of Jesus Christ (Acts 26:22-23; 28:23 John 5:39; Rom 1:2).

For, as we have already said, the Gospel is the only means by which from the beginning of the world, God has always saved His elect (Heb. 13:8; Acts 4:12). That is why, as Moses declares (Gen 3:15), God began to announce it to the world from the sin of Adam, although it was manifested and preached clearly, a long time afterwards, by Jesus Christ Himself in Person, and by His Apostles (Rom 1: 1-6; 16:25, 26).

Thus, to summarize, we call Gospel the Good News which, from the beginning, and by His grace and mercy alone, God has announced to His Church: those who, by faith, embrace Jesus Christ shall partake of eternal life in Him (Rom 3:21, 22; John 6:40).

How what we say about the authority of the written Word must be understood: Why it is necessary that it be translated into all languages

When we say that the Gospel, written and recorded in the manner which God has given us, is the sole ordinary means which God uses to save men (that is why this Word is called The Word of Life and of reconciliation; John 6:68; Acts 5:20; Phil 2:16); we do not stop at the syllables, nor at the paper and ink, nor at a Gospel hung by the neck, or pronounced only as the charmers

pronounce their charms, nor at a well patterned book, or worshipped with incense or other fineries. Let us never displease God by approving such sorceries and sacrileges.

But, in the first place, we close the door to all these fantastic notions which the Devil has made use of, in all times, to corrupt men.

And then, we hear the Gospel well and duly preached and expounded, so as to better understand the substance of it (Rom 10:8; 1 Pet 1:25), to put it in the heart where, by faith, it can produce the fruits of true repentance (Matt 13:23; Acts 16:14). The Apostles show this clearly. When Jesus Christ sent them out, He did not say to them, "Go, read the Gospel in an unknown tongue, and worship the book in which it is written." but He said to them, "Go and preach the Gospel to every creature." (Matt 28:19). I leave aside the remonstrances that St. Paul makes to the Corinthians when he speaks of the abuse that those committed in taking pleasure in hearing foreign languages ring out in the Church of God, without any prophet to explain what was said (1 Cor. 14). But how shall anyone believe without having heard, seeing that faith comes from what is heard, as St. Paul says (Rom 10:17)? And how shall anyone hear it when, far from being duly expounded, it is chanted in an unknown language (1 Cor. 14:9, 16-28)? How also shall anyone be established in the holy and true doctrine, comforted amid so many and various temptations, warned to resist false doctrines (Rom 15:4; 2 Tim 3:16), without meditating night and day in the Word of God (Ps. 1:2), and examining carefully the passages of Holy Scripture (Acts 17:11; John 5:39). Thus has it always been done in the Church, until the Devil, through the just punishment of God, removed this light to bring in his darkness, without anyone perceiving it. St. Peter is a witness for this, when writing to all believers, he commends the diligence with which they should take heed to hear the word of the prophets (2 Pet 1: 19,20). For he knew that the word which the Lord had said to him, "Feed my sheep." (John 21:15-17), must be heard from the preaching of the Word of Life. St. Paul, also, expounded the same thing and practised it (Acts 20:27,28).

However, we do not say that it is permitted to everyone to be a teacher in the Church, and to expound the Holy Scriptures; for this office belongs, as we shall soon say more fully, to those who are called and lawfully ordained to do it (Rom. 10:15). But we say that everyone must read the Scriptures, and have the knowledge of them to confirm what has been expounded well in the Church, and to reject the false doctrine of false pastors. We say that the reading of the Holy Scriptures, -- adding what is necessary, i.e. the pure preaching and exposition of them: it is for this that teachers and pastors are ordained in the Church (1 Cor. 4:2; 2 Cor. 5:19,20), and not to re-sacrifice Jesus Christ (Heb. 10:18) or to howl in a language unknown to the people (1 Cor. 14:28) --, is far from committing heresy; on the contrary, there is no other means of extirpating heresies (2 Tim. 3:15-17). And whoever prevents the reading of the Scriptures takes away, at the same time, from the poor people the only means of consolation (Rom. 15:4) and salvation (Luke 1:77; Acts 13:26; Eph. 1:13).

How the Holy Spirit uses the external preaching of the gospel to create faith in the heart of the elect, and to harden the reprobate

In the same way as the external preaching of the Gospel is an odour of death for the rebels who harden themselves, so is it an odour of life for the children of God (2 Cor. 2:15,16). Not that this force and power to save resides in the sound of the word, or that it comes from the energy of him who preaches (1 Cor. 3:7-8). But the Holy Spirit, whose office we are describing, uses this external preaching as a pipe or channel; He comes then to pierce to the depth of the soul, as the apostle says (Heb. 4:12; 1 Pet 1:23), so as to give by His grace and goodness alone, understanding to the children of God that they may be able to perceive and comprehend this high mystery of their salvation through Jesus Christ (Acts 16:14; Eph. 1: 18,19). Then, He also corrects their judgement so that they approve, with wisdom from God, what sense and reason used to think was folly (1 Cor. 2:6-16). Moreover he corrects and changes their will so that, with ardent affection, they embrace and receive the sole remedy which is offered in Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:29; Acts 13:48) against the despair into which, without this, the preaching of the Law would necessarily bring them (Eph. 2:1,4,5).

This then is how the Holy Spirit, by the preaching of the Gospel, heals the wound which the preaching of the Law has uncovered and made worse (Rom. 6:14). This, I say, is how the Holy Spirit, by the preaching of the Gospel, creates in us the gift of faith which comes, at the same time, to take hold of an that is necessary for salvation in Jesus Christ; this is what we have shown above.

The other fruit of the preaching of the law, once the preaching of the gospel has effectually done its work

Among the effects that Jesus Christ produces when He dwells in us, we have shown, and this is not the least, that He creates in us a pure heart (Ps. 51:10) to know (Jer. 24:7), to will and to do what is of God (Phil 2:13); previously we were slaves in sin (Rom 6:22), enemies of God (Eph. 2:12), incapable even of thinking anything good (2 Cor. 3:5).

Thus, when our disposition has been changed, the preaching of the Law begins also to change its effect in us, such that instead of terrifying us, it consoles us (1 John 2:17; 2 Pet 1: 10,11); instead of showing us how near our damnation is, it serves us as a guide to teach us the good works (Jer. 31:33; Rom 7:22) in which God has purposed we shall walk (Eph. 2:10); finally, instead of being an unpleasant and unbearable yoke, it becomes pleasant and light to us (Matt 11:30). There remains with us only one regret: that of not being able to obey it perfectly, as we wish to do, on account of the remnant of our corruption which battles against the Spirit (Rom 7:22,23). But all this regret does not drive us to despair, but rather drives us to pray ardently to our Father who strengthens us more and more (Rom 8:23-26). Faith, which is the testimony of the Spirit of God crying in our hearts (Rom 8:15), indeed assures us that the curse of the Law has been blotted out by the blood of Jesus Christ to whom it unites us (Rom 8:1); moreover, the same faith also assures us that the Spirit shall conquer, however long He tarries (Rom 6:14), and even death shall

be the means of our victory (John 5:24; 1 Cor. 15:26,54; Heb 2:14). Thus is brought to completion in us, by degrees, the remainder of true repentance, which comes from true conversion; it begins with contrition, or feeling of sin, and progresses by amendment of all that is in the man, visible and invisible (1 Thes. 5:23).

That is also why we conclude that this leads every true penitent to confess his fault before him whom it concerns, that is to say, before those who have been offended, and even before the whole assembly of the Church, if that is necessary. This confession must be accompanied, according to the measure in which this is possible, with restitution and satisfaction towards one's neighbour, for, without this, repentance can only be feigned and counterfeit. Thus, it is easy to see that we do not reject, but, on the contrary, require as necessary to salvation the true confession which has been ordained of God. Nevertheless, we have no desire to torment consciences by auricular confession (as it is called), which men have invented, in place of true confession and repentance, nor to establish towards God any other satisfaction than the sole satisfaction of Jesus Christ.

The second means which the Holy Spirit uses to enable us to enjoy Jesus Christ, and why the Lord has never been content solely with the preaching of His word.

We have said that the Sacraments are the other means, the other instrument by which the Holy Spirit applies to us all that is necessary for our salvation. But, since by this word is generally understood all the signs by which any sacred and spiritual thing is declared to us, it is necessary, first of all, to limit the meaning of the word.

Therefore, we must understand that our God, who is perfectly merciful, in using our very poor and miserable nature as a means to better manifest His goodness and long suffering, has not been content to simply make known to us and to show us, as it were from a distance, the means by which it has pleased Him to save us. Nevertheless, even in this, He uses incomprehensible gentleness and compassion in informing us of His will through men similar to ourselves (Deut. 18:15; Phil 2:7; 2 Cor. 5:19,20), and, what is more, stammers, so to speak, with us as nurses do with their little children (1 'Mess 2:7). But, in addition, to crown His infinite goodness, He has willed to add to the preaching of His Word certain actions which are designed to compel the most uneducated and stubborn in the world to believe more and more that God is not mocking them in offering them eternal life by this most wondrous means -- the death of His own Son. Thus, by such signs and actions, all their senses are driven to consent to the doctrine of the Gospel, as if they were already fully enjoying the salvation which is promised to them. In the same way, we see (if it is proper to make a comparison between affairs in the world and the incomprehensible goodness of God) that, when judicially the possession or ownership of something is awarded to us, certain ceremonies and actions will be used in the act of taking possession or in the execution of a warrant, to assure us and to testify to others that such and such belongs to us. Even in our civil affairs, although a lawyer has signed a contract and appended the name of the witnesses, in addition to all this, the seal of the office where the contract was drawn up will be affixed, so as to render the contract more valid and authentic (Rom 4:11).

Thus, from the beginning, our Lord God was not content with announcing to Adam the grace by which He had purposed to save His Church through His Son; He willed to add thereto sacrifices, as living figures of the future sacrifice of Jesus Christ, to strengthen the faith of the children of God in the redemption which they were awaiting (Heb. 11:4). Then afterwards, renewing this covenant of grace and of mercy to Abraham, He added thereto the Sacrament of circumcision (Gen 17:10,11). Finally, at the time of Moses, He added thereto the Sacrament of the Passover Lamb and many other ceremonies (Ex. 12); these were Sacraments representing to them what Jesus Christ would accomplish in His time, that is to say, all the mystery of their salvation: the Apostle declares this amply in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

But when the time appointed by God arrived, Jesus Christ, by His coming, put an end to all that which had prefigured His coming. He put an end to the shadows and Old Testament Sacraments and brought to the world another greater clarity so that, henceforth, men might worship God with more pure and spiritual service, as approaching more closely the nature of God who is Spirit (John 4:21-25). However, having still regard to our frail and dull nature, He thought well to add some Sacraments and external signs to the preaching of this eternal Word, to better nourish and support our faith. For, although Jesus Christ has already acquitted us by His death, yet, while we are below, we possess the Heavenly Kingdom only by hope (Rom 8:24; 1 Cor. 13:9); it is needful that we be supported to grow in this and persevere to the end (Eph. 4:15).

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