

VI. OF THE THIRD USE OF THE LAW.

STATUS CONTROVERSIAE.

The Principal Question In This Controversy.

1] Since the Law was given to men for three reasons:

first, that thereby **outward discipline** might be maintained against wild, disobedient men [and that wild and intractable men might be restrained, as though by certain bars];

secondly, that men thereby may be led to **the knowledge of their sins**;

thirdly, that after they are regenerate and [much of] the flesh notwithstanding cleaves to them, they might on this account have **a fixed rule** according to which they are to regulate and direct their whole life, **a dissension has occurred between some few theologians concerning the third use of the Law, namely, whether it is to be urged or not upon regenerate Christians.** The one side has said, Yea; the other, Nay.

Three Uses of the Law

1. Restraint on heathen (curb)
2. Knowledge of sin (mirror)
3. A fixed rule to regulate the Christian life

AFFIRMATIVA.

The True Christian Doctrine concerning This Controversy.

2] 1. We believe, teach, and confess that,

although men truly believing [in Christ] and truly converted to God have been freed and exempted from the curse and coercion of the Law,

they **nevertheless** are not on this account without Law,

but have been redeemed by the Son of God in order that they should exercise themselves in it day and night [that they should meditate upon God's Law day and night, and constantly exercise themselves in its observance, Ps. 1, 2], Ps. 119. For even our first parents before the Fall did not live without Law, who had the Law of God written also into their hearts, because they were created in the image of God, Gen. 1, 26f.; 2, 16ff; 3, 3.

3] 2. We believe, teach, and confess that **the preaching of the Law is to be urged with diligence, not only upon the unbelieving and impenitent, but also upon true believers, who are truly converted, regenerate, and justified by faith.**

4] 3. For **although** they are regenerate and renewed in the spirit of their mind,

yet in the present life this regeneration and renewal is not complete, but only begun,

and believers are, by the spirit of their mind, in **a constant struggle** against the flesh, that is, against the corrupt nature and disposition which cleaves to us unto death.

On account of this old Adam, which still inheres in the understanding, the will, and all the powers of man, it is needful that the Law of the Lord always shine before them

A., in order that they may not from human devotion institute wanton and self-elected **cults** [that they may frame nothing in a matter of religion from the desire of private devotion, and may not choose divine services not instituted by God's Word];

B. likewise, that the old Adam also may not employ his own will, but may be subdued **against his will**, not only by the admonition and threatening of the Law, but also by punishments and blows, so that he may follow and surrender himself captive to the Spirit, 1 Cor. 9, 27; Rom. 6, 12, Gal. 6, 14; Ps. 119, 1ff; Heb. 13, 21 (Heb. 12, 1).

5] 4. Now, as regards the distinction between **the works of the Law** and **the fruits of the Spirit**, we believe, teach, and confess that the works which are done according to the Law are and are called **works of the Law** as long as they are only extorted from man by urging the punishment and threatening of God's wrath.

Works of the Law Fruits of the Spirit
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6] 5. **Fruits of the Spirit**, however, are **the works which the Spirit of God who dwells in believers works through the regenerate, and which are done by believers so far as they are regenerate [spontaneously and freely], as though they knew of no command, threat, or reward;** for in this manner the children of God live in the Law and walk according to the Law of God, which [mode of living] St. Paul in his epistles calls the Law of Christ and the Law of the mind, Rom. 7, 25; 8, 7; Rom. 8, 2; Gal. 6, 2.

7] 6. Thus the Law is and remains both to the penitent and impenitent, both to regenerate and unregenerate men, **one [and the same] Law, namely, the immutable will of God;** and the difference, **so far as concerns obedience, is alone in man**, inasmuch as one who is not yet regenerate does for the Law out of constraint and unwillingly what it requires of him (as also the regenerate do according to the flesh); but the believer, so far as he is regenerate, does without constraint and with a willing spirit that which no threatenings [however severe] of the Law could ever extort from him.

One and the same Law But the obedience of man varies
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NEGATIVA.
False Contrary Doctrine.

8] Accordingly, we reject as a dogma and error injurious to, and conflicting with, Christian discipline and true godliness the teaching that the Law in the above-mentioned way and degree is not to be urged upon Christians and true believers, but only upon unbelievers, non-Christians, and the impenitent.

SOLID DECLARATION, VI.

10] **A.** But we must also explain distinctively what the Gospel does, produces, and works towards the new obedience of believers,

B. and what is the office of the Law in this matter, as regards the good works of believers.

11] For the Law says indeed that it is God's will and command that we should walk in a new life, **but it does not give the power and ability to begin and do it;** but the Holy Ghost, who is given and received, not through the Law, but **through the preaching of the Gospel, Gal. 3, 14, renews the heart.**

12] **Thereafter** the Holy Ghost employs the Law so as to teach the regenerate from it, and to point out and show them in the Ten Commandments what is the [*good and*] *acceptable will of God*, Rom. 12, 2, in what *good works God hath before ordained that they should walk*, Eph. 2, 10. He exhorts them thereto, and when they are idle, negligent, and rebellious in this matter because of the flesh, He reproveth them on that account through the Law, so that He carries on both offices together: He slays and makes alive; He leads into hell and brings up again. **For His office is not only to comfort, but also to reprove**, as it is written: *When the Holy Ghost is come, He will reprove the world* (which includes also the old Adam) *of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.* 13] But sin is everything that is contrary to God's Law. 14] And St. Paul says: *All Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof*, etc., and to reprove is the peculiar office of the Law. **A.** Therefore, as often as believers stumble, they are reprov'd by the Holy Spirit from the Law, **B.** and by the same Spirit are raised up and comforted again with the preaching of the Holy Gospel.

22] But how and why **the good works of believers, although in this life they are imperfect and impure because of sin in the flesh, are nevertheless acceptable and well-pleasing to God**, is not taught by the Law, which requires an altogether perfect, pure obedience if it is to please God. But **the Gospel teaches that our spiritual offerings are acceptable to God through faith for Christ's sake**, 1 Pet. 2, 5; Heb. 11, 4ff. 23] **In this way Christians are not under the Law, but under grace, because by faith in Christ the persons are freed from the curse and condemnation of the Law;** and because their good works, although they are still imperfect and impure, are acceptable to God through Christ; moreover, because **so far as they have been born anew** according to the inner man, they do what is pleasing to God, not by coercion of the Law, but by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, voluntarily and spontaneously from their hearts; however, they maintain nevertheless a constant struggle against the old Adam.

24] For **the old Adam, as an intractable, refractory ass**, is still a part of them, which must be coerced to the obedience of Christ, not only by the teaching, admonition, force and threatening of the Law, but also oftentimes by the club of punishments and troubles, until the body of sin is entirely put off, and man is perfectly renewed in the resurrection, when he will need neither the preaching of the Law nor its threatenings and punishments, as also the Gospel any longer; these belong to this [mortal and] imperfect life. 25] **But as they will behold God face to face, so they will, through the power of the indwelling Spirit of God, do the will of God [the heavenly Father] with unmingled joy, voluntarily, unconstrained, without any hindrance, with entire purity and perfection, and will rejoice in it eternally.**