

Translation of

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I Tim. 1, 3-11

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## EXPOSITION ON FIRST TIMOTHY

Doctor Martin Luther's sermon on the essence of God's commandments, concerning the misuse and the correct usage of the Law, according to the epistle of Paul, I. Tim. 1:3-11.

1) Up until now I have often taught, said, and continue to say, that there are two chief parts of Christian doctrine, faith and love, (as St. Paul continuously wrote about and attested to), because of which I also know of nothing else to preach. However, frivolous people have learned to use these words, they also want to be the center of attention and have cause to boast, as if they were an authority on the subject, but in essence they know nothing of the matter. Such a person experiences before long, that he seems to have come across something completely new, something that the people want to hear, but in essence have become nothing more than useless chatterboxes. So it has been since shortly after the time of the Apostles, whose teaching was based on faith toward God and love toward one's neighbor, and consequently is dependent on it. How a person tames and suppresses the lusts of the flesh; this alone they have stressed and had nothing more to teach.

2) But this sermon laid in the way, firstly, God's law and the scripture of the Old Testament, which the Apostle himself proclaimed and confessed. Secondly, that man might see, that the work or effect of their preaching did not follow as it should, as the complaint is now being heard. Because of this the new disciples convey the sentiment, that they want to make it better, and improve the situation, by mixing the two, works and faith. This scandal has hindered the pure teaching of faith from the beginning until this present day. When one preaches works it is to the detriment of faith, likewise, when one teaches faith it is to the detriment of works.

3) In this matter the people have a hard time judging and are rarely understood by anyone, unless the Holy Ghost has written it in the heart. On this very point many holy fathers have been tripped up. They were continually hung up with thinking that we should be able to see the sanctified life in its fine tuned and its completed external form and it had to be evidenced by its great and beautiful works, according to which we have called them holy, but not with regard to their faith. Furthermore, we saw in others several failings and weakness, these we have seen with our eyes, however, were not able to discern their faith. Thus we have judged them according to their works and have not taken their faith into account; exactly the opposite of what it should have been. Everyone was guilty of this same error, they all considered it right and proper, the final result is that I do not know of anyone who could judge this matter correctly, with the exception of the apostles, who were chosen to this purpose, so that they would be able to teach correctly in this matter and establish a basis for this doctrine. As far as books are concerned, there is nothing that speaks to this point. That is not surprising, in our time (this matter) is so deteriorated and squelched. For this reason St. Paul here warns Timothy, his disciples, and Christians everywhere, as much as they can, to defend with words, commands, earnest entreaties, and threats, so that they might not fall from the pure understanding and might diligently beware that the doctrine and teaching remain true and without error. For, as Paul says, everything depends on this.

V.3.4. As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work - which is by faith.

4) These "some" that the apostle is talking about here were certainly not evil people, but the esteemed apostles, Peter and others, disciples. They took note how the apostles went around according to the law of Moses, as did the other Jews. This fact caused them to boast when they came into contact with Gentiles. They took such things into account and boasted. (Peter and the other exalted apostles did this. What about Paul? He never went around with Christ or heard him. We have seen, that the others live and behave in this manner so you too should so live and do.) That was just about the whole argument with which they tried to make the law necessary, not because of Moses, but rather because of the apostles that held it as such. That was the case (I say) with the esteemed, great students of the apostles, who had so often seen their miraculous signs and had heard many beautiful sermons and doctrines, in addition, the final verdict at Jerusalem was decided by the apostles, Acts 15:1ff. Still they did not attain the proper understanding.

5) Because these are blinded by such a light, even when the Gospel was Preached so purely and so clearly, and with power it overcame and forged on. This is no longer the case, it has become mired in this mud, and they have compelled themselves and others to this end. Why is it a puzzle that this has happened to us? Even though we are so well equipped from God's grace and because we have such a light that easily judges such error; we should also have no such need to because we are still with each other and use the Word so diligently. Otherwise, if we were not going about it in this way, we might rapidly become a false preacher, who in one hour could do more harm than a person could correct in a year. Consequently, he could take one or another passage from Scripture and force these to pertain to works, so that the

doctrine of faith and love would fall away.

6) Therefore I have often warned that one should always separate works and faith. For although that is so often mentioned and attempted, yet everyone knows that this is lacking everywhere, especially when it comes to the final evaluation, from which one should judge or determine that one is proceeding on the proper course. Faith, (I say), is a matter of conscience between a man and God and something that no law, either man's or God's, can destroy. Therefore, if you hear someone who says you have to do such and such and he wants to lay the same work on your conscience and place it against God, you should know that it is most certainly a teaching of the devil and that these two are<sup>as</sup> far removed from each other as are heaven and earth, day and night. Faith is a matter solely of the heart or conscience, the works, on the other hand, are drawn from the conscience and applied to the body. There is more to faith because it pertains to heaven, works on the other hand are to be worn here on earth. Faith directs itself to God; works to one's neighbor. Faith supercedes all law and is without law. Works are submissive to the law and are the servants of all laws.

7) If now someone comes along and distorts something or mixes up and confuses, then the pure doctrine has been falsified already. Concerning works, we say that a person should do them and compel and train his body that he does not become too mischievous, lascivious, and lazy. These say: When you do that you will be holy and procure for yourself salvation, you merit eternal life. Such an addition, that a person has to do these things and that one should be made holy in a different way and impose the law on the conscience, so that the teaching of faith is done away with, should not be tolerated by us. I also talk the same way concerning other works that a per-

son does for his neighbor. It would be the same if I were to eat with the Jews, eating everything that they ate; the same thing also with the heathen, in keeping myself under their laws and customs and guiding myself in their works, so I am keeping all kinds of laws, nevertheless, in my conscience I have kept no law. For I am not doing the works with the opinion that I am being compelled to or that through them I am becoming holy before God, rather that I am placing myself under the will and use of my neighbor. This does not help or affect my standing before God for I already have the treasure through faith.

8) The apostles also held the law of Moses with the others, however, out of their own free will; not in order to appease their consciences or because they were forced to. They kept the law because they taught and decided to, as Peter says in Acts 15 verses 10 and 11. "Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are." With this decision he siezes and removes all works and laws. This makes it clear that the apostles are not throwing out the law, rather it is a matter of pure grace that the conscience hangs alone on Christ. Nevertheless, law and works still proclaim by their example and with their behavior. They are done for the sake of the people and not for the conscience's sake. Still these disciples clashed on this point, and made the addition which allowed the doctrine and the decision to slip from pure grace to works. In this way the apostles with their actions laid the same upon the conscience, saying, you must do such or you must not do such and such.

9) So it was that the false teachers made their inroad and fogged over faith, knocking grace down and driving Christ out. For whoever advises that one with his works can help the state of his conscience and will appease God, has already lost the grace with Christ and all reward. We will also still see when certain things are taken away, through which God maintains his Gospel, how soon the false teachers will make inroads, and what a flood of works will rush in. How much have not these destructive elements torn in -- and the rabble loves them! Therefore it is a matter of constant concern that we watch and take note of especially the preachers, that they maintain the true faith and give no inroad to false doctrine. For as soon as there is a confusion of faith and works and these two are not clearly distinguished, then everything is already lost. No matter how much is taught and maintained, it is much more easily obscured and changed. I am not saying that a person should not do works, but that a person should not bring them and flaunt them before God.

10) For this reason St. Paul speaks to this point. <sup>Firstly, Acts</sup> ~~His~~ Disciple Timothy should not teach otherwise. Secondly, that a person should not flatter such fables and genealogies. These are two barriers to the Gospel, firstly, that a person teaches otherwise or, as might be said, that a person forces law and works on the conscience. Secondly, that the devil, wherever he sees that he cannot immediately overturn faith, craftily proceeds and sneaks up from behind. He suggests useless questions, so that a person is bogged down in the peripherals while the main issue is left behind, as is the case with dead saints and departed souls; Where do they stay? Are they asleep? And similar questions. And so it goes, one question after another, a process to

which there is no end. So it is that our poor curiosity is bogged down with the unnecessary and useless things, things that are not commanded nor are they relevant. So it is that the devil comes behind people, opens their mouths, so that they gape at it and lose it (correct teaching). Then the fool enters who wants to be seen, suggests something new and strange,<sup>so</sup> that people say he is more learned than others, then the rabble comes in mass with ears and mouths wide open. In this way faith and love are silenced, for they maintain that it is daily bread and that they have all heard enough and know everything about it. It is lamentable that they continually hear but one thing.

11) The same thing also happened to the Jews. In the course of time they let the true doctrine fall by the wayside and became ensnared in all kinds of fables. They still have many which are concerned with fathers and birth--or family trees. For that reason they had a record of almost all ancestors and almost every city had their own genealogy. The Levites kept an annual record of them according to tribe and sex. They especially concerned themselves with the birth of the fathers. These are recorded in the book of Chronicles according to their tribe and family. This was done in order that they were able to tell who was whose father, brother, son, cousin, and friend, and how the line progressed from one member to another for each generation. What a drawn out and confusing thing this was, one that no one is able to unravel. These and similar fables and questions have been handed down to us from our teachers pertaining to the family of Christ, Mary and all kinds of other nonsense. There has not been anyone who said, "What are we doing?" or "What is the purpose in knowing this?" The heart of man by nature is a hostile, deceitful



curiosity that cannot help itself in carrying out such useless things.

]2) That is why Paul says you should defend yourself with hands and feet that you are not overcome by such useless fables and chatter. Such things cannot help anyone. All they do is hinder faith and cause controversy and dissention because everyone wants to be right. For example when one speaks about the departed souls, and another disagrees, and then each maintains that his opinion is the correct one. However, we say that we neither know nor do we care to know. Whatever God has not revealed to us; let such matters be, and God alone be concerned about them. We have other more necessary things to deal with in the handling of our own lives, such as the correct doctrine of faith and love and how we should live according to them. In order that our conscience is right with God and our body is held in check, whether one is a wife or child, or anyone who is in need of our service while we live on this earth. They acted as if they were the cause of this, although they never <sup>and</sup> anything to do with it. Ingeniously, they go around bragging and boasting in order that they receive the praise. Because of this it was necessary that St. Paul warned against these two obstacles. Unfortunately, his faithful advise and admonishment did not help much. So now everyone protects himself against all other doctrines and stands alone on that which follows.

V.5. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

13) That is the essence of the righteous Christian doctrine on which everything rests. What do these useless questions and fables benefit mankind?

Everything that God commands and desires is love, a love that proceeds from a pure heart, a pure conscience and untainted faith. That is what we want to see in one another.

14) We have been taught that a "pure heart" is when man drives out the unpure thoughts. This is well stated and understood -- but not carried out. One is never totally free from them. Experience has taught that when a person drives out one, then ten enter in its place and when a person drives out ten, then a hundred enter in their place. It is not possible to cleanse one's heart through one's own efforts. Flesh and blood tremble without ceasing the more a person tries to do it. Therefore Paul mentions that the heart has to be pure initially, so that it is not made to be a matter of the conscience. He says the same thing in Titus 1:15. "To the pure, all things are pure." And Christ says in Matthew 5:8. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." So we see that "to have a pure heart" does not only mean not to have unpure thoughts, but also when the conscience is enlightened and made certain by the Word of God it will not be fouled by the law. So a Christian knows that it (the law) will not hurt him whether he keeps it or not. He actually does what it is otherwise forbidden to do or allows that which is otherwise commanded. To a Christian it is not a sin because he is not capable of committing one, because his heart is pure. On the other hand an ~~un~~<sup>im</sup>pure heart defiles and sins against itself in everything because it is overcome by the myriad of laws. Later when the heart is cleansed ~~from~~<sup>in</sup> the law, something that only happens through the Word; at that time it is pure in its thinking. At that time flesh and blood are perceived to be pure -- not greedy, hateful, nor immoral. But this is still the lowest form of purity, the other is the

highest, out of which this has its origin.

15) Christ tells us in Matthew 5:8 that whoever possesses such a pure heart will see God. "To see God" is not what the philosophers dream about. God is recognized when the heart sees his goodness and grace and does not doubt that he is its father. The heart recognizes his good will and his natural way of going about things, which is without sin or wrath. With this knowledge the conscience should never drive us to the law. For where law is, there is sin; where sin is, there is an evil, impure conscience. As long as you continue to live in sin according to the law, it is impossible to see God and you will hold him for a vengeful judge. This is not what is meant by seeing God, for here, rather, a hangman and prison guard is seen. When this is the case it is impossible for anyone to see God as he is, for he is apart from the law.

16) As long as this superficial purity, that sees God, exists, then the other form of purity ~~is~~ also. That form which smothers evil desires and reduces them and after which pure thoughts follow. In this case you will be freed from meritorious works, as in the case of keeping the law, for out of this everything follows that is necessary to keep the law and to remove sin. But as long as the law remains neither the heart nor the work can be pure, but remains pure unbelief and evil thoughts against God. Titus 1:15. "To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted." To help better to understand this here is a rough example. The pope has burdened the conscience with laws, so many order<sup>s</sup>, institutions, masses, prayers, set up so many fasts. Whoever attempts to keep them and things<sup>k</sup> to himself, "This and that we have to do". This per-

son will have no rest and a terrible conscience and will see God as wrathful. If they do not pray then they have no peace. However, even when they pray, there is so little peace there, as if they never even prayed at all, or not as properly as they should have. In such a case the conscience is continually held captive and can perform no work from a believing heart. In short, there is nothing there except pure sin and fear that is the result of the law. This is something that a man will never be able to free himself from, because the law is continually there, therefore, it is also impossible for man to ever see God.

17) However, when the law is removed and I am no longer bothered by it, the sin and unrest of the conscience is also removed. When such is the case it is possible to see God correctly and to see His good will and what you do does not cause him grief, but pleases him. When this is the case the heart is pure and the conscience is good. In the same way I speak of all other laws, beings, and circumstances. When you ascertain that you have to do it, already the influence of the law is felt on the conscience, resulting in sin and an impure heart. This is the case either too often or not enough. The longer and more that you beat yourself with (this heresy), the more you defile yourself, sin and defame your conscience. Whoever wants to be separate from sin, to have a good conscience and a pure heart must not be bound to any law here on earth.

18) However, when you say: "Indeed, you have only been speaking about human law, but what do you have to say concerning God's law?" For it is easy to deal with the laws made by men, the laws which man can do away with,

those which do not weigh heavy upon the conscience, nor do they bind it and cause a person to sin before God. However, God's law, which he wants us to keep, will never lose a letter or tittle, as Christ says in Matthew 5:18. Because of that man cannot step it into the ground with a good conscience. If however there is an evil conscience present, sin is also there, and it is impossible for the heart to be pure. It is also not possible for it to be able to see God, for the conscience informs you that it is the enemy of sin and will punish it and sees anything but grace. How is it possible then for a man in such a case to escape the law and receive a pure heart and a good conscience?

19) The answer: Here the people are divided into two sections, those having the spirit and those who do not have it. Those who do not have the spirit are not affected by this doctrine and it is also not preached to them. It is not possible for them to be pure of heart or to have a good conscience. However, those who have the Holy Spirit, of whom we are now speaking, even if they have committed sins and feel them, they still have something higher and better than the law. At this point the law ceases to exist, not that it has been taken away and is no longer valid, nor should it be kept as the laws of popes and men which come to an end; but, as has been already stated, a higher (law) has been given so that it has been silenced and has fulfilled its purpose.

20) To illustrate the point: If I were to fall into sin and to go against God's command, the law is right there giving me a bad conscience and making God out to be vengeful. But in contrast, faith, holds before me

God's Word and Christ as my Savior, who has been sent to me from God, with everything that he accomplished. So I speak with the same faith. It is true that I do sin and that the law says that I should be pure of heart, not having a bad conscience nor evil lusts; but I experience that it is a different matter with the flesh which is evil through and through.

21) I have to divide myself in two, namely, the flesh and the Old Adam, and the spirit or new man. In my heart I have Christ through faith and the result is that I fight within myself in two ways. First, when I am dealing with the law, it is already a lost cause, for I am never capable of doing enough. I fall continually deeper into sin and the result is that my evil conscience and impure heart remain. I cannot escape the law. Second, when I grasp onto Christ and cling to him, the law cannot overpower me. Christ is not a sinner, he has done as much as was prescribed by the law, so that it can neither forbid, nor command him nor demand what he has already done. He is so full of everything good that he neither wills nor does anything but good. To sum it up, he has no law and is above all law, indeed, in him it has been completely done away with. Because Christ is mine through faith and I likewise am his, there is no law that can condemn me because of Him. If it (the law) arrives and attempts to grab hold of me so I lay this before him and say: "Have not I done this already and more than that which you want, even though I have evil passions in my flesh, I turn my eyes to Christ. He is mine and He gives me everything that he has. His purity is also mine. <sup>b</sup>This means that the law can do nothing to me. When I look inside of myself <sup>h</sup>I still find much that is impure, in that respect the law is right in condemning me.

22) This is the main point that we learn here, on which lies the ability and all power to tell a man how to correctly evaluate himself, so that when we experience the passions of the flesh or have fallen into sin, nevertheless, we can say: "I want to be free from the law. I have neither law nor sin, rather I am pious and just. If I cannot say that then I have to doubt and despair." The law says: "You have sinned." If I say yes, then I have lost; if I say no, then I must have a good foundation on which to stand, so that I can defend myself and maintain my answer of no. How is it possible that I can say this? Is it not also true and scripture also witnesses to this, that I am born in sin? Where is it that I get my answer of no? I cannot find it inside of myself, but rather in Christ. I have to obtain it in him, the one who has done away with the law, and said, "See, he can say no to all laws, and he has a reason for it, because he is pure and without sin. He has given me the right to say no even though when I look inside myself and see that I am a sinner, who is not able to stand before you <sup>and</sup> ~~but~~ feels that there is nothing pure in me. Indeed, I see God's wrath and I should say yes, but I still know that his righteousness is mine and for that reason I am no longer meshed in sin." We have to come to this point, that is, to constantly say we are pious and pure in the same way that Christ himself could say this. All of this happens through faith.

23) These are the things that we are to preach and the sum of the whole law. St. Paul tells us that is to be the case and you will have no rest if you deviate from them. Only in this way will you have love from a pure heart, one that knows nothing of law and sin and you will see the just God "with a good conscience." Thereafter with an "untainted faith", that is, a faith

that is not only preached with words and is not only acted out with thoughts in one's heart, but ~~that~~ a faith that is solid, undoubted and certain -- if it has all of these, then everything essential is there. In effect that is as good as saying that there is no law there, neither God's nor man's. So it is that human law falls away, it is completely abolished, abandoned and one does not even mention that Christ did not come for this reason. These laws can be lifted by men because they made them in the first place. God's law is above all others and only Christ could keep it. It had to be lifted in death or before, however, this death is eternal; therefore man needed the one over which it had no hold, the one who had done enough on our behalf. Such solid, untainted faith which we are to grasp, has to be created through the Holy Spirit. He is responsible for these three things. He makes us holy, pious and full of God and does not let us flounder or terrorize our good conscience. He does not mislead a pure heart. This alone is necessary to know, even though not all feel it, nevertheless some do.

24) So we should diligently beware ~~that~~ that man teaches nothing else. This happens, as has been said, when one attempts to make people pious by using the law and trying to rule the conscience. The papist have continued to this day to do this. All the rabblers still do this. They lead the people around with their thoughts and dreams that have to do with God, but come nowhere near to what they should be teaching, that is, what a pure heart, a good conscience, an untainted faith actually is. The pope with all his great scholars does not understand even today what these three things are all about. They dream about what a pure heart is, one that cannot think evil and is dependent on no creature, so that creature and thought are to be separate



from one another. When a person has a wife and goes about his work with a happy heart or a wife who is concerned with her child and cares for him, that is not supposed to have anything to do with a pure heart, so that all such things cannot happen without thoughts that are linked to the action. Man has to daily think about nourishment, money, work, and other things. There are certain creatures which man, it has been said, can get along fine without, the result is that his thoughts are nothing other than sitting and speculating about heaven, and aspire<sup>100</sup> nothing else than to follow after God. So it necessarily follows, that Christ also did not possess a completely pure heart when he caused the blind to see, made the sick healthy, raised the dead and in all his other works; for he had to care for the creature. How in the meantime did his heart and thoughts remain strictly with God?

25) In this way the blindleaders have led us and have written innumerably many books<sup>2</sup> with such speculating about how it is possible for man to rid himself of the creature. All this is nothing more than pure dreaming and the devil's misleading. It is inconceivable to think that the heart is pure; otherwise there would be no one so impure as God himself. He sees all villainy, thinks about it and is annoyed with it. He concerns himself with all creatures, creates and does everything Himself. There is the purity that has already been mentioned enough, namely, that when the conscience is good the man does for works what he wants, so that the heart is not bound to it, and does not do it in order to merit something or because he has to. He does works with all love and passion for the sole purpose of pleasing God. In this way (the heart) is pure and is concerned with all creatures. (Christians) are to

act freely as matters come up in life. There is not a matter of law or sin for them, there is nothing impure to him, indeed everything is pure. He sees God correctly and has an untainted faith, without which such works cannot be done. In this way all the commandments are fulfilled -- the heart stands just before God and works are seen by our neighbor. Everything that is not preached according to this rule and measure is not on the correct path. Therefore the writer continues with verses 6 and 7.

V.6.7. Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.

26) St. Paul says that they have missed the mainpoint. They do not know what the three essential parts are. They are only playing with thoughts and because of that they err and make mistakes and they are teaching these mistakes to other people. From their ranks you will never hear ~~from~~ one of them preach about how man obtains a pure heart and a good conscience. They deal only with other unnecessary prattle, saying, you have to do such and such and rely on yourself, etc., relying on pure works and commands.

27) Is not that a bold apostle who could call the exalted disciples of the apostles and their followers, the pope and his hordes, useless chatterers. He also told them that none of them knew what they were <sup>saying and erecting,</sup> locked up free will. Where a person fails to preach faith and love there is nothing other than unnecessary chatter and neither the ones preaching nor other people know what they are doing -- even if it has the appearance and name as precious as one might expect. They want to be lauded as if they were masters of Scripture, the only ones who can and should interpret it. In this way they are closing the mouths of the people. They themselves do not understand the passages that they

are teaching, nor do they know what they pertain to. When this happens, the three above mentioned parts in which the essence of the scriptures is contained are missing. They use the passages that contain these elements but they do not see them. They have to rely upon their dreams for interpretation, which is contrary to the actual doctrine.

28) Thus it follows that the doctrine which they set up and hold, they also know nothing about. This is the case when one preaches contrary to God's command. St. Paul said previously, everything is to illuminate (God) that demands love from a pure heart, a good conscience and untainted faith. This is the only way to correctly preach and teach. Concerning this they know nothing. For that reason they set other things against it and in this way demand the law. They say: "Keep this and that and you will be pious, deceive yourself and others with it and make for yourself only a bad conscience, stricken with the law, and an impure heart without faith and love.

29) With this you have a good picture of all who do not teach faith, the result is that they must make mistakes and err. they cannot teach, and they do not want to keep quiet. They are mistaken in this and have missed the boat, nevertheless, they want all right and power for themselves, to set and to order. They do not understand the Scripture, no matter how much they attempt to use it. They also do not understand their own venomous slander. They come up short on all sides -- in their correct understanding of the Spirit and their own childish trifles. That means that they take the exalted, educated, and holy people and laud and copy them. The apostle continues with the following.

V.8.9. We know that the law is good if a man uses it properly. We also know that law is made not for good men but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers.

30) Until now we have spoken about how the law is not correctly preached, i.e. about those who preach that the conscience must be caught and driven to do good works in order to receive merit before God. In that way the chief doctrine is wiped out because no one can come before God or to God by works. Rather one must be righteous and born of God in order to do a work that is truly good. Finally, this is the opinion that the law wants to have, that man has a pure heart, good conscience, and untainted faith toward God out of which love flows. In this a person should remain and seek nothing more. Whoever preaches and lives in this way preaches and lives correctly.

31) Now Paul answers a question which he also raised in other epistles. When somebody asks, "Does the law have any purpose? Does it not demand something from us over against God? Why, then, was it given? Why should we keep it?" In the writings of Moses it did not sound as if it was given for no reason, but rather that one should have it and keep it, as so many passages in the Scripture attest to. To this point (I say) St. Paul answered the following. Yes, I confess that the law is good, however, it is not so good. Many people can be found, who have been driven to misuse and are impure (because of the law). Therefore it is good where one uses it in the right way. However, it is not good, in fact, it is harmful when it is incorrectly used.

32) That is the reason we defend our teaching about why the law was given and how it is to be used. For, what we have already heard must remain, namely, that no one is made pious by it, that no law can burden the conscience, and in fact, the law should be driven away. For when you

drive it away, you actually spite evil.

33) Therefore the right use of the law means that one should not drive in, where it belongs out. To understand this use in the right way you must divide a person into two parts, namely, the old and new, just as St. Paul did. Let the new man not be entangled with laws! The old Adam is driven constantly with laws and has no peace because of it. This is the correct use of the law. The new man cannot be helped with works.. He needs something better, namely, Christ. He is no law or work, but rather a gift and present given out of the pure grace and goodness of God. When (Christ) comes into the heart through faith a person is chaste before God. When you are advised to do a work, keep an ordinance, or hold a position, so that you will be pure before God, then you have already lost the right use of the law and denied Christ. He helps you without all kinds of works which you have done. In this way the law is pushed too far and driven too extensively, for then you drive Christ out of your heart, where he alone should sit and rule and the law and your works are set in his place. This is just what the false teachers do and they can do nothing else. So the new man (I say) has his assigned part, namely, Christ with all His goodness. With Christ in his heart he has everything he should have and needs nothing more, either in heaven or on earth.

34) The Old Adam, which is without faith and does not have a pure heart or Christ, must have the law and must always be driven by works. For where Christ is not present, there no person is capable of doing good, because that person is under the devil's control. Therefore no deception is too much or too great for him, he thinks nothing of hurting

others, he commits all kinds of sins, blasphemies and shameful schemes whenever he can. He is inclined not to be good and performs no good, rather he is filled with vain deception and evil. On that account, it is necessary that the law comes and controls this evil. In addition, it serves as a defense to hold back the evil ones, so that they cannot do what they gladly want. For God comes and scares them with the law, commands with it and drives it powerfully into the people. They fear death, disgrace, and hell, yet he does not intend to make them better through this, but rather that the evil of which they are full is put to a stop. So they cannot burst forth and proceed according to their own will. This is not the case because of the pious, but it is given because of the evil, as St. Paul teaches in Romans 13:4-5 concerning the secular government. If the world were not evil, man would have no need of government, laws, swords, rulers, judges, fire, gallows, and the racks. What is true for the unbeliever pertains to all. They should be kept in order and **when they** get out of order, they should be punished and condemned. In conclusion, all governments and laws are given by God, in order to protect from those set on evil.

35) Even though the secular sword and external system of order are neither needed nor of use to the pious, but only to the evil, so it is also the case with God's law. With the pious citizen who harms no one the judge has nothing to do, but only with thieves and murderers. A man does not have to keep dogs for the sake of one sheep, just to bite someone who passes by, but he keeps a dog because of the wolves. If there

were not any wolves, then there would be no need for watches or precautions. So the law has been placed into effect, not because of the pious, but because of the evil. That is a use and usefulness of the law, that is, that it scares people and punishes with all kinds of bodily and spiritual misfortune, in order that evil might be done away with and fought against openly. That is why (the law) is good and does not in itself make a person pious. It makes merely an outward appearance for the people, so that people keep the works; however, internally it remains unchecked. Because of it the people can have peace and not have everyone practice mischievousness as he wishes. In this way (the law) is correctly preached and guides.

36) If you add to this, so that before God this is something that is valuable and necessary for the pious, then you have gone too far in this matter. It is only something that is valid on earth and in the external being before the people. Internally there is another treasure, something that a person can never attain by himself. This office and honor comes only through the work of the Holy Spirit; if he is not there, then everything is lost. He is the one who has to enlighten and kindle the heart, so that it delights in everything good and is unconfused by the law. If you give the law to such a person you have misused it, for you are driving the Holy Spirit out. Because the Holy Spirit is not the law, nor vice versa. If the law is there, then the Holy Spirit is not; if he is not there, then there is no godliness present. Therefore there should be no law there. The law should not and

cannot make a person godly, the Holy Spirit, however, makes a person devout before God. If you do not have (the Holy Spirit) then do not go on thinking that it is possible for you to be godly. He is not a work, i.e., something that stands within your power. He is God's gift, indeed, he is the living God. Man can by no power receive Him, the sole exception is when God allows preaching concerning Christ, through whose blood and death all our sins have been drowned and on whose account we have received His spirit.

37) When such words ring in the ears, the Holy Spirit accompanies these things to the heart. He goes where he wants and he does not blow on all; because of that not everyone grasps this. Nevertheless, the Word does not proceed without bearing fruit; because of that man has to continually preach, hear, handle, and promote the same thing until the time that the Holy Spirit comes; there is no other way to bring this about. If you sit in the corner, gape toward heaven and wait; and then you supposedly see Him coming -- it is an illusion. The word is the only bridge and means through which the Holy Ghost comes to us. Acts 10:44 speaks about this. Here Peter preached about Christ, how He died and rose again, so that the Holy Ghost would come on all those who heard the Word. That was certainly not a work, but only hearing which brought the Holy Ghost along with it. So it is a misuse of the law to think that hearing, worked by the Holy Ghost is a work. The right use of the law is to control and punish the evil.

38) There is yet another use of the law which St. Paul in other



places crosses out. This use is somewhat more subtle, i.e., that the law teaches the realization of sin. This use is preached when we hear that we are full of sin in all that we are and do. What a person thinks, wants, or speaks, in fact, everything a person does is against God and damnable. Through this use of the law all the great and beautiful works of the work-righteous saints will be knocked down. All those people who want to use the law to earn satisfaction before God will be struck down. The previous use checks great and public sins, but there is no good outward appearance, in fact, all still lead an impure and scandalous life, so that the whole world must say they are damnable.

39) There are some pious scoundrels and hypocrites, who by the deed do not murder, steal, commit adultery or live shamefully. They have a rather honorable being and behavior, go about in gray robes and hats, tie cords around their body, pray, fast, do penance and adhere to their order in the strictest way; just as the monks until now have done. There are still many fine and honorable people to be found in this world, about whom the world can only say that they are godly and holy people. Here the law concerns itself and curbs (such people). The law will not let these people be godly, just as it does not want these people to be evil. Here it rejects good works and there it forbids evil works. Here it cannot do its previous role, i.e., to curb the evil, for it has already ~~been~~ <sup>been</sup> brought into line and ~~excused~~; because these people are beautiful, godly, and are in no need of punishment in the eyes of the world. However, (they know that the law) forbids and they go too far in that direction, by believing that their

works, compelled by the law, will earn satisfaction before God. They want to make heavenly, eternal righteousness out of worldly, corruptible righteousness. Therefore (the law) has to curb both sides. This happens when a person says: "All the which you do with the opinion that you have merited something before God ~~are~~<sup>is</sup> lost and damned. For there is no one in this world who can do a work which will please God because we are all deceitful and we are all liars, as Psalm 116:11 says. There the law passes a judgment on such lives, strikes them down and makes those lives sinful and scandalous."

40) That is indeed a higher and more necessary use. Thus the law is a very precious thing when it is used in the right way. It must curb on both sides, so that those do not do evil and so that these are not godly. Why is that? Therefore, because it, (as now said), is nevertheless wrong and they with the appearance and cover deceive the people. They want to make it right with their works and beautiful behavior, but what then is the use of the Holy Ghost? Or why did Christ come and pay the price of his precious blood, so that He could win them, which they with their works seek (to do)? If they can attain it through the work of the law, then Christ died in vain, Moses seized the Holy Ghost and His office, slandered and denied Christ.

41) Where the teaching is received and the heart is touched in the right way that person might be outwardly as pious as he can be, yet he will knock down the feathers of a peacock and put down his pride. When that person looks at himself the right way, he must confess that he is full of dirt, poison, envy, wrath, lust and unbelief more than anyone

else. This is even the case if he can hide his villiany for a little while, out of compulsion or fear, for the sake of his appearance and honor. It is not possible to become godly by works, indeed, the more one wants to make good, the worse it becomes. Whoever now dares (to go too far in this regard) must be curbed by the law, so that he does not drive out the Holy Ghost, take His office, and set himself up in His place. If (the law) is so used, i.e., that it curbs here and there, then it is used rightly and is good and precious. So it remains in the end, that a person must have something more and better, because the law does not help a person to godliness. As already mentioned this is the Holy Ghost, which St. Paul called a gift of God. He freely gave that gift to us, however, it was earned through Christ and is brought in and with the Word.

42) However, you ask: "How? Should a person then do good works and keep the law?" Answer: "Yes, certainly." The law is good and everybody certainly keeps it who handles, preaches, pushes and does it. Why, then, should a person keep it? So that a person can thereby be made godly? Answer: "No, a person may want to say because a man will thereby be godly before the world, however, before God there must be something else. Why, then, is it good or why was it given? (It was given to serve) as a curb, so that one might not do evil and be compelled to an outward godliness before the world. Moreover, so that it would curb that same worldly godliness, in order that a person would not measure himself the wrong way and think that he could with it make himself pious before God, but rather to bring him to the point where he con-

fesses before God that he is a sinner and damned. In short, (it was given) so that a person knows that he merits nothing before (God) from outwardly holding to the works of the law.

43) Do you want to be godly and do righteous good works? Then you have to acquire the Holy Ghost, who brings Christ to you and plants in you and you in Him. In this way you will become a new person. The Holy Ghost will give you a pure heart and create a clean conscience and a firmly-based faith. There you have the right use of the law. Where (the law) functions (says St. Paul) and a person knows about it, (it is clear) that the righteous have been given no law, but rather (it has been given) to those who are not righteous and for them it is good and useful. How that applies has already been thoroughly explained.

44) Thus the apostle now says that it is not given to the righteous, but rather to the wicked. Why? Just look at the use. The righteous man is and has the Holy Ghost, a pure heart, clean conscience and untainted faith. What can you curb in him so that he does not do evil? He does not do any, however, in order that he recognizes himself as a sinner and does not measure with works his ability to become godly. This is alot to hope for. It is already there, and even more than the law can ever give. Whoever has faith certainly knows that he is a sinner and does not think that he will get into heaven with works, but knows that he has everything through Christ, therefore, no commandment can defeat him. A person must apply the law to the wicked. Why? So that a person curbs them or they learn to recognize what they are.

45) As I have stated above, God's law is not abolished, this is never the case and is not possible; but rather that a person understands it spiritually, according to his conscience. So much has already been said: The law certainly remains, however the righteous have so much, namely, the Holy Ghost and a pure heart which enables him to do everything which the law demands. Take this example: If a thing moves like it should, then no one has to push it; if it does what a person wants to have it do, then a person does not have to command, direct, or forbid it to do anything. A person can give no law to the sun for it to shine or run its course in the heavens; to the water so that it flows; to the fire so that it burns, to the tree so that it blooms, grows, and bears fruit, i.e., if there is nothing wrong with it. That person must be a fool who dares to command all such things. If it is already at hand, then no one can command it to be there. When you command it, it must either not be there or it must be there and you must be a fool. Augustine gave this example: Two and three are not guilty that they make five altogether. No one can simply demand this! The sum has already been made, so that it cannot and will not be anything else. In addition, a law must be given, which is still not there or does not function as it should. If it comes and is at hand, it must stop and be discarded. This is the way it is here with God's law and the ten commandments.

46) Therefore, if the law says: you should have no other gods, do not take God's name in vain, respect the Sabbath day, honor thy parents, do not kill, steal, commit adultery, bear false witness, and

so forth; this is just as much as if it were to say: you are an idolater, blasphemer of God, unholy, disobedient, a murderer, an adulterer, thief, and liar. If you do not drive out the works, then your heart is still completely full of vice and desires to do evil. None of us is any different, because we are all Adam's children. Thus no ass can call the other a pack mule; just as one is, so are all. That we do not do what we would gladly do, only creates punishment, scandal, and the fear of hell. Where these things are not present, there is no one who would not rob, steal, murder as the others. So you can see, that the law actually closes everything, with the result that what it demands is not there, but rather the opposite.

47) Because that is the way it is with a Christian, as has been said, i.e., that he does everything that the law demands, has a pure heart toward God, permits and does good to everyone and evil to no one. He is the way he should be, so that he wants and can do nothing else, because he has the Holy Ghost: Through the Holy Ghost his heart is enkindled with desire for all goodness. Therefore, you can command him to be godly, just as much as you demand a man to be a man or a woman to be a woman. This was so created before any law existed and the nature did not convey it otherwise. If you go further and you want to command such a person, I would say, that you certainly are a fool and absurd, because you demand that which he already has paid and given and that you forbid what he cannot do anyway. From

that it is clear enough that the law has nothing to do with the godly, but if it does have something to do with someone, it is that person who is not godly or righteous. For God is indeed no fool, that he would call you to do something that has already been done. Because He demands from the whole world: Do this and that. He wants to have determined that they are all full of sin and that these sins compel them to confess (their sins). Thus, as St. Paul says, the law remains on the wicked. It curbs and scares them, as long as they know that they <sup>must</sup> have something else and better to fulfill ~~it and to be free from it.~~

48) So you say: If that is the case then is no one righteous on earth? For St. Paul himself firmly commanded Timothy and said in verse 3, "As I have admonished" etc. Also shortly thereafter verse 18, "This command I give to you." This is a command that he further called an "order" and "command". Is it not true that the Scripture, both Old and New Testaments, are full of such commands? Are Paul or Timothy, or the other Christians not godly? Or why can he say, "To the righteous no law has been given" and then goes further and he himself gives him one?

49) The believer is righteous according to the spirit, without all sin and can have no law; he has sin according to the flesh and so forth. Therefore, take for example a pious Christian. He has a pure heart, good conscience and untainted faith and must also say, "I have a pure heart, good conscience, and righteous faith, nevertheless, my flesh, tongue, and fist are not pure, i.e., the old scoundrel, who

hangs on my neck is still impure." The faith, which leads us to God in heaven, wants to be under no law. The (believing) heart has as much as any person could ask for -- a happy spirit, desire to do good, and a friendly and humble heart which submits itself to everyone -- everything is pure and righteous. However, the flesh on the outside has no desire to follow, all kinds of dirt and evil desires hang on him, along with concern for nourishment, fear of death, avarice, wrath, and hate. The filth always remains next to the faith and (the faith) must beat it and sweep it out. Because such things are still there, the Scripture sees us in this section the same as the wicked and sinners, for according to the flesh we must have the law, just as much as that (other) one needs it to curb and suppress the desires of his flesh. However, such things happen to the vexation and unwillingness of the desires of the spirit. Here is the difference between the two. Both are curbed through the law, however, those who have the spirit have a willing and happy heart and the others do not. Therefore the former will receive a gift, i.e., their sins will not be reckoned to them; the latter will be damned because they have no desire or love.

50) Thus the righteous person has everything that he should, and needs to do no good works in order to become righteous. He can do nothing to attain godliness because he receives and takes the Gospel and walks in the spirit of Christ. If he has received that, then he will do good works. After that reception he needs no law and is



pure. However, after that reception, ~~that~~ he should take <sup>the law</sup> anyway, because he still needs <sup>it.</sup> ~~the law~~. A Christian has to divide himself into two parts because he is at the same time righteous and wicked. The Holy Ghost lives in the heart, but not <sup>in</sup> the flesh, there the devil lives with his seed. Thus a person must live on earth, outwardly compelled by the law and driven not to do evil; however, according to the spirit he will remain free to do good by himself. That will remain true until he dies. On the Last Day we will be pure in body and soul without all evil desires, indeed, heaven and earth will become full of goodness. Now, however, because flesh and blood are living it is not possible, it (flesh and blood) must keep itself moving. What it sees, it is obvious, that it must either have love for or turn away from it. That remains greater and stronger in some, and in others less, until their deaths. Therefore, one has to drive it along from day to day in order to sweep it out.

51) For the sake of this cause St. Paul now orders and lets it be commanded to others that a person should remain with the true doctrine and not teach anything else. For it is a part of the office that one does not fall into false teaching, in order that the heart will not again be contaminated with fleshly conceit and teachings. Thus a person should curb in whatever way he can, so that the conscience will not become dirtied, as must happen whenever (a false teaching) falls on it. The emphasis is put on this part, for where the teaching remains pure and the conscience is not polluted with other

teachings, it helps and advises you in your life and works. Thus this is the summa summarum: According to the spirit there is no law; according to the flesh there is law, for it does not do what it should; the spirit, however, does everything (it should). Now understand the passage correctly, which teaches why the law and the two uses of the law were given.