



Consider the areas of application of law and gospel. We have spoken of raising children, teaching Sunday school, listening to and analyzing sermons, witnessing Christ, but how about constructing our own devotions, using our skills to analyze hymns and spiritual songs. Consider the songs we might hear on WDLM or K-love radio. And what about the book my friend passed on to me, is it filled with Biblical errors, and/or is it confusing law and gospel. Where we see an emphasis on “doing” something to complete our walk or please God, we need to beware. Why? How about our visit to the nursing home, do we struggle for words of comfort? I hope you will remember the instruction on law and gospel from this study as you apply this art of rightly distinguishing between them.

Imagine you lived next to the father of the late Kelsey Clain. What comfort would you want to impart? How would you?

Today’s lesson is based on chapter 3 of the book, Making Christ a new Moses. Moses was the first law giver, so it is a mistake to make Christ over to the second Moses, God’s New Testament law giver. Read Titus 3:5. Making Jesus into a moral authority (like Moses was to the Jews) we deny his much greater gift to believers, namely our redeemer and our sin sacrifice who died in our place. Only once we live and celebrate Christ’s death and resurrection, do we have a personal reconciliation with God and so with great joy and appreciation turn to Jesus life and teachings for a guide for our own life. Not that this striving to live a good life will impart any more goodness to us. This imparting holiness by good works remains in many doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church (what Luther or Walther would call the “Papists”).

Walther mentions other false doctrine among the Socinians and the Rationalists. The Socinians denied Christ was the Son of God. Today members of the Universalist/Unitarian denomination deny Jesus’ deity and offer him up only as a moral authority, someone to emulate his goodness. This places Jesus in the same league as Confucius, Ghandi, Mother Theresa, or Martin Lutheran King. There are other religions that honor Jesus, but deny his Lordship. They include Mormons, Jehovah’s Witness, Seventh Day Adventists, and others. Rationalism would attempt to strip Christianity of its supernatural and sacramental character, also stripping Jesus of his greatest role for us.

Rationalists not unlike the Catholic Church leaders and those that would deny the Trinity, all put man’s striving to attain a new and better way of serving Him. They are making Jesus’ law

conform to “new evolving human morality”. This includes women status and rights including their right to control her body (a euphemism for abortion). It includes a growing acceptance of what is described in the Bible as an abomination in the forms of sexual perversions.

Rationalists are changing God’s law and then making Jesus their interpretation of a humanistic ideal. These teachings are heretical and are to be condemned.

1. Read Galatians 1:6-9. Why does Paul place those who preach a “different gospel” under a curse? How does this help us understand Walther’s condemnation of the council of Trent? There is an axiom of long-standing in the church that declares “the church that cannot curse can no longer bless.” In our tolerant age, many find it hard to reject false teaching. Why is this so?

2. Why does Luther insist that Christ is a gift before He is an example? When Christ is pictured merely as an example or model for Christian living, what happens to the Gospel? What evidence can you find of this confusion in contemporary Christianity?

3. How are rationalism, moralism, and mysticism dead-end paths to God?

4. What do each of these texts tell us about the Gospel? 1 Timothy 1:17

John 3:17

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Romans 1:16

5. If time permits return to p 49 & 50 of the small catechism to review what it says about Law and Gospel.

Closing-

consider LSB 579 The Law of God is Good and Wise

1. The Law of God is good and wise and sets His will before our eyes,
Shows us the way of righteousness, and dooms to death when we transgress.
5. The Law is good; but since the fall its holiness condemns us all;
It dooms us for our sin to die and has no pow’r to justify.
6. To Jesus we for refuge flee, who from the curse has set us free,
And humbly worship at His throne, saved by His grace through faith alone.