

The Sixth Sunday after Trinity

As far as possible, all misunderstanding should be prevented, and the distinction between the Law's works and the Spirit's works should be properly taught and preserved. Therefore, this is to be noted with special diligence: when we speak of good works that agree with God's Law (for otherwise they are not good works), then the word Law has only one sense. It means God's unchangeable will, according to which people are to guide themselves in their lives.

The difference, however, is in the works, because there is a difference in the people who strive to live according to this Law and will of God. For as long as a person is not regenerate and guides himself according to the Law, he does the works because they are commanded. So from fear of punishment or desire for reward, he is still under the Law. His works are properly called by St. Paul "works of the Law" [e.g., Romans 3:20], for they are extorted by the Law, like the works of slaves. These are "saints" after the order of Cain [Jude 11].

When a person is born anew by God's Spirit, liberated from the Law (i.e., freed from this driver), and led by Christ's Spirit, he lives according to God's unchangeable will revealed in the Law. Since he is born anew, he does everything from a free, cheerful spirit. These works are not properly called "works of the Law," but works and "fruit of the Spirit" [Galatians 5:22]. Or as St. Paul names it, "the law of [the] mind" [Romans 7:23] and the "law of Christ" [1 Corinthians 9:21]. For such people are no longer under the Law, but under grace, as St. Paul says in Romans 8:2.

The punishment and penalty of original sin, which God has imposed upon Adam's children and upon original sin, are death, eternal damnation [Romans 3:23], and also other bodily, spiritual, temporal, eternal miseries. These include the devil's tyranny and dominion. So human nature is subject to the devil's kingdom [Colossians 1:13] and has been surrendered to his power. It is held captive under his sway, who stupefies and leads astray many a great, learned person in the world through dreadful error, heresy, and other blindness, and otherwise rushes people into all sorts of crime.

e. Fifth, this hereditary evil is so great and horrible that, only for the sake of the Lord Christ, can it be covered and forgiven before God in those baptized and believing. Furthermore, human nature, which is perverted and corrupted by original sin, must and can be healed only by the regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit [Titus 3:5]. However, this healing is only begun in this life. It will not be perfect until the life to come [Ephesians 4:12-13]. ...

There is a great difference between baptized and unbaptized people. According to the teaching of St. Paul in Galatians, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ," and are made truly regenerate. They now have a freed will. As Christ says, they have been made free again [John 8:36]. Therefore, they are able not only to hear the Word, but also to agree with it and accept it, although in great weakness.

We receive in this life only the firstfruits of the Spirit [Romans 8:23]. The new birth is not complete, but only begun in us. The combat and struggle of the flesh against the spirit remains even in the elect and truly regenerate people [Galatians 5:17]. For a great difference can be seen among Christians. Not only is it true that one is weak and another strong in the spirit, but each Christian also experiences differences in himself. At one time he is joyful in spirit, and at another fearful and alarmed. At one time he is intense in love, strong in faith and hope, and at another time he is cold and weak. ...

The Sixth Sunday after Trinity

As far as possible, all misunderstanding should be prevented, and the distinction between the Law's works and the Spirit's works should be properly taught and preserved. Therefore, this is to be noted with special diligence: when we speak of good works that agree with God's Law (for otherwise they are not good works), then the word Law has only one sense. It means God's unchangeable will, according to which people are to guide themselves in their lives.

The difference, however, is in the works, because there is a difference in the people who strive to live according to this Law and will of God. For as long as a person is not regenerate and guides himself according to the Law, he does the works because they are commanded. So from fear of punishment or desire for reward, he is still under the Law. His works are properly called by St. Paul "works of the Law" [e.g., Romans 3:20], for they are extorted by the Law, like the works of slaves. These are "saints" after the order of Cain [Jude 11].

When a person is born anew by God's Spirit, liberated from the Law (i.e., freed from this driver), and led by Christ's Spirit, he lives according to God's unchangeable will revealed in the Law. Since he is born anew, he does everything from a free, cheerful spirit. These works are not properly called "works of the Law," but works and "fruit of the Spirit" [Galatians 5:22]. Or as St. Paul names it, "the law of [the] mind" [Romans 7:23] and the "law of Christ" [1 Corinthians 9:21]. For such people are no longer under the Law, but under grace, as St. Paul says in Romans 8:2.

The punishment and penalty of original sin, which God has imposed upon Adam's children and upon original sin, are death, eternal damnation [Romans 3:23], and also other bodily, spiritual, temporal, eternal miseries. These include the devil's tyranny and dominion. So human nature is subject to the devil's kingdom [Colossians 1:13] and has been surrendered to his power. It is held captive under his sway, who stupefies and leads astray many a great, learned person in the world through dreadful error, heresy, and other blindness, and otherwise rushes people into all sorts of crime.

e. Fifth, this hereditary evil is so great and horrible that, only for the sake of the Lord Christ, can it be covered and forgiven before God in those baptized and believing. Furthermore, human nature, which is perverted and corrupted by original sin, must and can be healed only by the regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit [Titus 3:5]. However, this healing is only begun in this life. It will not be perfect until the life to come [Ephesians 4:12-13]. ...

There is a great difference between baptized and unbaptized people. According to the teaching of St. Paul in Galatians, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ," and are made truly regenerate. They now have a freed will. As Christ says, they have been made free again [John 8:36]. Therefore, they are able not only to hear the Word, but also to agree with it and accept it, although in great weakness.

We receive in this life only the firstfruits of the Spirit [Romans 8:23]. The new birth is not complete, but only begun in us. The combat and struggle of the flesh against the spirit remains even in the elect and truly regenerate people [Galatians 5:17]. For a great difference can be seen among Christians. Not only is it true that one is weak and another strong in the spirit, but each Christian also experiences differences in himself. At one time he is joyful in spirit, and at another fearful and alarmed. At one time he is intense in love, strong in faith and hope, and at another time he is cold and weak. ...