

The Feast of the Resurrection

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

So when someone asks you, “What is meant by the commandment: You shall sanctify the holy day?” Answer like this, “To sanctify the holy day is the same as to keep it holy.” “But what is meant by keeping it holy?” “Nothing else than to be occupied with holy words, works, and life.” For the day needs no sanctification for itself. It has been created holy in itself. But God desires the day to be holy to you. Therefore, it becomes holy or unholy because of you, whether you are occupied on that day with things that are holy or unholy.

How, then, does such sanctification take place? Not like this: sitting behind the stove and doing no rough work, or adorning ourselves with a wreath and putting on our best clothes. But as said above, we occupy ourselves with God’s Word and exercise ourselves in the Word.

Indeed, we Christians ought always to keep such a holy day and be occupied with nothing but holy things. This means we should daily be engaged with God’s Word and carry it in our hearts and upon our lips. But as said above, since we do not always have free time, we must devote several hours a week for the sake of the young, or at least a day for the sake of the entire multitude, to being concerned about this alone. We must especially teach the use of the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer, and so direct our whole life and being according to God’s Word. At whatever time, then, this is being observed and practiced, there a true *holy day* is being kept. Other things shall not be called a Christians’ *holy day*. For, indeed, non-Christians can also stop working and be idle, just as the entire swarm of our Church workers do. They stand daily in the churches, singing and ringing bells, but they do not keep a holy day in true holiness, because they do not preach or use God’s Word but teach and live contrary to it.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

In the second place, since we know now what Baptism is and how it is to be regarded, we must also learn why and for what purpose it is instituted. We must learn what it profits, gives, and works. For this also we cannot find a better resource than Christ's words quoted above, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved." Therefore, state it most simply in this way: the power, work, profit, fruit, and purpose of Baptism is this—to save. For no one is baptized in order that he may become a prince, but, as the words say, that he "be saved." We know that to be saved is nothing other than to be delivered from sin, death, and the devil. It means to enter into Christ's kingdom, and to live with Him forever.

Here you see again how highly and preciously we should value Baptism, because in it we receive such an unspeakable treasure. This also proves that it cannot be ordinary, mere water. For mere water could not do such a thing. But the Word does it and, as I said above, so does the fact that God's name is included in Baptism. Where God's name is, there must also be life and salvation. So Baptism may certainly be called a divine, blessed, fruitful, and gracious water. Such power is given to Baptism by the Word that it is a washing of new birth, as St. Paul also calls it in Titus 3:5. ...

Lastly, we must also know what Baptism signifies and why God has ordained just this outward sign and ceremony for the Sacrament by which we are first received into the Christian Church. The act or ceremony is this: we are sunk under the water, which passes over us, and afterward are drawn out again. These two parts, (a) to be sunk under the water and (b) drawn out again, signify Baptism's power and work. It is nothing other than putting to death the old Adam and affecting the new man's resurrection after that. Both of these things must take place in us all our lives. So a truly Christian life is nothing other than a daily Baptism, once begun and ever to be continued. For this must be done without ceasing, that we always keep purging away whatever belongs to the old Adam. Then what belongs to the new man may come forth. But what is the old man? It is what is born in

human beings from Adam: anger, hate, envy, unchastity, stinginess, laziness, arrogance—yes, unbelief. The old man is infected with all vices and has by nature nothing good in him. Now, when we have come into Christ's kingdom, these things must daily decrease. The longer we live the more we become gentle, patient, meek, and ever turn away from unbelief, greed, hatred, envy, and arrogance.