

Third Sunday after Epiphany

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT

In this commandment belongs a further statement about all kinds of obedience to persons in authority who have to command and to govern. For all authority flows and is born from the authority of parents. Where a father is unable alone to educate his «rebellious and irritable» child, he uses a schoolmaster to teach the child. If he is too weak, he gets the help of his friends and neighbors. If he departs this life, he delegates and confers his authority and government upon others who are appointed for the purpose. Likewise, a father must have domestic manservants and maidservants under himself for the management of the household. So all whom we call “masters” are in the place of parents and must get their power and authority to govern from them. So also men are all called fathers in the Scriptures, who in their government perform the functions of a father, and have a paternal heart toward their subordinates. From antiquity the Romans and other nations called the masters and mistresses of the household” and “housemothers.” They called their national rulers and overlords “fathers of the entire country.” This is a great shame to us who would be Christians because we do not give them the same title or, at least, do not value and honor them as fathers....

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

To be baptized in God’s name is to be baptized not by men, but by God Himself. Therefore, although it is performed by human hands, it is still truly God’s own work. From this fact everyone may readily conclude that Baptism is a far higher work than any work performed by a man or a saint. For what work can we do that is greater than God’s work?

But here the devil is busy to fool us with false appearances and lead us away from God’s work to our own works. For there is a much more splendid show when a Carthusian does many great and difficult works. We all think much more of the things that we do and merit ourselves. But the Scriptures teach this: Even though we collect in one pile the works of all the monks, however splendidly they may shine, they would not be as noble and good as if God should pick up

a single straw. Why? Because the person is nobler and better. Here, then, we must not judge the person according to the works, but the works according to the person [Matthew 7:16–20], from whom they must get their nobility. But our insane reason will not consider this. Because Baptism does not shine like the works that we do, it is valued as nothing.

From this now learn a proper understanding of the subject and how to answer the question of what Baptism is. It is not mere ordinary water, but water comprehended in God’s Word and command and sanctified by them [Ephesians 5:26–27]. So it is nothing other than a divine water. Not that the water in itself is nobler than other water, but that God’s Word and command are added to it.

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