

Septuagesima

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

God's Word is the true "holy thing" [*Heiligtum*; relic] above all holy things. Yes, it is the only one we Christians know and have. Though we had the bones of all the saints or all holy and consecrated garments upon a heap, still that would not help us at all. All that stuff is a dead thing that can sanctify no one. But God's Word is the treasure that sanctifies everything. By the Word even all the saints themselves were sanctified. Whenever God's Word is taught, preached, heard, read, or meditated upon, then the person, day, and work are sanctified. This is not because of the outward work, but because of the Word, which makes saints of us all. Therefore, I constantly say that all our life and work must be guided by God's Word, if it is to be God-pleasing or holy. Where this is done, this commandment is in force and being fulfilled.

On the contrary, any observance or work that is practiced without God's Word is unholy before God. This is true no matter how brilliantly a work may shine, even though it is covered with relics, such as the fictitious spiritual orders, which know nothing about God's Word and seek holiness in their own works.

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT

Therefore, we allow these commandments to remain in their ordinary meaning. It is commanded, first, that we do not desire our neighbor's harm, nor even assist, nor give opportunity for it. But we must gladly wish and leave him what he has. Also, we must advance and preserve for him what may be for his profit and service, just as we wish to be treated. So these commandments are especially directed against envy and miserable greed. God wants to remove all causes and sources from which arises everything by which we harm our neighbor. Therefore, He expresses it in plain words, "You shall not covet," and so on. For He especially wants us to have a pure heart, although we will never attain to that as long as we live here. So this commandment will remain, like all the rest, one that will constantly accuse us and show how godly we are in God's sight!

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