

good work. We are doing no more than talking about and encouraging you about what you ought to do—not for our sake, but for your own sake. The Lord invites and allures you. If you despise it, you must answer for that yourself [2 Corinthians 5:10].

The Second Sunday after Trinity

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

Let us, then, learn well the First Commandment, that we may see how God will tolerate no overconfidence nor any trust in any other object. We will see how He requires nothing greater from us than confidence from the heart for everything good. Then we may live right and straightforward and use all the blessings that God gives, just as a shoemaker uses his needle, awl, and thread for work and then lays them aside. Or we may behave like a traveler using an inn, food, and bed only to meet his present need. Each person may do this in his calling, according to God's order, and without allowing any of these things to be his lord or idol. This is enough about the First Commandment, which we have had to explain at length, since it is of chief importance. For, as said earlier, where the heart is rightly set toward God [Deuteronomy 32:46] and this commandment is observed, all the other commandments follow.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

Here again the sad plight arises that no one sees or hears this truth. All live on as though God gave us children for our pleasure or amusement and servants so that we could use them like a cow or an ass, only for work. Or they live as though we were only to gratify our lewd behavior with our subjects, ignoring them, as though we have no concern for what they learn or how they live. No one is willing to see that this is the command of the Supreme Majesty, who will most strictly call us to account and punish us for it. Nor does anyone see that there is so much need to be seriously concerned about the young. For if we wish to have excellent and able persons both for civil and Church leadership, we must spare no diligence, time, or cost in teaching and educating our children, so that they may serve God and the world. We must not think only about how we may amass money and possessions for them. God can indeed support and make them rich without us, as He daily does. But for this purpose He has given us children and issued this command: we should train and govern them according to His will. Otherwise, He would have no purpose for a father and a mother. Therefore, let everyone know that it is his duty,

on peril of losing the divine favor, to bring up his children in the fear and knowledge of God above all things [Proverbs 1:7]. And if the children are talented, have them learn and study something. Then they may be hired for whatever need there is.

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

Now, since this commandment is so far-reaching, as just indicated, it is necessary to teach it well and to explain it to the common people. Do not let them go on in their greed and security. But always place before their eyes God's wrath, and instill the same. For we must preach this not to Christians, but chiefly to hoods and scoundrels. It would be more fitting for judges, jailers, or Master Hans (the executioner) to preach to them. Therefore, let everyone know his duty, at the risk of God's displeasure: he must do no harm to his neighbor nor deprive him of profit nor commit any act of unfaithfulness or hatred in any bargain or trade. But he must also faithfully preserve his property for him, secure and promote his advantage. This is especially true when one accepts money, wages, and one's livelihood for such service.

Now the person who greedily despises this commandment may indeed pass by and escape the hangman. But he shall not escape God's wrath and punishment [Galatians 6:7–8; 1 Thessalonians 5:3]. When he has long practiced his defiance and arrogance, he shall still remain a tramp and beggar. In addition, he will have all plagues and misfortune. Now you are going your own way, though you ought to preserve the property of your master and mistress. For your service you fill your throat and stomach, take your wages like a thief, and have people treat you like a nobleman. For there are many that are even rude towards their masters and mistresses and are unwilling to do them a favor or service by which to protect them from loss.

But consider what you will gain. When you have come into your own property and are set up in your home (to which God will help with all misfortunes), your earlier misdeeds will bob up again and come home to you. You will find that where you have cheated or done injury at the value of one mite, you will have to pay thirty again.

This will also be the result for craftsmen and day laborers. We are now obliged to hear and suffer such intolerable hatred from them, as though they were noblemen in another's possessions and everyone is obliged to give them what they demand. Just let them continue making their demands as long as they can. God will not forget His commandment. He will reward them just as they have served. He will hang them, not upon a green gallows, but upon a dry one. So all their life they shall neither prosper nor gather anything. Indeed, if there were a well-ordered government in the land, such greediness might soon be checked and prevented. That was the custom in ancient times among the Romans. There such characters were promptly seized by the head in a way that caused others to take warning.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

So you see, it is not left free in the sense that we may despise it. I call that despising the Sacrament if one allows a long time to elapse—with nothing to hinder him—yet never feels a desire for it. If you want such freedom, you may just as well have the freedom to not be a Christian and not have to believe or pray. One is just as much commanded by Christ as the other. But if you want to be a Christian, you must from time to time fulfill and obey this commandment. For this commandment ought always to move you to examine yourself [1 Corinthians 11:28; 2 Corinthians 13:5] and to think, “See, what sort of a Christian I am! If I were one, I would certainly have some small longing for what my Lord has commanded me to do.”

Since we act like strangers toward the Sacrament, it is easy to see what sort of Christians we were under the papacy. We went to the Sacrament from mere compulsion and fear of human commandments, without natural longing and without love, and never thought about Christ's commandment. But we neither force nor compel anyone. Nor does anyone have to do it to serve or please us. This should lead and constrain you by itself, that the Lord desires it and that it is pleasing to Him. You must not let people force you to faith or any