

53. The Second Commandment.

According to Thy name, O God, so is Thy praise unto the ends of the earth; Thy right hand is full of righteousness. *Ps. 48, 10.*

It is necessary that we should be taught the different parts of true godliness, lest we follow the evil inclinations of our depraved heart, thinking thus to serve God. Therefore God has given us nine more Commandments with a number of requirements, which result from the First Commandment. For the fear and love of God should move us to keep them. Rightly Luther begins his explanation of every Commandment with the words: "We should fear and love God." The right attitude of the heart to God is a duty which every commandment requires of us. And mainly by the words we utter it becomes apparent what is in our hearts. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Matt. 12, 34. Therefore in the Second Commandment God lays down a rule for the tongue, making it obedient to the First Commandment.

He says: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain." In Ex. 20, 7 God added: "For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain." What is God's name? God's name is God Himself as He has revealed Himself to us. Thus Jehovah is the Lord God; Sabaoth is God; Christ is God. God Himself, God's person and essence, is meant when we read or hear or speak His name.

If you speak of the Almighty, you name God Himself. If you swear by God's holiness you swear by God Himself. If I come to you with God's Word or command, I come to you with God's name and bring to you God Himself. God reveals Himself in everything He says in the Bible. We cannot sever God from His names. And now the Second Commandment tells us that we are not to take the name of God *in vain*. Taking God's name in vain is every misuse or abuse of it. We should not use it thoughtlessly, triflingly, unprofitably, much less blasphemously. We should not use it to further or to cloak selfish ends, but only when it serves to glorify God or to edify man.

Prayer.

O Lord, who hast revealed Thyself as a God of wisdom and power, of righteousness and grace, we beseech Thee, let us never use Thy holy name in vain, but let us ever employ it for our own and our neighbor's good and Thy great praise. O Lord, we have not hallowed Thy name as we ought, and we beseech Thee for Thy mercy's sake to blot out our transgressions. Grant us also increasing knowledge of Thy wisdom, power, and goodness, that, with a reverent regard for Thy eternal being and purposes, we may never misuse Thy great name to cloak wickedness with a semblance of godliness. Hear us for the sake of Jesus Christ, Thy dear Son, our Lord. Amen.

Direct, control, suggest, this day
All I design or do or say,
That all my powers, with all their might,
In Thy sole glory may unite.

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