

75. The Special Promise of the Fourth Commandment.

Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise, that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth. *Eph. 6, 2, 3.*

To make the path of duty over against parents and superiors easy and pleasant, God adds a promise, saying: "that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee." We see that according to the exact wording this promise was given to the Jews and therefore was only a temporary promise. But its meaning and application appertains to all men of all times, and therefore this promise is changed in the New Testament; it now reads: "that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth." This promise of God ought indeed to encourage us and give us hearts that will melt with pleasure and love toward those whom we should honor according to the Fourth Commandment.

He who despises this gracious promise of God and does not obey his parents deprives himself of a great blessing, and it surely will not be well with him in the end. Woe to him that heeds neither the divine command nor the divine promise! Disobedient and rebellious Absalom, hanging with his hair enmeshed in the boughs of an oak-tree, with Joab's three darts in his heart, is a warning example.

Let us strive, with God's help, to obey His Fourth Commandment, so that we shall receive the promise He has added to it. Let us remember the words spoken by God, through Jeremiah, to the Rechabites, Jer. 35, 18. 19: "Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab, your father, and kept all his precepts and done according to all that he hath commanded you, therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Jonadab, the son of Rechab, shall not want a man to stand before Me forever." Let us, then, keep our father's commandment and forsake not the law of our mother. Whatever we do to honor our parents shall be richly recompensed to us, so that we shall have not only bread, clothing, and money for a year or two, but long life, all that we need for this life, and peace, and, for Christ's sake, shall be eternally rich and blessed. For God has promised it, and God's promises will not fail us.

Prayer.

O Lord God, in the Fourth Commandment Thou hast so earnestly enjoined upon me to honor my father and my mother, and Thou hast also graciously promised to reward such service with long life and temporal well-being. I now pray Thee from my inmost soul, give unto me an obedient heart, that with due reverence I may obey my dear parents and all those placed over me in their stead, giving them honor in word and deed, with patience. May I never hurt their feelings or despise and mock them as long as I live, that Thy blessing may come upon me. Amen.

Now thank we all our God
With heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things hath done,
In whom His world rejoices;

Who from our mother's arms
Hath blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love
And still is ours to-day.

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