

TEACHING GOAL

To study the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment which serve to motivate us in our duty to observe it and all the more enforce it.

DOCTRINAL

- Q. What are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment?
- A. The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment are, God's allowing us six days of the week for our own employments, his challenging a special propriety in the seventh, his own example, and his blessing the sabbath-day.

S.C. 62, L.C. 120, W.C. of F. XIX, Savoy 19

SCRIPTURAL BASIS

Study Passage: Exodus 20:8-11

Support Passages: Deuteronomy 15, Genesis 2:2-3; John 20-21; Hebrews 4

BIBLE STORY

John 20:11-18; The message of Mary Magdalene to the disciples.

MEMORY ASSIGNMENT

"So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his." (Hebrews 4:9-10, ESV)

APPLICATION

Let us by the grace of God find delight in the Sabbath-day for it is the prelude to our eternal rest in heaven. May it be to us a foretaste of eternal delight in the presence of God.

SUMMARY

We should not need further motivation to delight in the law of God or to find delight in the Sabbath-day. El Shaddai has commanded it. But God has been pleased, nevertheless, to give additional motivation to keep the fourth commandment.

We find this motivation in the equity of the commandment itself. We observe that God has given us six days of the week in which to do all our work reserving but one day for Himself.¹ This is not an imposition or a hardship since the great majority of our time is granted to us for our lawful labors and recreations and the Sabbath day of rest is a great physical and spiritual blessing. Even the foreigner that is within our gates is blessed by it. That the Sabbath-day is immensely practical is thus a strong reason to keep it holy.

“Either body or mind can do more work by resting one day in seven, than by laboring all the seven days. And neither mind nor body can enjoy health and continued activity without its appointed rest. Even the structure of the brutes exhibits the same law. Again, as a moral and social institution, a weekly rest is invaluable. It is a quiet domestic reunion for the bustling sons of toil. It ensures the necessary vacation in those earthly and turbulent anxieties and affections, which would otherwise become inordinate and morbid. It brings around a season of periodical neatness and decency, when the soil of weekly labor is laid aside, and men meet each other amidst the decencies of the sanctuary, and renew their social affections. But above all, a Sabbath is necessary for man’s moral and religious interests.”²

God also claims a special propriety in the Sabbath by saying, "The seventh day is the Sabbath of YAHWEH your God." It is His day! Our creator, the Lord of the Sabbath, lays claim to one day in seven as His own. In like manner God lays claim to His people, “But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you.”³ Therefore, what God owns, He loves and safeguards. What stronger reason can there be for taking delight in the Sabbath-day for God Himself takes delight in it and owns it.

In addition we are motivated to keep the fourth commandment from the example God gives to us in that in six days He "made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day." The Father worked

(Creation) then rested.⁴ The Son worked (Redemption) then rested.⁵ The Holy Spirit works (Sanctification) and will enter into His rest in glory. (Hebrews 4) Surely so eminent an example demands our obedience.

God blessed the Sabbath-day not only in sanctifying it to be a day for His service, but in ordaining it to be a means of blessing to us in our sanctifying it. "Wherefore YAHWEH blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it." What God has blessed will surely redound to our good. Are we not therefore moved to keep the Sabbath holy if the Sabbath accrues to our good? Indeed, may we take delight in this special day, set aside by our creator for our present good and as a foretaste of our eternal rest in the presence of God.

¹ Exodus 20:8-11

² R. L. Dabney, Topical Lectures on Scripture, (Simpsonville, SC: Christian Classics Foundation) 1997.

³ Isaiah 43:1-3, ESV

⁴ Genesis 2:2-3

⁵ John 20-21