

## Sermons on Deuteronomy by John Calvin

On Friday the 21<sup>st</sup> of June, 1555

The 35<sup>th</sup> sermon, which is the sixth on the fifth chapter<sup>1</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *Six days you shall labour, and do all your business.*

<sup>14</sup> *But the seventh day is the rest of the Lord your God, you shall not do any work in it. You shall not do any work in it, yourself, your son, your daughter, your manservant, your woman servant, your ox, your donkey, or your cattle, or your stranger who is within your gates, that your man servant and woman servant may have rest as well as yourself.*

<sup>15</sup> *Remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord your God brought you from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God has commanded you to keep holy the Sabbath Day.*

I showed yesterday how and why the commandment to keep the Sabbath Day was given to the Jews. I briefly told you how it was a figure of the spiritual rest which the faithful ought to observe in order to serve God (Col 2.14,17,20). Since our Lord Jesus Christ has fulfilled the commandment perfectly for us, we must not dwell upon the shadow of the Law (Rom 6.6). Rather, we should be content with crucifying the old man through the power of the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ so that we can be completely renewed in our service to God.

Yet, we need regulation and order among ourselves. Therefore, it was necessary that a day of rest be appointed for us to meet together so that we may be confirmed in the doctrines of God and profit from them everyday, which means, for the rest of our lives. Also, the Day serves for calling on his name and for confessing our faith. The remainder of the Day is to be spent considering the blessings that we receive all the time from the hand of God so that he may be honoured even more.

Now we should note what Moses says in the text: “*six days you shall labour*, says the LORD.” We are not to understand this to mean that God commands us to work. It is true the we are born for this, and we know that God does not intend for us to be idle while we live in this world, since he has given men hands and feet and wisdom and creativity. Even before there was sin, it is said that Adam was put in the garden to tend it (Gen 2.15). But the work that men perform now is a punishment for sin. For it was said to them: “You shall eat your bread by the sweat of your brow.” That is the curse that was placed on mankind. We are not worthy to enjoy the condition of our first father, who was to live in a pleasant setting without having to work hard. Nevertheless, before sin came into the world, and before we were condemned by God to painful and difficult work, it was necessary for men to occupy themselves with some work. Why? Because it is against our nature for us to be useless blocks of wood. So it is established that we must apply our entire lives to some work.

Nevertheless, there is no precise command given here that we are to work six days since, in truth, there were other solemn days beside the Sabbath Day given in the Law. There were other feasts which sometimes fell in the middle of the week. But since there were only a few (four) days in the year, no mention is made here of them. Here he speaks only of the Sabbath Day. Thus, when it is said that we are to work six days our LORD shows us that we have no reason to begrudge giving and dedicating to him one day since we are given six days in exchange for the one.

It is as if he said: “Is it so important for you that I have chosen and reserved one day for serving me, in which you are to do nothing but read and meditate on my Law, hear the doctrine that is preached to you, come to the temple to be strengthened by the sacrifices you shall offer, call on my name, and confess that you are part of the fellowship of my people? Does this upset you since you have six days entirely to yourselves to do your business and carry out your work? Since I deal so graciously with you by requiring only one day of seven, are you so unthankful that you complain about the time as though it were wasted?”

<sup>1</sup> This modern English rendering of Calvin's sermons is based on the translation made by Arthur Golding in 1582. It is taken from the facsimile edition published by The Banner of Truth Trust in 1987. For a modern translation, made directly from the French, see the translation of Benjamin W. Farley published by Baker Book House in 1980.

Are you so vulgar and miserly to begrudge me a seventh of your time? I give you your entire life. When the sun shines on you, you should consider my goodness and that I am a generous father to you. I make the sun shine to give light to your way so that you can go about your business (Ps 104.22,23). Why then shouldn't I have one day of seven in which all men will cease from their own business and you will not be tied up with worldly cares, and instead have time to think about me?"

We can see, then, that the statement about working six days was not given as a command, but rather as a permission that God gives even as he challenges men about their ingratitude which they display when they do not keep and observe the Sabbath Day as it is required here.

From this we can derive a good and valuable lesson, that when we are being slow in obeying God we should consider the blessings he gives us. What should sharpen our desire to obey God's commands more than the consideration that he does not deal harshly with us and is not overbearing? God could control us with a tight rein and bit if that was his will, and drive us so hard that we could not escape. But instead, he is considerate and guides us as a father does his children. Since he is gentle with us, shouldn't we be more willing to do what he requires of us? So we should! So then, when God's commands are difficult, or at least seem to be, let us remember that he does not push us anywhere nearly as hard as he could. If God wished to press his rights to the extreme, we would be harassed beyond measure. Therefore, let us understand that he is patient with us and that he applies more than fatherly goodness on our behalf.

It is true that it is impossible for us to keep the Law of God (Rom 7.14,15). Man is not only unable to keep the Law completely, but even if he wished by his own power to keep it, he wouldn't be able to lift a finger to do so, nor would he know where to begin. We are so far from being able to obey God and to carry out the requirements contained in the Law that all of our thoughts and passions are at war with God (Rom 8.7). If it were possible for men to keep the Law under their own power, the command would be: *work*, but instead, the command is: *rest*, so that God may work. It may be impossible for us to keep the Law, yet it is still possible for God to imprint the Law on our hearts and govern us by his Holy Spirit in such a way that the Law is a light yoke upon us and there is no harshness in it to weary us. So when men look around, they will see that God is patient with them, as a father has pity on his children. Therefore, let us learn to be thankful and to be more ready in our service to God since he does not command us in harsh manner, but rather, has regard for weaknesses.

Thus, we see the key point of the text which is that God gives man some comfort. It is true, as we noted yesterday, that we ought to be so spiritual as to meet everyday to call on the name of God, and that we ought to strive for the heavenly life, leaving behind all our worldly concerns. But what is the situation? God knows that we are surrounded by the things of our earthly nature, that we 'crawl' about on the earth, and our weaknesses carry us away so that we cannot lead a life of angels. Therefore, God seeing our lack of discipline and weaknesses, and our inability to fulfill our duties, releases us from the most severe rigour by saying that he is satisfied with our giving him one day. If that day serves us for the entire week, he is satisfied with that. Why is this? As I said, he does not go to the extreme because he knows that we are weak. Since he bears with us and gives us comfort, we are more perverse, dishonest, and without excuse if we are not enthusiastic about giving ourselves entirely to him.

Now, it is said "that neither your male or female servant, nor your ox, nor donkey, nor any other creature is to work on the Sabbath Day, not even the stranger in your household." It is strange that God includes the domestic beasts under the obligation to keep the Sabbath rest, since, as I told you yesterday, it is a heavenly mystery. Does this mystery apply to oxen and donkeys? God says that "I have given you the Sabbath Day as a sign that you are set apart to holiness, that I am your God, and that I reign among you." (Ex 31.13-17; Ezek 20.12) This is not applicable to all men, since God does not give this grace and privilege to the pagans and heathen to make them holy. He speaks only to the people whom he has adopted and chosen as his inheritance. Therefore, as far as the Sabbath Day is a sign that God has separated his faithful Church from the rest of the world, why does it include oxen and donkeys? Let us note that it is not for the sake of the animals, but for the purpose of placing a motivating reminder before our eyes. This sacrifice, then, does not apply to the animals, which have no understanding or rationality, but it applies to men who should profit from it.

We see that animals were used for sacrifices and that a great amount of preparation was required for this purpose. There were vessels of gold and silver, and similar utensils, all of which were set apart for the work. Does this mean that God put his Spirit into corruptible metals and into materials which have no perception? No! The purpose was for men, for their use and benefit. God does not serve his own purposes alone with the things of this transitory life, but also gives them to us as tokens of his favour so that we might be drawn into heaven (Gen 1.28; Ps 8.7). However, since God wishes the oxen and donkeys to rest on the seventh day, it doesn't mean that he includes them in the spiritual rest that we spoke of previously. The purpose was so that Jews seeing the closed stables and stalls would think in themselves: "See, God sets before our eyes this visible sign and sacrament, including the animals." Our goal, therefore, should be to serve God all the more, knowing that we break the whole Law if we don't think about what is most important in our lives. We are to learn to forsake ourselves; to stop following our own desires, reasoning, and wisdom; to show that our God rules over us; to become like dead creatures so that he may live in us (Gal 2.20), and not follow our own ways which are utterly corrupt. This is how the Jews should have understood the visible sign that included even the animals. They should have seen that its purpose was to restrain them more, and thereby to encourage them to keep the Sabbath Day with all reverence.

We see also how at times God responds to men according to their hard hearts and provides them with suitable healing because they are not eager to come to him, until he draws them to himself. This was true not only for the Jews, it is true also for us. So then, let us consider the goodness of our God since we see that he keeps us in mind and does not neglect to provide us with healing from our vices. Let us also consider our rebellion, so that we will not flatter ourselves nor succumb to our passions, since we need to be constrained and given nudges with God's spurs, just like restless horses. Since God spurs us on in this way, let us understand that it is not without reason, but because we are rebellious and stubborn. Therefore, let us despise our passions and guard ourselves so that nothing can keep us from following the path that God directs for us. And, although by nature we strive against his ways, let us nevertheless resist striving and press on, being always fully obedient to our God.

Now we have an important message of this passage, which, in addition to the above, speaks about male and female servants. By mentioning servants God reminds the Jews that "they were servants in Egypt." Because of this, they should be gentle with those who are under their authority. Thus, he says "your male and female servants are to rest." Why? "Because you yourselves were once slaves, and at that time you wished that someone would have given you rest and relief. Because of this, you must be gentle with those under your hand." From this it appears that God ordained the Sabbath Day not only as a spiritual regulation but also, as I said previously, out of kindness. For he says: "When you were in slavery, didn't you want other men to give you relief? Were you always able to keep toiling? Surely not! Therefore, you must be gentle with others." Now, this is not only for God's service but also out of common charity which ought to be applied between neighbours, whether or not they are subordinate to us. Nevertheless, since this command [about servants] is included in the first tablet of the Law it must be a secondary requirement.

God did not divide his law into two tablets without a reason when he wrote on the two stones. Couldn't he have written all the Law on one stone if he had wanted to? Certainly. Why, then, was it given in two parts? Not without a reason. There are two main sections in God's Law: the one deals with our duties to him, and the other concerns our duty towards our neighbours as we deal with them. The purpose of the two sections is that they should serve as the reference point for our entire life. First, with respect to the fact that we belong to God: we are to walk in obedience to him, particularly since we receive our life from him; pay homage to him since he created us for a better hope, adopted us as his children, and has redeemed us with the blood of his Son; be entirely his, striving to withdraw ourselves from the pollution of this world so that we can be true sacrifices to him and call on him alone, fleeing only to him for comfort; and give him thanks for all the blessings he gives us. You can see, then, that the first purpose of our lives is the honour that we are to give to our God.

A second point is this: since it is God's will to test our obedience, as we live righteously among men, none of us should seek his own good, but instead we should seek to serve others. There should be a mutual

honesty among us, not only by abstaining from fraud, violence, and cruelty, but also by leading a sober and modest life, restrained, and without any obscenity or brutality. This is the second purpose of our lives.

Now, since it is a fact that this command is contained in the first tablet of the law, it follows that it belongs in the category of spiritual service to God. It does not concern the consideration that should be present between neighbours. Why then is it mentioned here? It is as if our Lord is saying: “The Sabbath Day will serve you even more when your male and female servants may have some rest as well as yourselves.” Not that this was God’s primary purpose. His primary purpose was not that there would be a day in the week in which men would stop working to catch their breath and avoid becoming totally exhausted. This was not the reason which prompted God to appoint the Sabbath Day. Rather, he ordained it so that the faithful would understand that they should live holy lives and rest from their passions and desires; and so that God might work fully in them. In this there is, as men would say, added benefit. Our Lord says: “Consider that since you have this witness among you that I am purifying you, you make sure that you strive to give yourselves entirely to me. For by doing this you will provide benefit to yourself and it will be to your profit, since your family will not always be exhausted. This is the reason why your male and female servants and your animals must have some rest. Therefore you will have this as an additional benefit.”

Now we see why God specifically mentions that the Jews were in slavery in Egypt and why they were to have a concern for those who are held captive by them. Moses speaks of male and female servants; but he does not mean the type of service we have today, because in those days servants were actually slaves and were treated like oxen and donkeys. They were treated very roughly and with so much unkindness that it was pitiful. For this reason, God tells the Jews that by keeping the Sabbath Day they will bring benefit and profit to their own family. This is why he says: “You have very little reason to complain about my having reserved one day out of seven for myself. For if you are not cruel and you don’t exercise tyranny over those in your power, then you will see that the day is for your benefit. If you have no other motivation than this civility (that is, giving your servants some rest on that day), it should persuade you of its benefit. But understand that I did not ordain the day only for the sake of your family but also so that you would think about what I have told you, which is that you are to be separate from unbelievers and that you must be a kingdom of priests to me (Ex 19.5,6). You must seek nothing else but serving me with full integrity and with a pure conscience. Once you have this in mind, you will understand that the day will provide earthly benefits, even though this is not what you are to seek in the Sabbath.” To put it briefly, our Lord shows us the same thing that Jesus Christ taught (Mt 6.33): that if we seek the Kingdom of Heaven all the other things will be given to us.

We seem to think, on the other hand, that if we seek the heavenly life we will starve from hunger and will be deprived of our other pleasures. To put it briefly, the Devil comes and tempts us to hate our service for God, under the pretense and deceit that if we strive to serve God we will starve from hunger, be in desperate circumstances, and be forsaken by the world. But surely it is the case that we cannot serve God unless we have cast off our own desires and have shaken off the worldly cares that press heavily on us. Therefore, we must depend on the blessing that is promised to us, which is, that if we seek the Kingdom of God we shall be blessed even with these transient things. Our Lord will show mercy to us and give us all the things that he knows we need in this present life. But we must wait upon him for the things that we cannot obtain by our own power and efforts. This is one thing we are shown in this passage.

Now this instruction should serve continually as a spur to us to go forward with the things that God has commanded us. For the primary thing that keeps us from regulating and directing our life in obedience to God is that we are ‘married’ to ourselves. We think that one thing or another will be more beneficial for us – and, whatever the results, the things of the world must result in our own pleasure. So we see from this that men cannot find it in their hearts to serve God. Rather, they avoid him and move away from his law because they think that if they serve God they will not prosper.

But this is a wicked and thankless response, and increases their rebelliousness a hundred-fold. What then must be done? Let us understand that we can never serve God in freedom and with a joyful heart unless we are fully convinced that he will care for us throughout our lives. Let us not forget what is said to Joshua (Josh 1.5,6) and note that the Apostle, in Hebrews (Heb 4.8,11), applies this doctrine to all the faithful so

that he can keep them from worrying too much. What is said is this: “Your God will not forsake you, nor will he forget you.”

If we could be truly persuaded that God watches over us and that he will provide for all our needs, then it is certain that we would not be so burdened by our earthly desires. We would not be turned from serving him, nor would we be distracted from meditating on the spiritual life. Instead, we would pass through this world using the things of creation as if we didn't use them at all. We would keep in mind that we have still further to go.

Thus, we find what we are to learn from this doctrine. The Lord shows us that his command, that we are to observe the Sabbath Day, has a spiritual application. Nevertheless, men will not fail to find keeping it profitable to themselves. God will bless them for it, if they look to him instead of eagerly seeking earthly pleasures.

As an aside, we are warned that those who have authority over others must not despise their neighbours, no matter how inferior their position. This has a far-reaching application. We are not to apply it only to male and female servants but also to the poor: to those who do not have positions of authority, or are of low esteem; to all those who work for us or are subject to us; and to all those who, we think, are in positions that are not worthy of the same respect by the world as we have.

We know what the pride of men is like; although there is no reason why we should be proud, yet we all covet some form of recognition. Now if we are so arrogant that we find in our heart a desire to be elevated above our neighbours, even though there is no reason, what will we do if we are in fact elevated? Consider those who are serving in the seat of Justice. They act as if the whole world (from their perspective) was made for them alone. But God restrains them by his Holy Spirit and shows them that they ought to be forbearing and not oppress those that are under their charge. Rather, they are to behave themselves like fathers and to think of their subjects as their children. Furthermore, since God honours them, they ought to live in the greatest humility. With respect to those who preach God's word and have the charge of leading others, if they think they should be exempt from the common folk and despise them, woe to them! It is better for them to break their necks when going into the pulpit than to be unwilling to be the first to lead a godly life and to live peaceably with their neighbours, and so demonstrate that they also are sheep in the flock of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In spite of this, it is true that rich men may be served by the poor. If a man has hired male and female servants, he will not set his servant above himself at the table, nor will he let him sleep in his own bed. Yet, even though there is a relationship of superiority, we must observe that we are all made from one flesh (Gen 9.6) and are all created in the image of God. If we realize that all those who are descended from Adam are our own flesh and bone, it ought to move us to kindness, even while we treat one another as wild beasts. When the prophet Isaiah intended to reprove men for inhumanity, he said that you should not despise your own body (Isa 58.7). In the many men and women in the world, I should see myself as if I were looking in a mirror. Consider this to be one point.

But there is still more – that is the image of God is engraved in all men. Therefore, whenever I oppress any man, I not only despise myself, but I also defile God's image as it remains in me. So then, let us note carefully that in this text God meant to show to all those having authority and esteem, to all who are richer than most, and to any who have some degree of honour, that they should not abuse those who are under their hand, nor exasperate them or be cruel to them. Rather, they are to remember that we are all descended from Adam's race and are all of one kind, even having God's image engraved in us. We should note this thing especially now that our Lord Jesus Christ has come down to us and has humbled himself to condemn all pride (Phil 2.7), and to show us that there is no other way we can serve God but through humility. Not only this, but he has made us all members of his body (1 Cor 12.13; Gal 3.27,28), servants and subordinates as well as masters and superiors, so that there is no distinction in this regard.

When we come to our Lord Jesus Christ and look at him, we must follow him. Considering that all of us, both great and small are members of his body and he is our head, this gives us a good reason why everyone

of us should adapt himself to his neighbours. Besides this, considering that God has shown himself to be a father to us, in more familiar terms than he did to those who lived under the Law, let this move us to maintain brotherly love among us. Thus you see something else to be remembered from this passage.

Nevertheless, there is yet one other point concerning God's instituting this memorial to remind the Jews: *that they had been poor slaves in the land of Egypt*. We know that they were oppressed with wicked cruelty while they were there. Now just as they wanted to be cared for in this situation, and God heard them when they sighed and groaned (Ex 2.23), so he tells them that they should do the same for others. This contains a good lesson: that if we consider our own situation, we may be encouraged to continually discharge our duty.

But, on the other hand, if we are cruel toward our neighbour it is because we are, as some say, drunk with our own comfort, and don't think about our own poverty and misery. The person who has suffered hunger and thirst and has longed to have his needs cared for will think about this when he sees a poor man, and will say: "Consider this, I also have been in this situation and would have been pleased if someone had cared for me, and I thought that someone should have had mercy to help me." I ask you, whoever thinks on these things when he sees a poor man in need, won't it soften his heart? Yes, truly. But what is the cause? When we are comfortable we don't think any more about our human poverty. Rather, we imagine that we are exempt and that we are no longer of the common sort. This causes us to forget our own situation and to have no compassion for our neighbours or what they endure. For this reason, we have a much greater need to consider this matter, primarily because our Lord knows that we are blindly in love with ourselves and wallow in our pleasures and never think about those who are suffering and are in need. Therefore, he shows us our condition, saying "Who are you? Were you never in distress?" Even if you get angry with them, don't you think to yourselves: "Here are creatures made in the image of God?" If we mistreat them, will God show us any mercy?

Therefore, let us practice this doctrine all our lives; and whenever we see anyone suffering from adversity, let us remember this: "Haven't I been in similar situation of need as they? If I were in this situation again, wouldn't I be glad if someone cared for me?" Considering this, why should we think we are exempt from such a condition? We ought at least to do to others as we ourselves would want them to do for us. Nature teaches us this; we don't need to go to school to learn it. Do we need any other evidence to condemn us than our Lord's teaching us through experience. If we consider this, then surely we should be touched with kindness and compassion to care for those who are in poverty and have needs. We should be moved with pity toward those who are suffering; and to the extent we have the means and ability to help them, we should make every effort to do so. This we should learn from the passage where it is said, "*you were strangers in the land of Egypt ...*" Therefore you must take care to provide relief for those that are under your authority, since at the time you were a slave you wished for help.

Let us now consider those who are not members of the Jewish nation but only conducting business among them. God wants them also to keep the Sabbath Day, even though they are not sanctified by God nor could the sacramental sign of sanctification be applied to them, as I have already said. It seems by this that God profanes the sacrament when he makes it apply to the heathen, to all who did not have circumcision as the mark of the Covenant, and to all who did not have the Law and the promises. But we should note that when God speaks of foreigners in this passage, he has in mind the people whom he has chosen and adopted. For we know that if things are permitted which are contrary to serving God, even if it is pointed out that these things are done by people who are not part of the body of believers, we will be enticed to follow their bad example. If foreigners were permitted to carry out their business among the Jews, what would have been the result? The Jews would have traded with them and defiled themselves, and there would have been no distinction on that Day. When the occasion arises we are easily led to do evil. And, although it might not be a great occasion, our natures are so inclined to evil that we are easily enticed to do it. What will be the result when we are all corrupted? Thus, if liberty had been given to foreigners to work and carry on business among the people of Israel on the Sabbath Day, it would have led to corruption. Every man would have acted as he pleased and would have taken liberty to break the Sabbath Day and not keep it. Therefore, to cut short the occasion for evil and to have the day observed with great reverence, God dealt with foreigners in the same way that he dealt with the beasts which he commanded to rest.

This commandment serves us also. It shows us that vices must not be permitted among people who profess to be Christians. They should not go unpunished, even among those who are foreigners and passing through. How can this be? Blasphemy is condemned among us. But if a person hears another blaspheming or making fun of God as he walks by and then allows it to go unchecked, is he not condoning the blasphemy by not challenging the person? Does he not infect everything else with the stink of the blasphemy? This is so, yet we see it happen. It is the truth that blasphemy is not punished as it deserves among those who are not of our religion, nor even among those who mingle with us and profess Christianity as we do. Men harden themselves to our great shame.

In spite of this, if any man, whether a Roman Catholic or of another group (since today the world is crammed full of those who despise God), is allowed (I say) to slander the doctrine of the Gospel and to blaspheme God's name, the result will be a corruption which will not be easy to correct. If we permit fornicators and vandals to pursue their wicked ways and to increase the amount of wickedness among us, and if we permit unruly and corrupt people to come among us to practice their wickedness, won't we become totally corrupted with them? Therefore, let us note carefully that our Lord intends to keep his people living in purity, so that those who profess to be Christians will not only abstain from evil themselves but will also not permit others to do evil, to the extent that this is possible.

We must understand that the earth is profaned when God's worship is polluted and when his holy name is dishonoured, and that the land in which he wants us to live is polluted and cursed, or will soon be. But since God has given his children the right to remove idolatry from their country, if they don't do it they provoke him to anger and bring his vengeance upon themselves. So if we were to allow the abominations of the Papacy to be mixed with the pure worship of God, by permitting the obstinate Roman Catholics living among us to perform the Mass and we gave them some freedom to perform their idolatries and superstitions, we would bring God's wrath upon ourselves and kindle the fire of his vengeance against ourselves. And why? Because God has put the sword of Justice into the hands of those who have authority to rule in this life. He has given them authority to drive out idolatry and the Papal infections. If instead, they maintain them, then it is as if they are driving out God and making it so that he no longer can live among them or reign over them.

So let us notice carefully that it was not without a purpose that our Lord required that the strangers who dwelt among his people, whether or not they were of another faith or religion, were to be compelled to keep the seventh day. This was not for their own sakes or for their own instruction, for they were not capable of learning from it but so that a stumbling-block would not be placed in front of his people which would cause them to be disorderly or mar his worship. It was so that the land which he had given as an inheritance to his servant Abraham might be entirely dedicated to himself.

Now, by this we are warned not only to keep ourselves holy in God's word but also not to allow any occasion for an offense or corruption to be committed among us. We see that all such things must be purged completely. In addition, because our Lord wants us to be zealous in keeping pure our worship of him, even to the extent that we constrain those who do not profess to be part of his Church and require them to conform when they are in our midst, I ask you: what excuse will we give if we do not give ourselves entirely to him or behave in such a way that we are mirrors for drawing and winning poor unbelievers to our God? For if we rebuke them when they do what is wrong, but at the same time they see in us similar or far greater sins, won't they have an opportunity to laugh in scorn at everything we say? Therefore, seeing that foreigners were forbidden from doing anything that is contrary to the worship of God, let us understand that we have a double command to walk carefully in humility and sobriety so that the foreigners may see clearly that it is our sincere desire, without hypocrisy and in a good conscience, that God be honoured and that we cannot tolerate anyone bringing reproach to his majesty and glory.

This is what we are to observe from the passage, if today we want to keep what was commanded to the Jews, since in truth and substance it belongs to us. For as our Lord in the past delivered them out of Egypt, so likewise he delivers us from the pit of Hell (Col 1.13) and reclaims us from eternal death (Heb 2.14) and from the bottomless pit of hell-fire into which we are plunged, with the intention of taking us into his heavenly kingdom as those purchased by the blood of his dear and beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.