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The Nine Commandments

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The Nine Commandments

Introduction

Recently, I found a file of old letters in the attic. Gently opening the folder, I noticed one unusual manuscript among the yellowing documents. It looked new, even though I was confident that this file had not been touched for decades. What was this letter, and why was it in such pristine condition? Curiosity got the best of me, and taking the paper in my hand, I began to read:

My Dear Bookworm,

You know how Our Father Below successfully tempted Eve in the Garden many years ago. Our Father appealed to the creature's pride by convincing her that through exercising her freedom of choice she would become as wise as the Enemy. The Enemy was not surprised by this turn of events. When He created Adam and Eve, the Enemy knew that this danger existed – that the freedom He had given to his creatures might be used against Him – but He thought the risk worth taking. He lost the bet.

I believe the time is ripe for making another assault on the Enemy's creatures, this time on the American continent. The nation has recently won a world war against Japan and Germany. Confidence is in the air. Gratification is on everyone's mind. There's a great desire for knowledge and education; that is, they want wisdom, just like Eve. These are winds of culture that we can use.

Here is my plan, Bookworm. First, you must *distract* the creatures. Point out the beauty of the tree from which we want them to eat. Second, *discredit* the Enemy by casting doubt on his words. Then you can lure them into disobedience just as Our Father did many centuries ago.

Distracting American society is the first key. Begin by using people with allegiance to our cause to advertise the happiness that comes from being free from the Enemy. Pleasure, fame, and power are ours to give, and I know the creatures desire such things. They already have political freedom and a history that lauds the benefits of liberty. All we need to do is keep

them moving toward more and more freedom – the freedom to do whatever they want, whenever they want, and with whomever they want to do it. Establish personal “rights” as a powerful motivator. Who will dare oppose the rights of the people in a democracy? Once they have tasted the sweet nectar of rights and total personal freedom, society will be ours. Then we can lure the Enemy's people to the same vision.

Next, you must discredit the Enemy. This is really the fun part! I believe you can use the Enemy's own words and people against Him. We know, for example, that the Enemy considers the first commandment as the most important one from which all others flow, but there is no need to make a direct frontal assault on it. There are ten commandments, and although the Enemy sees them as a unit (you break one, you break all), his creatures can probably be convinced that each commandment is up for a democratic vote. We need to identify the weakest link.

Since the Sabbath commandment has no obvious moral content, it seems to be the most likely candidate. Breaking it will create no guilt. Who does it hurt if it is disobeyed? The other Nine Commandments will still cause us some trouble, because creatures feel guilty when they break them, and this sometimes drives them back to the Enemy. But if we do this right, we can convince them that breaking the Sabbath is a good thing (at least, not a bad thing).

Separate Sabbath observance from its roots in creation, placing it solely in the realm of Law. Then, by pointing out that the Enemy said no one is justified by keeping the Law, you can discourage observance by his people, and draw the creatures into disobedience. At the same time, confuse them about grace. Grace is a noble concept in the Enemy's vocabulary, but by focusing on the freedom that grace promises, and creating a fear of legalism, you can drive a wedge between the Enemy's people and obedience to his commandments. Grace will be used to justify disobedience.

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Written in the vein of C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters* this piece gives food for thought regarding modern library hours on Sundays.

But there's more (I told you this was fun). Use the words of the Enemy's Book against Him. Make sure that the Enemy's people notice that his Book does not contain a Sabbath commandment in the New section. This should convince them that the Sabbath is obsolete – that only Nine Commandments remain.

Another way you can discredit Sabbath observance is to paint it fanatical by drawing attention to the practices of some of its adherents. The Pharisees are useful here. They are the ultimate Sabbatarians. Highlight the opposition of the Enemy's Son to the Pharisees. By identifying Sabbath-keeping with the Pharisees, you can discredit the practice (guilt by association) as effectively as if He had loudly and publicly banned the Sabbath (which, of course, He refused to do, but let's keep that our dirty little secret).

Our Father cast doubt on the Enemy's words in the Garden; you can do the same. Following the pattern of Our Father, you may wish to ask his creatures: "Did the Enemy really say you should all rest on the same day? Is this not just a device He uses to place restrictions on your freedom – an archaic relic of a discredited Victorian past? Is He not really afraid that if you exercise your freedom of choice, you will be as happy as He is?" This argument worked once. Why not again? I think you should promise them the world, and when they see things our way, we will give it to them.

If this tactic does not work, there is another that you can call on. Take the creatures to the opposite extreme. For those who think that following the Enemy's Law is their duty, reinforce that idea – make it a duty to them. Let them keep the Sabbath as a ritualistic observance. One of the most useful alternatives to non-observance (from our perspective) is empty ritual. The next best thing to disobedience is mindless obedience. Even if they go to church for an hour or two on Sunday, you can turn that into a token appearance in an otherwise seven-day world. Not much harm should be done to our cause. After all, in Our Father's eyes, sacrifice is better than obedience.

The Enemy's people are presently teetering on the cusp of new desires and ways of thinking. Steeped in the rhetoric of freedom and liberty, restraint has become an ugly concept to them.

Offer them freedom. Where should you begin? Higher education is a good route through which to funnel your activities, particularly in schools that claim to belong to the Enemy. Using higher education will not only reach the present generation, but will pay dividends far into the 20th and 21st centuries. As I said earlier, the present generation is ready for a change. Fundamentalism is strong, but there are those within the movement who are tired of being ridiculed by our people. If you can make reputation the most important thing in education, they will seek it, and because they need to play by our rules to attain it, they will then be ours.

Finally, Bookworm, in bringing the Enemy's colleges and universities to our side, you should focus on the libraries. I'm sorry to have to tell you this, but your beloved librarians can be useful to us. They are fine folk, on the whole, but they are very concerned about status, and that can be used for our purposes. Most importantly, they are powerless. Faculty and administrators have power; they can cease working on Sunday. If you can convince them, however, that librarians provide an essential service on Sunday, that students would be unhappy – and might go elsewhere – if the library were closed, the librarians will be flattered. The fact that campus offices are closed, and no classes are held on Sunday will fail to impress students of the need for Sabbath rest if they are encouraged to work in the library on Sunday – and it's the students we really want. Through a pattern of Sunday study they will develop a non-Sabbath lifestyle regardless of what they are taught verbally. You may even be able to convince them that by studying so diligently on Sunday they are serving the Enemy especially well (particularly if they are preparing for religious occupations). That they are actually disobeying Him will be hidden from them. A cleverly, devilish plan, don't you think?

That, my dear Bookworm, is the plan. If you can accomplish this in the decades ahead, we will be able to walk proudly before Our Father Below. The creatures will think they have freedom, and they will be proud of it. As Our Father Below has said many times, it is good to be free, and good to be proud.

Your cousin,
DUCT TAPE †