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BOOKLET No. 14



OR

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS
SIMPLY EXPLAINED FOR
CHILDREN AND CONVERTS

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CHAPTER 1

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS SIMPLY EXPLAINED FOR CHILDREN AND CONVERTS

What good shall I do that I may have life everlasting? (Matt. xix. 16.)

"If thou wilt enter into life," says Christ, "keep the Commandments." (Matt. xix. 17.)

I am to keep the ten commandments of God and the commandments of the Church.

THE LAW OF CONSCIENCE

Men are able to know, and serve, and love God. They do not follow laws blindly like stones and plants. And they have special laws from God. When Cain killed Abel he ran away terrified. Why? His conscience reproached him and would not give him peace. Conscience is the Voice of God which speaks within the soul. It reproaches and blames even the pagan savages, when they steal and try to hide themselves. It reproaches the boy who is disrespectful to his father. It says to a man, "Don't do it. Don't steal that money. It is not yours. Do not say that immodest word. It is wrong." Conscience tells us that we must do some things, and that we ought not to do other things; and after our actions, it gives us peace, or makes us unhappy.

Conscience is the Voice of God. It is a natural law which God has put in every soul. And our thoughts, and words, and actions should obey conscience or this natural law. This law of conscience is called a moral law, because it regulates our conduct or morals.

THE COMMANDMENTS

After the sin of our first parents, men did not always follow their conscience. Often they would not listen to it. They broke the natural law very often indeed, and committed many sins.

Now when a schoolmaster finds that not one or two children are careless, but that all begin to break the rules, what does he do? He speaks seriously to the whole class one day. He tells them the law, which they seem to have forgotten, and he tells them of the punishment that awaits those who do not behave properly. Some will be chastised; others will be kept in; some may even be expelled from the school. God did just this same thing. He gave to Moses, written on stone, the laws the people must obey; and to make them easy to remember He collected all the laws into

ten commandments. And God promised great blessings to those who would keep the ten commandments, whilst He punished very severely those who broke them.

Since God is very Holy, He wishes us to do good, and not to do evil, and we must try to fulfill His Holy Will. We shall see afterwards that every commandment orders us to do something good, and forbids us to do something evil. In each one, therefore, we shall have to look for what it orders us to do, and what it forbids or prohibits. And all that we discover we must try to put into practice.

OBEDIENCE

If a child refuses to obey his parents, or does not treat them with respect, he does not fulfill his duty as a son. By duty we mean something one ought to do, or is obliged to do. Sometimes our conscience tells us our duty. At other times our lawful superiors tell us. We know we ought to obey superiors. When the schoolteacher gives a task to be done he says, "You must have it done by tomorrow." Anyone who does not do it fails in his duty. In the same way God says to us, "You must not steal," or, "You must keep holy the Sabbath day." And it is our duty to obey. It is a strict obligation, a command, and we ought to obey.

The ten commandments contain many duties. Firstly, there are duties to God, and these are the most important. We owe everything we have to Him, and the man who neglects his religious duties and his prayers to God is very ungrateful and wicked.

Secondly, there are duties to ourselves; to our body, by making it obey the soul; and to our soul, by learning all we can, by loving what is good, and keeping free from sin. This is God's law, and we must obey it.

Thirdly, there are duties to our neighbor, for we do not live alone.

Our conscience tells us that we should do these things. But God also commands obedience. God knows what is right. He cannot make a mistake. Sometimes men tell us that we ought to do things, and we find out afterwards that they are wrong. But God cannot be wrong. And He has the right to command us, for He made us.

Anyone who refuses to obey, and breaks a commandment of God in serious things, commits mortal sin. He turns his back on God and deserves to be without God forever. And that, of course, means that one deserves to go to Hell.

ARE THEY TOO HARD?

Jack knows that he ought to tell the truth; but, all the same, he is ready to hide his faults by telling a

lie. Willie knows that it is wrong to steal, but only yesterday he put another boy's pocketknife into his pocket, and this morning took ten cents which he found left on the table by mother. You all know that you should be obedient. Yet how often you are disobedient! Children and grown-ups, men and women, all very often break God's commandments more or less seriously. Then is it impossible to keep them? If you were to look at the top of a very high mountain it might seem very steep. You would say, "I can see no track. It must be impossible to climb right up to the very top." Yet, if somebody had a good guide who knew the way, and plenty of courage, he could get to the top.

If a workman has to move a big block of stone he calls another workman to help him, and when both lift together they do not find it very hard.

Now there is a guide, and there is extra help for the soul in the difficult work of doing good and avoiding evil. It is grace. Divine grace gives us light and guidance when we are in doubt as to the way, and gives us extra strength in difficult duties.

Our Lord, however, expects us to ask for this grace by prayer. When we need help in this life we ask others to help us. If we want something, we ask for it. It is only right that we should ask Our Lord also for light and help. And if we do not ask, if we do not pray, then it is our own fault if we fall. The man who does not pray says to God, "Oh, I do not need Your help. I can manage myself." Then God lets him try to manage by himself, and he falls into sin. When Willie was tempted to take the pocketknife he did not pray against the temptation. He knew that it was wrong to take it, but he tried to manage by himself, and in the end he broke God's commandment. Our Lord told us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation." And again He said, "Ask and you shall receive. Whatever you ask the Father in My Name, He will give it to you." And, of course, we cannot ask bad things in the Name of Christ. With the help of God's grace, therefore, the commandments are not too hard. We can keep them, and we know that thousands of good people, especially the Saints, have kept them; and many of those who have faithfully served God have been far more severely tempted than we have been. I'm afraid many of our sins are due to sloth. We are too lazy to resist, and too lazy to pray. But now that we know why we fell into sin before, we shall be on our guard and pray quickly and fervently when the next temptation comes. Then we shall not fall half so often, nor half as badly as we have done in the past. Now let us look at the commandments.

The ten commandments of God are:—

1. I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt not have strange gods before Me.
2. Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain.
3. Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.
4. Honor thy father and thy mother.
5. Thou shalt not kill.
6. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
7. Thou shalt not steal.
8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.

If I were to ask a little Catholic boy, "What is the fourth commandment, he would reply at once, "Honor thy father and thy mother." But if I were to ask a little Protestant boy, "What is the fourth commandment?" He would reply, "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day." I would say, "No! That is the third commandment," and he would reply, "You are wrong. It is the fourth." What is the matter? Why do Protestants call our fourth commandment the fifth?

The first Protestants wanted to do all they could against the true Church. Above all, they did not like to see pictures and statues which remind us of Our Lord and Our Blessed Lady. So they wished to pretend that God had forbidden anyone to make these pictures and statues. They turned the first commandment into two commandments and said, "The first commandment is: Thou shalt not make images of things in Heaven and on earth to worship them." Then, because that would make eleven commandments, they made the ninth and the tenth one, and that gave them ten again.

The Catholic Church did not change them. She has them just the same now as always, from the very time of Christ. The Protestants changed them in the sixteenth century, and they must say why they changed them. They had no right to do so!

In the Bible the commandments are much longer than in the Catechism, but they are not really different. Just look at the first commandment as it is given in the Bible: "I am the Lord thy God, Who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in Heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them nor serve them. I am the Lord thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the

children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto thousands to them that love Me, and keep My commandments." Exod. xx. 2-6. Deut. V, 6-10.

All that is one commandment, commanding people to be true to God, and never to make idols or false gods. But isn't it long! And wouldn't it be hard to remember? So the Catholic Church puts the same thing more easily in the Catechism in a few words. "I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt not have strange gods before Me." That is not changing the commandment. It is giving the same commandment in easier words.

This is what the Catholic Church does in the Catechism, in order that you children may easily learn the chief thing God wished to tell us. But the Catholic Church has never divided the first commandment into two, as the Protestants have done. The commandments, as given in the Catechism, contain briefly just what God intended, and they are given in exactly the right order, and according to the right numbers.

CHAPTER 2

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

(A)

The first commandment is: I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt not have strange gods before Me.

We are commanded by the first commandment to adore God, and to adore Him alone.

When the King gives a law for all his people, he begins by saying, "I, King of this country, command and will," and then he adds what he wishes his people to do. He begins, therefore, by stating his title to authority.

Now God, Who is King of the whole universe, begins also by saying, "I am the Lord thy God." These words remind us to listen carefully to all that He has to say. It is not merely a man who is speaking to us. It is He Who has created the world, and Who is our Divine Lord and Master.

A boy must treat his father with great respect and reverence. Is not that so? Yet his father, although his superior, is only a creature. What shall we say of the respect we owe to Him Who is the Creator of all, the Master of all? The word respect is too weak. Even reverence is not enough. We must admit that He is all, and that we are nothing. We have no rights against God. If He treats us as His dear children, it is only because He is so good. We acknowledge our dependence, therefore, by adoring and worshipping God,

and when He says, "I am the Lord thy God," He commands us to adore Him. Then, because there is only one God, we must not adore anyone else; so we are commanded to adore God alone.

We are to adore God by faith, hope, and charity, by prayer and sacrifice.

When we believe God, we say, "O God, Thou art Infinite Truth," and by admitting that, we adore Him. So, too, hope shows that we adore His Infinite Power and Mercy; charity offers Him adoration by loving His Infinite Goodness. We adore, also, when we pray to Him, because we mean that He alone can give us all we need; whilst sacrifice acknowledges His Infinite Perfection which we had no right to offend.

Faith is a divine virtue, by which we firmly believe the truths which God has revealed.

Firstly, faith is a virtue. What do we mean by that? You will say goodness, just as vice is wickedness, and in a way you are right. But virtue is really a good habit. A boy who has the habit of always telling the truth, has the virtue of truthfulness. He has the constant will to tell the truth. Faith is the constant will to believe all that God has revealed, and the Catholic Church teaches. It is a good habit, indeed, always to believe God.

But how did we get that good habit or disposition? You have faith. But did you get this good habit just as you got the good habit of writing nicely? How did you get the good habit of writing nicely? It was by hard work. You kept making letters, till you could make them clearly and beautifully. You began with lines and pothooks, and after a lot of practice you had the good habit of making them well. So you see that you got this habit by exercise. You used your natural powers, and the good habit was a natural habit.

Now is it natural to be in the habit of believing all that God says? No. That is why the Catechism says—

"Secondly, faith is a divine virtue." When you were baptized, God gave sanctifying grace to your soul, and with this grace He put good habits into your soul. Faith was one of them, and it is called a divine virtue because it comes from God, and not from your own natural efforts. It is because of this divine virtue of faith that a little baptized Catholic child is ready to believe all that God says as soon as he hears it.

Thirdly, by faith we believe firmly. When we know that God has revealed something, we do not say, "Then I think, too, that it might be true." Nor do we say, "It seems that it might be true, if God says so." No. There is no doubt at all. It is true. God has said it. Perhaps my little mind does not quite understand it,

or even, perhaps, if God had not told me, I would have thought something else. But if God says it, I know it must be true, and I feel absolutely certain of it. Why does this **divine virtue** tell me to believe so firmly things I do not always understand? And how do I know what things I must believe like this? Let us take the second question first.

We know what God has revealed by the authority of His Church, which is the pillar and the ground of truth. I Tim. III. 15.

Protestants say, "We know what God has revealed by reading Scripture." But they have been reading it for four hundred years, and they do not know yet what God has revealed. So that cannot be the way. Besides, all that God has revealed is not in Scripture, so that, even if they could understand the whole of Scripture, they would not know all.

What God has revealed is contained in Sacred Scripture and in Tradition. By Sacred Scripture we mean the Holy Books contained in the Bible, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. God inspired different men to write these books, and they wrote just what He wished. So they do contain God's Word.

By Tradition we mean all the other things which Jesus taught to the Apostles, and which were not written. The Apostles taught these other things to their followers, and these again taught them to their successors, and so they have come down to us.

Thus what God has taught is contained in Sacred Scripture and Tradition. But this is not our question. The question is, "How do we know what is contained in Scripture and Tradition?" By studying it for ourselves? No. We need a teacher, just as at school we need a teacher to explain to us what our books contain. The truth contained in Holy Scripture and Tradition is not always clear to us. God knew that it would be difficult for us to find out for ourselves, and, to save us from mistakes He left us an infallible church to teach us; and we know what God has revealed by believing all that the Catholic Church teaches us. This church alone has the right to tell us the true meaning of all that is contained in Scripture and Tradition.

We believe what God teaches because He is the infallible truth, and therefore cannot deceive nor be deceived.

Infallible only means that God cannot think what is wrong, and cannot tell us what is wrong. God could not deceive us, by telling us a lie; nor could He be mistaken Himself or be deceived.

Now you see how we adore and worship God by

faith. The first commandment says, "I am the Lord thy God." By faith we reply, "Yes. Thou art our Lord and our God." Every time we make an act of faith, and say the words, "I believe," we say, "God is Truth itself, and cannot make a mistake. God is holy, and cannot tell a lie. God is my God, and I am His little creature. Therefore I believe this is true, because He says it, and I know He says it because the Catholic Church, which He told to go and teach all nations, tells me so." Is not that a great act of adoration and worship offered to God?

Thus we see the first thing the first of the ten commandments orders us to do. It orders us to have faith, and to believe in all that God teaches us through His Holy Catholic Church. If we did not do this, we would break the first commandment.

The second thing ordered by the first commandment is that we should hope in God. Let us see, therefore, something about this hope.

Hope is a divine virtue, by which we desire eternal life, and the means to obtain it.

Hope, therefore, is a divine virtue, just as faith is a divine virtue. It is a good habit put into our soul with sanctifying grace. But it does not give us a constant will to believe, as does faith. It does something else.

When Jesus ascended into Heaven, the Apostles watched Him till He disappeared from sight. But their hearts went with Him, and they would have liked to have gone with Him. Yet they could not go then. It was not time yet, for they had a lot to do for God. They knew, however, that Jesus had gone to prepare a place for them in Heaven, and right through their lives they kept hoping that soon He would take them there.

But is Heaven only for the Apostles? No. It is for all who love Christ, and who keep the commandments.

Yet it is not easy to keep the commandments. We have bad inclinations. The world and the devil try to drag us away from our good resolutions. So we hope, also, that God will help us. We pray to Him to guide us, so that we shall not miss the way, and to help us to overcome our temptations.

We desire to go to Heaven, and hope that God will give us the means to get there. We trust in God's promise. We have no right to go to Heaven, and we rely on God's goodness. Would a poor workman have the right to say, "I keep the laws of my king, so he ought to treat me as his son. I shall go to his palace, and walk in, and live there with him?" How then could we little creatures say this to God, Who is ever so much greater than any earthly king? Yet, because God has promised us that some day, if we are good,

we may come to the Palace of Heaven, we hope and trust in Him. And that leads to our next point.

We hope in God because He is infinitely powerful, good, and merciful, and has promised all graces, even Heaven itself, through Jesus Christ, to those who keep His commandments.

When many sufferings and sorrows came upon Job, a holy man of whom Scripture tells us, he said, "Even if God were to take my life, I would still hope and trust in Him." The holy martyrs lost their lives, and died, still hoping in God. What made them hope like this? Firstly, their faith. They believed God's words. Then they relied on His power and fidelity to His promises. God says to each one of us, "I shall be thy reward, exceedingly great." And then, "Ask, and it shall be given thee."

Men promise many things, but often they cannot keep their promises, and often, even though they can, they will not do so. But God does not promise more than He can do, for He can do all things. And because He is infinitely good, He will certainly keep His promises.

Then, too, our hope increases when we come to know Jesus Christ, and realize how He merited all graces for us by His sufferings and death. God did not spare His own Son, but sent Him to save us. How can we refuse to hope in God and trust Him?

The first commandment says, "I am the Lord thy God." Every time we desire Heaven, and hope to save our souls, we say, "Yes. Thou art our God. Thou art infinitely powerful, and Thou canst save us. Thou art good, and dost wish to save us. Thou art merciful, and wilt forgive us our sins." You see how we adore and worship God's power, and goodness, and mercy, when we make acts of hope. No wonder the first commandment orders us to hope in God, and to trust in His promises, and in the merits of Jesus Christ His Son.

If a man refused to hope in God, he would insult God, by saying, "God cannot save me," or else, "God does not want to save me. He is not so good as that."

Look at the Good Thief on the cross! Moved by grace and hope, he trusted in the merits of Jesus, and cried out, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom!" St. Peter, even after he had denied Christ, repented. He did not think that it was useless to hope in Our Lord. Hope told him that Jesus would forgive him, if he repented.

Jesus gave a parable especially for Christians who fall into sin. No matter how great their sins, they must not give up hope in God. He said that the prodigal son, reduced to great misery, thought of his

father. And a great hope came into his heart. He repented of his sins, thought out how he would make his confession, and then started for home, trusting that his father would forgive him.

St. Augustine had sinned like the prodigal son. But he repented, and turned to God with great sorrow and prayer. In the end he became a great saint! Yet what would have happened if he had said to himself, "Oh! what is the good of hoping in God!"

Let us, therefore, obey God's commandments, and always hope in Him. God wishes us to be saved. His promises come from His infinite goodness, and He will be true to those promises. No matter how great our sins, He can save us, because He is **omnipotent**, and He will save us, if we repent, because He is **good** and **merciful**, and because Jesus died for us. God rightly, therefore, commands us to glorify and adore Him by hoping in Him always and everywhere, as long as we are in this life. After death, of course, hope stops. Those who lose their souls have no more hope. Those who save their souls obtain all the things they hoped for, and they do not hope to get what they have already received. Hope in God, and hope for Heaven, children, and pray to Our Lord that you may be among the happy ones who obtain all that God has promised.

CHAPTER 3

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

(B)

Charity is a divine virtue, by which we love God above all for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.

Charity, like faith and hope, is divine, because it is given us by God with sanctifying grace, and is a virtue because it is a **good habit**, giving a constant will to love God. And it makes us, or rather helps us to love God above all other things.

You will say, "Oh, but I feel much more love for my mother than I do for God! And I feel more unhappy when I have a pain, than after I have offended God!" That is quite natural. You see your mother, but you do not see God. And a pain in your tooth, or in your head, may be very real and strong. Yet you must love God more than you love Mother, or Daddy; more than any creature in this world; more than yourself! How can you do it?

Faith tells us that God is better than any of the creatures He has made, and that we should love Him more than all creatures.

But there are two ways of loving: one by the natural

sentiment of our feelings, the other by the deliberate choice of our will. We can love by our feelings. If you feel happy when Mother is home, and unhappy when she is away, that shows that you love her.

The other way you love her is by doing her will. If she wants you to do something, you do it at once, because you love to please her.

Some children cry when Mother goes away. They love her with their soft-hearted feelings. But when she is at home and asks them to do something, they do not want to do it; they do not love her enough for that.

Now we can love Mother and Father more with our feelings, but we must love God more than anything else with our will.

Yet not only must we love God above all things for His own sake. We must love our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.

We must not do to our neighbor what we would not like him to do to us. And we must show him the same kindness we expect from him. Of course, it is easy to love our friends. Even those who are not Christians do this. But we have to imitate Jesus, forgiving those who offend us, and loving them also because we love God. Even our enemies are our neighbors. Do you remember how Our Lord said that the good Samaritan was kind even to a complete stranger? Think of St. Vincent de Paul, with his great heart full of love for men. The poor, and the sick, strangers and even enemies, always found him ready to help them. He was their kind father and friend always.

Learn, therefore, to forgive your enemies. Never let hatred stay in your heart. God would rightly say to you, "If you hate those whom I love, how can you expect Me to love you?" If you see an enemy whom you can help, then help him. St. Bernard said one day, "There are many Christians who pretend that they do not wish to do any evil to their enemies. But they do not wish to do any good to them, either, and they will not speak to them. What if God said to them, 'I will not do you any evil, but I shall not give you any grace, nor shall I ever look at you or speak to you.' Do you think they would be happy?"

By charity, therefore, we are commanded to love God above all things, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God. Our neighbor is also made in the image and likeness of God, and is our brother, sharing in God's love.

We should love God above all for His own sake, because God alone is infinitely good and perfect.

St. Francis of Assisi loved God so much that he could not help crying out, "My God, and my All!" To love God because He is so good in Himself is perfect

charity. It offers Him an act of adoration, worshipping His goodness. The first commandment says, "I am the Lord thy God." Charity replies, "Yes, Thou art my Lord and my God. Thou art infinitely good, and dost deserve all my love." Do we not, then, adore and worship God when we make acts of charity?

Of course we can love God in other ways, too. We can love Him because He has created us, and given us all that we have. This is love of gratitude. But this love is not so perfect as loving God for Himself. If you love your Mother because of herself, your love is unselfish. But if you love her only because she gives you her care, your love is rather selfish. We must try to love God, therefore, for Himself, as well as loving Him because He is good to us.

We should frequently make acts of faith, hope, and charity, and particularly at the hour of death.

If a little grain of wheat is left idle on a table, it just stays there as it is. But if it is put into the ground, the warm rays of the sun and the moisture of the earth make it begin to grow. Now the divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity, which are put into the soul at baptism, are like this little grain of wheat. They remain as they were first put there, until the warmth of our goodwill, with the help of actual grace, begin to make them grow. God gave us our reason, and our free will, and He expects that we should use our will in trying to become holy. Just as we use our mind by studying again and again, so we must use our will in choosing good things by many acts of virtue. And above all we should make many acts of faith, hope, and charity. The more often we do, the stronger they grow.

Sometimes people say, "If faith is a gift of God, then it is not my fault if I do not believe!" That is foolish. It is true that faith is a gift of God. But God has given this gift to all who are baptized, and if people lose their faith, or hope, or charity, it is because they would not make acts of these virtues. If they had often made such acts, paying attention to the inspirations of grace, these virtues would have grown, and become strong.

WHEN should we make acts of faith, and of hope, and of charity? Of course we should do so as often as possible. It is an act of faith to recite the Apostles' Creed. In the Our Father it is an act of hope to say, "Give us this day our daily bread," or "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." "Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy will be done," are acts of charity. We can exercise these virtues, also, by so many ejaculations, those short little prayers we all love. Isn't it an act of hope when you say, "Heart of Jesus, I put

my trust in Thee?" At Mass we look up at the Blessed Sacrament during the elevation, and we say those beautiful words of the Apostle, St. Thomas, "My Lord and my God." This is an act of faith. As for an act of charity, could you think of a better one than the one you know so well. "Sweet Heart of Jesus, I implore that I may love Thee more and more!"

We should make such acts, above all, in moments of temptation. "Jesus, help me!" "Oh, Jesus, I do not wish to sin, because I love Thee!" These acts give us the will to resist and fight against sin. When we make them we tell Our Lord that we hate sin, and love Him.

St. Paul says that such acts are like a shield. When the devil throws the spears of temptation at us they fall to the ground without hurting us. We fight for virtue by these acts of faith, and hope, and love, and if we are always ready to make them, we shall at last gain the crown of victory.

We ought to make these acts, also, when we have very important duties to do; above all, religious duties.

CHAPTER 4

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

(C)

The First Commandment forbids all sins against faith, hope, and charity, and other duties of religion.

Do all people keep the first commandment? Alas, no! There are sinful men who will not believe. They do not trust in God, nor do they love Him; and they do not practise any religion. That is bad enough. But some men are worse still.

Supposing that your mother asked you to do something, and you said, "I won't!" That would be wrong already. But supposing you were mean and spiteful, and did just the very opposite, would not that be far worse? Just imagine a boy who, instead of putting some wood on the fire when told to do so, would go and put the fire right out by pouring water on it! Thus God orders us to have faith, and hope, and charity, and to worship Him by our duties of religion; and He also forbids us to do the very opposite by sinning against these virtues.

A person sins against faith by not endeavoring to know what God has taught, by not believing what God has taught, and by denying his belief in what God has taught.

By faith we believe what Jesus came to teach men. Our Lord came all the way from Heaven to teach us, and it cost Him ever so much suffering, and even His

death. If He thought it was worth all that, wouldn't it be sinful if we said that it was not worth learning? Of course it is a sin to refuse to try to find out what God has taught. And if, when we find out what God has taught, we refuse to believe it, that is a greater sin still. Again, a man might find out, and really believe it in his heart, yet when someone asks him if he believes it, he might say "no," through shame or human respect or fear. And that would be sinful also.

They who do not endeavor to know what God has taught are those who neglect to learn the Christian doctrine.

You see, it is not a question of "They must teach me." "It's a question of "I must learn it." There are hundreds of people who do not know their Christian doctrine, and who do not try to learn it.

Now, when you die, God will examine each one of you. Wouldn't you like to pass His examination? What questions do you think He will ask you? Will He ask you about history or geography? No! Will He give you some sums to do? No! Will He ask you about Christian doctrine? Yes! So now you can guess how important it is to know Christian doctrine, and how foolish they are who do not try to learn it! Besides, reading and writing and arithmetic help you to make a success of your short little life on earth; Christian doctrine helps you to make a success of your eternal life.

They who do not believe what God has taught are the heretics and infidels.

The word **infidel** means a man without faith. Some infidels call themselves atheists, or people who say there is no God. But there are very few real atheists. A lot of those who call themselves atheists, believe in their hearts that there really is a God. Yet even a lot of these say that they do not believe that God takes any notice of men, and they deny that Jesus is His Eternal Son. Then, of course, they refuse to believe what Jesus taught. These men are infidels, and they break the first commandment very seriously. They live just as if there were no God, and as if Jesus had never come to this earth at all!

The word **heretic** means one who takes what he pleases. Some people say that they are not infidels. They keep telling us that they believe in God, and in Jesus Christ, and that they are Christians. But we know that they are not true Christians, for they do not belong to the true Church. They are heretics. Protestants are heretics, and, of course, many Protestants today do not realize that they are heretics, because they took what they pleased of Christian doctrine, and

refused to believe the rest. Those born of Protestant parents can be in good faith, but no Catholic could behave like this, without a mortal sin against the first commandment.

Henry VIII., of England, was once a good Catholic. But because the Pope would not give him a divorce, and let him marry Anne Boleyn whilst his first wife, Catherine, was still living, he left the Catholic Church, and said, "Oh, I don't believe that divorce is forbidden. If the Pope won't give me a divorce, I shall leave the Church, and make a Church of my own, and my own Church will have to give me what I want." In this way the Anglican or Church of England began, although many good Anglicans today do not seem to realize it. Very, very few Catholics today ever dream of leaving the Catholic Church to become Protestants or heretics. But we must be on our guard. The first heretics were once Catholics and they sinned in this way. And if they could, we could.

They who deny outwardly the true religion cannot expect salvation, for Christ has said: Whosoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in Heaven. Matt. x. 33.

When we die, we all hope that Jesus will be our Friend. But how can we expect this if we deny that He is our Friend? He will rightly say to us, on the last day, "Oh, no! I am not your Friend. You said I was not when you were on earth, and if you would not have Me then, you cannot have Me now!"

At our Baptism we renounced the devil and the world, and we gave our souls to Christ. We are happy that we did so. But we must not renounce Christ, and give our souls back to the devil and the world.

In the early Church it was much harder to be a Catholic than it is now. Catholics were arrested and tortured, and even put to death; for many, even little children, preferred to die rather than deny Christ. But some Catholics then grew afraid, and denied our Lord to save themselves from suffering; St. Cyprian wrote to some timid Christians like these, "Christ says that He will be ashamed of those who are ashamed of Him. Do you think you are a Christian, if you blush and deny that you belong to Christ?"

If anyone ever asks you, then, whether you are a Catholic, do not deny it, but say at once, "Yes. I have the happiness to be a Catholic." Be proud of your faith, and Our Lord will be proud of you.

We are obliged to make open profession of our religion, as often as God's honor, our own or our neighbor's spiritual good requires it. "Whoever," says Christ, shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in Heaven." Matt. x. 32.

Of course, we need not tell everybody we meet that we are Catholics. We profess our faith sufficiently, as a rule, just by living as good Catholics. When we go to Mass on Sundays, and refuse to eat meat on Fridays, people see that we are Catholics, and that we are not ashamed of it. But there are times when we are obliged to let people see in a special way that we are Catholics.

God's honor demands that we profess our faith whenever we are asked by public authority, as in a law court. If some ordinary man were to ask us, we could not deny our faith, but we could tell him to mind his own business. But even then, as a rule, it is better to say straight out, "Yes. I am a Catholic." We ought not to wait until we are obliged to say so. We should welcome the opportunity of being loyal to Our Lord.

The Catechism tells us that we must profess our faith, also, when our own spiritual good requires it.

Supposing that you were with some people who were talking about religion, when some non-Catholic said, "Well, one religion is just as good as another!" And supposing that a Catholic who was present, and who was ashamed of his faith, replied, "Yes, I think so, too." Would it not be wrong for a Catholic to admit that a false religion is just as good as the true religion given us by Our Lord? To save this weak Catholic from committing further sins through human respect, you should say, "We Catholics, of course, cannot and do not admit that one religion is as good as another!" Thus you would profess your faith, and at the same time do something for the spiritual good of the weak Catholic by giving him courage.

Sometimes, also, besides saving weak Catholics, such a profession of faith helps to convert non-Catholics to the true Church. Ever so many converts have come to the Catholic Church through the good example of Catholics who showed that they were proud to confess their faith. No wonder Our Lord says that He will confess those in Heaven, who confess Him on earth.

The sins against hope are despair and presumption.

If you were to eat too little, you would get thinner and thinner, and perhaps die of hunger and starvation. But if you were to eat too much, you would ruin your health, and perhaps kill yourself in that way. You must keep in between too little and too much, if you want to keep well. To eat rightly you must not take too little, nor must you take too much. In the same way, to hope rightly you must not hope too much. To hope too little is mistrust. If you do not hope at all, it is despair. And if you hope too much, it is presumption. Thus we sin against hope in two

ways: either by not having enough hope, or by having too much.

Despair is the loss of confidence in God.

A man who loses all hope in God has committed a sin of despair. The first commandment says, "I am the Lord thy God." The man who despairs says, perhaps, "Thou are the Lord," but he says in his heart, "Yet Thou are not my God. I do not hope in Thee and I do not believe that Thou canst love me or help me."

However, a man can sin against hope long before he comes to complete despair. He sins by mistrust, by not having enough confidence in God. We must trust Our Lord.

Do you remember how He once went in a boat with His disciples. He was sound asleep, when a great storm arose. The poor frightened disciples woke him up and said, "Lord, save us. We perish." Our Lord said, "Why did you fear, Oh you of little faith." He rebuked their want of trust.

How often storms come in our lives. Sickness comes, those we love die; we meet with poverty or disgrace; we find it hard to see how God can really be looking after us. Like the disciples we forget that Our Lord is with us, and we begin to be afraid.

Some people are always anxious lest they should not be able to get what is necessary to live. Then, when we look around the world, we see wars, revolutions, and persecutions. The good people suffer, and often the wicked seem to do well. People without trust in God say, "Oh, there cannot be a God, or if there is a God He does not care. If He did care things would not go wrong like this." Never speak like this! There is a God, and He loves us. He gives us many good things, and permits suffering only for our greater good.

When everything is going well, people say, "Isn't God good!" Then, when things go wrong, they should say, "Since God is good, He must be permitting this trial for my good. I must continue to trust Him."

If want of trust offends God, despair offends Him still more. The devil persuades men to commit sin, and then to make sure that they won't repent, he sends another temptation to despair, "It's no good," he whispers, "it is impossible for you to be saved. God will never forgive you, no matter what you do!" This is an insult to God, because it denies His infinite mercy. Think of the wicked sin of Judas. He betrayed Our Lord to His enemies. Then he felt miserable, because sin never makes anyone really happy. The money disgusted him, and he went and threw it back to the Jewish priests. Then what did he do? If he had asked Jesus to forgive him, do you think Our

Lord would have done so? Of course He would! Or supposing that Judas did not have the courage to go to Jesus, but went to Mary and begged her to ask Jesus to forgive him, do you think he would have recovered God's grace? Certainly Mary would not have sent him away, and Jesus would not refuse His Mother's prayer. But Judas gave way to the temptation of the devil. He believed that he could not be forgiven. "God could not be good enough to forgive such a sin," thought Judas, and he despaired of his eternal salvation. This was another mortal sin, and it led Judas to still a further mortal sin of suicide.

If you never begin by mistrusting Our Lord, you will never end in despair. And there is no need to despair. There is not a single sin which cannot be forgiven, if only one repents.

One day, St. Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, how often must one forgive others—seven times?" Our Lord replied, "not seven times, but seventy-seven times." He meant, "you must be always ready to forgive, as often as those who offend you ask you to do so. God is always ready to forgive all those who ask Him, and men should forgive each other as God is ready to forgive them, as often as they sincerely repent."

By mistrust and despair, we sin because we have too little hope. Now let us see how men can sin by hoping too much or by presumption.

God has not promised Heaven to all. He has promised Heaven to those who correspond with His grace, and who try to serve Him. And we are only allowed to hope for what God has promised. To hope to go to Heaven without grace is hoping too much. So, alas, it is hoping too much to say, "Oh, God's grace will save me. There is no need for me to do anything." These are sins of presumption.

Presumption is a foolish expectation of salvation, without making proper use of the necessary means to obtain it.

It is a sin of presumption to think that we can save ourselves without God's grace. Proud presumption says, "Oh, I trust in myself. I do not need to put my trust in the Heart of Jesus." Let us always ask Jesus to help us with His grace. But, then, too, let us do our best. What would you think of a pupil at school who hoped to be promoted to a higher class at the end of the year, yet who would not study and learn all that the teacher had explained to him? Would not this be presumption? All right, then, if a person thinks that he can save his soul without trying to serve God, or doing any good works, and not even going to Mass and the Sacraments, do you think he is justified in such hopes? No. It would be presumption.

A poor man might be in a state of sin all his life, and have no good works. Then at the last, instead of despairing, he might receive the grace of repentance. His hope to be saved, even though he has no good works, except his last act of corresponding with God's grace, is justified. But then he always knew that his sins were wrong, and that they did matter, and he never hoped to be saved without repenting of them. He did not commit the sin of presumption. But if others said, "Well, he was saved after a life of sin, we can commit sin, also; then we too shall be saved by final repentance," that would be presumption, for such men would deliberately sin, presuming that they must receive the grace of repentance when they want it, and not when God wants them to repent. It is a wicked thing to say, "Oh, God is merciful," and then offend Him just because He is merciful. Rather that is an extra reason why we should love and serve Him. Such a sin of presumption would deserve that a man should die without having time to repent as he boasted he would do at the moment of death.

A person sins against the love of God by every sin.

We are obliged to love God. Now Our Lord says, "If anyone love Me, he will keep My commandments." If, then, we sin and break the commandments, we do not love God really and with all our hearts. Every sin, therefore, offends the love of God.

Usually, however, men love something which God forbids. They keep thinking of the things they love, and just forget God. Then they do what they wish, throwing away God's friendship. Often they say they would like to have God's love and the thing He forbids as well. They say they do not hate God. But all the same, they know they cannot have both, and then deliberately choose what God forbids. It is a great sin against the love of God, to say that any created pleasure or thing is better than God. Yet far greater is the sin of the man who really hates God, and who does not want God at all, in any way. There are not many men like this, but there are a few, and we must pray that God will have mercy on them. This hatred of God is a special sin against charity or the love of God. But every sin is against the love of God in general.

A person sins against the love of his neighbor by injuring him in any respect.

When we love people, we wish to do them good. When we hear that they are hurt we are sorry. And we are happy if we see them happy. Then how can we say that we love them if we hurt our neighbors?

The Catechism says that to hurt them in any respect is a sin against the love of our neighbor. If we take

our neighbor's goods; or hurt his body; or destroy his good name by telling nasty stories about him; or hurt his soul by giving bad example or by tempting him to sin—all these are sins against the love of our neighbor. But we shall see more about these when we study the other commandments.

CHAPTER 5

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

(D)

The first commandment, which says, "I am the Lord thy God: Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me," obliges us to offer to God our religious worship, besides believing in Him, hoping in Him, and loving Him.

The first commandment forbids us to give to any creature the honor due to God alone.

We read in the Old Testament that Moses went up on to a mountain one day to speak to God, and when he came down he was filled with holy indignation because the people had made a golden calf, and were worshipping the idol as if it were God.

Even the Romans worshipped many gods made of brass and stone, and poor pagan people today do the same.

But divine worship is due to God alone. To worship any creature as if it were God is foolish and sinful, whether the creature be a man, or an animal, or a statue. This is called the serious sin of idolatry.

The devil said to Jesus, "I shall give You all the world if you will fall down and adore me!" But Jesus said, "Get thee gone, Satan. It is written, 'God alone shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve.'"

Many people nowadays, who do not fall into the sin of idolatry, commit another sin against this first commandment by **superstition**.

Some, instead of asking God to help them in their difficulties, ask the devil. The devil is a clever evil spirit, and he can do wonderful things at times which even look like miracles. These wonderful things deceive poor foolish men and lead them away from God.

Other people who call themselves spiritualists, say that they do not speak to the devil, but to the souls or spirits of their dead friends and relatives, who answer their questions. Alas! How they deceive themselves! We can pray for the souls of our dear ones who are in Purgatory, and we can ask God to give us graces because they pray for us. But let us remember that we are in this world, and the departed souls are in another world altogether. Except in very special

cases, and always with God's permission, they have no means of speaking to us. Those who say that they can speak with the souls of the dead whenever they like, may hear replies, but whose replies? They are evil spirits, often, who reply, and who mock and deceive men. And it is a sin against the true religion of God to talk with the devil and evil spirits. The Church rightly forbids Catholics to have anything to do with spiritualism, or any other superstitious ways of trying to find out what God does not intend us to know.

Silly people think the number 13 unlucky; they believe in dreams; they think that stars and comets can tell them future things; if they see a knife and fork crossed on the table they say that an accident is going to happen. All this is silly superstition, and denies the Providence of God. God has care of us, and it is sinful to say that God would use such silly and vain things to fulfill His Holy Will. If Our Lord wants to tell the future, He will not tell us in this foolish way.

Superstition, therefore, is forbidden by the first commandment. We cannot have recourse to vain means of knowing the future, by cards, or fortune-telling, or by asking evil spirits. This is giving to creatures honor and respect which is not due to them, but to God alone.

We must not, therefore, give to any creature the honor due to God alone. But now there comes another point.

We are not forbidden to honor the saints, but we are forbidden to give them Divine honor, which belongs to God alone.

All the souls in Heaven are holy and glorious. But just as some stars are brighter than others, so some saints are more glorious than others. Who are the more glorious? Those who more closely copied their Divine Master. Like Jesus, they practiced great virtue, and sacrificed themselves for others. For the love of God some saints suffered immense trials, sickness, hatred, prison, and even death.

How does the Church know that someone is a saint? First, the Church examines someone's life, and virtue, and writings. If the Church, after a long examination, says, "Yes. This person had the true spirit of Christ, and was heroic in the practice of Christian virtue," she declares him **Venerable**, or worthy of being honored by all Catholics. If, after this, many who have prayed to this Venerable and holy soul, obtain special favors, the Church examines these favors, and if some of them are proved to be real miracles, which God alone can do, she **beatifies** the holy soul, and calls him **Blessed**. Then if God still continues to grant miraculous favors to honor the name of His servant

on earth, the Church canonizes him, and he is known as Saint. Only the Pope can canonize a Saint, and when he does so the Holy Spirit guides him, so that his judgment is infallible. After a decree of canonization, we are absolutely certain that a holy soul is in Heaven.

But is it right to honor the saints like this? Protestants say that we Catholics commit a sin by doing so. They do not understand. They say they believe in the Communion of Saints, but they do not know what it means. Of course it is right to honor the saints. God has honored them by giving them great graces, and by working miracles to show that they are His special friends. Should not we honor them also? It is true that they are creatures. They are not God. We cannot, therefore, adore them and worship them as we adore God. But they are the friends of God, and we should reverence God's friends. It would not be a sin if we honor those whom God has so honored. And if a soul is worthy of being honored by God, is not that soul worthy of being honored by us?

It is lawful to ask the prayers of the saints.

St. James wrote in his epistle V., 16: "The prayer of a just man avails much." St. Paul often asked those to whom he wrote, "to help him by their prayers," and he promised that he would pray for them. Now if the saints can pray for us while they are still in this world, and obtain many graces for us, why cannot they do so when they are in Heaven? Are they less powerful there? Or are they less charitable? Of course we can pray to them.

It is good to ask them to obtain many favors for us. A Protestant said to me once, "But God loves you more than any saint loves you. Why not ask God always?" I replied, "Yes. But then, you see, God certainly loves the saints more than he loves me. The saints are dearer to God, and if they offer my poor prayers to God, He will answer them for their sake." In the Old Testament we read these words, written long after the holy prophet Jeremias had died. "This is a lover of his brethren, and of the people of Israel; this is he that prayeth much for the people and for the holy city: Jeremias, the prophet of God." II. Mach, xv. 14. We rightly, then, pray to the saints, both for temporal favors and for spiritual favors.

It is proper to show respect to the crucifix and religious pictures, because they represent Christ and His saints, and remind us of them.

Pictures and statues of Our Lord, Our Lady and the saints speak to our souls and remind us of those whom we love. In the early Church, away down in the Cata-

combs under the city of Rome, the first Christians used to draw pictures of Our Lord and Our Lady on the walls and always treated them with the greatest respect. Before printing was invented the people used to learn their Christian doctrine not only from the voice of the Priest, but by seeing the beautiful holy pictures in the churches. We do not adore or worship the pictures. We honor those of whom the pictures remind us, and we respect holy people. Protestants foolishly say that we should not respect pictures and images of Our Lord and Our Lady; and they will not have such pictures in their churches. Then they go home, and have pictures of their parents in their homes, and respect them. If their parents deserve such beautiful remembrance, does not Our Lord deserve it still more? But when it is a question of religion they say, "No. We must read only the Bible!" Yet do they know more about their religion that way? I am quite sure that a little Catholic child who makes the Stations of the Cross, and sees before her eyes each of the fourteen Stations, knows more about the Passion and Sufferings of Jesus than most Protestants, even if they did read Scripture, as they say they should.

We are not, therefore, forbidden to honor the crucifix and other holy pictures and images. They represent Christ and His saints, and remind us of them. After the Great War they built in many cities a monument, to remind us of the soldiers who died for their country, and even Protestants, as they go by, lift their hats as a sign of respect. How can they complain when Catholics show respect to a crucifix, which reminds us of One who died for us all? But the devil makes non-Catholics blind, because he wants to rob Our Lord of all the honor and respect he possibly can. We Catholics, however, will always reverence Our Lord, and respect all that reminds us of Him, or of Our Lady, His Mother, or of His friends, the saints.

Catholics honor the relics of the saints because their bodies were the temples of the Holy Ghost, and will be honored at the last day, and will be glorified forever in Heaven.

In some churches the complete bodies of the saints are preserved. They are kept in beautiful shrines, and the faithful say their prayers before these shrines, and touch their beads and prayer books on the shrine, feeling that thus their pious objects are blessed. Usually, however, we see small relics of the bodies of the saints, or of things they have used during life.

If, when a mother were dying, she called her son and said, "Son, here are my rosary beads. I have used them all my life, and I want you to have them to remind you always of your mother," would he not take

them, and kiss them, and treasure them all his life? So great would be his respect for them that he would say, "These beads belonged to my mother. I would not lose them for anything!" In the same way, we show our respect and honor for the dear saints of God by venerating their relics.

The saints always made their bodies serve God. Whilst they were in their bodies they used them in God's service, practicing Christian mortification, keeping them holy and chaste and pure, and working for the love of their neighbors. They obeyed the voice of grace and the Holy Spirit dwelt within them. Just as we reverence a church in a special way when Jesus is present in the Blessed Sacrament, so we reverence the bodies of the saints, and any relics of their bodies, because they were sanctuaries of the Holy Ghost.

Also we know that, at the last day, the bodies of all will rise, and that God will honor and glorify the bodies of those who have been saints, in a very special way. Often God honors them even now, for He has granted miraculous favors over and over again when people have touched these relics with great faith and confidence. And if God honors such relics as this, we also should show our respect and hold them in great honor and reverence.

We pray before the crucifix, and before the images and relics of the saints because they remind us of Christ and His saints.

A poor, good Protestant once said to a Catholic, "I went into a Catholic Church one day, and saw a Catholic kneeling down and praying to a statue!" The Catholic smiled, and said to his friend, "You might have seen a Catholic kneeling in front of a statue, but you did not see him praying to it. When you were a little child, I suppose you used to kneel down beside your bed to say your night prayers. Now wouldn't you be angry if someone saw you, and then told everyone that you prayed to your mattress?" The Protestant then looked very foolish. We Catholics do not pray to the wood, or marble, or plaster. No Catholic ever dreams that a statue can hear prayers or give us graces. Catholics pray to those whom the images and pictures represent. When soldiers salute the flag, do we say, "Here! You must not honor a piece of rag like that!" No. We all know that they are showing respect to their country, and that the flag reminds them of their country. The holy pictures and images enliven our faith. They remind us that we too should be holy. And then we pray with greater earnestness for the graces necessary to imitate Our Lord and Our Lady, and to become saints ourselves.

It is not forbidden to make images; but it is for-

bidden to adore and serve them, as the idolators do.

That is easy to understand, after all that we have said. The first commandment says, "Thou shalt not make an image of anything in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath." But it **adds**, "Thou shalt not bow down and worship them."

Some non-Catholics pretend that God forbade us to make any images at all. But that is foolish. People could not even go out with a Kodak and take a snapshot of a gumtree! They would be making an image of something "in the earth beneath." God forbade us to make images in order to adore them, as idolators do. And we Catholics never do that. Why, God Himself ordered the Jews to carve two images of the Angels, and put them over the Ark of the Covenant. Would God order the Jews to break His own commandment? No. God did not forbid the **making** of images. He forbade the **adoration** of images; and the Catholic Faith forbids this also.

CHAPTER 6

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

(A)

The second commandment is: Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

Supposing that your parents gave you a name which was not a common name, but different from the ordinary names other children usually have. Would you be pleased if others used your name just to laugh at you, ridiculing and mocking you? Yet God deserves much more respect than we do. The Holy Name of God, and the Adorable Name of Jesus deserve great reverence, and it is sinful to make bad use of them. So God forbids men to use His Holy Name how they please, and tells them that they must not mention Him without the greatest reverence and respect.

We are commanded by the second commandment to speak with reverence of God, and of His saints, and of all things relating to Divine Worship. We are also commanded to keep our lawful oaths and vows.

God gave us our lips, that we might praise Him on earth, and afterwards for all eternity in Heaven. It is a beautiful thing to use our lips in this life to tell God that we adore Him and love Him, and to ask Him for all we need, as any little child would ask its dear father.

In the Old Testament we know that the Jews were never allowed to say the special word for God. Even today, in Jewish prayer books, they do not print the

Hebrew word for God, and Jews never use it. Only the High Priest was allowed to pronounce this Holy Name.

But we Christians are rather the children of God than the mere servants of God, and we may say the Names of God, and Lord, and Jesus, as often as we wish. But it is never lawful to speak disrespectfully of these Names. There are many beautiful examples of reverence for the Holy Name of God, and we should often think of them.

Some years ago, in Italy, there was a poor farmer who had great faith in Our Lord, and love for Him. But a great trial came to him, for he got cancer in his tongue. The doctor said that an operation was necessary, and that his life would be saved, but that after the operation he would lose the power of speech. Just before the operation the good farmer said, "Let me at least say the last words I shall ever speak in this world. I should like to offer my last words to Our Lord, and can only say, 'Praised be the Holy Name of Jesus.'" After that he would say no more, but submitted to the operation.

Let us ask the same great grace of Our Lord, that we may always pronounce His Holy Name with great reverence; that we may love those words in the Our Father, "Hallowed be Thy Name"; and that we may often praise God and bless Him, above all when we hear men insult God by taking His Name in vain.

Let us remember, also, that we must always speak reverently of the saints. They are God's special friends, and we know that, even in this world, people will not hear anything against their friends. If people insult our friends, they insult us. And if people insult the saints by irreverence they insult God.

Finally, we must speak reverently of all things connected with divine worship, because all these things are sacred by consecration to God.

But the second commandment not only orders us to do all this, it also forbids certain conduct.

The second commandment forbids all oaths that are false, rash, unjust, or unnecessary; it also forbids cursing, swearing, blasphemy, and profane words.

It is forbidden to curse people. Sometimes people who never pray to God, and live as if God did not exist, will call upon God when they are angry, and then only to invite Him to do their evil will, asking Him to hurt or injure others. These are curses and are absolutely forbidden by God. Such expressions are always sinful, even if people do not really mean them. But they are very wicked indeed, if really meant. Such words should never pass the lips of a Christian. Our Lord tells us to forgive our enemies, and pray for

them. How can anyone ask God, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," if he curses those who trespass against him.

But not only curses are forbidden. Swearing is forbidden. Sometimes swear-words are not wrong in themselves, for they do not really mean anything. They would be wrong if they were used to express impatience or anger.

Some people, however, use Our Lord's Name when they swear. This is not blasphemy, for they do not mean to insult Our Lord. But it is always a great irreverence. Never use Our Lord's Name jokingly, or to show impatience, and wonder or surprise. Keep His Holy Name for your prayers, treating it always with the greatest respect.

Real blasphemy is still worse, and most strictly forbidden. Wicked men not only ask God to curse people they do not like, but sometimes they even curse God. They revile Jesus, and make a mockery of religion. They really wish evil to God. They cannot hurt God; they hurt only themselves. But they wish to express their hatred of God. They are like silly children who would try to throw stones at the distant stars, only to find the stones falling on themselves and hurting them. But such blasphemy is very wicked.

Profane words are also forbidden. They are not so bad as blasphemy, for they do not wish evil to God. But they show no faith at all. People say, "If God were just He would not let us suffer like this!" Or they speak lightly and irreverently of religious things. These profane words are often occasions of worse sins, destroying faith and confidence in God.

A man who blasphemes and uses horrible language does not speak the language of Christians. He speaks the language of hell. It is the devil who teaches such language, for you will never hear such words in Heaven. You can easily understand, therefore, why God forbids such language by the second commandment.

An oath is the calling God to witness that what we state is true, or that we will do what we promise.

If you were out one day with a friend, and you both saw something wonderful happen, but you found that people did not believe you when you told them afterwards, what would you do? You would tell them to ask your friend, for your friend would witness that what you said was true.

It is never lawful to swear what is false.

We know that it is never lawful to tell a deliberate lie. God says, "Thou shalt not bear false witness." When we tell lies we sin against the virtue of truth. Then if it is not lawful to say what is false, it is much

worse to call upon God to witness that what we say is true, when we know that we are not telling the truth. This would be not only a sin against the truth, but also it would be a sin of irreverence. Isn't it a great insult to God to behave as if God did not mind lies? When a man swears an oath before God that a lie is the truth, he commits a sin of perjury, and we shall see in a moment how great a sin is perjury. It is certainly never lawful to swear what is false.

It is lawful to swear what is true whenever God's honor, or the good of our neighbor, or the defense of ourselves requires it.

Just as we are not allowed to take God's Name in vain, so we are not allowed to invoke Him, or call upon Him to witness that we are sincere, unless there is a real necessity. We are not free to take an oath, even when we are really telling the truth, if the matter is not very important.

The Pharisee used to swear on oath for even trifling things, and Our Lord forbade it. "Do not swear." He said, "but answer simply 'Yes' or 'No.'"

However, it is lawful to take an oath before God for serious reasons.

God's honor may require it. When Moses explained the commandments of God to the Jews, he wished to make sure that they would honor God by keeping them. And he swore by a solemn oath that God would bless them if they did. "I call Heaven and earth to witness this day," he said, "that I have set before you life and death." Deut. xxx, 19.

The good of our neighbor may require it. To save his children from making mixed marriages with people who had not the true faith, Abraham called the chief man of his house, and said, "I make thee swear by the Lord God of Heaven and earth, that thou take not a wife for my son of the daughters of the Chanaanites." Gen. xxiv, 3.

So, too, today, if a man were arrested and charged with some serious crime, and we knew that he was innocent, we could go to the law court and swear before God that we knew he was not guilty.

When Our Lord was arrested, the Jewish priests tried Him, and asked Him by what right He taught the people. Our Lord would not reply, until they asked Him to say by a solemn oath before God if He were really the Son of God. "I adjure thee," said the High Priest, "by the living God, that thou tell us if thou be the Christ the Son of God." Matt. xxvi, 63. Then Jesus accepted the oath, and gave a complete defense of all His actions, by replying, "Yes. What you say is correct." Matt. xxvi, 64. But the wicked Jews would not believe even His sworn declaration, and

condemned Him to death. We, too, can give evidence on oath in our own case, if the matter is really serious.

An unjust oath is an oath which is injurious to anyone.

We may take an oath to save an innocent man, even though because of our oath, the guilty man is condemned. For the guilty man deserves it. But we cannot take an oath that will injure any innocent man.

When the daughter of Herodias danced before King Herod, Herod promised her by a solemn oath that he would give her whatever she asked. The oath was wicked and unjust. She might ask for something wicked and wrong.

When we take an oath we must know that it will always be for something good and honorable. The Freemasons take an oath without knowing whether it will oblige them to do what is right or to do what is wrong. And the oath taken by Freemasons is wrong. No Catholic, therefore, can be a Freemason.

In the case of Herod, we know that the daughter of Herodias asked for the murder of St. John the Baptist, and, although Herod was afraid, he kept his oath and sent an executioner, who put St. John to death. How unjust to St. John was this oath of Herod!

A person is not obliged to keep an unjust oath.

Herod sinned by taking an oath just because a dance pleased him. It was not lawful to take such an oath. But when he had made it, and the girl asked him to do a wicked thing, was he obliged to keep his oath? No. It is never lawful to do wrong. Herod added the sin of murder to his sin of irreverence. Men are obliged not to keep an unjust oath.

A person is obliged to keep a lawful oath; it would be perjury to break it.

Certainly a man would commit mortal sin if he were to promise some just thing under oath, yet had no intention of doing it, at the time he took the oath. For he would swear falsely, or commit perjury. But he must not only have the intention of fulfilling his promise. He is obliged to fulfill it when he can. Of course, if he cannot, or if there are very serious reasons why he should not, he is excused.

It is perjury to break a lawful oath, or to take a false one.

If it is lawful to take an oath, and you do so with no intention of keeping it, then you commit perjury, for you swear falsely. But if you really have the intention of doing what you say, and afterwards, do not do so when you are able, you do not commit a sin of perjury, but rather one of infidelity to a serious prom-

ise. In this case you were sincere when you called upon God to witness to your sincerity.

Perjury is swearing falsely. Poor St. Peter committed a sin of perjury when he swore by an oath that he did not know Jesus. Many people today give false evidence under oath in law courts, committing grave sins of perjury. But they do not repent afterwards, as did St. Peter, who wept bitter tears because of his sin.

Perjury is a most grievous sin.

To swear what you know to be false is contempt of God, because you know that He is the God of Truth, yet ask Him to witness a lie. A promise under oath to do something wicked is also contempt of God, for you know that He is infinitely good, yet ask Him to promise with you that you will commit a sin. Never, therefore, allow yourself to commit perjury.

CHAPTER 7

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

(B)

The second commandment is, "Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain." It commands us to keep the lawful oaths and vows which we make in the Name of Almighty God.

A vow is a solemn promise made to God binding under sin.

We have explained how a man can make a serious promise to someone else, and take an oath by calling upon God to witness that he intends to do what he promises. But we can also make promises, not only to our fellow men, but to God.

You can promise to God that you will try to be more obedient, or more charitable, and if you make such a good promise, you should try to keep it.

You made great promises to God when you were baptized, or at least great promises were made in your name, and you renewed them afterwards for yourselves at your Confirmation. You promised to renounce the world and the devil, and to serve Jesus Christ. And because these promises are so important they are called **Baptismal Vows**. However, they are not vows in the real sense of the word. They are solemn promises to God, and we should make every effort to keep them. But they cannot be real vows, or else every single sin committed by baptized people would be a sacrilege as well, and no one would say that.

A real vow is more than even a solemn promise. One who makes a real vow not only makes a promise to God, but he says, "And I intend to oblige myself in a

new and special way in the name of religion." Thus he makes his act sacred. If a man made a vow of purity like this, and afterwards committed a sin against that holy virtue, he would commit two sins, one of impurity, and another of sacrilege by violating his vow to God.

If one takes a vow he is obliged to keep it. If we should be faithful to our promises to our fellow men, how much more faithful we should be to vows made to God! We read in the Old Testament of a holy woman named Anna, who prayed to God for a little child. She vowed that if God would give her a little boy she would consecrate him to God's service. Her prayer was heard, and she kept her vow. She called her little child Samuel, which means, "In the Name of the Lord," and afterwards Samuel became a great prophet.

We are not obliged to make vows, but if we do we must keep them, unless we obtain a dispensation from the Church. You remember how Our Lord said to His Church, "Whatever you loose on earth, is loosed in Heaven." But unless we get such a dispensation, God expects us to keep vows if we make them. He said to the Jews, "When thou hast made a vow to the Lord thy God, thou shalt not delay to pay it; because the Lord thy God will require it. And if thou delay, it shall be imputed to thee for a sin. But if thou dost not promise, thou shalt be without sin." Deut. xxiii, 21, 22.

You can see that one should think carefully before he makes a vow, for it is a very solemn promise indeed. No one should ever make a vow without taking advice, and asking permission from a Priest in confession. If a person made a vow privately, and afterwards found it too hard to keep, what should he do? He should tell a Priest in confession, and the Priest will instruct him and help him and, if necessary, obtain a dispensation for him, or perhaps change it to something easier. Some vows can be dispensed only by the Pope, or by some Priest who has obtained special powers from the Pope. The Church is very careful about vows, because they are serious. People in the world, above all, should be very slow to make vows, because it may be very difficult to keep them in the midst of so many temptations.

CHAPTER 8

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

The third commandment is: Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath Day.

The command as given by Moses in the Name of God to the Jews was that the Sabbath, and not Saturday,

should be kept holy. The word Sabbath means rest. The law includes two elements; one essential, that one day in seven should be dedicated to God; the other ceremonial, that the particular day should be chosen. The Jews selected Saturday, while Christians decided to observe Sunday.

Who changed the day for us? The Apostles. Our Lord said to the Apostles, "Whatever you bind on earth is bound in Heaven." Using this power given them by Our Lord, the Apostles changed the day for Christians. They did this to show the change from the Jewish to the Christian religion, and chiefly in honor of the Resurrection of Christ, Who rose from the dead on Sunday morning, thus completing the work of redemption and in honor of the Holy Ghost who came to give life to the church on Sunday, the first day of the week. Sunday has always been known to Christians as the Lord's Day. Some Protestants, called the Seventh Day Adventists, say that the Catholic Church changed the day about the third century, and because of this offended God by breaking the third commandment. They say that Saturday is still the day to be observed.

But the Seventh Day Adventists were never heard of for over 1700 years after Christ, and it is absurd to say that all Christians were wrong till then. Christ said that His Church would never err.

Besides this, they are wrong when they say that the change was not made by the Apostles, but by the Catholic Church in the third century. There is no difference between the Apostles and the Catholic Church. The Apostles were just as Catholic as we are. As for the change being made in the third century, we find it the first century. In the Acts of the Apostles, xx., 7, we read, "And on the first day of the week, when we were assembled to break bread, Paul discoursed with them." In an old book, discovered in the year 1883, and written by the early Christians in the first century, we read these instructions for the faithful, "Meet on Sundays to break bread and give thanks, after having confessed your sins that your sacrifice may be pure." Doct. of the Twelve Apostles, c. xiv., 1.

Thus you know what to say to those who tell you that we Catholics are wrong in keeping Sundays as the Lord's Day.

We are commanded by the third commandment to sanctify the Sunday by prayer and other religious duties.

It is a strict duty to sanctify Sunday. This is the only commandment where God says, "Remember." The commandments which follow tell us our duties to our fellow men. But this commandment tells us our

duty to God. And it is so important that God says, "Remember." When God says "Remember," He is certainly not giving us permission to forget! It is a very serious sin to break this commandment.

But besides being a sin of ingratitude, it is a sin of injustice. We ought to give at least one out of 168 hours which we have in a week back to God. If men pay the baker for the bread which nourishes their bodies, is it not more necessary to pay God what He asks in return for our bodies and our very life? Remember, therefore, to keep holy the Sunday, as God commands.

The Catechism tells us that we must sanctify Sunday by prayer, and other religious duties. We shall see in a moment that we must also abstain from certain work. But Sunday is not only a day of rest from work. It is a day of rest for our bodies, but it is also a day of spiritual exercise for our souls. We are to do work of piety and religion for our own sanctification and the honor of God. We shall see that Catholics are obliged to go to Mass. But they should keep the spirit of Sunday. They should not only go to Mass, and then spend the rest of the day without a thought of religion. They may have lawful recreation, but they should say special prayers on Sundays, be at Rosary and Benediction or other Church services in the afternoon or in the evenings if possible, and do some spiritual reading. He is a poor kind of Catholic who does only what he is strictly obliged to do.

The chief duty of religion by which we should sanctify the Sunday is the hearing of Mass devoutly.

You see how the Catechism calls this the chief duty. It is not the only act of religion we should perform. But it is the chief duty, because it obliges under pain of mortal sin, and because it is a public act which we all offer together to God in Church.

We are present bodily, kneeling before the Altar, because God gave us both body and soul, and we must worship Him by reverence of body and devotion of soul. And we do it together, because we live in society, and we are meant to profess our faith in the presence of others, besides giving good example to others.

Some Protestants say, "Oh, there is no need to go to Church, and show our religion publicly. It is enough to worship God in our hearts!" That is not enough. God gave men both body and soul, and it is not enough to worship God with the soul only. We must offer God bodily and external homage. If you were to ask people who say such things, when they offer God this purely spiritual and interior worship, what would they reply? If they were honest they

would have to admit that they scarcely ever think of God. Those who give up the external practices of religion nearly always lose the religious spirit altogether.

Among the most important exercises of piety is the hearing of Holy Mass devoutly. You know that Jesus is present on the Altar, and that He offers Himself in sacrifice for you, just as He did on the Cross, except that in the Mass He no longer sheds His Precious Blood. He offers Himself as a Victim to His Divine Father, giving Him the infinite honor and worship which all men together could never give. There is no religious act so wonderful as the Mass, and the Church obliges us to be present. But we must not just be there. We must assist with great devotion, just as if we were kneeling on Calvary at the foot of the Cross. You should be asking God to forgive you your sins; to accept the praise and worship of Jesus to supply for your own poor service of God. And you should ask for grace as earnestly as a starving beggar would ask for a crust of bread to keep him alive. You need God's grace more than that poor starving man needs a crust of bread. Remember, therefore, to go to Mass on Sundays, and to assist at Mass with great fervor and devotion.

Let me tell you a story.

There was once a boy whose father never went to Mass. Whilst the boy was little his father never said anything, but let the child go off to Mass every Sunday. But when the boy was about fourteen, he said to him one Sunday morning, "Where are you going at this early hour?" The boy replied, "I am going to Mass. You know that God commands us to sanctify the Lord's Day." "Oh," replied his father, "the Priests tell you that. Believe me, God never made such a law!" What do you think the boy replied? He thought of the commandments for a moment, and then said, "Well, is the next commandment, to honor my father and mother, a lie also, and only invented by the Priest?" His father was silent, and let the boy go without saying any more. But while the boy was at Mass the father thought over what his son had said, and next Sunday followed the good example of his child by going to Mass, a practice he kept up ever afterwards. Keep God's commandment, therefore, and learn to love the Mass. God will bless you wonderfully if you do.

The third commandment forbids all unnecessary servile works on Sunday.

Sunday is a day of spiritual exercise for the soul, and a day of rest for the body. We have to give up unnecessary servile work. Servile work is hard bodily

labor. Ploughing fields, or digging, carpentry, brick-laying, tailoring, bootmaking and all works which laborers do to gain their daily bread are forbidden. They are called servile, because when God gave the commandment, slaves and bondmen used to do them. When the Jews were slaves under the Egyptians, the Egyptians made them make bricks and build houses, and do other hard bodily works. When the Jews escaped and were free, God told Moses that they were not to do such works for the future on the seventh day.

Works which occupy the mind rather than the body, however, are permitted, such as music or study and reading.

Would it be lawful to play golf or other games on Sunday, or to go for an outing or a picnic? Yes, provided we fulfill our religious duties also. No one regards these games and outings as servile work, and they are a real rest for our bodies, even though we come home tired and happy.

We have said that unnecessary servile work is forbidden. What about the man who rings the bell for Mass on Sundays, or moves the seats in the Church, or gets the vestments ready? Is such work lawful? Yes. For it is necessary for Divine Worship. But even for the needs of the Church, all servile work which can be done on other days should be done during the week.

In our own homes Mother can cook the meals, and children can help in the housework, for this is necessary. The Jews complained that the disciples of Jesus plucked ears of corn on the Sabbath, because they needed food. But Jesus excused them. Do you think Our Lord would blame a poor farmer who worked hard to gather in his crop on Sunday, because rain was coming to ruin it? Of course not. Necessary work is not forbidden.

Perhaps there is some work, not necessary for ourselves, but for others. Supposing that a kind-hearted lady knew that some poor children had not enough clothing. Could she say, "I have some spare time on Sunday. I shall work and make some dresses for those poor children?" Yes. Charity excuses her, and she can do so. So, too, people are allowed to work on Sundays for the sick. Whatever necessary works others would be allowed to do for themselves if they could, we may do for them, from a motive of charity.

Let us remember, however, that we should try to do all servile work during the week as far as possible, so that we shall be free on Sundays to give our attention to our religious duties.

The Church forbids business and shopping on Sundays, also. She permits certain shops to open for

necessary things, such as the apothecary or refreshment rooms. But Catholics are not allowed to engage in ordinary business.

Now we understand the third commandment. It tells us to sanctify Sunday chiefly by being present with devotion at Mass; by other exercises of religious devotion; and by refraining from servile work or bodily labor, unless we are justified by necessity, or charity, or some other grave reason.

CHAPTER 9

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

The fourth commandment is: Honor thy father and thy mother.

How far can you go back by your memory? Can you remember when you were a little tiny baby, unable to leave your cot, and run about in the house or out of doors? How much love and care you received from your mother! Perhaps you remember your first day at school, and your tears when mother left you there among strange people whom you had never seen before. During life we often have to part sadly from those dear to us. But how happy we are to go home once more to our dear ones! It is so good to be home with our own family!

As each one comes into this world, he finds himself in a little society called the family. This is the first little society, and the big society called the nation is made up of hundreds and thousands of families. Good families make good nations, and God gave a special commandment for families as soon as He had spoken of all we owe to God. The commandment is for both parents and children. The children have the duty to honor their parents, and the parents have the duty to look after their children, and to see that the children do give them the honor due to them.

We are commanded by the fourth commandment to love, honor and obey our parents, and superiors.

Why are you alive today? You owe it not only to God but to your parents also. If you took a little tiny baby and left it out in the road it would die. God gave you to your parents, and they took tender and loving care of you. You will never guess the sacrifices your father and mother have made for you. **Could** you let them love you like this, and not love them in return? You will certainly never be able to repay them, no matter what you do for them, so at least you must give them your love.

Secondly, you must remember that you and all in the home belong to father and mother, and they are

the King and Queen of the family. That is God's will. You owe them, therefore, great honor and respect. Even if they have faults, you must respect them, because they are your parents. Of course, it is a pity if they have faults. But no one asks you to honor their faults. You must honor them, and overlook their faults.

In the Old Testament we read how Joseph was sold as a slave into Egypt. But he rose until he became the greatest man in the kingdom. One day his father Jacob came to him, poor and starving, asking for bread. What did Joseph do? Did he despise his father? No! As soon as he knew it was his father he went to meet him, and shed tears of joy as he embraced and kissed him. Everyone wondered to see the great Joseph treat a poor man like this, but Joseph had great respect for his father and did not mind what people said.

You should examine your own conscience. Haven't you been rude to your mother at times? I speak of your mother because she is so gentle. Your father knows how to make you keep your place. Some children despise their parents, reply to them with anger and bad temper, and even ridicule them. Proud children think they always know best, and even at times insult their own parents. At least, tell me that you are not like this, but that you are always loving and respectful children!

Thirdly, you must obey your parents. You do not prove your devotedness by looking at your parents, and by taking all they give you. You prove that you love them by quickly and willingly doing all you can to please them. Remember that they hold God's place in the home, and that their voice is the Voice of God for you, in all lawful things.

However, if parents tell children to do sinful things, such as to tell lies, or to steal, or not to pray, or not to go to Mass, then children must not obey them. We must obey God rather than men.

Saint Barbara became a Christian without her father's knowledge. When he found out, he tried in every way to make her give up the faith. But Barbara remained always respectful, yet said that she could not obey in this one thing, because it would be sinful to do so. Her father, who was a pagan, grew very angry, and give her to the torturers. But she remained faithful, and died a martyr for Our Lord. Remember, however, that Saint Barbara was obedient in all lawful things, and try to imitate her obedience. We must also help our parents in every way we can, thinking of their comfort, without waiting to be told to do things. We should be a consolation to them in

their sorrows, look after them with our earnings when we leave school and go to work.

We should help them also in another way, very, very easy, yet better than all the others. Can you guess? Yes! By prayer every day. If they are careless about their religious duties we should try to make them love Our Lord.

I remember a little boy who was preparing for his first Holy Communion. One day he came home and said, "Daddy, I learned today that Jesus is just as really in the Blessed Sacrament as He was in the Holy Land, when He spoke to the people. Why don't you go to Communion?" His father did not answer, and the little boy was sad. He did not get happier as the day of his first Holy Communion came nearer and nearer, and one day his father asked him why he was not happy. The child said, "Daddy, I know that you love me, and want to make me happy. Give me a present. Come with me when I make my first Holy Communion, and receive Our Lord also." His father was quiet for a moment, then caught the little boy in his arms and said, "You are a little angel, I shall go with you!"

If your parents are careless, be like this little boy. Give good example, win them sweetly, and pray for them. Be good to your parents, and God will give you many blessings.

Now there is one last thing to explain. The fourth commandment also tells us to obey our superiors. There are others besides our parents who have authority over us.

At school, for some hours every day, the teacher takes the place of father and mother. Teacher works hard to help you to learn and become intelligent, and to teach you good behavior. You must love and respect and obey your teacher also.

There was a great emperor called Theodosius, who noticed one day that his sons, who were princes, did not stand up when their teacher came into the room. He rebuked them for not showing respect to their master, even though they were princes.

God punished very severely some boys who mocked one of His Prophets or Spiritual Teachers. What shall we say of those who mock and disobey the Pope, or the Bishops and Priests! Jesus said of His Priests: "He who hears you hears Me; and he who despises you despises Me!" Luke x, 16.

Besides the Bishops and Priests, we must obey the lawful authority in our country, for all lawful authority comes from God.

What a long explanation this has been! But the Catechism gives it all in those few words, "We are com-

manded to love, honor and obey our parents and superiors."

The fourth commandment forbids all contempt, ill-will, and disobedience to parents or to others placed over us.

After all that we have said, this is very easy to understand. Still there are many children today, especially those who have not our Holy Catholic Faith, who have no respect for their parents, who even injure them, and disobey whenever they wish. But we belong to Our Lord, and no matter what others do we must not imitate them when they give bad example. If you were a Christian living in a pagan country, would you be free to live like the pagans? Of course not. You would have more grace than the pagans, and God would expect you to be better. So, too, Catholic children have more grace than non-Catholics, and they should not imitate the faults of those who are not Catholics. A Catholic child who shows contempt, or ill-will, or disobedience towards his parents is more guilty before God than other children. Our Lord was once your age, and you should ask Him to make you behave towards your parents as He behaved towards St. Joseph and Our Lady when He was young like you. You will do so if you always remember that God has made your father and mother King and Queen of the home, to rule there in His Holy Name.

The chief duties of parents are, to provide for their children, to instruct them and all others under their care in Christian doctrine, and by every means in their power to lead them to God. I. Tim. v. 8.

Parents are God's Providence for little children. They have duties to care for the bodies and souls of their little ones. They must love their children. This is a natural law. Even wild animals love little baby animals, and a human parent who did not love his children would be worse than a brute beast. And this love should make it a joy to work for the little ones, clothing them and providing food for them. It is very wicked before God for parents to think only of themselves, spending everything on their own amusement, and neglecting the children. If a man were a drunkard or a gambler, and left his wife and children without sufficient food and clothing, he would commit a mortal sin of gluttony by taking too much drink, or perhaps a mortal sin of prodigality by gambling; but he would commit a far worse sin of injustice by neglecting his duty to his home. And this sin of injustice would cry to God for vengeance, because it is a sin against nature itself.

Parents, too, should labor to settle their children in life, educating them so that they can make their way in the world; saving up money to give them a good start; and advising them prudently. Every real Father should say, "Well, my children will have better opportunities in life than I had, if I can possibly manage it." Above all, parents should be overjoyed to provide what is necessary, if one of their children should be called by God to be a Priest or a Nun. They should feel greatly honored, and willingly give what they can towards the necessary expenses of clothing and education. If a girl asks her Catholic mother for the price of a religious habit, instead of the price for a worldly dress, such a mother should thank God from the depths of her heart that her daughter should choose such a state in life.

But let us leave the temporal duties of parents, and consider the far more important spiritual duties.

First and foremost, parents are strictly obliged to give their children, not only an education to fit them for this life, but also a moral and spiritual education to fit them for eternal life. What is the use of a mother bringing forth a child to temporal life if she brings it forth to eternal death?

There are five ways in which parents are obliged to train their little ones: by prayer, instruction, watchfulness, correction, and good example.

They must pray to God for light and help for themselves, that God may give them the grace to know what is best. I was speaking to a holy Priest not very long ago, and he was telling me about his mother. "My mother," he said, "used to pray to God about us children always. Even when I had done wrong, and she had to whip me, she used to make the Sign of the Cross, say a little prayer to Our Lord, and then give me a good thrashing for the love of God!" How he smiled as he told that! "But," he added, "I know I deserved it, and it did me good. I owe my vocation to that dear old mother of mine."

But besides praying to know God's will for themselves, they should pray earnestly for their children, that not one of them might ever be lost. Every true mother should want every one of her little children with her in Heaven, and pray for that.

In the next place, parents are obliged to instruct their children. They must see that the children know their prayers and Christian doctrine. Of course they must send them to a Catholic school, if possible, when they are old enough. It is a serious sin to send children to a non-Catholic school if there is a Catholic school near enough for them to go to. The education of a child takes place not only in the playground and

among companions. In school, religion is left out, and the child will think it not very important if it receives a non-Catholic education; out of school its companions will talk non-Christian and even anti-Catholic things, of which the teachers and parents know nothing. So parents should send their children to Catholic schools.

Yet long before they go to school, parents should already have taught them their prayers and the chief Christian doctrines. And even when they are learning Christian doctrine at school, children must still be under the care of their parents. Parents have the first duty. They may send their children to Catechism classes, but they must not think that enough. They must question, and teach, and make sure for themselves that the children are really making progress in religious knowledge.

Thirdly, by watchfulness, parents must notice the good and bad inclinations of their children; they must keep them out of occasions of sin, and know all about their companions and friends. All parents should know where their children are, and never let them go out without their knowledge and permission.

Fourthly, parents must correct their children, and punish them if necessary. There is a little saying that one who spares the rod spoils the child. Holy Scripture says that he who spares the rod hates his own child. Prov. XIII. 24. Such a father does not worry if faults spoil his child. And certainly those parents who think that there is nothing to be corrected in their children are blind indeed.

Fifthly, parents are obliged to give good example. It is little use to tell children that they must pray, and go to Mass, and Confession, and Holy Communion, if the poor little children never see their parents doing these things also. To tell the children what they should do, and not do it oneself, is like lighting a fire with one hand and pouring water on it with the other.

However, well-instructed children should fulfill what they know to be right and if their parents do not set a good example they should never imitate their bad conduct. They should be like the little boy who rather persuaded his father to come to Holy Communion with him.

The special reward promised by God to dutiful children is a long life and happiness even in this world.

God does not mean that every single child who honors his parents will live a long life. Many good children die young. They are so good that they earn Heaven in a short time, and God gives them their eternal reward very quickly. And of course such children are very glad to enter upon their eternal

joy so soon. But most children are not saints. They are very human and ordinary, and they like the joy of their earthly life when they are healthy and happy. They do not want to die too soon, and they do want to live, untroubled by sickness and blessed by God in their temporal goods.

Respect your parents, therefore, and you can hope to be blessed by God in this life, as well as in Heaven. But if you break this fourth commandment you have no right at all to expect God's blessing.

CHAPTER 10

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

In the first three commandments God speaks of His own rights. In the fourth commandment He tells us our duties to our parents; and in the fifth commandment He begins to teach us our duties to all men.

The fifth commandment is: Thou shalt not kill.

Whenever we hear of some terrible accident, or perhaps of a murder, our hearts grow cold with horror. Why? Because we know that life is sacred, and the greatest gift of God. God alone gives life, and He alone has the right to take life. Any man who tries to take the life of a fellow human being, even of a tiny child, commits a terrible crime. Cain killed Abel, and was filled with such horror and remorse that he despaired of forgiveness. He fled after the murder and wandered everywhere during his life, hoping to escape the just punishment of God. Yet since the murder of Abel by Cain, how many murders have been committed? Anger, envy, theft, and other passions made men kill each other, and God, Who gave us a heart that we might love, had to give us the fifth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." Of course, if a thief or a murderer tried to kill you, and you had no way of saving your life except by killing him, you would not be guilty of murder, if you did kill him to save your own life. If you could defend yourself by wounding him, you would have to try not to kill him.

We are allowed, to kill another in order to save our own life, if we cannot escape in any other way. Soldiers are allowed to kill their enemies in wartime. And public justice can condemn criminals to death. But, apart from these cases, we are forbidden to kill. However, there is much more yet in this commandment.

The fifth commandment forbids all wilful murder, quarrelling, drunkenness, hatred, anger, and revenge.

It also forbids injurious words and the giving of scandal or bad example.

Any private person who wilfully kills another, when it is not necessary for self-defense, is guilty of murder, and this crime is most strictly forbidden by God.

It is also strictly forbidden by God to take one's own life. God is the Master of life. He gives us our life when He wills, and He alone has the right to take it when He thinks fit. We cannot do what we like with our life, for it is not really ours. We belong to God. Taking one's own life is called **suicide**, which is a word meaning the killing of one-self. It is a dreadful sin, because a man or woman who commits suicide breaks a very grave commandment, and often has no time to repent after the sin, and to attain salvation. How foolish people are who think that by suicide they put an end to their lives! They cannot really kill themselves; they only go to meet God in judgment. They put an end to earthly troubles, only to meet far worse troubles for all eternity.

The Church shows her horror of suicide by refusing to allow any public prayers for one who takes his own life, and by refusing Christian burial. However, if a person has lost the use of reason, or lives on for a little, and sincerely repents before dying, the Church lets him off these severe penalties.

The commandment means more than you think. It not only forbids you to destroy the life of another. And firstly, it forbids quarrelling and fighting. Many quarrels end in murder, but they are forbidden long before they come to murder. When you see two children fighting, each trying all he can to hurt and injure the other, you know that they are **not** respecting each other's life. When a cat meets a dog, the cat will spit and scratch, whilst the dog tries all it can to bite and hurt the poor cat. But do you think God wants children to behave to each other like these brute animals? No. God forbids it.

Drunkenness, too, is forbidden by this commandment. It is a sin by itself against the virtue of temperance, and is one form of gluttony. But it is a dangerous occasion of murder. So many murders have been committed in drunken fits! Some people have even been known to get drunk purposely, hoping that they will do whilst they are drunk what they could never bring themselves to do whilst they are sober. Besides, a drunken man exposes his own life to danger by falling, or by being run over by a car, or in many other ways.

This fifth commandment forbids even hatred. Hatred is a sin against the virtue of charity. It is by charity that we love our neighbor, and if we really loved

our neighbor we would never do him any harm. If, therefore, we hated no one, we would never injure anyone. It is hatred of others, either because we do not like them to stand in our way, that leads to murder. And since hatred stops us from respecting other people's lives it, too, is forbidden. But what about hatred and quarrelling? Now you have something to think about, for God does forbid these by the fifth commandment. And there is still more. **Anger** is forbidden. It is bad enough to hate people, but it is worse to give way to one's feelings of hatred and allow oneself to be blinded by anger. Sometimes people are like lunatics while they are angry. They are really mad for a time, and are likely to do anything. They lose the use of their reason, and feel like killing people. No wonder God forbids it. Angry people cry out, "I wish you were dead," and other dreadful things like that. It is breaking the fifth commandment. Our Lord spoke very severely against the sin of anger. "Whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment." Matt. V. 22.

Revenge also is forbidden. How can we even think of revenge when Our Lord tells us to forgive injuries and do good to those who prosecute us? St. Paul told the Christians in Rome, where the pagans were doing them harm in every possible way, not to think of revenge. "To no man render evil for evil," he wrote, "but as far as you can have peace with all men. Revenge not yourselves, but put away anger, for it is written, 'Revenge is mine; I will repay,' saith the Lord. Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good." Rom. xii, 17-21.

Injurious words are forbidden, likewise. Threats, insults and evil wishes, which cause pain, not to another's body but to another's soul, are sinful before God. Both body and soul share in life, and we must respect our neighbor's complete life.

Yet there is another life in man, besides the life of his body, and the natural life of his soul. There is the spiritual, or supernatural life of Divine Grace, and this is far more important. We must not injure this life in any way at all. Yet men do so by scandal or bad example.

But do not think it is enough to avoid giving scandal. We must set a good example. What a good example St. Stephen gave! The Jews were stoning him to death, yet in the midst of all his suffering the Saint did not curse them or show any bitterness. He prayed for them, and cried, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Acts vii, 59.

Now there is only one more thing to say. If we

have hurt anybody, whether the injury be to his body or his soul, we are obliged to undo the harm we have done. Yet how difficult it is with this commandment. We feel that we have made some reparation if we can make up for the damage we do.

There is some consolation if a man can say on his deathbed, "Father, when I was young I stole a lot of money. But I have worked hard and paid it all back!" But if one man kills another, how can he give back the life he took? How can we restore health to a man if we have injured him, or crippled him, or made him ill? When we have helped him in every possible way, and given him money in place of the money he could have earned, even then, though we make the damage less, we cannot give back all we took from him.

Above all, when we have given scandal, we are obliged to bring back to God the souls we led into sin by our wicked words and bad example. So many people forget this strict obligation. They persuade others to join them in mortally sinful conduct. Then they repent. They go to Confession. And perhaps the others die without repenting, and lose their souls. If we have ever caused others to sin, we are obliged to pray hard for their conversion, and to do all we can to lead them back to the grace and friendship of God.

Remember, therefore, that this fifth commandment not only forbids murder and suicide. It forbids all quarrelling, drunkenness, hatred, anger, injurious words, revenge, and scandal. And if we offend, it commands us to repair, as far as possible, the harm we have done to others.

CHAPTER 11

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT

We now come to a commandment which is very important, and which people often forget. It is difficult to speak of the sin forbidden by this commandment, for even St. Paul says, "Let not uncleanness be so much as named among you, as becometh saints." Eph. V. 3. Yet the world talks of this sin as it pleases. Poor world! It is so unchristian!

The sixth commandment is: Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Have you ever heard of adulterated milk? Sometimes dishonest milkmen, who have not enough milk to go round, put water in. And then, of course, it is no longer pure milk. The milk has been spoiled and adulterated. It is not as it ought to be. To adulterate, therefore, is to make a thing impure by

mixing with it something which is not good. To commit adultery is to do actions which are not good, and which spoil us in the sight of God. What actions? All impure and shameful actions which we would not be caught doing for anything; actions which would make us blush and go red with shame if someone were to see us doing such things. Our Lord said that such actions defile us, and St. Paul says, "Know this, that no unclean person hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God. Let no one deceive you. Because of these things cometh the anger of God." Eph. V. 5-6.

Thus the commandment forbids all immodest actions by ourselves, or with others, and above all with people who are married.

The sixth commandment forbids all unchaste freedom with another's wife or husband, and all things contrary to chastity.

Firstly, the commandment forbids all immodest and unchaste conduct with people who are married to others. When two people marry they promise to love each other, and belong to each other always. Now when you take what belongs to somebody else you steal. That is unjust. If a wicked man persuades some poor woman to leave her husband, he steals that man's wife, and if he sins against the sixth commandment as well he commits two great sins: one of injustice and one of impurity. This is a very wicked thing indeed, and is therefore forbidden first.

But even when there is no unjust robbing of a wife from her own husband, or of a man from the wife who married him, the commandment forbids all things contrary to chastity, purity and modesty.

The body is full of feelings, some quite good, others not so good. If we give way to all the feelings of the body, we become filthy and dirty like a pure stream of water which runs through mud.

Consider a little stream of water, bubbling from a hillside. Clear, fresh and sparkling, it comes so pure and clean from the spring, but as it runs along the ground it gets mixed with mud and dirt, so that no one would drink it or go near it. Those who are not modest and pure are like this. They have horrible souls, and even if other people do not know it, Our Lord and Our Lady, and their Guardian Angels do. It fills them with disgust, of course. In your body you are like the animals—and animals have no sense of shame. But you have a soul, and your soul is like the pure and spotless Angel's when God creates it. Now if your soul lets your body do what it likes, it will be dragged into shameful actions. You must be on your guard. Your dear, innocent soul says to

your body, "Oh, body, do what I tell you, and I shall lift you to Heaven with me." But the body often says to the soul, "No, you won't. I shall take you to Hell with me." And sometimes the body leads people into sins of gluttony or drunkenness, sometimes into sins against modesty and purity. Don't let your body win! Mortify it, and keep it in its place.

Tell me, would you like to go into a church and find that someone had drawn horrible and immodest pictures, and written filthy words on the Tabernacle? Even you know that such a wicked action would be a profanation of the Temple of God, and would offend God Himself, Who is so Pure and Holy.

Well, then, there is another temple of God which we must respect. It is the body. Your soul is made in the image and likeness of God, and it dwells in your body. God, also, Who is everywhere, is present in your soul and body. Your Body has been consecrated to God by Baptism; it has been anointed with Holy Oil in Confirmation; and it will be anointed again when you die, and will be buried in holy ground. Besides, how often you have received Our Lord as your Guest within that heart of yours! Do not, therefore, disfigure your body, but keep it holy and pure. Remember that the sixth commandment forbids all things contrary to chastity.

It forbids you to look at everything. You must watch your eyes. You know, God gave you eyes and eyelids. He gave you eyes to see, and eyelids not to see. The eyes are windows; your eyelids are the window-blinds. Sometimes you must use the window-blinds by shutting your eyes when you see something you know is not fit for a Christian. Someone once gave St. Aloysius a book to read which had immodest pictures in it. But as soon as he opened it and saw the pictures he threw the book into the fire and then went and washed his hands, saying that his fingers felt filthy. If our eyes look immodestly at ourselves, or at other people, or at nasty pictures and books, evil thoughts will come into our mind, and our soul will never win against the body.

The sixth commandment forbids you to speak immodestly. Keep your words nice. Hate nasty words. You cannot tell a nasty story and keep your heart clean and pure. Do you know that not a single word should come from your lips that you could not say in the presence of Jesus and Mary? One of the Saints used to say that an immodest tongue is the "devil's carriage," because it carries souls to Hell for him. Some young people were once speaking immodestly, when a holy old Priest came along. They did not hear him coming, and he heard what they were saying. "And

are those the lips, my children," he said "which are going to praise God in Heaven for all eternity?" How they blushed, and how ashamed they felt!

The sixth commandment forbids you to listen to immodest words. Some people want to hear everything. But it is not good to hear everything, and, above all, impure things. You know how the devil tempted Eve. She was foolish to listen. If she had not listened she would not have sinned and been miserable all her life. If anyone says something not nice, show that you are disgusted, or leave him at once. St. Aloysius was brave like that. One day, at dinner, a visitor to his father's house said something wrong and impure. St. Aloysius was only a little boy, but he rebuked the visitor in front of everybody. "You have no right," he said, "to speak such words here."

St. Vincent Ferrer said that he knew a girl who kept as pure and innocent as a little white dove for thirty years. Then one day she listened to some immodest talk. She did not understand all that was meant, and afterwards asked one of the wicked speakers all about it. The other told her, and added a lot of horrible things. The girl who had once been so good lost her purity and innocence and committed so many sins that St. Vincent said that "If the devil had a human body he could scarcely be worse." If you hear things which you do not understand, and which your conscience tells you might be wrong, then never ask wicked people about them. Ask good people, like your father, or mother, or some holy Priest in Confession. They will be kind and tell you all that you should know. How many sins have been caused by listening to wicked words? Words against God; against the Catholic Faith; words asking people's help in sinful conduct, in murder, and stealing, and immodest behavior—really, nearly all temptations from our fellow men come through words, and if only we refused to listen as soon as we saw that it was something wrong, we would be saved from ever so many sins. Above all, remember that this sixth commandment forbids us to listen to anything against modesty and holy purity.

Yet there is still more. We must not only keep modesty of the eyes, and of our speech. We must not only refuse to hear evil things. We must behave modestly in our actions. We must always dress properly. I have told you before that some people dress, not to keep themselves warm and protected from the weather, but just to attract attention. They are vain and immodest. They forget that they attract the attention, not of good people, but of wicked people. They become an occasion of sin to others, and this is hateful to God. Some say, "Oh, we have to live

in the world, and if we do not dress like others, people will laugh at us. We have to be in the fashion." If the fashion is not modest, no Christian girl should ever adopt it. If it is modest, she may. But some foolish girls think they will be laughed at if they do not dress immodestly! If they had Christian courage, it is all the more dangerous to enter occasions of sin. Is it better to have people laugh at you for your modesty, or laugh with you immodestly?

And now, children, what must you do if you do not wish to offend God by sinning against holy purity? You must do what the Saints did. You must pray to Jesus, and think always of Him. He loved holy purity so much that He chose Mary, the Virgin most pure, for His Mother, and the good St. Joseph as His guardian on earth. See how He loved the little children, because they were so pure and innocent! But it is not enough to pray. You must run away from the occasions of sin. Do not read bad papers and books. Keep away from bad companions and from picture shows which have nasty advertisements. Mortify your senses and your bodies even sometimes in lawful things, just to prove to yourself that your soul is master of your body. Sometimes your eyes may see something quite good, perhaps, in a shop window. You may think that you would like to have it. Say to yourself, "Now I must see if I could really make myself do without it." It is a good practice if you do it for the love of Our Lord. Some children deny themselves sweets during November for the holy souls. Others go without sugar during Lent. They are mastering the inclinations of their bodies, and they will never find it difficult, afterwards, to reject temptations and wicked inclinations against holy purity.

You must be pure and holy, too, in your actions. A little boy, who wished some day to be a Priest, said to Our Lord, "O Jesus, I consecrate to you my hands, that they may be as pure and holy as the Sacred Host they are going to hold during Mass. Do not let my hands ever be defiled by touching anything You do not like." How often you have said, in your prayers after Holy Communion, "O Jesus, Thou hast given Thyself to me, and now let me give myself to Thee. I give Thee my body, that it may be chaste and pure. I give Thee my heart, that it may always love Thee." It is purity and modesty that will keep your body for God, as well as your soul.

Now let us finish this short but very important lesson by asking ourselves once more what the sixth commandment says. And remember that it is God speaking—God, Who gave us our body and our soul, and Who has the right to tell us how we are to use them.

Firstly, the sixth commandment tells us that we must be holy in our bodies, having the greatest respect for our own and for those of others, because they are the work of God, and temples in which He is present personally and by His holy grace.

Secondly, we are forbidden all impure or immodest conduct in our looks, in our words, in our actions, and by reading bad books or going to indecent pictures or plays.

St. Paul was never tired of reminding the first Christians that innocence and purity were necessary if they wished to be pleasing to Our Lord. He wrote to the Romans, "If you live according to the flesh, you shall die; but if by the spirit, you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live." VIII., 13. He said to the Corinthians, "Having received these promises (of Christ) let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of the flesh." 2nd Epist. VII., 1. To the Galatians he spoke still more strongly, "Walk in the spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lustest against the spirit, and the works of the flesh are manifest . . . uncleanness, immodesty . . . and I tell you again, as I told you before, that they who do such things shall not obtain the Kingdom of God." Gal. V. 16-21. In many other places, too, He spoke in the same way.

CHAPTER 12

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

We now come to a commandment which you must learn most carefully, and remember all your life. There are ever so many people today who break this commandment outside the Church, and even, alas, many Catholics who behave as if God had never given us this strict obligation. Some Catholics even speak like the socialists and communists and bolshevists, who say that no one has any right to own anything. They say that it is not stealing to take what belongs to other people, because it does not really belong to them. But God says that each man owns his personal property, and that it is a sin of theft to take what belongs to others. If no one owns anything it would be foolish for God to give us the seventh commandment. But let us see what this commandment says.

The seventh commandment is: Thou shalt not steal.

Look around you, and see how many birds fly in the air, and all the fish that swim in the sea, and the millions of animals that run about on dry land. God gives them all they need, and, guided by instinct, they use what God has provided as they wish.

Now Divine Providence has given men also means of living. But men have reason, and men do not use things just as the animals. Men gather the fruit of the earth. They change things, and make new things, and call them their own. Sometimes men put fences round a special piece of land, and say, "We shall have all the fruit, or perhaps gold, that comes from this piece of land." They work hard, and feel that the land belongs to them.

One man might find a large piece of marble that nobody claims or wants. He takes it, and carves a beautiful marble statue. The marble was not worth anything. Nobody wanted it, and nobody would buy it. But the statue is worth a lot of money. Whose is the statue? Why, it belongs to the man who made it, and he can sell it for a lot of money if he wishes.

If a man works hard, and makes something which he sells for a lot of money, the money is his. It is a just return for his labor.

Sometimes men who own things ask other people to work for them. Then the worker does not own the thing he makes, but he receives wages, and he owns the money he earns. He uses this money as he pleases, and if he is careful he can save up and buy land for himself, or a house, or other things he wants. Men, therefore, can own things, and they do. The communists do not tell the truth when they say that it is wrong for people to own things. Each man has a strict right to work, and save up, and own personal or private property. The law of our country admits this right, and calls people who take what belongs to others, robbers and criminals. But long before men made this human law, God Himself gave us the seventh commandment, "Thou shalt not steal."

The seventh commandment forbids all unjust taking or keeping what belongs to another. It also forbids all cheating, or any other injury done to any person in his property.

God, therefore, forbids all unjust taking of what belongs to others. Yet how many people are guilty! We hear of robbers and criminals who treat innocent people with violence, and take their goods. Burglars break into houses, or threaten people with guns. Sometimes bands of robbers hold up even trains, and rob the passengers. There are other wicked men also, who are less bold, but guilty also. Bad children take money, or steal food and other things which belong to their parents, and which they are forbidden to touch; or they steal pencils, and knives, and fruit, and other things from their companions at school.

Young people, and old people, too, who work for others, take money and goods from their masters and

employers, pretending that they are not paid all the wages they deserve. Servants take home things belonging to their mistresses. How many dishonest people there are in the world. All such people commit robbery more or less seriously, and there is only one name for them all. They are thieves! Now you must remember well, children, that every theft and every robbery is a sin. And it is forbidden by God. People usually begin by taking little things. Many children begin that way. Then, when they are not found out, they take more and more, until at last they take something very important and valuable. They are discovered, and caught, and end in prison. Yet from the very first, even if men did not know, God knew. And even if men never found out, these people would have to answer to God for every single theft, little or great. Never let yourself be guilty of even small thefts and dishonesty, even at home. You do not own your parents' goods, and when you take them against their will, you are guilty of theft. If you want something, ask for it. Your parents love you, and if they can they will give you what you want. But without permission, it is not lawful for you to take whatever you wish. "Thou shalt not steal."

The Catechism says that we are not allowed to keep what belongs to another. If it belongs to another then it does not belong to you, and you are a thief as long as you keep it. If you know a thing is stolen, you cannot buy it, because the other has no right to sell it to you. If a boy gave you a present, and some other boy told you that it had been stolen from him, you would have to give it back.

Not long ago a boy found a nice pocket knife just outside the school gate. He brought it home, and showed it to his mother with great joy. But his mother was an honest and good Catholic, and she said, "Perhaps some little boy at school lost that knife, and he may be very sorry. It might have been a birthday present from his father or mother, and very precious to him. You must take it to the teacher, and ask him to find out." The boy did not want to do it, and cried, and said, "But I found it." "It does not matter," said his mother, "for the boy who owned it did not give it away just because he lost it. It is still his, and it is not yours unless you cannot find the owner. You must do as I tell you." The teacher asked the boys in the school whether anyone had lost a pocket knife. One little boy said yes, and described the exact knife which had been found. So the teacher gave it back to him, and he was very happy. And the boy who found it was happier, after all, in his honesty than he would have been to have the knife. But he

remembered always that his mother had taught him the lesson.

Now I am sure that you will remember that he who takes a thing, and he who keeps a thing which is not his, is guilty of theft, and breaks the seventh commandment.

This commandment also forbids cheating. In the world there are many cheats, and of course they are dishonest men, and thieves. Some shopkeepers have false weights or give short measure. If customers ask for a pound of sugar they give a little less than a pound and gradually save quite a lot of sugar to sell to other people. Some men sell bad things, and although they know these things are not really good, they charge the full price. Others adulterate their goods, mixing water with milk and sugar syrup with honey. In a hundred ways men try to cheat each other, and they always sin against the seventh commandment when they do so, because they are frauds and thieves, who deprive others of what should really be theirs.

Sometimes men who work for others for a number of hours each day waste a lot of their time just doing nothing, or talking, or perhaps doing something for themselves. But they take full pay, thus robbing the employer of the money given for the time they did not give to him. It is quite dishonest to do this. Even children who waste their time at school are dishonest, because they rob their parents of the money spent on them for their education. If your parents feed you, and clothe you, and pay for you to be taught for some hours each day, don't you think that you are cheating them when you waste your time, instead of trying to learn as they would wish?

The Catechism says that the seventh commandment forbids all these things, and any other injury done to any person in his property. If a workman does his work badly through carelessness, and spoils the material owned by his employer, he sins. Even children are obliged to take care of the things their parents buy for their use. They should try not to wear out their shoes and clothing too quickly, and should take care not to break the cups and plates at home, or to spoil their books and smash their pens. Some children cost their parents far more than they should, and this injury to the property of their parents can easily be sinful.

We are commanded by the seventh commandment to pay our lawful debts.

If you buy things, and do not pay for them when you can and should, you commit an unjust action. If you are in debt, and have not the money to pay what you owe, you are obliged to work hard and earn

the money to pay it. Employers, also, are obliged to pay those who work for them. If they do not pay their workmen or servants when the time comes, perhaps each week, or each month, or if they pay them less than they agreed, they commit a sin of injustice, robbing them of the fruit of their labor and toil. God says that "the bread of the needy is the life of the poor. He that defraudeth them thereof is a man of blood and like him that killeth his neighbor. He that shedeth blood and he that defraudeth the laborer of his hire are brothers." Ecclus. xxxiv. 27. No wonder God commands us to pay what we owe to others! There are men who stay at hotels and boarding houses, and go away without paying their bills; families who move out of their houses, but do not pay the rent, and a lot of other people who try to avoid paying their creditors. They all sin against the seventh commandment, and if not caught by men will have to answer to God some day for such sins.

They who have ill-gotten goods, or keep unjustly what belongs to another, must restore them as soon as possible, as far as they are able; otherwise the sin will not be forgiven them.

Anyone who steals, or receives what is stolen, is obliged to give back to the right owner what belongs to him. If we have used or destroyed the object stolen, we have to give back enough money to pay for it. If the man who owned it is dead, we must restore it to his children or relatives, and if we cannot find anyone who has a just claim to the stolen property, we must restore it in other good and charitable works. But we cannot keep it and spend it or use it for our own benefit. It is not ours.

The Saints were very strict about restitution. When someone gave his wife a lamb to kill and cook for the family, the holy Tobias said, "Take heed, lest perhaps it be stolen; restore it to its owners, for it is not lawful for us either to eat or to touch anything that cometh by theft." Tob. II., 21.

In the New Testament we read of a man named Zaccheus, who wanted to be Our Lord's friend. Now Zaccheus knew that Our Lord loved justice, and therefore said to Him, "Lord, if I find that I have been unjust to anybody, I restore it to him four times over!" And Our Lord replied, "This day has salvation come to this house." Luke xix, 8-9.

An old miser, who had robbed many people once lay dying. But on his deathbed he was touched by grace. He called his two sons, who were both good Catholics, and confessed to them that he had become rich dishonestly, and that he had ruined many families. Then he said that he wanted the money given back to

the children of those who had been robbed, and begged his sons to respect his last wishes. "Oh, father!" they cried, "what a great consolation you give to us. Do not worry. All shall be restored and you need no longer feel this burden on your conscience."

But people should not wait until the last moment of life. They should restore at once. The Holy Spirit says that it is better to have a little justly, than to have a lot wickedly. This means that it is better to be honest, even if it means that you must be poor. Any real Christian would rather be poor than sin to be rich.

Some people, however, steal, but say to themselves, "It is only for a time. Later on I shall put it back." Yet they do not keep their resolution. When the time comes to put it back, the devil keeps whispering excuses and making difficulties. Never make such a foolish mistake.

There is one more thing to be said. Not only must we give back what belongs to others. If we do any injury to others at all, we must repair the damage we do. If someone stole the tools of a poor gardener, so that he could not work and earn his wages, then the thief would be obliged to return the tools and also pay to him the wages he lost during all the time he was unable to work. If he did not do so, he would certainly have to answer to God for the harm he did.

And now, a last question. If a man has wilfully stolen things from other people, is it enough for him to repent and go to confession? No. Unless he promises to restore the stolen goods or repair the harm he has done, he cannot be forgiven. If a man came to confession and said to the priest, "Father, I stole \$25," the priest would say, "And are you sorry?" If the man replied that he was sorry, the priest would then say, "And have you still got the money?" If the man then replied, "Yes," the priest would have to say, "Then I cannot give you absolution unless you promise me sincerely that you will give it back or at least put it back where you took it from." If the man said that he had spent the money, and no longer had \$25, the priest would have to make him promise to put it back as soon as he could save up the amount. But if the man would not promise to do his best to repair the harm he had done, the priest could not give him absolution. You can guess from this how important is the seventh commandment, "Thou shalt not steal."

CHAPTER 13

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

The eighth commandment is: Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Since men have to live together in society, God has given them the gift of speech, so that they can tell each other what they think, or feel, or want. But this gift is good only if men tell the truth. If you say a thing is true when it is not true, then your words are like false money. If it is unjust to give a man a bad coin for some fruit, because the bad coin is not what it pretends to be, so also it is unjust to give false words to others. We believe in God, because we know He always tells the truth; and we believe our fellow men because we feel that they are telling the truth. If we did not believe that people usually tell the truth, what a dreadful world this would be. We could never really trust anybody, and everything would be dreadfully upset. Children would not know whether to believe their teachers. Sick people would not believe their doctors; others would not believe those who gave them directions where to go; in fact, we would always be in anxiety and doubt. Our word, therefore, is very important; and in the eighth commandment God tells us that our words should always be true.

The eighth commandment forbids all false testimonies, rash judgments, and lies; and also backbiting, calumny, and detraction.

Firstly, we are forbidden to give false testimony. Even false praise is false testimony. Silly flatterers praise others for wicked actions as if they were clever, or brave and strong. This only deceives them, causes them to be proud, and even perhaps commit worse sins. The Holy Spirit says, "It is better to be rebuked by a wise man than to be deceived by the flattery of fools!" Eccl. vii, 6.

But there is another kind of false testimony, much more sinful. Sometimes in the law courts, people are called as witnesses to give testimony. The judge has to decide justly, and he asks the witnesses to tell him the truth so that he will not make a mistake. How important then becomes the word of a witness. If the witness does not tell the truth, but gives false testimony, the wrong man might be condemned! Perhaps you may never be called as a witness in court. Yet very often your parents, or teachers, or superiors, may ask you about things, so that they can find out the truth. "Who has touched this?" "Who broke that?"

“Who saw her?” “Who heard him?” Parents and superiors have the right to ask such questions, and you are obliged to tell what you know and to tell the truth. Never mind what others will say or think. If the culprit is punished, he deserves it. But you are not allowed by God to give false testimony.

We are forbidden, also, to make **rash judgments**. Many people judge far too quickly. They see only the **outside**, and consider only appearances. If they see a man get into a motor car and drive it away, they do not wait to find out whether he owns the car, but think at once, “Perhaps he is a thief.” Often they make even good actions seem wicked, and it is nearly always because they have wicked hearts themselves. If a boy at school is seen talking to a teacher, others might whisper, “Why is he talking to the teacher? He must be telling the teacher about the other boys.” They have no reason, and no proof; it is only a guess, and a rash judgment and a wicked suspicion. We are not allowed to judge like this, with nothing to go on. God forbids it by this eighth commandment. It is a sin against justice, and a sin against charity. All lies are also forbidden, but we shall see more about lies in a few special questions.

The Catechism tells us that backbiting, calumny, and detraction are also forbidden. **Backbiting** means talking unkindly about others behind their backs, or when they are not present. Every man has a right to his good name. The Jews used to say that one who takes away the good name and character of another eats his flesh. They knew that one’s good name is almost as precious as one’s life itself. But all backbiting is nearly always calumny or detraction, and it will do if we study these two dreadful sins.

Let us take calumny first. **Calumny** is saying something evil of another which is not true. In some men’s hearts there is a lot of pride, and hatred, and envy. Instead of wishing the good of others, they wish only evil, and their tongues invent poisonous words. They invent faults in other people, faults which do not exist. They take small faults which do exist, but exaggerate them, and turn them into big faults. They deny any good qualities which others may have. A boy does well at school. Another boy commits a sin of calumny by saying, “Yes, his father is a friend of the teacher. Besides, I know that he copies his exercises from others.” One who calumniates another is a thief. He steals the good name of others. How can it be just to say evil of another when we know that we made it up?

Detraction is saying something evil of another which does happen to be true. It is called detraction because

it detracts from, or lessens somebody's good name. It is bearing evil witness, even if it is not bearing false witness against another.

Would you have the courage to say nasty things in front of the people you talk about? No. Then should you not be ashamed to speak evil of them when they are not present? Holy Scripture says, "If a serpent bite in silence, he is nothing better that backbiteth secretly." Eccl. x, 11.

If we cannot speak well of people, we should not speak of them at all, unless we are obliged in conscience to tell of their faults to save other people from harm, or perhaps themselves. And if it is wrong to speak of other people's faults, it is wrong also to listen to uncharitable talk. If we cannot make scandal-mongers keep quiet, we must show our displeasure, or try to change the subject, or else walk away and refuse to listen.

Now I am sure you understand what is forbidden by the eighth commandment. Let us, however, learn a little more about lies, as we promised.

A lie is the saying of anything that we know to be false.

A lie is a word, or a sign, or an action, by which we deceive our neighbor and make him believe a thing which we know is not true. If we think something is true, although it is not true, then we make a mistake, but we do not tell a lie. To tell a lie we must know that what we say is wrong. We can tell lies also by writing, or by actions, such as by shaking our head to mean no, when we should say yes.

St. Augustine says that no one regards as lies little stories and jokes which anyone can know are not meant to be true by the way people tell them. Also there are certain ways of speaking which are not strictly true, but which everyone understands. A servant, going to the door, could say, "Mrs. Brown is not at home today," although she knows that Mrs. Brown is at home, and is inside reading a book. Everyone knows that she means, "Mrs. Brown is not at home to visitors, and she cannot see you." Such expressions are understood, and do not really deceive people, and therefore are not lies.

A real lie is deliberately meant to lead others into error. And you must be careful never to say what is not true. This does not mean that you must always say what is true. You are obliged to keep some secrets. But you can do that by not talking. There is no need to say anything. Learn to hate lies, for we all know that God hates them. Some children tell little lies easily, and they get so used to it that they do not know what

is truth and what is not truth. They so often tell lies that they would be foolish to believe them themselves.

It is never lawful to tell a lie.

It is never lawful to tell a lie for any purpose at all, no matter how much good you think it may do. Even jocose lies are venial sins. But did we not say that we can tell jokes which are not true? Yes. And we said that they were lawful, for we did not mean people to think they were really true. But if we mean people to believe that what we say really happened, then jocose lies are venial sins, and forbidden.

Could you steal money because you wanted to give it to a poor man? No. The good purpose will not make it lawful for you to steal. How can you hope to please God by offending Him? So, too, no good purpose can justify a lie. Our Lord called the devil "a liar, and the father of liars." John viii, 44. One who tells lies is a disgrace, and everyone despises him. But, above all, God despises him, and that is worse than anything else which could happen. God gave us speech to tell the truth, not to tell lies; He gave it to us so that we might help others, not deceive them. Let us, therefore, avoid lies as evil things; and let us love the truth above all else, for to love the truth is to love God.

We are commanded by the eighth commandment to speak of others with justice and charity.

Calumny is unjust, and detraction is uncharitable. Now calumny and detraction are forbidden. So it follows that God orders us to be just and charitable in speaking of others. There is something good in everybody, and if we are going to speak about others, why not choose the good we know about them? We have faults ourselves, and if others chose to talk about our faults, they would have much to say, indeed! Yet we always like others to speak well of us. Our Lord says, "Judge not, that you may not be judged. . . . Why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and seest not the beam that is in thy own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam from thy own eye." Matt. VII., 1-5. Our Lord meant that we should overcome our own big faults before we begin speaking of other people's little faults. Let us speak of others, therefore, with justice and charity. Our Lord promises a great thing to the charitable. You do not want Him to listen to all the horrible things the enemies of your soul will say at your judgment, and He promises not to do so if you refuse to listen to uncharitable things about others in this life. He said: "Judge not, and you shall not be judged."

And also, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Matt. V, 7.

They who have injured their neighbor's character in any way must repair the injury as far as they are able and as soon as possible; otherwise the sin shall not be forgiven them.

If a thief wishes to make his peace with God, and save his soul, he is obliged to restore what he stole. So, too, if a person is guilty of calumny, he is obliged to restore the good name he unjustly took away. He must unsay the lie he told.

Supposing a woman went to confession and said, "Father I called an enemy of mine a wicked thief, and told others that she lived by dishonest means." The priest would say, "And is it true?" Then, if the penitent said, "No, Father, it was a lie," the priest would say to her, "Then you must go back to those who were listening at the time and tell them that what you said was not true, or I cannot give you absolution." "But, Father," the poor woman might say, "they will think that I am a liar if I do that." What will the priest say to that? He will say, "You should have thought of that before you spoke. Anyway, isn't it better for you to be thought a liar when you are one, than for that other woman to be thought a thief when she is **not** a thief? I cannot absolve you unless you promise to make reparation."

Sometimes, however, the sin is not calumny, but detraction. What is said is true, but the penitent had no right to say it. Then it is very difficult to make reparation. The one who detracts cannot say that it was not true, for that would be a lie. The only thing to do is to ask forgiveness of the one offended, and say as much good of him as possible to those who heard the detraction, begging them not to repeat the uncharitable words.

Those who are guilty of calumny and detraction are bound, therefore, to make reparation. And they are bound, also, to repair any damage or injury that results from their words. If, through your evil words, a man loses his position, you will be obliged in conscience to pay him for the time he is out of work through your fault.

Remember always, however, that it is very, very difficult to repair the harm done by calumny and detraction, no matter what efforts you make. Supposing that you took a sack of little pieces of paper to the top of a tower when a strong wind was blowing, and emptied the sack, letting the wind carry the small papers everywhere. If you tried to find every smallest paper, and put it back into the sack afterwards, would

you succeed? No. Because the wind would have carried the papers in every direction, far, far beyond your reach.

Unjust and uncharitable words are like that. They have scarcely left your lips before they are flying from mouth to mouth, among friends and enemies alike. And when the one who first said them wishes to unsay them, he never succeeds in undoing all the evil he did. St. Bernard says, "Uncharitable words travel like lightning, and seem to be gone quickly. But as they go they inflict dangerous and deep wounds. They easily enter people's minds, but are very hard to get out." A doctor nearly always looks at the tongue first, and if it is coated and ugly he knows that the stomach is sick.

So, too, an unjust and uncharitable tongue shows a soul which is sick and diseased; a soul without sincerity, or charity, or any real healthy goodness.

Look out for your words, therefore, and ask Our Lord for the grace to be sincere and truthful, the prudence to speak or keep silent at the right times, and above all, that you may not sin against charity.

CHAPTER 14

THE NINTH AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS

We have seen the commandments which tell us about our words and actions. But God now gives us two commandments for our thoughts and desires. You have visited a cemetery, I am sure. There you saw beautiful marble monuments, and flowers growing, and nice clean pathways. But there was something you did not see. You did not see the inside of the tombs, the dead bodies and bones. It is horrible even to think of these things. Our Lord, however, said that some men were like graves, beautiful on the outside, yet at heart filthy and repulsive. Matt. xxiii, 27. Appearances are not enough. God, Who sees all, and knows everything, wishes us to be good in our hearts as well. If you were sick, would the doctor just come and touch your forehead, and then go away, thinking he had done enough? No. He would give you medicine to take, for he would wish to make you well inside.

Now God knows that our bad conduct outside is caused by something wrong inside, by bad thoughts, and bad desires. Before you can do anything, you have to think of doing it, and if only you never thought of any evil, you would never want to do it.

Now there are some thoughts far more dangerous than others, because they quickly lead to sinful actions,

and God gives two special commandments against allowing such thoughts to stay in our minds. They are impure and envious thoughts, and they each have a special commandment.

The ninth commandment is: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.

We said before that people who marry kneel together before God's Altar, and promise to belong to each other forever. God gives them children to look after for Him, and the family is His special sanctuary. Woe to him who profanes and desecrates the family! No man has the right to desire to be loved by any woman who has given her life to someone else in marriage. Nor has any girl the right to try to win the love of a man from his lawful wife. God forbids this most strictly, and forbids therefore, all thoughts and desires which would violate the married state.

Yet, although these thoughts and desires are particularly hateful to God, that is not all He forbids.

The ninth commandment forbids all willful immodest thoughts and desires, immodest books and pictures, and all amusements dangerous to chastity.

It really forbids all interior sins of thought and desire against the sixth commandment, which forbids impure words and actions. And, of course, you remember how we explained that commandment.

If the soul, which should command and rule the body, is full of evil thoughts, how can it keep the poor body pure, and lift it to Heaven? Yet if it allows immodest thoughts, evil desires follow almost at once, and it is hard to resist them. Again, if we read immodest books, or look at immodest pictures, we are bound to fill our mind with immodest thoughts. So, too, flirtation, and kissing, and love-making, just for the sake of amusement, are most dangerous to chastity, leading to all sorts of immodest desires. No wonder God gives a special commandment, forbidding all these things! Yet silly people forget this commandment, and do these things, and afterwards wonder why they fall into great sins. They are like the little moth which keeps flying round the flame of a candle, dazzled by the bright light, and then wonders why it falls into the flame, burning its wings and dying in the hot melted wax. Keep this commandment, and you will never break the sixth commandment.

Unchaste thoughts, when they are entertained wilfully and with pleasure, defile the soul. Matt. v., 28.

"But if bad thoughts come against my will," you will ask, "are they sins?" Such a lot of good people are wor-

ried like this. Now it is impossible to avoid all temptations. The devil sends bad thoughts to everybody at times. Sometimes bad thoughts come into one's mind before one knows it. We might be doing something quite good, or reading, or talking, and suddenly we find a bad thought in our mind. How on earth did it get there? We were not even thinking of such things! What must we do? We must refuse to let it stay there. We must not want it. Everyone is tempted some time or other. It is not, therefore, a sin to have bad thoughts, or no one could avoid such thoughts. But it is a sin to keep bad thoughts, and to want them. If, when a bad thought comes, you make no effort to get rid of it, and do not pray, but sit down and dream about evil things, nursing those wicked thoughts, and thinking out still worse things, then, of course, you have committed sin.

A little boy was once tempted greatly by all kinds of horrible thoughts, and he was miserable. "O Jesus," he said, "You know that I would much rather be without such thoughts." Yet still they came back at different times, and he told a good priest about them. Do you know what the priest said to him? "My child," he said, "can you stop the sparrows from sitting on the branches of the tree outside your window? No. But you can stop them from staying there, and building a nest, by driving them away, no matter how often they come back. It is like this with bad thoughts. You cannot stop them always from coming into your mind, but you can stop them from becoming sins, by never letting them stay there."

As often as you find a bad thought in your mind, put it away quickly, just as you would brush a spider off if you saw one crawling on your coat. And the best means is to turn your mind to Jesus and Mary, calling upon them to help you, and keep you for themselves. Now let us turn to the last commandment.

The tenth commandment is: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.

Covetousness and envy of things owned by other people lead to ever so many other sins, and God, therefore, gives us a special commandment, forbidding covetous thoughts.

The tenth commandment forbids all covetous thoughts and desires of our neighbor's goods.

In the Old Testament we read that a great king called Achab could see from his window a little orchard belonging to a poor man named Naboth. III Kings xxi, 1-6. Naboth's father had left the orchard to his son, and Naboth took great care of it. But the king one day thought that it would make a nice flower

garden for himself. There was nothing wrong with this thought. So he asked Naboth to give it to him. But Naboth refused, saying that he wanted to keep it in memory of his father. Then Achab grew angry, and fretted. He would not eat his food, but flung himself in a bad temper, and wilfully thought out a way to make the orchard his own. Ah! Then he sinned by covetous thoughts.

How many people are like Achab! They think of themselves, and care nothing about other people's rights. They desire to become rich, no matter how other people may be ruined. Wicked men wanted the last great war to keep going because they were making money. They did not think of all the poor soldiers being killed. Some people wish others to fall sick, or meet with accidents, so that they will have their position at work. There are men who hope that a drouth will come, so that they can sell their goods to poor ruined farmers. Or others hope that rich people will die so that they may have their money. You can easily see how such covetous desires lead to wicked actions. Take Achab and Naboth! Achab murdered Naboth so that he could have the orchard. But Achab did not enjoy it for long. God punished him by sending a war in which Achab was killed. And just before the war God sent Elias the Prophet to tell Achab that it would be a just punishment. "Thus saith the Lord," cried Elias, "In this place wherein the dogs have licked the blood of Naboth they shall lick thy blood also." III Kings xxi, 19. How God hates injustice!

The best way to avoid such sins is to be content with what God gives us. Do you know that poor people are nearly always happier, and enjoy more peace than rich people? Rich people may seem to have a lot of things, but they have far more desires which they cannot satisfy, and very many anxieties and cares.

We are allowed, of course, to use all lawful means to make ourselves better off, and more comfortable. We should work, and save up for a rainy day, or for sickness and old age. But if God chooses to leave us poor, let us accept it patiently, and make poverty our gateway to Heaven. Jesus could have chosen to be rich. Yet He wished to be poor, to teach us to love poverty. He is God, and owns the whole world. Yet where was He born? See His poor life, and His poor friends! He said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall possess the Kingdom of Heaven." Matt. V, 3. No one will ever become really holy whose heart is attached to the goods of this world.

Thus the tenth commandment tells us to be just and moderate in our desires to become well-off in this

world, and to bear with Christian patience the sufferings of this life. It forbids us to desire things unjustly, caring nothing for the rights and well-being of others.

The ten commandments may be reduced to these two great precepts of charity: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. This do, and thou shalt live. Luke x., 27.

Our Lord Himself said that love of God and of our neighbor sums up all the commandments. Why? Because if you really love God you would never do anything to offend Him, and if you really loved your neighbor you would never be guilty of an unjust or uncharitable word or action against him. So the man who really loves God and his neighbor would keep all ten commandments. St. Augustine said that supernatural love of God is simply everything. "Love God," he said, "and do what you like." Does that mean that I have only to say with my lips, "O my God, I love You," and that I can then go and commit any sins I like? No. If I did that my words would be false, for I would not really love God at all. What St. Augustine did mean is this. "Love God sincerely and with all your heart, and then do what you like, for you will like only what God likes." You will then love God and your neighbor, giving to your neighbor all you should for the love of God.

My neighbor is all mankind, without any exception of persons—even those who injure us, or differ from us in religion.

If you love God you love all those whom He loves. Now it is God's love that moved Him to let you live. You would not exist at all if God did not love you. I have only to see you sitting there, and I know that He loves you. He loved you so much that He thought you were worth making. But if this is true of you, it is true of every other human person who has ever lived or will live. And if God thinks others worth making, you should think them worth loving. It is not that you love them for themselves. It is your love of God which overflows and goes out to all whom God has made. As God has been kind to them, we must also be kind to them, and wish them all well.

We must love, in this way, even those who injure us, as we shall see in a moment, and also those who differ from us in religion. We can never admit that other religions are right. We know that they are wrong, and that if people want the right religion they should become Catholics. But whilst we know this, others do not. In any case, no matter how wrong

others may be, we have to speak of them kindly and treat them well, though we cannot share their religion with them. We must not injure them in any way because they are not Catholics. A Catholic might say, "I shall buy from this grocer because he is a Catholic." That is quite good and charitable. But we cannot say, "I won't buy from this man because he is a Protestant." For that is not a desire to do good, but to do harm. We cannot buy, perhaps, from both. But if we choose to buy from the Catholic, it must be because we wish to do a good turn to a fellow-Catholic, and not from any desire to hurt a non-Catholic. We must never bear a grudge, or think uncharitably of those who do not belong to the Church. Non-Catholics, even though they do not believe as we do, are our neighbors, and we must love them, even though we do not love their mistakes.

As you would, says Christ, that men should do to you, do you also to them in like manner. (Luke vi., 31.)

Here is a great test. You know the things that hurt you, and Our Lord tells you that these are the things that you must not do to others. And as you like others to be devoted to you, and please you, so you must try to please and serve them. Of course we mean only in good things. We can never help others in evil things because we sometimes wish others to help us wickedly. Our Lord did not mean us to judge by our unlawful desires, but only by our good desires. It must always be in God and for God.

We are obliged to love our enemies. Love your enemies, says Christ, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you. Luke vi., 27; Matt. v., 44.

This does not mean that we want them to be our enemies, or that we must love their hatred of us. But we must love them, at least by not hating them, or by wishing them harm. We may protect ourselves, or perhaps even go to law to recover what belongs to us. But we are thinking then only of our own rights, not wishing harm to the one who has injured us. If, afterwards, we could do good to them, we should try to do so. If they speak evil of us, we must speak well of them, and bless them. And we must pray for them.

A boy once had a quarrel with another boy, and told the Priest about it afterwards. The good Priest told him to make friends again. "But, Father," replied the boy, "I hate him." "My child," said the Priest, "Our Lord forbids you to do so." "But I do not wish him any harm, Father," the boy replied. "But that is not nearly enough," said the good Priest, "you must wish him well. Go, and pray sincerely for him, that

God may bless him, and see what graces God will give you. That is the quickest way to overcome unkind feelings."

Now we have finished with the ten commandments. If you have studied them well you will have noticed the things they command, and the things they forbid. When the streets are well lit up at night you can walk safely along them without falling over stones and gutters. Your knowledge of the commandments throws a bright light on the road of life. Be courageous, and determine to do good and avoid evil. Set your teeth tight, and make a real good try. Love these laws of God, for they tell you His Holy Will, and they lead to eternal happiness in Heaven. I do hope and pray that you will do so, and thus find your way to Heaven.

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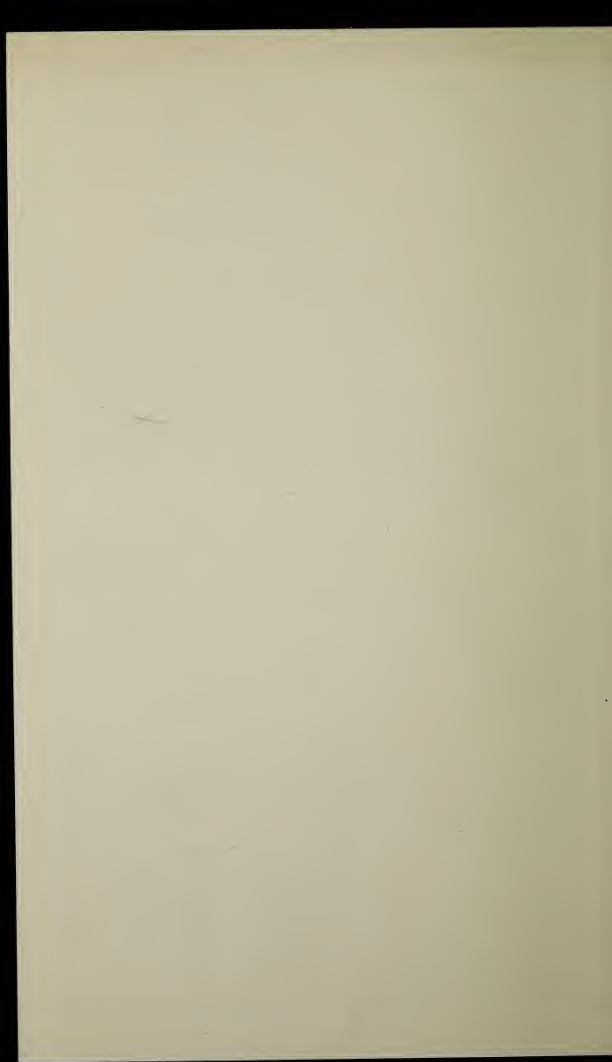
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