

one is bound to deprive himself of what is necessary to relieve his neighbor's wants. In such cases to render assistance is heroic charity. « Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friend. » (Jo. 15-13) This our Savior did : and hundreds of missionaries continually expose themselves to the risk of death to save souls.

All that we do to our neighbor, whether it be good or evil, we do to Christ Himself ; for he has said : « What you did to one of these My least brethren, ye did it to me. » (Matt. 25-40.) When St Martin had given half his cloak to a ragged beggar at the gate of Amiens, our Lord appeared to him in a dream wearing the half-cloak and accompanied by angels. « Martin, He said, covered Me to-day with this cloak. » — *The love of one's neighbor is then the distinctive mark of the true Christian.* Our Lord says : « By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another. » (Jo. 13-35.) Our Lord calls this a new commandment (Jo. 13-34), because the precept of charity to one's neighbor was not understood earlier in the sense He gives to it. Well indeed were it for the world, if charity prevailed everywhere ! No laws would be needed, no courts of justice, no punishments. Then no man would wrong his neighbor ; the very words of murders, brawls, rebellion, robbery and the like, would be unknown. There would be no destitution, for every one would have the necessities of life.

*Lack of charity to one's neighbor.* — We ought not to injure our neighbor : either as regards his life, his innocence, his property, his honor, or his household. All this God has forbidden in the six last commandments of the Decalogue. He who violates one of them to any serious extent, shows himself to have no love of his neighbor. Now envy is at the bottom of all those sins. We call a man envious who merely through ill-will is vexed at the prosperity of another, or rejoices when misfortune overtakes him. He is like a certain kind of snake, which is said to gnaw away the root of trees which bear sweet-smelling blossoms, because it cannot endure the perfume ; like the moth, that frets away the purple robe, or like rust that corrodes iron. But our vexation or pleasure may arise from the love of God or of our neighbor, in which case it is not blameworthy ;