

APPLICATION

Honour thy father and thy mother, v. 12. The commandment teaches the sanctity of the home, where respect to those who are the heads of the family is necessary. The promise of long life which is here attached is proof of the great importance which this fifth order carries. The Jews were known for the wise conduct of their homes, and for the care which they took to make their children familiar with the way of God. Says Edersheim, "The Gentile world here presented a terrible contrast, alike in regard to the relation of parents and children, and the character and moral object of their upbringing. Education begins in the home, and there were no homes like those in Israel; it is imparted by influence and example before it comes by teaching.... What Jewish fathers and mothers were; what they felt towards their children; and with what reverence, affection, and care the latter returned what they had received, is known to every reader of the Old Testament... The semi-Divine relationship between children and parents appears in the location, the far more than outward duties which it implies in the wording of the Fifth Commandment." The example of Jesus also reveals how beautiful was the relation between parents and child. No persons will ever regret any sacrifice made on behalf of their parents, and any neglect of this duty will some day bring great remorse. By honoring our earthly father we come to know how to honor God, the heavenly Father.

Thou shalt not kill, v. 13. This guards the sanctity of life. The first death was due to murder, and every few days we read of another such act added to the long list of those who break this commandment literally. But the spirit of the commandment is broken far more often than the letter. How many have murderous thoughts in their hearts and are restrained only by fear or lack of opportunity! Think also of the way in which characters are murdered by the false accusations and criticisms of people. Think of the joy that is murdered by angry words; of the good resolves murdered by cynical remarks. Notice the reading which Jesus gave to this commandment, Matt. 5: 22.

"According to our Lord's interpretation of the commandment, the same principle which forbids us to murder our fellow-men forbids us to treat him contemptuously and to refuse to acknowledge his claims to our consideration and respect."

Thou shalt not commit adultery, v. 14. This protects the sanctity of marriage. Marriage is an institution of divine origin, and was first celebrated in paradise. This is one of the things which keeps society together, and if marriage is allowed to fall into dishonor, it will soon happen that the supports of our civilization will drop out. Marriage must be the result of a true love of one for another, and this love cannot be retained if there be any want of fidelity of one to the other. Jesus expanded this commandment to include all impure thoughts, which, if they are allowed to take possession of the mind, are destructive of joy, religion and usefulness.

Thou shalt not steal, v. 15—protects property. Stealing takes secretly that which belongs to another without giving any equivalent. We all have a duty to work, and also have the right to possess what we gain. It is therefore injurious to this duty of labor and reward when property is not safe. No nation is civilized which does not arrange for the security of property. Compare Eph. 4: 28, where Paul contrasts theft and labor. Thieves are often referred to in the Bible, and in heathen nations still they are very numerous. But theft may take many forms. Is not gambling a species of theft? Is the laborer who wastes the time of his master not guilty of a similar offence? It is indeed a disgraceful thing to ever desire to rob others of what is their own. A little thought will show how widespread this commandment is; example, in trade relations.

Thou shalt not bear false witness, v. 16. This guards the sanctity of reputation or character. With us all, our reputation is a matter of first importance. It is the only valuable asset that some of us possess, and if it is taken away we become paupers. The law of the land takes this into consideration, and even goes so far as to say it is sometimes criminal to reveal a truth we know to peo-