

ancient world, as it is in those parts of the modern world which have not the religion of Jesus.

V. 13. *Thou shalt not kill.* The most precious thing that a man has is his life. To deprive him of that is to do the greatest possible injustice. Protection to life is one of the conditions of society. By the institution of the "cities of refuge" (Num. 35 : 6) provision was made for the man who had accidentally taken the life of another; but deliberate murder was illegal and punished with death, Lev. 24 : 7. To kill is wrong, (1) Because it is robbery of the dearest thing a man has, and the condition of all else; and (2) Because man is made in the image of God. It is the most tragic of all insults to that divine majesty, which, whether clearly or obscurely, shines from the soul of every man. The commandment is not exhaustive. None of the commandments are. They usually select the most prominent and heinous offence of the class. Christ pierces through the crime to the spirit which produces it; and no less than murder, He condemns anger, which may issue in murder, Matt. 5 : 21, 22.

V. 14. *Thou shalt not commit adultery.* Next to security of life, comes protection of the home from all that would stain its purity and confuse its order. For this law, again, is one of the pillars of society. Anything that ruins the purity or peace of the home, works injuriously on society; and the sin here condemned destroys not only all right relations between husband and wife, but through that, destroys the home. So, by two commandments, the interests of the home are safeguarded against the twin evils of disobedience and impurity. The Bible lays deep and strong the foundations of home life. The love that should reign between husband and wife is but a symbol of the love that binds Christ to His Church.

V. 7. *Thou shalt not steal.* After life and home come property. This, too, is and must be protected by all orderly society. For property is, in a sense, part of a man's personality. It is that part of the material of the world which he, by being what he is and doing what he does, has made his own. To assail it is to assail him; it is disrespect not

only to his rights but to himself. To rob another of his property is to deprive myself of the right to my own. Security of property is a condition of order. Certain Greeks used to honor those who stole successfully, but punished those who were caught in the act. How far this falls below the level of this simple Hebrew law!

V. 16. *Thou shalt not bear false witness.* We also owe a duty to our neighbor's character; for this is his property even in a more real sense than the external things he has made his own. This commandment contemplates, in particular, a case before the courts, where it is possible by a false word to damage a neighbor's reputation. But it may easily be extended from perjury to slander in general. Any word of ours about a neighbor which does not strictly correspond to truth is a cruel injury. It is like the theft of his reputation. The lie, too, besides injuring the man against whom it is told, injures the man who tells it, by dwarfing his moral nature. Lying is notoriously common in the East. Notice the false witnesses at the trial of Christ and of Stephen.

V. 17. *Thou shalt not covet.* This is the profoundest of the last five Commandments: for while they deal with acts, this deals with motives. Not only must hand and lip be right, but of still more importance is the rightness of the heart. A covetous desire will soon learn to express itself in open or secret act; and if sin is to be dealt with at the roots, the motive of action must be purified. In a sense, this is the test Commandment. Paul felt it to be so. Many like him who could fulfil the other Commandments have failed here.

"One of the marvels of the decalogue is its comprehensiveness. Every duty that should be discharged and every wrong that should be avoided will be found stated or implied in the Ten Commandments. They are there, at least in principle.

"They belong to the moral law, and the moral law never was abrogated. The civil law existed for the nation and ceased when the nation ceased to exist; the ceremonial law was fulfilled in Christ and ceased with the end of its mission; the moral law continues because man's moral nature continues."