

PART II.

ON THE COMMANDMENTS.

1. Is it sufficient for obtaining eternal salvation that we believe all that God has revealed?

No; we must also keep His commandments: 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments' (Matt. xix. 17).

'Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father who is in Heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven' (Matt. vii. 21).

2. But are we able to keep the Commandments of God?

Yes, with the assistance of God's grace, which He refuses to no one who asks for it.

'His commandments are not heavy' (1 John v. 3). 'My yoke is sweet, and my burden light' (Matt. xi. 30).

3. How do we know that we are able to keep the Commandments?

We know it, 1. Because God inflicts eternal punishment upon those who break them; and 2. Because there have been at all times Saints who faithfully observed them.

1. 'And that servant who knew the will of his lord, and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes' (Luke xii. 47). 2. It is written of Zachary and Elizabeth: 'And they were both just before God, walking in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord without blame' (Luke i. 6).

ON THE CHIEF COMMANDMENT.

4. Which is the chief Commandment that includes all the others?

The Commandment of Charity—i. e., the Commandment of the love of God and of our neighbor.

5. How is this Commandment of Charity expressed?

It is expressed in these terms: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength. This is the greatest and the first Commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself' (Mark xii. 30, 31; Matt. xxii. 37-40).

§ 1. On the Love of God.

6. What is the love of God?

It is a virtue infused by God into our soul, by which we give ourselves up with all our heart to Him, the Sovereign Good, in order to please Him by fulfilling His will, and to be united with Him.

7. What qualities must our love of God have?

It must be, 1. *Supernatural*; 2. *Sovereign*; and 3. *Active*.

8. When is our love *supernatural*?

Our love is supernatural when, with the help of God's grace, we love Him as we know Him, not only by our reason, but by our faith.

'Now the end of the commandment is charity, from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and an unfeigned faith. From which things some going astray, are turned aside unto vain babbling' (1 Tim. i. 5, 6). 'My just man liveth by faith; but if he withdraw himself, he shall not please my soul' (Heb. x. 38). By faith we know God, not only as the Creator of the world, and the Giver of all natural goods, which we can likewise perceive by our reason; but also as the Author and Giver of the supernatural graces and benefits; as the most merciful Father, who has most graciously adopted us, and has given His own Son, in order to save us, to sanctify us, and make us one day eternally happy in the kingdom of His glory.

9. When is our love of God *sovereign*?

Our love of God is sovereign when we love Him more than all other things, so that we are willing

to lose all rather than separate ourselves from Him by sin.

'I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, . . . nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God' (Rom. viii. 38, 39). This degree of love, by which we are ready to lose all, rather than commit a grievous sin, is absolutely necessary to salvation; but this is not the highest degree. For a higher degree is this, when we are not only determined not to commit any grievous sin, but not even the least sin; and there is a higher degree still, when we are resolved always to do what is most perfect, or most pleasing to God.

10. When is our love *active*?

Our love is active when we do what is acceptable to God; that is, when we keep his Commandments.

'He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me' (John xiv. 21). 'This is the charity of God, that we keep His Commandments' (1 John v. 3).

11. Why must we love God?

We must love God, 1. Because He is the sovereign and most perfect Good; 2. Because He has loved us first, and has bestowed innumerable blessings upon us in soul and body; and 3. Because He commands us to love Him, and promises us eternal salvation as a reward for it.

12. When is our love of God *perfect*?

Our love is perfect when we love God on account of His Infinite goodness; that is, when we love Him above all things, because He is both infinitely good in Himself, and infinitely good to us.

'Let us therefore love God, because God first hath loved us' (1 John iv. 19). Of this perfect love it is said: 'He that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him'; and, 'Every one that loveth is born of God' (1 John iv. 16, 7).—Example: Mary Magdalen: 'Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much' (Luke vii. 47).

13. When is our love *imperfect*?

Our love is imperfect when we love God chiefly because we expect good things from Him.

Example: The Prodigal Son: 'How many hired servants in my father's house abound with bread, and I here perish with hunger! I will arise, and will go to my father' (Luke xv. 17, 18).

14. By what means is the love of God increased and perfected in us?

1. By frequently and worthily receiving the Holy Sacraments; 2. By meditating on the perfections and graces of God, especially on the bitter Passion and Death of Jesus Christ; 3. By self-denial, and patience in afflictions; and 4. By performing good works.

15. How is the love of God lessened and banished?

By mortal sin the love of God is banished from our hearts, and by venial sin its fervor is lessened.

Application. Exercise yourself assiduously in the love of God by these means: Often think of Him, and often pray to Him; delight in hearing and speaking of Him, do and suffer everything for His sake, and fear nothing so much as to offend Him.

§ 2. *On the Love of our Neighbor.*

16. Whom must we particularly love after God? Our neighbor; *i.e.*, all men without exception.

17. Is it, then, not enough if we love God? 'If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar' (1 John iv. 20).

18. Why must we love our neighbor?

1. Because Christ our Lord commands us to love him, and by the fulfilment of this Commandment, He will know His true disciples; 2. Because He Himself in His life and death taught us so by His example; and 3. Because every one is a child and an image of God, was redeemed with the blood of Christ, and is called to eternal salvation.

1. 'By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another' (John xiii. 35). 2. 'Be ye, therefore, followers of God, as most dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us' (Eph. v. 1, 2). 3. 'Have we not all one Father? Hath

not one God created us? Why then doth every one of us despise his brother?' (Mal. ii. 10).

19. What qualities must the love of our neighbor have?

It must be, 1. *Sincere*; 2. *Disinterested*; 3. *General*.

20. When is our love *sincere*?

Our love is sincere when we love our neighbor, not in appearance, but as ourselves.

'My little children, let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed, and in truth' (1 John iii. 18).

21. When do we love our neighbor as ourselves?

We love our neighbor as ourselves when we observe the command of Christ: 'All things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them' (Matt. vii. 12).

'See thou never do to another what thou wouldst hate to have done to thee by another' (Tob. iv. 16).

22. When is our love *disinterested*?

Our love is disinterested when we do good to our neighbor for God's sake, and not that we may be praised or rewarded by men.

'When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind: and thou shalt be blessed, because they have not wherewith to make thee recompense; for recompense shall be made thee at the resurrection of the just' (Luke xiv. 13, 14).

23. When is our love *general*?

Our love is general when we exclude no one from it, whether he be our friend or our enemy.

'For if you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the publicans this? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more? Do not also the heathens this?' (Matt. v. 46, 47).—Ex.: The Good Samaritan (Luke x).

24. Is it not enough if we do not revenge ourselves on our enemies?

No; God commands us to love our enemies—*i.e.*, to

wish them well, and to be ready to assist them in their necessities, as much as lies in our power.

'Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you; that you may be the children of your Father who is in Heaven, who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and the bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust' (Matt. v. 44, 45).—Ex.: St. Stephen.

25. Why must we love our enemies?

1. Because the Lord our God commands us to love them; 2. Because Christ Jesus, our Divine Model, has given us the example of loving our enemies; and 3. Because we also wish to be forgiven by God.

1. 'But I say to you, Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you,' etc. (Matt. v.) 2. Jesus addressed even His betrayer in the kindest manner, saying: 'Friend, whereto art thou come?' (Matt. xxvi. 50), and he prayed on the Cross for His murderers: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do' (Luke xxiii. 34). 3. 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we,' etc. Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matt. xviii. 23-35).

26. What has he to expect who will not forgive him by whom he has been offended?

Judgment without mercy.

'Judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy' (James ii. 13). 'But if you will not forgive, neither will your Father that is in Heaven forgive you your sins' (Mark xi. 26).

27. What must we do when we have offended some one?

We must go and be reconciled to him (Matt. v. 23, 24).

28. What must we do when some one has offended us?

We must willingly offer to make peace with him, forgive him from our heart, and suffer injustice rather than return evil for evil.

'To no man render evil for evil. If it be possible, as much as is in you, have peace with all men. Revenge not yourselves, my dearly beloved, for it is written: *Revenge is mine; I will*

repay, saith the Lord' (Rom. xii. 17-19; comp. Matt. v. 39-41).
—Ex.: Jacob and Esau; David and Saul.

29. What sort of people does Holy Scripture particularly recommend to our love?

The poor, widows and orphans, and in general all those who are in corporal and spiritual need.

30. How are we to assist them?

By the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.

'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy' (Matt. v. 7).

31. Which are the *Corporal Works of Mercy*?

The Corporal Works of Mercy are these seven: 1. To feed the hungry; 2. To give drink to the thirsty; 3. To clothe the naked; 4. To harbor the harborless; 5. To visit the imprisoned; 6. To visit the sick; 7. To bury the dead.

32. Is it also a duty to perform corporal works of mercy?

Yes, it is such an indispensable duty that Christ condemns the unmerciful to everlasting fire.

'Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire. For I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me not to drink; I was a stranger, and you took me not in; naked, and you covered me not; sick and in prison, and you did not visit me. . . . Amen I say unto you, as long as you did it not to one of these least, neither did you do it to me. And these shall go into everlasting punishment' (Matt. xxv. 41-46). With regard to the dead, the Holy Scripture says: 'My son, shed tears over the dead, and neglect not his burial' (Ecclus. xxxviii. 16).

33. What good things are promised to those who give alms?

Temporal blessings,¹ and especially spiritual graces, in order to obtain forgiveness of their sins and life everlasting.²

¹ 'He that giveth to the poor shall not want; he that despiseth his entreaty shall suffer indigence' (Prov. xxviii. 27).—
Ex.: Tobias. ² 'Alms delivereth from death, and the same is

that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting' (Tob. xii. 9).—Ex.: Zacheus the Publican; Cornelius the Centurion.

34. Which are the *Spiritual Works of Mercy*?

The Spiritual Works of Mercy are these seven: 1. To admonish sinners; 2. To instruct the ignorant; 3. To counsel the doubtful; 4. To comfort the sorrowful; 5. To bear wrongs patiently; 6. To forgive injuries; 7. To pray for the living and the dead.

35. Are we also bound to perform spiritual works of mercy?

Yes, provided we have sufficient knowledge and an opportunity to perform them; for the spiritual good of our neighbor should affect us far more than his corporal welfare.

'My brethren, if any one of you err from the truth, and one convert him, he must know that he who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins' (James v. 19, 20).

36. When are we in general bound to admonish or rebuke our neighbor in a brotherly manner?

When it is necessary, in order to prevent him from committing sin, and there is hope that our admonition will not be in vain.

'If thy brother shall offend against thee, go and rebuke him between thee and him alone,' etc. (Matt. xviii. 15).

37. How is fraternal rebuke to be given?

With all possible prudence, love, and meekness.

'Brethren, if a man be overtaken in any fault, instruct such one in the spirit of meekness' (Gal. vi. 1).

Application. Be peaceable and kind to every one, especially to your brothers and sisters, and to your relations. Bear with the faults and frailties of your neighbor; never render evil for evil; but pray for him who may have offended you.

§ 3. *On Christian Self-Love.*

38. May a Christian love himself also ?

Yes, he may and ought to love himself ; for Christ says : 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as *thyself*.'

39. In what does Christian self-love consist ?

Christian self-love consists in being, above all things, solicitous for the salvation of one's soul.

40. Why must we be solicitous, above all things, for the salvation of our soul ?

1. Because the soul has been created to the likeness of God, has been ransomed with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and sanctified by the grace of the Holy Ghost ; and 2. Because on the salvation of the soul depends our eternal welfare (Matt. xvi. 26).

41. What are we to do in order to secure the salvation of our soul ?

1. We must carefully avoid sin, and every occasion of sin ; 2. If nevertheless we have sinned, we must not delay to do sincere penance ; and 3. We must earnestly endeavor to practise virtue, and to do good works.

1. 'They that commit sin and iniquity are enemies to their own soul' (Tob. xii. 10). 2. 'Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day ; for His wrath shall come on a sudden, and in the time of vengeance He will destroy thee' (Eclus. v. 8, 9). 3. 'Wherefore, brethren, labor the more, that by good works you may make sure your calling and election' (2 Pet. i. 10).

42. May we also love our body and temporal goods in a Christian manner ?

Yes, we may, and are also bound to love, in a Christian and supernatural manner, our body and temporal goods, as health, property, and good reputation.

43. When do we love our body in a Christian manner ?

When we love it, 1. Because it is the dwelling-place

of our soul, and her instrument for the service of God ; and 2. Because it also was sanctified in Baptism, and is destined for eternal glory.

He who loves his body in this manner will constantly subdue its unlawful desires, and thus, according to the admonition of St. Paul, '*Present it a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God*' (Rom. xii. 1).

44. When do we love the goods of this world in a Christian manner ?

When we love them, 1. As far as all created things have their origin in God and are His gifts ; and 2. As far as they serve us, to promote the honor of God, to assist the needy, and to fulfil the duties of our state of life.

He who loves the goods of this world in this manner will not turn his heart away from God, in order to seek his happiness in them, but will make such a use of them that on their account he will not forfeit those of Heaven.

45. What is opposite to this Christian love of one's self ?

Inordinate self-love.

46. When is self-love inordinate ?

1. When man prefers his own honor and will to the honor and will of God ; 2. When he is more solicitous for his body and for temporal things than for his soul and eternal salvation ; and 3. When he seeks his own welfare to the prejudice of his neighbor.

This vicious self-love is the source of all sins. 'Men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, haughty, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, wicked, without affection, without peace, slanderers, incontinent, unmerciful, without kindness, traitors, stubborn, puffed up, and lovers of pleasures more than of God' (2 Tim. iii. 2-4).

47. Is every self-love that is not supernatural, vicious and inordinate ?

No ; there is also a merely natural self-love, by which we may indeed love ourselves, and all that belongs to us, in a lawful manner, though not meritoriously for eternity.

'Thus also those who are evil know how to give [through natural love] good gifts to their children' (Luke xi. 13).

Application. Oppose in good time that pernicious self-love by which a person, in all that he thinks, speaks, and does, has not in view the honor of God or the welfare of his neighbor, but only his own self, and his pretended advantages over others.

ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF GOD.

(See *Short Hist. of Rel.* §11.)

1. Where is our duty of loving God and our neighbor more fully contained?

In the Ten Commandments, which God gave to Moses written on two tables of stone.

2. What are the Ten Commandments?

1. I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not have strange gods before me; thou shalt not make to thyself any graven thing to adore it.

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, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

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 house, nor his field, nor his servant, nor his handmaid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is his.

3. Why are we Christians also bound to keep these Commandments of the Old Law?

1. Because Christ is not come 'to destroy the law, but to fulfil it' (Matt. v. 17)—*i.e.*, to confirm it, and to

teach us how to observe it perfectly; and 2. Because the Ten Commandments contain that law which already binds all men, since it is grounded in human nature, and has been written by God in all hearts (Rom. ii. 15).

4. If the law is written in all hearts, why did God give it to man written on tables of stone?

That we may the more surely know the law of God, and be the more strongly impelled to fulfil it; for our capacity to know and to will what is good, has been very much weakened by sin.

5. What in particular ought to induce us faithfully to keep the Divine Commandments?

1. The reverence, love, and gratitude which we owe to God; 2. The fear of eternal punishment, and the hope of eternal reward.

The First Commandment of God.

'I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not have strange gods before me; thou shalt not make to thyself any graven thing to adore it.'

6. What are we commanded by the First Commandment?

By the First Commandment we are commanded to pay to Almighty God due honor and adoration.

7. How many kinds of honor do we owe to God?

We owe to God two kinds of honor—namely, *interior* and *exterior* honor.

8. How do we honor God *interiorly*?

We honor God interiorly, 1. By faith, hope, and charity; 2. By reverence and adoration; 3. By thanksgiving for all His blessings; 4. By zeal for His honor; and 5. By obedience and resignation to His holy will.

9. How do we sin against faith?

1. By infidelity, heresy, and scepticism; 2. By impious and profane language, or by wilfully listening to it; likewise by reading or spreading irreligious books