

THE COMMANDMENTS.

The Fifth Commandment (concl.):

Thou shalt not kill.

What it commands us to do.

1. The Fifth Commandment requires us (1) to pardon our enemies, (2) to be reconciled to them, (3) to do good to them when we can, and (4) to help those among them who are in want.

2. Our first duty towards our enemies is to forgive them, and next to be reconciled to them.

3. These two duties are so peremptory that Christ Himself says that God will not pardon those who refuse to pardon others and be reconciled to them.

« Do not think that I am come to destroy the law, of the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For amen I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall not pass of the law till all be fulfilled. He therefore that shall break one of these least commandments and shall so teach men, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. But he that shall do and teach, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you unless your justice abound, more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. »

« You have heard that it was said to them of old: « Thou shalt not kill. And whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. » But I say to you that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother. « Raca », shall be in danger of the council. And whosoever shall say, « Thou fool », shall be in danger of hell fire. If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift. »

« Be at agreement with thy adversary betimes whilst thou art in the way with him, lest perhaps the adversary deliver thee to the judge and the judge deliver thee to the officer and thou be cast into prison. Amen I say to thee, thou shalt not go out from thence till thou repay the last farthing. » (*Matt.* V, 17-26.)

4. We have another equally explicit declaration of Our Lord, which shows that the command to forgive admits of no exception whatsoever:

« Then came Peter unto Him and said: « Lord, how often shall my brother offend me and I forgive him? Till seven times? » Jesus saith to him: « I say not to thee till seven times, but till seventy times seven times. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened to a king who would take an account of his servants. And when he had begun to take the account, one was brought to him that owed him ten thousand talents; and as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that he should be sold, and his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. But that servant falling down besought him, saying: « Have patience with me and I will pay thee all. » And the lord of that servant being moved with pity, let him go and forgave him the debt. « But when that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow-servants that owed him an hundred pence; and laying hold of him, he throttled him saying: « Pay what thou owest. » And his fellow servant falling down besought him saying: « Have patience with me and I will pay thee all. » And he would not, but cast him into prison, till he paid the debt. Now his fellow-servants, seeing what was done, were very much grieved, and they came and told their lord all that was done. »

« Then his lord called him and said to him: « Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest me. Shouldst not thou then have had compassion also on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee? And his lord, being angry, delivered him to the tortures until he paid all the debt. So shall My Heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not everyone his brother from your hearts. » (*Matt.* XVIII, 21-35.)

5. Our further duty towards our enemies is to do good to them when we have the chance.

Explanation of the Plate.

6. *The small picture on the right* shows St. Cyprian the Martyr, who just before his execution made his friends present the executioner with a sum of money.

7. *The large picture* depicts St. Stephen, deacon and first martyr, who gave to the world an admirable example of how we ought to pardon our enemies. On his knees, his eyes raised towards heaven, he addressed to the Almighty this beautiful prayer for the Jews who were stoning him to death: « Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. » (*Acts VII, 59.*) And suddenly the heavens opened and he saw God welcoming him with extended arms. An angel is presenting to him the martyr's palm, while another holds over him the crown awaiting him in heaven.

8. *The small picture on the left* represents the reconciliation between the two brothers Jacob and Esau. (*Gen. XXXIII, 1-15.*)
