

THE COMMANDMENTS.

The Ninth Commandment:

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.

1. By this commandment we are forbidden to harbour any carnal thoughts or desires. Says Our Lord: « You have heard that it was said to them of old: « Thou shalt not commit adultery! But I say to you that whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart. » (*Matt. v, 27-28.*)

2. The difference between this and the Sixth Commandment is this, that whereas the latter forbids all outward manifestations of impurity, including immodest language, the ninth commandment forbids even the mere desire or thought of such.

3. It is *desire* when one is ready to satisfy it if the opportunity offered; and it is *thought* when, without any idea of translating it into action, the mind gloats over the idea itself.

4. The desire alone, though unsatisfied, is sinful, for we have no right to desire what it is not permitted us to do.

5. And it is sinful to harbour impure thoughts, even if the desire to commit the act itself be altogether absent.

6. It is sinful because we offend God by dwelling with pleasure on things which are intensely abhorrent to Him and harmful to us.

7. There is however no sin if the moment such thoughts present themselves we, true to our duty, thrust them away from us; and not only is there no sin, but in offering such stout resistance, we even gain for ourselves special merit. Remembering this, we ought never to lose courage, but fight bravely against all temptation.

8. To overcome temptation to impurity we must (1) remember that God's eyes are always upon us and that we are one day to be judged by Him, (2) lift up our hearts to Him in a short prayer, (3) offer resistance to

the temptation from the moment it presents itself, and (4) invoke the aid of the Blessed Virgin.

Explanation of the Plate.

9. *The large picture* illustrates the Gospel story of Christ and the woman, who, giving way to her evil desires, became an adulteress. (*John VIII, 3-11.*)

« And the Scribes and Pharisees bring unto Him a woman taken in adultery, and they set her in the midst and said to Him: « Master, this woman was even now taken in adultery. Now Moses in the Law commanded us to stone such a one, but what sayest Thou? » And this they said tempting Him that they might accuse Him. But Jesus bowing Himself down, wrote with His finger on the ground. When therefore they continued asking Him, He lifted up Himself and said to them: « He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. » And again stooping down, He wrote on the ground. But they, hearing this, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, and Jesus alone remained and the woman standing in the midst. »

« Then Jesus lifting up Himself, said to her: « Woman, where are they that accuse thee? Hath no man condemned thee? » Who said: « No man, Lord. » And Jesus said: «Neither will I condemn thee. Go and now sin no more. »

10. *In the small picture on the right* we see King David, and, standing before him, the prophet Nathan, who is reproaching him for his adultery with Bethsabee and the murder of her husband Uriah.

11. *The small picture on the left* illustrates the parable used by Nathan in order to bring home to David the enormity of his sin. « There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many sheep and oxen, but the poor man had nothing at all but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up, and which had grown up in his house together with his children eating of his bread and drinking of his cup and sleeping in his bosom, and it was unto him as a daughter. And when a certain stranger was come to the rich man, he spared to take of his own sheep and oxen, and to make feast for that

stranger, but took the poor man's ewe and dressed it for the man that was come to him ».

And David's anger being exceedingly kindled against that man, he said to Nathan: « As the Lord liveth, that man that hath done this is a child of death. He shall restore the ewe fourfold, because he did this thing and had no pity! »

And Nathan said to David: « Thou art the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: I anointed thee king over Israel and I delivered thee from the hand of Saul, and gave thee thy master's house, and gave thee the house of Israel and Judah, and if these things be little, I shall add far greater things unto thee. Why therefore hast thou despised the word of the Lord to do evil in my sight. Thou hast killed Urias the Hittite with the sword and hast taken his wife to be thy wife. Behold I will raise up evil against thee out of thy own house. » (*II Kings* XII.)

The king was overwhelmed with grief and from the bottom of his heart, repentance, escaped this saving cry of penitence which God never despises: « I have sinned against the Lord. »
