

LECTURE XXXIII.

SECOND TABLE. (5th and 6th COMMANDMENTS.)

SYLLABUS.

1. What is the general scope of the 5th Commandment?
 2. Show that, under the names "Father and Mother," all superiors in family, Church and State are included.
 3. What is the meaning of the promise attached?
 4. What is required and forbidden in the 6th Commandment?
 5. Does it prohibit the slaying of animals for food?
 6. Does it prohibit defensive war, or forcible self-defence by persons?
 7. Are capital punishments righteous?
 8. What is the moral character of dueling?
- Shorter Catechism, Qu. 63-69. Larger Cat., Qu. 123-136. Calvin's Inst., bk. ii, ch. 8, § 35-40. Turretin, Loc. xi, Qu. 16, 17. Green's Lect. 46-50. Ridgeley's Divinity, Qu. 123-136. Hopkins on the Ten Commandments. Hodge's Theology, Vol. iii, ch. 19, § 9, 10. "American Peace Society" Publications.

WE enter now upon the consideration of the Second Table. The immediate objects of the duties of this table are our fellow-men. But still, the breach of one of them is a sin against God also, because it is He who has enjoined them, and has placed us in those relations in which the duties arise.

As the first table began with that which is fundamental to all religion, the pointing out of the only proper Object of religious service; so the second table begins with that duty which is fundamental to all social duties, and the most important of all; subjection to domestic authority. I must here again remind you of the rule of interpretation laid down at the outset, that a whole class of duties is enjoined, and of sins forbidden, under one prominent specimen. So, we understand that here, under the example of filial duties, all the relative duties between superiors and inferiors, in the Family, the Church, and the Commonwealth, are included. Not only the duties of children to parents, but of servants to masters, pupils to teachers, and people to rulers in Church and State, are here implied. If these, most important classes of social duties are not intended to be included in this precept, then they are nowhere in the decalogue: for there is no other precept where they can be fairly embraced. Can we believe that the summary so omits what the subsequent Scriptures so often enforce in detail? The including of all these duties under the fifth commandment will seem far more natural, if we remember that the original forms of government in the old world were all patriarchal; in which the father was the head, priest, and prince of all his descendants and servants. The family was no doubt the germ out of which civil institutions and the organized Church grew. The Jewish nation was just now passing,

in part, out of this patriarchal form; and many of its features were retained in the Mosaic government. How natural then, to an ancient Israelite, to represent the general idea of civil and ecclesiastical superiors under the term Parents? Servants (who were usually slaves) were on much the same footing in ancient society with children. Kings were called Fathers, 1 Sam. xxiv : 11. Prophets were generally addressed as Fathers, by the young men entrusted to their religious instruction, who, in turn, were called "sons of the prophets," 2 Kings ii : 3 and 12.

Many duties are of a reciprocal nature. Obligation on one side implies a correlative obligation on the other. Thus the duties of inferiors imply the reciprocal duties of superiors. Under this commandment then, are included the duties of parents towards their children, masters towards servants, rulers towards subjects, church-teachers towards their charges. Thus, we find that St. Paul, in the former part of the sixth chapter of Ephesians, (which may fairly be taken as his exposition of the fifth commandment), begins with the duties of children towards parents, but follows it up immediately with the duties of parents towards their children; and after instructing servants, proceeds immediately to instruct their masters. We feel therefore fully justified in giving the fifth commandment the general scope assigned to it in the Catechism. "The general scope of the fifth commandment is the performance of those duties which we mutually owe in our several relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals."

2. It is under this head of the decalogue, that the important Scripture doctrine of the civil magistrate, and duty of citizens, should fall, which is the subject of the 23d chapter of our Confession. But this is a subject of so much importance, that I reserve it for separate discussion in the Senior course. The details of the other duties of inferiors and superiors may be seen so fully stated in your catechisms, that it would be mere repetition to recite them here.

The fifth commandment is peculiar in closing with a promise to encourage to its observance: "That thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." The first recipient of the promise was the Nation; and it may be national permanency which is pledged. But the Apostle applies it (Eph. vi : 2), to Christian children, after Israel was cast out. This authorizes us to give it a personal application. As a long life spent in adversity would be no boon, this promise is obviously understood as one of "long life and prosperity." We understand it to give us that encouragement which is also presented by the established connection of causes and effects in God's providence, where the faithful and general performance of the duties of inferiors and superiors, and especially of pa-

Obligations are Reciprocal.

3. Extent of the Promise.

rents and children, ensures, as far as any earthly means can, general health, peace, prosperity and temporal welfare; whereas the anarchical neglect of those duties, and especially of the parental and filial, plunges every society into violence, disease, disorder, misery, and premature death. We do not understand God's promise in this commandment as absolute and universal. To claim this would be to claim that God should work for dutiful sons a continual miracle, in suspending the mutual influences of men on each other's welfare, by which the virtuous, especially when few, share the calamities procured by the more prevalent crimes of the wicked. The first promise is given to a society (as to Israel) in the aggregate. The general performance of the duty is necessary to ensure the happy result. If there is a general neglect of the duties, as in our day, it must result in calamities; and some of the most dutiful of our sons may fall, as many a virtuous Confederate soldier fell, in the prime of his days, in the general disorder.

The sixth commandment is in these terse words: "Thou shalt not kill." Its obvious scope is the preservation of life. It forbids all that unrighteously assails our own and others' lives, and enjoins all suitable means for the preservation of both. This command is based upon these two great truths: that life is God's gift, and therefore to be abridged or taken away only at His command; and that life is of supreme value to every man. In robbing a man of life, you would virtually rob him of every valuable thing which life includes. It is committing against a fellow-man every species of robbery in one. The Scriptures also ground the prohibition of taking man's life on his likeness to God. Gen. ix: 6. "For in the image of God made He man. James iii: 9; also founds the lesser sin of slander and reviling partly on the same fact. Man's rational, moral and immortal nature is the chief glory of his being; it reflects the glory of God's. Hence, to invade this being is at once the most enormous wrong against the creature, and an act of impiety against God.

We have here then, another instance of the profoundly logical arrangement which infinite wisdom has given to the decalogue. The second table, after fixing those relative duties out of which society itself emerges, then proceeds to protect, first, that value which is transcendent with every man—his temporal existence. It then secures that which is next in order of essential importance—man's chastity, including the purity of the marital relation, the foundation of the domestic; and postpones to the last those duties of commutative righteousness, and of truth, which are the outer bonds of society.

But when God says, "Thou shalt not kill," what are the things whose slaying is thus inhibited? There is a small class of fanatics in Christian

4. Scope of Sixth Commandment.
5. Animal Life may be Taken.

lands, larger in some Pagan ones, who answer, that we may kill nothing that has animal life. Hence the use of the flesh of quadrupeds, birds, and fishes, for food, is of course inhibited by them. This party is known in America as Grahamites. Their tendency is infidel; for the Bible speaks too plainly on this subject to be questioned by any devout believer. We read that God gave to Adam and his family only the vegetable world for food, assigning him the use of the animals as his servants. (Hence, the skins in which God clothed Adam and Eve after their fall, must have come either from the religious sacrifices which He taught them to offer, the more probable surmise; or from beasts which died by the violence of their own kind, or by disease). But after the flood, the fruitfulness of the earth having been probably impaired for all subsequent time, God expressly gave Noah and his family the privilege of eating the flesh of animals, only reserving the blood, with which they should "make atonement for their souls upon the altar." This permission is doubtless now valid. It was expressly continued to the Hebrews, in the distinction of the clean beasts. It is equally certain that it was not abrogated after Christ came; for we find Him, even after His resurrection (Luke xxiv : 43; Jno. xxi : 9), eating the flesh of fishes, and encouraging His followers to do so. See also Rom. xiv : 3, and 1 Cor. x : 25.

Reason approves this. The sanctity of human life is placed, where inspiration places it (in Gen. ix : 6), in man's rational responsibility and immortality. The life of the beast, "whose spirit goeth downward," is no such inviolable boon to him. And while we admit that the duty of benevolence extends to the brutes, as does God's benevolence, we argue that the employment of animals for food has, on the whole, greatly promoted their animal well-being. For man thus has a sufficient motive for their careful nurture, whereas otherwise he would regard them as nuisances.

Still another, and a larger class of fanatics, hold that there are no circumstances under which human life can be taken lawfully by man. Claiming the admission which we have made, that life is to man God's loan, they urge that no creature can under any circumstances assume authority to take it away from his fellow man. Hence it must follow that personal self-defence against unrighteous aggression, that the defensive wars of commonwealths, and the infliction of capital punishments upon the most enormous criminals even, are all unlawful. Here is the theory of the "non-resistance" and the "peace parties."

I may make the same remark of these, that they are virtually infidel parties. If the authority of the Scriptures is admitted, their conclusions are obviously false. They are obviously illogi-

6. Capital Punishments and Defensive War, &c., Not Forbidden.
Arguments—Magistrate Slays by Delegated Authority.

cal. It is true that human life is God's loan to His creatures. No one may take it away without the authority of the Divine Giver. It is therefore simply a question of revealed testimony, whether God has, in any cases, deputed to man, or to society, the authority to take life. If He has, then it is God's authority which, in the appropriate case, takes away the boon; and the human agent is merely God's executioner. It is, then, simply a question of fact as to the Scriptural teachings.

If life is thus sacred, as God's boon, and is man's one possession of transcendent value, then to take it away without right is an enormous outrage. Suppose this outrage is obviously about to be perpetrated by an aggressor upon an innocent person. Suppose, also, that the protection of the law is absent, and cannot be successfully invoked? What shall the defendant do? Is it his duty to be passive and yield up his life; or to take the defensive, and protect it by force, even to the extent of taking the assailant's life if necessary? Human laws and conscience concur in the latter answer. Remember that the aggressor unrighteously creates the dilemma, making it necessary that at least one life must go. Whose had best go? Obviously the life of the criminal, rather than that of the innocent man. Again: If law subsequently has its just course, the murderer, after his guilty success, will have to die for it. The case is then still stronger: that the passive theory sacrifices two lives, one innocent; whereas the theory of self-defence saves the righteous life, and only sacrifices the guilty one. Our conclusion is also confirmed by the existence in us of the emotion of lawful resentment, the righteousness of which, within its proper bounds, the Saviour allows (Matt. v : 22; Eph. iv : 26). For if there is no forcible self-defence against wrong, there is no reasonable scope for this emotion.

The Scriptures expressly confirm us. The right of slaying the house-breaker clearly implies a right of self-defence. Exod. xxii : 2. The law of the cities of refuge contains the same right. Numb. xxxv : 22. The effect of this permission is evaded, indeed, by the pretence that Moses' legislation was imperfect and barbarous, and is corrected by the milder instructions of our Saviour. Matt. v : 39. But I have taught you the falsehood of this notion, and showed you that the Old Testament teaches precisely the same morality with the New.

As to the delegation of the right of capital punishment for flagrant crimes, the feeble attempt has been made to represent the injunction of Gen. ix : 6 as not a precept, but a prediction; not as God's instruction what ought to be done to the murderer, but His prophecy of what human vindictiveness would do. The context refutes this. This command for the capital punishment of the murderer, having been given to Noah,

Self-Defence Law-ful.

Capital Punishment in Scripture.

the second father of mankind, and before there was a chosen people, is of course, universal. Look also at the express injunction of capital punishments for several crimes in the Pentateuch: for murder, Num. xxxv: 31; for striking a parent, Exod. xxi: 15; for adultery, Levit. xx: 10; for religious imposture, Deut. xiii: 5, &c. In Numb. xxxv: 33, a reason is given which, on general principles, necessitates the capital punishment of murder: "For blood, it defileth a land, and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it." Capital punishments are also authorized in the New Testament. Rom. xiii assures us that the magistrate "beareth not the sword in vain," but in bearing it he is God's minister to execute wrath upon the evil-doer.

Unprovoked war is the most monstrous secular crime that can be committed: it is at once the greatest of evils, and includes the worst forms of robbery and murder. Wherever war is prompted by mere pique, or lust of aggrandizement, or ambition for fame and power, it deserves all that can be said of its mischiefs and criminality by the most zealous advocates of peace. And nothing can rescue a people waging war, from this guilt, except the fact that their appeal to arms is necessary for the defence of just and vital rights. But while the Scriptures teach this, they give no countenance to the weak fanaticism, which commands governments to practice a passive non-resistance, in such a world as this. Nations are usually unjust and unscrupulous. The very fact that they are politically sovereign implies that there is no umpire between them, except Divine Providence. A passive attitude would usually only provoke, instead of disarming attack. Hence its only effect would be to bring all the horrors and desolations of invasion upon the innocent people, while the guilty went free. God has therefore both permitted and instructed rulers, when thus unjustly assailed, to retort these miseries upon the assailants who introduce them. The very fact that all war is so terrific a scourge, and that aggressive war is such an enormous crime, only makes it more clear that the injured party are entitled to their redress, and are justified in inflicting on the injurers such chastisement as will compel their return to justice, even including the death and ruin which they were preparing against their inoffensive neighbors.

It is perfectly clear that Sacred Scripture legalizes such defensive war. Abram, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Josiah, the Maccabees, were such warriors: and they were God's chosen saints. It was "through faith they waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." Heb. xi: 34. God fought for and with them by giving, in their battles, answers to their prayers, and miraculous assistance to their

7. Defensive War
Lawful.

arms. Under the New Testament, when Christ's forerunner was preaching the baptism of repentance, he did not enjoin on soldiers the surrender of their profession as sinful, but only the restricting of themselves to its lawful duties. The New Testament tells us of a Centurion, affectionately commended by our Redeemer as possessed of "great faith;" and of a Cornelius, who was "accepted with God, as fearing Him and working righteousness." Luke iii : 14; vii : 9; Acts x : 35. The Apostle Paul, Rom. xiii : 4, tells us that the magistrate "beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." It would be strange indeed, if the ruler who is armed by God with the power of capital punishment against the domestic murderer, could not justly inflict the same doom on the foreign criminal, who invades our soil unprovoked, for the purpose of shedding blood. The security of life and property which the magistrate is intended to provide by his power of punishing, would be illusory indeed, if it could only be used against individual criminals, while the more mischievous and widespread crimes of organized multitudes must go unpunished. Aggressive war is wholesale murder; and when the government sends out its army to repel and chastise the invader, it does but inflict summary execution on the murderer caught in the act.

The modern duel is a very peculiar usage, which has descended to us from a perversion of an institution of chivalry; the ordeal by battle.

8. Dueling Murder.

This was a means adopted by the ignorance of the middle ages, to appeal to God's judgment where the question of right was too obscure to be unravelled by their rude courts. It was founded on an abuse of the doctrine of Providence. Because the Scriptures teach that this providence is concerned in all events, the Middle Ages jumped to the conclusion, that this providence would so decide the issue, as to vindicate justice. It needs no argument to show you the fallacy. Since the intelligence of modern days has exploded the idea of the divine ordeal, the duel remains a barbarous remnant of the middle ages, without even the shadow of an argument in its favor.

In refuting the arguments by which the duel is defended, I

shall not take the ground that the sentiment of personal honour is irrational or unchristian; I shall not assume that it is no real injury to wound it. My position is, that the duel is no proper remedy for that injury. And, first: the only lawful object, when one is wounded in his honour, is self-defence, and not revenge. The latter is expressly forbidden in every case. Now, for the defence of one's honour and good name, a duel is naught. Perhaps where malignant passions are not harboured, the challenger to a duel is most frequently actuated by this feeling; that his passive endurance of an insult will cause his fellow-

Arguments for it
Futile.

men to think him a coward; and that therefore he must expose himself to the dangers of combat, in order to evince that he is not a coward; and thus retrieve his credit. Now dueling does not prove courage; for notoriously, if some brave men have fought, so have many cowards. It only proves a species of moral cowardice, which shrinks from the path of rectitude, and cowers before the finger of scorn. It is yet more obvious that the issue of the duel will prove nothing as to the truth or falsehood of the charge which constituted the insult. If one calls me a liar, and I kill him therefor, this shows nothing whatever as to my truth or falsehood. The proper and reasonable remedy here, is to require the accuser to substantiate his charge, or else confess its injustice. His refusal to do either would place him so effectually in the wrong, that no other reparation would be needed.

Another objection to the duel is, that it usually prevents, and that in the most deadly manner, that very fairness and equality which it boasts of securing. The plea is, that it puts the weak man equal to the strong one, by appealing from mere, brute muscle, to arms and skill. But according to its laws, the duel authorizes an inequality of skill far more deadly. I am ignorant of the use of the pistol. A violent and malignant man who knows himself a dead shot, so outrages me that I am impelled under the code of honour, to challenge him. He, exercising the right of the challenged, chooses pistols. Thus he has me more completely at a disadvantage than if he were a pugilist of the first fame, and I an infant; and the result is not a parcel of bruises, but my death. The system is, when tried by its own pretences, flagrantly unfair.

It is also absurdly unequal in this: that if its proceedings have any justice, then it puts the righteous man and the culprit on the same footing. Unless the challenger is committing a monstrous wrong, he must hold that the challenged is a capital criminal: for does he not claim that it is right to subject him to the liability of a capital punishment? Why then should the innocent man, already so grievously wronged, when he proceeds to inflict the righteous penalty, give the culprit equal chances to inflict the same penalty on him? Shall the magistrate, in putting a condemned felon to death, courteously invite him to take his equal chances to put the magistrate to death? What more absurd? If the assailant really deserves to die; and this is duly ascertained (if it is not, the challenger is guilty of murder in seeking to slay an innocent man) then by all means, let him be killed, without giving him opportunity to perpetrate another unprovoked crime. When one has to kill a mad dog, he does not feel bound to give the dog a chance to bite him!

Jeopardizing of the
Injured Unjust.

Duels Unfair.

Last, the dueling code is a monstrous one, because it makes the man who supposes himself wronged, accuser, judge, and executioner in his own cause. It is righteously then, that the statute laws of the Commonwealth treat the duelist who has slain his adversary, as a murderer with prepense malice.

The Interested made
Judge, &c.

One plea for dueling is, that it is the necessary chastisement for classes of sins, (as against one's good name, against the chastity of one's family) for which the laws afford either no remedy, or such a one as no man of delicacy can seek. The answer is: that if the facts are true, they are arguments for perfecting the penal laws, not for the iniquities of dueling. Another argument is, that nothing but the code of honour will secure chivalrous manners; which it boasts of doing through the influence of the knowledge that the man who departs from that style of manners is in danger of a challenge. The answers are two. Surely that courtesy has little claim to be chivalrous, which is only coerced by fear? And facts show that the influence of the code is not what is claimed; for the societies where it has fullest sway, are sometimes the rudest and most debauched.

Pleas Refuted.