

THE TEN
COMMANDMENTS

The Ten Commandments

by

JOSEPH LEWIS

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ORIGIN AND MEANING OF
THE DECALOGUE AND AN ANALYSIS OF ITS ETHICAL AND
MORAL VALUE AS A CODE OF CONDUCT IN MODERN SOCIETY

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TO THE MEMORY OF
LUTHER BURBANK
AND
THOMAS ALVA EDISON

WHO WERE MEMBERS OF THE ORGANIZATION OF
WHICH I HAVE THE HONOR TO BE PRESIDENT,
AND WHOSE ENCOURAGEMENT WAS A CONTINUAL
SOURCE OF INSPIRATION

It has often been said that anything may be proved from the Bible; but before anything can be admitted as proved by the Bible, the Bible itself must be proved to be true; for if the Bible be not true, or the truth of it be doubtful, it ceases to have authority, and cannot be admitted as proof of anything.

THOMAS PAINE

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PREFACE

"Some of the old laws of Israel are clearly savage taboos of a familiar type thinly disguised as commands of the deity."—SIR JAMES G. FRAZER.

IS LIFE a journey of enough importance to require help and assistance until our destination is reached? Is our mental equipment at birth all-sufficient to direct us safely and securely along the path of life? Is man a creature of predestination, or is he merely a temporary, animate being born to face the struggles of existence without the slightest help?

Was man given knowledge to face the difficulties he is sure to encounter, or is he but one of the myriad forms of life resulting from the ever-changing conditions of the universe, to be tossed helter-skelter upon the sea of existence?

Some say that he is; others, that he is not. Some say that we are specially created beings formed in the likeness and image of an all-powerful Creator; others, that we are but tiny insects too insignificant to be important enough to require special attention; others, that we are but the result of the conditions around us; while still others tell us that we are the masters of our own destiny.

Surely, with this vital difference of opinion concerning man's place on earth, we are justified in at least investigating this essential phase of life in an endeavor to learn the truth concerning our existence, and thus fortify ourselves for the struggles necessary to meet the difficulties of life.

If man has been furnished with a chart to guide him while on earth, it should be infallible, it should be flawless, it should be perfect.

To be perfect, a chart must be scientific in every detail. It must be in conformity with, and not in opposition to, Nature. It must tell us what *to do* as well as what *not* to do.

If man has used false charts in the past, he should exercise the utmost care to be sure that he does not make the same mistakes in the future. If he has been deceived by false appearances, he should guard against future deception. Only stupidity will continually permit itself to be falsely led.

Would a captain of a vessel, no matter how much *faith* he had, rely upon a compass that violated every law of gravity, and instead of continually pointing to the north, fluctuated from one direction to another?

Human existence has often been compared to persons tossed into the sea. Some finally reach shore after bitter struggles, better for the experience and less fearful of future plunges; while others, yes, the great, great majority of others, despite heroic efforts, are unable to buffet the waves, and go down to their death, without seeing the land they tried so desperately to reach.

Would it not have been better, since all must plunge into the sea to get to "yonder" shore, that fewer lives be produced and to them given knowledge that would enable them to reach their destination, instead of producing a vast multitude to suffer the agonies of death in their struggle for existence?

How cruel must be that force which, if it knew the essentials of swimming, withheld such knowledge from the Niagara of lives that pour into the sea!

If a mere man possesses knowledge of danger and withholds it from his fellow man, either for profit or through indifference, he is held up to execration and scorn. How much more deserving of condemnation would be a "God" who possessed all the knowledge necessary for the health and happiness of the human race, but who because of some unknown and inexplicable cause withheld it! And if God manifests no more interest in human life than the meanest of selfish men, how utterly ridiculous to worship him for what in a man would be termed brutal selfishness, greed and indifference!

Reflect for a moment on the untold millions of pitiful and helpless creatures who have perished when only a little knowledge, just a *little*

knowledge, would have enabled them to lift the cup of cool relief to their parched lips, saved them from indescribable sufferings, and stayed the hand of death!

The history of man may be written, his pleasures and joys recounted; but never, never, will he be able to record the misery, pain, sorrow, heartache and torture that he has suffered because of lack of *available* knowledge.

Life is beset with a thousand difficulties. On every hand man meets unexpected problems. When he thinks the goal has been reached, he finds that it merely opens the door to new problems. One mirage follows another. Either as an individual or as a member of society, he is in one continual conflict. He is forever perplexed as to what he should do, how he should conduct himself, and what is his mission, if any, on earth.

So difficult does the problem of living occasionally become that some, unable to cope with an agonizing situation, surrender the task and enter the door to the shore from which as yet "no traveler has returned." Others take up arms against "a sea of troubles" and prefer to battle the waves in a nightmare of existence rather than fly to "troubles that they know not of."

Like a weary traveler lost in a bewildering forest is man trying to grope his way to light and freedom. Each generation faces the same conditions and meets the same difficulties. The only ray of hope is to instruct those who are to come and to help them from committing the same mistakes made by the generation that is going.

Some piece together the experiences, the trials and the tribulations and, to the best of their ability, formulate rules and regulations for the guidance of others in the hope that they will take counsel and avoid the mistakes others have made. To bring a little happiness and a little joy without injury to others into this complicated world is all that they seek to accomplish.

Some find that even by living up to the best of intended rules they are not only unable to solve the problems of living, but are even unable

to determine the proper conduct in life. Their best intentions often cause their own undoing.

There are some, however, who tell us that the efforts of those who labor to understand life and living are wasted in seeking to formulate their own code of conduct for the human race. They tell us that no one need make an effort to seek such knowledge; they tell us that it is already here in a special revelation from the "God of the Universe" in what is known as the Ten Commandments.

What *are* the Ten Commandments?

We are told by some that the Ten Commandments were written by "God" himself—that they are divine, infallible and imperishable. We were told, while still upon our mother's knee, the story of how Moses was put into the bullrushes to be saved when the cruel Pharaoh ordered that all male children be destroyed; how Pharaoh's own daughter found him, saved his life and nurtured him; how afterwards he became the great leader of the Children of Israel; and how, when God wanted to reveal to his children his laws, he sent for Moses; and how, after Moses had fasted for forty days and nights on Mount Sinai, God gave him two tablets upon which were engraved this most priceless message for the guidance of human beings.

So firm is the conviction of those who accept the Ten Commandments as God's divine precepts, that they believe that all the ills and torments with which mankind is plagued are caused by not practising the tenets of the Decalogue as revealed by God to Moses.

It has been variously contended that the Ten Commandments are so all-embracing that in addition to containing God's rules for the guidance of the human family and its mission while on earth, they contain also the very foundations upon which are based our laws and governments, and without which civilization could not exist!

It is also contended that if the Ten Commandments were universally accepted, all strife, discord, hatred, prejudice, misunderstanding and injustice would vanish from the earth. There would be no more deception, dishonesty or deceit. With the Ten Commandments as our

guide, the human race would live together as one perfect and harmonious family.

Throughout the history of the race we find that many things have been implicitly believed in by the great mass of people, but rarely has anything equaled the absolute faith accorded the Ten Commandments.

To show to what extent this belief may go, I need but mention that in January, 1938, United States Federal Judge John C. Knox, whose jurisdiction comprises the great City of New York, stated in a public address that the laws of this Republic were founded upon the Ten Commandments!

Alfred E. Smith, when Governor of the State of New York, stated that this government was founded upon the "Commandments of God."

The late George W. Wickersham, noted attorney and Chairman of the National Commission on Law Observance and Law Enforcement, organized to help solve problems affecting law and the social fabric, asked in an interview (after admitting that the present age no longer accepts the Biblical view of a God who punishes according to his favor or disfavor): "Has there ever been a better code of morals formulated for the government of men than those which Moses delivered on the tablets of stone to the Children of Israel? . . ." When his final report was made public, it is significant that Mr. Wickersham made no mention of the use of the Ten Commandments!

That the Catholic Church still holds the Ten Commandments to be a vital part of its dogma is emphasized in an authoritative statement by the Rev. Charles E. Gurley, which is quoted in part:

"You often hear it said, generally by way of criticism, that the Church isn't very modern or up-to-date. Perhaps this is true. But what of it?

"If it is old-fashioned to respect the Ten Commandments and insist upon their observance today, then the Catholic Church certainly is old-fashioned. If belief in the Decalogue is a sign of decrepitude and decay, something to be associated only with ages that have passed, then the Catholic Church is an outmoded institution. For the Church still clings to God's law and continues to enforce it. . . .

“The Ten Commandments given to the people in grand, awful solemnity upon Mount Sinai comprise all the duties and natural rights of man. . . .

“Although the Ten Commandments were given at first only to the people of Israel, yet it would be absurd to imagine that they were not also imposed upon us. For Christians as well as for Israelites this holy law was written, our divine Saviour repeatedly telling us that He came not to abolish the law but to fulfill and perfect it. Moreover, He expressly bids us to obey His commands. His words are, ‘If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.’ Far from revoking these divine commandments, Our Lord gave them a new force and a new authority. We can attain heaven, He declares, only by walking in the way of these commandments.”¹

Martin Luther put it very frankly when he said:

“Thus we have in the Ten Commandments a summary of divine instructions, telling us what we have to do to make our whole life pleasing to God, and showing us the true source and fountain from and in which all good works must spring and proceed; so that no work or anything can be good and pleasing to God, however great and costly in the eyes of the world, unless it is in keeping with the Ten Commandments.”²

In an editorial in the *White Plains* (N. Y.) *Reporter*, this statement is made:

“No man in more than two thousand years has been able to improve upon the Ten Commandments as the rule of life. To no other origin than to Divine Revelation can they be ascribed. Man constantly improves upon his own handiwork. There never will be a need for an Eleventh Commandment. The Ten contain all there is to guide human conduct in the proper channels.”³

This is only another instance of how an apparently educated man can make statements without the slightest foundation in fact when he

¹ *The Tablet*, Dec. 9, 1939. (*The Tablet* is maintained by, and in the interest of, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn, New York.)

² C. H. Moehlman, D.D., *The Christian-Jewish Tragedy*, p. 108.

³ *White Plains* (N. Y.) *Reporter*, Sept. 19, 1929.

accepts religious doctrines on faith. If his conclusions were true, how would this learned gentleman account for the ever-increasing number of "Ten Commandments" that are continually being promulgated by business men, educators, social workers, editors, judges, wives, husbands, sweethearts, lawyers, doctors and even ministers? They are proof of the inadequacy of the Ten Commandments to meet all problems of life. The following are examples of what constantly appears in the public press: "The Ten Commandments of Natural Education," issued by the Parents' Association; "The Ten Commandments of Love," by Helen Rowland, noted newspaper writer; "The Ten Commandments on How to Be Happy and Married," by Miss Dorothy LaVerne Backer, of East Orange, New Jersey, on the announcement of her engagement.

Even Judge Sabath, of the Chicago Superior Court, who at the time of his statement had handled more than 24,000 divorce cases, issued a set of Ten Commandments for happy marriages. Judge Joseph Burke, of the Court of Domestic Relations of Chicago, Illinois, who handles more than 35,000 marital complaints each year, issued a list of 'Ten Commandments for both husbands and wives. Certainly the experience of these two judges must indicate that the Ten Commandments of Moses were not sufficient to accomplish the desired result in the marital state, and an Eleventh Commandment on this particular phase of life would certainly not be superfluous.

Mussolini issued Ten Commandments for his Fascist supporters.

The Nazis prepared "Ten Commandments for the German Soldier."

Joseph Stalin issued Ten Commandments for the Bolsheviks.

Llewellyn Legge, Chief Game Protector of the New York State Conservation Department, issued what he terms "The Ten Commandments for the guidance of those who go into the woods to hunt."

Norman Daly, a magazine writer, issued a set of Ten Commandments for girls engaged to be married.

Miss Minnie Obermeier, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, New York City, gave a new set of "Ten Commandments for Mothers."

Mrs. Herbert Lehman, wife of the former Governor of the State of New York, issued the "Ten Commandments of Democracy."

The Rev. Christian F. Reisner issued a special set of "Ten Commandments for Successful Wives."

Lieutenant E. F. John, U.S.M.C., issued a set of "Ten Commandments for the Police."

"I. P.," a cook, issued through Gretta Palmer a set of "Ten Commandments to the Housewife Who Has Servants."

The National Better Business Bureau issued a set of "Ten Commandments Designed to Hold Customer Good Will."

The Rev. William L. Stidger, of the Linwood Methodist Church, Kansas City, Missouri, issued a new Decalogue for Modern Youth.

Dr. Shirley W. Wynne, when Health Commissioner of New York City, issued a set of "Ten Commandments for Wintertime Health."

Hollywood, the great moving-picture colony, not to be outdone, also issued a Decalogue.

Otto H. Kahn, the banker, gave the students of Princeton University a set of Ten Commandments to guide them in their banking careers.

The Federal Bureau of Education at Washington issued "Ten Commandments for the American School Teacher."

Rabbi Jerome M. Lawn, of Beth Israel Temple, New York City, offered a set of Ten Commandments for a successful marriage.

The American Medical Association advised the physicians of the country to "Give your patients the Ten Commandments of Good Posture."

The men of the White Methodist Church of Chicopee, Massachusetts, issued Ten Commandments for their wives. And the following week the wives of that church issued a similar Decalogue for their husbands.

The Department of Health, of Clarke County, Georgia, issued "Ten Commandments of Health."

Rabbi Israel Goldstein, of the Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, New York City, in his Rosh Ha-Shanah sermon, issued Ten Commandments

for "The American Jew," which would certainly indicate an inadequacy in the original Decalogue. He also issued a new "1942 edition" of the Ten Commandments.

The Northern Illinois *Methodist Clergyman* issued a Decalogue for the Methodist Episcopal ministers, one commandment of which prohibited stealing sermons from colleagues.

Mr. Kenneth Wishart, of Aberdeen, Mississippi, formulated a set of Ten Commandments concerning the cow.

The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America issued a set of "Ten Commandments for Social Justice."

Preaching in the Episcopal Church of the Heavenly Rest, New York City, the Rev. Dr. Henry Darlington suggested "Ten Commandments for the New Year."

Frau Ida Bock, an Austrian writer, alarmed at the constantly increasing number of divorces in her country, issued "Ten Commandments for Husbands."

The Rev. David Rhys Williams, seeking to interpret the advance of the day, issued what he called the "Decalogue of Science."

Then there are the famous "Sailors' Ten Commandments."

Albert Payson Terhune, the celebrated writer and lover of dogs, issued on behalf of the canine family a set of "Ten Commandments for My Master."

Miss Anna Green, bitter, disillusioned, disconsolate, issued Ten Commandments for other young girls so they would avoid the mistakes that she had made in the realm of love.

Last but not least, an editorial in the *White Plains* (N. Y.) *Reporter*, but three months later, almost to the day, since the appearance of the editorial previously mentioned, states:

"Were Moses to come down from the Mount today with the Commandments beneath his arm, in all likelihood there would be another tablet, and on it would be inscribed: 'Thou Shalt Be Tolerant!'"

justifying, though a contradiction, the statement that "there never will be a need for an Eleventh Commandment."

Literally thousands of such sets of Ten Commandments are formulated every year for the guidance of people, from that of the Ten Commandments of advertising to a Decalogue on the feeding of pigs.

An appeal to the Ten Commandments is always impressive and effective. When in doubt about a subject, reference to the Ten Commandments will always command attention. But if you should ask those who proposed following the Ten Commandments to repeat them, hardly one in ten thousand could do so correctly.

Even Rudyard Kipling implies, in his celebrated poem "Mandalay"—

"Ship me somewheres east of Suez
Where the best is like the worst,
Where there ain't no Ten Commandments,
And a man can raise a thirst"—

that without the Ten Commandments no civilization could exist, that there would be no restraint on primitive impulses, and lust, drunkenness and debauchery would be rampant. If "there ain't no Ten Commandments," Kipling would have you believe that man would trample his weaker brother underfoot, rob him of his rights and privileges, and commit acts of injustice without compunction or consideration.

Or as Ingersoll would say, they would have us believe, "that, had it not been for the Ten Commandments, larceny and murder might have been virtues." ⁴

Like the others, Kipling is lamentably wrong, because leading anthropologists have found that primitive people are inherently good. In writing of the social status of the tribe of Veddahs, which happens to be "east of Suez," Professor Hobhouse says:

"The Veddahs consist of a mere handful of scattered families, living sometimes in trees, in the rainy season often in caves; though they are capable of making primitive huts. They are hunters, and each Veddah, *with his wife and family*, keeps his hunting ground for the most part scrupulously to himself. These very primitive folk *are strictly monogamous*, and have the saying that nothing but

⁴ Ingersoll, Vol. 12, p. 61.

death parts husband and wife. Infidelity among them is in fact rare, and is generally avenged upon the paramour by assassination at the hands of the husband. Though the husband is master in his own cave, his wife is well treated, and is in no sense a slave. The Veddahs are credited with affection for their children, and with attachments to their parents after they have grown up.”⁵

Dr. Charles Hose, in a general reference to a long series of investigations of primitive tribes “east of Suez” and other parts of the world, finds them

“peaceful, happy, good-natured, faithful and kind to their wives, and indulgent and considerate to their children; they have a natural sense of right and justice, are truthful and honest. Having no property, they are free from the temptation of greed and envy. Being on terms of equality with their fellows, causes of jealousy are rare. But they are quick and able to resent injury or injustice. . . . *They think it perfectly inconceivable that any person should ever take what does not belong to him, strike his fellow, or say anything that is untrue.*”⁶

Paul L. Hoefler, leader of the Colorado African Expedition, who returned to the United States after making a painstaking investigation of the social customs of a pygmy tribe in the Belgian Congo, writes that “a man’s family is his only source of boasting and pride, and these little men and women of the forest marry only for love”!⁷ He observes another significant condition when he says:

“When a young man loves a girl and she loves him, they ask the father for permission to marry. If he consents they go to the chief, who must also give consent. He then makes them man and wife by giving one to the other, but only after a long talk on the duties of a married couple. They now live together for a while and, if both are satisfied, report to the chief, who seals the bonds by some mystic rite. The couple must now live together as long as life lasts. There is no polygamy among them, and I was told by

⁵ G. Elliot Smith, *Human Nature*, p. 14.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁷ *New York Times*, Oct. 6, 1929.

the chief that his people were very moral—that very few were untrue to their mates. If infidelity occurs, the chief may sever the bonds and release the innocent party, in which event the culprit meets an untimely end, unless he is quick enough to fade into the jungle and keep hidden away from the clan.”⁸

Mr. Hoefler’s conclusion is summed up in these words: “I wonder if all the thousands of intervening years have brought the measure of happiness to some of us that these little people enjoy. And there is no evidence to prove that they ever received a revelation from God as to how they should conduct themselves.”⁹

Dr. Robert H. Lowie, Professor of Anthropology, University of California, records his observation of the Plains Indians. In his introduction, he states:

“The so-called savage tribes of the world are not like un-disciplined hordes of apes. They do not live only to gratify their animal instincts. On the contrary, *all their behavior is regulated by strict standards*. The aborigines of Australia are among the simplest people on record, but neither in hunger nor in love do they act like the wild beast of the forest.”¹⁰

He was forcibly impressed by the code of morality and ethical conduct that existed among these Plains Indians of North America, observing:

“These rules of conduct surely make Indian family relations different from ours. But odd as they appear to us, they show refinement rather than brutality. They prove that social intercourse was not left to instinct, but was strictly regulated by social norms. The Plains Indian was a stickler for the proprieties as he understood them. Neither as a lover nor a spouse nor as a parent was he anything like the savage of popular fancy, but rather a human being like ourselves who happened to work out somewhat different standards of behavior while displaying much the same sort of human sentiments.”¹¹

⁸ *New York Times*, Oct. 6, 1929

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Scientific Monthly*, May, 1932, p. 462.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 464.

This is attested to by the noted anthropologist, G. Elliott Smith. After an exhaustive study, he concludes: "The evidence that is now accessible for study establishes the fact that man is by nature a kindly and considerate creature, with an instinctive tendency to monogamy and the formation of a happy family group bound together by mutual affection and consideration. This is the basis of all social organization. The old theories of primitive promiscuity and lack of all sexual restraint are now shown to be devoid of any foundation, and to be the very reverse of truth."¹²

The charge that primitive peoples that know nothing about the "glad tidings of great joy" and never heard of the Ten Commandments are sexually promiscuous and completely without a workable social organization, has now been proved to be without the slightest foundation.

Man's conduct in society is self-regulatory. He soon learns that the rights that he wants for himself must of necessity be granted to his neighbor. If a man steals from his neighbor, his neighbor will steal from him. If a man indiscriminately kills, his own life will not be safe. His sexual life is governed by the same rule. Laws for human conduct arose as a protection. Not only would Kipling have been disappointed not to find unrestricted license among primitive and untutored tribes, but he would have had to go much further than "east of Suez" to find that laxity of human conduct that he implies exists "where there ain't no Ten Commandments."

Miss May Mott-Smith, writer and artist, announced that after being "exposed to the perils of New York," she was going back to the safety of Africa, "where there ain't no Ten Commandments" and "white gorillas' roam the streets."

"Armed with nothing but a camera," she said, "I lived for eighteen months among a score of African tribes. Neither insult nor assault was ever offered me. Since I have been here, synthetic gin has corroded my stomach. The only thing that savagery cannot give me is good dentistry. In fact, only an uneasy tooth

¹² Smith, *Human Nature*, p. 41.

brought me back to New York this time. Now that the molar has been repaired, I'm off for the peace and beauty of the jungle for another two or three years."¹³

In his study of the social life of animals, Ernest Thompson Seton found that "one is hampered by the fact that association with man has always been ruinous to the morals of animals."¹⁴ He states that the morality of the animal squares most favorably with that of the human, and he finds that "there is a deep-rooted feeling against murder in most animals"; that filial devotion "is purely instinctive—which means that the law of obedience has been a long, long time in successful operation." He observes that "promiscuity was doubtless the mode when sex first appeared in the animal world," but that now "monogamy is their best solution of the marriage question, and is the rule among all the highest and most successful animals." Again and again he gives illustrations of strictly monogamous animals that have been forced against their will into promiscuous sexual relations by man to satisfy his vanity in using the animals' fur. And yet, so strong is the high moral sentiment of some animals that they will not violate their standard even under brutal treatment. He finds that animals have a sense of property rights and often protect their neighbors' belongings from marauders. "All the highest animals profit by each other's knowledge through intercommunications. Falsification would certainly work dire disaster," says this student of animal life regarding lying among the animals.

In addition to the important fact that animals observed high ethical rules of conduct without the aid of an animal Moses, Mr. Seton's most significant discovery was that he "could find nothing in the animal world that seemed to suggest any relation to a Supreme Being"! The fact that without "divine assistance" animals have attained the high level of moral behavior that man with his "divine" blessings and guidance is struggling to achieve, suggests the serious question as to whether man would not be better off without God's help!

¹³ *New York Telegraph*, May 20, 1930.

¹⁴ Ernest Thompson Seton, *The Ten Commandments of the Animal World*, p. 25.

Prince Peter Kropotkin, noted scientist in the realm of animal life, amassed an abundance of evidence to prove the prehuman origin of morals. He found not only a high moral sense in all types of animals, but that "life in societies is no exception in the animal world; it is the rule, the law of Nature."¹⁵

He speaks of "the high development of parental love in all classes of animals, even with lions and tigers," and that among the carnivorous beasts there is one general rule: *they never kill one another*.¹⁶ He states that "compassion is the necessary outcome of social life . . . it is the first step towards the development of higher moral sentiments." Kropotkin particularly stressed the high sense of sociability, common action, mutual assistance and protection among all species of apes and monkeys. His conclusion, based on his exhaustive studies, is as follows:

"It is evident that life in societies would be utterly impossible without a corresponding development of social feelings, and especially of a certain collective sense of justice growing to become a habit. If every individual were constantly abusing its personal advantages without the others interfering in favor of the wronged, no society life would be possible."¹⁷

Charles Darwin stated that "besides love and sympathy, animals exhibit other qualities connected with social instincts which in us would be called morals,"¹⁸ and that "man and the lower animals do not differ in kind, but degree."¹⁹

Some years ago agitation was started to have the Ten Commandments read in the public schools of New York City. The writer was present at a hearing held before the Board of Education of that city, and opposed the measure on the ground that the Ten Commandments were a *religious* rather than a *moral* code, and as such had no place in

¹⁵ Prince Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid*, p. 46.

¹⁶ *Idem.*, *Ethics*, p. 52.

¹⁷ *Idem.*, *Mutual Aid*, D. 51.

¹⁸ Charles Darwin, *Descent of Man*, p. 104.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

a public educational institution. Some other opponents of the measure sought to prove their contention by reading the Ten Commandments and commenting on each one separately to show its religious character. This was stopped on the ground that the procedure was not only irrelevant to the issue but was likely to cause dissension! Why? This action provoked Heywood Broun, noted columnist of his time, to comment:

“A group of adult educators was not able to hear the Ten Commandments through without rowing, and so it seems that there is reason to withhold the Decalogue from the public-school curriculum. Apparently the advocates of the plan were surprised at the opposition developed, for they proceeded on the assumption that practically all the varying religious groups could unite on this particular code of ethics. These optimists overlooked the fact that the selfsame words may mean several things, not always similar, to several persons.”²⁰

Professor Harry A. Overstreet, formerly head of the Department of Philosophy of the College of the City of New York, admonished a congregation of ministers meeting in the city of Chicago not to “teach little children the Ten Commandments. . . . Children are too young to understand.”²¹

The confusion and dissension aroused by reading the Decalogue recall to my mind the story I heard some time ago about an English scientist who was traveling through Africa. He came upon a native eating figs. Examining the figs with his magnifying glass, the scientist observed that they were swarming with maggots. He told the native of the danger of disease that would result from eating the decayed fruit. The native stopped for a moment, listened to the scientist, looked at the figs, but saw nothing to warrant his not eating them. The scientist then took his magnifying glass and held it before the eyes of the native. The latter, ignorant of the nature of the magnifying device, and of the virulence of the disease caused by the decayed

²⁰ *New York World*, Jan. 27, 1926.

²¹ *New York Journal*, Jan. 30, 1929.

figs, broke the glass, thinking that by doing so he would also destroy the germs—and continued to eat the figs. He died in agony shortly afterwards.

By the same token, I am led to ask: Do the people want the truth about the Ten Commandments? Do they want them analyzed? Do they want to see them under the magnifying glass of investigation? Or are some people like the native of Africa who believed that by destroying the instrument which revealed the maggots on the figs he would, at the same time, destroy the germs? Are some people like the proverbial ostrich who thinks that when he puts his head into the sand, the storm has passed?

At one time, most people were like that. Any new idea, any new proposal, was met with determined opposition. Anyone who dared question conventional beliefs was stoned or otherwise put to death. One need but recite the long list of martyrs to understand the brutal ignorance and stupidity of the great mass of people who were unable to comprehend things that were to their own advantage, and who fought to retain those that were inimical to their welfare.

It is one of the strangest inconsistencies of the human being that he will invent reasons and struggle to maintain conditions that are detrimental to his own welfare, aye, that even enslave him.

I, for one, do not believe that the Ten Commandments are too sacred to be investigated and analyzed, despite the fact that there are some who believe that if all else in the Bible were rejected, the Decalogue would be sufficient to convince them of the Bible's divine authorship. Neither do I believe that the Ten Commandments should be blindly accepted, despite the fact that there are some who maintain that they were written by the finger of God on tablets of stone and handed to Moses for the guidance of the human race. I do not accept these premises of the sacredness of the Decalogue, premises which would automatically preclude challenging both their divine origin and their moral and ethical value.

Once it was believed that the historical data in the Bible were infallible; that science, as biblically recorded, was absolute, and that

the morality of the Bible was most exemplary. Yet these beliefs have been exposed as without truth and without foundation.

Will the Ten Commandments, as an ethical and moral guide, when subjected to the same investigation and analysis as have the other portions of the Bible, meet the same fate? Will they likewise be found to be falsely labeled, their injunctions negative in value, and their influence distinctly and incontrovertibly harmful and detrimental to human conduct?

A picture of an angry God pointing his menacing finger and shouting "Thou Shalt Not" has been man's greatest stumbling block in his heroic endeavor to emancipate himself from the fear, ignorance, superstition and savagery of his primitive past.

INTRODUCTION

WHAT ARE THE COMMANDMENTS?

WERE one to turn to the Bible for the Commandments, he would find them difficult to discover. They are not written on the first page of the Bible. They are hidden among its many pages and obscured by a multitudinous number of texts. If the reader thinks that the "Ten Commandments" are as specific and as definite as the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution of the United States, he will be sadly disappointed. To find them is like looking for the proverbial needle in the haystack.

There is no table of contents in the Bible, nor is there an index to the Holy Scriptures to indicate where the Ten Commandments may be found.

Were acknowledged leaders of the various religions based upon the Bible asked where the Decalogue could be found, there would be much confusion and contradiction on their part. Some would say that the Ten Commandments are recorded in the 20th Chapter of the second book of the Five Books of Moses, called *Exodus*. Others would state that they are to be found in the 5th Chapter of the fifth book of the Five Books of Moses, called *Deuteronomy*; while others would maintain that Chapters 22 and 23 of the *Book of Exodus* contain the revealed words. And yet "covenants" as binding as the so-called Decalogue are found in Chapters 31, 32, 33 and 34 of the *Book of Exodus*.

In view of these facts, let us "search the Scriptures" ourselves and see what we find.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AS REVEALED IN THE BOOK OF EXODUS

Although we have been told that the Ten Commandments can be found in *Chapter 20* of the *Book of Exodus*, I think that the preceding chapter, describing the deliverance of the Commandments to Moses, should be quoted as it provides an introduction to this momentous event.

I quote *Chapter 19* of the *Book of Exodus*, the second book of the so-called Five Books of Moses: ¹

1 In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they *into* the wilderness of Sinai.

2 For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come *to* the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount.

3 And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;

4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how* I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine.

The significance of these statements to the Decalogue will be apparent when we come to the culminating event. "God's" flattery of the Children of Israel by boasting how he miraculously "bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself," while at the same time reminding them of "what I did unto the Egyptians," is not without a purpose. Because of subsequent events, we are deeply concerned with the promise as stated in the fifth verse quoted above, where God says: "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my

¹The quotations used in this book, unless otherwise stated, were taken from the authorized King James Version of the Bible, published by the American Bible Society.

covenant, then ye shall be a *peculiar* treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine.”

I now quote *Chapter 19, verses 6 to 9*:

6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

7 And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him.

8 And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord.

9 And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the Lord.

These preparations were essential to the magical performance that was to follow. There are certain forms of “sanctification” that so stultify the mind that imaginary events are as vivid and real as though they had actually occurred. The methods of “purification” generally consist of fasting, praying, repeating certain formulas, and sexual abstinence. This was undoubtedly the reason for these instructions as recorded in the above verses. Visions of having “seen” God are not unknown in such states of hallucination.

I quote *Chapter 19, verses 10 and 11*:

10 And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes,

11 And be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.

Here is a distinct promise. By preparing themselves according to the directions given by Moses, the children of Israel are to have the rare privilege of watching God “come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.” This consists of some form of ritual purification, mentally preparing the people in the manner of the priests and magicians which was so prevalent in primitive tribal life.

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I quote *Chapter 19, verses 12 and 13*:

12 And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, *that ye go not* up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death:

13 There shall not a hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether *it be* beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.

What great mystery was concealed on the mountain that made death the penalty for anyone even to “touch the border of it”? Why the necessity for so much mystery when such an important event was to take place—except as a precaution to avoid exposure? All acts associated with the event should have been open and aboveboard. They should have been performed in the simplest manner so that all might understand their meaning. This *one* particular event should have been entirely devoid of confusion or deception.

Mystery about the ceremonies was deliberately created, however, and fear was the instrument used to paralyze the mind in order to make it more receptive. This accounts for the taboo with the death penalty for violation. For so simple an infraction as touching the border with a hand, the culprit was to be “stoned” or “shot through.” No living thing must violate this sacred performance, and so beasts were included in the taboo. On too many occasions, especially in matters concerning purported conversations and messages from gods, mystery has been employed by charlatans to hoodwink the people.

I quote *Chapter 19, verses 14 and 15*:

14 And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes.

15 And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at *your* wives.

What the other acts of self-mortification were that Moses demanded of the Children of Israel in order that they might “sanctify” themselves, we do not know; but that sexual abstinence was one of

them is stated in the verse quoted above: "Be ready against the third day; come not at your wives." It is also not clear why it was necessary for them to "wash their clothes." But this is certain: the three days of preparation necessary for "sanctification," during which urgent physical functions were to be restrained for the purpose of preparing a proper receptive mentality, coupled with the strain of three days of anticipation, had their desired effect in confusing the senses and making the mind more susceptible to the mystical impressions being prepared for it. This method is almost universally practised when "communion with God" is sought by the "inner self." It varies with different types of people, but the ultimate results are the same. Some eat herbs and roots and some drink intoxicating beverages to produce the mental exhilaration that results in visions and hallucinations. This form of ritual was practised by nearly all primitive tribes and persists even today. Many of the current religions could not exist were it not for the mental intoxication that certain rituals produce to disarm the mind from detecting the delusion. The early Hebrews had their own methods of self-inducing feelings of grandeur and power, particularly as to their connection and association with their Deity. They were like the Negroes of the Niger, who have their "fetish water," the Creek Indians of Florida, who have their "black drink," the Mexicans, who have their "peyotl," the Samoyeds of Siberia, who use a poisonous toadstool, certain natives of the United States who smoke "stramonium"—all of which are used to bring about a feeling of direct communication with divine power and to produce ecstatic visions.²

Among the Kiowa Indians of Mexico, "mescal" is eaten as food for the "soul." Its psychic manifestations are considered "as supernatural grace bringing men in relation with the gods."³ In Greece some form of intoxication was used in the celebrations of the established cults. The Pythia of Delphi, after a three-day fast, chewed laurel leaves until she was intoxicated, thus producing a state of ecstasy. The worship of Tracain Dionysus was celebrated in the dead

² James H. Leuba, *Psychology of Religious Mysticism*, pp. 2, 3.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

of night mid the weirdest of sounds, frenzied shouting and sighing, which produced a state of "holy madness."⁴

Professor William James's investigation of this phase of mysticism is very pertinent here. He observes: "Nitrous oxide [and it might be other substances], when sufficiently diluted with air, stimulates the mystical consciousness in an extraordinary degree. Depth beyond depth of truth seems revealed to the inhaler. This truth fades out, however, or escapes, at the moment of coming to; and if any words remain over in which it seemed to clothe itself, they prove to be the veriest nonsense. Nevertheless, the sense of a profound meaning having been there persists; I know of more than one person who is persuaded that in a nitrous-oxide trance we have a genuine metaphysical revelation."⁵ The relationship of the above to the events as biblically recorded is obvious as I continue quoting, *Chapter 19, verses 16 to 19*:

16 And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that *was* in the camp trembled.

17 And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount.

18 And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

19 And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.

These verses offer additional evidence that the restrictions and taboos imposed upon the people were to bewilder them. When mystery is purposely introduced into any event, it is more than likely used for the specific purpose of concealing a fraud. And *that* in substance was the purpose of this ceremony.

⁴ Leuba, *Psychology of Religious Mysticism*, p. 11.

⁵ William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 387.

I continue with *Chapter 19, verses 20 and 21:*

20 And the Lord came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the Lord called Moses *up* to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.

21 And the Lord said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish.

The eagerness of the Children of Israel to see their God was natural. Thousands would have been ready to pass through the valley of the shadow of death for such a privilege.

I quote *Chapter 19, verse 22:*

22 And let the priests also, which come near to the Lord, sanctify themselves, lest the Lord break forth upon them.

It is quite obvious that their "vision" of God was an hallucination which followed their "sanctification." There is a certain form of religious ecstasy that creates from the imagination mystical figures that appear real, having been impressed upon the mind by autosuggestion. This is undoubtedly the vision of God that the Children of Israel saw and heard. When in this state of complete self-hypnosis, every mental picture suggested is vividly reflected in the devotee's mind, as he imagines that scene and event to be. Many are hypnotized into a "state of ecstasy" by genuflecting, kneeling or making the sign of the cross. There are some awe-inspiring objects that make overemotional people "feel" that they are in the "presence of God." Was Mount Sinai such an object? Some stand before the wide ocean and claim that they feel "God's" presence; others have a similar experience when viewing the starry heavens or the vast forests, before altars in churches, and during religious revivals.

I quote *Chapter 19, verses 23 to 25:*

23 And Moses said unto the Lord, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it.

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24 And the Lord said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the Lord, lest he break forth upon them.

25 So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them.

There seems to have been a perfect observance of the rules laid down by Moses, for it does not appear that the Lord visited his vengeance upon any of the people or broke forth upon them. And now the supremely important event is to take place: The Ten Commandments are to be issued!

I quote *Chapter 20, verses 1 to 17*:

1 And God spake all these words, saying,

2 I *am* the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness *of any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth:

5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me;

6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

7 Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

10 But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the Lord thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates:

11 For *in* six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

13 Thou shalt not kill.

14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

15 Thou shalt not steal.

16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.

I count in the above quotation seventeen separate and distinct verses, with at least thirteen separate and distinct "commands." That these seventeen verses and thirteen separate and distinct commands have since been condensed into what are known as the "Ten Commandments" is something that will require analysis, for we shall find that not all the religions which accept these Commandments arranged them alike. Some religious systems fail to include certain provisions that are not in harmony with their ritual, while others number them differently.

And then again, why particularly ten? Why not a different number or an odd number? Why not only One Commandment incorporating all the rules promulgated by the Bible Deity?

Anthropologists tell us that the explanation is simple. They tell us that our fingers are the basis of our arithmetical table, and for that reason we count and measure in units of ten.

Our criticism of the method employed in imparting these Commandments, or of the use of so many when a lesser number might have been sufficient, is not exactly the point which prompts this study. The important matter under consideration is that we are told that there is a set of Ten Commandments in the Bible, and that they were handed down by the God of the universe for the peoples of the earth to follow as essential to their happiness and salvation.

There is, however, no justification for calling these *the* Ten Commandments. There are nine additional verses to the chapter that could

very properly be included and are just as vital as the "Commandments" now condensed into the Decalogue.

For the sake of continuity and for a better understanding of the complete text, I quote the remaining part of *Chapter 20*, which is *verse 18*:

18 And all the people saw the thunders, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw *it*, they removed, and stood afar off.

Without the trappings and distractions of the early priest-magicians, Moses could not have successfully perpetrated his illusions. Thunder and lightning in the days of the Biblical Hebrews was still something to fear, and the priests knew full well its terrifying effect. Psychologists today understand that certain rituals were perfected to distract and numb the senses while the religious ceremonies were being performed. Modern spiritualists hold séances in dark rooms, thereby depriving the participants of their sense of sight where sight would prove disastrous to this particular form of deception. Others resort to swinging lights as a medium of hypnosis; congregation singing and response in churches have their use in accomplishing the proper mental receptiveness by the process of sense deception.

The weird sounds of the trumpet have been used by the medicine men of primitive societies for deceptive purposes. Its fear-inducing effects are staggering, especially to ignorant, superstitious people amid surroundings as awesome as Mount Sinai was supposed to have been.

I quote *Chapter 20*, *verse 19*:

19 And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

The consternation of the Israelites is evident from their pleading with Moses that only he should speak to them. The angry acts of God certainly gave them no assurance that they were not in danger. God had commanded them not to touch or come near Mount Sinai until they had heard the trumpet. Now that the trumpet had sounded

and they approached for the message as well as for the sight of God, there appeared "thunderings and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking."

I quote *Chapter 20, verse 20*:

20 And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.

Once under the spell of the magician-priest, it is his pet phrase to comfort his devotees with the words, "fear not." This is done to counteract the effect of the excitement that might get beyond control, cause mental derangement, and produce unrestrained violence.

I quote *Chapter 20, verses 21 to 24*:

21 And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.

22 And the Lord said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven.

23 Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold.

24 An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.

If an altar of earth had to be made and certain sacrifices performed, why did not God incorporate these instructions in the Commandments? Why was it necessary to make "burnt offerings and peace offerings"? Sheep and oxen in those days were the standards by which people measured their wealth. And what peculiar sort of God was it who would record his name in the different parts of the country where there were owners of sheep and oxen? The whole performance looks suspicious. It seems like a trick by which the people are induced to "sacrifice" their possessions to the priests of the "Lord."

The evidence from the above narrative is sufficient to prove that this ceremony took place in the days of the most primitive tribal life and among the most superstitious kind of people. The element of blood sacrifice stands out prominently as part of the ritual, and we can determine the age of a religion just as effectively by its ritual as we can determine the age of the earth by its geological formation.

I quote *Chapter 20, verses 25 and 26*:

25 And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.

26 Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.

Of all the important things in life that God could impart to man on this only occasion in which he made a pilgrimage to earth, what precious knowledge did he reveal? Let me repeat—it is so worthy of reiteration: “And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.”

There is significant meaning in the words of *verse 26*, as it was once universally part of the ritual taboo associated with “holy” altars. That this entire narrative is but part of the scheme to make plausible the ability of a priest-magician to commune with God is evident. Such performances took place in all tribes similar to the early Hebrews. In those days the priest-magician “talked with God” with more than casual familiarity. Someone had to possess that ability, for the primitive mind could not conceive that life could go on without the personal direction of a deity. It was through the mediumship of the priests that the god selected his “chosen people” for special favors and blessings, and protected them against the forces of evil.

That none shalt go up “by steps unto mine altar” lest “thy nakedness be discovered” only strengthens the delusion and is a threat to inspire fear—the basic principle of all religious beliefs.

This, however, shall not deter us from a further search for the Commandments as revealed in the *Book of Deuteronomy*.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AS REVEALED IN THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

It is not for me to determine why one version of the Ten Commandments should be found in the Book of Exodus and another in the Book of Deuteronomy. If, as is contended, Moses was the author of both books, then these precepts, if they were divinely spoken, should be as infallibly identical as two perfect reflections of the same thing. Let us see.

I quote the fifth of the Five Books of Moses, called *Deuteronomy, Chapter 5, verses 1 to 5*:

1 And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep and do them.

2 The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.

3 The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, *even* us, who *are* all of us here alive this day.

4 The Lord talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire,

5 (I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to shew you the word of the Lord: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount.)

I know that it is somewhat bold to contradict so great a lawgiver as Moses or to doubt the veracity of one who has seen God "face to face." Nevertheless I must challenge a statement recorded in *verse 4*, where the narrator says that the Lord did talk face to face with the people. Our first version said that if anyone approached the mount he would surely die. However, *verse 5*, immediately following, indicates that the writer of this version of the Ten Commandments was well aware of this contradiction.

This contradiction is not to be lightly dismissed, in view of the supposed seriousness of the event. *If* the event took place, then all descriptions of what occurred should be as definite as any law of

nature. This disparity and contradiction cause several doubts to be raised—first, as to the accuracy of the events, and second, as to the validity of the narrative.

These are the Ten Commandments as recorded in the *5th Chapter* of the fifth of the Five Books of Moses, called *Deuteronomy*:

6 I *am* the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

7 Thou shalt have none other gods before me.

8 Thou shalt not make thee *any* graven image, *or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth:*

9 Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me,

10 And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

11 Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold *him* guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

12 Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee.

13 Six days thou shalt labor, and do all thy work:

14 But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the Lord thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou.

15 And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and *that* the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.

16 Honor thy father and thy mother, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may

go well with thee, in the land which the
Lord thy God giveth thee.

17 Thou shalt not kill.

18 Neither shalt thou commit adultery.

19 Neither shalt thou steal.

20 Neither shalt thou bear false witness
against thy neighbor.

21 Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbor's
wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbor's
house, his field, or his manservant, or his
maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any *thing*
that *is* thy neighbor's.

I find that there are in this narrative sixteen separate and distinct verses with at least thirteen separate and distinct "commands." Why they have been condensed into "ten" deserves some explanation. Nothing in the narrative justifies this arrangement. Who is responsible for the condensation of these so-called precepts of God?

Professor Andrew C. Zenos, Dean and Professor of Biblical Theology at McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, supports this contention in his analysis of the Decalogue when he says:

"The arrangement of the moral precepts in the form of ten commandments was neither demanded by the nature of the subject nor suggested by logical or philosophical considerations. It is the result of deference to the popular regard and conventional value of the number ten, recognized at the time."⁶

However, in the condensation and rearrangement of these Commandments we shall find, as we did in those recorded in the *Book of Exodus*, that not all the religions which accept these Commandments as a divine revelation arrange them alike. Some are placed in different positions and some are entirely omitted because they are not in harmony with the ritual of a particular creed.

The variations existing between the two sets of Commandments require serious consideration, especially in view of the statement of Moses that these were delivered to the Children of Israel who were present at the time and were still living. *Verses 3* distinctly states,

⁶ *New Standard Bible Dictionary*, p. 174.

“The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, *even* us, who *are* all of us here alive this day.”

But today we are told by Biblical authorities that these separate sets of Commandments “exhibit some variants.”⁷ And so we proceed to find what these “variants” are, and why.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TEN COMMANDMENTS RECORDED IN THE BOOK OF EXODUS AND THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

Some readers might consider that the “variants” which differentiate the wording of the Commandments in the *Exodus* and *Deuteronomy* versions are too inconsequential to be taken up in a separate section. This would be a valid criticism if these variations occurred only in the different versions of the Bible. But since they appear in the same volume, they are serious differences and highly significant as to the utter unreliability of the Biblical narrative concerning the Ten Commandments.⁸

EXODUS

*First Commandment, Chapter 20,
Verse 2*

2 I *am* the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

DEUTERONOMY

*First Commandment, Chapter 5,
Verse 6*

6 I *am* the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

Already there is a noticeable difference between these two sets of Commandments. In the *Exodus* version, the word “have” is used, but it is not present in the *Deuteronomy* version. The last phrase in *Exodus* reads, “out of the house of bondage,” and the *Deuteronomy* version uses “from the house of bondage.” This first Commandment does “exhibit some variants,” though slight.

⁷ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 4, p. 492.

⁸ These “variants” occur also in both the Hebrew and Douay Bibles.

EXODUS

*Second Commandment, Chapter 20,
Verses 3 to 6*

3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of *any thing* that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me;

6 And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

DEUTERONOMY

*Second Commandment, Chapter 5,
Verses 7 to 10*

7 Thou shalt have none other gods before me.

8 Thou shalt not make thee *any* graven image, or any likeness of *any thing* that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth:

9 Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me,

10 And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

Again the facsimile “exhibits some variants.” The *Exodus* version reads, “thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them,” while the *Deuteronomy* version states, “thou shalt not bow down thyself *unto them*, nor serve them”; also in the *Exodus* version we find these words: “or that is in the water under the earth,” in contrast to the *Deuteronomy* version, which says, “or that is in the waters *beneath* the earth.”

EXODUS

*Third Commandment, Chapter 20,
Verse 7*

7 Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

DEUTERONOMY

*Third Commandment, Chapter 5,
Verse 11*

11 Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold *him* guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

There is no difference between these two versions of the Third Commandment, with the exception of the italicized word *him* in the *Deuteronomy* version.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

EXODUS

*Fourth Commandment, Chapter 20,
Verses 8 to 11*

8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9 Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work:

10 But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the Lord thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates:

11 For *in* six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

DEUTERONOMY

*Fourth Commandment, Chapter 5,
Verses 12 to 15*

12 Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee.

13 Six days thou shalt labor, and do all thy work:

14 But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the Lord thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou.

15 And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and *that* the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.

In the Fourth Commandment as recorded in *Exodus*, ninety-four words were used to express this Commandment, but in *Deuteronomy* one hundred and thirty-three words were necessary to express it. However, the difference between the number of words is not so important as the difference in what they say. The reason given for observing the Sabbath as recorded in *Exodus* is "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day"; the reason given in *Deuteronomy* is "that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and *that* the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day."

Whether God commanded the Sabbath to be observed for the reason that he "rested" after laboring for six days, or because "thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt," is a matter far more serious than a mere "variant."

Verses 2 and 3 of the 2nd Chapter of Genesis, although supporting

the reason for the Sabbath as recorded in *Exodus*, are in direct contradiction to the reason stated in *Deuteronomy*. For additional evidence of conflict with the *Deuteronomy* version, consider these important quotations from *Exodus, Chapter 31, verses 12 to 17*:

12 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,
13 Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it *is* a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that *ye* may know that I *am* the Lord that doth sanctify you.

14 Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it *is* holy unto you. Every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth *any* work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

15 Six days may work be done; but in the seventh *is* the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth *any* work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death.

16 Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, *for* a perpetual covenant.

17 It *is* a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for *in* six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.

It is obvious from this quotation that the Sabbath was to be observed because the Lord rested on the seventh day, which contradicts the reason given for the Commandment as recorded in the very same source, the *Book of Exodus*. This raises the serious question as to whether or not the Sabbath is only as old as Moses or as old as creation—and what a “variant” that is! ⁹

One or the other must be condemned as false, and since it is impossible to determine which one, and since both stand in the same relation to each other, both should be rejected until substantiating evidence is found in support of one or the other version. Neither possesses internal evidence of being an “inspired” revelation.

⁹ The Sabbath as “a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever” will be further discussed in the analysis of the Fourth Commandment.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

EXODUS

*Fifth Commandment, Chapter 20,
Verse 12*

12 Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

DEUTERONOMY

*Fifth Commandment, Chapter 5,
Verse 16*

16 Honor thy father and thy mother, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

There are twenty-two words in the version of *Exodus* compared with thirty-eight words in *Deuteronomy*, and the latter contains an additional reason for honoring parents. Which is the correct and authentic declaration? Shall you honor your parents that "thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee," or that "thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee"?

EXODUS

*Sixth Commandment, Chapter 20,
Verse 13*

Thou shalt not kill.

DEUTERONOMY

*Sixth Commandment, Chapter 5,
Verse 17*

Thou shalt not kill.

The Sixth Commandment of only four words shows no variant.

EXODUS

*Seventh Commandment, Chapter 20,
Verse 14*

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

DEUTERONOMY

*Seventh Commandment, Chapter 5,
Verse 18*

Neither shalt thou commit adultery.

That there is a difference in wording in this Commandment is important, though there is no difference in meaning.

EXODUS

*Eighth Commandment, Chapter 20,
Verse 15*

Thou shalt not steal.

DEUTERONOMY

*Eighth Commandment, Chapter 5,
Verse 19*

Neither shalt thou steal.

The same difference prevails concerning this Commandment as the previous one.

EXODUS

*Ninth Commandment, Chapter 20,
Verse 16*

Thou shalt not bear false witness
against thy neighbor.

DEUTERONOMY

*Ninth Commandment, Chapter 5,
Verse 20*

Neither shalt thou bear false witness
against thy neighbor.

This difference is just as important a variation as in the previous Commandments.

EXODUS

*Tenth Commandment, Chapter 20,
Verse 17*

17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbor's.

DEUTERONOMY

*Tenth Commandment, Chapter 5,
Verse 21*

21 Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbor's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbor's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any *thing* that *is* thy neighbor's.

The above Commandment has the same differences as the three previously quoted with one additional "variant" and a very important and significant transposition. In *Exodus* the first line of the Commandment reads, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house," while in *Deuteronomy* the first line reads, "Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbor's wife." According to the best Biblical scholars, this indicates that the *Deuteronomy* version was written in a later period of culture than the *Exodus* version, because property in early Biblical days was considered of greater value than a wife. In this text the word "field" is also specified, whereas it is omitted in *Exodus*.¹⁰

In the face of these "variants" and the obvious conclusion that one or the other must be wrong, which set is to be accepted and which one rejected? For no matter how small the "variant," it brands one or the other as not being "divinely inspired." The early rabbis, however, maintained that there could be no contradictions between the texts because they were both spoken simultaneously and miraculously by God.¹¹

¹⁰ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 4, pp. 492, 493.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

It is contended by some Biblical authorities that the italicized word in the Bible indicates the insertion of a missing word from the text of the manuscript from which it was translated. If this is true, then the conclusion is inevitable that the Biblical text is not infallible or that there is no authority for the inserted italicized word.

THE CONFLICTING ARRANGEMENT OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AS REVEALED BY A COMPARISON OF THE PROTESTANT, CATHOLIC AND HEBREW VERSIONS ¹²

I have stated previously, and subsequent facts will prove, that not all the religions which accept these Commandments as the revealed words of God condense them in the same manner or interpret them the same way. They are arranged to suit the exigencies of the particular creed and to fit the ritual of the particular form of worship.

We are told by religious leaders that the Bible is the inspired word of God, and that man must not presume to pit his finite intelligence against it. Yet that is exactly what the religionists have done with so important a part of the Bible as the Ten Commandments—God's supposed words written with his own finger!

We are told that regardless of other differences that might exist among these three religions, they are in perfect accord on the Ten Commandments!

If there is any place where perfect accord should exist in Biblical matters among the sects, it should be in the Decalogue. If they do not agree about the only message that God is supposed to have delivered himself, how can we expect to find them in agreement on matters about which they admit there exists much doubt and speculation?

Although the Protestant, Catholic and Hebrew Bibles vary but slightly and then only textually, the listing to follow reveals a deliberate change made by those responsible for the arrangement of the Commandments.

¹² As based upon the *Exodus* version.

THE DECALOGUE AC-
CORDING TO THE
PROTESTANT
VERSION ¹³

First Commandment

Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

THE DECALOGUE AC-
CORDING TO THE
CATHOLIC
VERSION ¹⁴

First Commandment

I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not have strange Gods before *me*.

THE DECALOGUE AC-
CORDING TO THE
HEBREW
VERSION ¹⁵

First Commandment

I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

In the First Commandment, the reader will note that the words "I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage," is left out of the Protestant version completely, and partially from the Catholic. It forms the First Commandment according to the Hebrews.

In the Catholic and Protestant versions, the reference to being "brought out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage," was left out for very good and sufficient reasons! That part of the Commandment has absolutely nothing whatever to do with Protestants or Catholics. When the Commandments were written, *they* were not in existence. *They* were never in Egypt, and the Lord had no occasion to free *them* from the yoke of bondage; by this very omission the Ten Commandments are stamped as a purely provincial code, applicable, if at all, only to the Children of Israel. In this respect both the Catholics and the Protestants have judiciously, yet deceitfully, refrained from using it, despite the incontrovertible fact that it is part of the Decalogue, and just as vital as the other parts.

In some editions of the Hebrew Bible, the word "bondage" has been substituted for "slavery." The explanation given for this change by the best Biblical authorities is that the Jews do not want to characterize Egypt as a place of slavery while the Jews living in Egypt are

¹³ The Protestant version of the Ten Commandments used here is the generally accepted King James version, issued by the American Bible Society.

¹⁴ The Catholic version of the Ten Commandments used here is the one printed in the Catholic Catechism by Peter Cardinal Gasparri, "published with Ecclesiastical approval" and bearing the imprimatur of Patrick Cardinal Hayes, Archbishop, New York. P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1932.

¹⁵ The Hebrew version of the Ten Commandments used here is the one printed by the Bloch Publishing Company, New York, 1922.

enjoying liberty there. Was the integrity of the text sacrificed for the sake of expediency? ¹⁶

In wording this Commandment, however, the Catholics were cleverer than the Protestants. They used the first five words of the Commandment but left out the succeeding damaging phrase, and have added, though in a corrupted form, the first part of the Second Commandment. The Protestants, unable to use the First Commandment as biblically recorded, have daringly taken the first sentence of the Second Commandment as the first one in the arrangement of the Decalogue!

In an address over radio station WEAJ,¹⁷ the second of a series dealing with the Ten Commandments, the Rev. James M. Gillis, C.S.P., made this statement: "On the tablets of Moses, the First Commandment read: 'I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt not have strange Gods before me.'"¹⁸

I challenge this statement of the Rev. James M. Gillis, C.S.P., and state categorically: No such words appeared on the tablets of Moses as biblically recorded, and in making that statement he either deliberately falsified the text or is ignorant of the facts. If the former, it invalidates his right to discuss this question; and if the latter, it reveals his incompetence.

If the Rev. James M. Gillis does not accept my indictment, perhaps he will abide by the following quotation taken from the Douay Version of the Bible, "published with the imprimatur and approbation of His Eminence John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York."

I quote *Exodus, Chapter 20, verses 1 and 2*:

- 1 And the Lord spoke all these words;
- 2 I am the Lord thy God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

¹⁶ R. H. Charles, *The Decalogue*, p. xxviii. The Protestant and Catholic Bibles use the word "bondage" instead of "slavery."

¹⁷ Nov. 23, 1930.

¹⁸ Published as *The Moral Law* by the National Council of Catholic Men, Washington, D.C., p. 23.

Why did the Rev. James M. Gillis fail to include the words, "who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage," particularly when he states that "the Ten Commandments are not the voice of man—they are the revelations of the mind and will of the Almighty," and "whether He whisper or whether He thunder, the message is the same, the infallible, everlasting moral law, in brief, the Ten Commandments"?¹⁹

In the course of his discussion of the Ten Commandments, the Rev. James M. Gillis states that "a lie is a lie, whether it come out of the mouth, or off the page," and that "if to the lie is added fraud, restitution must be made—otherwise, in the Catholic system absolution for the sin cannot be obtained."²⁰ According to his own standard, James M. Gillis himself is placed in the category of those doomed by the dogma of his own Church.

PROTESTANT

Second Commandment

4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

6 And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

CATHOLIC

*Second Commandment*²¹

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

HEBREW

Second Commandment

3 Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.

4 Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any manner of likeness, of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;

5 Thou shalt not bow down unto them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me;

6 And showing mercy unto the thousandth generation of them that love Me and keep My commandments.

¹⁹ Rev. James M. Gillis, *The Moral Law*, p. 13.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

²¹ Since the language used in the Douay Version of the Bible differs only textually

In addition to the italicized words which differentiate the Protestant and Hebrew versions of the Second Commandment, we find that the Catholics leave out the entire Second Commandment. They omit it because it would interfere with the most lucrative part of their ritual—the worship and adoration of saints. Catholics not only make “graven images” in direct prohibition and violation of the Second Commandment, but they also worship these images in defiance of an angry and vengeful God. That the Roman Catholic Church has practised this defiance with impunity for centuries indicates either the impotence of the Bible God or the falsity of the Commandments.

Catholic historical records show that the Church has continuously, since the fourth century, published a mutilated set of Commandments and maintained it as the true version by prohibiting anyone from reading the Bible! ²²

Since the Seventh General Council, 787 A.D., the Second Commandment has either been omitted or falsely explained away. In fact, so cleverly did the Catholic Church perpetrate this fraud that up to and even after the Reformation it was not discovered, and formed the Decalogue as accepted by the Anglican Church as late as 1563. So strongly was this mutilated version of the Commandments entrenched that even Martin Luther did not discover the imposition until several decades after his schism with Rome,²³ and accounts for the Lutherans accepting the Catholic version of the Decalogue.

I am constrained to refer to the text of the Decalogue in *Exodus* of the Douay Version of the Bible for additional evidence of the perfidy of the Catholic Church in omitting the Second Commandment. The heading at the beginning of the chapter is “The Ten Commandments.” I quote *Chapter 20, verses 4, 5 and 6*:

from the King James and Hebrew Versions, we will not concern ourselves with it. This does not in the slightest degree mitigate the mutilation of the Commandments printed in the Catholic Catechism. For a comparison of the complete text, the reader is referred to the Douay Bible.

²² That is one of the reasons why Tyndale, who translated the Bible into English, was strangled and burned at the stake.

²³ Charles, *op. cit.*, pp. 61, 63.

4 Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth.

5 Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them: I am the Lord thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me:

6 And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

In order to omit the Second Commandment from the Decalogue, not only must *verses 8, 9 and 10* be eliminated from *Chapter 5* of the *Book of Deuteronomy*, but the above *verses 4, 5 and 6* must also be deleted from this chapter as well as from other portions of the Bible.

While the Catholic Catechism omits this Commandment from its arrangement of the Decalogue, the *Catholic Encyclopedia* admits its validity as part of the Ten Commandments and even its application to the prohibitions of making and worshiping graven images! ²⁴

The Catholic Church stands convicted not only by evidence taken from its own records, but by its own authorities. The listing of the Ten Commandments as they appear in the Douay Version of the Bible has additional value to us besides furnishing incontrovertible evidence in indicting the Catholic Church for deliberate deception in omitting the Second Commandment from the Decalogue.

That image worship is a degrading superstition and was condemned by the early Church Fathers in scathing terms, is one of the amazing contradictions of Catholicism. St. Augustine, undoubtedly the foremost of the group, said: "He who worships an image turns the truth of God unto a lie." Even the crucifix, which is worshiped and adored today, is as much an idolatrous instrument as the image of a man or woman. It was introduced as part of the worship of the Church only in the latter part of the sixth century, and finally authorized by the Council of Constantinople, 692 A.D. The crucifix was

²⁴ *Catholic Encyclopedia*, art. "Images," Vol. 7, p. 664.

unknown until the sixth century, and liberal Protestants still abhor its use as being beneath the dignity of an intelligent person.²⁵

The Christians of France, Germany and England condemned the action of the Seventh General Council authorizing the worship of images, and foremost among the opponents was Charlemagne.

It would require too lengthy an analysis to give the complete reason why the Roman Catholic Church violates this Commandment and omits it from its version of the Decalogue. Suffice it to say that when Constantine embraced Christianity, he found that the incurably superstitious would not relinquish their idols, and so the Church, after a feeble and unsuccessful effort, merely incorporated image worship as part of its ritual. The financial returns more than justified the compromise with "God's Word."

In order to make up for the omission of the Second Commandment, the Catholic Church moved up the third and made it the second. It will be interesting, as we continue this comparison, to see for ourselves how they schemingly provided for the "ten."

With the exception of using the first sentence of this Commandment as the first of the Decalogue, the Protestants and the Hebrews differ only slightly in the wording, which is not particularly important in this comparison.

PROTESTANT

Third Commandment

7 Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

CATHOLIC

Third Commandment

Remember thou keep the Sabbath Day.

HEBREW

Third Commandment

7 Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.

For the first time there is perfect accord between the Protestants and Hebrews on one of the Commandments. The Catholics, however, in order to make up for the omission of the Second Commandment, merely move up the next one, making the fourth the third. There seems to be no justification for the mutilated form in which they ex-

²⁵ Charles, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

press it, nor can I find a reason for its mutilation, except to avoid the embarrassing question of why it is to be observed.

PROTESTANT

Fourth Commandment
Remember the sabbath
day, to keep it holy.

Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work:

But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

For *in* six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

CATHOLIC

Fourth Commandment
Honor thy Father and thy Mother.

HEBREW

Fourth Commandment
Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the sabbath in honour of the Lord thy God; on it thou shalt not do any work, neither thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

While the difference between the Protestant and Hebrew versions is mostly italicized words, we find that again the Catholic Church has misplaced the Fifth Commandment and listed it as the fourth, with the same omissions.

PROTESTANT

Fifth Commandment
Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

CATHOLIC

Fifth Commandment
Thou shalt not kill.

HEBREW

Fifth Commandment
Honour thy father and thy mother; in order that thy days may be prolonged upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.²⁶

Again the Catholics have moved the sixth to the place of the fifth, whereas the Protestant and Hebrew differ only textually.

²⁶ It is significant that in the *Deuteronomy* version of the Ten Commandments the phrase "and in order that it might go well with thee" is included.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

PROTESTANT	CATHOLIC	HEBREW
<i>Sixth Commandment</i> Thou shalt not kill.	<i>Sixth Commandment</i> Thou shalt not commit adultery.	<i>Sixth Commandment</i> Thou shalt not kill.

In this Commandment, the Protestants and the Hebrews are also in accord, while the Catholics have placed the Seventh Commandment in the position of the sixth. It is a notorious fact that when the Catholics wish to admonish their adherents against the violation of this Commandment, they never refer to it by number.²⁷

PROTESTANT	CATHOLIC	HEBREW
<i>Seventh Commandment</i> Thou shalt not commit adultery.	<i>Seventh Commandment</i> Thou shalt not steal.	<i>Seventh Commandment</i> Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Once more the Protestants and the Hebrews are in accord, while the Catholics continue to move up a Commandment in order to provide for the omission of the second.

In passing, I should like to mention that this Commandment was once placed before the one referring to killing because at one time adultery was considered the greater offense. In fact, in the oldest Biblical manuscript, a parchment known as the "Nash Manuscript," the prohibition of adultery precedes that of killing.²⁸

PROTESTANT	CATHOLIC	HEBREW
<i>Eighth Commandment</i> Thou shalt not steal.	<i>Eighth Commandment</i> Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.	<i>Eighth Commandment</i> Thou shalt not steal.

The agreement between the Protestant and Hebrew versions of this Commandment only emphasizes the falsity of the Catholic arrangement.

²⁷ The misnumbering of the Commandments by the Catholics has caused considerable confusion when they are referred to by number in the public press. For instance, in a news story when a murderer is condemned for violating the Sixth Commandment (Thou shalt not kill), in the minds of Catholics he is being charged with having committed adultery!

²⁸ Charles, *op. cit.*, p. xxv.

PROTESTANT

Ninth Commandment

Thou shalt not bear
false witness against thy
neighbor.

CATHOLIC

Ninth Commandment

Thou shalt not covet
thy neighbour's wife.

HEBREW

Ninth Commandment

Thou shalt not bear
false witness against thy
neighbor.

The significance here lies in the fact that the Catholics have taken a part of the Tenth Commandment and made it the ninth! Refer again to the *17th verse* of the *20th Chapter of Exodus* of the Douay Bible, and it will be plainly seen that this Commandment is in one complete sentence and does not lend itself to a division such as the Catholic Church made in order to cover up its duplicity by omitting the Second Commandment. I quote for the convenience of the reader:

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house:
neither shalt thou desire his wife, nor his
servant, nor his handmaid, nor his ox, nor his
ass, nor any thing that is his.

If the Tenth Commandment were divided into two verses or two sentences in the Bible, its separation could have been defended on that score; but even such a flimsy excuse cannot be resorted to as a defense in this monumental piece of brazen deceit and hypocrisy. Certainly the Tenth Commandment does not admit of separation. It deals with but one human trait—covetousness—expressed in one complete sentence. In addition, the first line of the Commandment, in both the Hebrew and Protestant versions, reads, “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house . . .”²⁹ The Catholic arrangement of the Decalogue makes “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife” the Ninth Commandment, and coveting the neighbour’s property the tenth. Catholics apparently use the *Deuteronomy* version as the source for the Ninth and Tenth Commandments. By doing this, they are placed in the position of accepting the reason for the observance of the Sabbath as the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. “Confusion worse confounded!”

²⁹ This was noted in the analysis of the difference between the *Exodus* and *Deuteronomy* versions, p. 5C. Also note variation in the spelling of the word neighbor.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

PROTESTANT

Tenth Commandment

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.

CATHOLIC

Tenth Commandment

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods.

HEBREW

Tenth Commandment

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

While the Protestants and Hebrews agree as to the Tenth Commandment, the Catholic version continues with a mutilated arrangement, leaving out vital details of the Biblical text, essential to the understanding of this Commandment.

Before turning our attention to an analysis of the ethical, moral and philosophical value of the Commandments, I should like to mention an incident which occurred just before a former mayor of the City of New York, James J. Walker, departed for an extended European trip. The Grand Street Boys' Association held a dinner in his honor. At its conclusion, as a token of the good will and harmony among those present, who comprised Protestants, Jews and Catholics, Supreme Court Justice Edward Riegelman presented to Mr. Walker, on behalf of the association, a golden scroll of the Ten Commandments written in Hebrew, with the following remark: "This is presented by Hebrews, through a Protestant, to a Catholic as an expression of the plane upon which all hope to stand."

If "the plane upon which all hope to stand" is no better than their agreement on the Ten Commandments, then they are all doomed to fall!

THE FIRST TABLES OF STONE

Any study of the Decalogue without some reference to the Tables of Stone would be incomplete, though we have already listed the Commandments as recorded in *Exodus* and *Deuteronomy*. We therefore proceed to examine the Biblical narrative concerning them.

The fact that the narratives describing the deliverance of the Ten

Commandments do not appear consecutively in the Bible has caused much confusion. The chapters must be painstakingly combed in order to connect the many references to the Commandments and the Tables of Stone and make the story comprehensible. This requires the elimination of many misplaced and interpolated passages that have no bearing on, or relationship to, the events described. To separate one from the other is a difficult and arduous task.

As there is confusion and contradiction about the Commandments themselves, so there is confusion and contradiction about their method of deliverance. Just as we have found—so far—that there are two sets of Commandments,³⁰ so we find that there are two sets of Tables of Stone, and the narratives concerning them are equally conflicting.

I quote the *Book of Exodus, Chapter 24, verses 1 to 9*:

1 And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the Lord, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off.

2 And Moses alone shall come near the Lord: but they shall not come nigh; neither shall the people go up with him.

3 And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do.

4 And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.

5 And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord.

6 And Moses took half of the blood, and put *it* in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar.

7 And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.

8 And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, Behold the blood

³⁰ There are actually several "sets" of Commandments, but for convenience and to avoid more confusion they were omitted from this study.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.

9 Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel.

Among peoples of primitive culture, the binding of any "covenant" was consecrated by the use of blood, and this custom prevailed also among the Biblical Hebrews. Let me repeat the words: "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." In response, "Moses took the blood, and sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." This, then, was the binding agreement between the Children of Israel and the Bible God. There has been a "meeting of the minds," and for the terms of the "contract," I quote *Chapter 24, verses 10 and 11*:

10 And they saw the God of Israel: and *there* was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in *his* clearness.

11 And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand; also they saw God, and did eat and drink.

It is not an uncommon experience among primitive and superstitious people to have visions of their god. It was not a difficult thing for the priest-magician of primitive tribes to provide such visions to specially favored members of the clan. Neither was it a difficult mental task to "see" the settings of the surroundings. This accounts for the "paved work of a sapphire stone" under God's feet. What they saw was a vision of the mind and not an image of the senses.⁸¹

To continue, I quote *Chapter 24, verse 12*:

⁸¹ This constantly occurs among highly emotional people who suffer from religious hallucinations. It recalls to my mind that in Italy there is a well which priests have utilized with great success. They tell the faithful believer, particularly after he had attended church services, that if he has performed his religious duties with scrupulous fidelity he will be able to see the face of Jesus Christ by looking long and intently at the bottom of the well. No faithful believer has ever been known to go away without having "seen" the face of his Saviour reflected in the waters below. It is quite likely that the Children of Israel "saw" their god in very much the same manner.

12 And the Lord said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.

Here is a promise that must be repeated for emphasis because of its important bearing upon subsequent events. The Lord tells Moses to "come up to me into the mount" and "I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments *which I have written*; that thou mayest teach them." This is a definite and unequivocal statement that the Commandments have already been written by the Bible Deity.

I quote *Chapter 24, verses 13 to 16*:

13 And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua; and Moses went up into the mount of God.

14 And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and, behold, Aaron and Hur *are* with you: if any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them.

15 And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount.

16 And the glory of the Lord abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud.

Magic is an essential part of all primitive religions, and the religion of the early Hebrews was no exception. The mystery of cloud formations has always awed primitive man. He saw both good and evil omens in them.

I quote *Chapter 24, verses 17 to 18*:

17 And the sight of the glory of the Lord *was* like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.

18 And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.

It is generally the experience of those who have "seen" God that "the sight of the Lord was like devouring fire." Fire holds a fascination even over the mind of modern man; in primitive society "consuming fire" and "the blazing sun" stimulated the awe-struck mentality of primitive man to "see" all kinds of majestic beings.

I now quote *Chapter 25, verses 1 to 3*:

- 1 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,
- 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering.
- 3 And this *is* the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass.

"Sacrificing unto the Lord" is not without ritualistic significance. Equally essential is the value of the sacrifice. The more valuable the "offering," the more it is supposed to be likely to receive favorable approval. Precious metals were considered too good for the use of man, so they were invariably "dedicated" to the Lord.

The following verses from *Exodus, Chapter 25, verses 21 to 29*, are quoted as an example of primitive ritual:

- 21 And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee.
- 22 And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which *are* upon the ark of the testimony, of all *things* which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.
- 23 Thou shalt also make a table of shittim wood; two cubits *shall be* the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof.
- 24 And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, and make thereto a crown of gold round about.
- 25 And thou shalt make unto it a border of a handbreadth round about, and thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about.
- 26 And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that *are* on the four feet thereof.

27 Over against the border shall the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table.

28 And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them.

29 And thou shalt make the dishes thereof, and spoons thereof, and covers thereof, and bowls thereof, to cover withal: of pure gold shalt thou make them.

To continue the narrative directly concerning the Tables of Stone, we must skip to *Exodus, Chapter 32, verses 1 to 3*:

1 And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for *as for* this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

2 And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which *are* in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring *them* unto me.

3 And all the people brake off the golden earrings which *were* in their ears, and brought *them* unto Aaron.

In order to explain the events that follow, the anxiety concerning the delay of Moses “to come down out of the mount” must have been more important than is implied. *Verses 2 and 3* present a serious matter. What did Aaron want with the “golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters”?

I quote *Chapter 32, verses 4 to 6*:

4 And he received *them* at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These *be* thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

5 And when Aaron saw *it*, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow *is* a feast to the Lord.

6 And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

Aaron wanted this gold to fashion it "with a graving tool" to make into a "molten calf." Equally important are the words, "when Aaron saw *it*, he built an altar before it." Then he made a proclamation and said: "Tomorrow *is* a feast to the Lord."

The relationship of these events to the Tables of Stone and the delivering of the Ten Commandments to the Children of Israel is extremely important. They had to decide whether they were going to accept this new god who, Moses explained, had brought them out of the land of bondage, or to continue to worship the golden calf. There seems to have been some doubt as to who was responsible for their deliverance. This is evident from the words mentioned in *Verse 4* after the golden calf had been fashioned by Aaron: "These *be* thy gods which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."

It is indisputable that the early Hebrews worshiped a golden calf as their deity. The bull was to them the symbol not only of strength but of fertility.³² One authority states: "Portable images of a bull overlaid with gold occupied, down to the time of the prophets, a prominent place in the equipment of the Israelitish sanctuaries."³³

There are innumerable hidden references in the Bible in which the Hebrew deity was compared to a wild bull,³⁴ and it is also the opinion of authorities that the *abbir* of the Old Testament should be rendered "bull" rather than "mighty one."³⁵ This view is also supported by those anthropologists who contend that the original home of the Semitic peoples was in Arabia, where the wild bull was a sacred animal and adorned the temples as guardian and protector.³⁶

In order to impress upon the Children of Israel the importance of discontinuing this form of worship, some act of extreme displeasure had to be committed to bring them to a realization of their new god's disapproval of their conduct.

³² *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, p. 511.

³³ *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, p. 631.

³⁴ *Numbers*, Chapter 23, verse 22.

³⁵ Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 2, p. 888.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 887.

I quote *Chapter 32, verses 7 to 9*:

7 And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted *themselves*:

8 They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These *be* thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

9 And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it *is* a stiffnecked people.

If the Hebrew deity had brought the Children of Israel out of the land of Egypt in the miraculous way described in the Bible, then indeed there was justification for his anger and his uncomplimentary remark about them. If they could attribute their deliverance to the molten god (the golden calf) and not to their new god, then indeed suspicion is cast upon the whole episode.

I quote *Chapter 32, verses 10 to 12*:

10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.

11 And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand?

12 Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people.

In primitive societies, the gods possessed the qualities of both compassion and vindictiveness. Were they not impatient with displeasing conduct, they could not be indulgent with weakness and forgive sins.³⁷ The Bible God also gives vent to his "fierce wrath."

³⁷ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 2, p. 603.

Moses, however, pleads with him to “repent of this evil against thy people.”

I quote *Chapter 32, verses 13 and 14*:

13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit *it* for ever.

14 And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

We now anxiously await the deliverance of the precious Tables of Stone with the infallible commandments of conduct which was so ceremoniously agreed upon in the first eight verses of *Chapter 24*.

I quote *Chapter 32, verse 15*:

15 And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony *were* in his hand: the tables *were* written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other *were* they written.

The above verse is worth a careful rereading. Moses has the two Tables of Stone, and we are now informed that “the tables *were* written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other *were* they written.” This is the first intimation that the tables of stone were written on *both* sides.

Before passing to the next verse, I should like to mention here that the Tables of Stone, even though written on both sides, had to be of considerable size. The question therefore arises as to whether a person, even though he possessed unusual strength, could have carried them from so great a height to the people below. According to the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, “The weight of the Stones was too heavy for one man to carry, so the letters are ascribed to miraculous power: The letters virtually carried the stones and only when they began to fly away did Moses feel the weight of the stones”! ³⁸

³⁸ Vol. 4, p. 497.

I quote *Chapter 32, verse 16*:

16 And the tables *were* the work of God,
and the writing *was* the writing of God,
graven upon the tables.

The significance of this verse cannot be too strongly emphasized, and it deserves repeating. It states that “the tables *were* the work of God, and the writing *was* the writing of God, graven upon the tables.” This is verified by Biblical testimony as revealed in *verse 18 of Chapter 31 of Exodus*:

18 And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.

If this were true—that Moses received “two tables of stone, written with the finger of God”—he had in his hands the most valuable thing ever possessed by man—the handiwork of God and words of his own writing. Reflect for a moment on their inestimable value! Moses should have guarded this priceless possession with his life, if need be.

For the action which follows, I quote *Exodus, Chapter 32, verse 19*:

19 And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.

If this narrative is true, then Moses committed the most tragic act in all the history of mankind—and without the slightest justification. If we refer to *verses 7 and 8* of this chapter, previously quoted, we shall find that the Bible God was fully acquainted with the acts of the Children of Israel in making a molten calf. Moses also had knowledge of what they had done, and in the verses that follow, particularly *10, 11 and 12*, the Bible God repented of this evil against *his* people and all was well again. In the face of these facts, Moses' act

is not only unpardonable and incomprehensible, but criminal. "He cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount."

For what follows the destruction of the two precious Tables of Stone containing the Ten Commandments, I quote *Chapter 32, verses 20 to 24*:

20 And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt *it* in the fire, and ground *it* to powder, and strewed *it* upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink *of it*.

21 And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?

22 And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they *are set* on mischief.

23 For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for *as for* this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

24 And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break *it* off. So they gave *it* me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.

Now that the golden calf has been destroyed, what are the Children of Israel to do, and what about the Ten Commandments? ⁸⁹

To follow the continuity, I skip to *Chapter 32, verses 30 and 31*:

30 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin.

31 And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold.

The ability to forgive sins endears any god to his people, hence Moses intervenes on behalf of the Israelites and prepares to atone for their sins. He "returned unto the Lord," and this brings us to the narrative concerning the second Table of Stone on which Moses

⁸⁹ Four additional misplaced verses follow the above, and they will be omitted for the reasons stated previously.

induces the Bible God to write again the Ten Commandments for the Children of Israel.

THE SECOND TABLES OF STONE AND A FORGOTTEN SET OF COMMANDMENTS

Were it not for the fact that Moses destroyed the Tables of Stone that God is supposed to have given him containing the Ten Commandments, this phase of our study would have been completed. But in *verse 17 of Chapter 33 of the Book of Exodus*, just quoted, there is a promise that God will rewrite these Commandments at the request of Moses, "for thou hast found grace in my sight. . . ."

It is because the Biblical narratives are not an orderly array of events that it is such a difficult task to follow the continuity of the story. It is obvious to any student of the Bible that "God's Word" has no proper sequence as to time and events. The contradictions and interpolations in the Bible are proof of this. It is only by the most painstaking efforts that the meaning of the events behind the confused text is made clear and understandable. This situation is plainly evident in this chapter as we proceed to the narrative concerning the second set of the Tables of Stone.

I quote the *Book of Exodus, Chapter 34, verse 1*:

1 And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon *these* tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest.

Here is a promise that we hope will be fulfilled. We have every assurance that it will be done, for God tells Moses to "hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon *these* tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest."

I quote *Chapter 34, verses 2 and 3*:

2 And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me in the top of the mount.

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3 And no man shall come up with thee, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount; neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount.

The above verses repeat in effect the details that we noted in the previous ceremony concerning the preparation for this event. No one must go near the mount and "no man shall come up with thee."

I quote *Chapter 34, verse 4*:

4 And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone.

Here is a most direct and unequivocal statement. Moses "hewed two tables of stone like unto the first . . . as the Lord had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone." There can be no mistaking the event narrated here. The Lord had the Tables of Stone and he was to write upon them the same Commandments that appeared in the first tables which Moses in anger had smashed to pieces.

I quote *Chapter 34, verses 5, 6 and 7*:

5 And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord.

6 And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,

7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear *the guilty*; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth *generation*.

In the above verses we find the substance of part of the Second Commandment as recorded previously, which we take as an indication that the new code will resemble the previous one. However, in *verse 6*, quoted above, the Lord refers to himself as "merciful and

gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth," in contradiction to being a jealous and vindictive god.

I quote *Chapter 34, verses 8 and 9*:

8 And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped.

9 And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it *is* a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance.

Here again is the sense of "guilt" that is essential to secure the help of a god. For if the Children of Israel were not a "stiffnecked people," there would be no necessity to "pardon our iniquity and our sin," and for the Bible God to "take us for thine inheritance."

I quote *Chapter 34, verse 10*:

10 And he said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou *art* shall see the work of the Lord: for it *is* a terrible thing that I will do with thee.

What follows is a set of Commandments used by the early Hebrew tribe and antedating the present Decalogue by many centuries! This set of Commandments not only proves the antiquity of the Biblical narrative, but is indisputable evidence of the evolutionary process of ethical and moral concepts. It is contended that these "covenants" deal only with the most primitive form of ritual duties and have no "moral" implication whatsoever,⁴⁰ such as might be attributed to the later Decalogue.

It is the opinion of the best Biblical scholars that "God's covenant with the Israelites,⁴¹ which will be quoted below, is a set of "commandments" that were considered a revelation from God in the earliest days

⁴⁰ Charles, *op. cit.* See also Sir James G. Frazer, *Folklore in the Old Testament*. Hereafter referred to as Frazer.

⁴¹ Caption heading in Bible at beginning of the *Book of Exodus, Chapter 34*.

of their tribal existence, and are not in any sense a duplicate of the "words that were written in the first tables."

The strange thing about the rest of the verses of this chapter is that they record an entirely *different* set of commandments that only in part bear any resemblance to the previous ones. Some are similar in meaning and intent, and some are entirely different. It becomes a matter of vital interest as to what this code of "God's covenant with the Israelites" is composed of.

I quote *Chapter 34, verses 11 to 14*:

11 Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite.

12 Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee:

13 But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves:

14 For thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

The above verses might be considered the substance of the first two Commandments as previously recorded, in which we are not interested at the moment. We are concerned with the Biblical assurance that God was to write upon this second table of stone "*the words that were in the first tables.*"

To that end we continue the narrative, and I quote *Chapter 34, verses 15, 16 and 17*:

15 Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and *one* call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice;

16 And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods.

17 Thou shalt make thee no molten gods.

The purpose of this "covenant" was to keep the seed of the tribe of Israel from pollution by other tribes as a means of perpetuating the solidarity of the clan.

It is not my intention here to analyze this set of Commandments for its ethical or moral value. I record it simply because of its relationship to the narrative concerning the Tables of Stone. I think, however, that a comment on the language is pertinent, especially the use of the word "whoring." In primitive societies the crudity of language reflected the crudity of thought, and those who married outside the tribe were considered guilty of a heinous offense. Such an act was condemned as the lowest in human conduct, and therefore characterized as "whoring." "To go whoring" is a typical Biblical expression and reflects the low mental level of the Biblical authors. The prohibition against images is also stated.

I now quote *Chapter 34, verses 18 to 26*:

18 The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt.

19 All that openeth the matrix is mine; and every firstling among thy cattle, *whether* ox or sheep, *that is male*.

20 But the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou redeem *him* not, then shalt thou break his neck. All the firstborn of thy sons thou shalt redeem. And none shall appear before me empty.⁴²

21 Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest.

22 And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end.

23 Thrice in the year shall all your men children appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel.

24 For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go

⁴²The ceremony connected with the redemption of the first-born is still practised by the Hebrews.

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up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year.

25 Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning.

26 The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring unto the house of the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.

A condensation of these "covenants" into *Ten Commandments* gives one a better understanding of what was known as the earlier Decalogue of the Hebrew tribes.

Professor K. Budde, in his *History of Ancient Hebrew Literature*, has done this, and lists the Commandments as follows:

Thou shalt worship no other god
(For the Lord is a jealous god).
Thou shalt make thee no molten gods.
All the first-born are mine.
Six days shalt thou work, but on
the seventh thou shalt rest.
The feast of unleavened bread
shalt thou keep in the month
when the ear is on the corn.
Thou shalt observe the feast of
weeks, even of the first fruits
of the wheat harvest, and the feast
of ingathering at the year's end.
Thou shalt not offer the blood of my
sacrifice with leavened bread.
The fat of my feast shall not remain
all night until the morning.
The first of the first fruits of
thy ground thou shalt bring unto
the house of the Lord thy God.
Thou shalt not seethe a kid in
its mother's milk.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Quoted by Frazer, *Folklore in the Old Testament*, p. 361.

I had hoped that this set of Commandments would clear up the reason for the observance of the Sabbath day. The reader will recall that according to the Fourth Commandment in *Exodus, Chapter 20*, the Sabbath was to be observed, “for *in* six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them *is*, and rested on the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it”; whereas the Fourth Commandment according to *Deuteronomy, Chapter 5*, states as follows: “And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and *that* the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day.” Instead, the reason given in this set of Commandments only adds more confusion to the conflicting claims.

The last “covenant” mentioned in *verse 26*, which reads, “*Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother’s milk,*” will be extremely significant in the analysis of the Commandments. It will prove to be the key to the very foundation upon which the religion of the Children of Israel is based. In passing, I might mention that this Commandment is still observed by the orthodox Hebrews with the same fanatical zeal as any of the Commandments of the other Decalogues.

I quote *Chapter 34, verses 27 and 28*:

27 And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.

28 And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And He wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.

The fact that this set of Commandments is not in “the words that were in the first tables” is one of the most damaging contradictions yet found in the Bible. We have had repeated to us again and again that the Bible God was to write upon this second table of stone the words of the first, but now we are told that “the Lord said unto Moses, *Write thou these words,* for after the *tenor* of these words I have

made a covenant with Israel.” Not only are these covenants not an exact duplication of the Commandments as previously given, but *Moses*, and not God, performed the work. They are orders for the crudest conduct prevalent in the most primitive of societies.

Even if the second tables of stone were in existence, they would not have the same value as if they were written by God. But even if written by Moses and only dictated by God, they would still be of inestimable value. Since there is no mention of their destruction, we might appropriately ask: Where are these second tables of stone? If they were not destroyed, what happened to them?

There is another important difference between the narratives concerning the Ten Commandments as recorded in *Exodus* and *Deuteronomy*. These are just as vital as the “variants” of the texts already observed, and we shall proceed to examine them. In the *Exodus* version it is stated that “. . . God spake all these words, saying . . .”⁴⁴ while the *Deuteronomy* version states, “And he wrote them in two tables of stone and he delivered them unto me.”⁴⁵

Did the Bible God speak the Commandments and did Moses write them, or did God write them himself upon the two tables and give them to Moses? This is of extreme importance, because there is a vast difference between *speaking* “these words” and *writing* them. If Moses wrote them down after hearing God speak them, it is quite likely that an error might have been made in their transcription, especially if he wrote them after having fasted for forty days and forty nights. If an omnipotent God wrote them himself, there could be no possibility of error.

If this was to be a sacred bond between the Children of Israel and their God, the Bible Deity should not have delegated Moses to perform the task. Under these circumstances, the Commandments came to the Children of Israel *at second hand*, and cannot be considered in the same light as if they had come directly from God.

As for the Ten Commandments being a revelation of God to the

⁴⁴ *Book of Exodus, Chapter 20, verse 1.*

⁴⁵ *Book of Deuteronomy, Chapter 5, verse 22.*

children of the earth, I am constrained to quote Thomas Paine. He said:

“It is a contradiction in terms and ideas to call anything a revelation that comes to us at second hand, either verbally or in writing. Revelation is necessarily limited to the first communication—after this, it is only an account of something which that person says was a revelation made to him; and though he may find himself obliged to believe it, it cannot be incumbent on me to believe it in the same manner; for it was not a revelation made to me, and I have only his word for it that it was made to him.

“When Moses told the children of Israel that he received the two tablets of the commandments from the hands of God, they were not obliged to believe him, because they had no other authority for it than his telling them so; and I have no other authority for it than some historian telling me so.”⁴⁶

The assurance given in *verse 1, Chapter 34*, was not fulfilled. The first “tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables.” This is in direct contradiction to the statement contained in *verse 18, Chapter 31*, which specifically states that God wrote them with his finger. I quote:

18 And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.

To conclude the introduction, I quote *Exodus, Chapter 34, verses 29 to 35*:

29 And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him.

30 And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him.

31 And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them.

⁴⁶ Thomas Paine, *Age of Reason*, p. 8.

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32 And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him in mount Sinai.

33 And *till* Moses had done speaking with them, he put a vail on his face.

34 But when Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he took the vail off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel *that* which he was commanded.

35 And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the vail upon his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.

There is more revealed in this narrative of the Bible concerning the Tables of Stone and the Ten Commandments than merely the fictional basis of the revelation from Sinai. It is also indisputable evidence of a flagrant piece of religious fakery. This is the imposition upon mankind of a corrupting and demoralizing series of superstitious taboos as a divine code of morals. This we shall proceed to prove.

The First Commandment

**“I am the Lord thy God, which have
brought thee out of the land of Egypt,
out of the house of bondage.”**

THE BIBLE DEITY AND ABRAHAM LINCOLN

WERE WE not quoting the words of one who is supposed to be the God of the universe, we would judge them to have been uttered by some braggadocio leader who was trying to impress his followers with the great deed he had performed.

If George Washington, the Commander-in-Chief of the Revolutionary Army, had made a similar statement at the conclusion of our War for Independence, much of his value as a leader would have been lost.

Egotism and self-praise are not very commendable qualities. Accomplishments should speak for themselves. It is rarely necessary to make worthy deeds appreciated by boasting about them.

Does anyone really believe that if there is a God over this vast universe, he would be so small and petty as to make the egotistical statement which constitutes the first declaration of the Decalogue? Does anyone really believe that this is the most important message such a God could impart to the children of the earth to express his importance and as a manifestation of his power? Is it possible that there are those who believe these are the words of a God who is considered the Creator and Ruler of the universe, the Almighty One who is responsible for all that is?

These words are, however, an indication of the character of a tribal god, attesting to his primitive origin. They place him in an ignorant and superstitious age when deception and "sorcery" enabled the priest-magicians to dominate and enslave the primitive peoples over whom they ruled.

To determine the ethical and moral value of this Commandment, let us assume that the Bible God did free the Children of Israel from the yoke of Egyptian rule (though it might be asked why he permitted their enslavement in the first place). Why, then, did he permit them

to become slaves under the yoke of the Romans? Was slavery under one tyrant more desirable than under another?

While he was setting the Hebrews at liberty, why did he not free others who were held in bondage? Was freeing of the Children of Israel the most important problem in the world at that time? The Hebrews were not the only people who were slaves. Were not the other enslaved peoples equally deserving of liberation? Is not slavery itself an obnoxious institution, and are not all peoples worthy of freedom? Slavery at that time was a universal institution. Enslaved humanity under brutal tyrants everywhere filled the air with cries of agony and despair. Why was he so partial to the Hebrews? If this God was omnipotent, there is no question as to his ability to perform the task. If he could and he did not, he deserves the sternest condemnation.

Would not the little knowledge that we have today, acquired after thousands of years of struggle with the forces of nature, have been of more benefit to mankind than the exodus of an insignificant tribe of people? Think of the great progress that would have been made if this God had shown the people how to construct the printing press, the automobile, the electric light, the motion picture, the electric dynamo or the X-ray machine, or to produce anesthesia, or had revealed the secrets of radium, or any one of the hundreds of inventions and discoveries that man has used so advantageously to liberate himself from physical pain and to cure the ills to which flesh is heir. Why, in his first statement to the people of the earth, did not this God reveal the laws that govern nature, and the formulas by which the materials of the earth could be used? The Bible does not contain even the basic law of the earth upon which we live—the law of gravitation.

While we are speaking of the liberation of the Hebrews from bondage, it will not be irrelevant to mention Abraham Lincoln's efforts to free the Negro slaves in this country. By way of comparison, Lincoln's task was just as arduous as that of the God of Israel; in fact, it was more so, for Lincoln was only a common mortal. He had to combat others stronger than himself. He also had to fight in the open

against the invisible foes of racial, political and social prejudices. He had to fight the Bible's own pronouncement that slavery existed by divine approval. In support of the institution of slavery, ministers of religion consistently quoted scriptural edicts, such as *Leviticus, Chapter 25, verses 44 to 46*:

44 Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, *shall be* of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids.

45 Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that *are* with you, which they begat in your land: and they shall be your possession.

46 And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit *them* for a possession; they shall be your bondmen for ever: but over your brethren the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigor.

Ministers also quoted *Timothy, Chapter 6, verse 1*:

1 Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and *his* doctrine be not blasphemed.

These Biblical quotations were flung in the face of Lincoln to justify the enslavement of human beings.

Lincoln was far superior to the God of Israel in this respect: his task was more difficult and his accomplishments far greater. But more important still, and far more valuable than his deeds, was his character. He did not boast of his accomplishments. He wanted no credit other than to know that he had freed human beings from the shackles of slavery.

Nor did he demand adoration and worship. His compensation was the satisfaction of destroying the most vicious institution that ever cursed human society, although it had Biblical sanction. And Lincoln did not pose before his liberated Negroes with this statement: "I am

Lincoln, your Emancipator, who freed you from your masters and liberated you from the shackles of bondage.”

Nor was Lincoln a Negro. The slaves were not “his” people. He was not bound to them by ties of blood. He did his work purely for the love of humanity. No member of the human race was a stepchild to him. He did not flatter them by calling them his “chosen people.” His passion was the principle of freedom for all mankind.

Lincoln said that this nation could not remain half slave and half free, and so he set about to make all free. The Bible Deity’s performance dwindles into insignificance when compared with that of the Great Emancipator. Certainly, if Lincoln could free the Negro slaves in the United States of America, a God of the universe should have been able to abolish slavery throughout the earth.

If the Bible God had abolished slavery completely, the bloody sacrifice of the Civil War would not have been necessary. When Lincoln freed the Negroes, he did not in turn permit them to enslave others; whereas the Bible Deity sanctioned the barter and sale of human beings.

These Bible laws, presumably with divine approval, established to God’s eternal infamy the property right in man, with all the heart-rending misery that slavery has brought upon the earth. Consider the intellectual and moral progress that would have resulted had slavery never existed.

THE PROLOGUE TO THE COMMANDMENTS

This Commandment, “I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage,” did not suddenly and without cause come into existence. It has its proper place as a prologue to the Decalogue, and is just as much a part of it as the Commandments which follow. Without this introduction, the rest of the Decalogue becomes meaningless and devoid of its original intent and purpose.

Without some such “miraculous” act to commend himself to the

people whose God he was to become, the Bible Deity would have had no basis to offer himself as God. Only by the performance of some magical deed could he assume the position as given in the Biblical narrative. Nearly all gods in primitive societies have some such act to commend them to their people.

For the story recorded in the *Book of Exodus*, I quote *Chapter 2, verses 1 to 10*:

1 And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took *to wife* a daughter of Levi.

2 And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he *was* a goodly *child*, she hid him three months.

3 And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid *it* in the flags by the river's brink.

4 And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him.

5 And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash *herself* at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side: and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it.

6 And when she had opened *it*, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This *is one* of the Hebrews' children.

7 Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?

8 And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother.

9 And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give *thee* thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it.

10 And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.

The circumstances surrounding the birth of Moses, although free from the element of divinity, nevertheless reveal the "hand of fate."

Why *he* of all the Hebrew children should have been miraculously saved has a definite purpose for the story that follows. A similar bit of folklore was widely current regarding the founder of Rome. Like Moses, Romulus was exposed in infancy and might have perished had it not been for the providential intervention of a she-wolf and a woodpecker! ¹

Another such tale deals with Sargon the Elder, the first Semitic king who reigned over Babylonia about 2500 years before the present era. As an infant he, too, was put in a basket of rushes among the flags of the Nile. The same fortuitous circumstances surrounding his discovery and preservation appear in his story. In fact, there is preserved in the library of Nineveh a copy of the inscription taken from one of his statues on which were carved the details of his charmed life.²

“Sargon, the mighty king, the king of Agade, am I.
 My mother was lowly, my father I knew not,
 And the brother of my father dwells in the mountain.
 My city is Azuripanu, which lies on the banks of the Euphrates.
 My lowly mother conceived me, in secret she brought me forth.
 She set me in a basket of rushes, with bitumen she closed my door.
 The river bore me up, unto Akki, the irrigator, it carried me.
 Akki, the irrigator, . . . lifted me out,
 Akki, the irrigator, as his own son . . . reared me,
 Akki, the irrigator, as his gardener appointed me,
 While I was a gardener, the goddess Ishtar loved me,
 And for . . . four years I ruled the kingdom.
 The black-headed peoples I ruled, I governed.”

Whether this legend was the basis of the story of Moses in the bulrushes and his subsequent leadership of the Children of Israel, no one, of course, can say.

To continue the narrative, without including minor details of Moses' life, I quote *Chapter 2, verses 23 to 25*:

¹ Frazer, *Folklore in the Old Testament*.

² *Ibid.*, *The Golden Bough*, p. 266.

23 And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage.

24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

25 And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto *them*.

We now come to the part that Moses is to play in this drama of rescuing the Children of Israel from the cruel clutches of the Egyptians.

I quote *Chapter 3, verses 1 and 2*:

1 Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro, his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the back side of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, *even to Horeb*.

2 And the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush *was not consumed*.

Magic is an inseparable part of primitive religion, and this accounts for its appearance here: "the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire," and when the bush "burned" it "*was not consumed*." It is by these demonstrations of presumed miraculous power that the Lord will reveal to Moses how he will accomplish the task set before him.

I quote *Chapter 3, verses 3 to 5*:

3 And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

4 And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here *am I*.

5 And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest *is holy ground*.

Moses is ordered to appear before Pharaoh, and the scene for the actual drama is set. I quote *Chapter 3, verses 7 to 10*:

7 And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

9 Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.

10 Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

The miraculous task that Moses is to perform is to free the Children of Israel from the yoke of Egyptian bondage. The Lord has heard their cry, and he is to send Moses to Pharaoh "that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt."

It is the performance of this deed that is the basis of this Commandment. By what miraculous power is it accomplished?

MOSES, THE BIBLE DEITY AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

In *Exodus, Chapter 3, verses 11 and 12*, we read:

11 And Moses said unto God, Who *am* I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?

12 And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this *shall be* a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

To "bring forth the Children of Israel out of Egypt" was assuredly no ordinary task, and it certainly was legitimate for Moses to question

this god who had appeared to him in a “consuming fire.” And this god of consuming fire answered, “Certainly I will be with thee.” When the performance is over, the Children of Israel, in appreciation of their deliverance, “shall serve God upon this mountain.”

I quote *Chapter 3, verse 13*:

13 And Moses said unto God, Behold, *when* I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What *is* his name? what shall I say unto them?

Moses, however, still manifests some skepticism as to why he was selected for so important an undertaking. He is deeply concerned to learn upon what authority he is to act, and rightly asks: “Behold, *when* I come unto the Children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What *is* his name? what shall I say unto them?” It is quite evident from this that the Children of Israel would want some certification from Moses that he bore the proper credentials for his mission.

Does this God reveal his name to Moses? ³ I quote *Chapter 3, verse 14*:

14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

The great I AM speaks. Is that a name? Or is it a designation? Or is it a concealment of the name of the Bible Deity? Will the Children of Israel accept I AM THAT I AM as sufficient proof that Moses represents a real god whom they should follow implicitly? Let us see. I quote *Chapter 3, verses 15 to 17*:

15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my

³ The *names* of the deities of primitive religions were secretly guarded; there was a very important reason for this secrecy.

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name for ever, and this *is* my memorial unto all generations.

16 Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and *seen* that which is done to you in Egypt:

17 And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.

Even if this God's acquaintance with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob should fail to convince the Children of Israel of his authenticity, perhaps the promise to relieve them of "the affliction of Egypt" and take them "unto a land flowing with milk and honey" would be sufficient to warrant their acceptance of him. But just how will all this be accomplished?

I quote *Chapter 3, verse 18*:

18 And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.

All gods of primitive peoples demand sacrifices from their subjects, and this is likewise true of the Bible Deity. The Children of Israel were continually admonished to sacrifice unto their Lord. Dire results would follow if they failed to offer the best of everything that was produced. It might mean his withholding favor and depriving them of fruitful crops, good weather, success in their undertakings, and good fortune as a nation.

The whole custom was born of fear, and the greater the fear, the more numerous the sacrifices and the more elaborate the ceremonies of propitiation. Everything in nature has some meaning which was interpreted to indicate God's pleasure or displeasure. For example,

the Indian, we are told, lived in constant fear. The turning of a leaf, the crawling of an insect, the cry of a bird, the creaking of a bough, might mean to him the mystic signal of weal or woe.⁴

For the Bible Deity and Moses to impress upon the Children of Israel their supernatural powers, they had to perform some extraordinary deeds. These are in the narrative dealing with Moses' contact with Pharaoh and the Hebrews' escape from "bondage." The story would have no value without these events, and Moses could not be looked upon as a deliverer and lawgiver.

I quote *Chapter 3, verse 19*:

19 And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand.

How did the new god of the Children of Israel know that "the king of Egypt will *not* let you go"? If he had let them go merely on their petition, then how could "I AM" demonstrate his magic powers to rescue them from the cursed Egyptian rule? Judging from what follows, it was not the deliverance of the Children of Israel from Egypt with which the narrative was concerned, but the demonstration of magical powers that this new god had conferred upon Moses.

I quote *Chapter 3, verses 20 to 22*:

20 And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go.

21 And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty:

22 But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put *them* upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.

If the Children of Israel should still doubt Moses' word as to his intimacy with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, then what should

⁴ Edward Westermarck, *Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*, Vol. 2, p. 613. Hereinafter referred to as Westermarck, *Morals*.

be done to convince them? Moses anticipates this doubt on the part of the Hebrews, as we see from *Chapter 4, verse 1*:

1 And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee.

The Bible God replies as recorded in *Chapter 4, verses 2 to 7*:

2 And the Lord said unto him, What *is* that in thine hand? And he said, A rod.

3 And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it.

4 And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand:

5 That they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.

6 And the Lord said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand *was* leprous as snow.

7 And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his *other* flesh.

Changing a rod into a serpent and the serpent back into a rod may be clever magic, but how does such a demonstration prove that Moses spoke to God? If the only thing necessary to prove the truth of an extraordinary claim were to demonstrate an ability to bewilder, there would be no more mysteries to solve.

If a person claims that he can bring the dead back to life, and in proof of that power pulls a rabbit out of a hat, that is hardly a demonstration of the truth of his claim; it is merely an example of his ability in the art of deception. If he claims that he can fly without wings and without the use of mechanical help of any kind, and in proof of his ability pulls another rabbit out of another hat, that is

not proof of his ability to fly, but of his ability to lie, and he will without much hesitation be condemned as a faker. The demonstration of one thing has absolutely no bearing in proving the truth of the other, when there is no relationship between them.

But suppose all these demonstrations of *magiċ prōvċ* *ōf nō āvāll*, if the Children of Israel still persist in their doubt and insist upon a more convincing demonstration in proof of Moses' claim that he was selected by the Bible God to impart this all-important message, then what is he to do? I quote *Exodus, Chapter 4, verses 8 and 9*:

8 And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign.

9 And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour *it* upon the dry *land*: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry *land*.

There is one great difference between this god and Moses, and present-day magicians. If the people of Israel did not believe what Moses told them, and they were still skeptical after his demonstration of the rod and the leprous hand, then "thou shalt take the water of the river, and pour *it* upon the dry *land*; and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land." There can be no comparison between the effectiveness of reasoning and changing water into blood. Such a demonstration would indeed be too effective to be argued about; in other words, the Egyptians would have had to believe what the Bible God, through Moses, told them, regardless of how farfetched and incredible the thing might appear, or suffer the pollution of their land.

The magician of today differs from Moses in another respect. If you suspect trickery in his performance, he does not punish you with a curse; on the contrary, he smiles at your power of detection and merely asks you to applaud his efforts to entertain you.

Compared to the magicians of today, however, Moses was an amateur. On many occasions I have seen professional hypnotists and magicians take a person from the audience, place his hand in a certain position, mumble some magic word, and behold the hand becomes "leprous as snow"! With the same ease, and mumbling the same magic word, the hand is "turned again as his other flesh." I have seen magicians "saw a woman in half" before my very eyes, and with the same ease restore her as she was, without the slightest injury! I have seen them pull a bird out of a woman's hair, with the same ease with which they make an elephant disappear!

I have seen magicians do all manner of wonders, and yet not one claimed that he was on intimate terms with God, or even conversed with him, or that God told him his (God's) name; nor did he perform these tricks in proof of something else. But aside from all that, the significant fact is this: You cannot prove one thing by doing something entirely different which has no relationship to what you set out to prove.

MOSES AND THE MAGIC ROD

Despite his familiarity with the Bible Deity, according to the Biblical narrative, Moses is still unsure of himself. I quote the *Book of Exodus, Chapter 4, verses 10 to 16*:

10 And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I *am* not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; but I *am* slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.

11 And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord?

12 Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.

13 And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of *him whom* thou wilt send.

14 And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses, and he said, *Is* not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can

14 speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.

15 And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do.

16 And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, *even* he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.

Well equipped now by training and instruction, Moses is prepared for his task before Pharaoh. In addition to being well versed in magic, he has acquired the power of ventriloquism. "And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do." But why should a little defect such as being "slow of speech, and of a slow tongue," be a handicap to one who performs so skillfully and who can remedy all such shortcomings with the magical powers of ventriloquism? So Aaron, Moses' brother, will provide him with another tongue to confound Pharaoh the more.

One thing, however, without which no magician can perform is still lacking. It is the most important part of his equipment. I quote *Chapter 4, verse 17*:

17 And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs.

It is "this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs." What can a magician do without his magic wand? ⁵

Now that Moses is ready, fully equipped, let us follow his sleight-of-hand performance before Pharaoh, in his efforts, in the Biblical drama, to free the Children of Israel.

I quote *Chapter 4, verses 18 to 21*:

18 And Moses went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren

⁵ There is a secret about this magic rod which will be revealed in a subsequent chapter.

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which *are* in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace.

19 And the Lord said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought thy life.

20 And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt: and Moses took the rod of God in his hand.

21 And the Lord said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go.

The secret reason why Pharaoh would not let the Children of Israel go, as stated in *Chapter 3, verse 19*, is revealed here. He will not let them go because “I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go.” It is easy to know the answers when you possess the power to create the events, control the characters, and provide for the conclusion.

I quote *Chapter 4, verses 22 to 24*:

22 And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel *is* my son, *even* my firstborn:

23 And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, *even* thy firstborn.

24 And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him.

The above verses seem slightly complicated, but what are a few complications either in the life of Moses or in a Biblical narrative? Let me repeat it, however: “And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him.” What was the reason why the Lord “sought to kill him”?

I quote *Chapter 4, verses 27 to 31*:

27 And the Lord said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him.

28 And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him.

29 And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel:

30 And Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people.

31 And the people believed: and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped.

Moses and Aaron gave a demonstration of their art "and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed." The magic formula worked! That was all that was necessary. It was as simple as all that. Now for the main performance.

MOSES AND AARON BEFORE PHARAOH

In the *Book of Exodus, Chapter 5, verses 1 and 2*, we read:

1 And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.

2 And Pharaoh said, Who *is* the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.

The above is more significant than a first reading would indicate. Although this scene is part of the drama, it nevertheless shows how utterly insignificant I AM was to all but Moses and his brother Aaron. Pharaoh contemptuously asks Moses, "Who *is* the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?" And Moses and Aaron replied, *Chapter 5, verses 3 to 5*:

3 And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.

4 And the king of Egypt said unto them,

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Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens.

5 And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now *are* many, and ye make them rest from their burdens.

Moses becomes bolder. He tries to frighten Pharaoh with a threat. He tells him that unless he lets the Children of Israel go, the Lord will visit them with "pestilence or with the sword." The king takes very little stock in Moses' threat, chides him for annoying him, and orders the Israelites to heavier tasks. He takes the whole matter as an attempt on the part of the laborers to shirk their work, and orders a stricter supervision over them.

I quote *Chapter 5, verses 6 to 8*:

6 And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying

7 Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves.

8 And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish *ought* thereof: for they *be* idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go *and* sacrifice to our God.

In this impasse, Moses returns to the Lord for further instructions; I quote *Chapter 5, verses 22 and 23*:

22 And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou *so* evil entreated this people? why *is it that* thou hast sent me?

23 For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.

The scene opens with Moses berating I AM for sending him on a fool's errand. "Wherefore hast thou *so* evil entreated this people? Why *is it that* thou hast sent me?" Moses relates the utter failure of his mission, and Pharaoh's contempt. He cries, "For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people. . . ."

But arousing the anger of Pharaoh was part of the plot, and the ineffectual use of the name I AM is about to be remedied, as we shall see in *Chapter 6, verses 1 to 3*:

1 Then the Lord said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land.

2 And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I *am* the Lord:

3 And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by *the name of* God Almighty; but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.

Verse 3, quoted above, brings us to one of the most important phases of our study. In it is mentioned the name of the God who is to perform wonders for the Children of Israel. The mystery which enshrouds the name of "I AM THAT I AM" is now revealed as "Jehovah." It is by this magic name that Moses will prevail over the hard-hearted Pharaoh.

Priest-magicians have ever used a sacred and fearful name as a means of accomplishing their greatest wonders. Now that the Lord has revealed himself as "Jehovah" to Moses, the miracles and the mighty performances promised are to be done *in his name!*

I quote *Chapter 6, verses 4 to 8*:

4 And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers.

5 And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant.

6 Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I *am* the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments:

7 And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I *am* the Lord your God, which

bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

8 And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for a heritage: I *am* the Lord.

Up to now it looks very much as if "Jehovah" would fail in his attempt to get the people of Israel to accept him as their God. He keeps repeating that he will free them from their burdens under the king of Egypt, and "bring them into a land" which he had promised to their forefathers.

I quote *Chapter 6, verse 9*:

9 And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.

Moses, in his appeal to the Children of Israel, cannot arouse their enthusiasm. They have just cause to resent his appeal, for it was they who suffered when the appeals and threats were unavailing. What must be done next? As his people have rejected Moses as their leader because of the failure of the Bible God to fulfill his promises, the Lord again speaks to Moses.

I quote *Chapters 6, verses 10 to 13*:

10 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,
11 Go in, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land.

12 And Moses spake before the Lord, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who *am* of uncircumcised lips?

13 And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, and gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

But the experience that Moses has already had makes him doubtful of success, and he answers: "Behold, the Children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who *am* of uncircumcised lips?"

PHARAOH'S HEART IS HARDENED

We continue the narrative in the *Book of Exodus, Chapter 7, verse 1*:

1 And the Lord said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.

What the Lord did to Moses to make him a god to Pharaoh is not revealed. Can it be inferred that Moses was "God" and that it is he, and he alone, who is to deliver the Children of Israel from bondage in Egypt? The Lord speaks again, and I quote *Chapter 7, verses 2 to 5*:

2 Thou shalt speak all that I command thee; and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land.

3 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt.

4 But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments.

5 And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.

It is not improbable that Pharaoh would have listened to a petition of redress, and if the grievances were valid and the people really breaking under the yoke of too great a burden, then he, like other kings in ancient times, might have granted their appeal. But the narrative does not mention such burdens. In fact, after the first appeal by Moses, it was discovered that the laborers had too much leisure, and as a punishment for their idleness they were ordered to gather the straw with which to make the bricks.

All of which appears to be a rather justified reaction to an unjustified demand. But in order that there might be no possibility of granting their petition, the Lord deliberately "hardens Pharaoh's heart," so "Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you." This is as vicious

an act as could possibly be conceived. Here is a situation where one who is trying to free a people from slavery makes the task harder by provoking the king to refuse the appeal. For the Children of Israel to accept as their God one guilty of such an act is beyond all sense and reason.

The more one reads the story, the more one is convinced that Pharaoh should be the hero rather than Moses or the Bible God. While Pharaoh is ready and willing to let the Children of Israel go, it is this Bible God who continues to harden his heart so he may deliberately prolong their stay and impose upon them greater burdens and heavier tasks.

The Lord had a purpose behind this delay, as the narrative reveals. He had to show his power by his ability to perform magic.

I quote *Chapter 7, verses 6 to 9*:

6 And Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded them, so did they.

7 And Moses *was* fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh.

8 And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

9 When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast *it* before Pharaoh, *and* it shall become a serpent.

Were Aaron and Moses told by this self-appointed God to recite the grievances of their people and appeal to the sympathies of Pharaoh? Were they armed with arguments to seek redress in the name of justice? Were they to enunciate the principles of freedom and condemn slavery as a vicious and inhuman institution? Nothing so laudatory was in their minds. Magic was the argument they were to use. How could an argument compare with a miracle? The truth or falsity of a statement was to be decided by resorting to trickery. "When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast *it* before Pharaoh, *and* it shall become a serpent."

I quote *Chapter 7, verses 10 to 12*:

10 And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the Lord had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent.

11 Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.

12 For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.

Note in the above verses how sharp was the controversy concerning the grievances of the Children of Israel and the burdens from which they sought their liberty. The "eloquent appeal" which Aaron made for them is described in the following words: "Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent."

In answer to this moving appeal, Pharaoh justified his treatment of the Children of Israel with the following facts: "Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod and they became serpents."

Until now the argument was even. Pharaoh's magicians were as good as Aaron and Moses, with this one exception: "Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods," which produced a very critical situation. However, magicians have a way of restoring things as they originally were after they have made them disappear.

I quote *Chapter 7, verses 13 and 14*:

13 And he hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said.

14 And the Lord said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart *is* hardened, he refuseth to let the people go.

Well, that was to be expected. Did not Pharaoh match the tricks of Aaron? Did not that show his power was equal to theirs? But for

great depth of reasoning and greater prognostication, the Lord is unequaled. He tells Moses that Pharaoh's heart is hardened. But was it not he who hardened it? Was it not done purposely? Then why the disappointment at his refusal of their request?

But, to continue this great humanitarian undertaking, I quote *Chapter 7, verses 15 to 18*:

15 Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water; and thou shalt stand by the river's brink against he come; and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand.

16 And thou shalt say unto him, The Lord God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness: and, behold, hitherto thou wouldest not hear.

17 Thus saith the Lord, In this thou shalt know that I *am* the Lord: behold, I will smite with the rod that *is* in mine hand upon the waters which *are* in the river, and they shall be turned to blood.

18 And the fish that *is* in the river shall die, and the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall loathe to drink of the water of the river.

Why should Pharaoh or anyone else liberate a great mass of people to go into the wilderness to "serve" one who suddenly claimed lordship over them, but whose pitiable performances make their safety precarious indeed? Pharaoh must be impressed with more dire threats.

I quote *Chapter 7, verses 19 to 21*:

19 And the Lord spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and *that* there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in *vessels of wood*, and in *vessels of stone*.

20 And Moses and Aaron did so, as the Lord commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that *were* in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that *were* in the river were turned to blood.

21 And the fish that *was* in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

After all, that was a pretty strong argument. Turning the waters of the river into blood, killing all the fish, and causing the country to stink with the smell of dead fish should have been an argument convincing enough to soften Pharaoh's hardened heart. Did he accede to Moses' request to let the Children of Israel go?

I quote *Chapter 7, verses 22 to the end*:

22 And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the Lord had said.

23 And Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither did he set his heart to this also.

24 And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink; for they could not drink of the water of the river.

25 And seven days were fulfilled, after that the Lord had smitten the river.

Pharaoh turned his back on the performances of Aaron and Moses. He called his magicians together and duplicated the trick, fantastic as this may seem. Do you wonder why he treated them with such contempt? After his magicians "did so with their enchantments," "Pharaoh turned and went into his house." What else was he to do? Had he not matched trick for trick, and wasn't this supposed to win the debate? Apparently the Egyptians suffered no ill effects from the water of the river being turned into blood, nor from the stench of the dead fish. Now what will Moses and Aaron do?

FROGS, LICE AND FLIES

The Lord is persistent and again urges Moses to see Pharaoh. If Pharaoh should refuse, more ominous tricks will be performed. I quote the *Book of Exodus, Chapter 8, verses 1 to 4*:

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1 And the Lord spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

2 And if thou refuse to let *them* go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs:

3 And the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneadingtroughs:

4 And the frogs shall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants.

Why was no time given Pharaoh to grant Moses' request so that this plague of frogs might be averted? Simple justice would have demanded that, or was he afraid that Pharaoh's magicians would be able to equal this performance and thereby negate this particularly nauseating argument? I quote *Chapter 8, verses 5, 6 und 7*:

5 And the Lord spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt.

6 And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt.

7 And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt.

As expected, the magicians of Egypt did duplicate the tricks of Moses "with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt." However, Pharaoh felt that there were too many frogs to contend with, and he sought Moses for a consultation.

I quote *Chapter 8, verses 8 to 11*:

8 Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Entreat the Lord, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord.

9 And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I entreat for thee, and for thy

servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, *that* they may remain in the river only?

10 And he said, To morrow. And he said, *Be it* according to thy word; that thou mayest know that *there is none like unto the Lord* our God.

11 And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only.

Apparently the argument of the frogs was to prevail. Pharaoh's heart was "touched with pity" for the Children of Israel. I quote *Chapter 8, verses 12 to 14*:

12 And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh: and Moses cried unto the Lord because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh.

13 And the Lord did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields.

14 And they gathered them together upon heaps; and the land stank.

But let us see how Pharaoh considered the bargain. I quote *Chapter 8, verse 15*:

15 But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said.

Moses was confronted with a rather difficult task. He did not take into consideration the severity of the hardening of the heart with which the Lord had plagued Pharaoh. What could Moses do if Pharaoh was made stubborn by a prearranged plan, despite the great annoyance and discomfort of the plague of frogs, and the stink of their decaying bodies? A hardened heart does not listen to reason or to "miracles."

I quote *Chapter 8, verse 16*:

16 And the Lord said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

What comment can one make on these events? Imagine turning the dust of the land into lice! Only a mentality of the most vicious type could conceive of such an "argument." And this is supposed to be done upon the direct insistence of an infinite God!

I quote *Chapter 8, verses 17 to 19*:

17 And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

18 And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there were lice upon man, and upon beast.

19 Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said.

"There were lice upon man, and upon beast." Pharaoh's magicians were unequal to such a task. "The magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not." Perhaps for the reason that there were no more lice. The trick was to get rid of them. Surely this looked like the end of the argument, but in a great controversy of this kind one can never be sure of the final results until a complete agreement has been reached by both sides.

Pharaoh refused to take the advice of his own magicians. He had seen them duplicate the tricks of Moses and Aaron too often to be satisfied that this failure was a real sign that the magic of Aaron and Moses was "the finger of God." Pharaoh's refusal brought further manifestations against him. I quote *Chapter 8, verses 20 to 23*:

20 And the Lord said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; lo, he cometh forth to the water; and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

21 Else, if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are.

22 And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I *am* the Lord in the midst of the earth.

23 And I will put a division between my people and thy people: to morrow shall this sign be.

Threatening Pharaoh with a swarm of flies is, I suppose, as good an argument for releasing the Children of Israel from slavery as any other, though mild in comparison to what has already been done. But in a bitterly fought contest, it is difficult sometimes to know which is the winning argument.

I quote *Chapter 8, verses 24 and 25*:

24 And there came a grievous swarm of flies into the house of Pharaoh, and *into* his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt: the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies.

25 And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land.

Pharaoh surrenders; the flies win! He sends for Moses and Aaron and says, "Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land." But this did not satisfy Moses, and he gives his reason for the rejection of the proposal. *Verses 26 to 28*:

26 And Moses said, It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us?

27 We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the Lord our God, as he shall command us.

28 And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away: entreat for me.

Moses and Pharaoh have another point of argument. Moses wants to take the Children of Israel, like so many sheep, "into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the Lord our God, as he shall command us." But Pha-

raoh insists that "ye shall not go very far away." What was the reason for this?

I quote *Chapter 8, verses 29 to 32*:

29 And Moses said, Behold, I go out from thee, and I will entreat the Lord that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, to morrow: but let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord.

30 And Moses went out from Pharaoh, and entreated the Lord.

31 And the Lord did according to the word of Moses; and he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; there remained not one.

32 And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.

This is a rather peculiar story, and so we must be prepared for peculiar consequences. If the Lord had the power he professed, and Pharaoh insisted upon deceitfully enticing Moses, there was only one thing left to be done, and that was to touch Pharaoh with the hand of death. Surely, if one can turn water into blood and plague the country with frogs, lice and flies, it should be a small task to properly chastise Pharaoh for his deceit. But we must remember that fact and fancy do not go together, and that logic and reason are not elements of this story. The incongruity of the statement contained in *verse 29* is apparent to any intelligent mind. It reads: "Let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord." If the Lord continually hardened Pharaoh's heart, how could Pharaoh let them go?

THE THREE PLAGUES

Moses and Aaron are still striving mightily with their magic; Pharaoh's heart is still hardened; the Children of Israel are still held in bondage, as the narrative continues in *Exodus, Chapter 9, verses 1 to 5*:

1 Then the Lord said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

2 For if thou refuse to let *them* go, and wilt ~~hold them still,~~

3 Behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thy cattle which *is* in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: *there shall be* a very grievous murrain.

4 And the Lord shall sever between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt: and there shall nothing die of all *that is* the children's of Israel.

5 And the Lord appointed a set time, saying, To morrow the Lord shall do this thing in the land.

As the threats of the Lord become more ominous, the heart of Pharaoh becomes more hardened. But this is a real threat, and strikes at the very sources of the supply of life. Here we are told that unless Pharaoh shall "let my people go, that they may serve me," "*there shall be* a very grievous murrain." According to the New Standard Dictionary, murrain is "a malignant epizootic contagious fever affecting domestic animals." Pharaoh is given but twenty-four hours to meet the demands of Moses, and if he refuses, his "cattle which *is* in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: *there shall be* a very grievous murrain." But "there shall nothing die of all *that is* the children's of Israel." This is a very serious threat and, if it comes to pass, will be a tragedy of momentous proportions.

I quote *Chapter 9, verses 6 and 7*:

6 And the Lord did that thing on the morrow, and all the cattle of Egypt died: but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one.

7 And Pharaoh sent, and, behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

Here was really a test, and a severe one, too. All of Pharaoh's cattle died, while those belonging to the Israelites "died not one." Pharaoh verified this for himself. But as he was apparently not satisfied that the manifestation was genuine, "the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go." As the story continues, the wrath of the Lord increases, Moses' plagues become more menacing, and Pharaoh's heart becomes more hardened, and the story more difficult to understand.

I quote *Chapter 9, verses 8 to 12*:

8 And the Lord said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh.

9 And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth *with* blains upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt.

10 And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth *with* blains upon man, and upon beast.

11 And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians.

12 And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had spoken unto Moses.

Again Moses and Aaron bewildered the magicians of Egypt. This time Moses turned ashes into dust, "sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth *with* blains upon man, and upon beast," and as a result "the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians." And still Pharaoh refused to yield.

I quote *Chapter 9, verses 13 and 14*:

13 And the Lord said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

14 For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that *there is* none like me in all the earth.

For a God to blight with plagues in order to reveal his greatness to a people is the height of moral perversion. Is it only in this way that an almighty and all-powerful God can impress upon a people "that thou mayest know that *there is* none like me in all the earth"? Such idiotic nonsense almost provokes one to exasperation, especially in view of the fact that God himself, according to the Biblical narrative, purposely hardened Pharaoh's heart so he would *not* let the Children of Israel go. Let us see what he intends to do next. I quote *Chapter 9, verses 15 and 16*:

15 For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth.

16 And in very deed for this *cause* have I raised thee up, for to shew *in* thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.

Hardening Pharaoh's heart was done for the express purpose of demonstrating the sadistic power of the Bible God. One plague follows upon another.

I quote *Chapter 9, verses 17 to 26*:

17 As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go?

18 Behold, to morrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof even until now.

19 Send therefore now, *and* gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field; *for upon* every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die.

20 He that feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses:

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

21 And he that regarded not the word of the Lord left his servants and his cattle in the field.

22 And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt.

23 And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt.

24 So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.

25 And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that *was* in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field.

26 Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel *were*, was there no hail.

This demonstration on the part of Moses is far from convincing. "Rain and a very grievous hail, and fire mingled with the hail, smote throughout the land all that was in the field, both man and beast." If all was destroyed, how did life continue? The miraculous exemption of the Children of Israel from this destruction is, of course, necessary to the story.

I quote *Chapter 9, verses 27 to 30*:

27 And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the Lord *is* righteous, and I and my people *are* wicked.

28 Entreat the Lord (for *it is* enough) that there be no *more* mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer.

29 And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the Lord; *and* the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth *is* the Lord's.

30 But as for thee and thy servants, I know that ye will not yet fear the Lord God.

Despite the fact that the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart purposely and designedly so he would not let the Children of Israel go, such brutal chastisements as Pharaoh has already suffered make him almost overcome this hardness of heart and surrender before the Lord is ready for him.

I quote *Chapter 9, verses 31 to the end*:

31 And the flax and the barley was smitten: for the barley *was* in the ear, and the flax *was* balled.

32 But the wheat and the rye were not smitten: for they *were* not grown up.

33 And Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread abroad his hands unto the Lord: and the thunders and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the earth.

34 And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants.

35 And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Israel go; as the Lord had spoken by Moses.

Moses must have felt himself in a maze of confusion as he followed the instructions of the Lord only to find that each time the Lord had further hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he would not hearken unto his pleadings.

But in the next chapter the Lord tells Moses why he hardened Pharaoh's heart, and as he does, we begin to come to the climax of the story.

THE PLAGUES OF LOCUSTS AND DARKNESS

The narrative in the *Book of Exodus, Chapter 10, verses 1 and 2*, proceeds:

1 And the Lord said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might shew these my signs before him:

2 And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I *am* the Lord.

Pharaoh is still obdurate; and the Children of Israel are still in bondage. The plea for the liberation of the Children of Israel from bondage seems to have been forgotten completely during these demonstrations. Was freeing the Israelites the real purpose of these demonstrations, or was it merely the purpose of the Bible God to convince them and Pharaoh of his superior magical powers?

I quote *Chapter 10, verses 3 to 6*:

3 And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? let my people go, that they may serve me.

4 Else, if thou refuse to let my people go, behold, to morrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast:

5 And they shall cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to see the earth: and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which groweth for you out of the field:

6 And they shall fill thy houses, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; which neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were upon the earth unto this day. And he turned himself, and went out from Pharaoh.

And now a plague of locusts. I quote *Chapter 10, verses 7 to 15*:

7 And Pharaoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?

8 And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve the Lord your God: *but* who *are* they that shall go?

9 And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we *must hold a* feast unto the Lord.

10 And he said unto them, Let the Lord be so with you, as I will let you go, and your

little ones: look *to it*; for evil is before you.
11 Not so: go now ye *that are* men, and serve the Lord; for that ye did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

12 And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, *even* all that the hail hath left.

13 And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all *that* night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts.

14 And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous *were they*; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such.

15 For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt.

This certainly was no ordinary plague of locusts. Pharaoh seems to have realized this too, for he hurriedly sends for Moses and Aaron. I quote *Chapter 10, verses 16 to 19*:

16 Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you.

17 Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and entreat the Lord your God, that he may take away from me this death only.

18 And he went out from Pharaoh, and entreated the Lord.

19 And the Lord turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red sea; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt.

At last it seems that the plague of locusts has prevailed over Pharaoh. But no. The character of the Lord surely "passeth understanding."

I quote *Chapter 10, verses 20 to 24*:

- 20 But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go.
- 21 And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness *which* may be felt.
- 22 And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days:
- 23 They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.
- 24 And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you.

In *verses 22 and 23*, there is recorded an event of an extraordinary manifestation. "Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days; they saw not one another." For this was the kind of "darkness *which* may be felt." In *verse 24*, quoted above, it appears that at last the forces of Israel have prevailed, "Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the Lord." But are Moses and the Lord satisfied?

I quote *Chapter 10, verses 25 to the end*:

- 25 And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the Lord our God.
- 26 Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not a hoof be left behind; for thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God; and we know not with what we must serve the Lord, until we come thither.
- 27 But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go.
- 28 And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in *that* day thou seest my face thou shalt die.
- 29 And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more.

Moses wants cattle: "there shall not a hoof be left behind." Perhaps this whole undertaking was a scheme to rob Pharaoh. In the

original petition to Pharaoh, not a word was said about taking cattle belonging to the Children of Israel. How could there be? We were given to understand that the Children of Israel were held in slavery by the kings of Egypt. If they were slaves, how could they own cattle? But without this demand and this refusal, the story would end; this would prevent a further manifestation of the magical powers of Moses and Aaron, and bring this revolting story to a close, and prevent the conditions and the events that are a prologue to the Commandments.

THE MURDER OF THE FIRST-BORN AND THE FEAST OF THE PASSOVER

Up to this time we have dealt rather facetiously with the performances of Moses and Aaron in carrying out the instructions of the Lord. In the verses to follow, they take on a more serious aspect.

I quote the *Book of Exodus, Chapter 11, verses 1 to 10*:

1 And the Lord said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague *more* upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let *you* go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether.

2 Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold.

3 And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses *was* very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people.

4 And Moses said, Thus saith the Lord, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt:

5 And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that *is* behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts.

6 And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

7 But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.

8 And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee: and after that I will go out. And he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger.

9 And the Lord said unto Moses, Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you; that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.

10 And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh: and the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land.

When it comes to killing innocent children, I think it time our attitude change and that proper condemnation be expressed. Mind you, not only will the first-born of the house of Pharaoh, but even "the firstborn of the maidservant that *is* behind the mill," be killed for no other reason than to demonstrate the power of the Lord, who keeps *hardening* Pharaoh's heart so he *won't* let the Children of Israel go.

Who can picture the barbarity and savagery of this act? But even the threat of the death of all the first-born through the machinations of the Bible God fails to soften the heart of Pharaoh. How else could it be?—for again in *verse 10*, just quoted, we are reminded that "the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land." Before his slaughter of the innocent beings, however, the Bible God shows the Children of Israel how to avoid the frightful curse he is about to visit upon the Egyptians.

I quote *Chapter 12, verses 5 to 7*:

5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take *it* out from the sheep, or from the goats:

6 And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

7 And they shall take of the blood, and strike *it* on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.

It is by this blood sign that the Lord will keep from smiting any of the Children of Israel. Why this sign was necessary to mark the Children of Israel from the Egyptians is not stated; for in the previous plagues their God distinguished them without any sign. He exempted them himself from the plagues which he visited upon others. Their cattle were not afflicted with murrain; they did not suffer from the curse of darkness, nor from the plague of frogs, lice or flies.

There can be no question that the blood of the lamb was a sacrifice to the Lord to avoid his taking any of the Children of Israel, and that it was a substitute for a human sacrifice. This custom was prevalent among many primitive peoples. It was a sign to their god that blood had been "sacrificed" to him so as to avoid death from visiting their households. It is the basis of the most savage religions known to man, part of the ritual of abjectly superstitious peoples living in the darkest ignorance. It is the lowest rung on the ladder of human intelligence.

I now quote *Chapter 12, verses 12 to 14*:

12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I *am* the Lord.

13 And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye *are*: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy *you*, when I smite the land of Egypt.

14 And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations: ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.

What an event to celebrate as the national holiday of a people: the murdering of the first-born of an entire country as an act of their God deliberately perpetrated to show his power! This brutal "God" tells them that it must be a feast forever, so that the memory of the anguish from the loss of the most precious thing in the world—the first-born—may never be forgotten! It is not easy to express in mere words the detestation such a God deserves.

I quote *Chapter 12, verses 21 to 30*:

21 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover.

22 And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip *it* in the blood that *is* in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that *is* in the basin; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.

23 For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite *you*.

24 And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever.

25 And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service.

26 And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?

27 That ye shall say, It *is* the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.

28 And the children of Israel went away, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.

29 And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that *was* in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle.

30 And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt: for *there was* not a house where *there was* not one dead.

It is difficult to comment on this deed. Just think of it—"the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that

was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle." No wonder "there was a great cry in Egypt; for *there was* not a house where *there was* not one dead"! What a monstrous and revolting deed! No wonder Pharaoh surrendered.

To show his power to convince Pharaoh, why was it necessary for the Bible God to kill the first-born of the captives in the dungeon? Surely they had nothing to do with hardening Pharaoh's heart. Would not Pharaoh's child alone have been sufficient to satisfy this murderous God? If there were any justice, Pharaoh should have prevailed against this Bible Deity. Did not Pharaoh want to let the Children of Israel go, and did not the Lord continually harden the heart of Pharaoh against it? ⁶

I quote *Chapter 12, verses 31 to 33*:

31 And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, *and* get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said.

32 Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also.

33 And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We *be* all dead *men*.

Small wonder the Egyptians "were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste." Who could stand against such a retaliation? I quote *Chapter 12, verses 34 to 42*:

34 And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneadingtroughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders.

35 And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment:

36 And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them *such things as they required*: and they spoiled the Egyptians.

⁶ The ritual meaning of this chapter is to be found in one of the Commandments written upon the second table of stone. It is the sacrifice of the first fruits to the Lord.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

37 And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot *that were* men, beside children.

38 And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, *even* very much cattle.

39 And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victuals.

40 Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egvpt, *was* four hundred and thirty years.

41 And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt.

42 *It is* a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: *this is* that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.

It is highly important that we remember the events related in the verses quoted above. Here we are told that at least a million people—judging from the six hundred thousand men alone, as mentioned in verse 37—were leaving a land that had been lived in for four hundred and thirty years! This exodus occurred after the land had been subjected to a series of devastating punishments the like of which cannot be found in human history outside of the Biblical narrative. But the exodus is not complete, all is not quite over.

For the conclusion of the story, I quote *Chapter 12, verse 51*:

51 And it came to pass the selfsame day, *that* the Lord did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies.

This is why the First Commandment, the prologue of the Decalogue, reads:

“I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”

Without this performance there would be no authority for the words that compose the remainder of the Commandments, and without this prologue there would be no God of Israel to issue edicts for his "Chosen People" to follow.

THE PARTING OF THE RED SEA AND THE DROWNING OF THE EGYPTIANS

Despite all this, after delivering all the Children of Israel from Egypt, the Bible God insists upon further hardening the heart of Pharaoh in order that he may pursue the Israelites and harass them in their worship of the Lord. To that end we must continue with the exploits of Moses, and the "wonders" he performs as biblically recorded. I quote the *Book of Exodus, Chapter 14, verses 1 to 12*:

1 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,
2 Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea.

3 For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They *are* entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in.

4 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I *am* the Lord. And they did so.

5 And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?

6 And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him:

7 And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them.

8 And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with a high hand.

9 But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses *and* chariots of Pharaoh, and his

horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon.

10 And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord.

11 And they said unto Moses, Because *there were* no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?

12 *Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.*

Even the Israelites began to believe that the Lord had carried the hardening of Pharaoh's heart too far. For despite the fearful blights that he had visited upon the Egyptians in their behalf they began to doubt both the success and value of their deliverance, particularly as "the Egyptians marched against them" with every intention of inflicting total destruction upon them.

Is it any wonder then that in view of their impending disaster and annihilation, that they cried to Moses, "Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptian? For *it had been* better for us to serve the Egyptian, than that we should die in the wilderness." However . . .

It is easy to have an answer to the situation when you yourself are the creator of the plot. So Moses answers—I quote *Chapter 14, verses 13 to 16*:

13 And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.

14 The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

15 And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward:

16 But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out

thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry *ground* through the midst of the sea.

Moses continues to perform miracles by controlling the elements of the earth, the sea and the sky. His magical powers have not waned in the slightest. He lifts up his rod, stretches out his hand, and divides the waters of the sea, that “the Children of Israel shall go on the dry *ground* through the midst of the sea.” Will that solve their problems and free them from the pursuing Egyptians? I quote *Chapter 14, verses 17 to 23*:

17 And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.

18 And the Egyptians shall know that I *am* the Lord, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.

19 And the Angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them:

20 And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness *to them*, but it gave light by night *to these*: so that the one came not near the other all the night.

21 And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go *back* by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry *land*, and the waters were divided.

22 And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry *ground*: and the waters *were* a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

23 And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, *even* all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

Where the Lord put the water and how he brought it back is told in *Chapter 14, verses 24 to 30*:

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

24 And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians.

25 And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians.

26 And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.

27 And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.

28 And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, *and* all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them.

29 But the children of Israel walked upon dry *land* in the midst of the sea; and the waters *were* a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

30 Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore.

No one can deny the efficacy of the Bible God when he “took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily.” Just imagine their consternation when suddenly they find that the wheels of their chariots have been miraculously removed, and their horses are struggling to pull the chariots on their axles! But the real miracle in this episode is that after the Children of Israel had safely crossed the sea because their God sent a strong east wind to divide the waters, he now causes Moses to “stretch forth his hand over the sea . . . and the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, *and* all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them.”

Now that Moses had killed all the first-born of the land of Egypt, and slaughtered all the army of Pharaoh, what is next in his portfolio

of crime to awe the Children of Israel and continue to harden the heart of Pharaoh?

I quote *Chapter 14, verse 31*:

31 And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses.

There is a subtle plan behind all this. The Children of Israel were to be duly impressed with these performances, so they might "fear the Lord" and believe "his servant Moses." It was the object of Moses in this whole fanciful tale to inspire the Children of Israel with his powers of magic so as to enervate them through fear. But the continuation of this story leads us to the very base of Mount Sinai, where Moses is to culminate his performances with the message containing the Ten Commandments directly from the hand of God.

In his journeying from Egypt to the base of Mount Sinai, everything that the Israelites required was miraculously furnished by Moses. For instance, when they cried for bread, he furnished it in this manner—*Chapter 16, verse 4*:

4 Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.

And still the Children of Israel murmured against the Lord. There must be something peculiar about this story, for despite all these miraculous performances, they were still dissatisfied and wanted to return to the land of Pharaoh. But lo! I quote *Chapter 16, verses 13 and 14*:

13 And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host.

14 And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground.

Truly miraculous food! Manna from heaven! What a fitting climax to such an "extraordinary" story!

Now for the truth of the narrative and the events described in the Bible.

WERE THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL EVER IN BONDAGE IN EGYPT?

Despite the revulsion one experiences after reading the Biblical narrative of the exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt, there is one consolation: THE STORY IS NOT TRUE. THE EVENTS RELATED NEVER TOOK PLACE!

There were no miracles performed before Pharaoh; his heart was not hardened; there was no plague of frogs; no dust turned into lice; no river of blood; no grievous hail; no killing of the first-born; no drowning of the Egyptians in the Red Sea, and no manna falling from heaven. The entire story is a monstrous fabrication imposed upon an ignorant and superstitious people, and deserves exposure and the severest condemnation.

How could such extraordinary events of such vital importance to the peoples of the earth, particularly to the Egyptians, have no corroborating evidence, while minor events of no particular significance or value have abundant documentation? Not a single item of historical value exists to prove the events related or that the Children of Israel were in Egypt, though they were supposed to have lived there over 400 years! Not a single authentic piece of evidence is in existence to substantiate any one of the events described in the narrative, or of the emancipation and deliverance of the Israelites. The whole narrative is a cruel hoax!

The entire story must be regarded as an imaginary tale without the slightest semblance of truth;

"it is a
Tale told by an idiot, full of
sound and fury,
Signifying nothing."

The best Biblical scholars and the most trustworthy historians maintain that not only were the Hebrews never enslaved in Egypt, but they never were in Egypt during the period implied in the narrative!

This is significantly substantiated by the fact, as previously stated, that according to the oldest Hebrew manuscript, the words "out of the house of bondage" do not appear in this Commandment. As additional evidence is the fact that in the Bibles of Hebrews living in Egypt today there is no mention that their home was a former land of enslavement.⁷

I have unimpeachable authorities to testify to the truth of the above statements: Mr. Joseph B. Alexander, Secretary of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, authoritatively states that "there is no definite evidence outside of the Bible regarding the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt."

Mr. William C. Hayes, of the Department of Egyptian Art, New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, states that "so far as Egyptian records are concerned, there is no historical evidence to show that the Hebrews were ever in Egypt, in bondage or otherwise."

Dr. Philip Khuri Hitti, Professor of Semitic Literature, Princeton University, says: "Other than Biblical, there is no record of Jewish enslavement in Egypt."

Mr. John A. Wilson, Director of The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, states that not only did James Henry Breasted, the noted Egyptologist, during his forty years of research, fail to find any "specific evidence on the oppression of the Children of Israel in Egypt," but neither "has any other scholar found any clear evidence of that phase of history."

Dr. Sidney Smith, Curator of the British Museum and one of the world's greatest authorities on Egyptology, states: "I do not think there is any positive evidence that the tribes of the 'Children of Israel' were in Egypt prior to their invasion of Palestine, outside the Old Testament."⁸

Abram Leon Sachar, formerly Associate in European History at

⁷ Charles, *op. cit.*, p. xxviii.

⁸ Original letters, all in the author's possession.

the University of Illinois, was forced to admit in his book that there is "no conclusive proof" of the existence of Moses, and that "the most influential personality in Jewish history may be merely the product of Jewish imagination." He further states that "actual evidence for a Hebrew settlement in Egypt is . . . of the scantiest and most doubtful kind."⁹

Professor Salo W. Baron, in his book, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, not only admits that there is no authentic evidence to prove the exodus of the Jews from Egypt, but that if such an event did take place, it was such an insignificant matter that the Egyptians did not even take the trouble to record it.¹⁰

Additionally significant as disproving the truth of this Biblical narrative is the fact that even the Feast of the Passover, including its ritual of eating unleavened bread and the slaughtering and sacrifice of the lamb, did not originate with the Hebrews as the result of this supposed event. They were customs that were practised long before the supposed exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt. It is commonly believed that eating unleavened bread is commemorated among the Hebrews because of the event related in *Exodus, Chapter 12, verses 34 to 43*, but this is without historical confirmation.

Among the Arabic Bedouins, a Semitic tribe, unleavened bread is eaten even to the present day at religious and even secular festivals, while slaughtering a lamb is an important ritual observance among the people of the Near East. The latter represents a symbolic sacrifice of the blood of a human being as an appeasement to the angry God, practised by the primitive, savage tribes who lived in fear and awe of the elements of nature. Both customs long antedated the time of the supposed events in the Biblical narrative.¹¹

If the Children of Israel were never in bondage in Egypt; if Moses never performed miracles before Pharaoh; if the Exodus to the Promised Land never took place, then the Feast of the Passover is a cruel

⁹ Abram Leon Sachar, *A History of the Jews*, p. 14.

¹⁰ Professor Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, Vol. 1, p. 16.

¹¹ Abraham Z. Idelsohn, *Ceremonies of Judaism*, p. 39.

memorial, imposing self-punishment upon a suffering people for an event that never happened and in memory of hardships never endured. The Children of Israel have enough to mourn over without adding fictitious events of suffering to their overloaded tragic memories.

The investigation and analysis of this Commandment leaves but one conclusion: IT IS NOT TRUE. The statement,

"I am the Lord thy God, which have
brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of
the house of bondage,"

is false. This Commandment has absolutely no value in the field of ethics or morals. It deserves exposure as a despicable piece of deception.

MOSES AS GOD

Is it not obvious, in the fictional story just related, that the part played by the God of Israel was merely Moses masquerading as the priest-magician god?

In ancient times the magician was not only king, but God. The people looked to him to perform miracles. Through his magic powers he protected them from evil. All good was attributed to him. He brought rain in times of drought. He made crops grow. He led the army to victory. If the people were defeated or overcome by misfortune, if plagued by insects and disease, he berated them for their sins and chastised them for their disobedience. He ordered them to do penance and make sacrifices. He proclaimed days for fasting and prayer. When full recompense was made for the evil ways which provoked the anger and displeasure of their god, he would proclaim the happy event by the resumption of the natural order of things and the rekindling of the affection of God for his people.

Magic and religion are so closely related that it is sometimes difficult to separate one from the other. It is a definitely established fact that religion and its ceremonies evolved from magic, sorcery and incantation.

Not acquainted with the natural order of cause and effect of the

universe, the primitive mind is stimulated to awe and adoration by that which it believes is unusual and unnatural. It thrives on miracles. Knowing the limitation of its own powers, it attributes that which it cannot understand to the supernatural abilities of the performer. "Not conceiving the existence of natural law," says Frazer, "primitive man cannot conceive a breach of it." A miracle to him is merely the demonstration of the supernatural ability of the performer.

In his studies of primitive societies, and particularly in the fields of magic and religion, Frazer says:

"The notion of a man-god, or of a human being endowed with divine or supernatural powers, belongs essentially to that earlier period of religious history in which gods and men are still viewed as beings of much the same order, and before they are divided by the impassable gulf which, to later thought, opens out between them. Strange, therefore, as may seem to us the idea of a god incarnate in human form, it has nothing very startling for early man, who sees in a man-god or a god-man only a higher degree of the same supernatural powers which he arrogates in perfect good faith to himself. Nor does he draw any very sharp distinction between a god and a powerful sorcerer. His gods are often merely invisible magicians who behind the veil of nature work the same sort of charms and incantations which the human magician works in a visible and bodily form among his fellows. And as the gods are commonly believed to exhibit themselves in the likeness of men to their worshippers, it is easy for the magician, with his supposed miraculous powers, to acquire the reputation of being an incarnate deity. Thus beginning as little more than a simple conjurer, the medicine man or magician tends to blossom out into a full-bloom god and king in one."¹²

Of the human deities of the ancient Egyptians, one such resided at the village of Anabis; burnt sacrifices were offered to him on the altars which he would eat just as if he were an ordinary mortal.

The chief of Urua, a large region to the west of Lake Tanganyika, boasts of his divine powers, pretends that he can abstain from food

¹² Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, pp. 92, 93, 96.

indefinitely, and that he eats, drinks and smokes only for the pleasure it affords him. There is a significant parallel here with Moses abstaining from food for forty days while he was on top of Mount Sinai getting the Ten Commandments amid thunderous manifestations.

In the Washington Islands lived a class of men who were deified in their lifetime. They were supposed to wield supernatural power over the elements; they could give harvests or smite the ground with barrenness. Human sacrifices were offered to them to avert their wrath.

The early Babylonian kings claimed to be gods in their lifetime. Temples were built in their honor and sacrifices made to them.

The Parthian monarchs of the Arsacid house styled themselves brothers of the sun and moon and were worshiped as deities. The kings of Egypt were deified in their lifetime.

Montezuma, the last king of the Mexicans, was worshiped by his people as a god. The Mexican kings at their accession took an oath that they would make the sun shine, the clouds give rain, the rivers flow, and the earth bring forth fruits.¹³

In South America the magician or medicine man was generally the chieftain or ruler of the tribe. Throughout the Malay region the rajah or king is commonly regarded with superstitious veneration as the possessor of supernatural powers. He developed from the simple magician. Even today the Malays believe that their king can influence the growth of the crops and the bearing of the fruit trees. In Ussukuma, a great district on the southern bank of the Victoria Nyanza, the king is looked upon as the regulator of the weather and the possessor of sufficient power to control the locust pest. If he should fail, his existence would be at stake.

In many other parts of the world where the king, who is supposed to possess magical powers, fails to protect the crops from drought or other misfortunes, he is liable to suffer the wrath of the people because of the belief that he is losing his magical powers.

The Banjars of West Africa ascribe to their king the power to

¹³ Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, pp. 96, 98, 104.

cause rain or fine weather. A Hindu sect which has many representatives in Bombay and Central India holds that its spiritual chiefs or maharajas, as they are called, are representatives, or even actual incarnations on earth, of the god Krishna. A sect in Orissa is said to have worshiped the late Queen Victoria of England as its chief divinity. And even today in India a person of unusual strength or clever magical powers is likely to be worshiped as a god.¹⁴

The King of Siam was venerated equally with a divinity. His subjects were not permitted to look him in the face; they prostrated themselves before him when he passed, and appeared before him on their knees, their elbows resting on the ground.

The King of Iddah said to the English officers of the Niger Expedition: "God made me after his own image. I am all the same as God, and he appointed me a king."

Of the three chiefs among the Wambuhwe, a Bantu people of East Africa living in 1894, two were much dreaded as magicians, and the wealth of the cattle they possessed came to them almost wholly in the shape of presents bestowed for their services in the capacity of making rain.

Before the King of Benin was made subject to the English by conquest, he was the chief object of worship in his dominions. He was considered their god. The King of Loango is known by the word which means "god" in the language of his people. They rely upon him to bring rain, protect the crops, and ward off evil spirits.

In almost every country still ruled by a lineal descendant of ancient kings, the people attribute more than human powers to him. This is true of nearly all ancestors of the Aryan races from India to Ireland. They believe that their kings possess supernatural and magical powers. The dyaks of Sarawak believed that their English ruler, Rajah Brooke, was endowed with certain magical virtues which, if properly applied, would produce abundant crops.¹⁵

¹⁴ Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, pp. 87-88, 101.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 84, 89, 99-100.

In England, until quite recent times, many attributed magical powers to the king. He was believed to be able to heal scrofula, known as the "king's evil," by touch. It is said that Queen Elizabeth often exercised this miraculous gift of healing. In 1663, Charles I was said to have cured one hundred patients in one swoop. In the course of the reign of Charles II, it is said that he "touched" a hundred thousand and that on one occasion the number was so great that several were trampled to death in their eagerness to be touched. The decline of the custom began with William III, who contemptuously refused to lend himself to such a vile superstition. On the only occasion he is known to have touched a patient, he said, "God give you better health and more sense."¹⁶

In Catholic countries like Italy and in some parts of France, the peasants believe that the priest possesses a secret and irresistible power over the elements. They believe the winds, the rain, the storms and the hail are at his command and obey his will. They think he and he alone knows and has the right to utter secret words that can control the forces of nature.¹⁷ Even today we hear stories of how priests have stopped floods, quenched fire, warded off pestilences, and performed similar magical acts.¹⁸ And does not the Catholic devotee today firmly believe that the Pope possesses the mystic power to

¹⁶ Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, p. 90.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 65; also *Exodus, Chapter 4, verse 25*.

¹⁸ This recalls to mind a story told me by that master magician, Harry Houdini. Houdini was visiting a friend who had a ten-year-old boy. After he had performed some simple tricks for the amusement and amazement of the child, the boy was anxious for something more sensational and said to Houdini, "Make it rain." Houdini walked out on the porch and noticed from the dark, gathering clouds that a storm was approaching. He repeated a few sentences of hocus-pocus and, with some gestures, at which he was so adept, demanded that the heavens send forth rain. Very shortly thereafter the rain began to come down in torrents and the boy was flabbergasted. Sensing that the storm was about over, Houdini asked the boy whether he would like to see him cause the rain to stop. Receiving an affirmative answer, Houdini reversed the order of the hocus-pocus, and the rain ceased! The boy, now believing that Houdini actually possessed magical powers, asked him to make it rain again. But Houdini, in a solemn voice, replied that the powers of the air must not be "tempted." Houdini told me this story several years after it had occurred. He thought the lad still believed that he possessed magical powers which enabled him to produce rain.

forgive sins, issue infallible edicts, and secure magical intercessional favors from God?

It is not difficult, then, to understand why the Bible story of the Exodus was believed to be true by the ignorant and superstitious people of Biblical times. But it is difficult to understand why otherwise intelligent people today cannot see the interchangeable character of Moses and the Hebrew Deity. Aside from the anthropological aspects of the primitive mind in relation to the priest-magician god, the unusual familiarity with which Moses and the Bible Deity interchanged, and the ease with which the thoughts of the one were conveyed to the other, admit of no other conclusion than that of the dual nature of the same character.

THE CLERGY AND THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

Although I have already shown by a comparison of the Decalogue the conflict between the different religious systems which accept the Commandments as a revelation from God, I also wish to mention that there is a greater divergence of opinion concerning their meaning by the ministers of these various sects. Only the Hebrews—and properly, because it applies to them only—accept this First Commandment as it appears in the code. Most of the Protestant sects reject the first half completely, and start the Decalogue with the first line of the Second Commandment. The Catholics combine the first half of this Commandment and the first line of the Second and use it as the First Commandment. The refusal of both the Catholics and Protestants, however, to accept this commandment in its original form is a deliberate attempt to conceal its application to the Hebrews only, thereby pretending that the Decalogue is a divine revelation applicable to all people.

In the opening paragraph of his book, *The First Commandment*, William Jennings Bryan says:

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me,” reads the first of the commandments brought down from Sinai. The fact that it

stands first would indicate that it is the most important of the ten, and the same conclusion is reached if we compare it with the other nine.”

Need any comment be made after quoting these words? They are in themselves sufficient to reveal either the deliberate evasion of the actual words of the First Commandment, or the ignorance of the writer. If “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” is the First Commandment, why do they continue to print Bibles with the words quoted at the beginning of this chapter?

Is this commandment the most important precept of the ten, even though it came first, in comparison with the other nine? It is pitiful to think that this was the extent of the knowledge of the Ten Commandments of the “Great Commoner,” the man who three times aspired to the presidency of the United States of America!

Dean Farrar, noted English divine, changes this commandment to suit himself, and minces no words in emphatically insisting upon his interpretation. After giving this commandment as “Thou shalt have no other gods before me,” he asks “Who were the gods after whom the backsliding Jews, again and again, went astray? Were they not devildities: Ashtoreith the abomination of the Sidonians, and Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and Moloch the abomination of the children of Ammon? ¹⁹

One would think that the belief in the existence of these other gods would be sufficient to convince any intelligent person that the Hebrew God was one of the many tribal gods worshiped in that primitive and nomadic time; and he was not superior to the others by any standard by which we measure values.

Dean Farrar further states: “Men seem to think that these Ten Commandments are something Jewish; that God did not really mean them to be kept. Why, this First Commandment, “I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have none other gods but me,” is nothing less than

¹⁹ *The Voice of Sinai*, p. 99.

the key to man's whole existence! It is the eternal basis of all worship and all morality.²⁰

What a ludicrous, contradictory, and puerile statement! In his first comment, Dean Farrar specifically mentions the existence of other gods, and explains that this commandment was a warning to the Hebrews not to abandon their God for the "devil-deities" of other tribes. In the next statement he states that this commandment is the basis of all worship and morality. Only a religiously trained individual could make such a contradictory statement without a blush of shame.

How can a person who deliberately mutilates texts he holds sacred, to suit his purpose, speak about the moral attributes of devotion and loyalty?

The Rev. Frederick David Niedermeyer reveals much needed knowledge of the Decalogue and particularly of this commandment. He informs us that "The Ten Commandments are theocentric. As the heavenly bodies in our solar system are centered around the sun, so is the divine law centered in God, putting Him into the place of first consideration."²¹

He continues with a more earthly interpretation, saying: "The Commandments were delivered *orally* in the hearing of the awe-struck Israelites, and later inscribed by the finger of God on two tables of stone. The size of those tables is not revealed, but they may well have been smaller than usually represented by artists." We are grateful for this information. Artists in the future should be more accurate in their description of the sacred tables of stone upon which God with his finger wrote the Ten Commandments. What about the set that God dictated to Moses? The Rev. Mr. Niedermeyer has the honesty, however, to say that, although "the Ten Commandments have a wide reputation," and "most people know something about them, far fewer really know the actual commandments." He gives as an illustration of the general ignorance of the commandments the reply of an

²⁰ *The Voice of Sinai*, p. 100.

²¹ Frederick David Niedermeyer, *The Ten Commandments Today*, p. 15.

adult who said one of the commandments was "You should not take your neighbour's cow."²²

He also states that "a commandment like the First might be given, indeed, by a small-minded, jealous potentate, who was hoping thereby to keep his political fences in repair and to safeguard his own authority. He might give such a law with an eye single to his own benefit, and it would seem only human to take such steps."²³

The Rev. J. C. Masse says, concerning this commandment: "Here is not a force setting in motion a train of sequence. Here is not original energy inherent in all matter. Here is not simply a great first cause of all substance. Here is the personal, holy God, eternal, immortal, all glorious. It is the incomparable, glorious Person who spake to Moses *out of the bush*."

The reverend gentleman has the integrity to include the words at the beginning of this chapter as they appear in the First Commandment, although he adds the first line of the Second Commandment. This is how he lists the First Commandment:

"I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

He continues in his analysis of this commandment: "As deep answers unto deep, so normal mankind must respond to God. Otherwise man has missed the very purpose of his being. The challenge of this first command, 'I am Jehovah thy God,' conveys all this to thoughtful, intelligent, moral mankind."²⁴

And as for the Deliverer, he makes this comment: "But He who is incomparably glorious in His person, and is to be worshiped for what He is, is none the less glorious in His works and is to be worshiped also for what he does. And so to the majesty of His name He adds a reminder of the compassion of His character, 'I am Jehovah thy God

²² Niedermeyer, *The Ten Commandments Today*, p. 17.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

²⁴ Rev. J. C. Masse, *The Gospel and The Ten Commandments*, p. 17.

that brought thee out of the land of Egypt, that delivered thee from bondage.' ”²⁵

The following gems of expression I take from the learned Reverend G. Campbell Morgan's book, *The Ten Commandments*: “The severity of the law of God is the necessary sequence of His infinite love. The fiery law is the most perfect expression of his love for the peoples. Let men then with reverent sincerity stand in the light of His law, that they may understand the perfection of His love.”

He does, however, make one statement which is incontrovertible: “The ten words of Sinai were not ten separate commandments, having no reference to each other. They were the ten sides of the one law of God.”²⁶

The Reverend John Alexander Hayes offers a rather new explanation of why there is a misconception of the commandments. He says that “the average person thinks of the size of the stone tablets, on which the commandments were inscribed, as being much larger than they really were.” “Artists,” he says, “have helped this mistaken conception by drawing them so.”²⁷ He believes that by this commandment “Atheism is forbidden.”²⁸

What a convenient interpretation to stifle all opposition so as to prevent an exposé of this piece of religious dishonesty.

The theologians are wrong. “I am the Lord thy God who brought thee out of the house of bondage, out of the land of Egypt” are the words of the First Commandment. Any abbreviation or change is pure imposture on their part. It is a necessary introduction to the religion of the Israelites and a proper prologue to the Ten Commandments.

²⁵ Masse, *The Gospel and the Ten Commandments*, p. 17.

²⁶ Rev. G. Campbell Morgan, *The Ten Commandments*, p. 11.

²⁷ Hayes, *The Ten Commandments*, p. 31.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

The Second Commandment

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image *or any likeness of any thing that is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I, the Lord thy God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.”

THE SADISM OF THE BIBLE DEITY

THIS COMMANDMENT reveals the brutality of the Bible Deity and makes the Decalogue an instrument of intolerance, persecution, fanaticism and oppression.

How can anyone worship a God who shamelessly expresses his malevolence in these words: "For I the Lord thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me"? What a monstrous God of the universe it must be who would make a special Commandment to emphasize his jealous and vindictive nature, and to stipulate the curse he would inflict upon his poor, helpless creatures who fail to worship him!

Since religion fashions its code of conduct upon the morality of its gods, are we to assume that the character of the Bible God is to be emulated?

Are hatred, jealousy and a vindictiveness that punishes the innocent for the wrongs of others the qualities of morality we want to inculcate in our children? Do we want our children to emulate this God, to demand continually supplication and adulation? And failing to receive this worship, are they to live in a state of continual hatred and malevolence, with the only purpose of their existence to vent their anger and punish those who refuse to pay homage to their vanity? Or do we want them to grow up into men and women worthy of our efforts to achieve a civilized society with high ethical standards of equality and justice?

We are concerned here not only with the truth of the words of this Commandment, but also with their value in the field of ethics and morals. These Commandments are supposed to be infallible moral

guides, and since this one possesses no intrinsic value in the sphere of ethics or in the realm of morals, why was it made part of the Decalogue? The answer is simple. It contains four vital features which reveal the character of the Biblical God and follow in perfect continuity the egotistical declaration of the First Commandment. These four provisions are:

1. The nature of the Bible Deity.
2. Strict rules regarding the making and worshiping of images.
3. The penalties provided for disobedience.
4. The rewards to be conferred for observance.

These statements are definite and unequivocal. If the Bible Deity wrote them, did he mean them? And if he meant them, did he follow his instructions and execute his own decisions? If he wrote them and did not mean what he wrote, then he stands convicted of hypocrisy; if he wrote them and cannot fulfill the promises of his obligations and execute the provisions of his own laws, then he stands exposed as a false god!

The description that the God of the Decalogue gives of himself could not be different. His character is typical of the other primitive tribal gods that existed contemporaneously with him. If a god did not possess the ability to punish and reward, of what use was he? Primitive man wanted reward for his labor and punishment for his enemies.

The Hebrew God was created to be feared. If the wrath of a jealous person is feared, how much more terrifying must be the fear of a jealous god. Without this kind of god there could be no doctrine of special providence, and if prayers cannot be directed to a power superior to man, then the whole structure of religion must crumble. Without a god to pray to, and without prayers being "answered," religion would lose its commodity of trade.

A volume could be written quoting indisputable Biblical passages to testify to the jealous and vindictive nature of the Bible God, but a

few quotations and his own words incorporated in this Commandment should be sufficient to silence all doubt as to his reprehensible character. I quote *Exodus, Chapter 34, verse 14*:

14 For thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name *is* Jealous, *is* a jealous God.

Deuteronomy, Chapter 4, verses 23 and 24:

23 Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, *or* the likeness of any *thing*, which the Lord thy God hath forbidden thee.

24 For the Lord thy God *is* a consuming fire, *even* a jealous God.

And what more conclusive than the following from *Deuteronomy, Chapter 6, verses 13 to 15*?

13 Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.

14 Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which *are* round about you;

15 (For the Lord thy God *is* a jealous God among you;) lest the anger of the Lord thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth.

Certainly no further testimony is needed to prove the character of the Bible God. Even today, clergymen defend this jealous and vindictive nature as part of the true character of the Bible Deity. The Rev. G. Campbell Morgan says: "The severity of the law of God is the necessary sequence of his infinite love."¹ The Rev. Frederick David Niedermeyer asks:

"Is God still jealous?" (and proceeds to answer by quoting him: "For I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God"! He continues:)

¹ Rev. G. Campbell Morgan, *The Ten Commandments*, p. 22.

“Some Christians are ashamed of that declaration. They think it has an undesirable meaning and are sorry that it is included in the Scriptures. Therein they differ from God, for He has freely declared that He is jealous. . . . In the mind of the Creator there is no hesitancy whatever in proclaiming His jealousy, and He has no dislike for the word. Believers who are ashamed of it do not realize what it means. . . .”²

As a result of this Commandment, man’s heart has been hardened and his brain stultified. It has made him vicious and brutal. In his attempt to imitate this Bible God, every conceivable injustice has been perpetrated. The horrors and misery that have followed can never be adequately told. Language is incapable of expressing the tortures endured by the victims of the insanely pious followers of this primitive Bible Deity.

JEALOUSY: THE ATTRIBUTE OF PRIMITIVE GODS

If the Bible Deity had not been subject to jealous fits and passions of rage as well as having periods of forgiveness and blessings, he could never have qualified as a god for so primitive a people as the nomadic Israelites. They needed a god suited to their mode of life, and the jealous, arrogant deity of this Commandment was eminently acceptable. Since gods are a reflection of the mentality of the people who worship them, the Bible God was a magnified reflection of the grossly superstitious Biblical Hebrew of that primitive age.

“Jealousy” is the last attribute one would expect to find in a God, and yet nearly all tribal gods in primitive societies boasted of their jealous and vindictive natures. Jealousy implies acts of propitiation.

The gods of the Gold Coast, says Major Ellis, are jealous and supersensitive, and nothing offends them so deeply as to be ignored, or to have their power questioned, or to be laughed at. Among the primitive Hebrews, it was sacrilegious to point to the heavens as the

² Niedermeyer, *The Ten Commandments Today*, pp. 36, 38.

abode where God dwelt.³ On the Slave Coast, insults to a god are always severely punished.⁴

The belief in a jealous god is born of a religious fear, based on ignorance of the forces of nature. The god who could inspire the greatest amount of fear had the greatest number of worshipers. An understanding and benevolent god does not require propitiation.

The more awe-inspiring the god, the greater the fear. To force a man to do your bidding, first frighten him. Under the spell of fear, you can rob him not only of his soul, but also of his possessions. Religions survive only through the ties of fear. Courage negates religion, and the person who has been freed from the thralldom of fear can never again become enslaved to the dogma of a creed. The more superstitious and ignorant the people, the more elaborate the ceremonies of worship.

The ancient Egyptians flattered their gods.

The Mohammedans worship a primitive conception of god. In their prayers to Allah they cry, "God is Great, God is merciful, God is he who seeth and heareth."

The Hindus believe that by praise, a person may obtain special favor from the gods. The first songs composed by primitive peoples are hymns of praise.⁵

The Maoris of New Zealand believed their deities were responsible for pain, misery and death, and one never thought of getting any aid from them. Their religious duty consisted in appeasing the wrath of their gods.

The Tahitians supposed their gods to be powerful, but they never expected them to exercise the simplest benevolence toward their most devoted followers. Their gods demanded homage and obedience, and were always ready to punish all who hesitated or refused to comply.

The Fijians looked upon their gods as positively wicked.

³ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 1, pp. 639, 641.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 654.

The people of New Hebrides believed that the air was filled with malignant beings, selfish and vindictive.

The Santals of India expect no favors from their god; on the contrary, they seek by supplication to avoid his displeasure and hate.

The Kamchasales do not expect anything good from their gods.

The gods of the Nenenots, or Indians of Hudson Bay, are of an evil nature and must be propitiated to secure their favor.

The only qualities which the Mulungu tribes attribute to their god are vindictiveness and cruelty.

To the Matabele, the idea of a benevolent deity is utterly foreign.

All the gods of the North American Indians possessed jealous natures, and the main object of the worship of these people was to appease their wrath.

Believers in the Bible and worshipers of the Bible God today cannot condemn the Hindus who still worship their god because of the fear of his jealous nature, or the present-day barbarians who likewise fear their god and who live in awe of his jealousy and wrath. Just as the Bible God demanded sacrifices, so we find this same trait among other primitive deities. Prayers were generally connected with offerings, as gods did not perform their deeds or bestow their favors gratuitously.

A Tanna priest, when he offers the first fruits to his deity, says: "Here is some food for you; eat it, and be kind to us on account of it."

Mithra also demanded worship and sacrifices. He complains: "If men would worship me with a sacrifice in which I were invoked . . . then I would come to the faithful at the appointed time."⁶

In South Africa, the Zulus speak of Heaven as a person, ascribing to it the power of exercising a will, and they speak of a Lord of Heaven whose wrath they experience during a thunderstorm.

Zeus controlled the heavens. If it rained, thundered, snowed; if lightning flashed, if the winds howled, it was Zeus who was responsible. The months, the days, the years were ordained by his orders.⁷

⁶ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. II, p. 656.

⁷ Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, Vol. II, p. 258.

It is a well-known fact that where the forces of nature take on a weird and unusual character, such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and the like, the people are more superstitious than in areas where such disturbances are fewer. Widespread superstition is particularly prevalent among nomadic tribes where the slightest change from normal conditions inspires fear.

Even today among so-called civilized people, many become terror-stricken when hearing an unexpected noise. Any unusual sound in the night causes fear. The superstitious person attributes to innocent and normal manifestations of nature a significance wholly foreign to them. For each one of these manifestations, he has some magic formula which he believes will prevent evil. This accounts for the multitude of superstitious rites found in many religious ceremonies.

Believers in the Bible certainly cannot be unaware of the nature of their God as revealed in this Commandment. Yet were this description used in reference to another god, both Christians and Hebrews would vigorously disavow it as a personification of their Deity. How little do religious believers realize the untenability of their beliefs when presented in an altogether different light from the one to which they are accustomed!

PUNISHING THE INNOCENT

Equally prevalent as the fear of a jealous god by primitive man was the superstitious belief in sympathetic magic. He thought that if one member of the family was guilty of evil, the whole family was contaminated and that the punishment suffered by the father would also be inflicted upon the children.⁸

What would you think of a person who insisted upon punishing the innocent children of a man who had supposedly committed some

⁸ A simple explanation of sympathetic magic is the superstitious belief in the direct association and influence between similar ideas and things. This will be further elaborated later on.

wrong? What would you think of a person who insisted upon punishing innocent children of the *second* generation of a man who had supposedly committed some wrong? What would you think of a person who insisted upon punishing the innocent children of the *third* generation of a man who had supposedly committed some wrong? What would you think of a man who insisted upon punishing the innocent children of the *fourth* generation of a man who had supposedly committed some wrong? You would undoubtedly think that such a man was a barbarian and a savage.

If a man with such a character is condemned as inhuman, what should be thought of such a god? If you recoil from this kind of deity today, remember that millions in the past not only accepted this sort of god as the supreme being of the universe, but paid him unrestricted homage.

One of the aspects of the belief in sympathetic magic was the resemblance of the son to the father. An inherited resemblance was presumed to denote inherited character, and guilt if there had been any.

Among the Ewe-speaking people of the Slave Coast, a man found guilty of a vicious crime is not only put to death, but his family either meets a like fate or is imprisoned. The same system of punishment prevails among the Matabele.

The Shilluks of the White Nile vary the punishment. The culprit is put to death for his misdeeds, but his wife and family are given to the Sultan, who retains them in bondage.

The Kafirs have a similar code of punishment; members of the whole household are punished for the misdeeds of one.

In some parts of the Malay Archipelago, a father and child are considered so inseparable that when one is punished the other seldom escapes a like fate.

The law in Bali is similar to the provisions of this Commandment. It prescribes that for certain kinds of sorcery the offender shall be put to death, adding the following: "If the matter be very clearly made

out, let the punishment of death be extended to his father and mother, to his children and grandchildren; let none of them live; let none connected with one so guilty remain on the face of the land, and let their goods be in like manner confiscated.”

In ancient Mexico, traitors and their children and relatives were made slaves to the fourth generation.⁹

In Athenian law, a man who committed a sacrilege was banished with all his children. Aristotle mentions a case where the body of one who was guilty of sacrilege was disinterred, his ashes cast beyond the borders of the place, and the living members of his clan condemned to perpetual exile as a measure of purification for their sins.

Among the Anglo-Saxons, before the time of Cnut, the child, even the infant in the cradle, was liable to be sold for payment of penalties incurred by the father, being “held by the covetous to be equally guilty as if it had discretion.” This belief was carried through the Middle Ages. A person condemned as a heretic lost not only his own property, but his family was subjected to a like penalty on the ground that his impiety had contaminated them.¹⁰

The Sibuyaus, a tribe belonging to the Sea Dyaks, “are of the opinion that an unmarried girl proving to be with child must be offensive to the superior powers, who, instead of always chastising the individual, punish the tribe by misfortunes happening to its members.”¹¹

In some parts of China, even today, the belief prevails that a child suffering from sickness or disease is paying the penalty of spiritual vengeance for its parents’ impiety. When a maimed or deformed child is born, the Japanese say that its parent or ancestor had committed some great sin. Many superstitious people in Western countries, perverted by the influence of this Commandment, make similar explanations for such tragedies.

The primitive Greeks had a theory of divine retribution similar to

⁹ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 1, pp. 45, 46.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

that incorporated into this Commandment. They believed that the community had to suffer for the "sins" of some of its members, and the children for the "sins" of their fathers. When Theseus was informed of the death of his wife, he exclaimed: "This must be a heaven-sent calamity in consequence of the sins of an ancestor, which from a remote source I am bringing on myself."

In Scotland, until quite recent times, it was believed that the misconduct of a person descended as a curse to his children until the third or fourth generation. In Christianity this belief is carried to its ultimate in the doctrine that the sin of Adam and Eve caused the entire human race to be cursed.¹²

Not having the divine inspiration of infallible knowledge, Confucius taught the very opposite to what the Bible God threatened. He said that the vices of the father should not discredit a virtuous son, and Plato laid down the rule that the disgrace and punishment of the father should not be visited upon the children. Seneca said that nothing is more unjust than that anyone should inherit the quarrels of his father.¹³ And Socrates said that we ought not "to retaliate or render evil for evil to anyone, whatever evil we may have suffered from him."¹⁴

The infliction of suffering as a retribution for the misdeeds of others has long since passed from the ethics of civilization. To punish the innocent for the guilty is the height of injustice, the Bible Deity to the contrary notwithstanding.

THE FEAR OF IMAGES AND THE ORIGIN OF THEIR PROHIBITION

The origin of the prohibition against making and worshiping images is based upon the belief in sympathetic magic and belongs in the same category as the primitive custom of punishing innocent children unto the third and fourth generations in expiation of the "sins" of the father.

¹² Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. I, p. 50.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

In primitive societies it was believed that an image of a person contained part of the soul of the one it represented, and that whoever possessed the image could bring evil to the person. It was therefore feared as a malignant weapon in the hands of an enemy, and its prohibition became a matter of serious concern which culminated in a fanatical taboo.

Based on the belief in this Commandment, the Biblical Hebrew was forbidden to draw pictures representing any living creature, or even of the sun, moon and stars. No figures of any kind were permitted to be kept in the house. He was forbidden to gaze at the graven image of a person, and the pious Hebrew even avoided mentioning the word "image."¹⁵

Even as late as the sixteenth century, a chief rabbi would not allow a member of his congregation to place before the Ark an embroidered curtain with a bas-relief of a deer set in pearls—the coat of arms of the donor. However, after much controversy and through the intervention of other rabbis, a compromise was reached whereby the curtain was permitted to be placed in the synagogue, provided the deer was embroidered on the curtain instead of forming a bas-relief!¹⁶

Another rabbi, even as late as the eighteenth century, refused to permit a stained-glass window above the Ark in the synagogue bearing the figure of the sun with rays inscribed, "From the rising sun to the going down of the same, the Lord's name is to be praised," on the ground that people bowing to the Ark, or entering the synagogue, would be worshipping the sun.¹⁷

The Moslem who accepts this Commandment, like the Hebrew, believes that if he makes an image in this world it will be set before him on the day of judgment. He will then be called upon to give it life, but will fail in the demand and thereupon be sent to expiate his offense in hell.¹⁸ The Moslem is just as fanatical regarding the pro-

¹⁵ Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 7, p. 142.

¹⁶ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, "Art." Vol. 2, p. 143.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

¹⁸ Tylor, *Researches into the Early History of Mankind*, p. 120.

visions of this Commandment as is the Hebrew; both have been inculcated with the fear of direful penalties for its violation.

So strong was the belief in animism and sympathetic magic among the primitive Hebrews that innumerable instances are recorded to show to what extent they believed that such magic could produce results. This was the formula to kill an enemy: "Write his name upon leaves and let them shrivel up over a fire," or, "Boil them in milk and say, 'May the heart of —— boil in like manner,' and your enemy's heart will boil and he will die." The early Hebrews were filled with deadly terror of the evil results that would inevitably follow their making of images under their delusive belief in animism and sympathetic magic.

Another Hebrew prescription for producing results through this medium is the following:

"If you wish to kill a man, take mud from the two sides of the river and form it into the shape of a figure, and write upon it the name of the person, and take seven branches from seven strong palm trees, and make a bow from a reed with the string of horse-sinew, and place the image in a hollow, and stretch the bow and shoot with it, and with each shot say, 'May [the name or names of the person or persons] be destroyed.'"¹⁹

There was a well-known formula to induce love and this is the method to be employed.

"Take virgin wax and make a female figure, with the sex organs clearly delineated, and with the features of the person you have in mind. Write on the breast, ——, daughter of (father's name), and ——, daughter of (mother's name), and on the back between the shoulders write the same, and say over it, 'May it be Thy will, O Lord, that N, daughter of N, burn with a mighty passion for me.' Then bury the figure and cover it carefully so that its limbs are not broken, and leave it thus for twenty-four hours. Then bury it under the eaves, being careful that no one witness your act, and cover it with a stone so that it does not break. When you disinter it, dip it carefully in water three times,

¹⁹ Joshua Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, p. 124.

so that it is washed clean, once in the name of Michael, again in the name of Raphael, and immerse it in some urine. Then dry it, and when you wish to arouse passion in the maiden, pierce the heart of her image with a new needle, in that spot where it will cause the most pain. So she will daily experience this pain.”²⁰

or if you wish to injure a person or cause him or her pain the wax image was exposed to the fire, the person whom it represented was supposed to be stricken with fever; if the image was stabbed with a knife, the victim would feel pain in the corresponding part of his body.²¹ Throughout Jewish folklore there are innumerable references to “witches who prepare images of wax.”²² A drop of blood, strands of hair, nail parings, a piece of garment, would be used in making an image.

Under the influence of this superstitious belief in sympathetic magic, the primitive Hebrews rarely destroyed cast-off parts of their bodies. The nails of the fingers and toes, and the hair, were carefully disposed of so that they could not be consumed by fire or otherwise violently destroyed. They even avoided covering excrement with hot coals for fear that they themselves would die by burning.²³ That is why some people today, in nearly all countries, still believe in the superstition that if anyone walks over nail parings, some injury or illness will happen to the person to whom they belong.

To injure a person, a Singhalese sorcerer will procure a lock of his intended victim's hair, a paring of his nails, or a thread from a garment; then he fashions an image of him, thrusting nails made of different metals into his joints.²⁴ Similar enchantments were wrought by the Moslems of North Africa.

Images of gods were also taboo until comparatively recent times. Varro affirms that for more than one hundred and seventy years after the founding of Rome, there was no image of a god in human or animal

²⁰ Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, p. 126.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, p. 124.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

²⁴ Frazer, *Golden Bough*, Vol. 1, p. 65.

form in the city; Numa is said to have forbidden such representations. The Persians had no temples or idols before Artaxerxes I. In Greece also, temples and images of the gods were unknown in ancient times. The earliest temples of the Egyptians were without idols. Arab tradition, which is supported by philological evidence, declares that idols, like that of Hobal at Mecca, were of foreign origin.²⁵

The fear of images was present in all early stages of culture. Among the Baganda, if a person was sick, the medicine man would make an image of the patient out of clay, run the image over the sufferer's body, and either bury it in the road or hide it by the wayside. The first person who stepped over it, or passed it by, would catch the disease and thereby cure the patient. So fearful were the people of the efficacy of this method, that anyone caught in the act of making images was put to death.²⁶

Frazer records that a certain superintendent of the king's cattle was once prosecuted in an Egyptian court of law for having made figures of men and women in wax, thereby causing paralysis of their limbs and other grievous harm.²⁷

When the Ojibway Indian desires to work evil on anyone, he makes a little wooden image of his enemy and runs a needle into its head or ear, or shoots an arrow into it, believing that wherever the needle pierces or the arrow strikes the image, his foe will at that instant be seized with a sharp pain in the corresponding part of his body; but if he intends to kill the person outright, he burns or buries the image, uttering magic words as he does so.²⁸

The North American Indians use images to injure an enemy. They make an image and melt it away, shoot at it, or stick pins or thorns into it in the belief that some like injury will befall the person it represents.

In North America, when an Algonquin wishes to kill a particular animal, he makes a grass or cloth image of it and hangs it up in his

²⁵ Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 7, p. 127.

²⁶ Frazer, *Golden Bough*, Vol. 9, p. 7.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 66.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

wigwam. He then repeats several times the incantation, "See how I shoot," and lets fly an arrow at the image. If he drives it in, it is a sign that the animal will be killed the next day.²⁹

The Peruvian sorcerers are said still to make rag dolls and stick cactus thorns into them. They hide them in secret holes in the house, or in the wood of beds, or in cushions, believing that they cripple people or make them sick or mad.

In Borneo, the practice still exists of making a wax image of the enemy to be bewitched. The belief is that his body will waste away as the image is gradually melted, as in the story of Margery Jordan's waxen image of Henry VI.³⁰

When the Malay seeks to do injury, he makes a small wax figure of the person who is the object of his hate. He turns it slowly over a lighted lamp and utters these words:

"It is not the wax I am scorching,
It is the liver, heart and spleen of So-and-so
that I scorch."

After doing this for the seventh time, he burns the image, and shortly after that the victim is supposed to die.³¹

The aborigines of Victoria use similar methods. When they seek to destroy an enemy, they retire to a lonely spot and draw a likeness of the victim on the ground. After certain cabalistic ceremonies have been performed, evil is supposed to befall the victim. So strongly do the natives believe in the efficacy of this method that victims who learn that images have been made of them often die of sheer fright. Natives of the Bloomfield River in Queensland think they can doom a man by making a wooden image of him and burying it in the ground.³²

If a Matabele wishes to avenge himself on an enemy, he makes a clay figure of the man and pierces it with a needle. The Ovambo of Southwestern Africa believe that some people have the power of be-

²⁹ Tylor, *Researches into the Early History of Mankind*, p. 118.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

³¹ Frazer, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 56, 57.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 58.

witching an absent person by gazing into a vessel of water till his image appears to them; then they spit at the image and curse the man. That is supposed to seal his fate.³³

The Negro of West Africa cuts figures out of leaves representing crocodiles, tigers or serpents. He believes that by possessing images of the animals he fears, he can cause them to keep away from him or to destroy themselves altogether.

The Katish of Australia believes that the rainbow prevents rain from falling. He therefore draws a rainbow on his shield and hides it away from the encampment, thinking that it will prevent the phenomena because its image is invisible.

To protect themselves from scorpions and centipedes which infest the country, the natives of Malaysia make images of the pests on one set of bamboo sticks, and place them next to another set of bamboo sticks that have images of pheasants which devour the pests. They believe this will cause them to be eaten.³⁴

The ancient books of the Hindus contain formulas for destruction by magic. When at war, Hindus made images of the soldiers, horses and chariots of a hostile army and then pulled them to pieces. When the Mab-Margi, a Hindu sect in the Northwest Provinces, want to kill an enemy, they make an image of flour and earth and stick sharp, pointed instruments into his heart, navel and throat.³⁵

An Arabic treatise on magic gives the following "infallible" formula: If you wish to deprive a man of his limbs, make a waxen image of him, engrave his name and his mother's name on it, then smite the particular limb which you want to injure.³⁶

In ancient Babylon it was also a common practice to make an image of clay or other soft material in the likeness of the enemy. Burying or burning it was supposed to kill or injure him. Even gods were not immune from peril.

³³ Frazer, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 63.

³⁴ Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 7, p. 111.

³⁵ Frazer, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 63, 65.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

In a hymn to the fire-god Nusku, we read:

“Those who have made images of me, reproducing my features,
Who have taken away my breath, torn my hairs,
Who have rent my clothes, have hindered my feet from treading
the dust,
May the fire-god, the strong one, break their charm.”³⁷

Babylonian literature contains long lists of instructions for banishing evil spirits. This is the formula to destroy the enemy of the Sun:

“Every night when the Sun-god, Ra, sank down to his home in the blowing west, he was assailed by hosts of demons under the leadership of his arch-fiend Apepi. All night long he fought them, and sometimes by day the powers of darkness sent up clouds even into the blue Egyptian sky to obscure his light and weaken his powers. To aid the Sun-god in his daily struggle, a ceremony was performed in his temple at Thebes. A figure of his foe, Apepi, represented as a crocodile with a hideous face or a serpent with many coils, was made of wax, and on it the demon’s name was written in green ink. Wrapped in a papyrus case on which another likeness of Apepi had been drawn in green ink, the figure was then tied up with black hair, spat upon, hacked with a stone knife, and cast on the ground. There the priest trod on it with his left foot again and again, and then burned it in a fire made of a certain plant or grass. When Apepi himself had thus been effectively disposed of, waxen effigies of each of his principal demons and their fathers, mothers and children were made and burnt in the same way. The fiends of darkness, clouds and rain, felt the injuries inflicted on their images as if they had been done to themselves; they passed away, at least for a time, and the beneficent Sun-god shone out triumphant once more.”³⁸

In 1574, a Florentine, Cosmo Ruggieri, made a waxen image of Charles IX with supposed hostile intent. The king died a month later of a mysterious illness. Ruggieri was accused of causing his death and arrested.

³⁷ Frazer, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 67.

³⁸ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 2, pp. 67, 68.

In 1560, there was great consternation at the English court when a waxen image of Queen Elizabeth with a large pin stuck in the breast was found in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Until the reign of the late ruler of Siam, no Siamese coins were ever stamped with the image of the king. It was feared that this would result in some form of evil to the ruler.³⁹

During the Middle Ages, when one wanted to cause injury to an enemy, it was the custom to make an image of him, have it blessed by the priest, and then stick it with needles, in the belief that the person it represented would suffer sharp pains.⁴⁰

So widespread is this superstition that it has persisted to this day in "civilized" nations. In the Scottish Highlands the belief in the malignancy of images still prevails. To kill a person whom a Highlander hates, he will make a clay image of him, fill it full of nails, pins and broken glass, and then place it in a running stream with its head to the current. As each sharp instrument is put in the image, he utters a form of curse and the person whom it is to injure is supposed to feel pain in that part of his body.⁴¹

Images were taboo among the ignorant and superstitious because of the fear that they possessed a sympathetic relationship to the thing they represented. So intense was this delusion that death was the penalty for those found guilty of resorting to this method of sorcery.

This belief was prevalent among the Biblical Hebrews, and that is why the prohibition against graven images was incorporated in the Ten Commandments.

SHADOWS, REFLECTIONS AND IMAGES

"Shadows" and "reflections" are closely associated with images under the belief in sympathetic magic and animism, and have exercised a tremendous superstitious influence upon primitive mentality.⁴²

³⁹ Frazer, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 98.

⁴⁰ Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 7, p. 112.

⁴¹ Frazer, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 96.

⁴² Animism, simply stated, is the superstitious belief of attributing life to inanimate objects and phenomena of nature.

It was thought that the person whose shadow was trampled upon would suffer some injury. This superstition grew from the belief that the shadow was a reflection of the soul.

In the Island Wetar, it is believed that a person can be made ill by stabbing his shadow. Among the Tolindoos of Central Celebes, to tread on a man's shadow is an offense because it is supposed to make the owner sick. The Ottawa Indians thought they could kill a man by making certain figures on his shadow. The Baganda of Central Africa regarded a man's shadow as his ghost, and would attempt to kill their enemies by stabbing or treading on their shadows. The Caffres avoid having their shadows touched for fear of the evil consequences. Among certain primitive tribes, it is the custom to avoid being seen in daylight for fear of injury through the medium of the shadow. Others avoid having their shadows fall upon the foundation of a building they are engaged in erecting for fear that it will bring sickness to the owner or occupants. In Darfur, people think that they can do an enemy to death by burying a certain root in the earth on the spot where the shadow of his head happens to fall. It was believed among the people of Arabia that if a hyena trod on a man's shadow, he would lose the power of speech and motion.⁴³

Among the Caffre tribe, it was believed that the shadow of a tree felt the touch of a man's foot; and in the Punjab it was believed that if the shadow of a pregnant woman fell on a snake, it would blind the creature instantly. It was also believed that to overshadow the king by standing in his presence was an offense meriting instant death.

In the central provinces of India, a pregnant woman avoids the shadow of a man, believing that if it falls on her, the child will resemble him. The Rushman is most careful not to let his shadow fall on dead game, as he thinks this would bring bad luck. An Australian native is said nearly to have died of fright because the shadow of his mother-in-law fell on his legs as he lay asleep under a tree.⁴⁴ The savage Basis of the Malay Peninsula fear to bury their dead at noon, be-

⁴³ Frazer, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, pp. 78-82.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, pp. 82-83.

cause they fancy that the shortness of their shadows at that hour would sympathetically shorten their own lives.⁴⁵

At funerals in China, before the coffin is shut, bystanders retire from the room for fear that their shadows will be enclosed in the coffin and they will suffer ill health as a result. In savage tribes it is the rule to avoid the shadow of those persons who are regarded as sources of dangerous influence. The Shuswap Indian thinks that the shadow of a mourner falling on a person will make him sick.

In Bimo, a district in the East Indian island of Sambawa, it is the custom to bury a man's shadow when a new building is erected. This is a survival of the custom of burying a live man in the belief that it will add strength to the building. The shadow, being considered his soul, is measured and preserved.⁴⁶ In one instance, the shadow was worshiped as a god.

When the Motumotu of New Guinea first saw their likenesses in a looking glass, they thought that the reflections were their souls. Among the Galelareese, girls and boys must not look into a mirror for fear that it will take away the bloom of youth. The Zulus will not look into a dark pool for fear that a beast will steal their likeness and they will die. Even today many superstitious mothers object strenuously to having their children look into the mirror.

The Basatos believe that crocodiles have the power of killing a man by dragging his reflection under water. In Saddle Island, Melanesia, there is a pool supposedly inhabited by a malignant spirit. Those who gaze into it are sure to die, runs the belief, because of the disappearance of their reflection in the water.⁴⁷

Clemens of Alexandrinus was of the opinion that ladies broke the Second Commandment by using looking glasses as they thereby made images of themselves.⁴⁸ This sympathetic relationship with the re-

⁴⁵ Frazer, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 87.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 91-94.

⁴⁸ W. E. H. Lecky, *History of Rationalism in Europe*, Vol. 1, p. 82. Hereinafter referred to as Lecky, *Rationalism*.

flection is probably the origin of the belief that if you break a mirror it will shatter your own fortune as it has shattered your likeness.

These superstitious beliefs, in addition to explaining the prohibitions of making graven images, also account for the custom of covering up mirrors or turning them to the wall after the death of a member of the household. It is feared that the soul, projected out of the person in the shape of his reflection in the mirror, may be carried off by the ghost of the departed, commonly supposed to linger about the house till the burial. It is a common belief that if a person sees his image in a mirror after a death, he will soon die himself.

Not only among the Hebrews today, but also among peasants of Germany, Belgium, England and France, the custom prevails of either turning mirrors to the wall or covering them with cloth after a person has died. Nor is this superstitious belief confined only to mirrors; it is extended to all shiny articles and particularly clocks and windows.

In the opinion of a sect known as the Raskolniks, the mirror is considered an accursed thing, invented by the devil.

Because of this very Commandment, there are thousands of Christians who even today refuse to have their pictures taken, standing in mortal fear of the consequences. This is also true of many natives within our own sphere of travel. Recently, on a visit to the island of Haiti, I wanted to take the picture of a family group particularly representative of the island. The mother clutched her children in terror lest evil befall them if photographed. Nor is this prevalent only among the Haitians. Women of the Carpathus in the Greek Islands refuse to have likenesses made of them, fearing that it will cause them to pine away and die. The superstition still prevails in certain parts of Germany that if you have your portrait painted you will surely die; ⁴⁹ while in the west of Scotland there are many who claim they have never had a day's health after being photographed! ⁵⁰

The Tepehuances of Mexico believe that he who takes your pic-

⁴⁹ Frazer, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, pp. 94-100.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

ture and possesses your image has the power of life and death over your person. Villagers of Skihim believe that if their pictures are taken they give away their souls. Ethiopian tribesmen of French Somaliland believe that they will "lose their souls" if they are photographed. Recently a Paramount News cameraman was beaten and his camera smashed because he tried to take pictures of some officials.⁵¹ A group of Mennonite families who sought to leave the country were in a dilemma because of their refusal to take passport pictures.⁵²

As with images, so with shadows and reflections. If a shadow was the cause of so much concern, we can now understand with what trepidation an image was held in awe by the primitive mind.

What has been the effect of this Commandment on those who came under its influence? What has been the result of its observance? What of its violation?

ICONOCLASTIC FANATICISM AND IDOLATRY

When Christianity came into power, the era that was to be known as the Dark Ages began. Not only were the cultures of Greece and Rome destroyed, but with them went every vestige of that high civilization which is still the envy of the modern world.

Art was not exempt from the blind fury of this religious madness. The magnificent statues and paintings of Greece were irretrievably lost when this Second Commandment became the guiding influence under the new dispensation. Every known piece of art was destroyed as a "graven image," and the few statues that we possess today as the valuable heritage of that Golden Age were preserved not because of, but in spite, of Christianity. These were buried deep in the earth to avoid the destructive onslaught which was believed to be the most solemn duty of every faithful believer.

The early Church Fathers condemned the making of images and image worship in accordance with the provisions of this Commandment. It was Celsus who said that the Christians "could not tolerate

⁵¹ *New York Times*, Nov. 12, 1935.

⁵² *Ibid.*, Jan. 31, 1942.

either temples, altars or images.” Origen stated that it was on the basis of this very Commandment that Christians abhorred all worship and use of images, and added that “it is not possible at the same time to know God and to address prayers to images.”

In Canon XXXVI, of the Synod of Elvira (A.D. 300), we read:

“It is ordained that pictures are not to be placed in churches, nor is that which is worshipped and adored to be painted on the walls.”

St. Augustine, who denounced the heathen for justifying his worship of an image by claiming that he worshiped what the image represented and not the image itself, replied, “He who worships an image turns the truth of God into a lie.”⁵³

So for the first five centuries of the Christian era the art of the preceding civilizations was destroyed because making and worshiping images was prohibited as provided by this Commandment. It was considered obnoxious and repulsive to make representations of Jesus nailed to an instrument of punishment. The cross as a religious symbol was unknown until the time of Constantine. In art, it was rarely used except for decorative purposes.⁵⁴

The early Church Fathers regarded the cross as a sacred talisman possessing remarkable efficacy in producing miraculous results. It has since become a fetish in Catholic dogma. In addition to its use as the crucifix, the sign of the cross was instituted as part of the Catholic ritual, not only as a reminder of holy recollections and as a mark of reverence, but also as a means of supernatural protection.⁵⁵ It became an obsession to such an extent that the cross was seen in every form of life: the shape of man, the mast on a ship, the plow, the hoe, the spade and even the face.

The temptation to picture Jesus on the cross became stronger as the prohibitions became weaker. For the first five centuries of Christianity, a lamb was the symbol of the Christian creed, proving that it

⁵³ Charles, *op. cit.*, pp. 38, 39.

⁵⁴ Lecky, *Rationalism*, Vol. 1, p. 70.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

was a religion based upon a blood sacrifice. The sadistic impulses produced by a religion that was founded on the belief in a revengeful god who demanded blood sacrifice were beginning to manifest themselves.

The realistic picture painted by the early Christian preacher of the crucifixion of Jesus, with his hands and feet nailed to the cross, his head mutilated by a crown of thorns, and his agonized face stained with blood, was becoming too vivid to remain only in the imagination. In one breath the early Christian Fathers thundered forth their denunciation of the Hebrews for their alleged crime of killing Jesus, and in the next they went into unrestrained ecstasy in praise of their brutal God who permitted the sacrifice of "his only-begotten Son" as an expiation for the sins of mankind.

After destroying "the glory that was Rome and the grandeur that was Greece," the sadism of the Christian religion triumphed over the superstitious stupidity of the Hebrew ritual.

The doctrine of image worship, however, was not finally adopted without a bitter struggle as there arose within the Church a powerful group which opposed it as a heathenish rite. They were called the iconoclasts, or image breakers. So violent was the dispute that Emperor Leo III issued an edict declaring images to be idols and forbidden by the Commandment as recorded in *Exodus, Chapter 20, verses 4 and 5*, and ordered all such images in churches to be destroyed.⁵⁶

Those who reverted to idolatry won the battle. The Church considers this victory of such great significance that a day was set aside to perpetuate the memory of the event. It is called the "Feast of Orthodoxy," and is celebrated on the first Sunday of Lent. Later, it was broadened to include all victories of the Church over heresies.⁵⁷

In the year A.D. 692, the crucifix was officially authorized by the Council of Constantinople to be the symbol of Christianity: "hereafter instead of the Lamb, the human figure of Christ shall be set up on the

⁵⁶ *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, "Iconoclasm," Vol. 7, p. 620.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

images.”⁵⁸ Thus began the worship of images that was destined to become inextricably woven and interwoven into the ritual and tenets of the Catholic dogma of salvation.

Image worship was settled as a Christian doctrine in the year 787. The Council of Nicea was convened by the Empress Irene, who was acclaimed by it as a model of Christian virtue and devotion. In addition to being an ardent image worshiper, she murdered her husband, provoked her son to blind and mutilate his uncles, and finally plotted the death of this very son in the bedchamber in which she gave him birth.⁵⁹

What the Catholic Church condemned as idolatry in the heathen who “in his blindness bows down to wood and stone” it now, with sanctionious approval, claims as an act of piety. There is, however, one important difference between the two. The “heathen” worshiped images because of ignorance and fear, while image worship by the Catholic Church is a piece of rank imposture. It made the worship and adoration of images a commercially profitable proposition. To disregard the provisions of this Commandment in the pursuit of artistic endeavors and the development of art as a medium of expression, is quite different from making gruesome and grotesque statues to awe and terrify the credulous and the ignorant for a fraudulent purpose. The Catholic Church violated the provisions of this Commandment not for the sake of art, but for profit; while debasing art, it put a price tag upon religion.

During the Middle Ages, this practice became so profitable that despite outspoken opposition and condemnation, a leading abbot, when confronted by a monk who had a dream in which he was lashed for his worship of the image of Mary and Jesus, issued this peremptory reply: “Better that you visit every brothel in Jerusalem than abandon this worship.”⁶⁰

While the Reformation destroyed the strangle hold of Catholicism

⁵⁸ Charles, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

on the world, it brought with it a destructive influence on art by its very reversion to the strict interpretation of this Commandment. It would be unfair to castigate Catholicism for its detrimental influence on art because of its resort to image worship, and not condemn Protestant Christianity for returning to the literal provisions of this Commandment. Although the latter deserves credit for its efforts to destroy idolatrous worship in the Church, it deserves no praise for the purpose which prompted those efforts.

After the Reformation, there was a revival of the earlier sect of Iconoclasts whose destruction of images in churches became part and parcel of a holy crusade for emancipation from all things connected with Romanism. Fanaticism born of religion, however, has no sense of value. It is just as likely to destroy the good as the bad, to believe the false as the true. Under the heading of "monuments of superstition," beautiful and perfectly innocent statues and pictures were ruthlessly destroyed at the same time that miserable images of idolatrous worship were demolished.⁶¹

The first objects of the fury of the Iconoclasts were the statues of the Virgin Mary. With obscene imprecations, they dragged them down, plunged daggers into their inanimate bodies, broke the figures into a thousand pieces, and scattered the fragments along the floors of the churches. Next in line were the statues of Christ, which were wrenched from their places in the churches by ropes and pulleys and shattered. In the choir of one of the Dutch churches, rising three hundred feet above the altar, was a figure representing the body of Christ. It was pulled down, broken with sledge hammers, and trampled into a pulverized mass.

The more statues the infuriated Iconoclasts found, the stronger became their lust for destruction. Every image of the Virgin, every crucifix, every sculptured saint met the fury of their wrath. Hardly a statue or picture escaped destruction. It was a holy war with only one object—the destruction of graven images. But despite their mad

⁶¹ Hastings, *Encyclopaedia*, "Art," Vol. 1, p. 854.

fury, not a single person was harmed nor a single article stolen.⁶² The destroyers were the disciples and defenders of this Commandment, and their acts were a proclamation of its triumph!

Some idea of the fanaticism that prevailed in this matter may be gathered from the "Acts of the General Assembly," July 29, 1640. At a meeting in Aberdeen, there was passed an "Act anent the demolishing the Idolatrous manuments," and worded as follows:

"Forasmuch as the Assembly is informed that in divers places of this kingdom, and specially in the North parts of the same, many idolatrous manuments, erected and made for religious worship, are yet extant, such as crucifixes, images of Christ, Mary and the saints departed, ordaines and said manuments to be taken down, demolished and destroyed, and that with all convenient diligence."⁶³

The influence of this Commandment upon art was threefold. In Christianity it was responsible for the fanatical destruction of art on the one hand, and the prostitution of art on the other. Among the Hebrews it completely destroyed all artistic expression, and is a direct cause for their gloomy outlook on life. Not until the Hebrews began to assimilate alien cultures, particularly those of Greece and the Western nations, were they liberated from the slavery of their creed, which permitted the flowering of natural artistic gifts. The progress and development of the Hebrew people during the past century and their notable contribution to the arts and the sciences are not due to their observance of this Commandment, but to their emancipation from it.

What kind of God is it that would deprive man of the pleasure that comes from artistic expression? To worship a God, must man refrain from picturing the majesty of the rising sun, lose forever the beauty of the full-blown rose, never retain the tender smile of a mother, the loving eyes of a wife and the dimpled cheeks of children? Must these precious things be as ephemeral as the winds because of a tyrant in the sky? To deprive man of the pleasure that comes from the crea-

⁶² John Lothrop Motley, *The Rise of the Dutch Republic*, Vol. 1, pp. 479-481.

⁶³ Hastings, *Encyclopaedia*, "Art," Vol. 1, p. 854.

tion of the labor of hand and mind is to murder the joy of living, and kill his ambition to advance. To possess the power to express his aspirations in art, and then be forced to suppress this rare ability on penalty of damnation, is like murdering a child in embryo. What kind of God is it that would murder the nearest thing to what we call the "soul" in man?

A THREAT AND A PROMISE

Before discussing the rewards and punishments provided by this Commandment, I should like to quote some additional Biblical passages, re-emphasizing the importance of the observance of these provisions of the Decalogue imposed on the Children of Israel by the Bible Deity. The reiteration of these prohibitions shows them to be an integral part of the primitive culture of the ancient Hebrew tribe, and accounts for the inclusion of these superstitious taboos in the basic law governing their conduct. I quote the *Book of Leviticus, Chapter 26, verse 1* (the caption at the beginning of the chapter reads: "Israel's obedience is to be rewarded" and "Israel's iniquity to be punished").

1 Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up *any* image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I *am* the Lord your God.

The above verse repeats the warning contained in the Second Commandment and elaborates on the nature of images. Here, as a further explanation, the worshiper is admonished to make "no idols, nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall you set up any image of stone in your land."

Leviticus, Chapter 26, verses 2 to 13:

- 2 Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I *am* the Lord.
- 3 If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them;
- 4 Then I will give you rain in due season,

and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.

5 And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely.

6 And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make *you* afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land.

7 And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword.

8 And five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.

9 For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you.

10 And ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new.

11 And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you.

12 And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.

13 *I am* the Lord your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright.

If the Children of Israel observe the provisions of this Commandment, keep the Sabbath, and “walk in my statutes and keep my Commandments,” then this Bible God will give them peace and courage, and drive out evil beasts from among them, and their enemies shall fall by the sword, and five Israelites will be able to chase a hundred, and a hundred will be able to put ten thousand to flight, and there shall be perfect seasons for harvest, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. That seems a fair bargain: the terms are plain and definite, the conditions not impossible to observe. Before we see what results follow, there is a warning against disobedience. I quote *Leviticus, Chapter 26, verses 14 to 17*:

14 But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments;

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

15 And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, *but* that ye break my covenant:

16 I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.

17 And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you.

This Bible God negates all his fair promises to the Children of Israel if they fail to observe the Commandments. Instead of chasing their enemies, it will be the enemies who will chase the Hebrews if their Deity sets his face against them. But that is not all.

I quote *Leviticus, Chapter 26, verse 18*:

18 And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.

The figure seven, mentioned here for the first time, has superstitious significance for the Bible Hebrew. It would appear that to punish the Children of Israel only once would have been sufficient, but so determined was this God to wreak vengeance upon them for their disobedience that their punishment was to be multiplied *seven* times!

Now what were these punishments that were to be sevenfold? I quote *Leviticus, Chapter 26, verses 19 and 20*:

19 And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass:

20 And your strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits.

To destroy the courage and energy of a people is indeed a severe penalty, but in addition thereto God will "make your heaven as iron and your earth as brass." That is, the earth shall prove barren and

fruitless, and all “your strength shall be spent in vain.” It is difficult to conceive of a greater punishment. But there is more in *Leviticus, Chapter 26, verses 21 and 22*:

21 And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins.

22 I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your *high* ways shall be desolate.

If the Children of Israel continue to “walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me, I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins,” so says this God of the Bible, and proceeds to elaborate upon the details of the plagues he will send. Let me repeat what he will do: wild beasts will rob them of their children and destroy their cattle, their highways shall be desolate, and they shall be few in number! But this is not all! I quote *Leviticus, Chapter 26, verses 23 to 26*:

23 And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me;
24 Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins.

25 And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of *my* covenant; and when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you; and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.

26 *And* when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver *you* your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied.

And if the Children of Israel continue to “walk contrary” to him, he will “walk contrary” to them. I do not know whether he means he will walk on one side of the street while they walk on the other side and go in opposite directions from each other like two small school

children who have had a recent quarrel. It is just about as sensible. But, in addition, the Israelites will be punished “seven times for your sins.” And what are they? I quote *Leviticus, Chapter 26, verses 27 to 29*:

27 And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me;
 28 Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins.
 29 And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat.

If the Children of Israel continue to walk on the opposite side of the street to this God, he will not only continue his contrary walking, but—and here is a significant statement—he will “walk contrary to you *also in fury*; and I, even I, will *chastise you seven times* for your sins.” Here we have a damaging admission: the acknowledged fury of this Bible God and his resort to chastisement to secure obedience to his Commandment. This is the monstrous part of the whole system of religion based upon the belief in such a God. And what will that chastisement be? “Ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat.” Even a cannibal would hesitate to inflict such a punishment, and yet this God wants slavish obedience. But that is still not all.

Leviticus, Chapter 26, verse 30:

30 And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you.

This verse deserves an individual comment because it specifically deals with the making of images and the intensity of the hatred of the Bible God for such a practice: not only will he abhor you with all his soul, but he will cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols which you so arrogantly presumed to make. But that is still not all. *Leviticus, Chapter 26, verses 31 to 39:*

31 And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours.

32 And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it.

33 And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.

34 Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye *be* in your enemies' land; *even* then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths.

35 As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it.

36 And upon them that are left *alive* of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth.

37 And they shall fall one upon another, as it were before a sword, when none pursueth: and ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies.

38 And ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up.

39 And they that are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them.

In *verse 32*, quoted above, it is stated that the land of the Israelites will be brought "into desolation" and that their "enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it." The astonishment is that people today still believe in this monstrous Bible Deity and hold sacred the book in which these frightful maledictions are recorded as an inspired work.

A God who will kill nearly all of a nation and cause the few that are left *alive* to be so weakened with "a faintness into their hearts" that the "sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them . . . as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth," is the cherished Deity of the Children of Israel.

Surely this is reversing the order of the blessing by seven times, and with a vengeance. Remember that “five Israelites were to chase a hundred, and a hundred ten thousand.” Now their strength was to be so sapped that a mere leaf was to frighten them as if defenseless before an onrushing army; and “they shall fall upon one another, as it were before a sword,” and “shall have no power to stand before your enemies.” But if, after all this, they are willing to perform the provisions of the Commandments . . . I quote again—*Leviticus, Chapter 26, verses 40 to 46:*

40 If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me;

41 And *that* I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity:

42 Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land.

43 The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them: and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity; because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes.

44 And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I *am* the Lord their God.

45 But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I *am* the Lord.

46 These *are* the statutes and judgments and laws, which the Lord made between him and the children of Israel in mount Sinai by the hand of Moses.

It cannot be denied that the Children of Israel faithfully performed the tenets of their religion and scrupulously observed the provisions

of these Commandments under the most adverse conditions and the severest kind of persecution. Nor was this merely temporary devotion on their part. Through the ages they have shown their loyalty and devotion to their God and his Commandments in the face of torture upon torture, sacrificing their all in the hope of fulfillment of his promises.

What were the results? What have the Children of Israel gained for scrupulously obeying their God and observing these Commandments?

GLORIFIED PUNISHMENT AND PERVERTED JUSTICE

The Second Commandment as recorded in the Douay Version of the Bible reads as follows:

Thou shalt not have strange gods before me.
Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth.

Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve *them*:
I am the Lord thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me:

And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.⁶⁴

In the last two lines quoted above, there is a solemn promise by the Bible God to those who faithfully keep his Commandments. The value of a promise depends upon its fulfillment. Moral integrity is a jewel of far greater value than precious stones. It is the very cornerstone of an ethical philosophy. Consistency is of a "true-fix'd and resting quality" for which there is no greater "fellow in the firmament." If a precept is formulated; if conditions of performance are

⁶⁴I am using the text of the Second Commandment as it appears in the Douay Version of the Bible and which the *Catholic Encyclopaedia* says absolutely forbids making any kind of representation of men, animals and even plants ("Images," Vol. 7, p. 664) because of its direct connection with the Catholic Church and its relationship to this phase of the Commandment.

prescribed; if punishment is provided for violation, and reward for observance; and then no effort made either to enforce its provisions, punish its violators, or reward its observers, what moral or ethical value can such a precept have?

A regulation which is not enforced is completely valueless, and if its violation is regarded with indifference, insolent disregard is naturally encouraged. To reward those who violate the law and punish those who obey it is a prostitution of justice. A rule the value of which lies in its breach rather than in its observance, does not possess the slightest ethical value, and makes its repeal morally obligatory.

Let me repeat the words of this Commandment, which distinctly specifies and enumerates the things to be done and how they are to be observed. The Bible Deity demands:

“Thou shalt not have strange gods before me. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them. . . .”

Here are very definite and specific orders: their meaning is unequivocal and they do not admit of a different interpretation. There can be no exceptions or modifications. They are absolute and peremptory, and leave only the alternative of observing or violating them, to be rewarded for the former or punished for the latter.

What are the facts? Have those who have observed this Commandment been rewarded, and have those who are guilty of violating it been punished? Let us see.

The Roman Catholic Church has defied the command that “thou shalt not have strange gods in my sight” by substituting the worship of Jesus Christ as God in place of the Bible Deity. It has made graven images of him, and not only have its devotees adored them and served them by supplication and prayer and adoration, but they still do. It has made graven images of Mary—the “mother of God”—and not only have its devotees adored them and served them by supplica-

tion and prayer and adoration, but they still do. It has made graven images of the saints "in the heavens above" and "on the earth beneath," and not only have its devotees adored them and served them by supplication and prayer, but they still do. It has made graven images of things "in the waters under the earth," and not only have its devotees adored them and served them by supplication and prayer, but they still do.

The Catholic Church has done these things not only in defiance of this Commandment, but for the sole purpose of perpetuating idolatry as a means of exploiting the ignorant and the credulous.

From the point of view of this Commandment, the Catholic Church is twice guilty, for it uses the things prohibited for a purpose directly opposite to that for which they were forbidden. Has it been punished for this crime?

It is known that at one time the Catholic Church was the most powerful organization on earth. It enjoyed absolute domination over hundreds of millions of people. It possessed wealth beyond calculation. Rulers of nations were subservient to its will. Slave and potentate bowed the knee in subjection to it. If an all-powerful God wanted to confer his "kindness" and "blessings," as a manifestation of his "love," he could not have done it with a greater degree of generosity than to the Catholic Church. Even today, despite its diminishing power, it still possesses great wealth. If this was "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me" and "who did *not* keep my Commandments," then truly this is the quintessence of glorified punishment.

Our concern for the moment is not, however, so much the use of idolatrous worship in the ritual of the Catholic Church in violation of this Commandment, but rather the truthfulness of the words of this Commandment. Since we have seen what has happened to those who violated its provisions, let us see what fortune has been bestowed on those who have accepted this Commandment and sought to observe its tenets to the very letter.

The plight of the Children of Israel during the past nineteen cen-

turies has not been due to their desertion of their God. They did not abandon him to worship another God, nor did they flout his Commandments. With every cause to repudiate him, they have continued to worship him even more blindly and more fervently than ever before; in fact, too blindly and too fervently for their own welfare. The reward "heaped" upon them for their loyalty might well be termed perverted justice, as we shall see.

THE OBSERVANCE OF THIS COMMANDMENT AND THE ORIGIN OF ANTI-SEMITISM

It is admitted by the highest Hebrew authorities that this Commandment was responsible for stifling the artistic instinct in the Hebrew people. They cannot boast of a single achievement in the realm of art during the centuries they were under its influence. Because of their deluded belief in the prohibitions of this Commandment, Israelites considered it a deadly sin to make reproductions in painting or sculpture "of anything that is in the heavens above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the waters under the earth." A devout Hebrew would not even look at an image; in fact, if he glanced at a statue, he was commanded to make a special prayer in expiation for having committed a sin!⁶⁵ The ancient Israelite was condemned to live in a world without form, without shape and without color.

No wonder his existence took on a drab and mournful hue. His sensibilities were dulled to the beauty and symmetry of life. The observance of this Commandment by the Children of Israel put blinders on their eyes and obscured their vision of life to such an extent that they were unable to see the rainbow of existence. For that is what art is. Art is life and love and inspiration and achievement. Life without art is like living without freedom. Art and progress are inseparable twins, without which life holds no promise and no happiness. The Biblical Hebrews threw the precious pearls of happy events to the winds of memory. By observing this Commandment,

⁶⁵ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 12, p. 569.

they imposed imprisonment upon themselves. They preferred the black crape of death to the multicolored loveliness of life. They preferred the mask of sorrow to the smile of joy. They became the Children of Darkness for the love of their God.

Nor is that all. The influence of this Commandment on their actions when associating with other peoples has been the direct cause of their tragic suffering, and made them the victims of the supremest tragedy ever endured by members of the human race.

The people under whose jurisdiction they lived could not understand their slavish devotion to a deity who imposed such outlandish religious rites. The Children of Israel were regarded with amazement and suspicion by their neighbors, who could not understand their fantastic ideas about life, and their continual occupation with prayer to appease the wrath and anger of their jealous deity. It also seemed extremely ludicrous to others that a mere "image" could cause so much fear and consternation.

Any image in the presence of the Hebrews provoked a violent reaction and the most fanatical demonstration. After their defeat by the Romans and the loss of Jerusalem, they refused not only to use, but even to gaze on the figures engraved on the Roman coins! They refused to handle or even own such money! They preferred to starve, if necessary, rather than violate the provisions of this Commandment. So determined was their refusal that the Roman governors decided to issue coins with their own emblem for the exclusive use of the Hebrews. The emblem was the horn of plenty, inscribed with the words "Commonwealth of Judeans," instead of the images of the Roman Emperors.⁶⁶ Why the cornucopia should not have been in violation of this Commandment, and an engraving of an Emperor's head should have been, is not clear, but there are more strange things in the religion of Judaism than were ever dreamt of in my humble philosophy. (And so an innocent coin, whose validity and value were never questioned, provoked the Hebrews to hysterical opposition to its handling and use.) If the Bible God was so insistent that the Hebrews

⁶⁶ Grätz, *History of the Jews*, Vol. 2, p. 12; also Josephus, *History of the Jews*.

use no money with images engraved thereon, he should have provided them with other coins to meet their needs, as he did manna from heaven.⁶⁷

After the Roman conquest of Jerusalem, the Emperor Tiberius sent Pilate to govern the new province. One of his first acts was to erect statues of Caesar throughout the new kingdom, symbolizing control of the territory. No sooner were these statues erected than the Hebrews once more protested against the appearance of images among them. Fortunately for this study, we have a record of the actual event written by Josephus, the Jewish scholar and historian, who was probably an eyewitness to the scene. His descriptions of this and similar events are so vital in analyzing the influence of this Commandment that I shall quote his own words, lest it be doubted that such acts actually occurred:

“Now Pilate, who was sent as a procurator into Judea by Tiberius, sent by night those images of Caesar that are called *ensigns*, into Jerusalem. This excited a very great tumult among the Jews when it was day; for those that were near them were astonished at the sight of them, as indications that their laws were trodden underfoot; for those laws do not permit any sort of images to be brought into the city.

“Nay, besides the indignation which the citizens had themselves at this procedure, a vast number of people came running out of the country. These came zealously to Pilate to Caesarea, and besought him to carry those ensigns out of Jerusalem, and to preserve them their ancient laws inviolable; but upon Pilate’s denial of their request, they fell down prostrate upon the ground, and continued immovable in that posture for five days and as many nights.

“On the next day Pilate sat upon his tribunal, in the open market-place, and called to him the multitude, as desirous to give them an answer; and then gave a signal to the soldiers, that they

⁶⁷ The Hebrews have not fared badly since they have been emancipated from this superstitious belief. Their use of coins in the modern world has brought them not only more liberty and wealth, but they have discovered that the punishment their God threatened never materialized. They may well honor the images of our Revolutionary leaders on our coins. These men were responsible for writing into our Constitution the Bill of Rights, the greatest charter of civil liberties the Hebrews ever enjoyed.

should all by agreement at once encompass the Jews with their weapons; so the band of soldiers stood around about the Jews in three ranks. The Jews were under the utmost consternation at that unexpected sight. Pilate also said to them that they should be cut in pieces unless they would admit of Caesar's images, and gave intimation to the soldiers to draw their naked swords. Hereupon the Jews, as it were at one signal, fell down in vast numbers together, and exposed their necks bare, and cried out that they were sooner ready to be slain than that their law should be transgressed. Hereupon Pilate was greatly surprised at their prodigious superstition, and gave order that the ensigns should be presently carried out of Jerusalem."⁶⁸

The statues of Caesar were removed from Jerusalem, and when the Hebrews objected to the use of the Roman flag, it, too, was removed from their midst.⁶⁹

Another event of equal import followed quickly upon the heels of the preceding one, and again we go directly to Josephus for the amazing details in proof of the paralyzing influence of this Commandment on the lives of the Hebrew people.

During the reign of Herod the Great, his public works were the envy of the world. He built magnificent palaces and beautiful marble baths, erected coliseums and stadiums for the Olympic games, developed the country's harbors, and encouraged commerce and peaceful foreign intercourse. He even went beyond his own province, and invited the people of other communities to enjoy the fruits of his generosity. Josephus describes Herod's ambitious undertakings in the following passage:

"He appointed solemn games to be celebrated every fifth year, in honor of Caesar, and built a theatre at Jerusalem, as also a very great amphitheatre in the plain. Both of them were indeed costly works, *but opposite to the Jewish customs* [italics mine];

⁶⁸ Josephus, *Wars of the Jews* (hereafter referred to as Josephus, *Wars*), Vol. 8, pp. 569, 570.

⁶⁹ *Jewish Encyclopediu*, Vol. 12, p. 569. It is very interesting to note that from about the third century A.D. the sign of the hexagram was used as the symbol of Judaism. Later on, in about the twelfth century, the Magen-David was adopted.

for we have no such shows delivered down to us as fit to be used or exhibited by us; yet did he celebrate these games every five years, in the most solemn and splendid manner. He also made proclamation to the neighboring countries, and called men together out of every nation."

Such laudable endeavors should have been highly praised and not stupidly objected to because "we have no such shows delivered down to us" from past generations. But back to Josephus's description of Herod's great efforts to bring all peoples together under the banner of Sport in a spirit of co-operation:

"The wrestlers also, and the rest of those who strove for the prizes in such games, were invited out of every land, both in the hope of the rewards there to be bestowed, and the glory of the victory to be gained. So the principal persons that were most eminent in these sorts of exercises were gotten together, for there were very great rewards for victory proposed, not only to those that performed their exercises naked, but those that played the musicians also, and were called *Thymelici*; but he spared no pains to induce all persons, the most famous for such exercises, to come to this contest for victory."⁷⁰

And now Josephus tells us that of all the games, of all the amusements, of all the activities, even the fighting of the lions, it was

". . . the trophies [which] gave most distaste to the Jews, for as they imagined them to be images included within the armour that hung round about them, they were sorely displeased at them, because it was not the custom of their country to pay honours to such images.

"Nor was Herod unacquainted with the disturbance they were under; and as he thought it unseasonable to use violence with them, so he spoke to some of them by way of consolation, and in order to free them from that superstitious fear they were under; yet could not he satisfy them, but they cried out with one accord, out of their great uneasiness at the offenses they thought he had been guilty of, that although they should think of bearing all the

⁷⁰ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* (hereafter referred to as Josephus, *Antiquities*), Vol. 5, pp. 535, 536.

rest, yet would they never bear images of men in their city, meaning the trophies, because this was disagreeable to the laws of their country.”⁷¹

In an effort to prove the harmlessness of these trophies, and in an honest attempt to emancipate them from their superstition, Herod had the Hebrews examine the trophies, at the same time removing the shield to show that nothing but bare wood was attached to them. Josephus records the scene, and I quote:

“Now when Herod saw them in such disorder and that they would not easily change their resolution unless they received satisfaction in this point, he called to him the most eminent men among them, and brought them upon the theatre, and showed them the trophies, and asked them what sort of things they took these trophies to be. And when they cried out that they were images of men, he gave order that they should be stripped of these outward ornaments which were about them, and showed them the naked pieces of wood; which pieces of wood, now without any ornament, became matter of great sport and laughter to them, because they had before always held the ornaments of images themselves in derision.”

Although Josephus tells us that many of the Jews accepted Herod’s explanation of the harmlessness of the trophies, and were not “displeased at him any longer, still some of them continued in their displeasure” for using these images in his festivities. A conspiracy was formed to kill Herod, and as the plot was progressing, “one of those spies of Herod’s that was appointed for such purposes, to fish out and inform him of any conspiracies that should be made against him, . . . “found out the whole affair and told the king of it, as he was about to go to the theatre.” The inevitable result was that the conspirators were apprehended, and confessed that “the conspiracy they had sworn to was a *holy* and *pious* [italics mine] action; that what they intended to do was not for gain, or out of any indulgence to their passions, but principally for those common customs of their country which all Jews were obliged to observe, or to die for them.”

⁷¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, pp. 535–537.

Nor do I think it inappropriate at this time to mention a significant incident in the life of Herod, as recorded by Josephus, to indicate his sympathetic attachment to the Children of Israel:

“He also fell in love again, and married another wife, not suffering his reason to hinder him from living as he pleased. The occasion of this marriage was as follows: There was one *Simon*, a citizen of Jerusalem, the son of one Boethus, a citizen of Alexandria, and a priest of great note there; this man had a daughter, who was esteemed the most beautiful woman of that time; and when the people of Jerusalem began to speak much in commendation, it happened that Herod was much affected with what was said of her; and when he saw the damsel, he was smitten with her beauty, yet he did entirely reject the thought of using his authority to abuse her, as believing, what was the truth, that by so doing he should be stigmatized for violence and tyranny, so he thought it best to take the damsel to wife. And while Simon was of a dignity too inferior to be allied to him, but still too considerable to be despised, he governed his inclinations after the most prudent manner, by augmenting the dignity of his family, and making them more honorable; so he immediately deprived Jesus, the son of Phabet, of the high priesthood, and conferred that dignity on Simon, and so joined in affinity with him [by marrying his daughter].”⁷²

The rebuilding of the great Temple of Solomon (which had been destroyed in conflict) was part of the public service that Herod had rendered to the city of Jerusalem. It stood at the entrance of the city. “The expenses he laid out upon it were vastly large,” Josephus says, “and the riches about it were also unspeakable.”⁷³ At another time

⁷² Josephus, *Antiquities*, pp. 539–547.

⁷³ Josephus, *Wars*, Vol. 7, p. 465. There is another indication of Herod's concern that the religious customs of the Jews be not violated. As it was unlawful for any but priests to enter certain parts of the temple, Herod employed one thousand of them as masons and carpenters. In his desire to maintain it as a religious sanctuary of the Hebrews, he made “a breastwork of stone” around the whole at the level of the steps. On it were placed at frequent intervals inscriptions in Greek and Latin forbidding a non-Jew to enter farther on pain of death. One of these stones with the inscription has been recovered and is now in the museum at Ankara (formerly Constantinople). *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 12, pp. 85–88. (It must also be understood that the name Jesus was common among the Hebrews of that time.—AUTHOR.)

he describes it as being more beautiful than the legendary Temple of Solomon, for "when the morning sun burst upon the white marble, Mount Moriah glittered like a hill of snow; and when its rays struck the golden roof of the sacred edifice, the whole mount gleamed and sparkled as if it were in flames." On top, above the gates of the temple, he erected a great eagle of black and gold as a symbol of the power and strength and greatness of the Roman legions, but the Hebrews objected to the eagle above the gates of the temple, as being contrary to the laws of their religion, which prohibited images within their midst, and which, if it remained, would bring down upon them the vengeance of their God.

It should be mentioned that while under Herod and other Roman Emperors, and until their dispersion, the Jews enjoyed, despite their subjugation, special privileges to practise the rites of their religion with the same freedom that they had possessed in their own land. This privilege naturally did not give them the right to interfere with the religious exercises of other people, or to impose their beliefs upon others, or restrict others from practising their own mode of religious worship.⁷⁴

As Herod lay on his deathbed, an event took place of such portentous consequences that I must again quote the words of Josephus for their significant relationship to this Commandment and its dire influence upon the Children of Israel:

"There also now happened to him, among his other calamities, a certain popular sedition. There were two men of learning in the city [Jerusalem] who were thought the most skillful in the laws of their country, and were on that account held in very great esteem all over the nation; they were, the one Judas, the son of Sephoris, and the other Matthias, the son of Margalus. There went a great concourse of the young men to these men, when they expounded the laws, and there got together every day a kind of an army of such as were growing up to be men. Now when these men were informed that the king was wearing away with melancholy, and with distemper, they dropped words to their acquaintance, how

⁷⁴ Josephus, *Wars*, Vol. 5, pp. 432, 433.

it was now a very proper time to defend the cause of God, and pull down what had been erected contrary to the laws of their country; for it was unlawful there should be any such thing in the temple as images, or faces, or the like representation of any animal whatsoever. Now the king had put up a golden eagle over the great gate of the temple, which these learned men exhorted them to cut down, and told them that if there should any danger arise, it was a glorious thing to die for the laws of their country; because that the soul was immortal, and that an eternal enjoyment of happiness did await such as died on that account; while the mean-spirited, and those that were not wise enough to show a love of their souls, preferred death by a disease, before that which is the result of a virtuous behavior.”⁷⁵

And so the great golden eagle was pulled down from the temple and smashed to pieces. The learned Hebrews of the Law were correct about dying “to defend the cause of God and his Commandments,” because this utterly outlandish demonstration provoked the Romans to retaliate, and in the conflict nearly forty of those guilty of this fanatical and destructive conduct were killed.

But another event, of far more importance and significance, was shortly to occur, the effects of which were to produce a drama of such appalling consequences that not only had it not been known to mankind up to that time, but it is doubtful whether it could have been conceived as a probability. This unbelievably tragic drama was to be written with human blood and indelibly stained upon the years of the centuries.

These “protests” began to irritate the populace, and each demonstration provoked more violent reactions. Here and there among the Roman people were loud cries to suppress this “peculiar” people who so fanatically objected to what they termed “images,” which were regarded by the Romans as great works of art representing their government. Despite pleas by enlightened Jews to their hotheaded brethren to stop these superstitious manifestations, many Greeks and Romans began to feel that these demonstrations cloaked more than a mere

⁷⁵ Josephus, *Wars*, Vol. 7, pp. 528, 529.

violation of a religious precept, and that they actually had a seditious purpose. Drastic action against the demonstrators was threatened again and again, but each time the Emperor restrained the populace from giving vent to the growing antagonism.

An opportunity for action finally presented itself when the Jews persisted in their opposition to the erection of statues in other parts of the Roman Empire.

A statue of Caesar made by a noted sculptor was placed at the entrance to the harbor of a small seaport in Galilee. It was supposed to demonstrate the loyalty of Judea to Rome, and was greatly admired as a work of art. The Hebrews, however, objected strenuously to having it there. They did not consider it a work of art or a symbol of loyalty to Rome. They regarded it as an affront to their God because of his prohibition against graven images.

Let us turn again to Josephus:

“When all Herod’s designs had succeeded according to his hopes, he had not the least suspicion that any troubles could arise in his kingdom, because he kept his people obedient, as well by the fear they stood in of him . . . as for the provident care he showed towards them, after the most magnanimous manner, when they were under their distresses. . . .

“But then this magnificent temper of his, and that submissive behavior and liberality which he exercised towards Caesar and the most powerful men of Rome, obliged him to transgress the customs of his nation, and to set aside many of their laws, and by building cities after an extravagant manner, and erecting temples; *not in Judea indeed, for that would not have been borne, it being forbidden for us to pay any honor to images, or representations of animals, after the manner of the Greeks, but still he did thus in the country [properly] out of our bonds, and in the cities thereof.*”
[Italics mine.]

I have quoted Josephus at length to show that the Romans gave full consideration to the objection of the Hebrews to the presence of images among them. Neither Herod nor any other Roman governor held the spectacular Olympic Games in Jerusalem proper or erected

statues of their Emperors in Judea, despite the fact that the Hebrews were a conquered people. Up to this time the Israelites had enjoyed the same civil rights and privileges as the Greeks, whose country they partly occupied. They could practise their religion to the fullest extent, provided they did not interfere with the laws of the country. This was a remarkably liberal and tolerant attitude for the time, despite the fact that both the Greeks and Romans regarded these superstitious beliefs and practices of the Israelites as beyond all reason.

The bigoted, intolerant and fanatical opposition to the use of images even in the Greek and Roman provinces cost the Hebrews their national existence.

I quote Josephus again:

“ . . . Now upon observation of a place near the sea, which was very proper for containing a city, and was before called Strato’s Tower, he set about getting a plan for a magnificent city there, and erected many edifices with great diligence all over it, and this of white stone. He also adorned it with most sumptuous palaces, and large edifices for containing the people; and what was the greatest and most laborious work of all, he adorned it with a haven that was always free from the waves of the sea. . . . This city is situated in Phoenicia, in the passage by the sea to Egypt between Joppa and Dora.”⁷⁶

“ . . . Now there were edifices all along the circular haven, made of the polished stone, with a certain elevation, whereon was erected a temple that was seen a great way off by those that were sailing for the haven, and had in it two statues, the one of Rome, the other of Caesar.”⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Josephus, *Antiquities*, Vol. 5, pp. 547, 548, 549–550.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 550.

One can judge the broad liberality of the Greek mentality from the following description: “Freedom also kept the Greeks from taboos and asceticism, for their religion allowed them a sane use of nature’s gifts. Their morality, like other features of their lives, was governed by ‘moderation.’ Greek ethics was a social and not a religious phenomenon, and the two, ethics and religion, were kept separate and not joined as in other faiths. There was no divine sanction to their rules of conduct, for such rules were the work of human teachers, such as Socrates. Their simple ethics freed them from any deep sense of sin or fanaticism for unattainable perfection. The Greek accepted life, lived here and now, and was little concerned with doctrines of

These two statues were demolished by the Jews. Caligula, the Roman Emperor, was informed of the deed.⁷⁸ Because of these fanatical demonstrations against images, they were charged "with neglecting the honours that belonged to Caesar; for while all who were subject to the Roman empire built altars and temples to Caius (Caligula), and in other regards universally received him as they received the gods, these Jews alone thought it a dishonourable thing for them to erect statues, in honour of him."⁷⁹

In retaliation for this unprovoked and unjustified conduct, the Emperor ordered that statues of himself be put in the Temple of the Hebrews at Jerusalem as a warning that such civil disobediences would not be tolerated again.

"... Accordingly, he (Caligula) sent Petronius with an army to Jerusalem, to place his statues in the temple, and commanded him that in case the Jews would not admit of them, he should slay those that opposed it, and carry all the rest of the nation into captivity; . . . Petronius marched out of Antioch into Judea with three legions and many Syrian auxiliaries."⁸⁰

"... But now the Jews got together in great number with their wives and children into that plain that was by Ptolemais, and made supplication to Petronius, first for their laws, and in the next place for themselves. So he was prevailed upon by the multitude of supplicants, and by their supplications, and left his army and the statues in Ptolemais, and then went forward into Galilee, and called together the multitude, and all the men of note to Tiberias, and showed them the power of Romans, and the threatenings of Caesar; and besides this, *proved that their petition was unreasonable* [italics mine] because while all the nations in subjection to them placed the images of Caesar in their several cities, among the rest of their gods, for them alone to oppose it was almost like the behavior of revolters, and was injurious to Caesar."⁸¹

immortality. He hated death . . . but did not fear it." Dr. Walter Woodburn Hyde, in *Scientific Monthly*, Washington, D.C., June, 1939 ("The Origin of Liberty").

⁷⁸ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, p. 515.

⁷⁹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, Vol. 6, p. 135.

⁸⁰ Josephus, *Wars*, Vol. 8, p. 572.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 8, pp. 573, 574.

“And when they insisted on their law and the custom of their country, and how it was not only not permitted them to make either an image of God or indeed of a man, and to put it in a despicable part of their country, much less in the temple itself, Petronius replied, ‘And am not I also,’ said he, ‘bound to keep the law of my Lord? For if I transgress it and spare you, it is but just that I perish; while he that sent me, and not I, will commence a war against you; for I am under command as well as you.’

“Hereupon the whole multitude cried out that ‘they are ready to suffer for their law.’ Petronius then quieted them, and said to them, ‘Will you then make war against Caesar?’ The Jews said, ‘We will offer sacrifices twice every day for Caesar, and for the Roman people’; but that if he would place the images among them, he must first sacrifice the whole Jewish nation; and that they were ready to expose themselves, together with their children and wives, to be slain.”⁸²

This last statement is of the utmost significance, as it reveals beyond all doubt that it was only because of the images that the Jews made these violent objections, and not because of any mistreatment by the Romans. On the contrary, they specifically state that because of their fair treatment by the Romans they would make sacrifices *twice* a day for Caesar. It was, then, the blind and slavish obedience to this Commandment that was responsible for their intolerant and fanatical acts.

Petronius sought the individual leaders of the Jews and tried to convince them of the propriety of carrying out Caligula’s orders, but to no avail. We continue with Josephus’s narrative:

“. . . so they threw themselves down upon their faces, and stretched out their throats, and said they were ready to be slain; and this they did for forty days together, and in the meantime left off the tilling of their ground, and that while the season of the year required them to sod it. Thus they continued firm in their resolution, and proposed to themselves to die willingly rather than see the dedication of the statue.”⁸³

⁸² Josephus, *Wars*, Vol. 8, p. 574.

⁸³ Josephus, *Antiquities*, Vol. 6, p. 138.

Though Petronius tried to intercede in their behalf, the Jews paid dearly for their opposition to the statues of the Emperors. Their demonstrations had been so frequent, and their conduct so fanatical, that despite the restraining order of the Emperor himself, it was too late to prevent the frightful consequences of their acts. As a result, they suffered the savage brutality of the first pogrom in the history of this "God-intoxicated" people.

Their failure to make images was one of the serious charges brought against them by Apion, who led the first anti-Semitic demonstration that resulted in making the Children of Israel outcasts in the family of nations. Their refusal to relax, in the slightest degree, from fanatically observing this Commandment brought down on their heads the most devastating punishment ever suffered by a race of people. They were deprived of their civil rights, beaten by infuriated mobs, and driven out of the city into prescribed quarters; thus began the establishment of the Ghetto and the beginning of that anti-Semitic hatred that was to swell into the spectacle of horror that it has since become.⁸⁴

The complete dispersion of the Hebrews took place after Titus Caesar captured Jerusalem. Though Claudius Caesar later restored their former civil rights, the poison and virus of religious prejudice induced by their fanatical demonstrations had already taken root. In the nineteen hundred years that followed and to this day, the Bible God's Chosen People have suffered every known torture, persecution, massacre and martyrdom as well as every conceivable infamy and humiliation known to man.

The rewards "enjoyed" by the Hebrews for their faithful observance of this Commandment are the beatings and massacres of pogroms, the misery of Ghetto life, and the humiliation and oppression which follow the epidemics of anti-Semitism that have spread like a plague

⁸⁴ See Kirsten, *History and Destiny of the Jews*, pp. 140, 141. Also *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, p. 515; Josephus, *Wars*. For a more realistic description of their sufferings, see Lecky, *Rationalism*, Vol. 2, p. 100; Sachar, *History of the Jews*, p. 115.

over the face of the earth. What a price to pay for such blind obedience to a superstitious taboo productive of such barren results!⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Difficult as it may be to believe the story just related, we have a similar example in our own times. I refer to the sect called "Jehovah's Witnesses," which still implicitly adheres to the literal interpretation of this Commandment. Its devotees refuse to permit their children who attend our public schools to give the pledge of allegiance to the American flag on the ground that the flag is an "image"; to salute it would in effect, therefore, be to "adore," which they consider a direct violation of the provisions of this Commandment.

Jehovah's Witnesses have already begun to pay the penalty for their fanaticism. In a number of places they have been brutally beaten and driven out of the communities in which they lived, have been denied employment, and suffered other forms of violence and discrimination. They are denied civil protection in many cities in this country. Maury Maverick, former mayor of San Antonio, Texas, and former liberal advocate in Congress, recently condemned them for refusing to salute the flag and thereby "inciting disorder," saying: "At one time I would have said that was saying [doing] something childish. In times like these, this is an overt act." (*New York World-Telegram*, September 21, 1940.) It is not impossible to imagine that if this sect continues its present attitude toward the flag of this Republic, it may in time be deprived of the protection of that flag and be forced into complete segregation. This would be even more likely if the members of Jehovah's Witnesses were as distinct a racial group, and could be as easily identified, as were the Israelites.

Jehovah's Witnesses have been outlawed in the Dominion of Canada, and even in Australia they are regarded with suspicion and denied the religious privileges accorded other religious groups. Yet their acts are not so serious or disturbing as were those committed by the Hebrews in destroying the "images in their midst."

Even the Supreme Court of the United States, which has time and again upheld the principle of freedom of thought and expression in religious matters, ruled (June 3, 1940) that because of the fanaticism of this sect, it could not invoke the Constitution as a protection in the practice of its fanatical doctrines; this despite the fact that for more than a century and a half freedom of expression has been a basic principle in our society, and we are accustomed to demonstrations of peculiar religious manifestations. *If a situation of this kind could occur in a country like ours today, one can well understand the temper of the people twenty-three centuries ago when dealing with the Israelites in their destruction of the Roman statues.*

With a change in personnel of the Court, a rehearing was granted on the petition of interested parties—publishers, civil organizations, etc.—who regarded this decision as a precedent which might eventually result in the abridgment of the Constitutional guarantees of free speech, free press and freedom of religious worship. On this basis, the Court reversed its previous decision. In reviewing this case, the *New York Times* commented editorially on the sect: ". . . Their beliefs are their own concern, but their methods of urging them upon other people are annoying. Almost everywhere they have gone they have stirred up antagonism. . . . Yet if we permit extremists of an unpleasant sort to be deprived of their rights, it is hard to tell where the line can be drawn and who is to be deemed secure. We think the rights of all Americans are

There is a popular misconception that the prejudice against the Jews started after the supposed crucifixion of Jesus. This is not true. The story of the crucifixion of Jesus antedates the expulsion of the Jews from Jerusalem. The crucifixion story is the *result* of their fanatical demonstration against the Roman ensigns and statues, and was not the *cause* of what is now called anti-Semitism.

The New Testament narrative of the nailing of Jesus to the cross has no more basis in fact than the exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt, and contains about the same amount of truth. There is serious doubt as to whether Jesus ever lived, as there is not a single authentic piece of historical evidence to substantiate his existence.⁸⁶ It is most probably one of the many monstrous tales that were fabricated about the Hebrews after the fanatical demonstration in the ob-
a little safer because Jehovah's Witnesses have had their second day in court" (May 4, 1943).

Following the above decision, another case was brought to the Supreme Court for a rehearing involving the question of the refusal of Jehovah's Witnesses' children to salute the flag in the public schools. Again the Court reversed the stand it had taken that saluting the flag was compulsory. However, Justice Felix Frankfurter, who wrote the majority opinion in one of the previous cases, and the minority opinion in this one, said that on five separate occasions where the flag salute question came before the Supreme Court "every Justice—thirteen in all—who participated 'found no Constitutional infirmity in what is now condemned.'" Noting that there are over two hundred and fifty religious denominations in the United States, he further declared: "Certainly this court cannot be called upon to determine what claims of conscience should be recognized and what should be rejected as satisfying the 'religion' which the Constitution protects. I cannot bring my mind to believe that the 'liberty' secured by the Due Process Clause gives this court authority to deny to the State . . . the attainment of that which we all recognize as a legitimate legislative end—namely, the promotion of good citizenship, by employment of the means here chosen." (See United States Supreme Court Decisions, May 3 and June 14, 1943.)

Although Arthur Krock of the *New York Times* commended the Court for its reversal in this case, he condemned the sect which provoked the court action, stating: "These parents and children belong to the militant and thoroughly unpatriotic, even subversive, sect known as Jehovah's Witnesses, who assert that in their creed a flag is an idol, an image, and therefore impious in their sight." (*New York Times*, June 15, 1943.)

For a detailed article on this group, see *Saturday Evening Post*, Sept. 14, 1940, Stanley High, "Armageddon, Inc.," and *The Persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses*, American Civil Liberties Union pamphlet, 1941.

⁸⁶ As to the claim that there are passages in the Old Testament prophesying the coming of Jesus Christ, see Thomas Paine's *Examination of the Prophecies*.

servance of their superstitious religion.⁸⁷ The wildest and most fantastic tales concerning their religious observances were circulated solely for the purpose of further arousing the antagonism already manifested against them.

If the position of wealth and power once possessed by the Catholic Church is a sample of the punishment the Bible Deity inflicted upon it for its violation of this Commandment, then how are we to describe the "reward" that the Children of Israel "received" for their observance? If their plight is a sample of their God's blessings "to them that love me, and keep my Commandments," then indeed their dispersion and wanderings over the face of the earth, the persecution, torture and massacres they suffered, might well be called justice with a vengeance.

If the "punishment" inflicted upon the Catholic Church for its deliberate violation of the provisions of this Commandment were to be compared with the "rewards" enjoyed by the Children of Israel for their strict observance of them, I think that the Jew, rather than Jesus, should be pictured with his hands and feet nailed to a cross, wreaths of thorns on his torn and mutilated head, and his bleeding heart exposed to the world. The crucifixion is a truer picture of the Hebrews' plight on this earth for having been sacrificed for the sins of their God than it is a symbol for the supposed sacrifice for the sins of mankind.

If the rules of conduct as stated in this Commandment are without practical value, and are not productive of the results warranted for them; and if the penalties stipulated for the violation of the provisions are not imposed, and the rewards provided for the observance are not bestowed, then this Commandment is twice false: it is false in its premises, and false in its promises.

THE BIBLE GOD AND THE IDEA OF MONOTHEISM

The first sentence of this Commandment, "Thou shalt have no *other* gods before me," destroys beyond doubt the contention of those

⁸⁷ Frazer, *Golden Bough: The Scapegoat*, "Crucifixion of Christ," p. 412.

who attribute to the religion of Judaism a monotheistic conception of the universe. That the Hebrew Deity reflects a conception of a Creator of the universe is another of the innumerable false opinions which, for centuries, people have held concerning the Bible. There is not a single intelligent argument, statement or fact in the Bible for such a conception of the universe—and for a good reason.

The mentality of the Biblical Hebrew was incapable of originating an idea of this nature. Like all the other ignorant people of his time, he was beset with myriad superstitions and held in bondage by the delusive belief in primitive magic. He did not have sufficient knowledge to be able to comprehend that natural laws govern the universe. The monotheistic conception could only evolve with the expanding mentality of the human mind.

The mind capable of conceiving a universe created according to natural laws and subject to no human intervention did not evolve until nearly two thousand years after the recordings of Hebrew tribal thought. This conception culminated in the great Alexander von Humboldt's declaration that "the universe is governed by law," which is the result of the accumulated wisdom of scientific progress. The Bible did not contribute a single item to the discoveries that led to this sublime conclusion.

The God of the Biblical Hebrew was a personal concept, while monotheism is universal. The Hebrew concept of God was egocentric; the monotheistic conception is geocentric. The conception of a Supreme Ruler of the universe has as its counterpart the immutable laws that govern life and all things in nature. The Hebrew God is the very antithesis of this universal conception.

The mentality of the Biblical Hebrew was unable to conceive of a universe under the control of immutable laws entirely immune to personal persuasion. A conception of this kind was not only impossible for his limited understanding, but was utterly unsatisfactory. He wanted a God possessing human emotions; one who would come to his aid in times of necessity.

The Bible Deity had a thousand vagaries and could be influenced by prayers, appeals, sacrifices and oblations. He possessed the basest of human attributes, and was subject to the seductions of the flesh, as innumerable Biblical accounts testify. He demanded and got the "animals without blemish" and the "first fruits" of the season. No god was ever created superior to the intelligence of the people who worshiped him, and most gods represented the lowest, rather than the highest, cultural level of the age in which they existed.

The belief in a personal relationship between the individual and his imaginary Creator is held by most primitive peoples. They have not sufficient knowledge even to comprehend that the world could not continue if each individual were able to control the affairs of the world for his personal convenience and benefit. The good fortune of one would be the undoing of another, while the inherent selfishness of all would destroy completely any semblance of hope for equality.

The more helpless man finds himself before the forces of nature, the more does he believe and rely upon a God. The stronger he feels, the more able to cope with the conditions of life, the less his need for supernatural help. The less need of a God, the more co-operation with his fellow men; the fewer the religions, the higher the morality. The standard of ethics rises in inverse proportion to man's religious beliefs and observances.

W. Robertson Smith summed up the claim that Judaism contributed the idea of monotheism to religious thought by saying that "what is often described as a natural tendency in Semitic religion toward ethical monotheism is in the main nothing more than a consequence of the alliance of religion with monarchy."⁸⁸ The *Jewish Encyclopedia* states that the religion of the early Hebrew people was "monolatrous rather than monotheistic." They believed that the Hebrew God was "the *one* God and *their* God but not the one and only God." He was the national God of the Hebrews just as "Chemosh was the god of Moab and Milkom the god of Ammon"; there could be "no

⁸⁸ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 8, p. 659.

other God in Israel . . . it did not affect the reality of the gods of other nations.”⁸⁹

“The ethical monotheism of the Prophets of Israel was not the product of any philosophical thinking,”⁹⁰ states another high authority. After a lifetime of research, Professor James H. Breasted substantiates this statement in emphatic and unequivocal terms: “In the Second Commandment that [the Bible Deity] laid upon the Israelites, he himself recognized the existence of other gods when he said, ‘Thou shalt not have other gods before me.’ ”⁹¹

The Bible Deity is an anthropomorphic God who is supposed to answer prayers and confer favors and rewards, who demands sacrifices, metes out punishment for disobedience to his commands and wishes, and penalizes the children of men for their “sins.” He could free a people from bondage, cause locusts to devour a land, and just as easily drive them away; he could cause pestilences and floods, harden hearts, and do all manner of evil; he could send manna from heaven; he could divide the waters of the sea; he could stop the sun and the moon. He was jealous and vindictive; his anger caused the earth to tremble and brought consternation to the hearts of men.

All primitive peoples contemporaneous with the Hebrews, especially at the time the Decalogue was probably written, believed in a plurality of gods. The sky was full of the gods of the Babylonians, the Chaldeans and the Egyptians. The Biblical Deity was but another of these provincial gods of primitive man.

The conception of the God of the Bible is explained by the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, and is applicable to all forms of belief in a personal God:

“The notion of the Supreme God, *needed for religion*, is not the highly metaphysical conception demanded by right philosophy. If it were, but few could hope for salvation. The God of religion is the unspeakably great Lord on whom man depends, in whom he

⁸⁹ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 9, p. 660.

⁹⁰ Hastings, *Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 8, p. 819.

⁹¹ James H. Breasted, *Dawn of Conscience*, p. 352.

recognizes the source of his happiness and perfection; He is the righteous Judge, rewarding good and punishing evil; the loving and the merciful Father, whose ear is ever open to the prayers of His needy and penitent children. Such a conception of God can readily be grasped by simple, unphilosophic minds, by children, by the unlettered peasant, by the converted savage.”⁹²

What an open confession of the infantile conception of the Bible Deity and the religions based upon the belief in such a God!

This substantiates my contention that a monotheistic conception of God could not be comprehended by the authors of the Bible, and the *Catholic Encyclopedia* adds additional and still more damaging testimony when it states further the modern rationalist’s and evolutionist’s point of view that “the mind of man was in the beginning but little above that of his apelike ancestors, and hence incapable of grasping so intellectual a conception as that of Monotheism.”⁹³

It is just as erroneous to attribute to Judaism the idea of a Supreme Creator of the world as it is to regard the Hebrew language as the original tongue of mankind. Just as we know that the primitive language of a Biblical Hebrew was utterly inadequate as a foundation for all other languages, so with the idea of the Hebrew God. It was not because of the confusion of languages at the Tower of Babel that other languages came into existence, nor was it at Mount Sinai that the idea of a Supreme Being entered the mind of man.

Numerous passages in the Bible clearly describe the nature of the Bible God, and his repeated and constant warnings against the worship of *other* gods is proof that there was a belief in the existence of other gods. Surely, if the Hebrew God himself admitted the existence of other gods, there is little else for the believer in the Bible to do but accept this admission.

For Biblical evidence of the belief in other gods, I quote:

Joshua, Chapter 24, verse 14:

14 Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; and put away

⁹² *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 10, p. 500.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord.

Exodus, Chapter 22, verse 20:

20 He that sacrificeth unto *any* god, save unto the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed.

Judges, Chapter 11, verse 24:

24 Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever the Lord our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess.

Kings 1, Chapter 11, verse 33:

33 Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do *that which is* right in mine eyes, and to *keep* my statutes and my judgments, as *did* David his father.

In primitive societies such occurrences were not unusual. A new god was like a new leader. All allegiance to the old had to be abandoned; the new leader demanded undivided support. Unless the old ties were completely severed, there would be no success in whatever was undertaken. This Commandment explicitly states that the Israelites not only believed in other gods, but worshiped them. They also worshiped images, and continued to do so for several centuries after this Commandment was "handed down." They were no different from the other ignorant and barbarous peoples of their time.

This primitive anthropomorphic concept of God has been fundamentally responsible for paralyzing man's brain. The unquestioning faith in the supernatural ability of the God to interfere in the affairs of the world has been the great stumbling block to intellectual progress.

A false, distorted conception produces a false, distorted viewpoint. No wonder this perverted view of a God has distorted man's viewpoint of life. A wrong conception of the universe and its motivating force will inevitably produce acts contrary to basic facts and out of harmony with life itself. If man is taught that disease is sent as a punish-

ment for sin, he will certainly not be stimulated to find the cause and cure of any particular disease. On the contrary, innocent acts will be suspected of having caused misfortune, and vicious acts often committed in expiation of supposed wrongs. This is exactly the attitude which has resulted from the influence of the Commandments. It has built temples for gods and dungeons for men; it has caused man to waste his affection upon ghosts and destroy his fellow man.

Not a single department of human activity has escaped the blight of the virus of religious superstition. Pleasure was regarded as sinful, and suffering became the purpose of life. If man's lot was to be an expiation for his sins, how could there be any smiles or laughter? How can joy exist in a world created for human misery? If the God we worship as the only true one bids us punish those who worship another because of his jealousy, is it surprising that members of different religious beliefs hate one another so bitterly and intensely? How can we expect to abolish religious hatred and racial prejudice while we continue to worship a jealous and vindictive God?

Instead of regarding social institutions in a utilitarian light to promote the happiness of mankind, they were restricted to those matters which had the "approval" of this God in an effort to avoid his wrath. There is hardly a social relation that has not been hampered and restricted, hardly a triumph of the intellect over the tyrannical forces of nature that has not been condemned, by the believers in the anthropomorphic Bible Deity.

When anesthesia was first introduced, it was objected to on the ground that the alleviation of pain was an affront to the Lord because he had ordained that man should suffer for his sins. When "twilight sleep" was introduced to mitigate the agony of childbirth, it was bitterly opposed because of the Biblical injunction, "In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children." To relieve pain was condemned as a monstrous heresy; it would deprive God of his most effective weapon, for how else could he punish the children of the earth for their sins?

The bitterest opponents of the dissemination of birth control in-

formation are the religionists who take literally the Biblical statement that man should be "fruitful and multiply."⁹⁴

Even the use of knives and forks was condemned as impious because God had given us fingers to eat with.

Not very long ago, when some humanitarian people sought to establish a child welfare organization, a minister protested on the ground that if God had wanted better care to be taken of the children, he would have so provided. And when an effort was made to raise the school age of children in the State of New York, it was bitterly opposed by the Catholic Church.⁹⁵

Benjamin Franklin was condemned as a mocking atheist for his invention of the lightning rod. It was characterized as the "heretical rod" designed to rob God of his power to inflict just punishment on those who provoked his wrath.

Thomas A. Edison's invention of the electric light, which has been of such immeasurable benefit to humanity, was condemned "as interfering with the divine plan of the world which God had ordained that it should be dark at night."⁹⁶

When the Wright brothers announced the invention of the flying machine, religionists denounced it as an impious and blasphemous invention because it would be used to trespass on God's domain. It was fanatically condemned as "a flying insult in the face of God."⁹⁷

Slowly but surely, as must all erroneous beliefs, this idea of an anthropomorphic God will vanish from the mind of man. Just as brave and courageous thinkers of the past were responsible for the emancipation of the human mind from the deceiving and illusory concepts of the world in which we live, so today we find our leaders of

⁹⁴ Genesis, Chapter 1, verse 28.

⁹⁵ *New York American*, Apr. 6, 1933.

⁹⁶ Virginia S. Eifert, "The Story of Fire," *Natural History Magazine*, Feb., 1939.

⁹⁷ For a detailed compilation of the detrimental influence of religion on human progress, see the following publications: William J. Fielding, *The Shackles of the Supernatural*; J. W. Draper, *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* and *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*; A. D. White, *Warfare between Science and Theology*; H. B. Bonner, *Humanity's Gain from Unbelief*; C. T. Gorham, *Christianity and Civilization*.

thought urging the abandonment of false conceptions of God and the universe. Albert Einstein, "the famous unifier of time and space," has proclaimed that man must abandon the idea of a personal God if we are to achieve "the Good, the True and the Beautiful in humanity itself." Professor Einstein said:

"During the youthful period of mankind's spiritual evolution, human fantasy created gods in man's own image, who by operations of their will were supposed to determine, or at any rate to influence, the phenomenal world. Man sought to alter the disposition of these gods in his own favor by means of magic and prayer."⁹⁸

No more conclusive observation on this subject can be made than that by Professor Leuba, who said: "The higher the state of intellectual progress, the less is there a belief in a god."⁹⁹

The following newspaper item, though intended humorously, is not without truth:

"Among the last wills and testaments recorded in Cherokee County, North Carolina, is that of an eccentric woman who left part of her estate to God. In an endeavor to settle the case properly, the usual suit, naming God a party thereto, was filed. And in the summons, the sheriff made this response: 'After due and diligent search, God cannot be found in Cherokee County.'"

The sheriff's report that "after due and diligent search God cannot be found in Cherokee County," might well have been the report had he made a *universal* instead of a *local* search for the beneficiary of the "eccentric woman who left part of her estate to God."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ *New York Times*, Sept. 11, 1940.

⁹⁹ James H. Leuba, *God or Man*, p. 272.

¹⁰⁰ *New York World-Telegram*, Apr. 19, 1940.

The Third Commandment

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold *him* guiltless that taketh his name in vain.”

THE ANIMISTIC SIGNIFICANCE OF NAMES

THIS Commandment follows in perfect continuity the previous one as regards the magical origin of religion and the taboos that are the inevitable outgrowth of a belief in animism. The taboo against mentioning names has the same genesis as the prohibition against making graven images. This Commandment emphasizes the vindictiveness of the priest-magician-god as exemplified by the Hebrew deity. Just as we discovered in the analysis of the Second Commandment that image making was prohibited because of the fear that a person could be sympathetically injured through his image, so we find that mentioning names was prohibited for the identical reason.

It was once firmly believed that a person's name was a substantial part of himself, and that serious injury could be inflicted on him just as effectively through the medium of his name as on his physical body. Primitive man considered his name a vital part of his soul, and his regard and care for it were a matter of serious concern.

To the primitive mind, that which had no name did not exist. Only after a name was given was a person supposed to have a "soul." In some languages the words for "name," "breath" and "soul" are synonymous. This is accounted for by the fact that a particular person responds to a particular name which he has received at birth. His name is his mark of identification, and he would be a "nobody" without it. He would feel as chagrined or hurt if he were denounced by name as though physically attacked; on the other hand, a pleasurable reaction would follow if favorable things were said about him when his name was used.¹

¹ There is a vestigial survival of this superstition even today. We applaud the *name* of a person as a mark of approval or praise, and hiss his *name* to express our opposition and hatred, unconsciously believing that these manifestations will have their desired homeopathic effect.

This belief, which is based on sympathetic magic, was widespread in primitive societies of the same tribal pattern as that of the early Hebrews. In order to understand the real significance and meaning of this Commandment and the reason for its inclusion in the Decalogue, it is pertinent to show its prevalence and influence upon the thoughts and actions of some primitive peoples.

The natives of the Duke of York Island believe that by persistently calling the name of a man whom they wish to appear, he will be drawn to them even from a great distance.² The Zulus believe that to "name a being is to invoke him, to render him present."³

The Indians of North America are afraid to utter their own names. Significant, as well as interesting, is the fact that the real name of the young Indian girl who saved the life of Captain John Smith was not Pocahontas. It was Matokes. She was given the name of Pocahontas to conceal her real name from the British because of the superstitious fear that if her real name were known some injury would be inflicted on her. This superstition prevails throughout all Indian tribes, and personal names are mentioned with great reluctance. It is reported that on many occasions, while in court, Indians have refused to state the names of the persons involved in disputes. Often, when forced to make an identification, the Indian will move his lips, without speaking, in the direction of the person he wishes to identify.⁴ The North American Indian regards his name not as a mere label, but as distinct a part of his personality as his eyes or teeth. He believes that injury will result as surely from the malicious handling of his name as from a wound inflicted on any part of his physical organism.⁵

One of the most serious charges that can be brought against a Hindu woman is to accuse her of mentioning her husband's name.⁶ A Bobo wife would rather be unfaithful than commit the monstrous

² Robert Briffault, *Mothers*, Vol. 1, p. 11.

³ "Talk of the devil and he is sure to appear" had a far more serious meaning in the early history of mankind than its facetious use has today.

⁴ Tylor, *Early History of Mankind*, p. 140.

⁵ Frazer, *Golden Bough*, Vol. 3, p. 318.

⁶ Tylor, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

sin of allowing her husband's name to pass her lips. In antiquity, Ionian women would not call their husbands by their names. After marriage, an Aino wife may not mention her husband's name; to do so would be deemed equivalent to killing him.⁷ The Tolampoos of Central Celebes believe that by writing a man's name his soul could be carried off.

Among the Taculius, the priest "seizes" the name of a dead man from his mouth, and "places" it on the forehead of one of those present. They believe that it becomes incorporated in him and will pass, by the sexual act, into the embryo of the first child born to this man's wife; the child will bear the name of the dead.⁸

To the Egyptian no being is complete without a name, and he believes that by the use of magic a man's life can be taken from him through the medium of his name. Cursing a person when mentioning his name will bring upon him those misfortunes incorporated in the curse.

The medieval Germans believed that if a smock-frock was laid on the doorsill, and over it was pronounced the name of a person whom one wanted to injure, he would feel every blow as though he were inside it in the flesh.⁹

The secrecy with which the Australian aborigine guards his name arises from the belief that if any enemy knows his name he can through some form of magic bring him injury.¹⁰ The Australians believe that "the life of an enemy may be taken by the use of his name in incantation." To that end the name given to a child at birth is held in the utmost secrecy and only imparted to him by his father on initiation. At the threshold of manhood (or womanhood) a new name is conferred upon him (or her), and the name he (or she) bore during infancy and childhood is forgotten. These people are also convinced that a curse will strike a foe dead at a distance of a hundred miles.

Among the Yuin of New South Wales, the totem name is said to

⁷ Frazer, *op. cit.*, p. 337.

⁸ Hastings, *Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 3, p. 134.

⁹ Tylor, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

¹⁰ Frazer, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 320.

have been something magical rather than a mere name in our sense, and it was kept secret lest an enemy should injure its bearer by sorcery.¹¹

The aborigines of Lake Tylers, in Victoria, mention the name of a member of their tribe with great reluctance. Their usual method of addressing each other is by the words "cousin," "friend" and "brother."¹²

Among some primitive tribes, it is believed that even to utter one's own name is tantamount to parting with one's soul. The Ojibwa warn their children never to give their own names lest they cease to grow. In Java the natives believe that all that is needed to kill a person is to write his name on a piece of bone and bury it in a damp place; as the name gradually fades away, so will the person to whom it belongs. The ancient Greeks used to write the names of their foes on tablets and drive nails through them in the belief that they were inflicting injury on the actual person.¹³

In Abyssinia, at the present day, it is customary to give a child a secret name at baptism and call him by a nickname which the mother gives him after the church ceremony. A similar belief prevailed among the Egyptians. Every Egyptian child received two names at birth, which were described as great and little names. The little name was made public and the great name was carefully concealed.¹⁴

The Indians of British Columbia have a strange fear of uttering their own names, but have no hesitation in giving each other's names.¹⁵ The Abipone of South America thinks it a sin to utter his own name and, if asked what his name is, will nudge his neighbor to answer for him.

The Wolofs of Senegambia, even today, are very much annoyed if anyone calls them in a loud voice; for they say that their name will be

¹¹ Frazer, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 320.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 321.

¹³ Briffault, *Mothers*, Vol. 1, pp. 9, 14.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 322.

remembered by an evil spirit and made use of by him to do them mischief at night.

Among the hill tribes of Assam, each individual has a private name which may not be revealed. Should anyone violate this rule, the whole village is tabooed for two days, during which a ceremonial feast is provided at the expense of the guilty one. Among the Kru Negroes of West Africa, a man's real name is always concealed from all but his nearest relations; to other people he is known only under an assumed name.

The Ewe-speaking people of the Slave Coast believe they can harm a person by "injuring" his name. This is usually done by beating the stump of a tree while pronouncing the name. This will bring the person to the stump, where he will meet his death.¹⁶

While a member of the Bangala of the Upper Congo is away fishing or hunting, his name must not be mentioned by those of his household for fear that the spirits of the woods will bring ill luck to his efforts.¹⁷

Among savage tribes the name is associated with the person and his accomplishments. The following is an admirable illustration recorded by Cadwallader Colden:

"The first time I was among the Mohawks, I had this compliment from one of their own *Sachems*, which he did by giving me his own name, *Cayenderngue*. He had been a notable Warrior; and he told me that now I had a right to assume to myself all the Acts of Valour he had performed, and that now my name would echo from Hill to Hill over all the *Five Nations*."¹⁸

Ancient Chinese physicians used to write the name of their patients on a piece of paper, burn it to ashes, and then mix it with the medicine for the patient to swallow. This was to insure the identification of the medicine with the patient.¹⁹

¹⁶ Frazer, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 323.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 330.

¹⁸ Tylor, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

In Borneo it is the superstitious custom to change the name of a sickly child to deceive the evil spirits that torment it. In South America, among the Abipones and Lenguas, when a man died, his surviving family would change their names to cheat death when he should come to look for them. The Tonquin give their children ugly names to frighten the demons away from them. The Abyssinians conceal the names of their children for fear of bewitchment by evil spirits.²⁰ This accounts for the prevalence of the belief that children of different families possessing the same names should not marry, because they would be unlucky; also that families of the same name should not live in the same community.

The Hebrews believed that if a man experienced ill fortune for a considerable length of time, he could change his luck by changing his name.²¹ Also, when several children in a Hebrew family have died, no name is given to the next one born. It is referred to as "Alter," in the belief that if the Angel of Death does not know the name of the child, he will be unable to seize it. Another widespread practice among orthodox Hebrews even today is to give a new name to a person who is very ill, so that the Angel of Death will not be able to recognize the one he is seeking. If the person recovers, he discards his old name and is known only by his new one.²² Many orthodox Hebrews consider it unlucky to call an only child by its right name.

Even the names of savage animals are never mentioned for fear lest they should suddenly appear. The natives of Madagascar never mention lightning for fear that it will suddenly strike. The Boziba never mention earthquakes for fear that one will occur. In Samoa rain is not mentioned because of the constant menace of storms. In China fire is not mentioned for fear of a conflagration. The ancient Scandinavians, while making beer, would not use the word denoting water for fear that the brew would turn out flat.²³

²⁰ Tylor, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 9, p. 159.

²³ Briffault, *Mothers*, Vol. 1, p. 11.

The Greeks avoided using the right names of the Furies (imaginary evil spirits). They believed that referring to them in a conciliatory manner would moderate them to a more desired attitude and disposition.²⁴

The superstitious people in parts of London and Scotland, even as late as the eighteenth century, would not mention the name of the devil when reading the Bible for fear that he would appear. They avoided this "calamity" by corrupting the pronunciation of the word to "divil."²⁵

Another instance of the relationship between this Commandment and animism and sympathetic magic is furnished by the taboo against mentioning the names of the dead. Just as the orthodox Hebrew never fails to use the magic word "ava sholem"²⁶ as a means of protection when mentioning the name of the dead, so do the superstitious people of Albania abstain from mentioning the names of their dead for fear of disturbing the ghosts of the departed.²⁷ If, however, the name is inadvertently mentioned, they spit three times in propitiation for violating the taboo. This is done for fear that the spirit of the dead man, which is supposed to hover over the place where he died, will return and do evil.²⁸

If primitive peoples were convinced that a man's name was an integral part of himself and that revealing it would put his life in jeopardy, one can well understand how seriously they regarded mentioning the sacred and secret name of their deity. If a mere mortal could be injured through the use of his name by an enemy, it was certainly that much more vital to protect the name of one's god. If a person of lesser degree conceals his identity from evil forces by the use of a substitute name, how much more necessary to protect the name of one's god.

²⁴ Briffault, *Mothers*, Vol. 1, p. 12.

²⁵ Wilson D. Wallis, *Religion in Primitive Society*, p. 41.

²⁶ "May his soul rest in peace."

²⁷ Frazer, *op. cit.*, p. 349.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 351.

NAMES OF GODS TABOO

Just as it was believed that evil results would follow mentioning a person's name, so it was believed that if the name of a god were known and used contrary to his wishes, the consequences would be nothing short of a world catastrophe. In fact, there is abundant evidence available that primitive man, ignorant of the natural causes of events, attributed earthly disasters to those guilty of violating this taboo.²⁹

It was also the superstitious belief among primitive peoples that the Creator of the universe brought the world into existence by uttering his own name. "There was a time," says an ancient Egyptian papyrus, "when no one and nothing existed except himself. A desire came over him to create the world, and he carried it into effect by making his mouth utter his own name as a word of power; and straightway the world and all therein came into being."³⁰ Even today Christianity maintains a similar belief with its doctrine of the creation of the world by the magical power of words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."³¹

There is a whole literature on the subject of what the Persians call the "science of names." Long after Joshua was supposed to have stopped the sun and the moon through the medium of magic, Australian medicine men were believed to be able, by the magic use of the name of their deity, to stop the sun, cause thunder, raise mountains, and create lakes and other wonders of nature, which the ignorant thought could be accomplished only by the omnipotent power of a God.³²

²⁹ *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, p. 3320: "The special importance attaching to the names of gods in the Old Testament, and the emphasis often laid on their significance, finds a partial explanation in the peculiar emphasis with which the word *name* itself is there employed. The name of a person or thing was for the Hebrew not simply distinctive; it was a revelation of the nature of the person or thing named, nay, often almost an equivalent for the thing itself. This is especially true of the names of God."

³⁰ Briffault, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

³¹ *John*, Chapter 1, verse 1.

³² Briffault, *op. cit.*, pp. 16, 17.

Religious leaders were supposed to have been able to talk to God solely because they could call him by his name.³³

This taboo of mentioning the name of a deity did not prevail only among the Hebrews: it was present in the religions of nearly all primitive peoples.³⁴ The name of Brahma is as sacred in India as is the supposed name of the Bible Deity to the Hebrews. It is rarely mentioned, and only on the most solemn occasions.³⁵

The ancient Vedic god Rudra ("the Howler") was the maleficent and destructive power of nature, in some respects like the jealous and vindictive Hebrew God. He could cause storms, conflagrations, pestilences, disease and all manner of evil. He was never referred to by his real name, but was always called "Siva" ("the Gracious One"), in an effort to flatter him and thereby escape his wrath.³⁶ Perhaps this same reason prompted the Children of Israel to refer to their tyrant in the sky by such endearing expressions as "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want," "The Lord is gracious, almighty," etc.

The following Hebrew hymn, which sings the praises of the Bible Deity, undoubtedly has a motivation of flattery to placate his vindictive nature as revealed in these Commandments:

"Lord eternal, merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in kindness and truth, preserving loving-kindness unto thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin . . . forgive Thou us our iniquities and also our sins, and take us for thine inheritance."³⁷

³³ *Matthew, Chapter 8, verses 26-34.*

³⁴ A survival of the fear of mentioning God's name is in the superstition of saying "for goodness' sake" instead of "for God's sake," as well as "thank goodness" when in reality the person wants to say "thank God." The avoidance of the use of the word "God" is prompted by the fear of the taboo of mentioning the name of the Deity which forms the basis of this Commandment.

³⁵ Tylor, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

³⁶ Briffault, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

³⁷ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, p. 202. This hymn reminds me of the sermon at the funeral of Mrs. Murphy's husband. During the funeral oration the priest was quite fulsome in his praise of his dead parishioner. He said that he had been a good and kind husband, a loving father, a man of high moral conduct, honest in his dealings, and upright in his undertakings, etc. As the priest continued to praise the virtues of the dear departed, Mrs. Murphy, who had been abused all her life, and whose children had

Some tribes of Indians consider it a profanation to mention the name of their highest divinity. Australian natives, when initiating their youth in the ritual of their religion, very often, through fear, omit pronouncing the name of their deity. The Marutse and allied tribes along the Zambesi shrink from mentioning the name of their chief god, Nyambe.

Cicero mentions the fact that among certain Egyptians it was criminal to mention the name of an Egyptian god, the son of Nilus. On two occasions Herodotus refused to mention the name of the god Osiris. The divine name of Indra was a secret, and the real name of the god Agni was unknown. The gods of Brahmanism have mystic names which nobody dares to speak.

Valerius Soranus is said to have been put to death for divulging the name of the Roman deity.³⁸

The great name of Allah is a secret known only to the prophets because it is believed that whosoever calls on him by his "great name" will obtain all his desires. Merely mentioning the name gives one the power "to raise the dead, kill the living, and to perform any miracle he pleases."³⁹

The real names of Amon and of Atumn "the mysterious" are unknown. The formidable names borne in classical antiquity by Zeus, Athene and Dionysus have never been found out; these names were guarded as great secrets for centuries, and were passed on only from high priest to high priest. They were never recorded and were thus lost to posterity.⁴⁰ It is still authoritatively stated that we do not know the real name of Rome.⁴¹

The secret names of the classical gods were very often so carefully preserved in depositories that even today we do not know the real

often been brutally beaten by their father, nudged her eldest child and said, "Bridget, go see who is in that coffin; that can't be *your father* the priest is talking about."

³⁸ Tylor, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

³⁹ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 2, p. 642.

⁴⁰ The Bible Deity is no exception to the rule, as we shall see.

⁴¹ Hastings, *Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 3, p. 153.

personal names of most of the great figures of past religions; it is only the apparent names that we know.⁴²

A good illustration is the story of how the subtle Isis wrested from Ra, the great Egyptian god of the sun, his secret name:

Isis, so runs the tale, was a mortal woman mighty in words, and she was weary of the world of men, and yearned after the world of gods. And she meditated in her heart, saying, "Cannot I by virtue of the great name of Ra make myself a goddess and reign like him in heaven and earth?" For Ra had many names, but the great name which gave him power over gods and men was known to none but himself. Now the god was by this time grown old; he slobbered at the mouth and his spittle fell upon the ground. So Isis gathered up the spittle and the earth with it, and kneaded thereof a serpent, and laid it in the path where the great god passed every day to his double kingdom after his heart's desire. And when he came forth according to his wont, attended by all his company of gods, the sacred serpent stung him, and the god opened his mouth and cried, and his cry went up to heaven. And the company of gods cried, "What aileth thee?" and the gods shouted, "Lo and behold!" But he could not answer; his jaws rattled, his limbs shook, the poison ran through his flesh as the Nile floweth over the land. When the great god had stilled his heart, he cried to his followers, "Come to me, O my children, offspring of my body. I am a prince, the son of a prince, the divine son of a god. My father devised my name; my father and my mother gave me my name, and it remained hidden in my body since my birth, that no magician might have magic power over me. I went out to behold that which I have made, I walked in the two lands I have created, and lo! something stung me. What it was I know not. Was it fire? Was it water? My heart is on fire, my flesh trembleth, all my limbs do quake. Bring me the children of the gods with healing words and understanding lips, whose power reacheth to heaven." Then came to him the children of the gods, and they were very sorrowful. And Isis came with her craft, whose mouth is full with the breath of life, whose spell chaseth pain away, whose word maketh the dead to live. She said "What is it, divine Father? What is it?" The holy god opened his mouth, he spake and said, "I went upon my

⁴² Hastings, *Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 9, p. 133.

way, I walked after my heart's desire in the two regions which I have made to behold that which I have created, and lo! a serpent that I saw not stung me. Is it fire? Is it water? I am colder than water, I am hotter than fire, all my limbs sweat. I tremble, mine eye is not steadfast, I behold not the sky, the moisture bedeweth my face as in summer time." Then spake Isis, "Tell me thy name, divine Father, for the man shall live who is called by his name." Then answered Ra, "I created the heavens and the earth, I ordered the mountains, I made the great and wide sea, I stretched out the two horizons like a curtain. I am he who openeth his eyes and it is light, and who shutteth them and it is dark. At his command the Nile riseth, but the gods know not his name. I am Khepera in the morning, I am Ra at noon, I am Tum at eve." But the poison was not taken away from him; it pierced deeper, and the great god could no longer walk. Then said Isis to him, "That was not thy name that thou spakest unto me. Oh, tell it me, that the poison may depart; for he shall live whose name is named." Now the poison burned like fire, it was hotter than the flame of fire. The god said, "I consent that Isis shall search into me, and that my name shall pass from my breast into hers." Then the god hid himself from the gods, and his place in the ship of eternity was empty. Thus was the name of the great god taken from him, and Isis, the witch, spake, "Flow away, poison, depart from Ra. It is I, even I, who overcome the poison and cast it to the earth; for the name of the great god hath been taken away from him. Let Ra live and let the poison die." Thus spake great Isis, the queen of the gods who knows Ra and his true name.⁴³

According to the Avesta, the revelation of the greatest of the names of Ahura Mazda is besought by Zarathustra that he may conquer, and not be conquered by, all demons and men, all wizards and witches.

In late Hinduism we find the belief among Krsnaites, Ramaites and Savities, that "the mere repetition of their god's name is a means of salvation, so that sinner and heretic, if he die at last with Krishna's name upon his lips, will be saved"! ⁴⁴

⁴³ Frazer, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, pp. 337-339.

⁴⁴ Hastings, *Encyclopaedia*, p. 163. There is a survival of this primitive and superstitious custom today in what is known as the "last rites" administered by a priest of

The sacred and secret names of gods were entrusted only to the high priests because it was necessary that the names be evoked in the proper manner to produce the magical results supposedly inherent in them. Since it was believed that a god's name was as fragile as life, it had to be pronounced with the same awe as the thing it represented. Unless the mysterious and magical formula was faithfully and properly performed in every detail of cadence, tonality, rhythm, and accent of each of the chanted syllables, there would be no results. Thus a thousand unsuccessful attempts were explained by the fact that the uninitiated did not possess the proper combination of the formula. The "successful" results were always shrouded in the mystery of the ritual.⁴⁵

Not only were the names of gods taboo, but the names of kings and other sacred persons were not to be used lightly and without due reverence.

The name of the king of Dahomey is always kept secret, lest knowledge of it should enable some evil-minded person to do him some mischief. In Burma it was accounted a most serious impiety to mention the name of the reigning sovereign.⁴⁶ In Eastern Asia and Polynesia the names of kings and chiefs are held sacred; in Siam a substitute name must be used in speaking of the king. In Polynesia the prohibition to mention the chief's name has been deeply impressed on the natives.⁴⁷ The name of the Japanese Mikado is so sacred that it is seldom mentioned and indeed is not known to a great portion of the public. A few years ago, when a Japanese mayor discovered that he

the Roman Catholic Church. No matter what the character of the person was, a devout believer in the religion would much prefer to send for a priest to administer the last rites, if he thought he was about to die, than for a physician who might be able to save him. This is so well known that physicians whose Catholic patients are critically ill, inform the family so as to enable them to send for a priest before death overtakes the patient. This is but another instance of the persistence of religious ignorance and superstitious fear.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

⁴⁶ Frazer, *op. cit.*, pp. 374, 375.

⁴⁷ Tylor, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

had given his son the name which the Emperor bore, he resigned and, in propitiation of the breach of this taboo, killed himself.⁴⁸

Religious articles associated with a deity were likewise held in awe. Anything upon which the name of God is written is considered sacred. That is why the Torah may be handled only by a rabbi. The Bible is sacred. It must not be used except in a reverent manner, as it is considered "God's Word." Children of orthodox parents are forced to pick it up and kiss it if it falls to the floor. It is sometimes kissed in a court of law before giving testimony.

Because of the association with the name of God, religious buildings, such as temples and churches, are regarded as sacred. Many bow when passing them, and Catholics remove or tip their hats when passing a church of their faith.

Images of saints are considered sacred, and many a person has lost his life during a fire while attempting to recover "sacred" articles from the edifice in which they were kept. That these things were sacred and were capable of performing miracles there appeared to be no doubt, but that they could not save themselves from being burned in an ordinary fire where common, ordinary articles are saved is not subject to explanation.

The garments of high priests are "holy," and devotees consider it a rare privilege even to touch them. A ring worn by a high dignitary of the Catholic Church is considered "sacred." Persons who make slighting remarks about holy religious things are guilty of sacrilege and should expect no mercy from a wrathful God.⁴⁹ In fact, at one time disease and misfortune were believed to be sent as punishment for lack of reverence for the name of God.

THE MAGICAL USE OF GOD'S NAME

The Biblical testimony in support of the superstitious belief in the magical power of the supposed name of the Hebrew Deity is

⁴⁸ Wallis, *Religion in Primitive Society*, p. 40.

⁴⁹ *Matthew, Chapter 9, verses 20-21.*

voluminous. One significant statement is found in *Numbers, Chapter 6, verse 27*:

27 And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them.

As Judaism was founded on a belief in animism and sympathetic magic, this accounts for the mystical interpretation of the Bible and the assumption that certain names possessed mysterious occult powers. The one who knew the secret "combination" of the letters could do all manner of wonderful things—gain supremacy over the invisible forces of evil, regulate the elements, or gain for himself divine favor. This belief is responsible for soothsayers, priests and sorcerers, who, because of their pretended knowledge of the secret combinations of divine names, have claimed heavenly contact through the mysterious medium of names and numbers, and the ability to connect heavenly forces with human events.

Certain portions of the Bible are incomprehensible without knowledge of the origin of primitive superstitions, such as animism and sympathetic magic. Religionists, ignorant of these origins, have therefore run riot in attempting to give "allegorical" interpretations to some of these meaningless phrases. They have also created forms of supplication which are an inevitable outgrowth of superstition: prayers, observing certain days of the week, abstaining from certain foods, fasting, mixing and non-mixing foods, genuflections, signs and ceremonies, forms of dress, mystic jugglery with numbers and letters, sprinkling water, doing penance, wearing charms to bring good luck, amulets to ward off evil influences,⁵⁰ and literally thousands of silly deeds and incomprehensible actions that "passeth understanding"—all for the purpose of transcending earthly affairs and becoming "one with God." This belief accounts for the intercession of priests to gain the

⁵⁰ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, p. 547. Amulets were widely used by the superstitious Hebrew, mostly consisting of the name of the supposed God inscribed upon an article and worn to ward off evil. Some had a transposition of the name of the Hebrew Deity written on paper or engraved on plates. These were used to put robbers to flight, to calm the sea, to protect cattle, to cure disease, to catch fish, to secure and retain the love of a woman. Soldiers even wore them in battle. If, however, one was thrown upon a man, it would kill him.

favors of God, to be lucky in love, to secure a job, to cure disease, to bring sunshine for outings, and even to be successful in baking a loaf of bread.

It was also claimed that the priests knew how to combine the letters which formed the secret name of God by which heaven and earth were created,⁵¹ and could perform miracles in the name of the Hebrew God. The hand of the magician would, with this knowledge, possess the same power as that exercised by the Deity.⁵²

Through the magic power of the letters of the secret name of the God of Israel, it is claimed that Babylonian rabbis "created a calf by magic."⁵³ They also believed that the name of God "creates and destroys worlds,"⁵⁴ and that by the proper combinations and permutations of the name of God, applied at the right time and in the right place, man could easily make himself the master of creation."⁵⁵

Jewish physicians were believed to have possession of this magic name and to use it effectively in the treatment of disease.⁵⁶

A vast literature on the magic use of this name of the Hebrew God was founded, and all forms of superstition took on a profound meaning; the irresponsible mutterings of those suffering from visions and hallucinations were interpreted as having divine significance.⁵⁷

If miracles were produced in the early days of Judaism by invoking the name of God, then why would it not be equally effective again? Influenced by this delusive belief, the medieval Hebrews sought the magic name of God, with which to repeat the wonders of the past so that manna from heaven would fall again.

How the imagination was fanned into believing the most outlandish tales of miraculous achievement can be gathered from the following incidents still to be found in the semi-sacred books of the orthodox

⁵¹ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, p. 458.

⁵² Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, p. 98.

⁵³ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, p. 458.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 461.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 548.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. 12, p. 119.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 461.

Hebrews: "Raba created a man and sent him to R. Zeira, who conversed with him, but he could not answer, so he exclaimed, 'You are created by magic; return to your dust!'" And here is another: "Rabbis Hanina and Oshaya used to sit every Friday night and occupy themselves with the *Book of Creation* and create a three-year-old calf, which they ate." This miracle was accomplished by the simple process of combining "the letters of the Name by which the universe was created; this is not to be considered forbidden magic, for the works of God were brought into being through His Holy Name."⁵⁸

During the Middle Ages, when the cabalistic Hebrews were trying to discover the secret of how to perform the miracles attributed to Moses, it is recorded that "Elijah of Chelm created a *golem* from clay by means of the *Sefer Yezirah*. He inscribed the name of God upon its forehead, thus giving it life but withholding the power of speech. When the creature attained giant size and strength, the Rabbi, appalled by its destructive potentialities, erased the life-giving name from its forehead and it crumbled into dust."⁵⁹

The *Jewish Encyclopedia* records these significant references to the use of the name of God:

"The divine names of God, the Haggadah [sacred Hebrew book] says, were used to perform miracles by those who knew their combinations. King David, on making excavations for the Temple, and finding that the deep was moving upward, asked for permission to stop its rising, which threatened to destroy the world, by inscribing the name of God on a potsherd and throwing it into the deep. His minister, Ahithophel, who was well versed in law, permitted it."⁶⁰

It was also believed that the presence of the Torah scroll, containing the name of the Bible God, in the room of a prospective mother would facilitate the birth of the child,⁶¹ because of the belief in the sympathetic connection between the Deity and his name. Placing the

⁵⁸ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 12, p. 84.

⁵⁹ Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, p. 85.

⁶⁰ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 9, pp. 463, 479.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, pp. 202-203.

Book of Leviticus under the head of a child when it was first put in the cradle was supposed to protect the infant from evil.⁶²

The word found at the beginning of a page of the Bible when it was opened at random, or the word touched by the thumb at the opening, was frequently used as an oracle for magical results.⁶³ When a person was seriously ill, the *Pentateuch—the Five Books of Moses*—was opened and the name which first met the eye was added to the patient's name in the belief that this would avert death.

There was a proscription against even writing the name of God:

“The sacredness of the divine name must be recognized by the professional scribe who writes the Scriptures, or the chapters for the phylacteries and the mezuzah. Before transcribing any of the divine names, he prepares mentally to sanctify them. Once he begins a name, he does not stop until it is finished, and he must not be interrupted while writing it, even to greet a king. If an error is made in writing it, it may not be erased, but a line must be drawn round it to show that it is canceled, and the whole page must be put in a genizah and a new page begun.”⁶⁴

In ordinary documents the mention of the name of God was forbidden.⁶⁵ Not only was the secret name of the Hebrew Deity supposed to be able to produce results, but it was also believed that extraordinary power for the subjection of nature lay in the mystic use of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. It was also believed that the allegorical and symbolical interpretation of the Bible could produce results not attained by human efforts alone.⁶⁶

The names of angels were also used for magical purposes. He who knew the names of certain angels and the spheres of their influence could ward off evil⁶⁷ and control the powers of nature.⁶⁸

It is stated that at the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, after

⁶² *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, pp. 202–203.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 9, p. 163.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. 9, p. 164.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, pp. 463, 479.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 595.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 462.

the mighty hero, Abikaben Gafteri, had fallen, Haneel, the uncle of Jeremiah, conjured up angels who struck terror to the hearts of the Chaldeans, thus putting them to flight. But God, having decreed the fall of the city, had changed the names of the angels. Haneel summoned up the prince of the world by using the Ineffable Name, and he lifted Jerusalem into the air, but God cast it down again.⁶⁹

The names of Biblical characters have also been used to produce magical results. For instance, the name of Daniel is used for protection against wild beasts, the name of Moses against fire, Joseph against pollution, against the evil eye and, I presume, against seduction. The names of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as well as of their wives, Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel and Leah, are to be used in a lying-in room.⁷⁰

The secret ways to use these names were many and various. Some were pronounced only in whispers, others over water upon which the sun had never shone, some while plucking vegetables, over salt, palm leaves and wine; some at certain times of the day; some were recited only once and some several times in succession; at times backwards and at times forwards; sometimes in combinations and sometimes in permutations; sometimes abbreviated and sometimes with one letter left off at a time.⁷¹ Some were written at various places and some on particular objects.

If there survives today a remnant of this belief in sympathetic magic and the hidden power of names, what must have been its influence in early superstitious days! We still name children after those who were strong, or successful, or intellectual, in the belief that the child will inherit the qualities possessed by its namesake. Biblical names are given children for the same reason.⁷²

Even prayer books are replete with references such as "Our Father,

⁶⁹ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, p. 595.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 205.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 205.

⁷² The superstitious basis of Judaism was carried over into Christianity and became the very foundation of the Christian religion. The same miraculous results that were supposed to be accomplished by invoking the name of the Hebrew Deity, it was claimed, could be duplicated by the mystical use of the name of Jesus, the Saviour. Just as

our King, do it (have compassion) for the sake of them that went through fire and water for the sanctification of Thy Name";⁷³ "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who hast sanctified us by Thy Commandments and commanded us to love Thy glorious and awful Name."

As superstition is the weed of the brain, it grows profusely, once started. That accounts for the multitudinous necromantic acts performed for talismanic purposes. Bible passages are extensively used by the superstitious. The following are some examples:

To become invisible, read *Genesis 1:1*. To confuse a person's mind, and as a protection against pollution, read only the last letter of each word.

To lighten childbirth, read *Genesis 21:1*. To stop children from crying, read *Genesis 25:14*.

To avoid danger while traveling, read *Genesis 32:31*. For protection from a vicious dog, read *Exodus 11:7*. However, for greater security it is advised that you also carry a strong stick; if the verse should not prove efficacious, the stick will come in handy.

To be successful in a lawsuit, reading *Exodus 15:16* has been highly recommended.⁷⁴ However, today most people think it safer to get a lawyer.

Mothers today should welcome the revival of Bibliomancy as it would save them a lot of trouble and worry. Reading *Deuteronomy 33:4* would provide them with the means of getting their children to school without trouble or mishap.

People with faulty memories (and this should be particularly

rewards were to follow the faithful performance of the covenants and Commandments of the Old Testament God, so all good was promised—"If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." (*John*, Chapter 12, verse 28.) The use of the name of Jesus in the domain of exorcism and to cure disease is directly attributed to the power supposed to be inherent in his name. Throughout the New Testament there are innumerable passages relative to this superstitious belief. Christian Science is based on this delusion. See *Matthew* 7: 22; 18: 20; 28: 19; *Mark* 16: 17; *Luke* 17: 17-20; *John* 3: 18; 10: 25; 12: 28; 14: 13. See also *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 5, p. 306.

⁷³ *Authorized Daily Prayer Book*, p. 57.

⁷⁴ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, p. 203.

directed to those who forget their obligations) are assured that reading *Isaiah 26:1* will strengthen their ability to remember.

In the realms of sickness, there are also verses which are supposed to be highly beneficial. To prevent a miscarriage, read *Psalms 1*; against diseases of the eye, *Chapter 6*.⁷⁵

For protection against evil spirits, read *Chapter 11*; against being caught in a lie, *Chapter 16*; against being robbed, *Chapter 18*. The insurance companies should insist that all policyholders read this chapter of their Bible while the policy is in force.

To interpret the real meaning of dreams, *Chapter 23* furnishes the key.

For women whose children die young, and as a protection against epidemics, *Chapter 33* is highly recommended. This is particularly appropriate in time of war. To escape drunkenness, *Chapter 27* will help,⁷⁶ but experience has proved that abstaining from intoxicating liquors is a more reliable method.

To avoid losing one's job, *Chapter 12* should be read.

For the man who has become tired of his wife, *Chapter 46* gives the solution.

If you don't want to be baptized, *Chapter 73* will protect you.

To gain new friends, read *Chapter 3*; against sudden death, *Chapter 116*; to protect oneself from slander, *117*.

And here is an all-inclusive one: to sharpen the intellect, for disease of the eye, when one is in deep perplexity, against sin, wholesome for the spleen and kidneys, against temptation, to win favor, against weakness of the hands, on a journey, against catarrh, against weakness in the feet, against earache, against dizziness, and on taking children to school, read *Chapter 119*. For immunity against heart disease, lumbago and pain in the arm, read *Chapters 139, 140, 141 and 142*. Christian Scientists should become more familiar with *Chapter 144*,⁷⁷ since they have decided that broken bones require medical attention

⁷⁵ Unless otherwise stated, all references following are from *Psalms*.

⁷⁶ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, p. 203.

⁷⁷ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, p. 204.

and the human intellect has not quite attained the power to heal such fractures. There seems to be none for a pain in the neck, unless it be the insane practice of Bibliomancy in general.

If there is a belief in a personal God who created the world with a magic wand, then a belief in a magic formula to ward off the powers of evil which this God had to overcome in his act of creation follows as a necessary sequence. Under this delusion, it is small wonder that man's efforts were devoted to the pursuits of seeking the magic formula with which to appease and gain the approbation of such a God. If man experienced misfortune, he could account for it only by some disobedience to God's wishes. He therefore devoted his whole life to gaining the approbation of this deity whose moods were subject to human appeal and sacrifice. If evil was supposed to befall those who disobeyed God, and blessings were conferred upon those who kept his statutes and Commandments, the object of living was not devotion to mankind, but the adoration and appeasement of God. The magical use of his name to bring the desired results was the primary objective of those who sought to escape the duties of life.

The belief that man is the special creation of a God, and that the world was created for his benefit, is responsible for those fantastic views of life and the universe which have so plagued the human race. Man will never discover the causes of disease if he believes that they are sent by a God as punishment for sin. Man will not solve the problems of existence, or of his general welfare, until he abandons this false and delusive belief, looks upon himself as only an insignificant part of the universe, and understands his true relation to the other forms of life and existence.

WHAT IS THE NAME OF THE GOD OF ISRAEL?

What is the name of the God of Israel which this Commandment so definitely and so emphatically warns us not to mention? Surely, if a person is told not to do something under pain of a terrible penalty, he should at least know what that something is. If he is told not to take God's name in vain, and is not told *what* his name is, how can he

be expected to obey such an injunction? Can it be that there is no name for the Hebrew Deity? I say this because *nowhere in the Bible does the name of the God of Israel appear!* And if it does not appear in the Bible, what was the reason for its having been left out? Was it left out because of the fear of the Hebrews to write the name of their God? Or was it left out because it would prove the utter futility of this Commandment? Or was it perhaps omitted because no such God exists? Was this Bible God invented by Moses as a piece of legerdemain, since he was unknown to the Israelites before his time? Is he, like the other gods of his day, merely a creation of the magician's imagination, to be invoked in the performance of magical tricks which would bewilder, and to inspire awe in the credulous and the ignorant?

Not only does the name of the Hebrew God not appear in the Bible, but there is a striking contradiction in the way it is concealed in the Hebrew, Protestant and Catholic versions. The three different accounts about so important a matter are, in my opinion, indisputable proof that no one account is correct, that there is no name for the Hebrew Deity, and that the entire story is a fabrication. The testimony of the Bible itself shall be the authority for my indictment.

THE FIRST DEADLY PARALLEL

For the difference in the name of the God of Israel as revealed by the Hebrew, Protestant and Catholic versions of the Bible, I quote the *Book of Exodus, Chapter 3, verses 13 to 15:*

HEBREW VERSION	PROTESTANT VERSION	CATHOLIC VERSION (Douay)
<p>13 And Moses said unto God, Behold, if I come unto the children of Israel and say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they then say to me, What is his name? then what shall I say unto them? ⁷⁸</p>	<p>13 And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, the God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? ⁷⁸</p>	<p>13 Moses said to God: Lo, I shall go to the children of Israel, and say to them: The God of your fathers hath sent me to you. If they should say to me: What is his name? What shall I say to them? ⁷⁸</p>

⁷⁸ Unless Moses was preparing for an act of deception, this was a perfectly legitimate question to ask of God, and the answer should have been prompt and straightforward.

HEBREW VERSION	PROTESTANT VERSION	CATHOLIC VERSION (Douay)
14 And God said unto Moses, I WILL BE THAT I WILL BE: and he said, Thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, I WILL BE hath sent me unto you.	14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.	14 God said to Moses: I AM WHO I AM. He said: Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel: HE WHO IS hath sent me to you.
15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, THE EVERLASTING ONE, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.	15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.	15 And God said again to Moses: Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel: The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me to you: This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

These parallel quotations of authorized versions of the Bible are indisputable evidence of the deceptive practices that are being perpetrated by the religions represented under the pretense of their knowing God and preaching salvation in *his* name. The very lack of agreement on what the Bible God actually told Moses as to his identity is proof of its falsity. If ever there should be unanimity between people professing to have received a special dispensation, it is upon the words their God is supposed to have spoken. If they cannot agree upon so fundamental a matter as the *name* of God, then what value can be placed on their statements about less important matters?

Is the Bible God "I WILL BE THAT I WILL BE," or is he "I AM THAT I AM," or "I AM WHO I AM"? Judging from the above quotations, it seems that something is wrong with the record of what God actually did say to Moses. In view of these facts, what reliance can be placed on Bible authority of what Moses said was God's name?

If God concealed his name from Moses with the statement "I AM THAT I AM," then on what basis do the Bible authorities presume to give him a name? If God refused to give his name to Moses when the latter was supposed to convince the Children of Israel that he was

speaking the truth, then how can the word of some other person not so directly concerned as Moses be accepted on this matter? ⁷⁹

THE SECOND DEADLY PARALLEL

The second deadly parallel which proves the amazing fact that the Bible does not contain the name of the Hebrew God is without question the most significant revelation that could possibly be made in this study of the Decalogue. If the foundation be false, the superstructure must fall. The proof positive follows in substantiation of my charge. I quote *Exodus, Chapter 6, verses 2 and 3*:

HEBREW VERSION	PROTESTANT VERSION	CATHOLIC VERSION (Douay)
2 And God spoke unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord:	2 And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord:	2 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: I am the Lord.
3 And I appeared unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God, the Almighty, but by my name THE ETERNAL WAS I not made known to them.	3 And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH ⁸⁰ was I not known to them.	3 That appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; and my name Adonai I did not shew them.

The name of the God of Israel, according to the Hebrew Version, is THE ETERNAL; the Protestant (King James) Version, JEHOVAH; and the Catholic (Douay) Version, ADONAI; but the significant fact is that it is neither THE ETERNAL nor JEHOVAH nor ADONAI. The leading Biblical authorities today are forced to admit that because of the taboo placed upon mentioning the name of the Bible God they do not

⁷⁹ There is an interesting legend in connection with the magic rod of Moses and the name of the Deity. The *Jewish Encyclopedia* (Vol. 1, p. 5) tells us that Jethro planted the rod in his garden, where its miraculous virtue was revealed by the fact that nobody could withdraw it from the ground, even to touch it being fraught with danger to life. This was because the Ineffable Name of God was engraved on it. When Moses entered Jethro's household, he read the Name and, by means of it, was able to draw up the rod, for which service Zipporah, Jethro's daughter, was given to him in marriage. This rod, according to Jewish tradition, was in David's possession, and with its help he slew Goliath. David left it to his descendants, but with the destruction of the Temple it miraculously disappeared!

⁸⁰ Sometimes spelled "Yahveh." See *New Standard Bible Dictionary*, p. 41.

know the letters that compose, or the proper pronunciation of his name.⁸¹ Because of the fear attached to mentioning the name of the God of Israel, its actual pronunciation has been completely lost in a cloud of mystery.

Rabbi Isaac Landman, former editor of the *American Hebrew*, and one of the leading Hebrew authorities of the present day, states: "In obedience to the Third Commandment, the name of God was never spoken in Biblical times. . . . We do not know how to read the word. Its pronunciation is lost."⁸² Professor Louis Finkelstein says: "The precise form of the original pronunciation has been forgotten."

The *Encyclopaedia Biblica* adds important testimony by saying that the explanation offered as to the name of the God of the Old Testament is merely "an attempt to explain a primitive name that had long since become unintelligible. . . ." "It seems precarious to suppose that while Hebrew was still a living language, the people should have been so completely deluded as to the meaning of the most important sacred name."⁸³

Hastings's *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* likewise states that to guard against mentioning the name of the Bible God, the Hebrew laity ceased to pronounce it; the priests mentioned it only at benedictions. After the death of Simon the Just, only the high priests were permitted to mention it, and then only with bated breath so as to render it inaudible even to their fellow high priests. Such was the fear attached to uttering the "unutterable" name of the Hebrew Deity.

Philo, in referring to the Tetragrammaton, the four-letter word composing the name of the Hebrew Deity, said: "The four letters may be mentioned or heard only by holy men whose ears and tongues are purified by wisdom, and by no other in any place whatsoever."⁸⁴

It is also seriously contended that the cruel death which R. Haninan Teraldion suffered in the Hadrian persecution was punishment for pronouncing God's "ineffable" name. This accounts for the use of

⁸¹ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, p. 201.

⁸² *New York Times*, Dec. 7, 1937.

⁸³ *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, pp. 3322-3323.

⁸⁴ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, p. 202.

such appellatives, when referring to the Hebrew Deity, as "the name of four letters," "the great name," "the great and precious name," "the great and holy name," and again as "the proper, the great, the wonderful, the hidden, the excellent, the written-but-not-read name."⁸⁵

Even Josephus was under the spell of this superstition, for apparently, judging from his words, he knew the name of the Hebrew God. He said: "Moses besought God to impart to him knowledge of His name and its pronunciation so that he might be able to invoke His name, hitherto unknown to any man; and it would be a sin for me to mention it."⁸⁶ Josephus's words reveal the true facts about the name of the God of Israel. It was the stigma of sin associated with mentioning the name of God that caused it to be avoided. It possessed no value beyond that. After the destruction of the Temple, it was forbidden for a Jew to pronounce the name of the Hebrew Deity under any circumstances; if he did, he would "forfeit his portion in the future world."⁸⁷

In later editions of the Hebrew Bible, published by the Jewish Publication Society, the four-letter word JHVH is used to denote the name of the Hebrew God instead of "The Eternal."⁸⁸ Whether these four letters form the name of the God of Israel, it is impossible at this late date to know with any degree of certainty. As they are not taken from any authoritative original Hebrew Bible, but from the Masoretic notes found on the margins of Hebrew Bibles of the Middle Ages, little reliance can be placed on them. These notes, it is claimed, were made by the cabalistic Jews who still maintained their animistic belief and sought the magic formulas for a Messiah who would restore their Temple and their native land to them.⁸⁹

The Hebrew word "Elohim" is sometimes used, but this is merely the plural noun meaning "gods." The word "Adonai," in the Douay Version, is Hebrew for "Lord," and does not in any sense reveal the

⁸⁵ Hastings, *Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 11, p. 296.

⁸⁶ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, p. 202.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. 9, p. 163.

⁸⁸ Isaac Landman, *New York Times*, Dec. 7, 1937.

⁸⁹ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, p. 201.

name of the Bible God! "Adonai" was used by the early Hebrews to avoid mentioning the name of their God.⁹⁰ "Adonai" is found in the Douay Version of the Bible because this Hebrew superstition was carried over into Latin Christianity.⁹¹ It is best explained in the words of the noted Catholic theologian, Origen, who said: "There is a certain word of four letters which is not pronounced by the Jews . . . but is read as Adonai, not as it is really written in the four letters, while among the Greeks it is pronounced the Lord."⁹²

Orthodox Hebrews, having been told that "Adonai" was the name of their God and not knowing his real name, began to avoid using this word in order to be sure not to violate the provisions of this Commandment. As a result, they substituted "Ado Shem," which in Hebrew simply means "name." This accounts for the widespread use of these words today when Hebrews refer to their God. If this superstition continues, it is quite likely that "Ado Shem" will be discontinued for some other word.

An instance is recorded in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* of the power of this taboo, when an orthodox Hebrew, despite his poverty and alluring promises of reward, refused to mention the name of the Bible Deity.⁹³ A similar instance might be given from my own experience of the pious Catholic who refused to eat meat on Friday, despite a very tempting dish and a tempting pecuniary reward.⁹⁴

Protestant Christians, not contaminated by this animistic superstition, could see no earthly reason for not mentioning the name of God, or any other name, for that matter. They translated the four-letter word mentioned by Origen and found in the Masoretic notes in Hebrew Bibles, by inserting the vowels of the word "Adonai" between each two letters, thus originating the word JeHoVaH. Even the *New*

⁹⁰ As previously stated, they now use "Ado Shem" to avoid saying "Adonai."

⁹¹ *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, p. 146. The word "Adonai," used in this translation, is the way it was pronounced, but not as written.

⁹² *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 2, p. 35.

⁹³ *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 8, p. 329.

⁹⁴ This is an instance of how easily we can discern useless superstitious beliefs in others, but fail to notice our own.

Standard Bible Dictionary is forced to admit that “the form Jehovah is impossible, according to the strict principles of the Hebrew vocalization. It is due to the arbitrary transference of the vowels of *adonay*, ‘Lord,’ to the sacred name JHVH after the Jews became overscrupulous as to the pronunciation of the Name.”⁹⁵

The word “Jehovah” has been characterized as an “etymological misadventure.”⁹⁶ It has absolutely no meaning or power, and to all intents and purposes might be “abracadabra.” It is a trick of religion to throw words together that sound imposing but have no meaning.

Because Jehovah is *not* the name of the God of Israel, its use is being discontinued in the proposed edition of the new *American Standard Bible* and “Lord” substituted as the name of the Hebrew Deity. The change is being made, according to Professor Julius A. Brewer of Union Theological Seminary, “because the term ‘Jehovah’ has not been favorably accepted by American churches.” This is an open confession that the name of the Bible God is not known. Jehovah is an improvisation of the supposed name of the Hebrew God. It is a deliberately falsified name of the Hebrew Deity. Both Christians and Jews have been deceived for centuries. Millions who are worshiping Jchovah as God are simply worshiping a meaningless name.

TITLE VERSUS NAME

This Commandment distinctly says, “Thou shalt not take the *name* of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who taketh His name in vain.” The words “Lord” and “God” are titles, not names, just as are King and Ruler, Pope and Pontiff, President and Chief Executive.

The Almighty, Adonai, Creator, Elohim, Lord, the Eternal—these are merely synonyms for the *title* of the “King of Heaven” and the “Supreme Ruler of the Universe.” “God” is the *title* of the deity of the Children of Israel; it is not his secret or sacred name.

King George VI of England is not the *name* of the present head of

⁹⁵ *Standard Bible Dictionary*, p. 418.

⁹⁶ Landman, *New York Times*, Dec. 7, 1937.

the British Empire; it is merely his title. His real name is Albert Frederick Arthur George Windsor. The President of the United States is the title of the Chief Executive of this country. The *name* of the President is Harry S. Truman. Pope Pius XII is not the *name* of the present Roman Pontiff of the Catholic Church; that is his title. His real name is Eugenio Mary Joseph John Pacelli. Their names in their respective positions as King, President or Pope have power, but beyond that there is no more secret power in their names than in mine.

The whole idea of not mentioning the name of a God, even if he existed, is a silly, childish one, born in the brain of superstitious man and fit only for the ignorant time in which it was practised. If it was considered a frightful crime to mention the supposed name of God in Biblical times, what change has taken place that permits it to be spoken now with impunity? Judging from the reward bestowed upon the observers of the Second Commandment, I think we can with complete assurance also disregard the punishment implied for the violation of this one.

BLASPHEMY

This Commandment also introduced a new sin into the world. To protect the name of God, religion invented the crime of blasphemy, and in defense of this nameless deity, man's inhumanity to man began.

When Robert G. Ingersoll was denounced as "the champion blasphemer of America," he replied: "Blasphemy is an epithet bestowed by superstition upon common sense. Whoever investigates a religion as he would any department of science is called a blasphemer. Whoever contradicts a priest; whoever has the impudence to use his own reason; whoever is brave enough to express his honest thought, is a blasphemer. When the missionary speaks slightingly of the wooden god of a savage, the savage regards him as a blasphemer. To laugh at the pretensions of Mohammed in Constantinople is blasphemy. To say in St. Peter's that Mohammed was a prophet of God is blasphemy. There was a time when to acknowledge the divinity of Christ in

Jerusalem was blasphemy. To deny his divinity is now blasphemy in New York." ⁹⁷

The Biblical example that has justified the cruelest punishment for the slightest suspicion of casting aspersions on the Bible Deity is found in *Leviticus, Chapter 24, verses 10 to 16*:

10 And the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father *was* an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel: and this son of the Israelitish *woman* and a man of Israel strove together in the camp;

11 And the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name *of the Lord*, and cursed. And they brought him unto Moses: (and his mother's name *was* Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan:)

12 And they put him in ward, that the mind of the Lord might be shewed them.

13 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,

14 Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and let all that heard *him* lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him.

15 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin.

16 And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death, *and* all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name *of the Lord*, shall be put to death.

The above passage may well be considered the cornerstone of religious intolerance. For this crime of preferring the god of *his* father to that of the god of another tribe, “. . . they put him in ward, that the mind of the Lord might be shewed them.”

Then the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, “Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and let all that heard *him* lay their hands upon his head and let all the congregation stone him.” After this was done, and as an additional warning, the Hebrew God again instructs Moses to warn the Children of Israel that “whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin.” As a result of this injunction, as a sup-

⁹⁷ *Ingersoll Works*, Dresden Edition, Vol. 5, p. 50.

porting warning to this Commandment, a curse was placed on the mentality of man. Thinking became a crime. Nearly every country that came under the stultifying and brutalizing influence of the Bible enacted laws in conformity with these edicts and executed them with ever-increasing ferocity.

Equally pernicious and far more obnoxious is the following from *Deuteronomy, Chapter 13, verses 6 to 11*:

6 If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which *is* as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers;

7 *Namely*, of the gods of the people which *are* round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the *one* end of the earth even unto the *other* end of the earth;

8 Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him:

9 But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people.

10 And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

11 And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you:

Nowhere in the annals of religious intolerance is there to be found a more devilish doctrine than the one contained in these verses. It must be repeated for its full significance to be realized: "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which *is* as thine own soul," should seek to wean you away from the God of Israel to some other god, no matter who or where he might be, not only must you not hearken unto him but "thou shalt surely kill him; . . . thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die. . . ." Why? What monstrous crime is involved in such

an act that father should inform against son, brother against brother, friend against friend, and every human relationship be trampled under-foot?

These Biblical citations have been further elaborated by theological leaders in justification of a continuance of this barbarous doctrine. Thomas Aquinas calls blasphemy "an offense directly against God"; he says it "outweighs murder, which is an offense against our neighbor. The blasphemer intends to wound the honor of God."⁹⁸ "Wounding the honor of God." What a crime! Its frightful history shows that blasphemy can be used as a shield to meet all conditions and suit all purposes. To the Hebrews, whose forefathers wrote this Commandment, the greatest blasphemy is to call Jesus "God," and to the Christians the greatest blasphemy is to say that he is not. The people of one religion hold the God of another religion in the utmost contempt. Each condemns the other for worshiping a false God, and each denounces the other as an infidel and blasphemer.

In England, in the year 1754, a bequest to propagate Judaism by reading the Bible daily was declared invalid by the Lord Chancellor on the ground that it was blasphemy to the Christian religion.⁹⁹

The *Catholic Encyclopedia* defines blasphemy as "a sin against the virtue of religion by which we render to God the honour due to Him as our first beginning and last end."¹⁰⁰ It further states that "blasphemy is of its whole nature a mortal sin, the gravest that may be committed against religion. The seriousness of an affront is proportioned to the dignity of the person towards whom it is directed. Since the insult in blasphemy is offered to the ineffable majesty of God, the degree of its heinousness must be evident."¹⁰¹

Medieval canon law, dictated by the Church, provided many and various penalties for the blasphemer. One was that he "was compelled to stand at the door of the church during the solemnities of the Mass for seven Sundays, and on the last of the three days, divested of cloak

⁹⁸ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 2, p. 640.

⁹⁹ Bonner, *Penalties Upon Opinion*, p. 35.

¹⁰⁰ *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 2, p. 595.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 596.

and shoes, he was to appear with a rope about his neck.”¹⁰² Obligations of fasting and almsgiving were likewise imposed under the heaviest penalties. Pope Pius V insisted upon rigorous penalties for those guilty of this “heinous sin.” If flogging was not sufficient to purge the penitent of his sin, his tongue was pierced and he was then sent to the galleys.

The *Jewish Encyclopedia* defines blasphemy as “the evil of profane speaking of God.” In Jewish law, as in nearly all laws of different peoples, blasphemy consists not in “the evil of profane speaking” of the gods of other peoples, but only of the god of their own people. Josephus is the authority for the statement that in early Jewish law “a Jew who blasphemed a heathen deity was not guilty of the crime of blasphemy”; yet a heathen might be guilty if he blasphemed the name of the Bible Deity.¹⁰³ Likewise, “the death penalty was inflicted only upon the blasphemer who used the *Ineffable Name*; but the blasphemer of God’s attributes was subject to corporal punishment.”¹⁰⁴

Even during the taking of testimony in the course of a blasphemy trial in early Jewish courts, the witness was not permitted to repeat the words condemned as blasphemous. Certain words and phrases were substituted for them. At the conclusion of the trial, however, since it was necessary that the words of the actual blasphemy be mentioned before the verdict could be rendered, all persons not immediately concerned with the trial were ordered out of the room. The chief witness was then ordered to “state literally what you heard.” When he repeated the blasphemous words, “the judges stood up and rent their garments, that being the common sign of mourning.” The “rent” in the garments was not sewed up, to indicate the profound degree of mourning in expiation for having heard God’s name blasphemed.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 2, p. 596.

¹⁰³ Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, Vol. 3, p. 237.

¹⁰⁴ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, p. 237.

¹⁰⁵ According to R. Hiyya, “the rend of garments was no longer required after the fall of the temple,” having been superseded by this dictum: “He who hears blasphemy nowadays is not obliged to rend garments, because otherwise his garments would be nothing but tatters.” *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, p. 237.

During the Inquisition, the accusation of blasphemy was used as a means of extortion. Upon the slightest pretext, a designing Inquisitor would invoke the charge against the person whose property or daughter or wife he coveted, and nearly always with success.¹⁰⁶ If in a moment of despair a poor wretch muttered to himself, "I renounce God," he found himself in the clutches of these religious bandits. The penalties he suffered are only too well recorded in historical records.¹⁰⁷

Although savage cruelty was visited on unfortunates for the slightest infringement of religious duties, blasphemy was even more vigorously condemned. All other sins were holy in comparison with this great heresy; blasphemy, being the worst of sins, was punished the most severely. On the authority of the Bible itself—in fact, in the words of the Bible God who delighted in the extermination of his enemies—neither age nor sex stayed the hand of those who sought to inflict on the blasphemers the most frightful punishment they felt their God wanted them to inflict. Indeed, it was considered exemplary Christian conduct to find pleasure in contemplating the anguish of the sinner.¹⁰⁸ "Christians have burnt each other, quite persuaded that all the Apostles would have done as they did."¹⁰⁹

One of the first autos-da-fé to be held in Paris was for a victim charged with blasphemy, Marguerite de Hainault, who had written a book explaining her doctrine of the soul. It was condemned as blasphemous and burned by Gui II, Bishop of Cambria. She persisted in expounding her belief and fell into the clutches of Frère Guillaume of Paris. For eighteen months, having been excommunicated, she lay in an inquisitorial dungeon awaiting trial. The formality of a trial was quickly accomplished. Conviction having followed the inquiry, she was burnt at the stake the following day.¹¹⁰

In 1539, Catherine, wife of Melchier Weygel, was burned at Cracow in Poland for the crime of blasphemy, which consisted in believing

¹⁰⁶ Henry Charles Lea, *Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies*, p. 391.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Lea, *History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, Vol. 1, pp. 236, 238, 240.

¹⁰⁹ Lord Byron, *Don Juan*.

¹¹⁰ Lea, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 123.

“in the existence of one God, creator of all the visible and all the invisible world, who could not be conceived by human intelligence.”¹¹¹

By the laws of Christian V of Denmark, in 1683, blasphemers were beheaded after having their tongues cut out.¹¹² Similar laws prevailed in other countries during the Dark Ages. Pulling out the tongue of the heretic before he was bound to the stake was to prevent him from committing further blasphemy. If anyone escaped burning at the stake, “all his goods shall be confiscated, and upon his forehead shall be branded with the letter B.”

In order to show to what extent fanaticism in defense of a mythical God can pervert people, it is necessary, I believe, to give a number of illustrations of the severity of the punishment despite the harmlessness of the “blasphemy.”

It was the opinion of King Louis IX (the only French king who was canonized by the Church) that “a man ought to drive into the heretic’s entrails as far as he can.”¹¹³ It was this child of the Church who recovered for his country the inestimable relic, the crown of thorns. The enormous price that was paid was used as an argument for its authenticity, despite the fact that the Abbey of St. Denys was in possession of another one, considered equally authentic!¹¹⁴

In June, 1797, a poor bookseller named Williams was tried before Lord Kenyon of London for selling a “blasphemous” book—Thomas Paine’s *Age of Reason*. He was prosecuted by a group composed of the Bishop of London and other high dignitaries of the Church. The services of the noted Thomas Erskine, later Lord Chancellor, were employed against the poor and defenseless man to make sure that a conviction would be secured. Lord Kenyon, in his charge to the jury, stated that “every attack upon Christianity must, as such, be illegal.” Naturally, after such a charge, the jury brought in a verdict of guilty. Several days after the trial, while Mr. Erskine was walking through Holborn, a section of London, a woman seized him by his coat. She

¹¹¹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (13th Edition), Vol. 27, p. 594.

¹¹² Lea, *History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, Vol. 1, p. 235.

¹¹³ Draper, *Intellectual Development of Europe*, Vol. 2, p. 73.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

dragged him to a miserable room where Williams, the bookseller, lay in bed with his three children, desperately fighting smallpox. The woman pleaded with him, in the name of humanity, not to send her husband to jail. Mr. Erskine was so deeply touched by this pitiful sight and the heart-rending appeal of the poor woman that he suggested to the bishops that they suspend judgment on this man, already punished with poverty and sickness. So deeply "touched" were these bishops, and so overwhelming was their "Christian compassion," that the day following the receipt of Mr. Erskine's appeal, they enclosed a note with his fee urging him to press the court's judgment upon Williams. Astounded at their heartlessness, Mr. Erskine returned their fee and drew a pen through the retainer as counsel for the society, "because they love judgment rather than mercy." Williams was sentenced to serve one year in prison and to be bound in his own recognizance for \$5,000! On hearing the sentence, he asked the court whether, in view of his illness, he might not have the indulgence of a bed! To this the great-hearted Christian, Mr. Justice Ashhurst, replied: "I cannot order that. I daresay you will be treated properly. I wish to have it understood that this sentence is *a very great abatement of the punishment*, as in modern times, within the period I have sat in Westminster Hall, *three years'* imprisonment has been ordered for an offense of *much less enormity* than this, for this publication is horrible to the ears of a Christian."¹¹⁵ What a penalty to pay for selling *one* copy of *The Age of Reason!*

Fourteen years after the conviction of Williams, Daniel Isaac Eaton, another bookseller, also sold a copy of *The Age of Reason*. He, too, was charged with having committed blasphemy. Lord Ellenborough, in instructing the jury empaneled to try Eaton, said: "I leave it to you as twelve Christian men to decide whether this is not a most blasphemous and impious libel." And they did. They found Eaton guilty as charged. And so this infirm man of sixty years was sentenced to serve eighteen months in prison and to stand on the pillory from

¹¹⁵ Bonner, *Penalties upon Opinion*, pp. 33-35.

twelve to one o'clock once a month! All for selling *one* copy of *The Age of Reason!* ¹¹⁶

In January, 1819, Richard Carlisle was arrested on a charge of blasphemous libel for having published Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*. As part of his defense, Mr. Carlisle proceeded to read *The Age of Reason* in justification of its publication. The judge, Chief Justice Abbott, refused to permit it on the ground that it would be reiterating the libel, and stated that "to sit here and hear the Holy Scriptures calumniated is what I ought not to do." Richard Carlisle was convicted, imprisoned for three years, and ordered to pay a fine of \$4,500. Not having the sum to pay his fine, he served an additional term of three years. Immediately upon his conviction, Carlisle's wife committed the same "act of blasphemy" by selling a copy of *The Age of Reason*; she was imprisoned for two years, and was followed to prison by Carlisle's sister, who received the same sentence. In their battle for freedom of thought, even the shopmen of Carlisle committed the same "blasphemous" act, and each in turn was imprisoned until at one time it was estimated that more than 150 persons were jailed for selling this book. The public at last became so outraged at this prostitution of justice that an *age of reason* finally fell or was forced upon the judges of England, and since that time not a single person has been convicted for selling Thomas Paine's book. Hundreds of thousands of copies have since been sold with impunity.¹¹⁷

If *The Age of Reason* was a blasphemous libel in the times of Williams the bookseller, what has caused it to be looked upon today as one of the most remarkable books ever written? The answer lies in the emancipation of the human mind from the criminal superstitions of religion, and in the growing disbelief in the brutal Bible God.

On May 24, 1842, George Jacob Holyoake, a mathematics teacher and social philosopher, lectured at the Mechanics Institute in London on "Home Colonization as a Means of Superseding the Poor Laws and Emigration." At the conclusion of his address, which nearly everyone

¹¹⁶ Bonner, *Penalties upon Opinion*, pp. 35, 36.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

in the audience considered scholarly and erudite, a question period was permitted. A local preacher took advantage of this opportunity to be heard, and stated that although Mr. Holyoake had told the members of the audience of their duty to man, he had not told them of their duty to God, and asked whether there should not be churches and chapels in the community as outlined by the speaker. To this Mr. Holyoake replied:

“Our National Church and general religious institutions cost us, upon accredited computation, about twenty million pounds annually. Worship thus being expensive, I appeal to your heads and your pockets whether we are not too poor to have a God. If poor men cost the State as much, they would be put like officers on half pay; and while our distress lasts, I think it would be wise to do the same thing with the deity. Thus far I object, as a matter of political economy, to build chapels in communities. If others want them, they have themselves to please; but I cannot propose them. Morality I regard, but I do not believe there is such a thing as God.”¹¹⁸

For this explanation Mr. Holyoake was arrested and charged with blasphemy. For more than nine hours he addressed the jury in an eloquent and learned appeal that freedom of speech was a priceless heritage of mankind, that liberty of opinion was essential to the progress and happiness of man, and that blasphemy was an imaginary offense. The jury, however, found him guilty, and he was sentenced to six months in prison! In his day, blasphemy was a “worse poison to man’s soul than even nitroglycerine to their bodies.”¹¹⁹

I do not know of a more pertinent comment on this barbarous decision than the words of Mr. Holyoake himself in regard to his imprisonment. He recounts the following as he starts to serve his prison sentence: “My little daughter, Madaline, ran from her mother’s knee to the door, when she found I had gone, and called after me down the street. Her sweet, clear voice arrested me. I looked back and saw her dark, black eyes gleaming. I never met her glance again,

¹¹⁸ Bonner, *Penalties upon Opinion*, p. 63.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

nor heard her voice any more.” He continues: “Word was sent me that my child was ill, and then a letter came saying that she was dead. . . . The sole income of home was from subscriptions from friends in various parts of the country. . . . A few days before the fever took the child, her mother was carrying her through Bull Street, Birmingham, when she cried from hunger for a bun in a window. There was no penny to buy it.”¹²⁰ This conviction for blasphemy and the penalty suffered by George Jacob Holyoake satisfied God’s representatives on earth and appeased his wrath in heaven.

In another case of blasphemy, about the same time, testimony was offered to certify to the high character of the defendant, a Mr. George Adams, but the judge refused to permit it, stating that “had Adams committed a robbery, such a character might have weight, but in extenuation of religious offenses it was of no service.”

In 1920, in the State of Maine, a man was criminally prosecuted for laughing at a pigeon in a painting that was supposed to represent the Holy Ghost! His crime consisted in this remark: “How can the Holy Ghost be God when she is afraid a cat will kill her?”¹²¹

Recently, in the Dominion of Canada, an editor was charged with blasphemy. He was tried and convicted. After imposing a sentence of *sixty days* in jail for his crime, the learned judge had this to say: “We have ever been taught to reverence the name of God. We regard the taking of his name in vain as a sin. We look upon the Bible as the very basis of good law in our country. It has always been painful to hear any person question any part of the Bible.” The above remarks are quoted by the Rev. Frederick David Niedermeyer, and his comment is worth repeating as a revealing attitude upon this matter. He says: “The attitude expressed by that outstanding jurist is based upon God’s revelation of Himself through His words, and upon love for Him.”¹²² If this is the position of a present-day clergyman and the conviction of a present-day judge, then one can well

¹²⁰ Frank Swancara, *Obstruction of Justice by Religion*, pp. 239–241.

¹²¹ *Idem*, p. 244.

¹²² Rev. F. D. Niedermeyer, *The Ten Commandments Today*, p. 59.

understand with what severity the name of God was protected during the Middle Ages.

After the death of his wife Harriet, Percy Bysshe Shelley tried to regain the custody of his children, of whom he had been deprived as the result of his unfortunate marital difficulties. His petition to the court was opposed on the ground that he had published a blasphemous book for which he had been expelled from Oxford College. He had also been guilty of writing in defense of the poor bookseller Williams. On March 17, 1817, Lord Chancellor Eldon gave judgment against Shelley, prohibiting him from taking possession of, or associating with, his children. Their education was assigned to a clergyman of the Church of England, to be paid for by their father.¹²³ What a mockery!

I do not know a more appropriate summation of this discussion of blasphemy than these words of Shelley, which so graphically depict the heartlessness of those who believe in God but deny to others the right to disbelieve.

“I was an infant when my mother went
To see an atheist burned. She took me there:
The dark-robed priests were met around the pile;
The multitude was gazing silently;
And as the culprit passed with dauntless mien,
Tempered disdain in his unaltering eye,
Mixed with a quiet smile, shone calmly forth:
The thirsty fire crept round his manly limbs;
His resolute eyes were scorched to blindness soon;
His death pang rent my heart! the insensate mob
Uttered a cry of triumph, and I wept.
‘Weep not, child!’ cried my mother, ‘for that man
Has said, ‘There is no God.’”

With what hardness of steel and with what coldness of ice do religion and the “love” of God petrify the human heart!

On one occasion, when delivering a lecture, I denounced a number of Biblical characters for their part in some particularly fiendish

¹²³ Bonner, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

acts, and when the names of Moses and David were mentioned, a man in the audience quickly left the hall. When seen after the lecture, he was asked why he had left so suddenly, and replied that he did not intend to remain and suffer the possibility of being killed if God should wreak his vengeance upon those in the audience for *listening* to my blasphemy! Here the *taboo* of this Commandment extends merely to listening to others who may be guilty of violating it. It is not uncommon, particularly in religious discussions, to see people put their hands over their ears so that they will not be able to hear what they consider "taking the name of the Lord in vain."

If modern man, with all the intellectual development that has taken place since this Commandment was formulated, with all the educational facilities at his disposal to become acquainted with the facts of the Bible and the truths of the universe, can still become so mentally paralyzed by such a fear, then what must have been the effect of this Commandment upon the grossly ignorant and the superstitiously credulous people of primitive times when almost everyone was "afraid of his own shadow"!

It is impossible for me to believe in the Bible God. My mind rebels against it. I cannot help but look upon this God as "an inhuman wretch, incapable of pity, void and empty from any dram of mercy," an ignorant force that has stupefied the brain of man and paralyzed the intellect with fear. I denounce this God with all the energy I possess, and if this be blasphemy, then make the most of it.

THE CLERGY AND THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

One of the most amazing things I have discovered in analyzing the Decalogue is the ignorance of the clergy concerning the origin and meaning of the Commandments. For more than a thousand years, billions and billions of dollars have been spent building institutions for the specific purpose of inculcating the doctrines of the Bible, on the assumption that these Commandments were a special revelation from God; and millions and millions of men and women have

devoted their energies to this useless task. The salvation of the soul was dependent not only on the strict observance of these so-called Commandments of God, but also on the acceptance of everything else in the Bible as "inspired knowledge"—indisputable facts and incontestable truths of life to the contrary notwithstanding. Anyone who dared to question these dogmatic edicts of the Bible was summarily suppressed. That a civilized world should engage itself in not only a useless and fruitless endeavor, but one that has the most demoralizing and stultifying results, is hardly believable.

The labors of men and women in writing and printing endless volumes of "explanation" of Biblical doctrines furnish only one example of wasted energy. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the books of the clergy offering their explanations of this particular Commandment, and the code of conduct to be followed in its observance.

Dean Farrar gives this inspired opinion:

"The ordinary notion of this Third Commandment is that it forbids profanity and perjury; and therefore those who are guilty of neither think that it little concerns them. But 'the word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword; and pierceth even to the dividing of the soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and is quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.' . . . And before I have ended, even the most self-satisfied of us may well tremble lest we too should stand within the judgment of this Third Commandment, for its violation is practical Atheism. Thou takest His name in vain when thou triest to forget or to ignore Him; to live without Him; and, yet more defiant than the very devils, to believe, yet not to tremble."¹²⁴

This explanation is an example of the religious fanaticism that dominated the mentality of the clergy during the early part of this century. An already overstimulated imagination reached the breaking point in appraising the Bible Deity, and any act that could be construed as not conforming with the most slavish devotion to this

¹²⁴ Dean Farrar, *Voice from Sinai*, pp. 132, 137.

tyrant of the sky was considered a breach for which the culprit was to receive punishment that might well make him "tremble."

The Rev. J. C. Masse widens the field of acts which violate this Commandment, saying: ". . . Every man or woman who violates in thought, desire or deed the marriage vow or the marriage relation has blasphemed the Holy Name"; equally culpable are "church members who have changed residence without changing church membership."¹²⁵

In studying religion, and particularly its exposition by its leaders, one wonders how people not unintelligent in other fields can be so mentally unbalanced in explaining religious conduct. If the Rev. J. C. Masse says that "every man or woman who violates in thought, desire or deed the marriage vow or the marriage relation" violates this Commandment, then let me ask him what acts violate the Seventh Commandment. I have read many explanations of what constitutes a violation of this Commandment, but "church members who have changed residence without changing church membership" is a new one. Beware, you roving church members who fail to let your local preacher expound his doctrine of hell-fire, or take the consequences of violating this Commandment!

The Rev. G. Campbell Morgan says that "a man takes the name of God in vain when he does not use it in the way God intended it should be used, when he himself is not true to the revelation of God that the name makes."¹²⁶ One of the purposes of this study of the Decalogue is to understand the Commandments so as to be able to determine what their meaning is and what must be done to observe them. This "explanation" only adds confusion to confusion. How does anybody know *how* God "intended" us to use his name? It is difficult enough to understand the meaning of the written words that God is supposed to have said without attempting to presume what he also intended. What is the revelation of God that the name makes? How can anyone be true to such a thing when he hasn't the slightest conception of its meaning? The Rev. G. Campbell

¹²⁵ Rev. J. C. Masse, *Gospel in the Ten Commandments*, pp. 53, 58.

¹²⁶ Morgan, *The Ten Commandments*, p. 37.

Morgan's explanation that every man is a law unto himself in this matter may account for the vast number of religiously insane who have attempted to observe this Commandment as "God intended it should be used." What religious hallucinations have not resulted from the attempt to be "true to the revelation of God that the name makes"!

As further evidence of the qualification of the Rev. G. Campbell Morgan to speak with authority on this subject, the following public statement is pertinent:

" 'You must not believe these lying spirits,' was the answer today at the twenty-first annual general Bible conference of the Stony Brook Assembly of the Rev. Dr. G. Campbell Morgan of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to reports that Dr. Morgan had given up his belief in the second coming of Christ, thereby surrendering his views as a premillennialist.

" 'I understand that someone on the campus has questioned my belief in the second coming of the Lord,' said Dr. Morgan, 'and my premillennial views as to his return. You must not believe these lying spirits. If I did not believe in the second coming of our Lord and his glorious return as the only hope for the world, I would quit preaching.' " ¹²⁷

In reaffirming his faith in the second coming of Christ, does the Rev. G. Campbell Morgan mean to imply that some of his brother clergymen violated this Commandment by their false accusation as to his changing his beliefs on this matter? Or are they observing it according to his own explanation by claiming that their expression was the way God "intended" them to speak?

This gem of wisdom comes from the brain of the Rev. John Anderson Powell, Jr., Ph.D.: "Hypocrisy and profanity, perjury and irreverence, these are the sins against which the Third Commandment is directed." ¹²⁸ He also states, in his discussion of this Commandment, that "we have come to a pretty poor pass when profanity on the stage is thought to be funny," and gives as an illustration,

¹²⁷ *New York Times*, Aug. 31, 1930.

¹²⁸ Rev. John A. Powell, Jr., *Ten Commandments*, p. 37.

“when some woman came out to sing a song in which she used God’s name coupled with the proverbial ‘damn.’”¹²⁹

For the edification of the Rev. Mr. Powell, I wish to state emphatically that this Commandment has absolutely nothing whatever to do with profanity, perjury or irreverence. “Profanity” is merely a vulgarization of speech; “irreverence” has to be defined, as it differs according to time, place and thing. The Roman Catholics condemn those who do not accept their religious tenets as being irreverent, and I am irreverent for not accepting yours.

The Rev. Henry Sloane Coffin tells us that “this Commandment was primarily a safeguard for the sanctity of oaths . . . ,” and that “it requires no small effort to fulfill our Lord’s Commandment to make our yea exactly yea, and our nay precisely nay.”¹³⁰ If “this Commandment was primarily a safeguard for the sanctity of oaths,” what was the Ninth Commandment intended for?

Rabbi Isaac Warsaw says that this Commandment “is intended to be a lesson in reverence.”¹³¹ Reverence for what? For so-called “holy things”—and what are they? Did Mark Twain violate this Commandment in his book, *Innocents Abroad*, when he poked fun at the ugly and repulsive statues of the saints in the Vatican, and the ridiculous adoration of them by their slavish devotees? Who is to say what are the holy things to be revered, and who is to determine the standard of reverent conduct?

The Rev. John Alexander Hayes implies that to protect God’s name against misuse, it should have been registered in the United States Patent Office like any other trade-mark!¹³² That is indeed a splendid idea. The licensee should pay well for the privilege of its use, and infringers should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. In this way, too, all criticism of the Bible would be prohibited as in violation of patent rights. He also states that “this Commandment is violated . . . by calling into question the truth of scriptural

¹²⁹ Rev. John A. Powell, Jr., *Ten Commandments*, pp. 31, 32.

¹³⁰ Rev. H. S. Coffin, *Ten Commandments*, pp. 53, 57.

¹³¹ Rabbi Isaac Warsaw, *Broken Tablets*, p. 83.

¹³² Rev. John Alexander Hayes, *The Ten Commandments*, p. 59.

statements . . . jesting at holy things, such as the Holy Scriptures and the Church of God . . . it forbids making a mockery of sin.”¹³³

Rabbi Nathan Krass, formerly of Temple Emanu-El, New York City, says: “When a man pretends he is a saint and is living in a state of sinless perfection, using the Church of God to place himself on a pedestal above his fellows, he violates the Third Commandment by taking the name of God in vain, merely through his hypocrisy.”¹³⁴ If every person who places himself on a pedestal above his fellowman violates this Commandment, then the majority of the religionists are the greatest offenders. They consider themselves as having supreme religious authority on the assumption of being vicars of God on earth. Do not ministers of religion pretend that their prayers obtain better results than those of parishioners?

The similarity of the quotations by these clergymen leads one to the conclusion that they all must have got their ideas from the same source. Each seems to have repeated the mistaken notion of the other, and all combined show their complete ignorance of what this Commandment is supposed to mean. They use such expressions as profanity, reverence, perjury, without the slightest understanding of what these words mean in relation to this Commandment.

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT AND OATHS

Does this Commandment really deal with the question of invoking the name of God to prevent the crime we call perjury, or with the sanctity of an oath “to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth”? If it were intended to prevent perjury, why was it not more explicit? If it were intended to prevent lying, either in a court of law or anywhere else, it was a simple thing to state this plainly. If this Commandment said, “Thou shalt not lie,” and warned that “I the Lord thy God will not hold him guiltless who disobeys this Commandment,” then there would be no question as to its meaning.

¹³³ Hayes, *The Ten Commandments*, pp. 59–61.

¹³⁴ Paterson (N.J.) *Evening News*, Oct. 24, 1930.

But no such interpretation was intended by the one who wrote this Commandment. When it was promulgated, modern jurisprudence was not in existence.

As we have previously noted, this Commandment was written for one specific purpose, and this has not changed in the slightest degree. For the clergy to interpret it in any other way than as a primitive taboo associated with mentioning the name of one's god is indisputable evidence of their utter lack of understanding of its real meaning. *In fact, to invoke the name of God in taking an oath is in itself a violation of this Commandment and not an act in observance of it.*¹³⁵

If society depended only upon invoking the name of the Bible Deity when taking an oath, to secure the truth in legal matters, I fear that our entire system of jurisprudence would crumble into dust. Taking an oath, with the hand upon the Bible, and invoking the name of God, has about as much effect as any other ridiculous and meaningless gesture.¹³⁶

If this practice caused people to tell the truth, we should have no need for prosecuting attorneys. Instead, the moment a witness is sworn in and gives his testimony, he is immediately subjected to a searching and relentless cross-examination by the opposing attorney to prove that the testimony which he swore was the truth, was a premeditated lie! Significant is a statement of the Hon. Joseph N. Ulman, Associate Judge of the Supreme Court of Baltimore, Maryland, in an article entitled "Perjury in the Courts." He wrote that some of the most shameless lying he ever listened to was done by rival

¹³⁵ Because the Hebrews refused, as a specific observance of this Commandment, to invoke the name of God when required to do so in a court of law, they were regarded with suspicion. This contributed to intensifying the prejudice already incurred by their observance of the Second Commandment, and aggravated the anti-Semitic attitude already grown to menacing proportions. Hastings, *Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 5, p. 434.

¹³⁶ The following is a good illustration: "A witness was being sworn. The judge noticed that he was not holding up his right hand. He said to the clerk, 'Let the witness hold up his right hand.' 'His right arm was cut off,' replied the clerk. 'Let him hold up his left, then.' 'That was shot off, your Honor.' 'Well, then let him raise one foot; no man can be sworn in this court without holding something up.'" Hastings, *Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 5, p. 315.

groups of religious trustees in a contest over the control of some church property.¹³⁷

The use of an object, sacred or otherwise, or invoking a curse, as a pledge to tell the truth, is a custom that belongs to the primitive past, and its prevalence among the Biblical Hebrews attests to its primitive origin. For such a system to be practised in our courts of law is to place us on the same footing as ignorant tribal groups. Oath-taking is a form of sympathetic magic and is a survival of the belief in animism. The fear of magic power accounts for oaths being associated with the curse of retribution. Attesting by the name of a deity prevails in many primitive societies, as it is believed that treaties and business transactions are not binding otherwise.

The Negroes of Loango believe that Zambi, their supreme being, who punishes fraud and perjury, uses his name in giving testimony. The god *Leza* of the Awemba, who rewards the good and punishes thieves, murderers and adulterers, is invoked both in blessings and curses; the injured man prays that *Leza* will send a lion to devour the evildoer. In the Ewe-speaking Ho tribe on the Slave Coast, the great god *Maws*, who is said to inflict punishment on the wicked, is frequently appealed to in law cases by the judge as well as by the plaintiff and the accused. The Mpongwe, we are told, always invoke *Mwetyi*, their supreme being, as a witness when a covenant is about to be formed among the different tribes. He is commissioned with the duty of visiting vengeance on the party who violates the contract. Without this, their national treaties would have little or no force. And when a law is passed which the people wish to be especially binding, they invoke the vengeance of *Mwetyi* upon the transgressor; this, as a general thing, is ample guarantee for its observance.¹³⁸

In Egypt especially, it was the belief that there were certain gods who were the guardians of the truth. Truth, "the judge in heaven," was invoked when the person's words were intended to convey the

¹³⁷ *American Mercury*, May, 1935, p. 95.

¹³⁸ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 2, p. 686.

truth.¹³⁹ There is a survival of this superstition even today. It is not uncommon to hear a person who wants to impress you with the truth of his words say, "God is my witness." Among certain tribes, witnesses, before giving testimony, used to swear to its truth by placing their hands upon their genitals,¹⁴⁰ the inference being that if they spoke falsely they would lose the use of their vital organs.¹⁴¹ This form of swearing was eventually abandoned because it was discovered that the genital organs of those who were false to their oath were not affected. In Tibetan law courts the great oath is taken by placing a holy scripture on the head,¹⁴² sitting on the reeking hide of an ox, and eating part of the ox's head. Hindus sometimes swear by holding some water of the Ganges River in their hands, sometimes by touching the leg of a Brahman. The Kandhs frequently take an oath on the skin of a tiger, "from which animal destruction to the perjured is invoked."¹⁴³ The Angami Nagas, when they swear to keep the peace or perform any promise, place the barrel of a gun or a spear between their teeth, signifying that if they do not live up to their agreement, they are prepared to fall by either of the two weapons. The Chuvashes put a piece of bread and a little salt in the mouth and swear, "May I be in want of these, if I say not true," or "if I do not keep my word."

The Ioaw (Indians) have a mysterious stone wrapped in seven skins on which they make men swear to speak the truth. The people of Kesam, in the highlands of Palembang, swear on an old sacred knife; the Bataks of the South Toba on their village idols; the Ostyaks on the nose of a bear, which is regarded by them as an animal endowed with supernatural power. Among the Tunguses, a criminal may be compelled to climb one of the sacred mountains, repeating as he mounts, "May I die if I am guilty," or "May I lose my children

¹³⁹ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 2, p. 699.

¹⁴⁰ *Genesis*, Chapter 24, verses 2-9.

¹⁴¹ Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 113.

¹⁴² This we think is more sensible than placing the hand upon the book, for the words do come from the mouth, and the brain is responsible for their utterance.

¹⁴³ Westermarck, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-120.

and my cattle.”¹⁴⁴ There is a survival of this superstition even today, not only among orthodox Hebrews, but among nearly all religiously inclined people. Very often we hear a person who wishes to emphasize the truth of what he is saying, state that he hopes never to see his wife and children if he is not telling the truth. We know today that there is absolutely no connection whatsoever between his telling the truth and the security of his family. It is still common to hear expressions like “I would not believe that person if he swore on a stack of Bibles.”

Arabs swore by dipping their hands in the blood of a camel. The Latins swore by Jupiter Lapis, holding the sacred stone in the hand. In Samoa the accused lays his hand on the sacred stone of the village, and says: “I lay hand on stone. If I stole the thing, may I speedily die.” Among the Tunguses, the swearer drinks the blood of a dog, the throat of which has been cut and the flesh cut up. The swearer says, “I speak the truth, and that is as true as I drink this blood. If I lie, let me perish, burn or be dried up like this dog.”¹⁴⁵

Innumerable examples could be quoted to show the prevalence of this custom among primitive tribes. Despite the fact that we now look upon this method of attesting as having no value or effect, it nevertheless persists with superstitious stubbornness. Although an insult to modern intelligence, our own government papers invariably state, after the proper signatures are affixed, that they were “done in the year of our Lord,” etc.

How much longer will civilized people continue to follow customs that place them in the same category and on the same level as primitive and savage tribes? Fortunately there is an ever-increasing number of intelligent people who refuse to take oaths, and who merely affirm to tell the truth. If the penalties of perjury are not a sufficient

¹⁴⁴ Westermarck, *Morals*, p. 120. In London only recently an instance of this superstitious belief in sympathetic magic in relation to oath-taking was provided when some Chinese sailor insisted on taking an oath by cutting a rooster's throat or breaking a saucer, while saying: “As this saucer is broken, so may my soul be shattered if I do not tell the truth.” *New York Times*, Sept. 24, 1942.

¹⁴⁵ Hastings, *Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 9, pp. 431-433.

deterrent to prevent false testimony, invoking the myth of God will not accomplish it. Quakers do not swear, and I will match their degree of veracity with that of those who insist on making God a witness to their testimony. Fetishes of all kinds have been used by different peoples of nearly all lands for the purpose of extracting the truth; yet, despite the methods used and threats of punishment, the widespread prevalence of perjury attests to the inadequacy of the oath.

The Rev. Frederick David Niedermeyer says that this Commandment is not only a call for reverence, but "all false swearing, such as perjury, is forbidden because it is in effect making God a witness to a lie . . . and the severity of the penalty reveals how vital it is for man to fear God."¹⁴⁶ If this Commandment was intended to prevent perjury, and if God is a witness to the oath when his name is invoked, then it reveals his impotence when he fails to punish the utterer of the lie! If a witness to a lie remains silent and fails to reveal the truth, he is just as guilty as the liar himself. An accessory to a crime is as guilty as the perpetrator. If this Commandment was a warning of "the severity of the penalty" to be inflicted for committing perjury, and if, when it was being disobeyed, the person suddenly became tongue-tied, then indeed it would have some value and "reveal how vital it is for man to fear God," by experiencing "the severity of the punishment." But nothing like that happens. This Commandment is valueless as a deterrent in preventing perjury. If this were not true, how could we account for the widespread prevalence of perjury in our courts of law by the very ones who profess this Commandment to be a prohibition against it?

Men and women have been put to death on perjured testimony for crimes they did not commit and to which others have later confessed, yet the author of this Commandment was as silent as the Sphinx during the commission of these irreparable mistakes. Hundreds of thousands of innocent men and women have been deprived of their property and have suffered the loss of their liberty as the

¹⁴⁶ Niedermeyer, *Ten Commandments Today*, pp. 46, 53, 66.

direct result of perjured testimony by persons who invoked the name of God in taking the oath upon which their testimony was given.

If this Commandment means what the ministers of religion say it does, why does not God show his disapproval of false testimony, especially when the innocent are made to suffer and the guilty not only remain undetected, but enjoy the fruits of the labor of others? How can ministers of religion account for such a state of affairs? Unless the innocent are repaid for their suffering and recompensed for the loss they have sustained, of what benefit is God's not holding "guiltless" the one responsible for the crime? Punishing the guilty is not protecting the innocent. A wrong once committed can never be undone.

If ever a situation demanded the exercise of omnipotent power, it is when the defenseless weak are robbed by the unscrupulously strong.

If the Bible Deity could smite Ussah for touching the Ark, and kill more than fifty thousand people for merely looking at the Ark, then surely he could prevent false testimony by the wicked against the good.¹⁴⁷ If the Bible God is a witness to an irreparable crime which he possesses the power to prevent, and yet remains silent, then the blood of murder stains his hand.

The essence of a truly moral philosophy is to live so that no act requires forgiveness; then there is no need for expiation to make amends.

Robert G. Ingersoll said that an oath

"furnishes a falsehood with a letter of credit. It supplies the wolf with sheep's clothing and covers the hands of Jacob with hair. It blows out the light, and in the darkness Leah is taken for Rachel. It puts upon each witness a kind of theological gown. This gown hides the moral rags of the depraved wretch as well as the virtues of the honest man. The oath is a mask that falsehood puts on, and for a moment is mistaken for the truth. It gives to dishonesty the advantages of solemnity. The tendency of the oath is to put all testimony on an equality. The scoundrel is delighted with the

¹⁴⁷ *Samuel 1, Chapter 6, verses 1 to 20; Samuel 2, Chapter 6, verses 1 to 8; Samuel 2, Chapter 6, verses 8 to 29.*

opportunity of going through a ceremony that gives the ring of true coin to base metal. To him the oath is a shield. He is in partnership, for a moment, with God, and people who have no confidence in the witness credit the firm.”¹⁴⁸

We know that to invoke the name of God to prevent perjury is an act in vain. It has proved barren of results. You will not be rewarded if you do invoke his name, and you will not be punished if you don't. The person who testifies falsely soon discovers that no secret vengeance is wreaked upon him; as a result, taking an oath by invoking the name of God has lost its effect, its value and its significance. Shakespeare expressed this when he said:

“ ’Tis not the many oaths that make the truth,
But the plain simple vow that is vowed true.”

How well do Ingersoll's words apply here: “The alchemist did not succeed in finding any stone the touch of which transmuted baser things into gold; and priests have not invented yet an oath with power to force from falsehood's desperate lips the pearl of truth.”¹⁴⁹

Henry Thomas Buckle, in his great book, *History of Civilization in England*, after stressing the prevalence of perjury due directly to the manner by which the oath was invoked, quotes Archbishop Whately, who declared that “if oaths were abolished, leaving the penalties for false witness . . . unaltered, I am convinced that, on the whole, testimony would be more trustworthy than it is.”¹⁵⁰

Truthfulness is not achieved merely by taking an oath. It is part of the intellectual development of the individual, and to achieve it requires the same careful education as to learn any phase of behavior. To be able to tell the truth is a sign of moral development. The higher the social order, the more scrupulous the ethical conduct, the more readily is the truth told. The ignorant, uncivilized man has no regard for truth or honesty for its own sake.

¹⁴⁸ Ingersoll, *Works*, Vol. 8, p. 181.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 8, p. 188.

¹⁵⁰ Buckle, *History of Civilization in England*, Vol. 1, p. 281.

TAKING GOD'S NAME IN VAIN

One of the most heart-rending sights ever witnessed was that of a mother in fervent prayer to save her dying child. Her prayer went unanswered; her child died; her appeal to God was in vain.

A girl who loved not wisely but too well found herself abandoned by the boy she had trusted. She appealed to God to save her from what she felt was inevitable disgrace. Never did a human being plead more strongly for divine assistance in her hour of trial, but the only answer was the "echo of her wailing cry." She took the name of God in vain, for she found solace not in prayer but in a poison potion.

When crops fail and famine stalks the land, in vain do the starving people appeal to Heaven for a morsel of food to stay the agonizing torture of death by starvation.

The maimed and the crippled, the heavily burdened, the despondent and the depressed have all taken the name of God in vain when they appealed for assistance to help them meet the emergencies of life.

What is more pitiful than the drowning man as he sinks below the water, his prayer to God for help in vain?

The whole human race has taken the name of God in vain for centuries. When man has appealed to Heaven to help solve the problems of the race that have caused so much misery, suffering and injustice, it has been in vain. If God would answer but one prayer and stop human beings from murdering one another, we might forgive him his callous attitude toward our other requests.

Three little innocent, playful children wandered aimlessly into a vacant house. Unconscious of the time and busily amused, they were unaware that night had fallen. It grew darker and darker. The smallest child became frightened and began to cry. The oldest groped her way from room to room in search of light. She came upon some matches. The anguished sobbing of the other children filled the empty and abandoned house with terrifying sounds. Frightened almost beyond the endurance of her childish mind, the oldest girl, in her eager-

ness to lead the others out of the darkened house, stumbled and fell. The lighted match ignited her dress and in a few moments she was aflame. She screamed for help. Her cries, mingled with those of the other children, reverberated with such hideous noise that the already terror-struck children became paralyzed with fear. Within a short time the house was on fire and the flames swept the building. In the meantime the frantic parents were looking feverishly for the children, uttering prayers to God for their safety. The whole neighborhood was aroused. Alarms were sounded. They finally came upon the burning building. The children had been taught that in an hour of trial they should pray to God for help and their prayers would be answered. There they found the charred bodies of the three children. One was lying flat upon the floor, the other two were found in a kneeling position, indicating that the little ones, in a last desperate moment, fell upon their knees and prayed to God to save them from so horrible a death. These children took the name of God in vain!¹⁵¹

Do you want me to tell you why appeals in the name of God are uttered in vain? Do you want me to tell you why prayers are not answered? I will tell you. *There is no such thing as a God who answers the prayers of man.* The sooner we come to that realization, the sooner the human race becomes cognizant of this fact, the sooner will man set about to accomplish for himself all that he has appealed to God for in vain. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. . . ." Thou canst not take the name of God in any other way.

¹⁵¹The facts related above are based on an actual tragedy.

The Fourth Commandment

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work:

But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the Lord thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates:

For *in* six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

IS THERE A SABBATH DAY?

THE ESTABLISHMENT of a "Sabbath" day, a day superior to, and more "sacred" than, any other day of the week, a day to be observed simultaneously by all the peoples of the earth, is a physical and astronomical impossibility. It is therefore not surprising that one professed Christian authority confesses that the explanation of this Commandment is "full of difficulty."¹

For one day in seven to be set aside for all eternity for the complete cessation of labor because "God rested" on the seventh day, with death as a penalty for the violation of this order, is obviously too puerile for intelligent consideration. If the Bible God had put a time limit upon his period of rest, especially when there is so much still to be done to make the earth a truly habitable place, we could possibly pardon his rigorous demands and excuse his passion for adoration; but to rest for eternity is laziness without an excuse.

Yet, of all the Commandments which God is supposed to have given to Moses on Mount Sinai for the guidance of the Children of Israel, the observance of the Sabbath day was considered the most important. What made the Sabbath day the holy bond between the Children of Israel and their God? Was the Sabbath but another superstition founded upon a primitive taboo based upon sympathetic magic? In addition to the fact that the Sabbath is mentioned in each and every one of the different sets of the Commandments, the necessity for its strict observance is repeated innumerable times throughout the Bible. The Bible Deity insisted that the Children of Israel observe it as a sign between him and them, as visible evidence that they would keep his Commandments. There can be no mistake about this; the provisions are clear and definite. The Sabbath was

¹ Charles, *The Decalogue*, p. 110.

the Day of Days—the most sacred tie between the Israelites and their God.

This Commandment also contains an additional injunction not present in the others—the admonition to “remember” the Sabbath. Forgetfulness was not a valid excuse, and woe unto those who failed to observe it.

How could one remember the Sabbath day? By what means and by what method could it be identified? How had the Lord “blessed” the seventh day? How was it hallowed? Has it some particular mark of identification to distinguish it from the other days of the week? Does the sun rise and set at a different time, or is the temperature on that day even and unvarying, or must we depend on the man-made calendar to tell it from the other days of the week? Since man began to measure the movements of the heavenly bodies, the arrangement, number and names of the days of the week have been changed innumerable times in the calendar. How, then, is it possible to designate the *authentic* seventh day?

Does not the sun shine on the seventh day as well as on any other day? Does it not sometimes rain, and do we not have storms and cyclones and earthquakes on the Sabbath as well as on any other day of the week? According to religionists, the Lord sends all these phenomena. Does God, then, not violate his Sabbath by “working”? Are the heavens any different on the Sabbath? Is the sky any bluer or the sun any brighter? Do we not have to eat and drink and sleep on the Sabbath as on any other day?

Why is there sickness and death during the Sabbath just as on any other day of the week? What about war—the cruelest and most stupid undertaking of man, the wholesale murder of human beings by each other in a blind fury of hate—does that not continue on the holy Sabbath? If there were no sickness, no death, no mean and despicable act, no vicious thoughts on this “holy” day, then indeed it would possess some distinguishing merit.

The story of the six days of creation is not only unscientific, it is not even good fiction. In the cycle around the sun there are no

favorite days of the earth; no one day is more blessed or hallowed than another; there are no "stepchildren" in the family of months.

In the *Deuteronomy* version of the Decalogue,² the reason given for the observance of the Sabbath is the deliverance of the Children of Israel from bondage in Egypt. In the *Exodus* version, however, the Sabbath is to be observed because God created "heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."

This glaring contradiction exposes something more than merely textual errors. It proves the falsity of the *Exodus* explanation and places the other in the category of fiction. It also proves that the Sabbath was unknown to the Hebrews until the time of Moses and was merely one of the many superstitions he imposed upon the credulous Israelites. Even the *Jewish Encyclopedia* makes this important admission: ". . . the Sabbath was either improperly observed or sometimes, perhaps, altogether ignored in the time of the prophets."³

When geologists determined the age of the earth to be hundreds of thousands of years, the believers in the Mosaic account of creation tried to defend the Biblical narrative by stating that the "six days" of creation as mentioned in *Genesis* indicated "long periods of time." This explanation would certainly negate a "seventh" or "Sabbath" day in the scheme of creation. It belongs in the same category with the stupidities of the early Church Fathers, who laid down infallible propositions, such as this "profound" utterance of St. Augustine: "Although the world has been made of some material, that very same material must have been made out of nothing." Upon the vital question of the six days required by God to accomplish his task, he further enlightens us: "There are three classes of numbers, the more than perfect, the perfect, and the less than perfect, according as the sum of them is greater than, equal to, or less than the original number. Six is the perfect number, wherefore we must not say that six is a perfect number because God finished all his work in six days, but God finished

² *Deuteronomy, Chapter 5, verse 12.*

³ *Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. 10, p. 587.*

all his work in six days because six is the perfect number.”⁴ Peter Martyr was so certain of the truth of this that he stated that were “this article taken away, there would be no original sin, the promise of Christ would become void, and all the vital forces of our religion would be destroyed.”⁵

Is it any wonder, in view of these infallible declarations, that the Westminster divines, in drawing up their Confession of Faith, especially laid down that it was necessary to believe that all things visible and invisible were created not only out of nothing, but in exactly six days?⁶

Martin Luther brought his great intellect to tackle this problem, and with his “usual boldness” declared that Moses “spoke properly and plainly, and neither allegorically nor figuratively,” and that therefore “the world with all creatures was created in six days.” He then goes on to show how, by a great miracle, the whole creation was instantaneous!⁷

John Calvin, taking an opposite view of the instantaneous six-day creation, said that “creation was extended through six days that it might not be tedious for us to occupy the whole of life in the consideration of it!”

We must not fail to add to this weighty testimony that of St. Hilary of Poitiers, whose accomplishment lies in the reconciliation of these two apparently irreconcilable conceptions. These are inspired conclusions: “For, although according to Moses, there is an appearance of regular order in fixing the firmament, the laying bare of the dry land, the gathering together of the waters, the formation of the heavenly bodies, and the arising of living things from land and water, yet the creation of the heavens, earth and other elements is seen to be the work of a single moment.”

It was, however, left to St. Thomas Aquinas, that mighty Church intellect, to bring about some agreement on this subject by declaring

⁴ A. D. White, *Warfare of Science with Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

that God created the substance of the things in a single moment, but required six days for the separating, shaping and adorning of creation!

To cap the climax of this bitter controversy that threatened the Church for over a thousand years, Dr. John Lightfoot, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge and one of the most eminent Hebrew scholars of his time, declared in his great work—the result of a most profound and exhaustive study of the Scriptures—that “heaven and earth, center and circumference, were created all together, in the same instant,” and that “this work took place and man was created by the Trinity on October 23, 4004 B.C., at nine o’clock in the morning.”⁸ Later theologians, however, have supplied a serious omission of Dr. Lightfoot’s findings by adding: “*Eastern Standard Time.*”

Again, R. H. Charles is forced to conclude that “no educated man now accepts the literal account of creation in six days. This supernatural conception of the Sabbath is without any basis in actuality.”⁹

The explanation that the “six days” of creation indicated “long periods of time” has now been completely abandoned by religious apologists as not having the slightest shred of evidence. They are even ashamed of it.

That the sun was created before there was vegetation was of little concern to the theologians, and, according to St. Isadore of Seville in his great encyclopedic work which was the intellectual authority for the human race for a century under the domain of Catholic Christianity, “bees are generated from decomposed veal, beetles from horse-flesh, grasshoppers from mules, and scorpions from crabs.”¹⁰

The discussion of the Sabbath has not ended, however, and that this momentous question is still agitating the minds of the clergy is evidenced by the following:

LONDON.—An unexpected discussion today concerning the creation of the world enlivened the hitherto quiet sessions of the Church

⁸ A. D. White, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁹ Charles, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

¹⁰ White, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

Assembly. It began when the Rev. C. E. Douglas referred to the biblical account of the creation in six days. The Bishop of Birmingham intervened to say that those who read the popular newspapers would believe Mr. Douglas took the story of the creation literally.

Amid cries of dissent the Bishop continued:

"For the sake of our people I think it ought to be stated here that such a statement is not accepted seriously by this house without protest. It is to be desired that our people should know that we as a Church feel we can accept the conclusions of modern science without feeling thereby in any way disparaging the value of the spiritual witness of the Bible.

"We believe the first chapter of Genesis still demands our regard because of the emphasis thrown on the creative activity of God. The world, we affirm, as disclosed to us by modern science, has not come into existence as a result of some fortuitous concourse of atoms."

"On a point of honor, I did not make that statement," Mr. Douglas interjected. "The Bishop of Birmingham doesn't seem to have a sense of humor."

"I am glad to have elicited from Mr. Douglas the fact that he does not wish to insist on the literal truth of the creation of the world in six or seven days," the Bishop returned. "Recent scientific discoveries have enabled men of science to state the age of the earth with very considerable accuracy."

The Bishop was interrupted by cries of "Oh, oh," and laughter when he added, "The approximate age of the earth is between two and four billion years." The Bishop of London, presiding, ruled out any further discussion of the creation.

"I have allowed the Bishop of Birmingham to correct what he thought a misstatement, but we cannot now discuss the creation of the world," he said.

Loud laughter ended the debate.¹¹

In no other category than that of a ridiculous yarn, were the consequences not so tragic, could the question of a Sabbath day be placed.

¹¹ *New York Times*, Feb. 7, 1931.

WHICH DAY IS THE SEVENTH?

We live on an earth whose geographical proportions can be mathematically computed in latitude and longitude. This fact was unknown to the "inspired" writers of the Bible. It was their belief that the earth was a flat parallelogram having "corners" and "ends," the length being east and west, the breadth north and south ("going around the earth" was therefore inconceivable), and that it was the center of the universe around which the sun and all heavenly bodies revolved. We now know that the earth is globular and revolves around the sun; that when the sun rises in the east, it sets in the west—"and never the twain shall meet."

Those who have traveled to Europe know that during the six-day voyage they lose an hour each night in order that the time they left New York may not conflict with the time they arrive in Europe. Why must they adjust their timepieces to correspond with the time of the place they are visiting? The answer is simple. The sun cannot rise and set over the whole face of the earth at the same time! For instance, if we should take as an example the beginning of the day at Honolulu, only 20 degrees from the International Date Line, at 6:30 A.M. on Saturday, it would simultaneously be

9 a.m. Saturday in San Francisco
6 p.m. Saturday in London
12 midnight in Singapore
1 a.m. Sunday in Manila
2 a.m. Sunday in Tokyo

—which makes time, like morality, a geographical problem.

The following article presents the astronomical and scientific reasons for the impossibility of a Sabbath day for all the peoples of the earth at exactly the same time.¹²

¹² Miss Marguerite L. Galois, secretary to the late Sir Hiram Maxim, in the *Truth Seeker*, Aug. 2, 1913. Although this deals with Sunday as the Sabbath, it is, of course, equally applicable to any other day.

"Ten years ago, while I was still a girl in my early teens, I was one of a New Year's Eve party of twenty in London. At about eleven o'clock an all-knowing gentleman present remarked that it was already New Year's Day in Vienna; a little later he said, 'It is now New Year's Day in Berlin'; at fourteen minutes to twelve he said, 'The New Year has arrived at Paris and will be in London in fourteen minutes; in five hours the New Year will have reached New York, and about three hours later the people of San Francisco will commence to celebrate the New Year.' All this seemed very curious to me—so I ventured to ask where the New Year commenced. They all answered, 'Of course, it commences at twelve o'clock midnight.' 'But,' I said, 'I did not ask *when* it commenced, I asked *where* it commenced; it must have been New Year's somewhere else before it was New Year's in Vienna.' There was not one present that could enlighten me on the subject.

"Shortly after this I went to Vuna-Taviuni, one of the Fiji group of Cannibal Islands in the South Pacific Ocean. This island was exactly on the one hundred and eightieth meridian, that is, it was one hundred and eighty degrees west of Greenwich and one hundred and eighty degrees east of Greenwich. A British man-of-war equipped with scientific apparatus and instruments, had visited the island some years before, made observations, and set up a row of stone posts having the figures '180' sculptured in each. This was said to be for the guidance of mariners in those distant seas.

"Both the Catholics and the Presbyterians (natives) were strong Sabbatarians; among other restrictions a law was passed making it a criminal offense to sell alcoholic drinks on the Sabbath day. I noticed a row of shanties erected exactly on the line of the one hundred and eightieth meridian. Suppose, for example, that it was Sunday morning on the west side of the meridian line, Sunday would commence to travel westward, and would take twenty-four hours to get completely around the earth and arrive at the east side of the same meridian; then again, the very instant that Sunday arrived, Monday morning would start on the west side. Therefore, while it was *Monday* on the west side of the meridian it was *Sunday* on the east side. When a barroom was exactly on the line, it was only necessary to move the bottles from one side to the other to enable the dealers to sell rum every day in the year without infringing the Sunday law.

"I was much amused at the ingenuity displayed in the arrangement of one restaurant with a barroom attached. It was a light wooden structure about twenty feet wide and sixty feet long, mounted on wheels in such a manner that the whole building could be moved from one side of the line to the other. By this ingenious arrangement, not only could the bar be opened every day in the year, but the restaurant was very convenient for the Catholics, as it enabled them to eat meat every day in the week without ever eating it on Friday.

"One could catch fish every day in the year without fishing on Sunday, for while it was Sunday on one side of the island, it was either Monday or Saturday on the other side. It was absolutely impossible for it to be Sunday on both sides at the same time. This was much appreciated by the beachcombers and natives who depended very largely upon fish for their food. Moreover, men with large families were able to work every day in the year without working on Sundays.

"It was thus that I learned definitely where the New Year commences and, for that matter, where every day in the week commences; but, curiously enough, this small island, with its few thousand inhabitants, is the only land, except in the frozen arctic regions, where such a state of affairs prevails."

If we do not know when the year begins, how can we tell when the week starts? A mathematically minded person has shown how, by traveling back and forth across the international date line, one can have ten Sundays in a single month! And, by reversing his course, he could avoid having any Sundays at all! Would such a person, if he followed the first course, be obligated to observe the ten Sundays in the month? Or, if he followed the second course, would he be entirely free from the obligations of the Sabbath?—because, if he did this, his seventh day would be in the middle of the week.

The primitive Biblical Hebrews had no calendars, such as we have today, and it was difficult to keep an accurate record of the days of the week. They determined the days of the week by counting the threads on their prayer shawls. The later Biblical Hebrews relied upon the crude calendars of other nations.

The first calendars showed the measurements of the year by the seasons.¹³ It is stated on good authority that the Greeks of the Classical period had no week of any kind, nor can any trace of the week, as we now know it, be found in ancient Egypt. The lunar months, determining the days of the week by the phases of the moon, were the only guide of primitive man from remote antiquity until the invention of the modern calendar. The arrangement of the years into months, weeks and days is not only of recent origin, but was the result of the development of astronomical science in determining the actual time it took the earth to revolve around the sun.

It was not until the third century that the practice of measuring time in cycles of seven days, each of them dedicated to the seven planets, was to any degree universally used.¹⁴ The division of time into seven days to the week as the basis of our present calendar belongs to the Greeks. (If the Greeks had known that there were ten planets instead of only the seven with which they were acquainted, it is quite probable that they would have provided for a ten-day week instead of the seven-day week, for in China the ten-day week prevailed until almost the present era.) The very names of the days, called after the planets, were made up by the Greeks. Surely if God had "hallowed" the seventh day, *he* should have given it a name, instead of leaving this important function to the despised Greeks. *No mention of so fundamental a thing as the names of the days of the week is to be found in the Bible.* However, if the Greeks had not divided the revolution of the earth around the sun into years, months, weeks and days, it would have been impossible to determine the day when the Bible God is supposed to have completed his task of creation!

The lunar month was determined by the four quarters of the moon of approximately seven days each. Long before the introduction of the months—which were also named by the Greeks—the year was determined by periods of 52 weeks, the length of time it took for the earth to revolve around the sun.¹⁵

¹³ F. H. Colson, *The Week*, pp. 18, 19.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ A. D. McLaren, *The Christian Sunday*, Pioneer Press, London.

The first and seventh days of the week, and particularly the number seven, were regarded by the Greeks as sacred to the god Apollo, probably because of their supposed relation to the seven planets. References of the seventh day implying some special, though vague, significance of a sacred character are frequently mentioned in Homeric poems and other early Greek records.¹⁶ One writer quotes the Greek historian Strabo, who wrote before the Christian era: "The Greeks and barbarians have this in common, that they accompany their sacred rites by a festal remission of labor."¹⁷

The reformed Egyptian calendar was dated from what is called the first year of Augustus—the year in which he entered Alexandria after his victory over Anthony and Cleopatra. This actually took place on August 1, 30 B.C., but as the Egyptian year begins with the month of Thoth, which almost coincides with our month of September, the Augustan era of Egypt was calculated from the first of Thoth.¹⁸

In shifting the calendar, making January instead of September the first month of the year, what happened to that sacred "seventh" day? It was irretrievably lost, because when these changes were made, Rome was living under a calendar of an eight-day week!¹⁹

To complicate matters and make even more impossible the designation of *the* seventh day, it must further be remembered that while the Egyptian calendar was based on the solar year, the Hebrew calendar was based on lunar reckonings. The lunar year is shorter than the solar year by about ten days, twenty-one hours and twelve seconds. With such a great difference, it is utterly impossible for the Hebrew calendar to run parallel with the months as divided under the solar year. The lunar month contains 29½ days; consequently, every five months a new day is added to the month. This would make the original seventh day, according to the lunar calendar of 28 days to the month, or seven days to the week, the eighth day, five months later it would make it the ninth day, and thus the original seventh day of

¹⁶ A. D. McLaren, *The Christian Sunday*.

¹⁷ Charles, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

¹⁸ Colson, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

creation would be totally lost down the corridors of time. This accounts for the yearly change of the time for the observance of the so-called holy days in the Hebrew calendar. In making these changes and in fixing the day for the observance of the Day of Atonement, it is so arranged that it never falls (according to Hebrew law, it must not) on a Sunday. Likewise, the day of the New Year, Rosh Hashana, must never fall on a Saturday.²⁰

With such a jumbling of days and dates, how is it possible to designate *the* seventh day? ²¹

What happened when the new Gregorian calendar, the one now used, came into existence? While the number of days in the week remained the same, the *number* of the day the Bible God designated as the seventh was lost forever in the rearrangement of the months. While Saturday remained the seventh day of the week, the *seventh* day in the old Hebrew calendar was *not* the *seventh* day in the Gregorian.

What better proof is there of this confusion concerning the *seventh* day than the indisputable fact that the "Sabbath" is observed on *different* days of the week in different countries among different peoples? For instance, the Christians observe the Sabbath on Sunday, the first day of the week; the (old) Greeks observe Monday; the Persians observe Tuesday; the Syrians observe Wednesday; the (old) Egyptians, Thursday; the Mohammedans, Friday; the Hebrews,

²⁰ Idelsohn, *Ceremonies of Judaism*, pp. 51, 52. For instance, if Thursday, October 2, 1940, was the 5,701st year since the world was created, according to the Hebrew calculation, how is it possible for Saturday to be the seventh day of creation? According to this reckoning, Wednesday of the following week would be the seventh day; and since the reckoning of the New Year according to the Hebrew calendar is constantly changing, this is additional evidence substantiating the claim that if there was a "seventh" day of creation, it has been irretrievably lost. Then again, how silly to assume the accuracy of the Hebrew reckoning of creation, when astronomers, geologists and biologists present indisputable evidence of the existence of the universe and of life on this earth for millions of years. Now that the Jews have abandoned the observance of the Sabbath as the bond between them and their God, they should discontinue the observance of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur and complete their emancipation from this demoralizing superstition.

²¹ Even today the orthodox Hebrews, not knowing definitely which was the first day of creation, observe two days so as not to make a mistake in failing to observe the proper one. A more accurate method would be to observe every day of the week.

Saturday—and each claims that the day he observes is the “real” Sabbath!

Walter Scott Haskell has carried the question of the Sabbath to its logical conclusion in a humorous poem:

HIS RELIGIOUS SCRUPLES

“The woodpile, sir,” the lady said
Unto the hobo she had fed,
“Is waiting for a man like you
To give it a close interview.”
“I’m sorry, Ma’am!” the hobo yelled;
“By pious thoughts today I’m held;
My mother was a Greek, they say,
And Monday is her Sabbath day,
And while in Persia a dear friend
(His goodness I would not offend)
Did entertain me with good fare;
And Tuesday is the Sabbath there.
Another friend, a Syrian priest,
Gave me the church rite and the feast;
My sacred duty cannot shirk:
On Wednesday Syrians do not work.
Egyptian lore I learned by rote,
For I have traveled, if you note,
And Thursday is the day they rest;
Of all the days it is the best.
Mohammedans on Friday find
The sacredness of Islam’s mind,
And, lady, it is sad but true,
On that day I can’t work for you.
My father was a Jewish gent,
And Saturday’s the day God meant
That men from labor e’er should cease
And rest their weary bones in peace.
No Christian Sabbath I’ll profane;
The thought of work then gives me pain.
I’m conscientious in my creed,
But thank you for your generous feed.”

As a result of this confusion there were *three* official Sabbaths each week in Istanbul (formerly Constantinople): Friday for the Mohammedans, Saturday for the Hebrews, Sunday for the Christians—and the entire city observed all three! ²²

Because of the mixed population of Hebrews, Moslems and Christians, so much confusion exists in Jerusalem at the present time regarding the Sabbath that the High Commissioner of Palestine empowered each municipality to determine for itself by local option which day was to be designated as the Sabbath.²³

Even in our own country we are faced with this dilemma. A mother was brought to court for failing to send her children to public school on Fridays. She defended her action by stating that she was of the Mohammedan faith and since Friday was their Sabbath, children were forbidden to attend school on that day. Since Hebrew and Christian children in this country enjoy the privilege of celebrating their Sabbath according to their faith, the judge felt that he had no alternative but to grant a similar privilege to the Mohammedans.²⁴

As a result, the question as to which is the *seventh* day of the week is confusion worse confounded.

THE SABBATH AS A TABOO

The “sabbaths and the full moon” are mentioned together in numerous passages of the Old Testament. The derivation of the word “sabbath” is from the Babylonian “Shabattum,” meaning the day of the full moon, and the designation of the seventh day by the Hebrews is attributed to the Babylonian “U-hul-gallum,” which means the “evil day” and “a day of rest for the heart.” That the Hebrews copied or

²² Only recently the National Assembly of Turkey, discarding the centuries-old tradition, designated Sunday instead of Friday as the Sabbath for the Mohammedans. *New York Times*, May 29, 1935.

²³ *New York Times*, Apr. 13, 1935.

²⁴ *New York Times*, Feb. 9, 1934. It is interesting to note that the witnesses who testified on behalf of the parent did not take the oath on the Bible, but by Allah, holding up two fingers of the right hand and five of the left. Another interesting point is that a movement has been started recently to include Moslem chaplains in the army.

borrowed their Sabbath day from others cannot be disputed. That it was a taboo day, a day portentous of evil and associated with the full moon, seems also undisputed.

However, instead of making their Sabbath in accordance with the moon's changes, the Hebrews decided upon the seventh day regardless of its coincidence with the moon's variations. As the Children of Israel were a nomadic people, they could not depend upon the phases of the moon to determine their day of rest. In order to have their Sabbath come at regular intervals, they abandoned the lunar religion of the Babylonians and Assyrians, and adopted the seventh day of the week.²⁵

In 1869, George Smith, well known as a pioneer student of Assyriology, discovered among the cuneiform tablets in the British Museum "curious religious calendars of the Assyrians, in which every month is divided into four weeks, and the seventh days, or 'Sabbaths,' are marked out as days on which no work should be undertaken." Authorities contend that this reckoning of the days of the week and the taboo prescribed for the seventh day probably belonged to the age of Hammurabi.²⁶

Even the name Sinai means "moon-mountain," a synonym for "sin." One of the Hebrew names for "month" is *yerah*, from *yareah*, "moon"; it is also called *hodesh*, which means "new moon." Orthodox Jewish mothers still teach their children to take off their hats to the new moon,²⁷ and the custom of offering a prayer to the new moon still prevails.

A passage in one of the Psalms is significant: "Blow the trumpet at the new moon, at the full moon, on our feast day."²⁸

The late Professor Morris Jastrow, in commenting on the twenty-third chapter of *Leviticus*, where it is prescribed that "on the morrow about the sabbath" fifty days are to elapse before the commencement of the Feasts of Weeks, clearly shows that the word "Sabbath" is here

²⁵ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 10, p. 590.

²⁶ Hutton Webster, *Rest Days: A Study in Early Law and Morality*, p. 223.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 248.

²⁸ *Psalms* LXXXI: 3.

used, not in its later sense of a seventh day of rest, but as a survival of the old designation of the Sabbath as the full-moon day.²⁹

Even modern Jewish ritual prescribes a special service for the new-moon day, including the recital of psalms of joy. The new or full moon was the only means of lighting the evening, and we can readily understand its influence upon primitive man. He became awed by its appearance to the extent that he would do nothing to frighten it away before its regular time of disappearance.

The Babylonians regarded the disappearance of the moon at the end of the month with great anxiety.³⁰ Modern Arabs consider the last day of the month unfavorable for any sort of undertaking. The Lolo Pula and other aboriginal tribes of southwestern China keep a "sabbath" as a rule every sixth day. No plowing may take place at this time, and among some tribes the women are not allowed even to sew or wash clothes.³¹

Evil days, unlucky days, taboo days go back to primitive times. Traces of this superstitious awe are to be found in the remote periods of Egyptian history. Today among the peasants of Thebes and the Said, there are many who on certain days of the year refuse to kindle a fire, to approach a flame, or even light a candle or lamp, while the more timid or the more superstitious do not smoke.³²

In Slavic antiquity, Friday appears to have been consecrated. On this day certain kinds of work were suspended. Spinning, sewing or weaving was considered a sin and especially obnoxious to "Mother Friday" because the dust and refuse thus produced injured her eyes. Men did not twine cords. Any work begun on a Friday was believed sure to go wrong.³³ Some people even today avoid Friday when beginning an undertaking.

On the Babylonian Sabbath, the King was not to show himself in

²⁹ Morris Jastrow, "The Day after the Sabbath," *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, 1914, Vol. 30, p. 104.

³⁰ Webster, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 258.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

his chariot, not to hold court, not to bring sacrifices, not to change his clothes, not to eat a good dinner, and not even to curse his enemies.³⁴

A taboo or evil day is to be found among almost all tribes. "The idea is carried to such an extent that most of the natives of the Basutos believe that if they obstinately persist in their labor at such a moment, the clouds are irritated and retire, or send hail instead of rain. Days of sacrifice, or great purification, are also holidays. Hence it is that the law for resting on the seventh day, far from being objectionable to natives, appears perhaps even more fundamental than to certain Christians."³⁵

In some tribes the unlucky or taboo days are those of the new and full moon, and its first and third quarters.³⁶ It is fairly well authenticated that even the Buddhist Sabbath dates back to ancient taboos observed at changes of the moon. The Ga of the Gold Coast, who also have a seven-day week, observe the first day as a communal Sabbath. Its name, *dsu*, means "purification," a term which seems also to have been used as a title of the moon.

The Siamese Sabbath (*Wan phra*) is always the fourth day of the moon; in each month they have two great ones, at the new and the full moon, and two less solemn, on the seventh and twenty-first. Fishing and hunting are forbidden on these days. Those who are caught violating these prohibitions are thrown into prison for having profaned the sanctity of the day. The Mandingo pay careful attention to the changes of the moon because they think it very unlucky to begin a journey until they feel the moon's influence is favorable. Among the Scottish Highlanders a similar superstition prevails.

There still survives a Jewish superstition, reaching back to the Talmud, that it is lucky to begin an undertaking on a Tuesday, because in describing the third day of creation it is said, "God saw that it was good." Contrawise, it is unlucky to commence anything on a Monday, about which nothing at all was said.³⁷

³⁴ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 2, p. 288.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 284.

³⁶ Webster, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

From primitive times it has been believed that the moon has exerted an influence upon mankind. Even today, the Brazilian Indians believe that the rays of the moon are deleterious to children. Newborn infants are taken by their mothers into the thickest parts of the forests in order to prevent the moonlight from falling upon them. Greek nurses were careful never to show their charges to the moon. French peasants consider it dangerous to sleep in the moonlight, and even among sophisticated moderns there is a remnant of that belief. Fishermen, when lucky enough to catch fish on a moonlight night, hide them from the moon's rays for fear that they would spoil.³⁸

German peasants subject themselves to a long list of restrictions at the new moon. No spinning must be done in the moonlight, for the yarn will not hold; wagons or tools must not be left exposed to the moonlight, or they will soon be broken; water from a spring or well in which the moon shines should not be drunk, since this would be to absorb the evil influence of the moon; the lunar rays should never be allowed to penetrate into the kitchen or the maid would break many dishes. The superstition still prevails that any work begun when the moon is on the increase is sure to succeed, and that the full moon brings everything to perfection, whereas business undertaken during the waning moon is doomed to failure.

So numerous are these superstitions relative to the moon that throughout Germany Monday is generally considered an unlucky day because it is thought to partake of the qualities of the moon from which it is named. Even in certain parts of the United States, Monday is thought to be unlucky; "Blue Monday" is still feared by a great many people.

In various parts of Europe it is believed that plants and other growing things which are cut while the moon is on the increase will grow again fast, but that, if cut while the moon is on the wane, they will grow slowly or waste away.³⁹

Particularly in France, the belief prevailed that timber should be

³⁸ Webster, *op. cit.*, pp. 125, 127.

³⁹ Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Vol. 2, p. 133.

cut only after the moon had passed the full. The moon's effect on the wood was regarded with such apprehension that bills for the sale of lumber contained a special notice that the wood had been cut in the waning of the moon.

Mexicans as a rule will not cut timber while the moon is increasing. The Wabondei of Eastern Africa, before building a house, cut the posts when the moon is on the increase, for they believe that if the posts were to be cut while the moon was wasting away, they would soon rot.⁴⁰

The Spartans as a rule never marched to war except when the moon was full.

The early Greeks and the Negroes of Dudan had this in common: they never marched to war during the last quarter of the moon; they always waited until the first day of the full moon. Tacitus is the authority for the statement that the Germans considered the new or full moon the most auspicious time for business.

The Armenians think that the moon exercises a baneful influence upon little children, and have developed numerous ceremonies to counteract the evil. Both Christians and Moslems in Syria turn their silver money in their pockets at the new moon for luck.⁴¹

The Bushmen throw sand in the air and shout loudly when they see the new moon, which is their usual procedure when they want to drive away evil spirits. The Masai throw stones at the new moon with their left hand. The Zulus beat drums, a proceeding which is thought to frighten the luminary or any evil spirit which it may have let loose upon mankind.

One of the most familiar lunar superstitions still current is that one must not see the new moon through glass. This superstition, says Robert Briffault, certainly could not have originated since the invention of glass, but is a survival from the time when it was considered unlucky to see the moon from within the house. Savages come out of their huts to see the new moon. And the Bushmen are careful to

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 134-139.

⁴¹ Frazer, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-150.

build their huts in such a way that the new moon does not shine through the door. In Nigeria, among the Hukon, should the light of the moon happen to shine into the house, a sacrifice is at once offered. Briffault mentions a present survival of this superstition now prevalent in the state of Louisiana. When the new moon appears, the window shutters are closed and securely bolted by some people so as to exclude the entrance of the new moon's rays. Certain superstitions die hard. Look at the new moon over your left shoulder and make a wish, and it will come true—who has not heard and perhaps practised that “moon superstition” today?

The aborigines of Australia regard the moon as wicked and accuse it of going up and down the world doing all the harm it can. The Eskimo regards the moon as the cause of all plagues and epidemics. The Dene live in constant dread of the moon. “The man in the moon,” according to the Tartars of Asia, is a giant who eats men.

Among the Bechuanas, when the new moon appears, all must cease work. The Thermia, in the Cyclades, maintain that all work, as far as possible, should be suspended on the days immediately preceding the full moon. In the Vishnu Purana, it is said that one who attends to secular affairs on the days of the full moon goes to the Rudhirandha hell, whose wells are filled with blood.

Even the Buddhists have their Sabbath, or Uposatha, which occurs *four times in the month*, namely, on the day of the full moon and on the two days which are eighth from the new moon. On these days all normal activity ceases.

In Ashanti and the neighboring districts, where people reckon time by the moon, there is a weekly “fetish day” or Sabbath, which seems to be of native origin. On this fetish or taboo day, the people generally dress themselves in white garments, mark their faces with white clay, and rest from labor. They believe that if they fish on that day, the anger of their god will be visited upon their heads.⁴² In Ashanti, the day of the new moon is called “The Day of Blood,” and the Yoruba

⁴² Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 284, 286.

believe that if they work the fields that day, the corn and rice will turn blood-red.⁴³

In Hawaii, the taboo days were reckoned by the changing of the moon, and were observed by strict silence broken only by the prayers of the natives. Not a fire or light was to be seen, none bathed, the mouths of dogs were tied up, the heads of fowl were enveloped in cloth, and only those who officiated at the temple were permitted to be about.⁴⁴ Women at such times were forbidden to enter canoes; sexual intercourse was also forbidden.⁴⁵ In Central Africa the natives hide from the sight of the moon.

It is known that moon worship long preceded any form of sun worship and is the lowest stage in the worship of the heavenly bodies.⁴⁶

That the Hebrew Sabbath was also a taboo day seems self-evident from its very nature, and is substantiated by the following Biblical text.

Book of Amos, Chapter 8, verse 5:

5 Saying, When will the new moon be gone,
that we may sell corn? and the sabbath,
that we may set forth wheat, making the
ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying
the balances by deceit?

It was through fear that business transactions on the Sabbath would displease the Deity and prove unprofitable that the idea of a taboo became so strongly associated with the day. The same thought seems to be behind these words from *Isaiah, Chapter 1, verse 13:*

13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is
an abomination unto me; the new moons and
sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot
away with; *it is* iniquity, even the solemn
meeting.

⁴³ Briffault, *Mothers*, Vol. 2, p. 436.

⁴⁴ Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 284, 286.

⁴⁵ Webster, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁴⁶ Briffault, *op. cit.*, pp. 573, 578. See also Frazer, *op. cit.*, Vol. 5, pp. 132, 139.

A similar idea is also expressed by *Hosea, Chapter 2, verse 11*:

11 I will also cause all her mirth to cease,
her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths,
and all her solemn feasts.

Such fear was manifested by the early Hebrews regarding the evil results of working on the Sabbath that even objects were taboo. This *Jeremiah* emphasizes in *Chapter 17, verses 21 and 22*:

21 Thus saith the Lord; Take heed to yourselves,
and bear no burden on the sabbath day,
nor bring *it* in by the gates of Jerusalem;
22 Neither carry forth a burden out of your
houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye
any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day,
as I commanded your fathers.

The above strongly emphasizes the belief in sympathetic magic prevailing among the Biblical Hebrews. This is further substantiated by Frazer, who said: "Observers, ignorant of savage superstitions, have commonly misinterpreted such customs as worship or adoration paid to the moon. In point of fact, the ceremonies of the new moon are probably in many cases rather magical than religious."⁴⁷

That the full moon has a physiological effect upon women, and that many feel the symptoms of menstruation at the time of its appearance, undoubtedly did much to associate with its cycle the element of a taboo. It seems firmly established that the influence of the moon upon menstruating women has much to do with its worship and fear by primitive man, as well as for the taboos placed upon the female of the species.

It is firmly believed, even in some parts of Europe, that the moon regularly menstruates. When the moon is on the wane, for instance, the peasants of Bavaria say that "she is sickening," using the same expression as they employ in reference to a menstruating woman.⁴⁸ To this day, among orthodox Hebrews it is customary for women to abstain from work at the time of the new moon.

⁴⁷ Frazer, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 142.

⁴⁸ Briffault, *op. cit.*, p. 436.

Among the Murry Islanders, however, the moon is supposed to be a young man, who at certain periods defiles young girls, causing a bloody discharge. Among the Papuans, the moon is considered responsible for the menses. They look upon the moon as a diminutive youth who follows young girls and women and has sexual relations with them, thereby causing menstruation. The Vaupe Indians of the Upper Amazon have the same notion; they call the first menstruation "defloration by the moon."

The Papuans believe that the moon's amours with women aroused the jealousy of the husbands, and in punishment "all girls and young women should bleed when he appeared, but the older and pregnant women should be excepted, since in the latter case he was responsible for their condition."⁴⁹

In Greenland, the Eskimos believe that the moon comes down at night and cohabits with their women; and young girls are afraid to stare at the moon, imagining they may get a child as a result. Among the Nutka Indians of Vancouver, a chief can cohabit with his wife only by the light of the full moon.⁵⁰

The Ja-Lou of Eastern Uganda believe that a woman can only become pregnant at the time of the new moon, and it is generally believed that the moon has a great deal to do with the occurrence. No doubt, behind the belief in praying for a child is the thought that real fecundation can come only from a divine source.

In Central Europe it is believed that if a girl or woman drinks from a well or spring in which the moon is reflected, thus "swallowing the moon," she will certainly become pregnant in consequence.

In Brittany the women are extremely careful not to expose the lower part of their bodies to the rays of the moon, especially in the first and last quarter, when the moon is horned.⁵¹

Among the primitive tribes of East Africa, the phases of the moon are said to have an important influence on the child's sex and virility.

⁴⁹ Briffault, *op. cit.*, p. 584.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 585, 586.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 587.

The waxing moon is supposed to produce male children, and the waning moon females. In Cornwall the belief is current that when a child is born in the interval between the old moon and the first appearance of the new one, it will only live to reach puberty. Hence the saying, "No moon, no man." It is believed that children born when there is no moon, if they live at all, are weak, delicate, sickly and feeble-minded.⁵²

In the Highlands of Scotland, girls would generally not marry until there was a full moon.

The sacred bull Apis was held to be the outcome of the impregnation of a cow by the moon. In Babylon, human fertility depended upon the moon, and offspring were called "children of the moon."

"Mooncalf" is our expression for an incomplete pregnancy,⁵³ and is sometimes used to refer to adolescent lovers. Women in all parts of the world have addressed prayers to the moon for children, and many modern songs continually refer to the moon as the presiding factor in romantic love.

All phases of the moon are supposed to have a certain significance. Among the Wasania, a tribe of British East Africa, no cohabitation takes place during an eclipse. The natives of northern India are said to consider it a great crime to partake of food, drink water, or answer the call of nature during an eclipse. A pregnant woman will do no work then for fear that her child would be born deformed.⁵⁴

In ancient Mexico, pregnant women were greatly perturbed when there was an eclipse of the moon, for they feared that their children would be born incomplete, lacking a nose, a lip or finger. Similar beliefs are held by Hindu and Malay women.⁵⁵ Among the high-caste Hindus, no food that has been in the house during an eclipse of the sun or moon must be eaten. Earthen vessels must be broken.⁵⁶ The Chinese formerly observed lunar eclipses by a general suspension of

⁵² Briffault, *op. cit.*, p. 587.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 436, 438, 584.

⁵⁴ Webster, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

⁵⁵ Briffault, *op. cit.*, p. 588.

⁵⁶ Webster, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

business. Many orthodox Hebrews abstain from food on the day of an eclipse of the moon, considering it a portent which they regard as evil.⁵⁷

A dispatch from Istanbul, Turkey, states that superstitious Turks fired thousands of shots during a total eclipse of the moon, as, in accordance with Oriental legend, they believed that Satan was devouring the moon and they wished to frighten or kill him. The same terror gripped the Italian soldiers in Eritrea who feared their God was frowning in wrath upon them.⁵⁸

In some German country communities a pregnant woman must on no account linger in the moonlight lest she should bear a lunatic child; and it is the belief in Iceland that if a pregnant woman should sit with her face toward the moon, her child would be a lunatic.⁵⁹ No wonder, then, that lunacy has been associated with certain phases of the moon. The Sabbath might well be called the lunatic day of religion.

The Sabbath, then, is a survival from the days when primitive man, awed by the appearance of the new moon, and fearing the celestial visitor, made the time of its arrival a taboo day. Under the belief in sympathetic magic, they thought evil results would follow acts committed that might displease this visitor of the sky, who shone with such awe-inspiring brightness approximately once in every twenty-eight days. Therefore any four phases of the moon's appearance became a taboo day—a day on which all activities of every kind were prohibited.

The conclusion of Hutton Webster, after an exhaustive study of Sabbath days, was that "the observance of tabooed and unlucky days must be included among the many superstitions which have retarded the progress of mankind."⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Webster, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

⁵⁸ *New York Times*, Jan. 9, 1936.

⁵⁹ Briffault, *op. cit.*, p. 587.

⁶⁰ Webster, *op. cit.*, p. 302.

THE MAGIC ASSOCIATION OF THE NUMERAL "SEVEN" AND THE SABBATH

There can be no question that the reason for the observance of a Sabbath is based upon the superstitious principle of sympathetic magic. The "seventh" day was selected because of its supposed magical quality. It was believed that there was some homeopathic connection between its observance and good fortune, and that ill fortune would follow its violation. The orthodox Hebrew believed that if he observed the Sabbath he would be followed by a good angel, and that if he failed to observe it an evil angel would curse him. He also believed that by observing it strictly he would be blessed with riches and his sins would be forgiven.⁶¹ He had ample justification for his acts by Biblical authority. "Let no man go out of his place on the seventh day" was the warning injunction.⁶² If it rained on the Sabbath, it was considered a positive sign of God's displeasure with man's acts.⁶³

It is the contention of Tacitus that the satellite Saturn was responsible for the observance of the Sabbath by the Hebrews because "of the seven stars which rule human affairs, Saturn has the highest sphere and the chief power."⁶⁴ Tibullus, writing before 18 B.C., describes his reluctance to undertake a journey which turned out unluckily on the seventh day of the week: "I often allege auguries and evil omens, or that I held the day of Saturn sacred."⁶⁵ Even the color associated with Saturn was significant of evil. While gold and silver were the colors applied to the sun and the moon, black—the color nearly always associated with misfortune—symbolized Saturn.⁶⁶ The Seven Ages of man are based upon the influence of the seven planets,

⁶¹ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 10, p. 589.

⁶² *Exodus*, Chapter 16, verse 30.

⁶³ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 10, p. 490.

⁶⁴ Colson, *Week*, p. 17. As previously mentioned, the Sabbath was unknown among the Israelites until their contact with Babylonian culture.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

and the last stage, dealing with old age, infirmity and death, is under Saturn, the "evil" planet.

It is quite probable that the superstitious origin of magic associated with the seventh day was derived from the belief in the seven planets of the sun.⁶⁷ The Biblical story of creation was no doubt based upon the erroneous belief, each planet symbolizing a day of creation. The seventh day of the week, and particularly the number "seven," were regarded by the early Greeks as sacred to the god Apollo.

Thus it came to be believed that the numeral "seven" had some divine significance and that by abstaining from any activities on the seventh day, *as God is supposed to have done*, evil consequences would be avoided. The day was exclusively the Lord's day, and labor would be displeasing and disturbing to him. If God rested on the Sabbath, it was considered man's sacred duty to reverence that day by also "resting." The influence of this taboo prevails even today; any unusual noise is condemned as "disturbing" the Sabbath.

Particularly among the Biblical Hebrews, the number "seven" exercised a tremendous influence and played an important part in their religious system. It is mentioned more than *five hundred* times in the Bible, and its relation to the Sabbath is extremely significant. A partial survey of the number "seven" in the Bible follows:

There were seven days of creation; the seventh day was blessed and sanctified, for God rested on the seventh day; Lamech lived seven hundred and seventy years; Noah took "of every clean beast by seven" as well as "of the fowls also of the air by sevens"; after seven days it rained upon the earth; and after seven days "the waters of the flood were upon the earth"; the ark rested on the seventh month, on the seventeenth day; it was seven days after the dove's return when "he again sent forth the dove out of the ark, he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove."

Abraham took seven ewe lambs and Abimelech took these seven ewe lambs as a witness; Sarah was a hundred and seven and twenty years old; Jacob served seven years for Rachel; Laban pursued Jacob

⁶⁷ Colson, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

for seven days; Jacob bowed himself to the ground seven times; in Pharaoh's dream appear seven well-favored kine being consumed by seven ill-favored; the seven ears of corn on one stalk were consumed by seven "thin ears"; Joseph interpreted the dream as seven years of plenty and seven years of famine.

Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid, bore Jacob seven sons; Jacob lived "a hundred forty and seven years"; Jacob's sons mourned him for seven days; on the seventh day the Lord called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud; the priest of Midian had seven daughters; the Feast of the Passover is seven days; also the injunction was given that "there shall be seven lamps"; holy garments are to be worn seven days; there shall be seven days of consecration; blood is to be sprinkled before the Lord seven times; a woman was unclean for seven days after the birth of a male child; for a female child it was twice seven; leprosy was determined by seven days of observation; seven days were required for purification.

The seventh Sabbath has special ceremonial significance; the first day of the seventh month was to be a memorial; seven times seven years was a Sabbath year; you were punished seven times more for your sins, and seven times more plagues were added; you were unclean seven days if you touched a dead body; all who entered the tent of the dead were unclean seven days; Balaam built seven altars, sacrificed seven lambs and seven oxen; seven nations were to be destroyed; seven years' service brought release; seven weeks from the Passover was planting time; the Feast of Tabernacles was to be observed seven days after the gathering of the corn; Israel's enemies were to flee seven ways; seven priests were to bear seven trumpets and on the seventh day encompass the city seven times; and this magic combination of seven caused the Lord to deliver the city to the Israelites; seven tribes of Israel were divided into seven parts.

Seven parts of Israel did not receive their inheritance; for doing evil, the Lord delivered the children of Israel into the hands of the Midians for seven years; a seven-year-old bullock was sacrificed at the altar of Baal; Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel seven years; Samson

demanded that a riddle be solved in seven days; he was bound with seven green switches; Delilah was to weave seven locks of his hair; seven locks of his hair were cut off and he lost his strength; seven hundred chosen men could sling a stone at a hairsbreadth and not miss.

A daughter-in-law "which loveth thee" is better than seven sons; the ark of the Lord was in the country of the Philistines seven months; after seven days tarry in Gilgal, the Lord promised a visit to Samuel; the elders of Jabesh asked for a seven days' respite; the seven sons of Jesse passed before Samuel; they fasted seven days at Jabesh; David was king in Hebron seven years; David slew the men of seven hundred chariots; seven sons were hung in Gibeah; Solomon took seven years to build the Temple; there were seven wreaths for one chapter and seven for the other; the assembly of the men of Israel took place before King Solomon during the seventh month; Solomon had seven hundred wives.

Elijah's servant went seven times to behold the miracle of the cloud out of the sea; Ahab numbered the children of Israel as "being seven thousand"; on the seventh day they went forth to battle; the King of Judah and the King of Israel planned a seven days' journey; when the King of Moab saw that the battle was too strong for him, he took with him seven hundred men.

The child sneezed seven times; to wash in the Jordan seven times was the cure for leprosy; a sojourn of seven years avoided a seven years' famine; Jehoash was seven years old when he began to reign in the seventh year of Jehu; unto the Lord were offered seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep; the Arabians presented Jehoshaphat seven thousand and seven hundred rams and seven thousand and seven hundred he-goats; Ahasuerus held a feast for seven days; on the seventh day he ordered the seven chambermaids to bring Queen Vashti before him; with the king were the seven princes of Persia; he gave Esther seven maids; she was taken into the king's house during the seventh year of his reign.

Job had seven sons; he also had seven thousand sheep; his friends sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights; the

Lord was praised seven times; the House of Wisdom has seven pillars. The just man falleth seven times; there are seven thousand abominations; seven women shall take hold of one man; the Lord shall smite the seven streams; the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days; at the end of seven days the word of the Lord came unto Ezekiel; the weapons of war shall burn with fire for seven years; every day for seven days a goat was prepared for a sin offering; seven days shall they purge and purify the altar; from the commandment to restore the Temple shall be seven weeks; upon one stone laid before Joshua shall be seven years; there were seven pipes to seven lamps.

Ye shall wash your clothes on the seventh day; there were seven counselors; the furnace was heated seven times more; vengeance shall be sevenfold; Joseph was seventeen years old when he brought his father the evil report; Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; in seven no evil shall touch thee.

“All sevens are beloved,” says the *Midrash*. Even the name of God was supposed to have seventy-two syllables; God had seventy attributes; seventy names of angels were good for protection against all sorts of danger.

There were seven occasions which required the ritual washing of the hands; the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple is celebrated by seven “rain fasts” on Tisha B’ab. To recite the seven references to the voice of God⁶⁸ was suggested to protect one who must drink water on a night when evil spirits are particularly active; mourners encircle the coffin seven times; the bride walks around the groom under the canopy seven times; the *mezuzah* contains the seven names of angels; magical results were obtained by repeating things seven times; draw seven circles on the ground and continue the performance seven days.

A classic illustration of the number seven in magic is this Talmudic prescription to cure a tertian fever: “Take seven prickles from seven palm trees, seven chips from seven beams, seven nails from seven bridges, seven ashes from seven ovens, seven scoops of earth from

⁶⁸ *Psalms* 29: 3-10.

seven door-sockets, and seven pieces of pitch from seven ships, seven handfuls of cumin, and seven hairs from the beard of an old dog, and tie them to the neck-hole of a shirt with a white twisted cord.”⁶⁹

In view of the recital of the numeral seven among the Biblical Hebrews one can well understand what magical results they associated with its use.

The only book of the Old Testament which does not contain the word seven is the Songs of Solomon, and that is the one book that Biblical scholars agree is not a Hebrew work!

THE SANCTITY OF THE SABBATH

Orthodox Hebrews still consider the observance of the Sabbath the most essential part of their religious duties. In fact, to many the Sabbath is the holy bond between them and their God. As previously stated, the Sabbath is not only mentioned in all the different sets of Commandments, but appears in innumerable passages throughout the Bible as an additional warning of its importance. In *Leviticus, Chapter 24, verse 8*, we find:

8 Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the Lord continually, *being taken* from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant.

And in the same book, *Chapter 26, verse 2*:

2 Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I *am* the LORD.

Another indication of the Bible God's insistence that the Sabbath be observed is found in *Ezekiel, Chapter 20, verses 12 to 20*:

12 Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I *am* the Lord that sanctify them.

13 But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which *if* a man do, he shall even live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly polluted:

⁶⁹ Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, p. 119.

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then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them.

14 But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, in whose sight I brought them out.

15 Yet also I lifted up my hand unto them in the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land which I had given *them*, flowing with milk and honey, which *is* the glory of all lands;

16 Because they despised my judgments, and walked not in my statutes, but polluted my sabbaths: for their heart went after their idols.

17 Nevertheless mine eye spared them from destroying them, neither did I make an end of them in the wilderness.

18 But I said unto their children in the wilderness, Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols:

19 I *am* the Lord your God; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do *them*;

20 And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I *am* the Lord your God.

It could not be stated more emphatically than in *verse 20*, just quoted, that the Sabbath was the holy bond between the Children of Israel and the Bible Deity. They observed it not only to avoid the penalty for its violation, but to receive the rewards promised for its observance.

So strictly was the Sabbath to be observed that even to cook food on that day was prohibited. All meals which were to be eaten on the Sabbath had to be prepared the previous day. *Exodus, Chapter 16, verses 23 and 24:*

23 And he said unto them, This *is that* which the Lord hath said, To-morrow *is* the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake *that* which ye will bake *to-day*, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning.

24 And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein.

As a matter of fact, the Sabbath was so holy that even putrefaction and decomposition were supposed to be suspended on that day! But despite the Bible statement, both processes continue wholly unmindful of the day of the week. The seventh is no exception; if it were, and if food were not subject to the laws of nature, then, indeed, there would be some justification for its observance. Nature, however, gives the lie to the Bible.

We quote *Exodus, Chapter 16, verses 25 to 29*:

25 And Moses said, Eat that to-day; for to-day is a sabbath unto the Lord: to-day ye shall not find it in the field.

26 Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, *which is the sabbath*, in it there shall be none.

27 And it came to pass, *that* there went out *some* of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none.

28 And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?

29 See, for that the Lord hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days: abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.⁷⁰

The statement "*that* there went out *some* of the people . . . for to gather, and they found none" (meaning food), is false, for the earth knows no seventh day and the fruits of the fields no Sabbath. The grass grows, flowers bloom, fruit ripens, the winds blow, the sky is blue, the stars shine, the birds sing, love buds and blossoms on the seventh, just as on any other day of the week. The sanctity of the seventh day as a holy Sabbath is without validity. By observing such a day, man has robbed himself of a substantial portion of the joy of living. If Nature could give vent to her emotions, she would laugh at this stupidity of man.

In order to emphasize the importance of the observance of the Sabbath, we quote *Exodus, Chapter 31, verses 12 to 17*:

⁷⁰ The last line of verse 29, quoted above, is the reason why a pious Hebrew traveled only a limited distance from his home on the Sabbath.

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12 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,

13 Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it *is* a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that *ye* may know that I *am* the Lord that doth sanctify you.

14 Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it *is* holy unto you. Every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth *any* work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

15 Six days may work be done; but in the seventh *is* the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth *any* work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death.

16 Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, *for* a perpetual covenant.

17 It *is* a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for *in* six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.

This day was to be a perpetual covenant between the Bible God and the Children of Israel, binding them forever, and death was the penalty for its violation. If they kept the Commandments, they were to “know that I *am* the Lord that doth sanctify you.” We shall see presently how much truth there is in either or both of these statements.

A strict interpretation of this Commandment forbids all work, all labor of any kind, “for whosoever doeth *any* work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people,” and “whosoever doeth *any* work in the sabbath day, shall surely be put to death.” It is almost impossible to describe the frightful paralysis that this taboo day had on the primitive mind. Intelligent people today know that there is no relationship whatever between the “violation” of the Sabbath and evil results. The best proof is the fact that millions of people now perform the same work on the so-called Sabbath as on any other day of the week, with identical results. Demonstrations are the best method of counteracting the unfounded fears associated with taboos and religious superstitions. The Christian who works on Sunday will suffer no more ill effects than will the Hebrew who labors on Saturday.

Let the Bible speak for itself regarding the punishment to be inflicted for "violating" the Sabbath. *Numbers, Chapter 15, verses 32 to 36:*

32 And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day.

33 And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation.

34 And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him.

35 And the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp.

36 And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the Lord commanded Moses.

On the advice of Moses, who was commanded by God, the unfortunate man who gathered some sticks on the Sabbath day was taken by the congregation outside the camp and stoned to death. This man did not commit murder, he did not steal, nor did he violate a maiden. His crime was far more heinous. *He picked up some sticks on the Sabbath!* Religious taboos can so pervert the mind that committing murder for an infraction of a taboo is considered justifiable, even though one of the provisions of the Decalogue specifically admonishes, "Thou shalt not kill."

The following passage—*Numbers, Chapter 15, verses 37 to 41*—gives us further enlightenment:

37 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,
38 Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments, throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue:

39 And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring:

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40 That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God.

41 I *am* the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I *am* the Lord your God.⁷¹

So important were the Sabbath and its observance that the Bible God bade the Children of Israel make fringes in the borders of their garments, "and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a riband of blue," and that they look upon it "and remember all the commandments of the Lord." Before the invention of the calendar, the Hebrews separated the fringes on their holy garments in order to count the days of the week and determine which one was the Sabbath.

In order that the sacredness of this day might be still further impressed upon the Children of Israel, there were additional instructions—*Exodus, Chapter 35, verses 1 to 3*:

1 And Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said unto them, These *are* the words which the Lord hath commanded, that *ye* should do them.

2 Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you a holy day, a sabbath of rest to the Lord: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death.

3 Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day.

Again the Lord emphasizes the importance and holiness of the Sabbath, making it without any doubt the most important of all the Commandments to be obeyed.

Whether Moses has again been in communication with the Lord or whether this is merely an elaboration of the Commandment given at a previous meeting with him, we do not know. But the injunction is very specific: "Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you a holy day, a sabbath of rest *to the Lord*: whosoever doeth work therein shall be *put to death*."

⁷¹ The last two verses quoted above would indicate that the Sabbath was to be observed because their God "brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God," and not because he rested after six days of labor. Which again raises the question: Is the Sabbath as old as creation or only as old as Moses?

The following quotation is significant because it emphasizes the complete taboo associated with the Sabbath and the necessity for a cessation of labor on this day. It also presages the work that was to be prescribed—*Nehemiah, Chapter 13, verses 15 to 17*:

15 In those days saw I in Judah *some* treading winepresses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all *manner of* burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified *against them* in the day wherein they sold victuals.

16 There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem.

17 Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day?

The above text is in direct contradiction to the statement made in *Exodus, Chapter 16, verse 27*. There it was stated that no food was found on the Sabbath, while here it says that food in abundance was not only found and prepared, but even “sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem,” and apparently consumed with great satisfaction and no evil results!

Not only did picking up sticks and kindling a fire constitute a mortal sin, but buying food was condemned as a “profanation of the Sabbath day.” What a monstrous crime that was! I continue with *Nehemiah, Chapter 13, verses 18 to 22*:

18 Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.

19 And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and *some of* my servants set I at the gates, *that* there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day.

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20 So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice.

21 Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do *so* again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no *more* on the sabbath.

22 And I commanded the Levites, that they should cleanse themselves, and *that* they should come *and* keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day. Remember me, O my God, *concerning* this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.

The Children of Israel kept the Sabbath as specified in this Commandment and in other passages of the Bible. They observed it with the same fanatical devotion as the previous Commandments and with much the same results: they paid in blood, tears, torture and humiliation.

If picking up sticks and lighting a fire on the Sabbath were punishable by death, surely other acts must likewise be condemned. Is it any wonder, then, that with such a taboo attached to the Sabbath there were formulated detailed provisions of what could and could not be done?

The patriarchs were ingenious in their reasoning. Moses has said, "*These are the words.*" The arithmetical sum of the Hebrew letters composing the words is thirty-six. They valued "the words" as three, making a total of thirty-nine articles to be prohibited on the Sabbath. But thirty-nine prohibited articles gave entirely too much leeway to violate the Sabbath, and so these "inspired" patriarchs multiplied thirty-nine by thirty-nine and arrived at the "infallible" number of 1521 separate and distinct acts that were not to be permitted on the Sabbath! ⁷² They then proceeded to enumerate them. If they failed to include anything, the credulous made up for any lack of their imagination.

Naturally, we cannot here enumerate all the things that were specifically mentioned as forbidden on this sacred day. Under the

⁷² *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 10, p. 536.

thirty-nine provisions, which touch every branch of human activity, the laws founded upon this Commandment were invoked. The reader may get an idea of the comprehensiveness of the prohibitions from the following acts forbidden on the Sabbath: plowing, sowing, reaping, binding sheaves together, threshing, winnowing, bolting, sifting, kneading, baking or cooking, shearing, bleaching or beating fleece, dyeing, spinning, braiding, knitting two loops crosswise, weaving two strands, separating two strands, knotting, unknotting, sewing two stitches, rending for the purpose of sewing two stitches, snaring, slaughtering or flaying a deer, salting, marking or erasing the mark or cutting the skin, writing two letters, erasing for the purpose of writing two letters, building, breaking down, extinguishing, kindling, beating with a hammer, carrying from one place to another.

Some of the 1521 prohibited acts follow: It is forbidden to fast on the Sabbath for the express purpose of fasting, even for a very short time, and to fast until noonday is forbidden, at any rate, even if not done for the purpose of fasting. Squeezing lemons is forbidden. It is forbidden to milk an animal on the Sabbath. A woman to whom the abundance of milk in her breasts causes pain is permitted to let the milk out upon the ground. It is forbidden to scrape snow or hail or crush it into small portions in order to extract the water, but it is permissible to put it in a cup of water and let it melt.

It is forbidden to wring out a garment which has absorbed any liquid. If water is spilled, it is forbidden to wipe it up with a cloth about which one is particular, as there may be the temptation to wring it out; nor should it be wiped up with a sponge unless there is a handle; the handle might possibly guard against its being wrung out, as it is impossible to keep from wringing it if it has no handle. It is forbidden to shake out a garment which has been soaked in water, or upon which rain has fallen; it is even forbidden to handle it for fear of wringing it out. It is forbidden to shake from a black garment rain, snow, dust or feathers that have fallen upon it.

It is especially forbidden to wash one's head on the Sabbath, because that would transgress many prohibitions. It is forbidden to

pare the nails or remove a hair or an ulcer either with the hand or with an instrument, either from oneself or from others. It is likewise forbidden to comb the hair with a comb or hairbrush on the Sabbath, as it is impossible that hair should not be torn out. It is forbidden to pull out even one gray hair from among the black on one's head so as not to appear old.

If a fly falls into an edible or beverage, one should not remove the fly itself, but should throw some of the edible or beverage out along with it.

It is forbidden to rub off mud from a garment or scrape it off with the fingernail. One must not write; even carrying a pencil is prohibited. A writer must not carry his pen, or a tailor his needle. It is not permitted to carry money on the Sabbath. Shining one's shoes is forbidden.

False teeth had to be removed on Friday, and false hair could not be worn on the street on the Sabbath. Wadding that fell out of the ear on that day had to be left out.⁷³

Simeon ben Yohai regarded too much talking as inconsistent with a proper celebration of the Sabbath.⁷⁴ Loud noises were a violation; clapping one's hands, striking with a hammer, music of any kind, and any demonstration of joy were condemned as impious.

Although it was contended that every animal carries itself and it would not be a burden if it carried a man, still a man should not ride an animal for fear that if he did he might cut a switch in order to whip the animal to make it go.

If an act is permissible but the result of that act should lead to another that is prohibited, the former is considered a violation of the Sabbath. If an act is prompted by a good motive and results in a good deed, the perpetrator is nevertheless guilty if the thing he did is prohibited.

Extinguishing a light is forbidden, even if done for the purpose of

⁷³ For a complete list of acts prohibited on the Sabbath, see *Laws and Customs of Israel Compiled from the Codes*. Translated from the Hebrew by Gerald Friedlander Shapiro, Valentine and Co., London, 1929, p. 264.

⁷⁴ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 10, p. 589.

conserving oil.⁷⁵ It is better to permit the consumption of oil uselessly than to violate the Sabbath by putting out the light!

Reading on the Sabbath was permitted provided you were not too close to the light. To get the full benefit of the light would be a violation. You must suffer difficulty in being able to see! ⁷⁶

Tying or untying knots was prohibited. One rabbi said that a knot that could be untied with one hand was permissible, while another said that if the knot was not intended to be permanent it would not violate the Sabbath.

If there be a stain on an article made of leather, it is permissible to pour water on it, but it is forbidden to wash it.

Broken windows or doors, even though they be hanging on their hinges, cannot be removed on the Sabbath. One must not carry an umbrella. The leg of a broken chair must not be replaced. It is forbidden to put laces in shoes if the holes are too small and there is difficulty in putting them in. A dull knife must not be sharpened.

If a burning candle or sparks fall upon a table, it is permitted to shake the table, but not with the intention of extinguishing the sparks. It is forbidden to open a door to let the wind extinguish a candle or a fire.

Removing the bastings which a tailor has temporarily placed in a garment is prohibited. Tearing paper is prohibited.⁷⁷

To carry a child is forbidden. If the child is too small to walk, the parent must make some semblance of its walking by letting its feet touch the ground. However, to drag the child is considered the same as carrying it, and hence forbidden.

One should especially abstain from carrying a watch. If a hand-

⁷⁵ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 10, pp. 503, 504.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 594.

⁷⁷ So intensely can this taboo complex stifle the mind that the following would seem incredible had it not been told to me by the person who observed the practice. On the Sabbath, this person would not tear paper to cleanse himself after performing his physical duty. He would tear paper on Friday and carry it with him, in case of necessity, to be used on Saturday. Was he much removed intellectually from the primitive who refused to answer the call of nature during the eclipse of the moon? Webster, *The Rest Days*, p. 35.

kerchief is carried, it must be around the upper garment. Since making two knots on the Sabbath is prohibited, care should be taken that only one knot is made in order that it may remain on the garment.

The application of saliva to the eyes is supposed to have a curative effect, and is therefore forbidden. On the Sabbath you may put a plaster on a wound to prevent it from getting worse, but not for the purpose of its getting better or well. Broken bones may not be set on the Sabbath; that would be considered curing. Not even the dislocated limb of a child may be set. A surgical operation must not be performed. Emetics must not be given.

It is unlawful to kill a flea on the Sabbath. To pluck a blade of grass is forbidden. It is unlawful to wear any garment which one might take off and carry in the hand, for this would be a burden.⁷⁸

Fruit that ripened on the Sabbath is taboo. Fruit found under a tree on the Sabbath must not be handled, for perchance it may have fallen on that day. Eggs laid on the Sabbath are likewise taboo. Ringing a bell is prohibited. Making mental calculations on the Sabbath is a violation. Reading letters is prohibited.

If one is ill but is able to get about, he cannot take medicine to relieve his pain. An aching tooth must continue to ache until the Sabbath is over before it may be treated. You may, however, use vinegar to allay the pain, provided you drink it, as it is then considered food. To spit it out would classify it as medicine, and that is prohibited. Binding an open wound is prohibited, as the cloth may be colored by the blood that flows, and that is prohibited. If cold water would bring relief to a sprained ankle, it may not be used.⁷⁹

It is a violation to attempt to save anything from a burning house. Sacred books, however, are an exception, provided they are not of another religion and do not mention the name of God.⁸⁰

Could there be a day that more nearly required suspended animation in order that all of its insane restrictions and prohibitions might

⁷⁸ Charles, *The Decalogue*, p. 120.

⁷⁹ *Jewish Encyclopædia*, Vol. 10, p. 597.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 594.

be observed? How can a system of religion whose God provides a day that so paralyzes the brain of man be productive of good to the human race?

So fanatical did the Hebrews become regarding the observance of the Sabbath that they even refused to defend themselves from their enemies on that day. To fight in self-defense was prohibited.⁸¹ Josephus states: "They avoided to defend themselves on that day because they were not willing to break in upon the honour they owed the Sabbath, even in such distress. . . ."

When the enemy nations of the Hebrews learned about this, they took advantage of their stupid "day of rest" and concentrated their attacks on the day they feared to "labor." Plutarch commented: "They so lay still until they were caught like so many trout in the dragnet of their own superstition."

The general of Antiochus Epiphanes, in the second century B.C., took advantage of the law of the Sabbath of the Hebrews, and put to the sword 1000 unresisting Jews who were engaged in worship.⁸² Their strict, literal interpretation and observance of this Commandment, the fear of breaking a taboo day even in defense of their lives, is one of the most amazing phenomena of religious superstition.

During the time of the destruction of the eagles and the protest against the use of ensigns and flags by the Romans in the Jewish provinces, Apion used as one of his strongest arguments against the Jews their fanatical observance of the Sabbath day. A "Sabbath"—a cessation of all work and the devotion of the entire day to prayer—was then unknown to either the Greeks or the Romans and indicated to them an unbalanced mind.⁸³ What must be said of modern Christians for imitating this superstition?

But even the fanaticism of the early Hebrews could not forever be maintained in the face of wanton destruction. The result of this strict observance of the Sabbath would have meant complete annihilation

⁸¹ Charles, *The Decalogue*, p. 125.

⁸² Charles, *op. cit.*

⁸³ Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, Vol. 10.

because of their refusal to obey the laws as prescribed by the emperor of the Roman Commonwealth. It was therefore decided, after much needless sacrifice, that the Sabbath was not to be binding when it was necessary to defend themselves from attack. Mattathais, their leader, advised them that unless they defended themselves "they would become their own enemies, by observing the law [so rigorously], while their adversaries would still assault them on this day and they would not defend themselves, and that nothing could then hinder but they all must perish without fighting." This speech persuaded them; and this rule continues to this day—"that if there be necessity, we must fight on Sabbath days."⁸⁴

Although the Hebrews had dedicated themselves to a strict observance of the Sabbath, they found it necessary, as a means of preservation, to violate this prohibition. Unable any longer to permit the unmerciful slaughter and frightful decimation to continue, they finally decided that in times of war and in defense of themselves, the Commandment could be violated. To succor the ill, however, to help one in distress, to do a good deed that required labor, to work for the benefit of others, even to pick up a stick, were all condemned as the worst of sins if performed on the Sabbath, punishable with death by stoning; but to kill as a means of defense in warfare was declared permissible.

Either the whole concept of the Sabbath should be repudiated or they should suffer the consequences for the observance of those provisions which they believe their God imposed upon them, even if it means annihilation.

If the Hebrew God wanted the Children of Israel to observe this Commandment literally, as the many texts in the Bible indicate, why did he not exercise his omnipotent power and prevent his "chosen people" from being attacked by enemies, *at least on the Sabbath?*

If it were necessary to violate the literal interpretation of the Fourth Commandment so as to prevent complete destruction, does it not follow that each and every Commandment is subject to the same

⁸⁴ Josephus, *The Antiquities*, Vol. 4, p. 254.

elastic interpretation when a similar crisis presents itself, and when its enforcement presages disastrous results? If that is true, what is to be the standard by which these exceptions are to be determined? And do not these exceptions in effect nullify the validity of the Commandments?

To emphasize again not only the importance of observing the Sabbath, but also the penalties to be inflicted for its violation, I quote *Exodus, Chapter 35, verses 1 to 3*:

1 And Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said unto them, These *are* the words which the Lord hath commanded, that *ye* should do them.

2 Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you a holy day, a sabbath of rest to the Lord: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death.

3 Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day.

The refusal of the Hebrews to light a fire on the Sabbath day, because of this injunction, caused them frightful suffering, particularly during the Spanish Inquisition. When the terrible edict of expulsion was put into effect, thousands upon thousands went through the formality of renouncing their faith and becoming Christians rather than suffer the tortures and misery of dispersion for believing, practising and observing the "Laws of Moses." They were called Conversos and Marranos. Conversions are not easily accomplished, and, believing discretion to be the better part of valor, they gave the semblance of assent. But the Spanish Inquisitors had a method of detecting the genuineness of the conversion. *They watched for the slightest indication of the observance of the Sabbath.* One way they could discover this was when the weather made heat necessary in the house. Because of the strict observance of this Commandment to "kindle no fire throughout their habitation" on the Sabbath, the Inquisitors observed that no smoke came from the chimneys. On this evidence, they accused the Conversos of practising the tenets of their pre-

sumably abandoned religion, which to the Inquisitors justified arrest and trial and subjection to the Inquisitorial methods of torture.

The misery and suffering that the Children of Israel endured for observing this Commandment cannot be told more poignantly than by merely mentioning historical facts. In the whole story of religious persecution there is no bloodier page. The fanatical Spanish Christian butchered and slaughtered the Jews in a manner unparalleled in history. So intense was the hatred in the hearts of the Inquisitors that "a kindness to a Jew was a sin against God."⁸⁵ A Christian was forbidden to drink wine in the house of a Jew.⁸⁶ Was this one of the blessings that the Bible God conferred on them for keeping his Commandments? Did ever a people suffer such atrocities as the direct cause of the observance of their religion which their God imposed upon them under threat of death? Could the punishment for violation of this Commandment have been as terrible as the suffering they endured for its observance?

The most ingenious devices were used by the believers in the Mosaic law to observe the Sabbath and at the same time avoid the suspicion of the Inquisitors. One of the methods of concealment was for the mother and daughters of the house to sit with reels or spinning wheels before them on the Sabbath so that if anyone came, they could pretend to be at work.⁸⁷ These ruses, however, were not often successful.

In the public autos-da-fé of Cordova, from 1655 to 1700, out of three hundred and ninety-nine persons brought forward, three hundred and seventy-four were those who tried to follow literally the provisions of the Fourth Commandment. In Toledo, from 1651 to 1700, there were eight hundred and fifty-five cases of which five hundred and fifty-six were for Sabbatical observances. In Valladolid, in 1699, out of eighty-five accused, seventy-eight were for this "crime."

⁸⁵ Lea, *History of the Inquisition of Spain*, Vol. 1, p. 111.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 300.

For *observing* the Sabbath, not for violating it, Antonio Lopez, at Valladolid, in 1648, was tortured from eight o'clock in the morning until eleven at night, and was left with a crippled arm. Unable to stand the terrific pain he was suffering as a result of the torture he had endured, he endeavored to strangle himself, and died within a month. After being confined for ten months in the inquisitorial dungeon and suffering numerous tortures, among which was having an arm broken and a toe wrenched off, Engracia Rodrigues, a woman of sixty, finally confessed her diabolical crime of Sabbath keeping and Jewish practices.⁸⁸

For confession under torture, and for revoking the confession when relieved, Miguel de Castro, at Valladolid, in 1644, had an arm dislocated and *lost two fingers*. He was to be tortured again, when the physician and surgeon declared him unable to endure it. However, after he confessed and begged for mercy, he received a final punishment of a hundred lashes.

At Toledo, in Spain, in the year 1567, there lived Elvira del Campo, who was of Converso descent and married to a respectable Christian. She was charged with observing the Sabbath, refusal to eat pork, and keeping other Mosaic rituals. She was also charged with putting on clean linen on Saturdays, and not working. Although her friends and neighbors testified that she was a Christian who attended mass regularly, made confession, and gave all outward signs of being devout, she was nevertheless brought to trial. It was admitted that she was *a good woman, kind and charitable, and never spoke ill of anyone*. Her trial was vigorously pushed, but had to be delayed because of her pregnancy. On the strength of the evidence, some by witnesses she had never known, she was subjected to inquisitorial torture in order to force a confession.⁸⁹

The priests of the Holy Roman Catholic Church lost no opportunity to wreak their vengeance upon these "miserable relics of Judaism," the "unhappy fragments of the synagogue," these "detesta-

⁸⁸ Lea, *History of the Inquisition of Spain*, Vol. 1, pp. 22-23.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 232-235.

ble objects of scorn." And for what? Were they guilty of unmentionable crimes against others? Did they butcher innocent children or rape virgin girls? No. Their crime was that they believed that this Commandment was God's divine message. They believed the words of this Commandment to be true. That is all. The innocent blood of millions of the Children of Israel had been shed for the observance of this Commandment. And yet a fundamentalist minister has the brazen effrontery to say that "Nothing marks their [the Hebrews'] later decadence in morals or in practical righteousness more than their constant evasion and desecration of the Sabbath day"! ⁹⁰ What a mockery!

Around the day designated on the calendar as the Hebrew Sabbath there should be a band of mourning in memory of all those who died because of the brutal fanaticism that accompanied the observance of this lunatic day of religion.

In making a superstition of the Sabbath, with its masochistic ritual, the Children of Israel inflicted self-strangulation upon themselves. Never have a people suffered so much for so invalid a reason. Their day of freedom will come only when they completely emancipate themselves from the superstitious tyranny of the delusion of the Sabbath day.

THE WIFE AND THE SABBATH

If this Fourth Commandment is read carefully, a significant omission will be noted: the *wife* is not included among the persons particularly and specifically mentioned as those who should not labor on the Sabbath!

This Commandment tells us that not only was the seventh day of the week "blessed" and "hallowed" by God, and that it should be kept holy in honor of the Lord, but "in it thou shalt not do any work, nor thy son nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates."

⁹⁰ Masse, *The Gospel in the Ten Commandments*, p. 67.

But not thy wife—why? Why was she put in a class below that of the beasts of burden?

For the answer, it is necessary to understand the position of women in early Hebrew society. In those days a woman was considered, if she was considered at all, to be of little value and deserving of little consideration. Had she not been cursed by God? Was she not the means of bringing sin into the world? The wife was therefore not only excluded from observing certain religious tenets, but she herself was taboo as far as sacred things were concerned. *To have included the wife in this Commandment would have violated the taboo placed upon woman as a polluting agent when associated with sacred things.*⁹¹

Among the Hebrews of Biblical times, the "Congregation of the Children of Israel" meant the men only; women were not included. They were not permitted to take part in religious ceremonies for fear that they would pollute the sacred portals of worship.⁹²

The most important daily prayer uttered by a pious Israelite is, "Blessed art thou, O Lord Our God, King of the Universe, who hast not made me a woman." Considering the status of woman among the early Hebrews, one can well understand this profuse thanks and appreciation for not being an abject, despised and polluted creature.

One can get an idea of the multitude of restrictions placed upon women in Hebrew ritual from the recent announcement of the Rabbinical Association of the Hebrew Theological College that a com-

⁹¹ Especial significance is also attached to the omission of the word "woman" servant as the proper counterpart of "man" servant. The mention of "maid" servant is of course proper, as it signified a girl not yet physically mature. Mention also of "thy daughter" must be understood to mean an immature girl, as in early Hebrew tribal life a mature girl was sold by her father either as a concubine or in marriage. (*Exodus, Chapter 21, verse 7; Genesis, Chapter 29, verse 18.*) An unmarried woman in the early society of the Children of Israel was a disgrace.

⁹² This influence was carried into Christianity, and at a council held at Auxerre at the end of the sixth century, women were forbidden to receive the Eucharist in their naked hands. In various canons women were enjoined not to come near the altar while mass was being celebrated. Some churches during the Middle Ages, in order to avoid any possible pollution from the presence of women, employed eunuchs to supply the soprano tones for the cathedral choirs. (Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 1, p. 666.)

mittee was named to frame the necessary procedure to bring to an end the two-thousand-year-old taboos against women's participation in religious ceremonies and handling sacred articles.⁹³

The lower the scale of human society, the more degraded is the position of woman, and the more despicable is she in the eyes of the male who believes that she was created solely for his sexual satisfaction, to be disposed of and discarded at his pleasure. In many preliterate cultures, Professor Wilson D. Wallis found that women were not only forbidden to use sacred articles, but were even denied the knowledge that they existed.

A Hindu woman may not read the Veda, nor worship a Vedic deity, nor is she permitted to touch the sacred images.

During certain periods of Shinto worship in Japan, women were forbidden to pray before the *miya*, make offerings, touch the sacred vessels, or kindle the lights of the Mami.⁹⁴ Greek women were not allowed to swear by Hercules and participate in the worship at his altar. They were also not permitted to touch the Temple of Juno.⁹⁵

In Cairo, women are not only forbidden to pray with the congregation in the mosque, but they may not even be in the mosque during religious services.

In Haiti, voodoo women may not enter the chamber set aside for the worship of the native god. Tucano women may not look upon the god Yurupari. When the Edo of southern Nigeria are about to bring out the sacred drum, they shut all doors and with loud noises warn the women to keep away.

Among the Yahuna and other tribes of Brazil, women are not allowed to see the flutes which the men use at festivals to celebrate the ripening of fruits. The death penalty is invoked on those who out of curiosity violate this taboo.⁹⁶

The women of the hill tribes near Rajmahal may not sacrifice or

⁹³ *New York Times*, Aug. 7, 1940.

⁹⁴ Eli Eduard Burriss, *Taboo, Magic, Spirits*, p. 43.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁹⁶ Wilson D. Wallis, *Religion in Primitive Societies*, Chap. 17.

appear at shrines, or take part in the religious festivals. Todas women may not approach enclosures where the sacred cattle are kept. Among the Chuvashes, women dare not assist at sacrifices. In the Sandwich Islands, women are not allowed to share in worship or festivals, and their touch "pollutes" offerings to the gods. In the Tongo and the Fiji Islands, women are not allowed in places of worship, though dogs are permitted to enter. The Arabs of Mecca will not allow women to receive religious instruction because "it would bring them too near their masters." If a Hindu woman touches an image, its divinity is destroyed and it must be thrown away.⁹⁷ In the Tahiti and the Society Islands, a wife may not touch a sacred object that belongs to her husband.⁹⁸ In Africa, Bayeye women may not enter the place of sacrifice, though this is the center of tribal life. Among the Gallas, women may not go near the sacred *woda* tree where worship is celebrated.⁹⁹

The reason for all these prohibitions against woman lies in the fact that what the primitive mind could not understand, it feared. These taboos are directly traceable to woman's "mysterious" sexual functions, which both awed and revolted the male. He believed that they were the cause of her physical inferiority. That, together with the belief that her touch at certain times was polluting, resulted in her subjugation to the physically stronger and "cleaner" male.

There is a definite connection between the taboo against the wife in this Commandment and her periods of menstruation. From the Bible itself comes the most convincing testimony for the reasons for the taboo being placed upon women so as to avoid their contaminating holy and sacred things. The exclusion of women from this Commandment also places the culture of the early Hebrews in the category of primitive and superstitious peoples. I quote *Leviticus, Chapter 15, verses 19 to 31*:

⁹⁷ E. Crawley, *Mystic Rose*, Vol. 1, pp. 56-61.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

19 And if a woman have an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be put apart seven days: and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even.

20 And every thing that she lieth upon in her separation shall be unclean: every thing also that she sitteth upon shall be unclean.

21 And whosoever toucheth her bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until the even.

22 And whosoever toucheth any thing that she sat upon shall wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until the even.

23 And if it *be* on *her* bed, or on any thing whereon she sitteth, when he toucheth it, he shall be unclean until the even.

24 And if any man lie with her at all, and her flowers be upon him, he shall be unclean seven days; and all the bed whereon he lieth shall be unclean.

25 And if a woman have an issue of her blood many days out of the time of her separation, or if it run beyond the time of her separation; all the days of the issue of her uncleanness shall be as the days of her separation: she *shall be* unclean.

26 Every bed whereon she lieth all the days of her issue shall be unto her as the bed of her separation; and whatsoever she sitteth upon shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her separation.

27 And whosoever toucheth those things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until the even.

28 But if she be cleansed of her issue, then she shall number to herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean.

29 And on the eighth day she shall take unto her two turtles, or two young pigeons, and bring them unto the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

30 And the priest shall offer the one *for* a sin offering, and the other *for* a burnt offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for her before the Lord for the issue of her uncleanness.

31 Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness; that they die not in their uncleanness, when they defile my tabernacle that *is* among them.

This primitive superstition regarding the function of woman was made part of the ritual and law of the Children of Israel. Her physical condition was looked upon as a curse from God, and fear of contamination became an obsession. Naturally, a menstruous woman was taboo on the Sabbath. Not only was everything that she touched made "unclean," but "everything that she lieth upon . . . everything that she sitteth upon . . . whoever toucheth her bed . . . whoever toucheth anything that she sat upon . . . shall be unclean." *Under such conditions, how could she possibly participate in the observance of so sacred a day as the Sabbath without corrupting it?* Since it was obviously impossible for any woman to avoid her "uncleanness" on the Sabbath, she was forbidden to participate in observing this sacred day solely to prevent its contamination by her. "Ye shall separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness . . . unless . . . they defile my tabernacle."¹⁰⁰

Even the Talmud refers to the taboo associated with a menstruating woman, and the dread with which she is held when in that condition. It is related that when a woman meets a snake on the road, it is enough for her to say, "I am menstruating," and the reptile will glide away hastily.¹⁰¹ According to the Talmud, if a woman at the beginning of her period passes between two men, she causes one of them to die; if she passes between them at the end of her period, she only causes them to quarrel violently.

This belief concerning a menstruous woman was not confined only to the early and uncultured Hebrew; it prevailed in many societies and is mentioned in many "sacred" books.

The Persian lawgiver, Zoroaster, who claimed to have received his code direct from the mouth of the Supreme Being, Ahura Mazda, says that a menstruous woman is the work of Ahriman, the devil. Therefore, as long as a woman is in that condition, she is unclean and possessed of the demon; she must be kept apart from the faithful

¹⁰⁰ It must be understood that the highest Biblical authorities admit that the word "unclean" as biblically used is not the ordinary word for things physically foul or unhygienic, but is used in a ritual sense and specifically applies to that which is taboo.

¹⁰¹ Trachtenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

whom her touch would defile. The Zoroastrian religious books enter into minute details. The very glance of a menstruous woman was regarded as polluting anything upon which it fell. Hence, a menstruating woman must not look upon a fire, or upon water, or converse with any man. No fire was to be kindled in the house during that period.

Among the Gonds it was believed that the greatest evils would befall anyone who looked at a woman during her state of impurity, and the Nayar women cannot enter a sacred place in such a condition.¹⁰² Among the Kamar, when a woman is menstruating, no man belonging to the same household can enter the temple or perform any act of worship until he is "purified."¹⁰³

Among the Veddass of Travancore, the wife, during her monthly periods, is secluded for five days in her hut.¹⁰⁴ In Queensland, menstruous women are "unclean," and no one will touch a dish which they have used. A Brahman must not allow himself to be touched by a menstruous woman, or even to eat food offered by her.

Among the Eskimos, women are regarded as dangerously contagious during menstruation; they must have their own cups and dishes, which men must be careful not to use or touch. Among certain tribes of Indians, while a woman is menstruating, she is the very incarnation of evil, a plague to be avoided at all costs. Among the Bribri Indians of Costa Rica, a menstruating woman must not use any household utensil, but must make shift with banana leaves, which are afterwards carefully buried, for it is believed that if a cow should happen to eat such a leaf, it would die. The Macusi of Guiana believe that women and girls, while menstruating, are impure and would be attacked by snakes if they went into the forest. The vessels which they use are directly broken, and the shreds and pieces carefully buried.¹⁰⁵

Among the Guayquiriy of the Orinoco, it is believed that what-

¹⁰² Briffault, *The Mothers*, Vol. 2, p. 370.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 378.

¹⁰⁴ Crawley, *Mystic Rose*, Vol. 1, pp. 56-61.

¹⁰⁵ Briffault, *op. cit.*, pp. 365-371.

ever a menstruous woman steps on or touches will wither and die, and that if a man treads where she has been, his legs will swell. The Visayans of the Philippine Islands believe that if a menstruous woman comes in contact with fishing nets, they will no longer catch fish, weapons will no longer be efficient, and fighting cocks will no longer be able to fight.¹⁰⁶

Like many Indians, the Uganda believe that weapons touched by a menstruating woman would cause them to lose their value and that the owners would be killed the next time they attempted to use them. Among the North American Indians, everything that was touched by the hand of a menstruous woman was deemed ceremonially unclean, and if she crossed the path of a hunter or warrior, he would have no luck that day.¹⁰⁷ The Stseelis Indians of British Columbia imagined that if a menstruous woman stepped over a bundle of arrows, the arrows would thereby be rendered useless and might even cause the death of their owner; if she passed in front of a hunter who carried a gun, the weapon would never shoot straight again.¹⁰⁸

The peasants of Lebanon think that menstruous women are the cause of many misfortunes and that their shadows cause flowers to wither and trees to perish.¹⁰⁹

The Menangkabau of Sumatra believe that if a woman goes near a rice field while she is menstruating, the crop will fail. In the wine districts of Bordeaux and the Rhine, women, when menstruating, are strictly forbidden to approach the vats and cellars, lest the wine should turn to vinegar. A similar taboo prevails in the sugar refineries where sugar is boiling or cooking, for fear it will turn black.¹¹⁰ Similar superstitions, too numerous to mention, prevail among all types of people.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Briffault, *op. cit.*, pp. 375, 381.

¹⁰⁷ Frazer, *Balder the Beautiful*, Vol. 1, pp. 86, 87.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

¹¹⁰ Briffault, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 385, 387.

¹¹¹ The superstition still prevails today that a living plant will wither at the touch of a menstruous woman, and that women during that period should not make food preserves of any kind as they will spoil.

The Orang Belenda believe that contact with a menstruous woman will deprive a man of sexual strength. It is stated that an Australian native killed his wife when he discovered that she had used his blanket while menstruating.

During the time of Maimonides, it was the common custom of the women of the East during their periods to be kept in a separate house, and to burn everything upon which they had trodden. A man who spoke to such a woman, or who was merely exposed to the same wind that blew over her, became thereby unclean.

In Australia, among the Pennefather, Margaret Bay and Proserpine River tribes, a menstruating girl is buried up to her waist in a pit in the sand, a fence of brushwood is built around her, and no one would think of coming near. She is fed by her mother, and is provided with a stick to scratch herself, as she must on no account touch her body with her hands.¹¹²

The Parsees, who reverence fire, will not suffer menstruous women to see it or even to look at a lighted taper.

The Anglo-Saxon Penitentials forbid menstruating women to enter a church.¹¹³

The superstition about walking under a ladder originated in the fear of a menstruating woman. In primitive tribes, men avoided walking under a tree because a woman might have been in it and some of her blood might fall on them.

In Southern Italy it is still believed that if a menstruating woman gets into a carriage, the horses will be unable to make it move and that they will die in the effort unless the woman has taken the precaution to put three pebbles in her pocket.¹¹⁴ Sicilians believe that if a woman in that state were to ride a donkey, the back of the animal would break unless some salt had been sprinkled over it.¹¹⁵

The Hindu lawgiver, Manu, who professed to have received his institutes from the Creator, Brahma, informs us that the wisdom, the

¹¹² Briffault, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 384.

¹¹³ Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, Vol. 1, p. 292.

¹¹⁴ Briffault, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 411.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 389-390.

energy, the strength, the sight and the vitality of a man who approaches a woman in her courses will utterly perish; whereas, if he avoids her, his wisdom, energy, strength, sight and vitality will increase.

So widespread was this superstition, and so firmly was it believed, that even members of the medical profession fell under its influence. As late as 1878, a physician wrote to the editor of the *British Medical Journal* asking him whether a ham cured by a menstruating woman would be spoiled! Not until 1891 did Dr. William Goodell, a distinguished medical authority, state: "I have learned to unlearn the teaching that women must not be subjected to a surgical operation during her monthly flux. Our forefathers, from time immemorial, have thought and taught that the presence of a menstruating woman would pollute solemn religious rites, would sour milk, spoil the fermentation of wine-vats, and do much other mischief in a general way. . . ." ¹¹⁶ Today there are women physicians! This taboo of woman has undoubtedly been the cause of the restriction placed upon her, not only in association with the Sabbath, but in excluding her from the fields of the learned professions.

Frazer states that "the Hebrew lawgiver Moses, whose divine legation is as little open to question as that of Manu and Zoroaster, treats the subject at still greater length; but I must leave the reader the task of comparing the inspired ordinances on this head with the merely human regulations of the Carrier Indians which they so closely resemble!" ¹¹⁷

When a person is taboo, the taboo applies not only to that person but to everything he or she touches. If food that a menstuous woman touches is unfit for a man to eat, how much more serious is her association with sacred things, and how much more important is it that she be prevented from corrupting them! To the Biblical Hebrew, what was more sacred than the Sabbath? It is very important that this primitive conception of woman's position be understood in order

¹¹⁶ Ellis, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 293.

¹¹⁷ Frazer, *Balder the Beautiful*, Vol. 1, pp. 95, 96.

to obtain a proper comprehension of the reason for her being omitted from the provisions of this Commandment.

No wonder Frazer was constrained at the conclusion of his researches to say that "In civilized society most educated people are not even aware of the extent to which savage ignorance survives at their door."

THE SECRET OF CIRCUMCISION

Pregnancy and childbirth also place woman in the category of a taboo person and call for a ritual expiation of her "sinful" condition. The Biblical Hebrews distinguished between the birth of a male and a female child by providing a different form of expiation, and in carefully examining this, we come upon the secret of male circumcision, as well as additional evidence for the reason why women were excluded from the provisions of the Fourth Commandment. I quote *Leviticus, Chapter 12, verses 1 to 4*:

- 1 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,
- 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying,
If a woman have conceived seed, and borne a man child, then she shall be unclean seven days; according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean.
- 3 And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.
- 4 And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days; she shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled.

The Lord himself "spake unto Moses, saying, . . . If a woman have conceived seed, and borne a man child, then she shall be unclean seven days; according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean." Let us repeat this highly significant statement, which makes the wife's exclusion from the Sabbath a certainty. ". . . She shall then continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days; *she shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary* [italics mine], until the days of her purifying be fulfilled."

Since the Sabbath was a "hallowed thing," her participation or observance would be "polluting" during the period of her "purification." Thus she is absolutely and completely excluded from Sabbath observance, and all that she touches, *including her own child*, is taboo until "purified."

Since the mother, during her period of thirty-three days of purifying, must of necessity touch her child, what must be done to save him from the pollution caused by his contact with her? Let us repeat the necessary mode of expiation contained in *Verse 3*, just quoted. "And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised." *This ritual injunction, following the birth of a male child, and its direct relation to the mother's state of taboo, is a blood sacrifice on behalf of the boy to avoid the contamination of having come in contact with the mother's "uncleanness."*

*So vitally important was this blood expiation on behalf of the child that the rite of circumcision had to be performed on the eighth day after its birth, even though that day fell on the Sabbath. This precluded others from doing it, making it necessary for the mother herself to perform the task.*¹¹⁸

This blood sacrifice, so obvious when understood in relation to the taboo of women and the primitive Hebrew's belief in animism, sympathetic magic and blood pollution, reveals the secret of the origin and meaning of the ceremonial rite of circumcision among the Children of Israel, which has puzzled anthropologists and students of religion for centuries. The highest Biblical authorities still tell us that the rite of circumcision among the Children of Israel is one of the mysteries of Judaism, as its origin has been lost in antiquity. There seems to be no doubt that this rite originated in the remotest past, as the first Biblical reference to it mentions that circumcision was performed with sharp stones, the most primitive cutting instrument used by man.¹¹⁹ Among some Hebrews it is the custom that when a male

¹¹⁸ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 4, p. 95.

¹¹⁹ *Exodus*, Chapter 4, verse 25.

child dies before the eighth day, it is circumcised before burial,¹²⁰ in order that its soul may be saved.

Even the correct meaning of the word, both in Arabic and Hebrew, is "purifying," as well as "removing a sexual obstacle" and "cleansing" in a religious sense. That "purification" was the purpose¹²¹ of circumcision cannot be doubted in view of the indisputable facts here recorded. That circumcision is an ancient blood sacrifice for sexual purification is also indicated by its prevalence among the Egyptians. Ancient Egyptian records speak of "the blood that fell from the phallus of Ra, when he accomplished his own mutilation." A recent discovery, dated in the year 44 of the reign of Rameses II, speaks of the day "when men come to rid themselves of impurity before Amon."¹²²

Further evidence regarding the rite of circumcision is given in its existence among other primitive tribes, although the method varies from that of merely slitting the prepuce to its complete removal. Many and various customs have been associated with it. Among the East African Wakikuyu, the prepuce is buried in the ground in front of the boy just circumcised; while the African Bara father throws it into the river. For fear of its being used in black magic, the Turks bury the prepuce as they do parings of nails and other parts of the body. For a similar reason, the Amaxosa Kafir boy carries away his prepuce and buries it in a sacred spot.

On the West Coast of Africa, the prepuce, soaked in brandy, is swallowed by the boy operated on. The Arabs of Algiers wrap it in a cloth and put it on a tree or animal. The Hova of Madagascar wrap it in a banana leaf, which is given to a calf to eat. Among the Wolof, the prepuce is dried and is carried by the circumcised lad, the object being the promotion of virility. Today, among the Sakalava of Madagascar, the foreskin is shot from a gun or fastened to a spear; if it falls sticking in the earth, it is a good omen. Among

¹²⁰ Tylor, *Early History of Mankind*, p. 216.

¹²¹ Hastings, *Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 3, pp. 661-677.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 672.

the Australian Urabunna, the stomach of each elder brother is touched with the foreskin, which is then placed on a fire stick and buried.¹²³

The northern Arunta bury the prepuce together with the blood caused by the operation. The Kalkodoon of Cloninny (North Queensland) string it on twine of human hair and hang it around the mother's neck "to keep the devil away." Among the Yaroinga of the Upper Georgina District, the blood shed in circumcision is drunk by the women of the tribe as a strengthening draught.¹²⁴

In some Australian tribes, boys who are being circumcised are laid on a platform formed by the living bodies of the tribesmen; and when a boy's tooth is knocked out as an initiatory ceremony, he is seated on the shoulders of a man on whose breast the blood flows and may not be wiped away.¹²⁵

And to think that this bloody ritual of savage superstition survives today under the guise of a health and hygienic measure! ¹²⁶

In religion,
What damned error but some sober brow
Will bless it, and approve it with a text.
—*Merchant of Venice, Act III, Scene 2.*

If circumcision is the expiatory rite for the birth of a male child who comes in contact with the mother's uncleanness, what shall be done as a sacrifice for a "maid child"? See *Leviticus, Chapter 12, verse 5*:

¹²³ Hastings, *Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 3, p. 600.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 661.

¹²⁵ Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, p. 229.

¹²⁶ Today, however, intelligent leaders of enlightened Jews advocate the abolition of the rite of circumcision on the ground that it "no longer is in keeping with the dictates of a religious truth intended for humanity at large," and because of the large number of deaths that follow the mutilation. *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 4, p. 6; Vol. 10, p. 357; see also William Roseneau, *Jewish Ceremonial Institutions and Customs*, pp. 130-132. A step in this direction is indicated when proselytes of Judaism do not have to be circumcised. That it has no hygienic value has been admitted by advanced Hebrew students. See David Jacobson, Ph.D., *Social Background of the Old Testament*. For a condemnation of circumcision on aesthetic, physical and psychological grounds, see Miles Atkinson, *Behind the Mask of Medicine*, pp. 175-183. Circumcision belongs in the same category of stupidity as knocking out a boy's tooth at puberty in certain savage tribes; binding Chinese women's feet; the Zulu's custom of strapping the skull in infancy to give it an elongated shape, and mutilation of the women's lower lips by the Ubangis. In his book *Idiot Man*, Charles Ricket scathingly denounces circumcision as a horrible mutilation.

5 But if she bear a maid child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her separation: and she shall continue in the blood of her purifying threescore and six days.

Although female circumcision was practised among primitive tribes, it was hardly ever performed upon a female infant.¹²⁷ This may have been due to the fact that the external genital organs of the female infant do not permit as easy an operation as those of the male, and that when done by unskilled hands, it almost always resulted in the death of the child.¹²⁸ This, then, accounts for the purifying rite of the maid child being *twice* that for the male child. Hence the mother was not only unclean *two* weeks, instead of one week, but “she shall continue in the blood of her purifying *threescore and six days*”—a period twice as long as for the male child.

Equally important, in regard to the relation of a taboo and the Sabbath, is the method of expiation for the mother’s own state of blood contamination. The Bible reveals the methods for her to follow “when her days of purifying are fulfilled.” *Leviticus, Chapter 12, verses 6 to 8:*

6 And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, for a son, or for a daughter, she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtledove, for a sin offering, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest:

7 Who shall offer it before the Lord, and make an atonement for her; and she shall be cleansed from the issue of her blood. This *is* the law for her that hath borne a male or a female.

8 And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering: and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean.

¹²⁷ For the prevalence of female circumcision, see Hastings, *Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 3, pp. 667, 668.

¹²⁸ When a female was circumcised, it was done at puberty, and consists in cutting off the nymphæ, or labia minora, of the vulva, which unite over the clitoris.

For the mother herself to be made "clean" again, she must make the following additional blood sacrifices: ". . . if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering." Here is convincing evidence of a primitive superstition of blood sacrifice based on sympathetic magic.

What better parallel is there than between the uncultured and primitive Hebrew and the ignorant people of Bokhara? In Bokhara the mother of a child is taboo for forty days, and does not even dare to pray to God while her supposed impurity lasts!¹²⁹ How similar to the Bible are the provisions in the sacred book of the Zend-Avesta for the purification of women after childbirth! Not only must a woman's clothes all be burned after her ordeal, but she must be purified by being washed with bull's urine.¹³⁰ Her taboo lasted forty days, and anyone attempting to break this taboo was severely punished as guilty of the most unspeakable crime. Nyan women are similarly regarded at such times. After confinement, they must not enter a sacred place for forty days.¹³¹ A woman in this state is supposed to be possessed by some dangerous and maleficent spirit that corrupts all with which she comes in contact.

Among the Yukaghir, a woman is taboo after childbirth and must be careful not to touch any hunting or fishing instrument. A Koryak woman after childbirth is taboo and her touch would deprive a shaman's drum of its virtue; she must not even be seen by anyone. Among the Gilyak, a woman never dares to give birth to a child at home; she must, in spite of the severity of season or weather, go out of the hut for the purpose. The women of Kamchatka are under obligation to leave their huts when about to give birth to a child, which is born in the public street of the village, before the populace.¹³² Among the Samoyeds and the Ostyak, women at childbirth may not eat any fresh meat for fear that living animals would be

¹²⁹ Briffault, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 374.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 376.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 378.

¹³² *Ibid.*, pp. 373-374.

affected, and in order to insure against all possible risks they must not, even at ordinary times, stand over the reindeer while unloading a sledge, but must undo the straps from below.¹³³

Among the Basutos the father is separated from the mother and child for four days after birth, and may not see them until the "medicine man" has performed the religious ceremony of "absolution of the man and wife." If this were neglected, it is believed that he would die when he saw his wife.

Women in Russia, before the present regime, were considered in a state of impurity after childbirth, and were not permitted to communicate with others until they had been purified by a priest. In Serbia, similar conditions prevailed. Among the Tibetan tribes of Lab Nor, a mother is driven from the village in which she lives, and is compelled to live in a near-by hut or along the roadside. Food is supplied to her by the husband.¹³⁴

If women had to be purified in early Biblical times, what change has taken place that makes such a ceremony no longer necessary? The same liberating force of scientific knowledge that has emancipated us from other forms of religious superstition is responsible for breaking these taboos which have so long enslaved women.

Now that women are no longer forced to observe this savage custom of "purification," nor condemned to suffer for the "sin" of uncleanness, circumcising the male children of Hebrew parents cannot be characterized as anything but a cruel mutilation. The number of deaths resulting from circumcising a male child before it is physically able to stand such an ordeal might well be called the slaughter of the innocents.

BORN ON THE SABBATH

In addition to woman's period of "uncleanness" occurring on the Sabbath, babies are born on the Sabbath as well as on any other day

¹³³ Briffault, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 374.

¹³⁴ Briffault, *op. cit.*, p. 375. See also Frazer's *Golden Bough: Taboo and Perils of the Soul*, pp. 145, 157. The reasons for this taboo will be found in the analysis of the Sixth Commandment.

of the week. That factor provides additional evidence for the wife's exclusion from the provision of this Commandment. In early Biblical days, as now, babies were born on every day of the week, and the "seventh" was no exception.

I wonder how long the "divinely inspired" men debated as to whether any member of the household should perform work on behalf of a woman giving birth to a child on the Sabbath, and to what extent the beasts of burden might be used in such an emergency, since they, too, were included in the provisions of "rest" on this day. I ask this in all seriousness because it was actually forbidden to help an animal out of a pit into which it had fallen on the Sabbath. The question was asked: If a man had a sheep and it should fall into a pit, would a person be justified in lifting it out on the Sabbath? That was a point of great controversy which occupied the minds of leading Biblical authorities.¹⁸⁵ "If an animal has fallen into a well, it is provided with food until the Sabbath is over, if this is possible; but, if it is not, covers, cushions and mattresses are placed under it so that it may get out without further aid; the pain of the animal is sufficient excuse ('za'ar Ba'ale hayyim') for this Sabbath violation. But the animal might not be drawn out by man."

It was, however, a more serious offense to help to relieve a woman in childbirth than it was to help an animal in distress. The reason for this is simple. The woman had been cursed by God—she was "unclean." The animal bore no such mark of disgrace. In fact, it was a sacrilege, often punished with death, to alleviate the suffering of a woman in childbirth on this "holy of holy" days.

The Biblical injunction, "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the Sabbath day,"¹⁸⁶ has been the cause of myriad deaths and untold misery. Women suffering the agony of childbirth in cold rooms during inclement weather and the winter season have been denied the essential comfort of warmth. Thousands have died,

¹⁸⁵ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 10, p. 597; *Yad* 1. c. xxv. 26; *Shab.* 128 b; *B. M.* 32 b; *Ex.* xxiii.

¹⁸⁶ *Exodus*, Chapter 35, verse 3.

millions have suffered to the end of their lives from illness contracted as a result of this frightful and inhumane superstition, merely because the child happened to be born on the Sabbath. It is quite probable that even today strictly orthodox Hebrews still refuse to light a fire on the Sabbath, regardless of the circumstances.¹³⁷

But that is not all. It was even an offense to relieve the pains of childbirth on *any* day of the week. When Dr. James Y. Simpson, in 1847, sought to use chloroform to ease the labor pains, the pulpit thundered forth denunciations of this attempt as impious and "contrary to Holy Writ," and that it would tend "to avoid one part of the primeval curse upon woman."¹³⁸ So fearful were the clergy at even the thought of alleviating the pains of women in childbirth that they pictured the most horrible disaster to the human race for practising that which was "contrary to religion and the expressed command of God." Does not the Scripture say "in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children"? One clergyman expressed the divine opposition in the following manner: "Chloroform is a decoy of Satan, apparently offering itself to bless women; but in the end it will harden society and rob God of the deep, earnest cries which arise in time of trouble for help."¹³⁹ Another divinely inspired representative said: "The very suffering which a woman undergoes in labor is one of the strongest elements in the love she bears for her offspring." I wonder how this divine accounted for the love of a father for his children?

Could anything be more repellent than a system of religion that

¹³⁷ Because of this Commandment, weddings were also forbidden on the Sabbath. Marital indulgences on the Sabbath were regarded as a profanation, and strict laws were passed for its rigorous observance. (*Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 10, p. 593.) In the days of Benjamin Franklin, the Puritans of our own country refused to christen a child born on a Sunday, because a child born on the Sabbath must have been *conceived* on the Sabbath and no such desecration should be made of the Lord's Day! Benjamin Franklin was born on a Sunday, and the unholy child was a problem to the Sabbatarians of his time. What the world needs today is a few more such desecrations, if they mean the births of more Benjamin Franklins. The fanaticism of the Hebrew Sabbath is matched only by that of the Christian observance.

¹³⁸ White, *Warfare of Science with Theology*, Vol. 2, p. 63.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

so paralyzes the mind to the suffering of a woman in childbirth? In 1591, a lady of rank, Eufame Macalyane, sought the assistance of Agnes Sampson for the relief of pain at the time of the birth of her two sons. Agnes Sampson was tried before King James, condemned and burned alive on Castle Hill in Edinburgh.¹⁴⁰ How far removed were these religionists from the savages of Chukchi, who religiously seclude women during childbirth and do not allow any assistance to be rendered her except in cases of the utmost necessity, when an old woman is permitted to attend? ¹⁴¹

The discovery of anesthesia is one of the greatest of all of man's accomplishments. In all the fields of man's achievements, this one remains pre-eminent. What greater blessing is there than to help women through the travail and anguish of childbirth by a pain-obliterating method? Yet this discovery, this merciful potion, was declared by the clergy and by the highest church authorities to be a defiance of the Bible Deity!

Is it any wonder that Shakespeare observed "that we do cry when we come to this great stage of fools"?

CHRISTIANITY AND THE SABBATH

In this analysis of the Fourth Commandment, we make no distinction between the Sabbath of the Hebrews and the "Lord's Day" of the Christians. Both days have the same significance as far as this study is concerned, and the fear attaching to the observance of the one is identical with the restriction placed upon the other. The essence and principle of the Jewish and the Christian Sabbath are identical, says Dean Farrar.¹⁴²

When Christianity transferred the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, it did not in any way change the taboo associated with its observance; in many respects it intensified the fanaticism. Although Christians called it the "Lord's Day" instead of the Sabbath, the

¹⁴⁰ White, *Warfare of Science with Theology*, Vol. 2, p. 62.

¹⁴¹ Briffault, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 373.

¹⁴² *The Voice from Sinai*, p. 150.

word "Sabbath" is still applied to Sunday, despite the fact that there is no Biblical authority whatever for the observance of the first day of the week. That this is but another instance of the Church's long list of deceptive practices is well attested to by the long and bitter controversy that has raged among the different Christian sects regarding Sunday as the Sabbath.

The following statement, issued by the Seventh Day Adventists, tells in a degree of the conflict among the "warring Christian sects":

"We believe that the seventh-day Sabbath was instituted at the end of the creation of the world in six literal days; that it is a memorial of creation, and a sign of re-creation, or redemption; that it is a vital part of the moral law, the Ten Commandments; that it is essentially a spiritual institution; that God intended it to be observed in all ages by all men; that Christ and His apostles always, both before and after the crucifixion, observed the seventh-day Sabbath and therefore it is the rest day of all Christians.

"We believe that the first day of the week, commonly called Sunday, was dedicated by ancient paganism to the worship of the sun; that as the Christian church fell away from the true doctrine in the early centuries, the seventh-day Sabbath was gradually displaced by the pagan holiday, Sunday, which, with other pagan institutions, was eventually incorporated into the ecclesiastical law of the Roman Catholic Church, and by her transmitted to the reformed churches; that because it is based on pagan custom and church tradition only, and is nowhere countenanced in the Bible, Christians are in error in observing it as the weekly rest day."

This comment by John Frith, quoted by Dr. Hardwicke, is interesting and important: ¹⁴³

"We are as superstitious about Sunday as they [the Jews] are about their Saturday, yea, we are much more mad; for the Jews have the word of God for their day, since it is the seventh day, and they are commanded to keep it sacred; but we have not the word for us, but rather against us."

¹⁴³ W. W. Hardwicke, M.D., *Sunday and the Sabbath Question*, Watts & Co., London, p. 35.

That this controversy is still going on can be gathered from an incident which occurred several years ago.¹⁴⁴ The Rev. William M. Ivy, Methodist clergyman, offered \$1,000 to the Rev. M. S. Banfield, Seventh Day Adventist, if the latter could prove by the Bible that Sunday was the Sabbath day. The wager was accepted and a debate held before a Methodist congregation of six hundred. The Rev. Mr. Ivy used the King James Version to show that Sunday, and not Saturday, was the day to be kept holy, and the congregation voted for him. The Rev. Mr. Banfield, however, refused to pay, saying that he was not yet convinced, whereupon the Rev. Mr. Ivy brought suit!

Regardless of the day, the taboo still exists, which shows how easy it is to impose a superstition, how deeply ingrained it can become, and how difficult it is to eradicate. Not only have the Christians appropriated the Sabbath of the Hebrews, the observance of which was to be a sign between the latter and their God, but they have even intensified the restrictions and made the day more intolerable, impossible as that may seem.

This day was first instituted in the year 321 by Constantine, who spoke of Sunday as "the venerable day of the sun." The Pagans celebrated it as a festival in the religious rites of Mithraism, a sun-worshipping religion. Unable to suppress these pagan celebrations, the early Christians embraced these holidays, gave them Christian significance, and merged them into the religion of Christianity.¹⁴⁵

That the early Church Fathers were strenuously opposed to the observance of the Sabbath, and that the early Christians tried to abolish it, is evident from the testimony of the Church itself. Martin Luther was so incensed at its observance as a religious function that he admonished his followers to violate it. John Knox opposed it, as did John Calvin, the latter even threatening to change the weekly day of rest to Thursday, so as to make a distinctly separate day of observance from that of the Romanists.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ *New York Post*, Mar. 19, 1927.

¹⁴⁵ Arthur Weigall, *The Paganism in Our Christianity*, Putnam, New York, pp. 235, 238.

¹⁴⁶ Hardwicke, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

All wanted a "sacred" day, however, and they got it. They got it at the point of the sword, and with the bullet, the bars of the prison, and the fires of the stake. It was not until the eighth century that the Church enacted restrictive laws for the observance of this day.¹⁴⁷ The day began at midnight and ended the following midnight; it was the first and not the seventh day. Both labor and enjoyment were prohibited. It was made a day of worship and prayer, and attendance at church was compulsory.

Under the prohibitions imposed by Christianity, it was almost impossible to move on Sunday without being guilty of some violation of the Sabbath. If anyone were bold enough to agitate against these frightful impositions, he felt the power of Christian authority. In 1661, in London, a Baptist minister was hanged, drawn and quartered, his heart torn out, his quarters affixed to the gates of the city, and his head stuck on top of a pole and set up opposite his meeting house. His crime was speaking against Sabbath observance.¹⁴⁸

Children were prohibited from playing or even laughing. It was considered a crime to kiss one's wife or children on that day. It is stated that Charles I was publicly rebuked for laughing on Sunday in Scotland.¹⁴⁹ Anyone caught whistling had to do penance for disturbing the Sabbath. Traveling was forbidden. Some went so far as to suspend work on both Saturday and Monday because they were so close to Sunday. It was a sin to visit a friend, water the garden, shave, walk in the meadows, sit in the doorway to enjoy the weather, or even sleep on this sacred day that God had prescribed as a day of rest! Bathing, considered pleasant and wholesome, was therefore prohibited on Sunday.

So fanatical was the attitude regarding the Sabbath that on Sunday Christians were not even supposed to think of benefiting others. All their thoughts had to be reserved for the Lord. It was sinful to enjoy one's dinner, for that was pleasure. To think of one's health,

¹⁴⁷ Charles, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

¹⁴⁸ Hardwicke, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 25.

to make oneself comfortable, was contrary to the great object of life, which was to be in a state of constant affliction. Whatever one liked to do was sinful, for merely liking it made it wrong. The primary purpose of the Sabbath was to destroy all human pleasure. It not only accomplished this, but destroyed human affection and dulled the sensibilities. It was considered a sin to help a vessel in distress, for if the ship and the crew perished, that was God's will! Those caught aiding a ship were forced to do penance!¹⁵⁰

It was Hippolyte Taine who said that Sunday in London presented the aspect of an immense and well-ordered cemetery, and Stendhal declared that the Sabbath in England and Scotland destroys "the seventh part of possible happiness."¹⁵¹

The Christian has been thoroughly contaminated with this Sabbath superstition; he believes that if it rains on a church outing it is a punishment for some sin. It never occurs to him that perhaps some farmer might be praying for rain to save his parched crops, or that rain is a natural occurrence. In 1908, a relief party in Cape Smith, which was organized one Saturday to go to the rescue of some people stranded in a blizzard, refused to start until early Monday morning.¹⁵² That the taboos attached to these days are more important than human life is one of the strange insanities of religion.

In England, the Sabbath laws enacted two hundred years ago, though not enforced, are still on the statute books. These laws prohibit meeting for any sports or pastimes whatsoever. Carriers and drivers are forbidden to travel on Sunday. Killing or selling meat is prohibited. Working or exercising is forbidden.

Stringent laws regarding the Sabbath were enacted in our own New England in Puritan days. (No wonder these laws were called *blue*—they were enough to change the color of anything. They were, however, called "blue laws" because they were written on blue paper.) The prohibition against working on the Sabbath was strictly en-

¹⁵⁰ Buckle, *History of Civilization in England*, Vol. 3, pp. 265, 276.

¹⁵¹ McLaren, *The Christian's Sunday*, p. 11.

¹⁵² Bonner, *Christianizing the Heathen*, p. 155.

forced. A public flogging was the penalty for violation. No food could be cooked, no beds were to be made, cutting hair and shaving were prohibited. A mother could not kiss her child on the Sabbath. Riding on this holy day or walking in the garden was prohibited. Even a sick relative or friend could not be visited if it were necessary to ride to his house. The only thing permitted was to walk "reverently to and from church."

One man was fined for being about on the Sabbath; his excuse that he was running to save a man from drowning did not help him. As late as 1831 a lady was arrested within sight of her father's house and fined for unnecessary travel on a Sunday. To violate these provisions of the Sabbath observance in a manner calculated to "defy" the Lord was punishable *with death*.

A charge of non-attendance at church was brought against William Bladgen of New Haven in 1647. He pleaded that he had fallen into the water late on Saturday, and since he could not light a fire on Sunday to dry his clothes, he had lain in bed to keep warm while his only suit of garments was drying. His excuse was not accepted, and he was sentenced to be "publicly whipped."

When Captain Kemble returned to Boston in 1656 after a three years' journey, his wife met him on the doorstep, and embraced and kissed him. For this "vulgar" display of human affection on Sunday, he was kept in the public stocks for two hours.¹⁵⁸

An incident recorded in the *Columbian Centinel* of December, 1789, is worth mentioning: "The President [George Washington], on his return to New York from his late tour through Connecticut, having missed his way on Saturday, was obliged to ride a few miles on Sunday morning in order to gain the town at which he had proposed to attend divine service. Before he arrived, however, he was met by a tithing man, who, commanding him to stop, demanded the occasion of his riding; and it was not until the President had informed him of every circumstance and promised to go no further than the town

¹⁵⁸ *The Blue Laws of Connecticut*, Truth Seeker Co., New York, p. 247.

intended that the tithing man would permit him to proceed on his journey." ¹⁵⁴

In 1658, James Watt was publicly reproved "for writing a note about common business on the Lord's Day, at least in the evening somewhat too soon." In 1646, Aquila Chase, of Newbury, and his wife were fined for gathering peas from their own garden on the Sabbath. In 1772, William Estes, of Wareham, acknowledged that he was guilty of raking hay on the Sabbath, and was fined ten shillings. In 1774, another citizen of Wareham was fined for "pulling apples on the Sabbath." A Dunstable soldier, for "wetting a piece of old hat to put in his shoe" to protect his feet, was fined forty shillings. ¹⁵⁵

Sleeping in church was one of the most common of the many violations of the Sabbath, and the ministers employed many devices to see that members of the congregation remained awake during their sermons. One amusing incident occurred in Maine. The clergyman, observing a parishioner asleep, bided his time, and then suddenly shouted at the top of his voice, "Fire! Fire! Fire!" The sleeping man, instinctively jumping to his feet, startled and blinking, asked, "Where?" The reverend gentleman replied, "In hell, for sleeping sinners." ¹⁵⁶ Another minister, in Brunswick, Maine, had a different method. He would call the name of the man asleep, and tell him pointedly to awake and remain so. On one occasion he shouted, "Wake up, Mr. X," and the napping churchgoer shouted back, "Mind your own business, and go on with your sermon."

A New Haven man was severely whipped and fined for declaring that he received no profit from the minister's sermons. In Windham, in 1729, a most unregenerate citizen was guilty of "vile and slanderous expressions" when he declared that "I would rather hear my dog bark than Mr. Bellamy preach." In 1631, Phillip Ratcliffe, for "speaking against the church," was whipped and had his ears cut off. An extremely wicked man in Hartford who had the temerity to

¹⁵⁴ *The Blue Laws of Connecticut*, p. 75.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 7.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

say that "he hoped to meet some of the members of the church in Hell before long, and he did not question that he would," was put in the pillory and severely whipped.¹⁵⁷

Even as late as 1840, a rich old lady provoked a nine-day discussion by providing herself with a cushion to sit on to relieve her aching back caused by the hard, straight-back benches.

In the law books of that period is recorded this case: "His Majesty's tithing man entered complaint against Jona and Susan Smith, that on the Lord's Day during Divine Service they did *smile*."

The petty insults and embarrassments, to say nothing of the beatings and whippings inflicted on "sinners" of that time by the fanatical Sabbatarians, seem incredible.

So fanatical did the Puritan Christian become in the observance of the Sabbath that in order to be certain that he would not violate a single minute of the precious day, he began to observe it from sundown on Saturday until Sunday night. Superstition filled the air, and the slightest infraction of the rules and regulations intensified the fear.

An incident is recorded of a man who was hired by the day to finish a job and who worked an hour after sundown on Saturday. The next day his little child was left alone for a while. She fell into an uncovered well in the cellar of the house and was drowned. It is said that the father freely, "in open congregation, did acknowledge it the righteous hand of God for his profaning his holy day." Imagine believing that a God would kill a child in retaliation for her father's working on the Sabbath!

As late as 1855, shops in Hartford, Connecticut, were not open on Saturday evening. However, there lived at that time some people with both a sense of humor and a bit of courage, and here and there a poet with a little reason would write: ¹⁵⁸

"And let it be enacted further still
That all our people strict observe our will;

¹⁵⁷ *The Blue Laws of Connecticut*, pp. 245, 258.

¹⁵⁸ Alice Morse Earle, *The Sabbath in Puritan New England*, pp. 245, 258.

Five days and a half shall men, and women, too,
Attend their business and their birth pursue,
But after that no man without a fine
Shall walk the streets or at a tavern dine;
One day and halt 'tis respite to rest
From toilsome labor and a tempting feast.
Henceforth let none on peril of their lives
Attempt a journey or embrace their wives;
No barber, foreign or domestic-bred,
Shall e'er presume to dress a lady's head;
No shop shall sell (half the preceding day)
A yard of ribband or an ounce of tea."

And there is still heard this rhymed warning:

"Better a child had ne'er been born
Than cut her nails on a Sunday morn!"

And:

"Sunday shaver, Sunday shorn,
Better hadst thou ne'er been born!"

How fanatical human beings could become over their observance of this Commandment is shown by Carl Sandburg in discussing "Stonewall" Jackson.¹⁵⁹

"Stonewall's reverence for the Sabbath went so far that he wouldn't mail a letter to his wife on Sunday, or open one from her that arrived that day. But, 'with the blessing of an ever-kind Providence,' he would 'fight, slay and deliver doom to the enemy if on the Sabbath the enemy looked ready for punishment.'"

Let us not be too ready to smile at the gross superstition of the people in years past regarding the observance of this utterly stupid and silly day. Right in our own time we find this insane determination to stifle all human activity in fear of the wrath of a mythical deity.

¹⁵⁹ Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years*, Vol. 1, p. 528.

The stringency of the Sabbath laws in this country is described by Herbert Asbury.¹⁶⁰

“When I was a boy in Farmington, Sunday was a day of dreadful gloom; over everything hung an atmosphere of morbid fear and dejection. In the morning the whole town donned its Sunday suit, almost always black and funereal and depressing, and therefore becoming to religious practice, and trudged sorrowfully and solemnly to Sunday school and to church, there to wail doleful hymns and hear an unlearned man . . . beseech the Lord upon the universal prayer theme of ‘gimme.’ Then the village marched, in mournful cadence, back home for Sunday dinner.” After removing their Sabbath raiment until after supper, “the family clutched its Bibles and wandered forth despairingly to evening service.

“We could not play games on Sunday; card playing was an invention of the Devil and could not be played on any day, but on Sunday the children were not allowed to play such games as Lotto, Old Maid and Authors.

“The Lord did not approve of Sunday-night suppers, and so we could not have them. In the homes of the godly, there was only a cold snack for the evening meal. It was considered sinful to light a fire in the cookstove after twelve o’clock.

“Dancing on Sunday was considered the Sin of Sins.

“Sunday newspapers were not considered religious.”

Ingersoll said: “Sabbaths used to be prisons. Every Sunday was a Bastille. Every Christian was a kind of turnkey and everyone was a prisoner—was a convict. In that dungeon a smile was a crime. It was thought wrong for a child to laugh upon this holy day. Think of that!”¹⁶¹

On July 27, 1927, Governor John G. Richards of South Carolina made a statement expressing his determination to “close up South Carolina tight on Sundays.” He said: “I regard the great national sin today, the want of a proper observance of the Sabbath. Much of the present-day lawlessness can be traced to the fact that people are neglecting religion in order that they may make a sporting event

¹⁶⁰ Herbert Asbury, *Up from Methodism*, p. 36.

¹⁶¹ Ingersoll, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. 380.

of Sunday. Normal conditions can be restored by regard for religious requirements of the Sabbath." The Governor admits that at present, with blue laws enforced, there is still much lawlessness in the State, but he thinks this can be remedied when everything is closed down on the Sabbath day.¹⁶²

Is Governor Richards very far removed intellectually from the primitive savage who observed the appearance of the new moon by putting bags over the heads of the chickens and dogs so they would not disturb the peace and quiet of the day that all so feared?

Ocean Grove, New Jersey, a summer resort near New York, still observes the Sabbath-Sunday by-laws passed over 100 years ago. On Sunday, July 31, 1927,¹⁶³ these conditions prevailed: No automobile was permitted on the streets; no cars could pass through the city from midnight Saturday until midnight Sunday; parking in front of one's own home was prohibited; no man, woman or child was permitted to bathe in the surf; a messenger could not deliver a telegram on his bicycle, but had to walk a mile from Asbury Park, or get off his bicycle and wheel it into Ocean Grove. A newspaper published a photograph of William Young, a messenger boy, wheeling his bicycle to deliver a rush telegram. No ice cream could be purchased; if one wanted a plate of ice cream, one had to go to a restaurant owned by the Sunday Association and order a whole meal costing a dollar. Sunday newspapers were taboo. Even special-delivery letters could not be delivered. Dentists were not permitted to treat patients, and all drugstores were closed.

The delicious dish of ice cream covered with syrup now known as a "sundae" is an invention to circumvent the law passed in many States prohibiting the sale of ice-cream sodas on Sunday as a desecration of the Sabbath. Soda dispensers circumvented the law by serving ice cream, which was considered a food, covered with syrup, as a Sabbath substitute for ice-cream sodas, and so the "sundae" came into existence!

¹⁶² *New York Sun*.

¹⁶³ *New York Evening Journal*, Aug. 1, 1927.

So fanatical can the supporters of these Sabbath laws become that murder is sometimes perpetrated to prevent the Sabbath from being "violated." On November 9, 1930, Richard Hannah, 18, was shot to death and his brother George, 22, was wounded while they were resisting arrest for violating the blue law prohibiting Sunday hunting in Chardon, Ohio.¹⁶⁴

One man murdered a woman but refrained from giving himself up to the police because the act was committed on the Sabbath: ¹⁶⁵

"Joseph Borys, sixty-two, walked into a police station today and told the desk sergeant that he had battered a woman to death with an ax Sunday, but had waited twenty-four hours to report it—'because Sunday is a day of rest.' The skeptical officer ordered the confessed slayer held in jail while patrolmen were sent to investigate. They found the body of Mrs. Francis Piotrowski, forty-nine, lying beside a bed. Her head was crushed.

"Borys explained his wife had urged him to surrender immediately, but he insisted: 'No, Sunday is a day of rest. I'll go tomorrow.'"

What a parody on morals! A religion that perverts the brain to such an extent that a greater restraint is exercised to prevent the violation of the Sabbath than the commission of a murder!

On December 2, 1927, members of the City Council of Lawrenceville, Illinois, planned to introduce an ordinance prohibiting housewives from preparing dinner on Sunday and to prevent physicians from attending the sick.¹⁶⁶

On May 2, 1927, an artist was arrested in Baltimore, Maryland, for painting a picture on Sunday.¹⁶⁷

East Orange, New Jersey, prohibits the showing of moving pictures on Sunday, but it is permitted in Orange, New Jersey. A theatre on the border line between the two cities divided the theatre

¹⁶⁴ *American Freeman*, Jan. 15, 1931.

¹⁶⁵ *New York Post*, Jan. 17, 1939.

¹⁶⁶ *New York Evening World*, Dec. 2, 1927.

¹⁶⁷ *New York Evening Post*, May 5, 1927.

with a rope, and special ushers were hired to see that no one sat on the side of the house which was in East Orange! ¹⁶⁸

On December 12, 1926, in Irvington, New Jersey, ninety-five people were fined for violating the Sabbath law. These arch criminals were guilty of selling cigars, toothpaste, gasoline, shoe polish, ice cream and tin whistles. ¹⁶⁹

When attempts were made to impose additional restrictions upon the activities of the people of New York State on the ground that the desecration of the Sabbath was contributing to lawlessness, Senator Benjamin Antin protested vigorously. His letter, sent to the Lord's Day Alliance, is a hopeful sign that not all our legislators are cowed by these religious fanatics. He wrote:

"As one of the legislators of this State who shall have an opportunity to vote on any measures you advocate, I hasten to assure you that I shall fight these with all my strength and power.

"You speak of the increase of criminal statistics. We deplore these as much as you do. But any psychiatrist will tell you that the answer is not to be found in more blue laws.

"Today all thinking men stand in awe before the staggering results of prohibition, which has exalted the bootlegger to the estate of wealth, murdered drinkers with poisoned rum, and produced a disregard and even a contempt for law which shocks us. Shall we add to this the bootlegging of gasoline, books, movies, cards, dancing and piano playing?

"We believe that God intended his children to enjoy their days on earth. We believe that the day of rest should be a day of relaxation."

Interesting, however, is the statement of the Rev. H. L. Bowlby, who attributed the "crime wave" some years ago and the "general breakdown" of society to the "violation of the fourth commandment [which Christians constantly violate when they observe Sunday according to the Hebrew calendar] in the nation-wide desecration of

¹⁶⁸ *New York Evening Journal*, Oct. 5, 1930.

¹⁶⁹ *New York Sun*, Dec. 13, 1936.

the Sabbath." He regards this as the most "serious contributing cause for the present alarming conditions."¹⁷⁰

When we take into consideration the fact that both Ruth Snyder and Judd Gray taught Sunday school; that William Hickman was a regular Sunday-school attendant and conscientious in his studies for the ministry; that the Diamond boys were known for their strict observance of their Sabbath and regularly attended the synagogue on Saturdays; that a young girl in Los Angeles deliberately murdered her mother because she refused to permit her to go on a picnic sponsored by the Sunday school from which she had just returned; that when Earl Peacock,¹⁷¹ who killed his wife and set fire to her body, was arrested, he wore a medal which he received for six years of perfect Sunday school attendance; that a choir boy, while attending Sunday school, robbed twenty-one poor boxes and appropriated the entire contents, \$190, for his own use; and that a minister, while delivering his regular Sunday morning sermon, flirted with his pretty choir singer until infatuation became so great that he eloped with the young woman immediately after the service, leaving his wife and children destitute, then I am inclined to agree with the reverend gentleman that the "influence of the Sabbath" is the most "serious contributing cause for the present alarming conditions."

The observance or non-observance of the Sabbath, whether it be Saturday or Sunday, or any other day of the week, has absolutely nothing to do either with committing or preventing crime. The prevalence of this misunderstanding is responsible for the confusion concerning religion and morality.

It is the duty of every sensible man and woman to violate the insane provisions for observing the Sabbath and break the taboos associated with it.

This day is utterly meaningless; it was born of superstitious fear and ignorance and has been the source of unnecessary misery to the

¹⁷⁰ *New York Times*, Aug. 3, 1927.

¹⁷¹ These people were found guilty, and some were sentenced to long terms in prison and some were executed for their crimes.

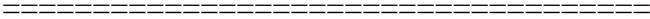
human race. If there is a God and he wanted to curse the human race, he could not more effectively have vented his malediction than by the creation of a Sabbath day.

With Ingersoll, we say: "Let us throw away these superstitions and take the higher and nobler ground, that every day should be rendered sacred by some loving act, by increasing the happiness of man, giving birth to noble thoughts, putting in the path of toil some flower of joy, helping the unfortunate, lifting the fallen, dispelling gloom, destroying prejudice, defending the helpless and filling homes with light and love." What a profitable exchange would take place!

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The Fifth Commandment

“Honor thy father and thy mother:
that thy days may be long upon the land
which the Lord thy God giveth thee.”

PARENTS AS VICE-REGENTS OF GOD

THE PROVISIONS of this Commandment bear a close relationship to those of the Second Commandment in which the Hebrew Deity threatens to punish "unto the third and fourth generation" the children of those parents who "serve other gods" in violation of the injunction to "have no other gods before me." The "honor" demanded in this Commandment was the strict conformity of the child to the religion of the parent, based upon the superstitious belief in sympathetic magic.

To the Biblical Hebrew, the land upon which he lived and from which he derived subsistence was the most precious thing in the world and could therefore only be a gift from the God he worshiped. To retain this possession, nothing must be done to arouse the anger of this jealous Deity, and therefore children were warned to honor their parents by imitating them in the observance of "my statutes and my commandments."

The words "the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" had deep significance for the Hebrews because their land was the binding tie between them and their Deity.¹ To be removed from their homeland meant to be deserted by their God. The Bible is replete with many such references of their concern lest some act should provoke the loss of this valuable bequest to them.²

I quote *Deuteronomy, Chapter 26, verse 15*:

15 Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

¹ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 8, p. 660.

² *Leviticus, Chapter 20, verses 1-9*. For a further analysis of the relationship of sympathetic magic between parents and children, see Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, pp. 236-248.

Another Biblical quotation substantiating the above is from the *Second Book of Samuel, Chapter 7, verse 23*:

23 And what one nation in the earth *is* like thy people, *even* like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, *from* the nations and their gods?

The above verses refer directly to the occupancy of the land as part of the inheritance of the Children of Israel from their God, and to the necessity of holding it inviolate as "thy holy habitation, from heaven." The fear that a child might commit some taboo act which would provoke the wrath of the Bible Deity against the parents was the reason for the provisions of this Commandment.

The readiness with which Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac, and the proximity of this Commandment to the third, caused Philo Judaeus to place it in the category that dealt with questions of reverence and duty to God, as he contended the parents were "the visible gods." Many clergymen today include this Commandment with the previous four as being indicative of our "duty to God."

In early Greek writings there are numerous passages which put filial duties on a par with duties toward the deities. Aristotle speaks of "the affection of children to their parents is like that of men towards the gods." There is a Slavonian maxim that says: "A father is like an earthly God to his son." Indeed significant in revealing the primitive and underlying motive of this Commandment is the following Biblical injunction from *Leviticus, Chapter 19, verse 32*:

32 Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I *am* the Lord.

Much weight is placed upon the following passage because of its association with the Sabbath. It is claimed that the provisions of this Commandment are identical with the reasons for keeping the Sabbath, both being in the category of taboos that, if violated, would

bring down upon the perpetrators fearful punishment from this wrathful God. I quote *Leviticus, Chapter 19, verse 3*:

3 Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I *am* the Lord your God.

There is a close association here of the fear of parents with the fear of God, and it is indicative of their vice-regency in relation to this Commandment.

The demand for conformity can best be illustrated by the following quotation giving the penalty for parental disobedience, particularly in the matter of unbelief, as well as for planting the seed of Israel in outside tribes, in violation of this Commandment. I quote *Deuteronomy, Chapter 13, verses 6 to 11*:

6 If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers;

7 *Namely*, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the *one* end of the earth even unto the *other* end of the earth;

8 Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him:

9 But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people.

10 And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

11 And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you.

The great crime involved is enticing one to serve *other* gods—"the gods of the people which are round about you . . ." To honor one's parents meant conforming strictly to the tribal religious belief,

and particularly promoting tribal unity. Disobedience in this respect was considered the worst possible offense because of the fear that not only the members of the household, but the rest of the tribe, would suffer from the wrath of their God.

The import of this quotation to the Commandment lies in the fact that adhering to the belief in the God of the parents was the most important duty of the child. For merely trying to entice someone away from that belief, "thou shalt surely kill him, thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death . . ." and "thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die . . . because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage." Verse 11 is an additional warning in support of this Commandment not to commit acts to provoke this Bible Deity to anger.

The Catechism of the Council of Trent substantiates my premise: "If we did not honor and reverence our parents, whom we do love next to God, and whom we have almost continuously before our eyes, how can we honor or reverence God, the supreme and best of parents, whom we cannot see?"

The following from *Ephesians, Chapter 6, verses 1 to 3*, deserves very careful consideration as it shows this thought carried over into the New Testament:

- 1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.
- 2 Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise;
- 3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

The above quotation also repeats the phrase found in the *Deuteronomy* version of the Commandments, i.e., "that it may be well with thee," as further evidence of a reward for obeying parents as the representatives of the Lord.

Martin Luther, who is considered somewhat of an authority upon this question, said: "Honor thy parents' does not refer to fellow

men, but to vice-regents of God. Therefore, as God is to be served both with honor and fear, his representatives are to be so, too."

To honor one's parents meant also to guard the purity of the seed of the tribe. The Children of Israel were threatened with being deprived of their land if they gave away any of their "seed unto Molech." I quote *Leviticus, Chapter 20, verses 1 and 2*:

1 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,
2 Again, thou shalt say to the children of Israel, Whosoever *he be* of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth *any* of his seed unto Molech; he shall surely be put to death: the people of the land shall stone him with stones.

Here again is the strict injunction to maintain the solidarity of the tribe:

3 And I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people; because he hath given of his seed unto Molech, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name.
4 And if the people of the land do any ways hide their eyes from the man, when he giveth of his seed unto Molech, and kill him not:³

In addition, the slightest departure from the strict rule of maintaining tribal purity was condemned as "profaning" the tribal god:

5 Then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off, and all that go a whoring after him, to commit whoredom with Molech, from among their people.
6 And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.
7 Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I *am* the Lord your God.
8 And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I *am* the Lord which sanctify you.

³ *Leviticus, Chapter 20, verses 3-4.*

9 For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death; he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood *shall* be upon him.⁴

To fanatically religious parents the greatest disgrace, the deepest humiliation a child could possibly inflict, is to marry a person of a different religious faith. To many this is a crime of such enormity that there is no forgiveness; according to the Bible, it constitutes a violation of this Commandment because the child "hath cursed his father or his mother" and committed "whoredom with Molech." This so-called act of dishonor has caused untold misery in the world. It has aroused the most violent bitterness and hatred. It has broken up homes and estranged families. And this Commandment has contributed largely to intensifying this condition.

Even though a child marries one whose faith permits him to accept this Commandment as part of the Decalogue, that does not in the least mitigate the enormity of the crime or lessen the hatred aroused. I have seen a Catholic mother weep as though her heart would break because her son was to marry a girl of the Protestant faith and the marriage ceremony was to be performed in a Protestant church. I have seen a Protestant mother disown and disinherit her son because he married a Catholic girl and the ceremony was performed by a priest. It was not until there was a death in the family that she permitted him and his wife and children to enter her house. Even today I have known orthodox Hebrew parents to mourn as dead a child who married outside of their faith. Some even go to the extent of performing the funeral ceremony as required by the ancient tribal law, to express their grief, as well as their condemnation of this filial breach.⁵

In contrast to the hatred and bigotry caused and intensified by the Bible and religious systems in general, here is what the infidel Ingersoll said regarding parental affection:

⁴ *Leviticus, Chapter 20, verses 5-9.*

⁵ A typical case was recorded in the *New York Herald Tribune*, Oct. 18, 1931.

“When your child commits a wrong, take it in your arms; let it feel your heart beat against its heart; let the child know that you really and truly and sincerely love it. Yet some Christians, good Christians, when a child commits a fault, drive it from the door and say: ‘Never do you darken this house again.’ Think of that! And then these same people will get down on their knees and ask God to take care of the child they have driven from home. I will never ask God to take care of my children unless I am doing my level best in that same direction. Call me Atheist, call me infidel, call me what you will, I intend so to treat my children that they can come to my grave and truthfully say: ‘He who sleeps here never gave us a moment of pain. From his lips, now dust, never came to us an unkind word.’”⁶

At the conclusion of his address, of which this quotation is a part, a prominent United States Senator sought him out and said: “Colonel, you have converted me. For years I have been estranged from my only daughter because she did not marry to please me, but now I shall go to her tonight and beg her forgiveness for allowing a selfish pride to keep her from my arms and heart!”

The Biblical Hebrew felt that only by compelling their children to adhere to their belief and observe the other taboos and rituals associated with their religion, the disaster of losing their land could be averted.

I quote *Deuteronomy, Chapter 11, verses 26 to 29*:

26 Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse;

27 A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day:

28 And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.

29 And it shall come to pass, when the Lord thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal.

⁶ Ingersoll, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. 324.

The constant repetition of a curse to be inflicted for disobeying this Commandment, and a blessing to be conferred for obedience, emphasized the necessity of conforming to its edicts. Its place in the Decalogue has no relationship whatever to the modern understanding of filial devotion, respect and affection. The "honor" to parents demanded in this Commandment was for the sole purpose of maintaining the solidarity of the tribe and the continuous "blessing" of the Bible Deity on all the Children of Israel who remain steadfast to his laws and statutes.

In *Deuteronomy, Chapter 29, verses 18 to 29*, is emphasized the warning against following other gods. It is imposed on parents by the Bible Deity, and reveals another reason why it was their duty to demand that their children "honor" them:

18 Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God, to go *and* serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood;

19 And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst:

20 The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.

21 And the Lord shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law:

22 So that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the Lord hath laid upon it;

23 *And that* the whole land thereof *is* brimstone, and salt, *and* burning, *that* it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which the

Lord overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath:
 24 Even all nations shall say, Wherefore
 hath the Lord done thus unto this land?
 what *meaneth* the heat of this great anger?

The curse was forever an effective warning to the Children of Israel to obey their God:

25 Then men shall say, Because they have
 forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of
 their fathers, which he made with them when
 he brought them forth out of the land of
 Egypt:
 26 For they went and served other gods, and
 worshipped them, gods whom they knew not,
 and *whom* he had not given unto them:
 27 And the anger of the Lord was kindled
 against this land, to bring upon it all the
 curses that are written in this book.

The reason for this threat is repeated in the words "because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers . . ."

28 And the Lord rooted them out of their
 land in anger, and in wrath, and in great in-
 dignation, and cast them into another land,
 as *it is* this day.
 29 The secret *things belong* unto the Lord
 our God: but those *things which are* revealed
belong unto us and to our children for ever,
 that *we* may do all the words of this law.

Here again is the threat of losing the land for disobedience.

Do we need more evidence to prove that this Commandment was formulated solely for the purpose of intensifying the solidarity of the tribe, as a mode of propitiation to the Bible Deity that the Israelites might continue to occupy the land which they believed their God had given them?

There still exists a strong conviction among the Hebrews that a father possesses a mystic power through his blessings or curses. Westermarck and other leading anthropologists support the contention that this Commandment, with its element of reward for honoring parents, was originally due to the prevalence of the belief that the parents were "vice-regents of God."⁷

⁷ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 1, p. 627.

THE ELEMENT OF SYMPATHETIC MAGIC IN TRIBAL FILIAL OBEDIENCE

The superstitious belief that parents possess the power of God on earth is found in nearly all primitive societies. Long before Moses is supposed to have lived, an Egyptian sage had written that "a son who attends to the words of his father will grow old in consequence."⁸

Among the Moslems, parental disobedience is placed on a par with idolatry and murder; and some of the southern Slavs maintain that if a son does not fulfill the last will of his father, the soul of the father will curse him from the grave.

The Koreans believe that the richest rewards and the brightest heavens await the filial child, whereas curses and disgrace in this life and hell in the world hereafter are the penalties of the disobedient and neglectful child. A man who strikes his father is generally beheaded.⁹

In ancient Egypt, the notion prevailed that a son who accepted the word of his father would attain old age on that account.¹⁰ In the *Precepts of Ptahhotep* we read: "How good it is when a son receives that which his father says. He shall reach advanced age thereby."¹¹ Among the Nandi in Central Africa, if a son refuses to obey his father in any serious matter, the father solemnly strikes the son with his fur mantle. This is equivalent to a serious curse, and is supposed to be fatal to the son unless he obtains forgiveness, which he can do only by sacrificing a goat before his father.¹² In Greece, the belief prevailed that a child who struck his parent would be accursed. In India, a child considered guilty of parental disrespect could only be purified with water taken from a sacred lake or river. Disobedience had to be purged with foods that were taboo—food that had been licked by dogs or pigs, or defiled by crows or impure men.¹³ This superstition was

⁸ Quoted by Farrar, *The Voice of Sinai*, p. 180.

⁹ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 1, p. 513.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 624, 625.

¹¹ Hastings, *Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 9, p. 478.

¹² Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 622.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 624, 625.

carried even further among the Hindus. In their sacred books we find evidence that even the oldest were sacred to the younger children. It says: "The feet of the elder brothers and sisters must be embraced, according to the order of their seniority."

So strict did the Chinese become in their obedience to parental authority, and so early did they instruct their children in this reverence and awe, that it became the basis of their creed—the worship of ancestors. Confucianism has been briefly described as "an expansion of the root idea of filial devotion." In Korea and Japan, the authority of the father is equally great. It is said that a Japanese maiden, at the command of her father, will enter a brothel without a murmur and become a prostitute for life.¹⁴ In ancient Chaldea, a son or a daughter could be given as a hostage for a debt. Among the early Hebrews, a father could sell his child to relieve his own distress, or offer the child to a creditor as a pledge. He often sold his daughter to be a servant or concubine.

Fear of parents, and paying strict obedience to their demands, were almost universal in early times, and prevail in primitive societies today. The lower the scale of intellectual development, the greater the fear and the stricter the compliance. Eskimo and North American Indian children are described as being very obedient to their parents. Disobedience is practically unknown, and often a word or even a look from a parent is enough to enforce discipline. The son of a Central Asiatic Turk, when young, behaves as if he were his father's slave. Among the Ossetes, the young men never sit in the presence of their fathers or speak in loud voices. Parents in the Barea and Kunama tribes are highly respected, and a child would never dare to contradict them or oppose their commands, no matter how unjust. The son of a Kafir who is disrespectful to his father is subject to the contempt of the tribe and is sometimes even banished.¹⁵

A noted historian, Leighton Wilson, says that among the Mpongwe veneration for age is carried to greater lengths than among any other

¹⁴ Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 608.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 600, 601.

people. The young are instructed in reverence, and they never enter the presence of their elders without taking off their hats and assuming a crouching gait.¹⁶

Even today, beating children as a punishment is still considered a parent's inalienable right. The law today will interfere only if the chastisement becomes too brutal. It is not uncommon even now for a mother to tell a child that has just received a whipping from its father that it has been punished by God for some disobedience.

Henry Sloane Coffin, associate professor in the Union Theological Seminary of New York, in discussing this Commandment, had the honesty to say: "To what extent can we apply a Commandment, devised for tribesmen among whom sons and daughters grew up to follow the callings and repeat almost exactly the careers of their ancestors, to conditions where the lives of children are so totally unlike those in which their parents were reared?"¹⁷

This Commandment belongs in the same category as the four previous ones in admonishing "our duty to God." It does not prescribe moral conduct; it does, however, specify a superstitious religious duty, the performance of which would produce the results desired by sympathetic magic. The pledge of "prolonged days" and the occupation of the Promised Land for obedience to parents makes this Commandment an integral part of the primitive culture of the Hebrew tribal code and, as such, occupies an appropriate place in the Decalogue of superstitious taboos.

FAITHFULNESS AND FAILURE

The tenderest relationship in life is that between parent and child. To remember the tenderness, care and watchfulness of parents and to repay them in some measure for their unselfish devotion is not only one of the great pleasures of life, but also one of the greatest privileges. The man who recalls the loving kiss of a mother or the affectionate embrace of a father can never be completely without some consolation.

¹⁶ Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 604.

¹⁷ Coffin, *The Ten Commandments*, p. 98.

The child who mistreats his parents, who is ungrateful for their efforts in his behalf, who is indifferent to their welfare, will probably, when he or she becomes a parent, feel a pang for his callous indifference, for which there is no comfort.

What does this Commandment teach us concerning this relationship? What is meant by the words, "Honor thy father and thy mother"? In what did honor consist? Why was it necessary to honor parents in order "that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee"? Must affection for parents, must consideration for their welfare, must respect and duty toward them be determined by the consideration of a reward? Are these attachments of the heart for sale at a price? Must we be bribed to perform a duty that should be our first and greatest privilege? Must we give honor to our parents only upon the expressed condition that our "days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee"?

What baser bargain could there be? Cannot affection, consideration and filial duty be put upon a higher plane than that of a commercial product? What do you think of a son or a daughter who looks for value received in performing a duty toward parents? To permit the promise of long life to influence respect and devotion to parents commercializes the tenderest of relationships. It reduces our deepest emotions to the level of barter.

The man or woman who shows devotion and affection to his or her parents merely for the love of them is certainly manifesting a greater and more commendable degree of virtue than one who exhibits these attachments for the reward that is promised.

A high standard of morality is not built on rewards and punishments. Virtue, we are told, is its own reward. A good deed is performed because it is better to do good without reward than to withhold services for lack of compensation. We do good because it is good to do good.

The Greek and Roman philosophers could have taught us more in this respect than this Commandment. The Stoics said: "No deeds are more laudable than those which are done without ostentation." And

Seneca said: "He who wishes his virtue to be blazed abroad is not laboring for virtue, but for fame." And Persius said: "I do not shrink from praise, but I refuse to make it the end and term of right." And Pliny said: "That which is beautiful is beautiful in itself; the praise of man adds nothing to its quality." And the younger Pliny said of one of his friends that "he sought the reward of virtue in itself, and not in the praise of men." Peregrinus, the Cynic, said: "The wise man will not sin, though both gods and men should overlook the deed, for it is not through fear of punishment or of shame that he abstains from sin. It is from the desire and obligation of what is just and good." Marcus Aurelius said: "To be paid for virtue is as if the eye demanded a recompense for seeing, or the feet for walking."¹⁸

Can anyone say that this Commandment is a precept that could only emanate from a divine source—that it required a special revelation to man? Do the words of this Commandment actually inculcate into the minds of our children that unselfish attitude toward parents which we so highly commend? Does it teach unselfishness? In this world of insatiable greed, some contend that unselfishness alone is all that is needed to solve many of the problems and help to bring peace and understanding to the human race. But does this Commandment contribute one iota to that much-desired end? Or has it only intensified those selfish traits which are the basis of so many of our baser acts?

What was the moral standard that the Bible God used in the formulation of this Commandment? Surely the words "Love thy father and thy mother" would have been sufficient to stress those affectionate attachments which are universally practised, and it did not require the thunder and lightning of Sinai to remind us of them.

Since the word "love" is used in the Bible in the phrase "Love thy neighbor,"¹⁹ surely it is equally desirable to love one's parents as to "honor" them.

¹⁸ Lecky, *Morals*, Vol. 1, p. 79.

¹⁹ This phrase is generally attributed to Jesus, as an original thought and a new dispensation, as expressed in *Matthew, Chapter 19, verse 19, and Chapter 22, verse 39*, when as a matter of fact it is a purely tribal concept found in the Old Testament, *Leviticus, Chapter 19, verse 18*.

Honor is not a term of endearment; it is a form of tribute. Love and affection are the binding attachments of family life; honor is an attribute exhibited as a public recognition for deeds and accomplishments and high positions of authority; it does not necessarily include affection and devotion.

More filial devotion and respect for parents, more consideration for their wants, more regard for their welfare, can be learned from *King Lear* than from these "inspired" words of this Commandment.

Bought love is false love. Love that depends upon a price, that looks for a reward, that is put on a commercial basis, is love that should be spurned and condemned.

The love and affection in family life is just as strong and just as fervent among human beings who never heard of this Commandment as it is among those who, parrot-like, call it a "divine revelation." The love attachment exhibited in the animal and bird kingdoms is in many respects equal, and often superior, to that manifested by members of the human family.

Why was the word "honor" used in this Commandment instead of the word "love"? There was a valid reason for this. "Honor" is the word intended. This Commandment was not formulated to inculcate love and affection between parents and children. Its distinct purpose was to impress upon the child the importance of exhibiting to parents the honor accorded to God and his representatives, and to make sure that the children of the Children of Israel would keep their God's "statutes and his commandments unto the thousandths of generations." *The solidarity of the Children of Israel "upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" was the reason for its inclusion in the Decalogue. The dutiful attachment of child to parent was never even remotely associated with it.*

If this Commandment has any significance whatever, it should demonstrate its power at the appropriate time. There have been countless children who have "honored" their parents, who have sacrificed themselves for their welfare, and who nevertheless suffered hardship and did not live long. There have been hundreds of thousands of

children who have behaved wretchedly to their parents, and yet have enjoyed the best of the world's goods. There are children who waste and squander enough in one year to give their parents all the comfort and protection they need for the rest of their lives, and yet these children live long and seem to enjoy life. A false edict is not only valueless, but in addition creates a negative influence.

Even as a Commandment intended solely and exclusively for the Hebrews, subsequent events have definitely and irrevocably proved it to be false. On the whole, Jewish children have always been faithful and dutiful to their parents. They have the reputation of performing their filial duty with scrupulous fidelity. Yet the most orthodox and most fervent religious believer must admit that the Jews did *not* live long in the land that they thought their God had given them as an inheritance for keeping his statutes and his Commandments. In fact, judging from authentic historical records, the Jews lived but a *short* time in their native land. They were not dispersed from that land because they were disobedient or failed to observe the Commandments or other edicts of their God. On the contrary, it was because the Children of Israel were too scrupulous in their observance of the Decalogue that they no longer possess the land of their forefathers. *The loss of their land was due not to the breach but to the observance of the Commandments.*

The sons and daughters of Israel have "honored" their parents as provided by this Commandment, but the Hebrew Deity has not kept faith with them. Their days have not been prolonged "upon the land" of their fathers; they are scattered over the face of the earth! The promise of their God was not fulfilled. The Hebrew people themselves are the best example of the falsity of this Commandment and the failure of their God.

The Sixth Commandment

“Thou shalt not kill.”

KILLING AND SELF-PRESERVATION

MANY theologians contend that the five previous Commandments are supposed to deal with man's relation to God, and the remaining five, beginning with this one, with man's relation to man. Assuming this premise to be correct, would that account for an important difference that distinguishes the first half from the second—the element of reward and punishment?

The Second Commandment states that God was to visit the "iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him, and show mercy unto the thousands of them that love him."

The Third Commandment warns that the Lord would "not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain."

In the Fourth Commandment, the Lord "blessed the Sabbath and hallowed" it.

For the observance of the Fifth Commandment, "thy days would be long upon the land that thy God giveth thee."

In this Commandment there is no stipulation of reward for its observance, or punishment for its violation. What is one to assume from this difference? Is it that the Commandments dealing with our supposed relation to God, as biblically recorded, are more important than the ones dealing with man's relationship to man? Is one half of the Decalogue more binding than the other half?

Consistency is one of the prime requisites of any code of living. Any inconsistency, particularly in a moral code, invalidates whatever value it might otherwise have. The Ten Commandments are no exception to this rule. To exempt the Decalogue would be to take from it the claim of infallibility.

If no reward is offered for the observance of this Commandment

and no punishment is to be inflicted for its violation, why was it made one of the Commandments? Why was it prescribed, and what is its meaning? Was it intended to be a moral precept or a taboo? Has it any ethical or moral value for our own time? Can it be observed? Or was this injunction not to kill based on a belief in animism and the fear of blood contamination, as we discovered the previous Commandments to be based on animism and sympathetic magic?

It is universally maintained that there is nothing more valuable than life. The law of self-preservation prevails not only among the so-called civilized races, but also among the primitive. The highest authorities tell us "no known tribe, however low and ferocious, has ever admitted that men may kill one another indiscriminately."¹ The same condition exists even in the animal world and, from the most careful observation, among all the lower forms of life. To make a person pay the supreme penalty for any wrongdoing is to deprive him of his life. To kill is to commit an irreparable deed. Since this rule is universal, why was it necessary to repeat it in the Commandments?

As some form of killing takes place every moment of the day, does this Commandment apply to human beings only, or to all forms of life? At this very moment myriad forms of life are being killed that myriad forms of life may live. There are some instances where conditions are such as to permit only the alternative of killing or being killed. To tell us not to kill, when the fundamental law of life is self-preservation, is to force us into a conflict and contradiction; the stronger motive must inevitably prevail even though that stronger motive—the preservation of one's own life—is contrary to the explicit and unqualified edict of this Commandment. Man kills and will continue to kill those things which he feels to be a menace to his existence.

The instinct to kill cannot be eradicated by merely repeating the words of this Commandment. What kind of moral ruler of the universe was this Bible God who gave rules of life that are contrary to and in violation of the very principles upon which life itself is based? So far experience has not only made it necessary for him to kill, but

¹ Quoted by Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 1, p. 331.

has taught him, as the first law of self-preservation, that he *must* sometimes kill. At the present time, man's ignorance and fears make him kill needlessly and indiscriminately.

Therefore, "Thou shalt not kill," unless qualified, becomes a meaningless Commandment and an indefinite precept. Because it is subject to many interpretations, it cannot help but prove of little or no value. What one word suggests to one person may have an altogether different meaning to another. "Thou shalt not kill" may mean to one that he should not kill a human being; to another it may mean that he should not kill an animal for food. Some people advocate the killing of a few to save the lives of many.

If lightning, tornadoes, floods, hurricanes and other death-dealing manifestations of nature are "acts of God," as they have been legally classified, then the Bible God himself is guilty of taking the lives of hundreds of millions of defenseless men, women and children, as well as other forms of life.

Vegetarians are constantly quoting this Commandment and substantiating it with the words of Isaiah: "He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man." ²

"Thou shalt not kill" may mean to one child that he should not kill anything that lives; to another it would seem ridiculous not to use his rifle to kill rabbits and birds. Many a churchgoer who has repeated this Commandment over and over again engages in the sport of killing wild animals. Apparently he does not consider that wild animals come within the scope of this Commandment. In fact, the killing of wild animals is regarded by many as a great sport. Little do they realize the pain and suffering that follow such indiscriminate and thoughtless killing.

According to the Christians, if Jesus had not been killed, they would have been deprived of salvation. In other words, through the violation of this Commandment they claim the human race was saved. We are told that Jesus said:

² *Isaiah, Chapter 10, verse 3.*

"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." ³

I cite the above not as an event that actually took place, or which has any significance or value, but to show how utterly impossible it is to make so all-embracing a command as this one without qualifications as to its meaning, because Jesus also said:

"Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?" ⁴

To tell us not to kill, without defining the meaning of the word "kill," is to tell us to do something impossible of performance. Not only cannot man survive unless he kills, but no form of life can exist without killing. We must kill to live, and in turn we are killed that something else may live. Death is just as much the law of life as is living; nothing dies of itself. To be killed is to pay the penalty for living. How true are these words of Henri Fabre:

"At the banquet of life each in turn is a guest and a dish."

If the purpose of this Commandment is to prevent killing, has it had any influence? Or does the instinct of self-preservation nullify this edict? ⁵

IS KILLING EVER JUSTIFIED?

A peremptory Commandment of "Thou shalt" or "Thou shalt not" is impossible of fulfillment. Each and every act must be subject to

³ *Matthew, Chapter 16, verse 21; Chapter 26, verse 28; also, Mark, Chapter 8, verse 31; Chapter 9, verse 31.*

⁴ *John, Chapter 7, verse 19.*

⁵ The question was asked in a newspaper editorial some time ago whether a man who had killed another could be President of the United States. "Can a hangman ever be President?" was the question. The amazing answer is that not only can a man who has killed a human being be President, but one actually was. The killing was not done in self-defense, but merely because he was paid to do it! It seems that in 1872, when Grover Cleveland was sheriff of Buffalo, New York, two men were sentenced to death for murder, and rather than delegate the task of execution to someone else, he sprang the trap that killed the men.—*New York Evening Journal*, Apr. 19, 1931.

the conditions surrounding it. What may be applicable in one case would not apply in another. To follow indiscriminately a certain dogmatic and inflexible precept would not only prove futile, but might result in serious consequences, which would be worse than the condition sought to be prevented. This was demonstrated by the Iconoclasts who wrought havoc by blindly following the provisions of the Second Commandment, and the Sabbatarians who adhered literally to the provisions of the Fourth Commandment.

A Commandment that read "Thou shalt be good always" could not be applicable to all people at all times. To show the same degree of goodness or kindness to one who has befriended you as to one who has injured you would be to insult your benefactor by failing to differentiate between a friend and an enemy.

Even a Commandment that read "Thou shalt smile always" could not be observed under all circumstances. Suppose you entered a house where the loss of a dear one was being mourned. Would you greet the members of the household with a smile? If you did, would it not be natural for them to assume that you were callous and indifferent to their suffering? Would not your smile be taken as an insult by those who had been visited by misfortune or death?

Understanding of a situation must always govern our actions. Any moral code that fails to take into account the variations of human conduct and provide for contingencies cannot help but prove to be a faulty system. A proper moral code must make provision for time and place and circumstance. The preacher of *Ecclesiastes* (*Chapter 3, verses 1 to 4*) knew this when he said:

1 To every *thing there is* a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

2 A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up *that which is* planted;

3 A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.

Does this Commandment distinguish between killing that is deliberate and killing that has some basis of justification? Is the man who kills in self-defense just as guilty as the one who kills in cold blood? What of the person who is provoked to kill? Is he to be held to the same accountability as the deliberate murderer? Is a justifiable, excusable or accidental killing to be put in the same category as deliberate murder? In nearly all societies, killing in self-defense is considered justifiable homicide; in primitive societies, killing for food and in defense of property was also so considered.

In *Exodus, Chapter 21, verses 20 and 21*, we read:

20 And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be surely punished.

21 Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: for he *is* his money.

In other words, if a slave is severely beaten so that he lives but two days, yet dies on the third day from the injuries received, the master and the owner shall not be held for his death!

How can this Commandment be considered all-conclusive regarding the taking of life, when there still rings in our ears the bloodthirsty and murderous injunction, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live"?

Man's own efforts in the field of law show a far greater understanding of his nature than this Commandment, even when it is considered in its broadest possible aspect. In law there are different degrees of homicide. Killing in self-defense is considered justifiable. Killing under certain provocations is not so severely condemned as when other motives are involved. For instance, killing an intruder or thief is held justifiable homicide.

A woman is held justified if she has killed a man who attempted to ravish her. Even today it is difficult to convict a man of murder who kills another caught in an adulterous act with his wife. Among the Moslems, the man who does not kill the adulterer is shunned by society as being unworthy of friends and a disgrace to his family.⁹

⁹ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 1, pp. 290-291.

Among the Wakamba, "a thief entering a village at night can be killed." In Uganda there is no penalty for killing a thief who enters an enclosure at night.⁷ An ancient Norwegian law permitted the slaying of a thief caught in the act, and according to a Javanese law, if a thief is caught in the act, it is lawful to put him to death.

For years there has been agitation by enlightened people for recognition of the fact that there are times when killing becomes an act of mercy. Humanitarians have been pleading for years that children born with irremediable mental and physical defects should be permitted to pass out of life in the quickest and least painful way. They hold that it is cruel and unjust to permit such children to live in this world of terrific strife, where all the faculties are necessary in order to meet the exigencies of life. These pitiful creatures become a burden not only to themselves but to others. Life for them is a perpetual tragedy.

Some years ago the most virulent abuse and vituperation were heaped on the head of a famous Chicago physician, Dr. H. D. Haiselden, for pleading for the right to chloroform the miserably misshapen and distorted body of a child that he had delivered.⁸ The child was doomed to imbecility, blind in one eye, crippled in limb, the helpless prey of physical and mental distortion; yet, this humanitarian doctor was hounded to death by clergymen who insisted that the child "had come directly from the hand of God," and that since God sent the child here in that condition, it should be permitted to live and *suffer* as God intended that it should!⁹ If a child comes "directly from the hand of God," should it not be sent here free from the defects that would make its life a burden to itself and others? And what kind of sadistic God is it that would so frightfully afflict a human being?

Despite the fact that the law does not differentiate between a "merciful" killing and a deliberate murder, those who commit the

⁷ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 1, pp. 288-289.

⁸ *New York Times*, Nov. 16, 17, 1917.

⁹ The subject of "mercy killing" is gaining in interest and importance year after year. In fact, there is already in existence in almost every civilized country a Euthanasia Society, whose purpose it is to advocate the merciful killing of the incurably helpless, the deformed and other hopeless "misfits of life."

former are rarely convicted when brought to trial. A grand jury, some time ago, refused even to indict a father for killing his two-year-old son who had been born with an inflamed brain and who was doomed to a life of imbecility and agonizing suffering.¹⁰

A jury brought in a verdict of not guilty against a son for killing his mother who was suffering indescribable agony from an incurable cancer. She had pleaded with him time and again to relieve her of her misery. Unable to endure his mother's hopeless condition, he acceded to her entreaties and ended her life. Despite the judge's opinion that "it was for God to consider when your mother should have died," the jury thought the son justified and acquitted him.¹¹

After killing her hopelessly invalid son, whom she had nursed for over thirty years, a mother wrote this note before she committed suicide: "This is done in the name of mercy. Every night my son got on his knees and begged me not to leave him alone. He was so terrified that it was horrible. I, his mother, could not permit this. The law should relieve such helpless sufferers. The burden should not be upon me."¹²

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, noted poet, lecturer and writer, and one of the greatest women of her time, preferred to take her own life rather than to endure the sufferings and miseries of cancer. She said that "justifiable suicide" was the simplest of human rights. In the note which she left, she said: "Human life consists in mutual service. No grief, pain, misfortune or 'broken heart' is excuse for cutting off one's life while any power of service remains. But when all usefulness is over, when one is assured of an unavoidable and imminent death, it is the simplest of human rights to choose a quick and easy death in place of a slow and horrible one. Public opinion is changing on this subject. The time is approaching when we shall consider it abhorrent to our civilization to allow a human being to lie in prolonged agony which we should mercifully end in any other creature. Believing this

¹⁰ *New York Times*, Jan. 16, 1932.

¹¹ *New York World-Telegram*, Nov. 4, 1929.

¹² *New York Times*, Aug. 8, 1940.

choice to be of social service in promoting wiser views on this question, I have preferred chloroform to cancer.”¹³

Even the district attorney had to admit that it was a “sad case” when the facts were presented to him concerning the killing of an imbecile son by a distracted father. After his “act of mercy” had been discovered and a physician tried to revive the boy, the father cried: “I hope you don’t revive him. He is better off dead.” When the full story was told of the dread with which both the mother and father feared a violent outbreak by their imbecilic son, the jury promptly acquitted him.¹⁴

These are but a few of the hundreds of such cases that take place year after year.

Are these acts in violation of this Commandment? Or should they be placed in the category of justifiable killing? Is it not obvious from the meager facts already related here that this Commandment could not possibly be applied unequivocally as a prohibition of killing in the strictest sense of the word?

RELIGIOUS DELUSION AND HOMICIDAL MANIA

How are those people who are victims of religious homicidal mania to be considered? Killing is no less killing when done as “God’s will.” Those who kill under the influence of religious delusion, “in the name of God,” have not even the excuse of extenuating circumstances. Their only explanation is that they have Biblical sanction to support their murderous deeds.

Countless children have been murdered under the delusion of performing a human sacrifice as an appeasement of the Bible God. In Spandau, Germany, a father cut the throat of his son. When he surrendered, he said: “I am Abraham. My mission is fulfilled. I have sacrificed my son.”¹⁵

¹³ *New York Times*, Aug. 20, 1935.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Jan. 13, 1939.

¹⁵ *London Freethinker*, Jan. 18, 1931.

After hearing "voices" and seeing "visions of heaven," Clair Young brutally killed his nineteen-month-old baby girl. When he was apprehended, he cried: "I had to do it to save my soul. I'm a very religious man. In the eyes of the Lord, I was to sacrifice something in order to go to heaven."¹⁶

"As a test of his faith and acting under divine command," Antonio Lopez Malo of Madrid, Spain, brutally stabbed his twenty-two-month-old daughter to death with a kitchen knife "after the fashion of Abraham." When the monstrous deed had been committed, the family gathered around the dead child for prayer.¹⁷

Acting as a "messenger of God," thirty-two-year-old Oskar Hestness strangled his only two children, boys ten and four years of age. His only excuse was that he had had a "vision of God" ordering him to "choke the devil out of the boys." Hestness said his wife knew what he was doing, "but she knew that it had to be done because God had told me to."¹⁸

Responding to what she said was a "command of God," Mrs. Herbert Kennedy drowned her eight-year-old daughter. "God told me to do it," she said.¹⁹

Crazed by religion, Walter Bingham of West Chester, Pennsylvania, murdered his two children of eleven and three years old under the delusion that "God sent a command in a spirit that told me to do it. Why shouldn't I obey the commands of God?" was his only excuse.²⁰

A farmer, whose mind physicians said was affected by intense religious fervor, killed his wife, their two children, a boarder and himself in their home near Blue Mountain, Mississippi.²¹

Age is no respecter of religious fanaticism. There has just come to public attention the brutal strangling to death of a mother of

¹⁶ *New York Daily Mirror*, June 22, 1939.

¹⁷ *New York Times*, Aug. 5, 1926.

¹⁸ *New York World-Telegram*, Jan. 23, 1934.

¹⁹ *New York American*, Feb. 15, 1933.

²⁰ *New York Times*, May 7, 1931.

²¹ *New York Herald Tribune*, Apr. 17, 1931.

eighty-seven years by her religiously deluded daughter of sixty-four years. When apprehended she said: "I just killed mother because she was possessed of the devil and the Lord told me to kill her." ²²

An eighty-year-old religionist, living near Johannesburg, South Africa, killed his son in the belief that by so doing he would bring rain to his parched community. Accordingly he cut the throat of his son, put the blood into cattle horns and dissected the body for "rain medicine." When apprehended, this religious fanatic said: "I loved my son, but believed that if I sacrificed him I would bring plenty of rain and food for my people, and we would not need to work again." ^{22a}

A few years ago the country was shocked by the brutal murder of a ten-year-old girl in White Plains, New York. A sixty-year-old man, known to be deeply religious, was arrested for the murder. He confessed that he had been commanded by God to sacrifice a virgin so that she could not live to become a harlot. He successfully carried out the mission entrusted to him for which he said he had received the approval of Christ. He was electrocuted at Sing Sing prison for the murder of this child. ²³

Wilfred Pichette, a religious fanatic who bought "the power of Christ" from a gypsy band, confessed with his wife to killing their nineteen-year-old maid. Pichette said that "divine power" drove him to hammer Marion Doyle to death with a flatiron. "I was going to drive the evil spirits out of the house," he gave as his reason for committing the murder. ²⁴

A twelve-year-old girl, the daughter of Christian Scientists, died after an eight weeks' illness during which the parents refused to call a physician. ²⁵

The parents of another child, Hilda Freer, allowed her to die rather than permit the use of diphtheria antitoxin. They "trusted in prayer

²² *New York Times*, Mar. 18, 1944.

^{22a} *New York Times*, May 27, 1944.

²³ *Truth Seeker*, June, 1935.

²⁴ *New York World-Telegram*, Oct. 24, 1938.

²⁵ *New York World*, Jan. 21, 1930.

to save her," the doctor who was called in testified.²⁶ The father was arrested and held for trial on a charge of manslaughter.

Newspapers and the courts, as well as our insane asylums, are continually crowded with cases similar to the ones mentioned above. These crimes have occurred throughout the ages and continue without abatement. It would require volumes to detail them.²⁷ Should not the book which inspired these people to commit these insane religious murders be condemned as an accessory? Should a book exercising such a vicious influence be held without blame? In face of these facts, the conclusion is inevitable that religions based on the Bible as a divine message from God have provoked far more killings and murders than they have prevented.

IRRESPONSIBLE AND ACCIDENTAL KILLING

Should a person who has no comprehension of morality be condemned for his actions? Only by the most painstaking effort can a normal child be taught to differentiate between right and wrong conduct. Since that is so, is it not utterly impossible to inculcate a moral sense in the insane, the idiot, or those of retarded mentality? This is a fact recognized even in primitive society.

The North American Potawatomis regard those whom they call "foolish" as not having an understanding of crime. The Iroquois believe that a person who is not in his right senses is not to be reprehended, or at least not to be punished. Among the West African Fjort, fools and idiots are not personally responsible for their actions. Crimes committed by lunatics in the Wadshagge tribe are judged more leniently than others.²⁸

What about those who are insane—those who are unable not only to control their actions, but are absolutely ignorant and unconscious of what they are doing?

²⁶ *New York American*, Nov. 9, 1931.

²⁷ Ellis, *The Criminal*, pp. 187-189.

²⁸ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 1, pp. 271, 273.

What about children? Does this Commandment demand of them the same discretion and ability to control their acts as is demanded of adults? Must the punishment meted out to them be of the same severity as administered to their elders?

One of the blackest pages in the history of man deals with the execution of children five and six years of age for misdeeds. Even today, under the law, a child of seven can be held accountable for his acts. In England, as late as 1748, a boy of ten was convicted of first-degree murder, and the judges before whom he was tried demanded execution of the sentence.²⁹

It was Seneca who said: "Why do we bear with the delirium of a sick man, or the ravings of a madman, or the impudent blows of a child? Because, of course, they evidently do not know what they are doing. . . . Would anyone think himself in his right mind if he were to return kicks to a mule or bites to a dog?"

Under the influence of this Commandment, animals and even insects were held responsible for killing people. They were solemnly tried by "due process of law" before legal tribunals, with religious approval. Judgment of guilt was solemnly pronounced, and sentence carried out with all the ceremonies attendant upon an official killing!³⁰

In 1457, in the town of Bourgogne, a mother pig and six little pigs were tried for murder. The mother pig was found guilty and sentenced to death by hanging. The sentence was duly executed. The six little pigs were acquitted. The sympathy of the court was with them, because they would have to bear for the rest of their lives the shame of being the offspring of a criminal mother!

In addition to all species of animals, insects and vermin that have been tried and convicted for murder, we find that stones, statues and other inanimate objects were held to strict accountability for causing death—a survival of the belief in animism.

A Greek writer recounts how a bronze statue was found guilty of murder for killing a man by falling upon him. The statue was duly

²⁹ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 1, pp. 267, 268.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

tried in court, found guilty of the murder, and cast into the sea. Another instance is recorded of a small boy who, while playing under a bronze ox, struck his head against it, cracked his skull, and died from the injury. The proper procedure was to bring the statue into court for trial; but, since it was guilty of only involuntary homicide, a ceremony of purification was carried on at the statue.

Even among the Hebrews, according to the Mosaic law, there is a provision exempting from punishment certain acts of homicide. *Deuteronomy, Chapter 19, verses 4 to 6:* ³¹

4 And this *is* the case of the slayer, which shall flee thither, that he may live: Whoso killeth his neighbour ignorantly, whom he hated not in time past,

5 As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour, that he die; he shall flee unto one of those cities, and live:

6 Lest the avenger of the blood pursue the slayer, while his heart is hot, and overtake him, because the way is long, and slay him; whereas he *was* not worthy of death, inasmuch as he hated him not in time past.

There are many instances where the killer of another is "not worthy of death, inasmuch as he hated him not" when committing the deed. If this Biblical reference makes such an exception, is it not also probable that there are many such acts that are "not worthy of death" and that might prove an exception to the peremptory words of this Commandment?

Should the accidental killing of a little girl by her brother, who shot her with a gun he did not know was loaded, be included in the provisions of this Commandment? ³²

In an attempt to kill himself, a man fired a pistol, the shot went wild, and instead he killed his mother-in-law. Was this deed worthy

³¹ See also *Deuteronomy, Chapter 35, verse 19*: "The revenger of the blood himself shall slay the murderer: when he meeteth him he shall slay him."

³² *New York American*, Feb. 21, 1931.

of death?³³ Or should it be placed in the category of accidental killing?

In Temuco, Chile, a priest, unable to overtake a thief who had just stolen a crucifix, shot and killed the man as he sought to escape.³⁴ Under what degree of guilt should the priest who committed this murder be classified? His crime is difficult to understand. He was not only trained to observe this Commandment not to kill, but he also was taught that the crucifix possessed miraculous powers. Should a Catholic priest kill a Catholic believer because he steals a crucifix? The priest should have been pleased with the theft. If the crucifix possessed the power the Church claims for it, its possession by the thief might have made him an honest man—and that should be “punishment” enough for a thief! But the truth is that the priest knew the crucifix had no such miraculous powers, and he shot the thief because he had stolen an “implement of trade,” a piece of property by which he makes profit.

Just as there are people suffering from mental and physical diseases which cause them to commit all kinds of acts, so there are men and women who are victims of homicidal mania who cannot control their impulse to kill. These people are impelled to commit their crimes by forces utterly beyond their control and often feel the greatest remorse after the deed has been perpetrated. Such people and their crimes are constantly coming to public notice. How are these people's acts to be judged in relation to this Commandment?

One such criminal boasted that he had killed nine people beginning with a girl only ten years of age.³⁵ The only defense of a barman charged with having thrown a girl before an onrushing train was that “a sudden impulse came over me and I wanted to push someone under the train.”³⁶

A bride of one week was stabbed to death and decapitated by her

³³ *New York Times*, July 18, 1932.

³⁴ *New York American*, Apr. 17, 1933.

³⁵ *New York World-Telegram*, Apr. 14, 1931.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Feb. 17, 1939.

husband, who confessed that an overpowering "urge to kill" came over him as he saw his young wife lying in bed.³⁷

From Rome came the report that a priest connected with the Catholic Institute of Pius IX confessed that he had murdered a thirteen-year-old student as he lay in bed "in a moment of unconsciousness."³⁸

Henry Hagert, age eighteen, killed Charles and James Collins, twins, "just for the heck of it."³⁹

Louis R. Payne could only give an irresistible impulse as his explanation for killing his mother and brother. He said he was unable to restrain his actions.⁴⁰

James McCullough, giving vent to what he described as an "uncontrollable desire to kill somebody," murdered his fellow worker. He could offer no other excuse for his deed.⁴¹

In an address before the Michigan Medical Society, Dr. Foster Kennedy, of Cornell University, one of the most noted neurologists of our time, stated that the impulse to kill was a natural instinct. He said: "The sudden impulse to slay is more often felt by ordinary persons than they confess to anyone but their doctor. Only sanity and reason keep most of us from obeying that impulse."⁴²

Killing as an atavistic impulse deserves far more consideration than has been given to it. It may reveal the cause of murder when other "motives" cannot be discovered.

How are these wholly irresponsible acts to be judged in relation to this commandment?

³⁷ *New York Times*, Nov. 5, 1939.

³⁸ *New York World-Telegram*, Mar. 21, 1932.

³⁹ *New York Times*, Aug. 14, 1943.

⁴⁰ *New York Times*, June 5, 1934.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Mar. 27, 1937.

⁴² *New York Journal-American*, Oct. 1, 1937.

THE FREQUENCY OF MURDER AND THE PREVALENCE
OF SUICIDE

One would imagine murder to be the most irregular and variable of offenses. Yet we can determine the number of murders that will occur within a given year with almost the same accuracy as the trivial matter of the number of letters that will be misdirected. Statistics show that approximately the same number of murders as were committed last year will be repeated this year—unless, of course, some great fundamental change takes place in our social and economic life. Acts committed this very day will be responsible for murders committed “tomorrow.” To prevent murder, therefore, it is necessary to do something more constructive than merely repeating a meaningless precept about not killing. The important thing is to remove the *causes* that provoke people to kill, whether they are due to environmental conditions, conflict in love matters, or the pressure of economics.

This Commandment has not had the slightest effect in diminishing the number of murders. Despite the death penalty, murders continue to be perpetrated with unflinching regularity. In other words, the reasons which impel one person to kill another are stronger than the forces that are working to restrain him. Once he is bent on murder and emotionally immune to reason, the threat of death, much less this Commandment, is not strong enough to overcome the obsession to kill.

Dr. Walter A. Lunden, criminology professor at the University of Pittsburgh, made an extensive research into 2,500 murders. He found that not only were murders committed with amazing regularity year after year, but especially on certain days and at certain times of the year. He discovered that murders were committed more frequently on Saturdays than on other days of the week, and that on the Fourth of July and Labor Day, and during the Christmas season, when there are family gatherings, a larger number of emotional killings occurred. Motives ranged from triangle slayings to arguments over the Ten Commandments! ⁴³

⁴³ *New York Sun*, Aug. 20, 1941.

If, when a person was about to kill, his hand became temporarily paralyzed so as to stay his act, then this Commandment would be valuable as a warning signal. But the fact is that most people are easily provoked to anger, and the urge to kill—a vestigial primitive instinct—when it becomes an all-consuming passion, completely dominates the mind to the exclusion of all other thoughts.

The Rev. Henry Sloane Coffin, in discussing this Commandment, says that it is “almost an element of humor” to preach against murder to members of “the present congregation.”⁴⁴ He made the statement in the belief that this Commandment prohibits murder, and that members of a modern congregation are incapable of committing homicide. However, if a member of the Rev. Mr. Coffin’s congregation were to find himself in circumstances provocative of murder, he would, like others, be prompted by the strongest impulses within him. He would kill under the stimulation of patriotism, blighted love, revenge or self-defense, just like any other person.

What better illustration of this truth than the incident which occurred when Judge Ben Lindsey was in the Cathedral of St. John, during Bishop Manning’s sermon, which was an attack on him. When Judge Lindsey arose to defend himself against the unjustifiable charges, the congregation almost in unison cried, “Kill him! Kill him!”⁴⁵ How easily the members of the church were aroused to kill by the mere provocation of having the remarks of their pastor challenged by one against whom his denunciation was directed! The occasion would not have been so humorous, Reverend Mr. Coffin, if the police had not rescued Judge Lindsey from the murderous passion of this congregation.

Not only are murders committed by members of congregations, but by clergymen themselves.

The Rev. Walter Dworecki, pastor of the Camden Polish Baptist Church, promised \$100 to a youth to entice and murder his own eighteen-year-old daughter, solely for the purpose of collecting the

⁴⁴ Coffin, *The Ten Commandments*, p. 113.

⁴⁵ *New York Times*, Dec. 8, 1930.

insurance which he had placed on her life.⁴⁶ If the Rev. Mr. Coffin says that it is almost an element of humor to preach against murder to members of his congregation, how does he account for this minister, who pretended that the words of this Commandment were a divine message, and yet was able, callously and brutally, to cause his own daughter's murder for a mercenary return? The State of New Jersey made this heartless clergyman pay with his life for this foul deed.

Another minister killed a colleague because he was jealous of his success at a revival meeting.⁴⁷ The Rev. J. Frank Norris, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Texas, killed a man who had come to his study in the church as an emissary of good will. There were no extenuating circumstances except religious hate. Mr. Norris was considered one of the most outspoken protagonists of the Bible, preaching that it is the exact word of God.⁴⁸ How, then, did he justify his act?

And yet there are some people who would rather die than kill another. Randolph Godfrey Phillips, in refusing to bear arms, said that he would "rather die than kill a man. . . ." ⁴⁹

Is the person who takes his own life guilty of violating this Commandment? What we find prevalent as the basic law concerning murder is equally true in relation to suicide. Suicides take place year after year with almost unchanging regularity and among all ages and classes. The youngest will generally be about five years old, and the oldest approaching the century mark. There will be bankers, brokers, clergymen, stock clerks, etc. The motives which prompted these suicides were the same as those which caused others before them to take their own lives.

The Catholic Church considers self-destruction a mortal sin because of this Commandment, and yet faithful Catholic priests, as well

⁴⁶ *New York Times*, Aug. 28, 1939.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Apr. 6, 1931.

⁴⁸ A veritable encyclopedia could be compiled of the crimes committed by ministers of religion. The reader is referred, for a small collection, to *Crimes of Preachers*, by Franklin Steiner.

⁴⁹ *New York Times*, Mar. 19, 1943.

as devout laymen, have committed suicide when faced with intolerable situations.

Not until man is made with a mentality strong enough to withstand all the rebuffs of life, and is capable of meeting the varying situations which are bound to occur in our social order, will he be able to refrain from self-destruction in the face of overpowering circumstances which make death preferable to life.

MOSES KILLS A MAN

More important sometimes than the precepts of a moral code is the example set by the one who promulgates them. If the originator of the code does not follow his own precepts, he not only invalidates their worth, but very often diminishes greatly the possibility of its benefiting others.

Certainly, if anyone should have known how these Commandments were to be observed, it was the one who was selected to deliver them to the children of men. Perhaps in the study of the character of Moses, "the great lawgiver," we may find the true meaning of the words and the proper action to be followed in the fulfillment of this Commandment.

That this Commandment was not a prohibition against killing or murder, is proved by the Bible itself, because the man whom the Bible selected to deliver the Tablets of Stone (containing the Ten Commandments) to the Children of Israel was himself a *murderer!* He killed not in self-defense, not under the emotional stress caused by suffering a great personal wrong, but deliberately and with calculation.

After Moses had been saved by the daughter of Pharaoh, she nurtured him as her own child. We find him now fully grown in the land of Pharaoh and we begin the Biblical narrative with the very *first* act of Moses after he became a grown man, "full forty years old."⁵⁰

⁵⁰ *Exodus, Chapter 2, verse 11.*

11 And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren.

How Moses knew that the Hebrew was "one of his brethren," the Bible does not tell us. But what did Moses do when he spied an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew? Did this divinely protected and favored child seek to separate them? Did he tell them that it was wrong to fight? Did he tell them that the stronger should protect the weaker? Did he tell them that it was more manly to try to settle their disputes by reason and not resort to brute force? Did he offer to arbitrate their differences and render a decision fair to both? The Bible tells us that he did none of these things. It does say, however, in *Exodus, Chapter 2, verse 12*:

12 And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that *there was* no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.

Without even making an effort to determine whether the Egyptian was justified in smiting the Hebrew, Moses "looked this way and that way, and when he saw that *there was* no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand."

For deliberate, unmitigated murder this act of Moses is difficult to parallel. First he made sure that no one saw him; secondly, he summarily killed the man, and, thirdly, to cover the evidence of his deed, he buried him in the sand so as to avoid detection and punishment. All this only because he saw this man striking a fellow Hebrew. There was no other provocation. Even according to the laws that Moses himself promulgated, he should have been judged guilty and punished.⁵¹

What an example from the man whom God selected to give to the people a Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill"! Moses remained in

⁵¹ *Exodus, Chapter 21, verse 14*: "But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbor, to slay him with guile, thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die." *Leviticus, Chapter 24, verse 17*: "And he that killeth any man shall surely be put to death."

hiding for two days, evidently with the hope that by so doing all suspicion of his crime would be dispelled. I quote *Exodus, Chapter 2, verse 13*:

13 And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?

The question of Moses indicates that he sought to interfere in the quarrel: "Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?" he asked. Judging from his answer, it becomes doubly evident that Moses had absolutely no justification for the murder he perpetrated. I quote *Exodus, Chapter 2, verse 14*:

14 And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known.

Even his fellow Hebrew condemned his act against the Egyptian, and as he had seen him deliberately kill one man without justifiable cause, he not unreasonably feared for his own life. "Intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian?" he asked.

Faced with the knowledge that his crime was known, Moses feared the consequences. He became frightened and did what murderers almost invariably do: he fled from the scene in the hope of escaping. The narrative continues in *Exodus, Chapter 2, verse 15*:

15 Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.

Pharaoh intended to make Moses pay with his life for the murder of the Egyptian. Certainly Pharaoh had more justification than Moses. The latter had killed a man merely because he was *striking* another; Pharaoh intended to execute Moses for killing another man. But Moses fled into another land out of the jurisdiction of Pharaoh, and "sat down by a well," evidently contemplating his deed and

meditating upon his act. He was not apprehended, nor was he punished for this murder.

In view of these facts, we must again ask, What is meant by the words, "Thou shalt not kill"? If this Commandment is an injunction against killing human beings, why was one who had violated it been selected to impart it to the people of the earth?

THE CLERGY, THIS COMMANDMENT, AND WAR

Has this Commandment had any effect in reducing human slaughter? Have the men who proclaimed this Commandment as a divine precept been instrumental in preventing wars?

Dean Farrar says that "the primary aim of this Commandment is to inculcate reverence for human life."⁵² Yet he immediately follows this statement with "though this Commandment is God's eternal interdict against unjust and ambitious wars, it is a falsehood in the extreme to say that it brands with criminality a war of justice or necessary self-defense." It is regrettable that the inspired Dean did not explain the difference between "unjust and ambitious" wars and those of "justice and self-defense." He continues, "nor need I enter into the plain right of society to inflict capital punishment." If the primary aim of this Commandment is to inculcate reverence for human life, by what method of reasoning did Dean Farrar come to his conclusions?

The Rev. G. Campbell Morgan agrees with Dean Farrar concerning wars of "justice and self-defense," and from him we get a glimpse of the strangely "inspired" reasoning of a religiously warped mind.⁵³ The reverend gentleman says: "The only justifiable wars in human history have been those undertaken immediately and directly in obedience to a definitely express Divine Command . . . in such cases God chose to make man, instead of plagues or famine, the agent of his judgment." With this explanation, every instigator of war can justify his slaughter. Why should God send plagues and famine or provoke

⁵² *The Voice from Sinai*, p. 198.

⁵³ *The Ten Commandments*, p. 69.

wars to kill people when he so definitely tells us that we should not kill? If there are too many people in the world, why does not God—since he is presumed to be all-knowing and all-powerful—regulate the production of life so as to prevent overpopulation?

But let us continue with the reverend gentleman's remarks. To cap the climax, he says: "The history of the ancient people proves that when wars were undertaken only under these conditions the loss of life was almost entirely upon the side of those against whom God sent his hosts. When, as is often the case, God's people entered the war upon their own initiative, they were routed with slaughter." The reverend gentleman distinguishes between righteous and unrighteous wars merely by learning which ones were victorious and which ones were failures! However, historical facts show that the victor generally suffers as much as the conquered. And, finally, the Rev. Mr. Morgan makes the most amazing of all amazing statements: "The whole history of the Hebrew people proves the Sixth Commandment was of abiding importance."

Similar quotations from the books of clergymen could be continued *ad infinitum*. David Lloyd George, England's colorful Prime Minister during the first World War, said: "The last war was made by monarchs, statesmen, warriors, who were all Christians, every one of them. It was not the pagan, the atheist, the infidel. It was Christian ministers, kings and Christian emperors."⁵⁴

The Rev. Frederick David Niedermeyer⁵⁵ sees the "call for renewed attention to the Sixth Commandment, because our Monday newspapers nearly every week record many persons killed on the preceding day, and accidents are so frequent that they have ceased to be news." This Commandment, he says, "condemns the so-called sport of prize fighting" and at the same time "sanctions intelligent insistence upon a safe observance of the Fourth of July." He says that "capital punishment is a recognized penalty" and that "such

⁵⁴ George Whitehead, *Evolution of Morality*, p. 168.

⁵⁵ Niedermeyer, *The Ten Commandments Today*, pp. 17, 96.

punishment does not violate this ordinance . . . neither does this injunction forbid killing in self-defense." He also makes this enlightening statement: "When God said, 'Thou Shalt Not Kill,' He did not forbid the taking of animal life, so the persons who find objection against eating meat and the sports of hunting and fishing lack Scriptural foundation for their positions" because "much of animal life was divinely decreed for food."

If the reverend gentleman would be kind enough to specify the animals that were provided for human food so that we could determine which ones *not* to kill, it might help us to understand his statement and save many animals that are now ruthlessly destroyed. However, he is certain that "it gives the foundation for the work of mosquito extermination, and calls for the destruction of rats and other vermin carriers." He also believes that it is not a prohibition against killing fleas!

The Rev. Mr. Niedermeyer makes the startling statement that "to take life" is not murder, and that "neither capital punishment nor war can be wholly dispensed with till murderous assaults on the individual and on the nation come to an end." He goes so far as to condemn those who would abolish capital punishment as brutal murder, and war as wholesale slaughter, as "individuals whose minds have undergone a moral perversion."

In a further and labored elaboration, the Rev. Mr. Niedermeyer goes into minute detail regarding the liquor traffic in England, and the benefits to be derived from the "establishment of the Society of Registered Plumbers"! However, "the ultimate and dominant reason for obedience to the Sixth Commandment is that man may have the maximum opportunity for knowing Christ and serving Him."

The then Archbishop of York, during a debate on the attitude of the Church of England toward the death penalty, declared that although he favored the abolition of hanging, the penalty should be inflicted because it was the law. "For some reason, which I think idiotic, there is special sentiment against hanging women," he said.

"I wish Englishwomen would rise in protest. It is a horrible insult to them and they ought to resent it with ferocity." ⁵⁶

To advocate execution for a crime is, in my opinion, no different morally from being the actual executioner. And so we place the Archbishop of York in an even worse position than that of Grover Cleveland. It was the public duty of Cleveland to perform the act of slaying as provided by law; while the Archbishop urges such execution and even protests the exemption of women from such a penalty.

The Rev. Walter F. McMillin, of Philadelphia, said to a congregation of ministers:

"Capital punishment was instituted by God. We have found in the Bible that God instituted capital punishment, that the crime in connection with which it is to be administered is murder, and that God requires the perpetuity of the institution. Murder is to be punished by the death of the murderer, and the institution to whom is given the prerogative of capital punishment is the organized State." ⁵⁷

The advocacy of capital punishment as a means of self-preservation because the murderer might kill you as well as another person, is quite different from trying to justify it by Biblical sanction.

The Rev. J. C. Masse tells us that "this Commandment ushers us into the immediate presence of a Holy God. It reveals to discerning eyes the awfulness of that God of whom Paul wrote, 'Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men,' for 'Our God is a consuming fire.'" He tells us that "Satan, the author of sin, is declared by the Lord Jesus to be the murderer from the beginning." He maintains that this Commandment "does not prohibit capital punishment for certain crimes" and that "God explicitly requires the death penalty for men who violate the Sabbath day." Nor does this Commandment prohibit war. For "the holy nation under the immediate government of God was required to go to war." He also thinks that it is a prohibition against giving a permit to carry a pistol!

⁵⁶ *New York Times*, Feb. 9, 1933.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Aug. 25, 1929.

R. H. Charles, who does admit that the Decalogue is better understood when considered as a religious development rather than as an ethical or legal code, is so positive that this Commandment is a prohibition against the taking of human life when applied to deliberate killing only, that he has reinterpreted it to read, "Thou Shalt Do No Murder." "Hence the ultimate religious ground which justifies the sentence of death on the murderer is not the so-called sacredness of human life, but the fact that man is made in the image of God." He believes, as did the previously mentioned prelates, that those who oppose war and capital punishment "are moral perverts and degenerates; they have lost the capacity for righteous indignation."⁵⁸

The Rev. James M. Gillis, widely recognized as an authoritative Catholic spokesman, states: "There is, or at least there may be, such a thing as just warfare, the conditions of which have been laid down by Christian morals. These conditions have been recognized by Catholic theologians back to St. Augustine, 1500 years ago."

"In a just war," says the Rev. John La Farge, associate editor of the Catholic weekly, *America*, "killing is not necessarily murder." But since no nation goes to war—not even Hitler's Germany—without considering its cause a "just" one, we can see how little support for the cause of peace among nations is to be expected from the clergy.

This Commandment has not had the slightest influence in diminishing war. In Christian nations during war, Bibles are generally distributed to soldiers by the hundreds of thousands—not, however, for the purpose of stopping the war. It is done to influence God to be with them in battle, that they may kill the enemy soldiers before they are killed by them. A distinguished medal of honor is usually given to the soldier who kills the greatest number in battle. That the enemy soldiers also carry Bibles for the same purpose, and also receive medals for the number of soldiers they kill, makes doubly evident the utter uselessness of this Commandment as a preventive of war.

As late as the sixteenth century it is said that children were bap-

⁵⁸ Charles, *The Decalogue*, pp. 195-196.

tized by immersion; but the right arms of the males were carefully held above water in order that, not having been dipped in the sacred stream, they might strike a more deadly blow.⁵⁹ How far removed are we from such a state when a priest in our own day blesses the pistol of an assassin that its bullet may be successful in finding its mark! The Rev. Aurelio Jimenez Palcios was held for trial in connection with the Obregon assassination in Mexico in 1928. It was charged that he heard a confession from the assassin, José de Leon Toral, and blessed Toral's pistol before that youth killed President-elect Alvaro Obregon.⁶⁰

In order that religion might carry on its holy wars in its mad determination to exterminate the heretic and unbeliever, penance was prescribed for those who had shed blood on the battlefield.⁶¹ Since religious believers were convinced that God sanctioned war, could there be a holier one than for the salvation of lost souls? Fighting against infidels and heretics took rank with fasting, penitential discipline, visits to shrines, and almsgiving.⁶² Nor must we forget the command of the Abbot Arnold in his mad, religious zeal to wipe out the heretics: "Slay all; the Lord will know his own."

War was looked upon as a judgment of God, and victory as a sign of his special favor. Pope Adrian IV says that a war commenced under the auspices of religion cannot but be fortunate.⁶³

Jeremy Taylor said: "Kings are in the place of God, who strikes whole nations, and towns and villages; and war is the rod of God in the hands of princes." How simple it is to justify a war when the divine right of kings is believed "to work out the noble purposes of God." We are further assured that there is nothing among men "like the smell of gunpowder for making a nation perceive the fragrance of divinity in truth."⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Lecky, *Morals*, Vol. 2, p. 106.

⁶⁰ *New York Times*, Sept. 20, 1932.

⁶¹ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 1, p. 348.

⁶² *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 351.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 358.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 360.

War, "when God sends it," says a Christian authority, "is a means of grace and of national renovation"; it is "a solemn duty in which usually only the best Christians and most trustworthy men should be commissioned to hold the sword."⁶⁵

According to Proudhon, "it [war] is the most sublime phenomenon of our moral life, a divine revelation more divine than the Gospel itself"! And the warlike people are the religious people.⁶⁶

That this attitude has not changed in the slightest is evidenced by the statement of the late Arthur Cardinal Hinsley, Archbishop of Westminster. He said: "There are persons who tell us that all war is unjust and utterly opposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and that the Church forbids us to take part in warfare of any kind. This is a false conclusion."⁶⁷

The Rev. Dr. John H. McComb, of the Presbyterian Church in New York, is even more emphatic in his justification of war. He said: "Pacifism has not a leg to stand on in the light of the Scripture. God permitted Israel to defend herself time and again against her enemies, and aided her to do so successfully. If the Jews had not taken up arms again and again in self-defense, they would have been destroyed by their enemies."⁶⁸

Of all his monumental contributions to the history of human conduct in society, none is more valuable than Lecky's summation of the wars provoked by religion:

"In looking back, with our present experience, we are driven to the melancholy conclusion that, instead of diminishing the number of wars, ecclesiastical influence has actually and very seriously increased it. The military fanaticism evolved by the indulgences of the popes, by exhortations of the pulpit, by the religious importance attached to the relics of Jerusalem, and by the prevailing hatred of the misbelievers, has scarcely ever been equalled in its intensity, and it has caused the effusions of oceans of blood, and

⁶⁵ For a more detailed record of the approval of war by the clergy, see Ray H. Abrams, *Preachers Present Arms*; also G. Bedborough, *Arms and the Clergy*.

⁶⁶ Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 360.

⁶⁷ *New York Times*, Sept. 1, 1941.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Dec. 15, 1941.

has been productive of incalculable misery in the world. The religious orders which arose united the character of the priest with that of the warrior, and when, at the hour of sunset, the soldier knelt down to pray before his cross, that cross was the handle of his sword.”⁶⁹

Not only has this Commandment had absolutely no influence in diminishing wars, but no greater wars have been waged than those instituted by religion itself in defense of the faith and for the glory of God. With what hypocritical pretense do clergymen utter this Commandment!

BLOOD TABOO

This Commandment is no more a prohibition against murder than the previous Commandment was meant to inculcate filial respect, or the Fourth Commandment was meant to provide for a day of rest. It is an ancient taboo that has been carried down through the centuries by a people who have maintained their primitive culture, fears and superstitions. Like the five previous Commandments, it was formulated exclusively for the Hebrews, and was a taboo based on the superstitious belief in animism against spilling blood because of the fear of blood pollution. The confusion concerning its meaning today is due to the fact that it has been restated in language with a modern connotation, either designedly or through ignorance, which gives it an altogether different meaning from what the Commandment originally intended to prohibit.

This Commandment was based upon the ancient belief that blood was life and that the spirit of the slain would return and seek revenge. This belief prevailed among the Hebrews from the earliest times and was also prevalent among the other Semitic and primitive races. Beyond that it had no significance whatsoever, and was never intended to have any. *It was devoid of any moral implication.* No better proof could be adduced of the underlying motive of this Command-

⁶⁹ Lecky, *Morals*, Vol. 2, pp. 106-107.

ment than the following from the Bible itself—*Numbers, Chapter 35, verses 33 and 34*:

33 So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye *are*: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it.

34 Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the Lord dwell among the children of Israel.

Extremely significant as proof of the belief in blood pollution is the statement in the above verse that “the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it.” This is the basis of blood atonement and was responsible for this Commandment being made part of the Decalogue of a superstitious and primitive people. The necessity for expiation or atonement is indicative of its ancient origin.

We also find this primitive belief in animism expressed in *Genesis, Chapter 4, verses 8 to 13*:

8 And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

9 And the Lord said unto Cain, Where *is* Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: *Am* I my brother's keeper?

10 And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

11 And now *art* thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand.

12 When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

13 And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment *is* greater than I can bear.

“. . . The voice of thy brother's *blood* crieth unto me from the ground.” And this blood will pollute the earth and prevent it from yielding fruit. *Verses 14 and 15*, following, also state that Cain is

to be haunted throughout his life by the spirit of the one whose blood has been shed.⁷⁰

14 Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, *that* every one that findeth me shall slay me.

15 And the Lord said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

So deeply ingrained was the superstition that the spirit of life was in the blood that there is a specific warning to the Children of Israel against "eating" blood in *Deuteronomy, Chapter 12, verse 23*:

23 Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood *is* the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh.

There is a similar provision emphasizing the taboo against eating blood in *Genesis, Chapter 9, verse 4*:

4 But flesh with the life thereof, *which is* the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.

This is the reason why orthodox Jews even today will eat only "kosher"⁷¹ meat. To be "kosher," the animal or fowl must be killed and prepared for cooking in such a way that no blood remains in its body. All meat must be soaked in water for at least half an hour, salted and kept on a board for another half hour, so as to make certain that every drop of blood is extracted. Otherwise the prohibition, "Thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh" would be violated. This accounts for the fact that porterhouse and tenderloin steaks and similar portions of the animal are not eaten by the orthodox. Before this meat could be eaten, all blood vessels would have to be

⁷⁰ For details of the prevalence of this belief among primitives, see "The Mark of Cain" in Frazer, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, p. 33.

⁷¹ The word "kosher" does not in any sense mean hygienic. It does not mean clean in the modern sense of the word. It is purely a religious term and denotes a ritual ceremony.

removed to make it ritually edible. A propitiative prayer is always said at the slaughter of animals or fowl to avoid the sin of shedding blood. There is some progress even in this custom because the ancient Israelites, in order to conform strictly to this ritual performance, had to bring the live animal or fowl to the temple. There it was slaughtered by the priest, who then performed a sacrificial ceremony by dashing the blood against the altar.⁷²

This superstitious custom, based on the primitive belief in animism, is but another instance of the utter ignorance of the Biblical Hebrews regarding hygienic matters and the nutritional value of food.

According to a strict interpretation of a belief in blood contamination, blood transfusions would be forbidden, and as a result hundreds of thousands of lives that are now saved would be sacrificed to this superstition.

This animistic belief also carried with it the fear of revenge, in the belief that blood was life and possessed the spirit of God as revealed in *Genesis, Chapter 9, verses 5 and 6*:

5 And surely your blood of your lives will I require: at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.

6 Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

Even in the story of Joseph, we find this same precaution against blood pollution on the theory that blood will have its revenge. *Genesis, Chapter 37, verses 21 and 22*:

21 And Reuben heard *it*, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him.

22 And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, *but* cast him into this pit that *is* in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.

⁷² Idelsohn, *Ceremonies of Israel*, p. 67. See also Friedlander, *Laws and Customs of Israel*, pp. 67, 69.

“Shed no blood” was the precautionary advice of Reuben, for fear that by doing so “he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.”

The following definition from the *New Standard Bible Dictionary* also throws important light on the meaning of blood pollution and the reason for this Commandment: “The important meaning attached to blood in the Oriental world was determined by the notion that the life principle either was the blood itself or had its residence in the blood.”⁷³ It is not difficult to understand how such a notion might originate when one considers that after the blood has run out of the body, life is extinguished in both man and the lower animals.

Even in the *Psalms* there is a prayer asking that we be spared the penalty of the guilt of blood. *Psalms 51, verse 14*:

14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God,
thou God of my salvation: *and* my tongue
shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

“Bloodguiltiness” did not refer to killing, but to the contamination of blood without proper expiation. The use of the word “bloodguiltiness” reveals in itself the prevalence of the fear of blood pollution. Like all other superstitious peoples under the influence of taboos, the Hebrews were always provided with methods of atonement and expiation. They carried their superstitions to fanatical lengths, recording them in minute detail, and formulating their fears and taboos into a system of belief which became the dominant factor in their lives. This is plainly indicated in *Leviticus, Chapter 4, verses 1 to 12*:

1 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,
2 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying,
If a soul shall sin through ignorance against
any of the commandments of the Lord *con-*
cerning things which ought not to be done,
and shall do against any of them:
3 If the priest that is anointed do sin ac-
cording to the sin of the people; then let him
bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a

⁷³ *New Standard Bible Dictionary*, p. 110.

young bullock without blemish unto the Lord for a sin offering.

4 And he shall bring the bullock unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord; and shall lay his hand upon the bullock's head, and kill the bullock before the Lord.

5 And the priest that is anointed shall take of the bullock's blood, and bring it to the tabernacle of the congregation:

6 And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle of the blood seven times before the Lord, before the veil of the sanctuary.

7 And the priest shall put *some* of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the Lord, which *is* in the tabernacle of the congregation; and shall pour all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which *is at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

8 And he shall take off from it all the fat of the bullock for the sin offering; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that *is* upon the inwards.

9 And the two kidneys, and the fat that *is* upon them, which *is* by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away,

10 As it was taken off from the bullock of the sacrifice of peace offerings: and the priest shall burn them upon the altar of the burnt offering.

11 And the skin of the bullock, and all his flesh, with his head, and with his legs, and his inwards, and his dung,

12 Even the whole bullock shall he carry forth without the camp unto a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn him on the wood with fire: where the ashes are poured out shall he be burnt.

The fear of blood pollution and the necessity of expiation for it are also shown in *Samuel I, Chapter 14, verses 31 to 33*:

31 And they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to Ajalon: and the people were very faint.

32 And the people flew upon the spoil, and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew *them* on the ground: and the people did eat *them* with the blood.

33 Then they told Saul, saying, Behold, the people sin against the Lord, in that they eat with the blood. And he said, Ye have transgressed: roll a great stone unto me this day.

This phase of animism prompted Saul to tell his warriors to abstain from food after engaging in battle. However, that had nothing to do with the matter of disobeying Saul and "sinning" against the Lord. Their transgression had to be expiated, and of what did this ceremony of purification consist? The "sinner" had to "*roll a great stone unto me this day*," in the belief that this useless exertion of one's strength would expiate the violation of the taboo.⁷⁴

Throughout the Bible there are numerous passages to prove the prevalence of the belief in blood pollution.⁷⁵ This Commandment is a survival of this animistic belief, and it prevails among many people of primitive culture even today.

Some Esthonians will not taste blood because they believe that it contains the animal's soul, which would enter the body of the person.

Marco Polo tells us that persons caught in the streets of Cambaluc (Peking) at unseasonable hours were arrested and, if found guilty of a misdemeanor, were beaten with a stick. Under this punishment victims sometimes died, but it was used to eschew bloodshed, for according to their *Baosis* it is an evil thing to shed man's blood.

In West Sussex, people still believe that the ground on which human blood has been shed is accursed and will remain barren forever.

Among the Latuka of Central Africa, the earth on which a drop of blood has fallen at childbirth is carefully scraped up with an

⁷⁴ To expiate sins and for consecration purposes, the Hebrews would take the blood of a lamb and put it on the tip of the right ear, and on the thumb of the right hand, and on the great toe of the right foot. (*Leviticus, Chapter 8, verses 23 and 24; also Chapter 14, verses 13 to 25.*)

⁷⁵ See *II Samuel, Chapter 3, verses 27, 28; Chapter 14, verse 11; Chapter 23, verse 17; I Kings, Chapter 2, verses 31-33; II Kings, Chapter 16, verse 33; II Kings, Chapter 24, verse 4; II Chronicles, Chapter 29, verses 22-25.*

iron shovel, put in a pot along with the water used in washing the mother, and buried outside the house on the left-hand side.

In West Africa, a drop of blood which has fallen on the ground must be carefully covered up, rubbed and stamped into the soil.

The natives of New Guinea are careful to burn any sticks, leaves or rags stained with their blood.⁷⁶

As already mentioned, fear of blood revenge formed an additional basis for this Commandment. According to early beliefs, the soul of a murdered man finds no rest until his death has been avenged.⁷⁷ Even in primitive societies, where it is considered a meritorious act to kill an enemy, i.e., a member of another tribe, a ceremony of purification for shedding blood must take place.

The Ponka Indians believe that a murderer is surrounded by ghosts that keep up a constant whistling; that he can never satisfy his hunger, though he eat much food; and that he must not be allowed to roam at large lest high winds arise.

Among the Omahas, a murderer was obliged to pitch his tent about a quarter of a mile from the rest of the tribe when they were going on a hunt, lest the ghost of his victim should raise a high wind which might cause damage. They also believed that the spirits of those who had been killed reappeared after death, their errand being "to solicit vengeance on the perpetrators of the deed."

Among the North American Indians, it was found that "as they reckon they are become impure by shedding human blood," they observe a fast of three days. After a battle they ran through their village and made hideous noises for the purpose of preventing the ghosts of the departed combatants from entering the village. Among the Natchez, "those who for the first time have made a prisoner or taken off a scalp, must, for a month, abstain from seeing their wives or from eating flesh," or the souls of those whom they killed, or burnt, would effect their death, or they would never gain any advantage over their enemies.

⁷⁶ Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, pp. 229, 230.

⁷⁷ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 1, p. 372.

The Kafirs and Bechuanas practise various ceremonies of purification after their fights. The Basutos say: "Human blood is heavy; it prevents him who has shed it from running away." They consider it necessary that on returning from battle "the warriors should rid themselves, as soon as possible, of the blood they have shed, or the shades of their victims would pursue them incessantly and disturb their slumbers"; hence, they go in full armor to the nearest stream; the moment they enter the water, a diviner, placed higher up, throws some purifying substance into the current.

Among the Bantu Kavirondo, "when a man has killed an enemy in warfare, he shaves his head on his return home, and his friends rub 'medicine' (generally the dung of goats) over his body to prevent the spirit of the deceased from worrying the man by whom he has been slain." Among the Ja-luo, a warrior who has slain an enemy not only shaves his hair but, after entering the village, prepares a big feast to propitiate the ghost of the man he has killed.

According to the laws of Manu, a person who has unintentionally killed a Brahman shall make a hut in the forest and dwell in it for twelve years; in order to remove his guilt, he must throw himself thrice headlong into a blazing fire, or walk against the stream the whole length of the river Sarasvati, or shave off all his hair.

The ancient Greeks believed that one who had suffered a violent end was angry with the one who had caused his death. The blood-guilty individual, as though infected with a miasma, shunned all contact and conversation with other people, and avoided entering their dwellings.⁷⁸ The legend of the matricide Orestes, how he roamed from place to place pursued by the Furies of his murdered mother, and how none would sit at meat with him, or take him in until he had been purified, reflects faithfully the real Greek dread of being haunted by the angry ghosts of the slain.⁷⁹

The Jbala of North Morocco, though they no longer believe in ghosts, are still convinced that a person who has shed blood is in

⁷⁸ Westermarck, *op. cit.*, p. 376.

⁷⁹ Frazer, *op. cit.*, pp. 214, 215, 216.

some degree unclean for the rest of his life. They believe that poison oozes from beneath his nails; hence, anybody who drinks the water in which he has washed his hands will fall dangerously ill. The ignorant savage, unable to account for the ill effects of drinking impure water, attributes it to an evil influence, which results in the multitude of prohibitions and taboos that are universally a part of all religious systems.

In Central Africa, after killing a slave, the master is afraid of Chilope. This means that he will become emaciated, lose his eyesight, and ultimately die a miserable death. He therefore goes to his chief and gives him a certain fee (in cloth, or slaves, or such legal tender), and says, "Get me a charm [*lusai*], because I have slain a man." When he has used this charm, which may be either drunk or administered in a bath, the danger is supposed to pass away.

In Chinese books there are numerous stories about persons haunted by the souls of their victims on their deathbeds, and in most of these cases the ghosts state expressly that they are avenging themselves with the special authorization of Heaven.⁸⁰

The people of Paloo in Central Celebes take the heads of their enemies in war and afterwards propitiate the souls of the slain in the temple.

Among the tribes at the mouth of the Sanigela River in New Guinea, "a man who has taken life is considered impure until he has undergone certain ceremonies; as soon as possible after the deed, he cleanses himself and his weapon. . . . After elaborate ceremonies, a hunt is organized and a kangaroo is selected from the game captured. It is cut open and the spleen and the liver rubbed over the back of the man. He then walks solemnly down to the nearest water and, standing straddle-legged in it, washes himself. . . . The following day, at early dawn, he dashes out of his house, fully armed, and calls aloud the name of the victim. Having satisfied himself that he has thoroughly scared the ghost of the dead man, he returns to his house. . . . A day later his purification is finished."

⁸⁰ Westermarck, *op. cit.*, pp. 378, 379.

The Yabim of New Guinea believe that the spirit of a murdered man pursues his murderer and seeks to do him mischief. Hence they try to drive away the spirit with shouts and beatings of drums.

According to Yakut beliefs, a person who is murdered becomes a *yoro*, that is, his ghost never comes to rest. The Cheremises imagine that the spirits of persons who have died violent deaths cause illness, especially fever and ague. The Burnese believe that persons who meet a violent death become gnats and haunt the place where they were killed.

In Warend, Sweden, the people maintain that the unsatisfied ghost of a murdered man visits his relatives at night and disturbs their rest, and it was an ancient custom among them that, if the murderer was not known, the victim's nearest relation, before the knell began, went forward to the corpse and asked the dead man himself to avenge his murder.⁸¹

Among the Bageshu of East Africa, a man who has killed another smears his chest, his right arm and his head with the entrails of a sheep. When a Nandi of East Africa has killed a member of another tribe, he paints one side of his body, spear and sword red, and the other side white. For four days he is considered unclean. He finally purifies himself by taking a strong purge of a *segetet* tree and by drinking goat's milk mixed with blood.

In the Pelew Islands, those who have been out fighting for the first time, and who have touched the slain, are shut up in a large council house and become taboo. After three days they go together to bathe as near as possible to the spot where the battle took place.

It is a common rule among many tribes and peoples that royal blood should not be shed at any time, and when members of the royal family are to be put to death a mode of execution is selected which avoids the spilling of blood.⁸²

In New Zealand, anything on which a drop of a high chief's blood chances to fall becomes taboo or sacred.

⁸¹ Westermarck, *op. cit.*, pp. 480-482.

⁸² Frazer, *op. cit.*, pp. 239, 241.

When Kublai Khan defeated his uncle, Nayan, who had rebelled against him, he caused Nayan to be put to death by being wrapped in a carpet and tossed to and fro till he died, "because he would not have the blood of his line imperial spilt upon the ground or exposed in the eye of Heaven and before the Sun." It was considered highly improper for the blood of a great Khan to be spilt on the ground.⁸³ This taboo was carried over to early Christianity when heretics were burned at the stake in order to avoid the taboo of spilling blood. The Christian doctrine was that "the hands which had to distribute the blood of the Lamb were not to be polluted with the blood of those for whose salvation it was shed"!

Another very significant passage which has an important bearing on the origin and meaning of this Commandment is the one that deals with the establishment of a sanctuary for those who have killed accidentally, that they may escape the revenge of the deceased and save the land from the curse of blood pollution. I quote *Deuteronomy, Chapter 19, verses 1 to 9*:

1 When the Lord thy God hath cut off the nations, whose land the Lord thy God giveth thee, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their cities, and in their houses;

2 Thou shalt separate three cities for thee in the midst of thy land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it.

3 Thou shalt prepare thee a way, and divide the coasts of thy land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee to inherit, into three parts, that every slayer may flee thither.

4 And this *is* the case of the slayer, which shall flee thither, that he may live: Whoso killeth his neighbor ignorantly, whom he hated not in time past;

5 As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbor to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbor, that he die; he shall flee unto one of those cities, and live:

6 Lest the avenger of the blood pursue the slayer, while his heart is hot, and overtake

⁸³ Frazer, *op. cit.*, p 228.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

him, because the way is long, and slay him; whereas he *was* not worthy of death, inasmuch as he hated him not in time past.

7 Wherefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt separate three cities for thee.

8 And if the Lord thy God enlarge thy coast, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, and give thee all the land which he promised to give unto thy fathers;

9 If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them, which I command thee this day, to love the Lord thy God, and to walk ever in his ways; then shalt thou add three cities more for thee, beside these three:

Deuteronomy, Chapter 19, verse 10, reveals the reason:

10 That innocent blood be not shed in thy land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and so blood be upon thee.

These cities of sanctuary were provided so that blood shed within the confines of the tribe might be expiated, and thereby prevent the curse of blood pollution from falling upon the whole tribe. In nearly all primitive societies, the shedding of human blood is prohibited and sanctuary provided for those who must be purified.

In some Indian nations there were several peaceable towns, which were called "old beloved, ancient, holy or white towns"; they seem formerly to have been "towns of refuge," for within the memory of the oldest inhabitant human blood was never shed in them. Those who were to be punished had to leave and were put to death elsewhere. The Aricaras of Missouri have in the center of their largest village a sacred lodge called the "medicine lodge," as no blood is on any account whatsoever to be spilled within it, not even that of an enemy.

In Athens, the prosecution for homicide began with debarring the criminal from all sanctuaries and assemblies consecrated by religious observance. In ancient Greece, purification was an essential preliminary to an acceptable sacrifice.

In many parts of Morocco, a man who has slain another person

is never afterwards allowed to kill the sacrificial sheep at the "great feast."⁸⁴

The Druids of Gaul never went to war, it is said, because they wanted to keep themselves free from blood pollution; the human sacrifices that they made to their gods were burnt, so as to avoid spilling blood.⁸⁵

The following passage also reveals the taboo regarding the shedding of blood. I quote *I Chronicles, Chapter 28, verses 2 and 3*:

2 Then David the king stood up upon his feet, and said, Hear me, my brethren, and my people: *As for me, I had* in mine heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building:

3 But God said unto me, Thou shalt not build a house for my name, because thou *hast been* a man of war, and hast shed blood.

David could not build a temple to the Lord because it would have been a violation of this Commandment, and, according to Biblical tradition, the building of the temple was left to Solomon, David's son.⁸⁶

The early Hebrew priests refrained from shedding blood, except for sacrificial purposes, and then only when accompanied by expiatory prayer. The "holy" men of the North American Indians likewise refrain from shedding blood.⁸⁷

It was inevitable that this superstition would develop into a strict religious rite. The "uncleanness" resulting from the shedding of blood was transformed into spiritual impurity, which required some form of ritual expiation.

It is not uncommon today to hear people say that the spirit of the slain person will haunt his murderer to his grave. Such is the tenacity of a superstition.

⁸⁴ Westermarck, *op. cit.*, p. 380.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 380.

⁸⁶ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 12, p. 96.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 381.

Thus we find that the origin of the Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," had its basis in the superstition of blood contamination based on the primitive belief in animism, and was never even remotely intended as a precept of moral suasion.

THE ANIMISTIC BELIEF IN BLOOD POLLUTION

How can this Commandment be construed as a prohibition against killing for moral reasons when the Lord gives the Children of Israel the rules and methods of warfare? Not only does the Bible God command the Israelites to kill, but he urges them to practise deception as a prelude to wholesale slaughter.

I quote *Deuteronomy, Chapter 20, verses 10 to 18*:

10 When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it.

11 And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, *that* all the people *that is* found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee.

12 And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it:

13 And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword:

14 But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, *even* all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee.

15 Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities *which are* very far off from thee, which *are* not of the cities of these nations.

16 But of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee *for* an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth:

17 But thou shalt utterly destroy them; *namely*, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee:

18 That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the Lord your God.

Small wonder the Bible God is called the God of War: "The Lord *is* a man of war."⁸⁸ What a mockery it is to include in the Decalogue a Commandment against the taking of human life!

That the Hebrews themselves, after receiving this Commandment from Sinai, waged war on neighboring tribes is additional proof that this Commandment was not formulated as a moral prohibition against killing. I quote *Numbers, Chapter 31, verses 1 to 13*:

1 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,
2 Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites: afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people.

3 And Moses spake unto the people, saying,
Arm some of yourselves unto the war, and let them go against the Midianites, and avenge the Lord of Midian.

4 Of every tribe a thousand, throughout all the tribes of Israel, shall ye send to the war.

5 So there were delivered out of the thousands of Israel, a thousand of *every* tribe, twelve thousand armed for war.

6 And Moses sent them to the war, a thousand of *every* tribe, them and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, to the war, with the holy instruments, and the trumpets to blow in his hand.

7 And they warred against the Midianites, as the Lord commanded Moses; and they slew all the males.

8 And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain; *namely*, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword.

9 And the children of Israel took *all* the women of Midian captives, and their little ones, and took the spoil of all their cattle, and all their flocks, and all their goods.

10 And they burnt all their cities wherein they dwelt, and all their goodly castles, with fire.

11 And they took all the spoil, and all the prey, *both* of men and of beasts.

12 And they brought the captives, and the prey, and the spoil, unto Moses and Eleazar the priest, and unto the congregation of the

⁸⁸ *Exodus, Chapter 15, verse 3.*

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

children of Israel, unto the camp at the plains of Moab, which *are* by Jordan *near* Jericho.

13 And Moses, and Eleazar the priest, and all the princes of the congregation, went forth to meet them without the camp.

“And they warred against the Midianites, *as the Lord commanded Moses; and they slew all the males.*” I repeat *verse 7* to prove two very significant points: First, if this commandment was a prohibition against killing, the Bible God himself violated his own precept; secondly, the Israelites violated the Commandment in obeying the command of their God.

The Children of Israel were avenged. All the males of Midian were slain! They burnt all the cities! Destroyed all their goodly castles with fire! They took all the women of Midian captive! They took all their cattle and all their flocks and all their goods! What a vengeance! This was “the spoil” of war that they brought to Moses, as the Lord *commanded* him that they should do. And how did Moses express to them his appreciation of their triumph and their victory? The Bible can tell it best in its own words in *Numbers, Chapter 31, verses 14 to 16:*

14 And Moses was wroth with the officers of the host, *with* the captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, which came from the battle.

15 And Moses said unto them, Have ye saved all the women alive?

16 Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord.

What made Moses wroth with the officers of Israel? Had they failed to accomplish all that was demanded and expected? Did the soldiers fail to kill enough? In addition to slaying all the males, should they have slain all the *females* also? Yes, the females too should have been slain. Having failed to kill the females, what was to be done with them? The “inspired” brain of Moses solves the

problem, and the solution is revealed in *Numbers, Chapter 31, verses 17 and 18*:

17 Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him.

18 But all the women children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves.

In all history there is no command more revolting to human sensibilities. It is the most damnable that ever fell from human lips. "Kill every male among the little ones," Moses tells them. And yet that is not enough! Every mother must die also! And so he commands that they "*kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him.*" But "*all the women children [that is, the young girls], that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves.*" Could anything be more inhumane than the ravishing of children by brutal soldiers who had but recently killed their parents?

From what has already been quoted, it becomes evident that this Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," has no bearing on, no connection with, a prohibition against killing and murder as such. It was a command formulated solely because of the fear that the spirit or soul of the victim would return to haunt or take revenge on the one who had killed him. This is conclusively proved by the following testimony from *Numbers, Chapter 31, verses 19 and 20*:

19 And do ye abide without the camp seven days: whosoever hath killed any person, and whosoever hath touched any slain, purify *both* yourselves and your captives on the third day, and on the seventh day.

20 And purify all *your* raiment, and all that is made of skins, and all work of goats' *hair*, and all things made of wood.

And the following quotation from *Numbers, Chapter 31, verse 21*, gives the final evidence:

21 And Eleazar the priest said unto the men of war which went to the battle, This is the ordinance of the law which the Lord commanded Moses.

The superstitious fear of blood itself, for the shedding of which purification was necessary, was the underlying reason for this Commandment, for the Bible is the authority that "*this is the ordinance of the law which the Lord commanded Moses.*" It was applicable only to "*whosoever hath killed any person, and whosoever hath touched any slain.*" There was no divine injunction against killing the Midianites and slaying their kings; there was no wrong committed in burning their cities and destroying their castles. There was no sin involved in slaying the mothers and ravishing the young girls; purification was demanded because of the stain of blood that might still be on the body, the garments or the weapons.

The *crime* of murder needed no purification, nor did that of spoliation or rape. *Acts* of murder, rape or theft needed no atonement. There was no stain on the character for all this. But the fear that there might be a *stain of blood* on the garments, or on the goat's hair of the raiment, or imbedded in some weapon of war—this "contamination" required the seven days of purification!

It was the fear that the blood of those killed might be carried within the camp and their spirit wreak vengeance on the tribe, that made purification necessary. That is why the stain of blood had to be purged "by fire" and "purified with the waters of separation." I quote *Numbers, Chapter 31, verses 22 to 24*:

22 Only the gold, and the silver, the brass,
the iron, the tin, and the lead,

23 Every thing that may abide the fire, ye
shall make *it* go through the fire, and it shall
be clean: nevertheless it shall be purified with
the water of separation: and all that abideth
not the fire ye shall make go through the
water.

24 And ye shall wash your clothes on the
seventh day, and ye shall be clean, and after-
ward ye shall come into the camp.

Just as the Kafirs and the Bechuanas still practise various ceremonies after their fights to avoid the stigma of the stain of blood, so did the Hebrews. As the Basutos still consider it essential to purify

themselves of the blood of those they have killed, so did the Israelites. Only the ceremonies were different.

Another significant Biblical passage indicating the ancient belief that blood spilt within the camp would bring retaliation unless proper expiation were made, is recorded in *Deuteronomy, Chapter 21, verses 1 to 9:*⁸⁹

1 If *one* be found slain in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it, lying in the field, *and* it be not known who hath slain him:

2 Then thy elders and thy judges shall come forth, and they shall measure unto the cities which *are* round about him that is slain:

3 And it shall be, *that* the city *which is* next unto the slain man, even the elders of that city shall take a heifer, which hath not been wrought with, *and* which hath not drawn in the yoke;

4 And the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto a rough valley, which is neither eared nor sown, and shall strike off the heifer's neck there in the valley.

5 And the priests the sons of Levi shall come near; for them the Lord thy God hath chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in the name of the Lord; and by their word shall every controversy and every stroke be *tried*:

6 And all the elders of that city, *that are* next unto the slain *man*, shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley:

7 And they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen *it*.

8 Be merciful, O Lord, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel's charge. And the blood shall be forgiven them.

9 So shalt thou put away the *guilt* of innocent blood from among you, when thou shalt do *that which is* right in the sight of the Lord.

It is to be noted that the discovery of the dead man became important because he had been *slain* and there had been no proper

⁸⁹ The explanation caption in the Bible at the beginning of this chapter is significantly stated as "The expiation of an uncertain murder."

expiation for the blood which had been spilled. Since it was not known who had committed the deed, it was necessary to purge the place *nearest* to where the man was found. Was a search made for the murderer to administer the proper punishment, to demand an equitable recompense for the loss of that man's life to his family? By no means. The expiation consisted in killing an innocent heifer "which hath not been wrought with, *and* which hath not drawn in the yoke. And the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto a rough valley, which is neither eared nor sown, and shall strike off the heifer's neck there in the valley." In addition, ". . . all the elders of that city, *that are* next unto the slain *man*, shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley; and they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen *it*." Doubly significant becomes the fact that the slain man's nearest kin were obliged to take part in the expiatory ceremonies that they might not be victims of the revenging spirit of the slain man's blood. And so, as is the custom in all primitive societies where the belief in animism prevails, the stain of blood had to be removed by some form of expiation, thereby freeing the family and the clan from contamination.

In some primitive communities, expiation is effected by sprinkling the perpetrator with the spurted blood of a slain suckling pig.⁹⁰ The ceremony of the ancient Hebrews differs only in method. The superstition is the same.

That killing the heifer and washing the hands of the elders had absolutely no relationship to the murder of the man or to expiating the crime could not be understood by the ignorant people of Biblical times. Even one who had merely touched the body of a dead person was unclean and had to be "purified," for "this *is* the ordinance of the law which the Lord hath commanded."⁹¹

I quote *Numbers, Chapter 19, verses 11 to 13*:

⁹⁰ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 1, p. 376.

⁹¹ *Numbers, Chapter 19, verse 2*.

11 He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days.

12 He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean: but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean.

13 Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness *is* yet upon him.

So strong was the fear of blood pollution that if a man failed to purify himself as provided in the previous verses of this chapter, he “defileth the tabernacle of the Lord,” and his “soul shall be cut off from Israel.”

Not only were the garments of all those who had slain in battle to be purified, but anything that might retain the slightest possibility of contamination—“*this is the ordinance of the law which the Lord hath commanded.*” I quote *Numbers, Chapter 19, verses 14 and 15*:

14 This *is* the law, when a man dieth in a tent: all that come into the tent, and all that *is* in the tent, shall be unclean seven days.

15 And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, *is* unclean.

The following verses reiterate the importance of purification—*Numbers, Chapter 19, verses 16 to 22*:

16 And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days.

17 And for an unclean *person* they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel:

18 And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip *it* in the water, and sprinkle *it* upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave:

19 And the clean *person* shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the

seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even.

20 But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the Lord: the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him; he *is* unclean.

21 And it shall be a perpetual statute unto them, that he that sprinkleth the water of separation shall wash his clothes; and he that toucheth the water of separation shall be unclean until even.

22 And whatsoever the unclean *person* toucheth shall be unclean; and the soul that toucheth *it* shall be unclean until even.

No better summary of the explanation of the provisions of this Commandment can be given than by quoting again *Numbers, Chapter 35, verses 33 and 34*:

33 So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye *are*: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it.

34 Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the Lord dwell among the children of Israel.

That this Commandment was applicable only to the Hebrews is additionally substantiated by the warning in *verse 34*, which states: "Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the Lord dwell among the children of Israel."

This means, of course, that blood could be spilt or shed without fear of contamination in a land outside the tribe of the Israelites. It makes it distinctly a provisional edict.

It was fear of the sin of spilling blood and the resulting contamination, and not any humane, moral or ethical reason, that was responsible for the formulation of this Commandment as part of the Decalogue of a primitive people obsessed with the superstitious belief in animism.

The Seventh Commandment

“Thou shalt not commit adultery.”

THE SIN OF SEX AND SOME ASPECTS OF ADULTERY

“THIS is the Commandment we rarely mention,” say the clergy.¹ Why? Because it deals with the forbidden subject of sex. Sex was made a taboo subject by the perverted views of religion. In addition to the passions associated with sexual activity, the mysterious mechanism for the reproduction of life has awed the ignorant and been responsible for the weirdest superstitions.

The suppression of any form of happiness and the mortification of the flesh have been the two basic requirements of nearly all religious systems. The earth is the place to suffer the pangs of hell in order to experience the joys of heaven. Merely to be familiar with the manifestations of the sexual impulse means being tainted with the knowledge of sex. The individual who has once experienced sexual gratification of any kind, no matter how remote from the intention of this Commandment, is, according to the clergy, placed forever beyond the pale of the holy, the sanctified and the blessed.

I am constrained to continue to quote the “inspired” words of this same clergyman who says, “The time for the discussion of this Commandment should be carefully chosen,” but “if anything is a sin, it must be so named and declared.”

That is why for centuries the discussion of sex and sexual conduct has been virtually prohibited and the most severe penalties inflicted on those striving to throw some light on this subject, ignorance of which has caused so much misery among mankind.

Sex was under such a taboo in Puritan America that, in order to avoid mentioning the parts of the animals used for food, new

¹ Niedermeyer, *The Ten Commandments Today*, p. 114.

words were invented, such as "white meat" instead of "breast of chicken," and "drum stick" and "second joint" for the leg.²

For inadvertently omitting the word "not" from this Commandment, a London publisher by the name of Moore was imprisoned for two years.³ This is indicative of what severe punishment has been imposed on men and women whose only crime was to discuss some phase of sex. With such restrictions, is it any wonder that sex has been so clouded in mystery and ignorance? As an illustration: "The person who was willing to break the Seventh Commandment but never on Sunday, because of early having been taught by the Fourth Commandment to keep the Sabbath day holy."⁴

It was an old superstition that a child born on a Sunday had been conceived on a Sunday, and as sexual indulgence on the Sabbath was prohibited by Christian law, such indulgence was considered an offense to God. As a rule, children born on a Sunday were considered omens of sin and denied baptism, as in the case of Benjamin Franklin, mentioned in a previous chapter.

The Rev. Frederick David Niedermeyer expresses the inhibitions regarding sex in the following statement:

" . . . that our bodies, though ours, are also God's, and that they are to be the dwelling places of the Holy Spirit when we become believers in Christ Jesus." To that extent, our bodies should not be touched by another person "except for the conventional contacts approved by society and which can be made without embarrassment in the presence of witnesses, such as the shaking of hands which is vastly different from a *lingering* handclasp. . . . This Commandment forbids immodesty in dress. It also forbids insinuating words and gestures, and actions that have a questionable or undesirable meaning." He speaks of the danger of "petting parties," and declares that "many violations of this Commandment are traceable to unsanctioned familiarities in parked automobiles." Yet he confesses that "it is difficult to be pure in mind and thought when so many enticements assail us. . . . The stage, too,

² See *Dictionary American Language*.

³ *New York American*, Dec. 11, 1933.

⁴ Niedermeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

offers many things that make it hard for men to keep their minds free from thoughts and imaginings that defile.”⁵

No wonder this clergyman said that “Christ’s interpretation of the Seventh Commandment is staggering”! Jesus said, “Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”⁶

The Rev. J. A. Hayes, in discussing this Commandment, states that “promiscuous fondling is dangerous.”⁷ The Rev. J. C. Masse says:⁸

“The intimacies of life are no longer regarded as reason for blush and embarrassment, and the young men and women discuss with perfect freedom things which their mothers did not breathe aloud. Added to this familiarity of conversation is the familiarity of contact. Young women are crowded into stores where behind counters they are man-handled in narrow passages till they lose the sense of personal purity in such contact. Our subways and street cars are so crowded that in the jam many a girl is set upon all sides until she loses any sense of personal propriety in her body. Then there is the question of dress: the exposure, the suggestiveness and the open familiarity with all parts of the body occasioned by bathing suits and décolleté dressing for so-called social functions. The modern dance with its close and familiar contact of body, its sensuous motions, set to the strain of sensuous music. In our colleges, biology classes are now made open forums in coeducational institutions, where boys and girls in their late teens sit to discuss the origins of life, and in their laboratory work, together dissect those organs upon which God has put honor and secrecy at the same time, with the same open familiarity that they give to the dissection of a flower.”

The Rev. Mr. Masse undoubtedly would have us follow the custom of St. Vincent, who, to avoid seeing his sexual organs, would undress

⁵ Niedermeyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-123.

⁶ Rev. Niedermeyer should not take seriously the violation of this Commandment according to Jesus’ *staggering* interpretation, because if that were true, few men would be free of the guilt of having broken this Commandment.

⁷ Hayes, *The Ten Commandments*, p. 123.

⁸ Masse, *The Gospel in the Ten Commandments*, pp. 114, 115.

in the dark. And that is not all. He further says: "Caressing, kissing and hugging become familiar pastimes of many young men and women who should be put in strait-jackets until they learn some sense of decency and find some sense of modesty."

The Rev. G. Campbell Morgan tells us that "unfaithfulness before marriage is as much adultery as unfaithfulness after marriage." He also states:

"The adulterer is the enemy of the state, and as such, after being divorced in the divorce court, should be imprisoned by the criminal courts. The man or woman upon whose guilt the marriage tie is broken, no Christian minister of any denomination has the right to remarry. It is an act of treason to the state to allow such persons to go free. They should be incarcerated in separation from the other sex to the end of their days, and then they could not wipe out the wrong they did the nation when by unchaste action they struck a blow at the family. . . . The prevalent notion that incompatibility of temperament is sufficient for divorce is a blow at the very throne of God. . . . Purity must refuse to give a moment's countenance in any form to such a doctrine of hell. The command is a simple, unqualified, irrevocable negative. . . . A sevenfold vice is this sin of unchaste conduct, being a sin against the Individual, the Family, the Nation, the Race, the Universe and God."⁹

Does anyone need a better illustration of the corrupting and perverting influence of the Bible upon human thought and action than these perfidious words from the warped mentality of this reverend gentleman?

Yct this same clergyman tells us that the profligate David was a man after God's own heart, and that the debauchee Solomon was a character of exemplary virtue.

It is not surprising that the eminent historian, W. E. H. Lecky, commented: "It was a favorite doctrine of the Christian father that concupiscence, or the sexual passion, was the 'original sin' of human nature."¹⁰

⁹ *The Ten Commandments*, pp. 78, 81, 82.

¹⁰ Lecky, *Morals*, Vol. 2, p. 18.

The Rev. J. H. Powell, Jr.,¹¹ has the honesty to say regarding this Commandment that the death penalty provided for its violation "is not going to safeguard all the homes of the land either from adultery or from all the loss of affection and the development of other attachments that will undermine the happiness of the home."¹² With reference to Jesus' "staggering" interpretation of this Commandment, he says: "I presume none of us is pure in heart, and we know within ourselves the burnings of wrong desire."¹³

Nor must we omit an expression on the subject by the Reverend James M. Gillis, C.S.P., whose opinions we have already encountered. He puts together the only two parts of the Decalogue that deal with sex, and says: "These two Commandments, 'Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery,' and 'Thou Shalt Not Covet Thy Neighbor's Wife,' bring us face to face with the ugly sin of lust, lust in the flesh and lust in the mind, and no man who respects himself and his audience can approach that subject without misgivings."¹⁴ Having professed the vows of celibacy, any act or thought of sex is lust in the mind of this Catholic theologian. He continues: "There is no happiness in sin, any kind of sin, and the sin of impurity is the surest way of misery."

Why should any act dealing with sex be condemned as *sin*? Why should a celibate priest brand the joys of the sexual embrace as the "surest way to misery"? Since he himself lacks experience, how can he speak with authority on this vital phase of life? In contradiction to his statement, *I say that there are no sins of the flesh, there is only ignorance*. Ignorance is the cause of mankind's misery. This ecclesiast evidently received his sexual knowledge from the Bible. Outside of this Commandment, the only references to sex in the Bible deal with rape, incest, sodomy, whoremongering, sexual perversions and other reprehensible deeds within the sexual realm. There is not one enlightening truth about sex within its pages.

¹¹ Minister of the Reformed Church, Bronxville, New York.

¹² Powell, Jr., *The Ten Commandments*, p. 94.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

¹⁴ *Catholic World*, Dec. 20, 1930.

"Men and women," he says, "plunge into it [satisfaction of the sins of the flesh] seeking happiness and they achieve only anguish." I deny this. Such a statement is a libel on honest men and women. There is more purity in the passionate embrace of lovers who have vowed eternal devotion to each other than in all the systems of religion ever invented, and in the vows of purity of all the celibates that ever lived. Devotion to one's mate is a higher virtue than celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

This Catholic priest does admit, however, that he feels the urges of sex. He confesses: ". . . We are drawn with a fierce attraction and with what seems at times irresistible force towards impurity," and admonishes: "Some persons may think that a good man is one who experiences no great temptation and that a bad man is one who has been cursed by the inheritance of a particularly passionate nature. But they who imagine such things can never have read the lives of the saints." The concluding statements of the Rev. Mr. Gillis are too important not to mention. He says: "A god does not go lusting about, a victim to the passions of the body."

How naïve and contradictory! Does he not preach that Mary, the betrothed of Joseph, was begotten with child by the Holy Ghost?¹⁵ By the violation of the previous Commandment, Christian "salvation" was gained, and by the violation of this Commandment Christianity was born. And did not an angel of the Lord come down to visit Elizabeth, the cousin of Mary, when it was discovered that her husband Zachariah was old in years? The Bible itself furnishes the evidence that she conceived and bore a son.¹⁶ In fact, from time immemorial the gods in song and fable have all too often lusted after the daughters of men.

As we discovered that ministers of religion knew little about the original meanings of the previous Commandments, so we find them equally ignorant about this one. To quote one is to quote them all.

¹⁵ Judging from the Biblical text, Joseph was fully aware of the nature of Mary's act and "being a just man and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily." *Matthew, Chapter 1, verse 19*; also *The Bible Unmasked*, p. 18.

¹⁶ *Luke, Chapter 1*.

Each has repeated almost verbatim the meaningless words of the others. This is particularly unfortunate because this Commandment is supposed to deal with the most vital and compelling force of existence, proper knowledge of which would prevent much of the misery and at least half the crimes which beset the human race. And how often has sex ignorance been the major cause of an adulterous act! The tragedies resulting from ignorance of sex are ten thousand times more stark than the pen can describe.

Since sex plays so vital a part in life, why did not the Bible God, in his "infinite" wisdom, give us more knowledge of proper sexual conduct than is contained in the words "Thou shalt not commit adultery"? If, according to the clergy, God made adultery a crime, it would have been just as easy for him—since he was all-powerful—to make adultery impossible. He could have made men and women of such a nature that when mated by love no outside attraction could possibly induce them to commit the sexual act with another person.

WHAT IS ADULTERY?

Before the meaning and purpose of this Commandment can be understood, we must know what it is that must not be committed. Is the sex act adulterous only when committed in violation of the marriage vow, or does any promiscuous sexual relation come within the scope of its meaning? Is Jesus' definition of adultery to be followed, or must there be actual physical contact? Does prostitution violate this Commandment? What about polygamy and polyandry? Are these social customs prohibited by this Commandment? Are those guilty of incest, sodomy and other sexual perversions violators of this precept of the Decalogue? How are we to judge homosexuality, consanguinity and other unusual phases of sexual conduct? Does the failure to be specific as to what adultery *is* invalidate this Commandment, just as we found the failure to be definite a fault of the previous ones?

Why is there no provision for punishment if this Commandment

is violated, or reward offered for its observance? Was it for the same reason that no punishment or reward was provided for the observance of the sixth? Was this Commandment imposed on the early Hebrews because of certain *taboos* associated with sexual conduct, just as we found the previous Commandment not to kill was a *taboo* because of the fear of blood pollution? Is this Commandment, when strictly interpreted, like the previous one, impossible of observance? Just as the Sixth Commandment was contrary to the fundamental law of life, is this one equally in conflict with the basic law governing the instinct of self-preservation in the perpetuation of the race?

Unless we are acquainted with all phases of sexual conduct, how are we to understand what to do and what to abstain from doing? Without sex there can be no life, and as there are a multitude of regulations concerning sexual expression, some approved and some disapproved, depending on the time and place, how are we to determine which rules of sexual conduct to follow? Variations in sexual conduct are the result of the great disparity between the sex mechanism of man and woman. As a result of this great difference, woman has from time immemorial been forced to play, in the drama of life, the wife, the mother, the virgin and the prostitute.

Is a man, because of his inability to procreate, exempt from the sexual restrictions imposed on his female partner? Can any rules governing sexual conduct be universally applied? Is it possible for one rule to apply dogmatically to all irrespective of the variegated social customs existing in different parts of the world? If not, then of what value is this Commandment? And why was only adultery prohibited? Why not all sexual manifestations that have proved detrimental?

Is adultery committed only when the marriage vow is violated? If so, does it apply to both members of the union or only to one? And if only one, which one—the husband or wife? And if the wife, why is the husband exempt? And if there are exceptions to this Commandment, why were they not stated? If this Commandment, as generally accepted, means a sex act “in violation of the marriage

bed," why were not other sex acts, often far more pernicious than mere unfaithfulness, included?

Then again, how can this Commandment be construed as a prohibition against adultery in the modern sense of the word, when the Children of Israel practised polygamy at the time this Commandment was formulated?

A law or precept specifically designed to govern conditions in a particular type of society often cannot be utilized in an altogether different type of society. While conditions may provoke certain acts which the law was designed to prevent in one society, those conditions may be completely absent in another, thereby making the law unnecessary. No better illustration could be given to emphasize the inapplicability of certain edicts than the fact that in a polygamous state there is much less occasion for committing adultery than in the more restrictive state of monogamy. Polygamy, which was an accepted custom in Biblical times, is now actually prohibited by law in modern society.

The authoritative *New Standard Bible Dictionary* states that "the prohibition of the Seventh Commandment is indeed general; but it leaves open the question of what constitutes adultery for a man and what for a woman." It was the doctrine of the Roman jurists that adultery is a crime when committed by the wife, and the wife only, because of the danger of introducing strange children to the husband.¹⁷

One of the greatest of the Christian fathers of the latter half of the fourth century distinguished between adultery and fornication committed by a married man. He decided that the sexual act with a married woman was adultery, with an unmarried woman merely fornication.¹⁸

People in different countries have different ideas regarding sexual behavior, and so we find among the Creek Indians that it was con-

¹⁷ *New Standard Bible Dictionary*, p. 555.

¹⁸ Ellis, *Psychology of Sex*, Vol. 6, p. 400.

sidered adultery if a man took a pitcher of water off a woman's head and drank from it.¹⁹

The Roman Catholic Church condemns as adulterous the marriage of a Catholic with a Protestant. There still remains in force, as established by the Eastern Church of the Council at Trullo in the seventh century, the nullity of marriages between Catholics and heretics. The Greek Church also forbids the marriage of one of its followers with a Roman Catholic.²⁰ The Jewish law does not recognize the marriage of a Jew with a person of another belief. Tertullian branded as fornication the marriage of a Christian with a pagan.

Cotton Mather rendered this infallible judgment:

“God gave to Adam a law of universal obedience written in his heart. . . . This law, so written in the heart, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness after the fall of man, and was delivered by God on Mount Sinai.”

As a result, the Massachusetts courts in 1631 ordered that “if any man shall have carnal copulation with another man's wife, they both shall be punished by death.” This is supported by the Biblical text in *Leviticus, Chapter 20, verse 10*:

10 And the man that committeth adultery with *another* man's wife, *even he* that committeth adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

The criminal code of New York State defines adultery as “intercourse between two persons one of which is married.” As this law is interpreted by the highest legal authority of the State, it excludes from its provision the intercourse of two adults who are not married. In other words, this law means that sexual relations between two unmarried people is not regarded as adultery or even as a crime. It recognizes by its omission the irrepressible sexual instincts, and

¹⁹ Ellis, *Psychology of Sex*, Vol. 6, p. 305.

²⁰ Westermarck, *Marriage*, Vol. 2, p. 63.

makes provision for the punishment for adultery, as so defined, merely as a protection of the parties in the married union. This law, however, does not exempt the man who is liable to the same prosecution as the woman. As a result, this law is rarely ever enforced, and in the few cases which have come before the courts, the guilty parties have been penalized only by a very small fine. Pope Boniface VIII made a unique comment when he said: "There is no more harm in adultery than in rubbing one's hands together."²¹

In some places there is no definite provision in law for the punishment of adulterers. In others, it ranges from a fine of five dollars to a year's imprisonment. An illustration is the law that prevails in the town of Cardiff, which lies partly in Maryland and partly in Pennsylvania. If a person commits adultery on one side of the street, he may suffer the extreme punishment of a fine of ten dollars. On the other side of the street, within the boundary of the other State, he is subject to a fine of five hundred dollars or incarceration in jail for one year.²² Violators have been extremely sagacious in avoiding the severer penalty.

Was Solomon guilty of adultery when he indulged in the sexual embrace with more than seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines? Or was Solomon like the Duke of Ferrara (Niccolo D'Este), who had ninety-two illegitimate children, yet made a law that marital infidelity should be punishable by death?²³

These men were not the only ones who indulged carnally with other men's wives. There have been other instances which make Solomon's affair puny by comparison. The king of Benin had over four thousand wives—although he generously gave some away to those of his male servants who had rendered him faithful service. In Ashanti, the law limited the king to three thousand, three hundred and thirty-three wives. Both the kings of Mtessa and Uganda and the king of Loango are said to have had over seven thousand

²¹ Draper, *Intellectual Development of Europe*, Vol. 2, p. 88.

²² Geoffrey May, *Social Control of Sex Expression*, p. 258.

²³ *New York American*, Jan. 6, 1933.

wives.²⁴ Mushidi, the king of Budkey in the Belgian Congo, was the father of nine hundred and ten children. King Chulalongkorn, Rama V, the old king of Siam, had three thousand wives and three hundred and seventy children—one hundred and thirty-four sons and two hundred and thirty-six daughters. John Dunn, the white king of Sululand, married forty wives and was the father of one hundred and twenty children, seventy of whom are said to be alive today. Abas Mirza, Prince Royal of Persia, became the father of sixteen children in a single night, and the following day six more of his wives gave birth to his offspring.²⁵ Our own Brigham Young had nineteen wives and fifty-six children.

Were these men guilty of adultery, and if so, why were they permitted to continue these violations with complete impunity?

Was Shakespeare right when he said:

“Adultery?

Thou shalt not die; die for adultery: No:

The worm goes to't, and the small gilded fly

Does lecher in my sight.

Let copulation thrive; for Gloster's bastard son

Was kinder to his father than my daughters

Got 'tween the lawful sheets.”²⁶

BASTARDY

If adultery is an act which the Bible God seeks to prevent, then a child born of an adulterous union should in some way be distinguished from children born in the bonds of matrimony. But are children born out of wedlock any different from children born in wedlock? In further Biblical condemnation of adultery, we quote from *Deuteronomy, Chapter 23, verse 2*:

2 A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the Lord.

²⁴ Westermarck, *Marriage*, Vol. 3, p. 51.

²⁵ *New York American*, Dec. 4, 1933; Mar. 21, Dec. 9, 1934; Nov. 27, 1935.

²⁶ *King Lear*, Act 4, Scene 6.

As far as nature is concerned, a woman may have twenty children by twenty different fathers, and a father may have a thousand children with as many different mothers. Nature is not concerned with marriage—that is purely a man-made institution; she is, however, concerned with propagation, and propagation will continue regardless of the marriage customs that prevail. Thousands of children are born each year from the seed of men other than those they call father. The courts are continually called on to determine the parentage of children where a dispute of fatherhood arises. Long and bitter court battles have resulted because of the suspicion of husbands regarding the paternity of children. Shakespeare said, "It is a wise child that knows its own father."

At one time it was erroneously believed that the birth of twins was conclusive evidence of adultery on the part of the wife, as no man could be the father of two children born at the same time. Recently such a case came to public attention, reviving this primitive belief. Because his wife became the mother of twins, a Japanese, ironically in the Child Department of Kyoto Imperial University Hospital in Tokio, asked for a divorce on the ground that, according to ancient Japanese belief, the birth of twins indicated adultery on the part of the wife.²⁷ Very often, when twins were born, one had to be killed.²⁸

If the Bible had given us the formula by which the true parentage of a child could be determined, that surely would have done more to prevent adultery than this Commandment. However, the Bible does contain a perfect and "infallible" formula to determine whether a woman has committed adultery, in the *Book of Numbers, Chapter 5, verses 11 to 31*:

11 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,
12 Speak unto the children of Israel, and
say unto them, If any man's wife go aside,
and commit a trespass against him,
13 And a man lie with her carnally, and it be
hid from the eyes of her husband, and be kept

²⁷ *New York World-Telegram*, Dec. 22, 1933.

²⁸ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 1, p. 395.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

close, and she be defiled, and *there be* no witness against her, neither she be taken *with the manner*;

14 And the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled; or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled:

15 Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth *part* of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it *is* an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance.

16 And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the Lord:

17 And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel; and of the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle the priest shall take, and put *it* into the water:

18 And the priest shall set the woman before the Lord, and uncover the woman's head, and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which *is* the jealousy offering: and the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causeth the curse:

19 And the priest shall charge her by an oath, and say unto the woman, If no man have lain with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness *with another* instead of thy husband, be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse:

20 But if thou hast gone aside *to another* instead of thy husband, and if thou be defiled, and some man have lain with thee besides thine husband:

21 Then the priest shall charge the woman with an oath of cursing, and the priest shall say unto the woman, The Lord make thee a curse and an oath among thy people, when the Lord doth make thy thigh to rot, and thy belly to swell;

22 And this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels, to make *thy* belly to swell, and *thy* thigh to rot. And the woman shall say, Amen, amen.

23 And the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall blot *them* out with the bitter water:

24 And he shall cause the woman to drink the bitter water that causeth the curse: and

the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, *and become bitter.*

25 Then the priest shall take the jealousy offering out of the woman's hand, and shall wave the offering before the Lord, and offer it upon the altar:

26 And the priest shall take a handful of the offering, *even* the memorial thereof, and burn *it* upon the altar, and afterward shall cause the woman to drink the water.

27 And when he hath made her to drink the water, then it shall come to pass, *that* if she be defiled, and have done trespass against her husband, that the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, *and become bitter*, and her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall rot: and the woman shall be a curse among her people.

28 And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean; then she shall be free, and shall conceive seed.

29 This *is* the law of jealousies, when a wife goeth aside *to another* instead of her husband, and is defiled;

30 Or when the spirit of jealousy cometh upon him, and he be jealous over his wife, and shall set the woman before the Lord, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law.

31 Then shall the man be guiltless from iniquity, and this woman shall bear her iniquity.

This is the primitive "trial by ordeal." It was believed that a virtuous woman could surmount all obstacles and be immune to all defilement, just as it was believed that an honest man could survive the ordeal by fire. Could anything be more horrible than that such a test should be imposed upon an innocent woman to determine her faithfulness? Could anything be more monstrous? Can anyone conceive of anything more devilish? And yet this damnable and revolting test is found in the Bible as an infallible method—an edict from God—for determining female sexual purity! Think of it! Think also of the thousands of women who were brutally forced to make this humiliating, disgusting and self-convicting ordeal. Because were a woman as pure as the white of snow and as innocent as the day she

was born, she would be unable to survive such a test as this. Oh! How religion perverts the human mind!

This Bible formula belongs with the "infallible" test for determining witches which prevailed as late as the eighteenth century in Colonial America. Innocent women suspected of witchcraft were thrown into a river; if they swam to shore and safety, that was positive proof of their guilt, and they were therefore summarily killed; the women who drowned were innocent! They also practised another infallible method, no doubt fashioned on this "trial by ordeal." Suspected women were stripped of their clothes, strapped to a bed, and sharp pointed needles were stuck into the most sensitive parts of their bodies. If they felt pain and shrieked for mercy, their cries were audible confessions of their guilt!

Equally strong was the belief among superstitious people that a woman who lost her milk during the nursing period was guilty of adultery, and such grounds were sufficient for divorce.²⁹

Roman history records the custom of exposing a newborn infant on a shield laid on the surface of a river when the father had cause to doubt its legitimacy.

It was also the custom in primitive times, when an infant's legitimacy was doubted, to throw it into the water. If it floated, that proved its legitimacy; if it sank, it was a bastard.³⁰ This may have accounted for the original story of why Moses was put in the bulrushes, rather than the legend of Pharaoh's wrath. Moses was the son of Amram, who had married his paternal aunt, which, according to Hebrew law, was an incestuous union.

The Celts also have been known to use the water test to determine the legitimacy of children. They left this important matter to the judgment of the river Rhine. Infants would be thrown into the water,

²⁹ Mantegazza, *Sexual Relations of Mankind*, pp. 193-204.

³⁰ The explorer Speke was told about a governor in the province of Unyoro in Central Africa who covered his children with bead ornaments and threw them into the N'yanza to prove their identity as his own true offspring. If they sank, that was conclusive to him that someone else was the father; if they floated, he would recover them as his own.

and if they were bastards, the pure and stern river drowned them; but if they were trueborn, the waters gently wafted them into the mother's trembling arms.³¹

Science has only recently made it possible to determine parentage with some degree of accuracy by comparing the structure and composition of the father's blood with that of the child.³²

If each child born out of wedlock were distinguished by some mark of illegitimacy, then this Commandment would be a warning to the woman, at least, to avoid extramarital relations. Or if, when an adulterous act was about to be committed, the woman suddenly became "as cold as ice" and the man physically impotent, then this Commandment would indeed have some value as a warning; but the reverse is generally true—"forbidden sweets" are often "the sweetest" and clandestine sexual relations are usually the result of irresistible passion.

H. L. Mencken is credited with the statement that many today would take pride if they could claim illegitimate kinship with George Washington or any other equally prominent person of the past.

Judging from the men and women who have distinguished themselves by singular achievements, children born of adulterous unions are no less favored than those born within the bonds of marriage.

Pericles, son of the great Pericles and the celebrated courtesan Aspasia, was an able general.

Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1515), one of the world's most versatile geniuses, was the illegitimate son of a Florentine lawyer and a mother of humble station. Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375), celebrated Italian writer and scholar, and author of the *Decameron*, was a love

³¹ Frazer, *Folklore*, p. 260.

³² The question of split paternity has interested biologists for some time. A thesis in 1924 by Dr. Menetrier and Mme. Bertrand Fontaine, French scientists, held that "identical twins," those developed from the same cell, must have the same parents, but that "fraternal twins," simultaneously developed from individual cells, might have different fathers. From Cologne comes a case where a judge ordered a blood test to be performed on twins. After it had been proved that the woman's husband was the father of only one child, the mother confessed to having had illicit relations with another man.—*New York American*, Mar. 19, 1935.

child. Charlemagne never denied his illegitimacy. Clement VII, an illegitimate son, was Pope from 1524 to 1534, despite the previous Biblical quotation which said that "a bastard shall not enter the congregation of the Lord." Erasmus, "the man who laid the eggs that Luther hatched," was the son of a Dutch parish priest and his housekeeper servant.³³ Jean d'Alembert (1717-1783), one of the most brilliant mathematicians and writers of his time, famous for his work on the great French Encyclopedia, was the illegitimate son of an artillery officer and was picked up as an infant on a doorstep in Paris. August Strindberg and Alexander Dumas *fil*s were unlawfully begotten.

Abraham Lincoln and Alexander Hamilton were born from men other than those to whom their mothers were married. James Smithson (1765-1829), founder of the Smithsonian Institution, which is "devoted to the increase and diffusion of learning among men," was born in France, the natural son of Hugh Smithson, first Duke of Northumberland, and Mrs. Elizabeth Keate Macie.³⁴

Booker T. Washington, great Negro educator, and George Washington Carver, Negro scientist whose achievements in the field of food and plant chemistry are acclaimed the world over, did not know who their fathers were.

Even the Bible records some notable instances of illegitimate births. Solomon was a bastard, and his descendant, Jesus, was born from seed other than his father's. An "angel" of the Lord committed adultery with Elizabeth, and John the Baptist was born.

Bastardy or not, one thing is definite—that the child is not responsible for the acts of its parents. It is born as the result of the union of a man and a woman regardless of the laws regulating such conduct. No child should have to bear the stigma of illegitimacy. Illegitimacy is a wrong, not of nature, but of law and religion. Was not Shakespeare right when he said:

³³ Miriam Allen deFord, *Love Children*, p. 111.

³⁴ For additional names, see *ibid.*; also *The Hidden Lincoln* by Emanuel Hertz, p. 63.

“ . . . Why bastard? wherefore base?
 When my dimensions are as well compact,
 My mind as generous and my shape as true,
 As honest madam’s issue? Why brand they us
 With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base?
 Who in the lusty stealth of nature take
 More composition and fierce quality
 Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,
 Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops,
 Got ’tween asleep and wake? . . .
 . . . I grow; I prosper:
 Now, gods, stand up for bastards!”³⁵

SACRED AND PROFANE PROSTITUTION

In endeavoring to determine what is meant by the word “adultery” as used in this Commandment, much might be taken for granted as not coming within its scope, but no analysis would be complete if it did not take into consideration prostitution.

The transition from sacred to secular prostitution was so imperceptible that it is hardly possible to determine when the former ended and the latter began. The only marked difference was in the deviation of the revenue. It is notorious that the Church had a monopoly on prostitution for centuries and that it was one of the most fruitful sources of its wealth. Havelock Ellis states that “the origin of prostitution is to be found primarily in a religious custom. . . .”³⁶

St. Augustine said: “Suppress prostitution, and capricious lusts will overthrow society.”³⁷ St. Jerome recognized prostitution and argued that, “as Mary Magdalene had been saved, so might any prostitute who repented. . . .” In 1431, at the Council of Basle, a high Church dignitary presented a discourse on the subject of prosti-

³⁵ *King Lear*, Act 1, Scene 2.

³⁶ Havelock Ellis, *Psychology of Sex*, Vol. 6, p. 299.

³⁷ Dr. William W. Sanger, *The History of Prostitution*, p. 91.

tution in which he implied that it was the only safeguard of good morals.³⁸

A brothel called the "Abbey" was instituted in the papal city of Avignon under the patronage of Queen Joanna of Naples. It was regulated by strict rules after the model of religious houses, and none but good Christians were admitted. Jews and Infidels were not permitted to enter; so sacred an institution was not to be "corrupted" or "contaminated." To maintain its strictly religious air, it was closed on Good Friday and Easter. Its women were housed in cloister-like buildings, adjoining the churches, which are still commonly spoken of as "abbeys." What a commentary on religion as a means of moral uplift, when the prostitute can ply her trade—but not when it interferes with her religious duties!

Pope Julius II instituted a similar brothel in Rome, and the foundation prospered under the patronage of Leo X and Clement VII. Part of the proceeds were devoted to providing for the comfort of the Holy Sisters of the Order of St. Mary Magdalene.³⁹ By the time of the Reformation it was estimated that there were more than 100,000 prostitutes in London, mainly supported by ecclesiastics.⁴⁰

When brothels were forbidden in the City of London, prostitution was carried on close to the palaces of the high bishops, who not only had jurisdiction over but profited substantially from them. So notorious were these enterprises that the women inmates were called "Winchester Geese." In Shakespeare's *Henry VI*, Humphrey, Duke of Gloster, reproached the Bishop of Winchester with "Thou that giv'st whores indulgences to sin."⁴¹ In 1321, Edward II approved the sale of a lupinar to a cardinal who evidently considered it a profitable investment for sacerdotal funds.⁴² In Antwerp, even today, it is stated on excellent authority, the prostitutes of the regular brothels proceed in a body on certain feast days to the churches,

³⁸ Sanger, *History of Prostitution*, p. 91.

³⁹ Briffault, *The Mothers*, Vol. 3, pp 214, 216.

⁴⁰ May, *Social Control of Sexual Expression*, p. 127.

⁴¹ Shakespeare, *1st Henry VI*, Act 1, Scene 3.

⁴² Briffault, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

carrying candles which they dedicate to the Holy Virgin, fervently praying to her for the success of their affairs.⁴³

In Eastern Islam, where there are more males than females, the young girls who remain unmarried and offer themselves to men are looked upon as public benefactors.⁴⁴

Sacred prostitution was incumbent upon all women and existed throughout Europe, Asia and Northern Africa. Religious prostitutes were called "servants of God," and even as late as the second century sacred prostitution was still an honorable practice for women of good birth who felt the "call" to live the "divine life under the influence of divine inspiration."⁴⁵

In India and elsewhere, women who failed to bear children by their husbands visited the temples to perform fertility "rites." They remained overnight at the temples, where they were visited by priests who impersonated the terrible god. They returned home the following day, firmly convinced that a miracle had occurred—that the god had condescended to cohabit with them and that they would have a child.⁴⁶

The Eskimo women think themselves happy if one of their "holy" men cohabits with them.

In Phoenician temples, women prostituted themselves for hire in the belief that they thereby won the favor of the divinity. Among the Amorites it was a law that "she who was about to marry should sit in fornication seven days by the gate." In Lydia all girls were obliged to act as prostitutes before marriage.

Cutting off the hair of girls who become nuns probably had its origin in the custom which prevailed in Byblos, where the surrender of a woman's virginity to a "stranger" could be atoned for by shaving off her hair. When girls become Catholic nuns, they are mystically married to the Divine Bridegroom.⁴⁷

⁴³ Briffault, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 216.

⁴⁴ Westermarck, *Marriage*, Vol. 1, p. 137.

⁴⁵ Ellis, *op. cit.*, Vol. 6, pp. 234, 235.

⁴⁶ Briffault, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

At the memorial shrine of Al-Uzza at Mecca, it is the practice for women to offer themselves to the holy pilgrims. Children born of such unions are looked on as divinely blessed.⁴⁸

Among the Yezidis, a semi-Christian sect in Armenia, the priests who travel in itinerant groups select a "wife," if only for a day or two, at each place they stop at. The women who are chosen consider themselves lucky, because they are then regarded as having become holy.

In Egypt, the "holy" men go about naked. Women who desire to have children kneel before them. Not infrequently a priest will seize a woman and cohabit with her in the public street. No resentment is felt; indeed, the victim considers it a great blessing and her companions congratulate her on having been selected by the "representative of God." In recent times, in Damascus, the activities of one of these "saints" were so outrageous that the pasha had to put him in prison.⁴⁹

Religious prostitution of the Babylonian type was supposed to have been nothing but ordinary immorality practised under the cloak of religion. It has been represented as an act by which the worshiper sacrificed her most precious possession to the deity.⁵⁰

Among the Ewe-speaking people of the Slave Coast, the business of the priestess of the god to whom she is dedicated is that of prostitution. The best-looking girls between the ages of ten and twelve are put in an institution where they remain for three years, learning the chants and dances peculiar to the worship of the gods and submitting themselves to the priests and the inmates of the male seminaries.⁵¹ Children born of such unions belong to the gods. In India, dancing girls are attached to a great many temples. They feel honored when the priests in charge select them for sexual enjoyment. Among the Veddas, if an adult female cannot get anyone to marry her, she may be dedicated to a free life in the name of Yellamma,

⁴⁸ Briffault, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

⁴⁹ Briffault, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 228.

⁵⁰ Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 210.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

who is their patron deity.⁵² Among many Semitic tribes, girls were "consecrated" to a goddess of prostitution such as Ishtar.⁵³

If adultery is a sin, children should be prevented from being born of an adulterous union, and women who have been guilty of promiscuity should not be permitted to attain superior positions in life. Neither condition, however, prevails. On the contrary, the courtesans of Greece were noted for their intelligence and were by far the most important women of their time. They exercised more influence on the thought of their day than have women in any other age of the world. They were sought after not only for their physical charms and beauty, but also for their advice in worldly matters. Their salons sparkled with brilliant conversation, and social and political problems were first discussed with them.

Aspasia, who was as famous for her brilliance as for her beauty, was the passionate love of Pericles. She is said to have instructed him in eloquence and to have composed some of his famous orations. She was continually consulted on affairs of state, and Socrates, like other philosophers, attended her assemblies.

Socrates himself admitted his indebtedness to a courtesan named Diotimas. The gentle manners and disinterested affection of a courtesan named Bacchis were recalled and deeply mourned when her death was announced.⁵⁴ She was the mistress of the orator Hyperides, and her fidelity has become a legend of a woman's devotion to the man she loves.

Lais, whose matchless figure and lovely face had no equal except it be her remarkable wit and encyclopedic information, was extremely influential. She refused a fabulous sum from the orator Demosthenes for a sexual embrace, but willingly gave her charms to the ragged cynic Diogenes and the still more poverty-stricken philosopher Aristippus.⁵⁵

The courtesan Pythionice was sent by Alexander the Great to be

⁵² Westermarck, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

⁵⁴ Lecky, *Morals*, Vol. 2, pp. 120, 124.

⁵⁵ Sanger, *op. cit.*, pp. 53, 58.

the companion of his treasurer, Harpalus. She graced the palace and ruled Babylon with unusual ability. At her death, she was buried in a tomb that cost more than a king's ransom.

Leontium, whose lover was the great philosopher Epicurus, was herself a woman of rare ability, and the author of several books. A Milesian prostitute named Thargelia accompanied Xerxes on his invasion of Greece. Thargelia married the king of Thessaly.

The Empress Theodore was a notorious prostitute, yet is credited with liberalizing the law of Justinian. Radadopsis, who led the life of a prostitute in Egypt, became one of the leading citizens of her time, acquired wealth, and is even reputed to have had sufficient money and intelligence to build a pyramid.⁵⁶

RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS AND SEXUAL PROMISCUITY

Many of the religious festivals today are survivals of the belief, based upon sympathetic magic, that unrestrained sexual indulgence at harvest time increases the fertility of the land. During the yam festival, in Ashanti, the chief religious function of the year, the sexual behavior of the people is unrestrained. Sexual relations are freely indulged in by all attending, and no man is allowed to have intercourse with his wife.⁵⁷ In Morocco and North Africa, the most solemn religious feasts are made occasions for sexual license and prostitution. During early Christian times, May Day was notoriously the occasion for sexual license.

Alphonse de Liguori declared that in some parts of Italy the celebration in honor of the Holy Virgin was utterly profane. He warned the participants to stay away from the sanctuaries during the festivals, "for on such occasions," he said, "the Devil gains more profit than the Blessed Virgin derives honor from it." In the same kind of celebration among the Portuguese of Brazil, the women celebrants have an orgiastic dance in which they sing: "*Eu cago fogo! Donna Maria quer lamber.*"

⁵⁶ Sanger, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

⁵⁷ Briffault, *The Mothers*, Vol. 3, p. 200.

Among the North American Indians, sexual promiscuity was part of almost every religious ritual. Young women vied for the honor of having relations with the chief of the tribe. The Patagonians believe that drought and famine can be relieved by having their women offer themselves to the first strangers they meet.⁵⁸ The prevalence of this custom to appease the anger of the gods has been definitely established by anthropological authorities. It was probably because of this belief that David's wives were to be given to his neighbors for sexual enjoyment in order to atone for his many crimes. Nakedness and the exposure of the female body has also been considered pleasing to the gods. According to St. Cyril of Jerusalem, the Manichaeans regarded rain as the effect of amatory excitement on the part of the Deity.⁵⁹

Among the Peruvians, festival celebrations are part of the religious ceremony. After severe fasts and abstinence, men and women are assembled naked and at a given signal run a race and every man cohabits with the woman he catches.⁶⁰

In Central America, among the Pipeles, on the night that seeds are planted, certain persons are especially appointed to perform the sexual act at the exact moment the seed is deposited in the ground. Children born of these unions are regarded as possessing divine gifts and are accounted great prophets.⁶¹

CELIBACY

Is not the denial of the natural functions of the body just as wrong as their abuse? Is not one extreme just as contrary to nature as the other? If man possesses certain fundamental and necessary desires, are they not to be satisfied? If, under the influence of religious fanaticism, the flesh is mortified in an attempt to suppress the natural functions of the body, is this not just as wrong as the unrestrained indulgence of those functions? Virginitv and chastity are desirable

⁵⁸ Briffault, *op. cit.*, pp. 201, 202.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 205, 207.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

virtues at certain times and under certain conditions, but they become perversions as substitutes for marriage. Physically abnormal was the man who said, "He that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better."⁶² The religious celibate denounced sexual congress as a pollution of the soul and an affront to God. Many believed that married people were incapable of salvation.

St. John Chrysostom crystallized the thought of the Christian Fathers when he said: "Marriage is good, but virginity is better than marriage. If you would have my candid opinion on the matter, it is that I consider virginity to be as high above marriage as the heavens are above the earth." St. Thomas Aquinas said that virginity alone could make us equal to the angels.

These "inspired" opinions were confirmed by the decrees of the synods, and are embodied in the canon of the Council of Trent, in which it is laid down that "whosoever saith that the marriage state is to be placed above the state of virginity or of celibacy, and that it is not better and more blessed to remain in virginity or in celibacy, than to enter marriage, let him be anathema."⁶³

The Church taught that when a woman marries, she should feel the deepest sorrow for the loss of her virginity; also that if anyone felt the slightest passion in nudity with the opposite sex, he was a depraved human being. "Every woman," said Clement of Alexandria, "ought to be filled with shame at the thought that she is a woman." He stoutly maintained that marriage and fornication were not the same, but that the difference between marriage and adultery was so fine that it resolved itself into a mere legal fiction.⁶⁴ Tertullian said that a "stain upon our chastity is accounted by us as more dreadful than any punishment or any death." He recommended abstinence for the sake of adding to the efficacy of prayer.

Both these early Church Fathers condemned married life, and considered it their duty to dissuade women from cohabiting with their

⁶² Lea, *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy*, p. 41.

⁶³ Briffault, *The Mothers*, Vol. 3, p. 375.

⁶⁴ Lea, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

husbands. A woman who deserted her husband was an object of admiration. Anyone guilty of sexual intercourse, whether married or not, they thundered, could not enter heaven on the day of resurrection. St. Ambrose said that "married people ought to blush at the state in which they are living." He maintained that the race was born in a state of virginity and that to change that state was to deface the work of the Creator! Both St. Ambrose and Tertullian declared that the extinction of the human race was preferable to its propagation by sexual congress! Bishop Gregory of Nyssa held that Adam and Eve had been created sexless, and that the phrase "male and female created He them" referred to a subsequent act necessitated by Adam's disobedience. Had it not been for this disobedience, the propagation of life would have been accomplished by some mode of vegetation! ⁶⁵

St. Thomas Aquinas felt that marriage and the satisfaction of the sexual desires were obstacles to the love of God. He believed that salvation could be purchased by stifling human affections. The mortification of the flesh and suppression of the sexual impulse was thought to appease an angry God.⁶⁶

The imposition of continence and mortification of the flesh was merely another manifestation of the religious principle that suffering is pleasing in the sight of God and that the more man suffers here, the less he will endure hereafter. The joys of life were supposed to be inventions of the Devil. Sin and sex became synonymous terms. Gregory VII prescribed continence for priests and "looked with abhorrence on the contamination of the holy sacerdotal character, even in its lowest degree, by any sexual connection."⁶⁷

The mere thought that Mary, the mother of Jesus, had other children by her husband in the normal, natural way is repugnant to some devout people.

To the early Christian Fathers everything except absolute virginity was considered adultery; woman was regarded as "the tool of Satan."

⁶⁵ Briffault, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, pp. 372, 373.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 375.

⁶⁷ Lea, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

Hermes, the Shepherd, denounced all pleasure in sexual intercourse, the only excuse for which was propagation. He advocated that husband and wife should live as brother and sister! Justin Martyr preached "that total abstinence is a higher virtue and that sexual activity is unnecessary to life." St. Basil would speak to a woman only under extreme necessity. St. John of Lycopolis had not seen a woman for forty-eight years! St. Gregory suffered a haunting remorse because he chanced to touch the necklace of his niece.⁶⁸

A young Roman girl made a pilgrimage from Italy to Alexandria, to look at the face and obtain the prayers of St. Arsenius, into whose presence she forced herself. Quailing beneath his rebuff, she flung herself at his feet, imploring him with tears to grant her only request—to remember her and to pray for her. "Remember you!" cried the indignant saint. "It shall be the prayer of my life that I may forget you."⁶⁹ The Abbé Isaac, seeing a footprint of a woman on the road, became terribly agitated until he destroyed it for fear that "if a brother seeth it, he may fall."⁷⁰

When Linnaeus made his great discoveries in botany, religious people tried to suppress them on the ground that they were based on the discovery of the sexes in plants and were therefore calculated to cause immorality.⁷¹

When a virtue is made of filth, cleanliness has no charm. When ignorance and superstition are considered the highest virtue, knowledge and intelligence are condemned as heresies. When celibacy is considered holy, marriage is condemned as a sin.

Under the delusion of this belief, an actual epidemic of religiously insane ascetics was produced. It would require an immense volume to record all the hideously vicious things they did to themselves in order to stifle their sexual desires. The following instances, though

⁶⁸ Lea, *op. cit.*, p. 184; also Lecky, *Morals*, Vol. 2, p. 51.

⁶⁹ Lecky, *Morals*, Vol. 2, pp. 46, 48. Even the *Catholic Encyclopedia* admits both the scholarship and impartiality of Lecky as an historian. See Vol. 8, p. 128.

⁷⁰ Ellis, *Psychology of Sex*, Vol. 6, p. 185.

⁷¹ Lecky, *Rationalism*, Vol. 1, p. 16.

only a mere fragment, will give some idea of the extent of the perverted influence of religion.

St. Ammon had never seen himself naked. St. Besarion spent forty days and forty nights in the middle of thornbushes, and for forty years never lay down when he slept. St. Marcian restricted himself to one meal a day so that he would continually suffer the pangs of hunger. A sect known as "grazers" never lived under a roof, but spent their time on the mountainside, eating grass like the cattle.

Physical cleanliness was considered a pollution of the soul, and the most sainted ascetic was the one who became the most hideous mass of clotted filth. A virgin named Silva resolutely refused, on religious principles, to wash any part of her body except her fingers. St. Anthony was never guilty of washing his feet. St. Abraham for fifty years rigidly refused to wash either his face or his feet. St. Poemen consented to such an heretical act only when confronted by an old man who said that he had "learnt not to kill the body, but his passions." St. Euphraxia joined a convent of one hundred and thirty nuns who never washed their feet and who shuddered at the mention of a bath.⁷²

In order to live a life of chastity, men have been known to wear enormous rings on their prepuces so as to make sexual congress impossible.⁷³ The Christian sects of Skots, during the reign of Catherine II and Alexander I of Russia, resorted to castration as their means of assuring chastity. They destroyed the testicles with a hot iron, calling the operation a *baptism of fire*. If burning the testicles did not prove successful in completely destroying the passion of the flesh, the penis itself was cut off. In women, the genitals were mutilated, and if that was not sufficient, the nipples of the breasts, and sometimes the entire breasts were amputated. To them, original sin did not consist in eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge, but in relations between the sexes.⁷⁴

There is in existence the confession of a member of the Carthusian

⁷² Lecky, *Morals*, Vol. 2, pp. 46, 47.

⁷³ Mantegazza, *Sexual Relations of Mankind*, p. 97.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 106, 108.

Order in the monastery of Vallis Dei, near Séez in Normandy. He had every virtue, was earnest in his devotions, and practised mortification to an even greater degree than was prescribed by the severe rules of the order. He rarely slept on the couch provided for each brother, but passed his nights in prayer on the steps of the altar. In the hair shirt he wore next to his skin, he cultivated lice and maggots so assiduously that they were often seen crawling over his face. He scourged himself for every unhallowed wandering thought. But still the visions of sexual pleasures came to his mind. With all this laceration, the flesh would still assert itself, and he was tormented with evil desires which the sharp cords of the discipline failed to subdue. When he was forced to make frequent visits on business to the neighboring town, he never left the gate of his retreat without lamenting and expressing the fear that he should not return to it in the same virtuous condition in which he left. Although he preserved his virginity to old age, he nevertheless continually accused himself of having committed every sin possible to man.⁷⁵ O Galilean, thou didst not conquer!

To carry out his fanatical belief, St. Jerome stifled the longings of the flesh as described in his own words:

“How often, when I was living in the desert and the solitude that affords a savage dwelling place, parched by a burning sun, how often did I fancy myself amid the pleasures of Rome! I sought solitude because I was filled with bitterness. Sackcloth disfigured my misshapen limbs, and my skin had become by neglect as black as an Ethiopian’s. Tears and groans were every day my portion. I, who from fear of hell had confined myself to that prison where I had no other companions but scorpions and wild beasts, fancied myself amongst bevvies of young girls. My face was pale and my frame chilled with fasting; yet my mind was burning with the cravings of desire, and the fires of lust flared up from my flesh that was as that of a corpse. I do not blush to avow my abject misery. . . . So long as we are borne down by this frail body; so long as we have treason within this earthly vessel, so long as the flesh

⁷⁵ Lea, *op. cit.*, p. 306.

lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, there can be no sure victory.”⁷⁶

Tempted by an evil spirit in the guise of a beautiful maiden, St. Benedict of Nursia, finding his resolution to remain chaste on the point of yielding, threw himself into a thicket of brambles and nettles, through which he rolled until his naked body was lacerated from head to foot. The desires of the flesh were effectually conquered.⁷⁷

And to think that such “representatives of God” made our laws and governed our conduct for more than a thousand years. Is it any wonder that such a period was called the “Dark Ages”?

Female devotees of religious orders also mutilated themselves in order to stifle the natural impulses of sexual desire. The experiences of Sister Jeanne des Anges, Superior of the Convent of the Ursulines of London, are described in her autobiography: “These impurities and the fire of concupiscence which the evil spirit caused me to feel, beyond all that I can say, forced me to throw myself onto braziers of hot coal. . . . At other times, in the depth of winter, I have sometimes passed part of the night entirely naked in the snow or in tubs of icy water.”⁷⁸

There seems to be no limit to the self-inflicted tortures that these religiously fanatical human beings endured for the sake of “purity.” The blessed Angela de Fulginio tells us that, until forbidden by her confessor, she would place hot coals in her private parts, hoping by the use of material fire and heat to extinguish the burning lust that would surge through her body.⁷⁹

Mme. Guyon, who lived as late as the eighteenth century, is perhaps the most noted example of how the suppression of the natural sexual instincts distorts the mentality. She became “married” to God and would often acclaim that she loved him more than the most passionate lover his mistress. She craved “the love that thrills and burns and leaves one fainting in an inexpressible joy and pain.” So strong

⁷⁶ Briffault, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 372.

⁷⁷ Lea, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

⁷⁸ Leuba, *The Psychology of Religious Mysticism*, p. 160.

⁷⁹ Westermarck, *Marriage*, Vol. 1, p. 153.

did passion burn within her that she actually experienced an orgasm, which prompted her to say that if God would make sensual people feel as she did, they would give up their false pleasures of the flesh! The method by which she sought to stifle her sexual desires is too revolting to be recorded here.⁸⁰

The case of St. Marguerite Marie (1647–1690) varies only slightly. She was beatified in 1864 and only recently canonized. After seventeen months in a monastery, “she lay down on the pavement of the church, the sheet of the dead spread over her, and she rose again, radiant, for she was henceforth to be dead to the world.” She had become the bride of Christ. The method she practised to restrain her sexual feeling is too nauseating for repetition here, despite the fact that she hoped she would be able to do it every day. The following night Christ rewarded her for her self-mortification and held her in close embrace for two or three hours with her mouth pressed on his heart. Once, when Christ was crushing her by the weight of his love, he said to her: “Let me do my pleasure. There is time for everything. Now I want you to be the plaything of my love, and you must live thus without resistance, surrendered to my desires, allowing me to gratify myself at your expense.”⁸¹ As Professor Leuba remarks, this took place not in the Dark Ages, but in the latter half of the last century, and is recorded by a bishop of the Roman Catholic Church.

To suppress sexual desires, Catherine St. Cloud placed her body on a red-hot stove, while Catherine Ebner cut a cross over her heart and tore the Christian symbol off her body.⁸²

Those women—and there were many—who pledged spiritual matrimony to Christ, but who were unable to resist sexual congress with unmarried ecclesiastics, were denied holy communion at their death and were branded as adulterers of Christ! It was contended that if an ordinary husband found his wife enjoying sexual congress with another man and was provoked to violence by jealousy, then what must be the

⁸⁰ Leuba, *op. cit.*, pp. 77, 78.

⁸¹ Leuba, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

⁸² W. J. Fielding, *Love and the Sex Emotions*, p. 315.

indignation of Christ at such flagrant unfaithfulness! ⁸³ There was no expiation for "holy" adultery.

According to the rules of St. Caesarius for nuns, no male clothing was to be taken into the convents for the purpose of washing or mending. He feared that contact with male attire would stimulate the nuns' sexual desire for copulation or self-abuse.

St. Augustine maintained that the fall of Eve in the Garden of Eden caused the sex organs to become the seat of lust. Based upon this belief, religious societies were formed where there were to be no sexual relations whatever. Under the influence of this religious insanity, Origen emasculated himself and wanted to exclude all women from heaven as a corrupting influence. A sect called the Valesians is said to have obtained proselytes by forcibly mutilating anyone unfortunate enough to fall into their hands. Sextus Philosophus, popularly known as Sextus II, openly advocated mutilation of the genitals. As a result of this mania, an epidemic broke out among the Christian Fathers and each outdid the other in self-castration.⁸⁴

There is no limit to fanaticism, particularly when mixed with religious fervor. The whole system of Christian asceticism was based on the impurity of sex; as a consequence, anything that tended to arouse sexual excitement was condemned as a sin.

The frightful results of trying to impose such perverted ideas of sex on the world are already too well known to be recorded here. Humanity is still struggling to free itself from the inhibitions with which this repressive and perverted system enslaved it.

The lives that were ruined, the labors that were lost, the mentalities that were poisoned, can well be imagined from these cases of enforced asceticism. This perverted and fanatical way of life deprived the world of the fruits of the labors of men of strong will and unflinching determination, men who could have contributed wealth to the world and been recompensed by the joys of creating.

The result of this perversion of the human body destroyed whatever

⁸³ Westermarck, *Marriage*, Vol. 1, pp. 396, 405.

⁸⁴ May, *Social Control of Sexual Expression*, p. 51.

element of love it contained, and made Christianity not only a religion of chastity, but a religion of implacable hatred of all that was natural to our nature. This stifling of the ties of human affection is one of the unforgivable crimes of the Church. By the suppression of the natural impulses of love, Christianity made perverts of her devout believers and soldiers of hate against all those "vicious" enough to love and laugh. Celibacy had an altogether different effect from what was intended. Not all were capable of suppressing the natural desires of their sexual natures. Being restricted from seeking a normal outlet for the passions of the flesh, the "pious" were forced to satisfy their sexual longings through prohibited channels. The result was that while celibacy produced fanatical asceticism on the one hand, it was also the cause of the most demoralizing promiscuity on the other. The gross immorality that followed the imposition of celibacy on the clergy can never be completely recorded. Priests became adulterers and corrupters of the home, and nunneries became notorious brothels. Authoritative writers of the Middle Ages tell of nunneries that were like brothels, and of the widespread prevalence of incest among the priests, many of whom lived with their mothers and sisters.⁸⁵ John Knox committed adultery with his stepmother. Gregory, Bishop of Vercelli, was convicted of incest, having had relations with a widow betrothed to his uncle.

In an effort to impose celibacy on the priest, the clergyman's mother or sister was not permitted to sleep in the same house with him. Experience had taught them that no blood tie was strong enough to prevent sexual satisfaction.⁸⁶ The hot passions of the body easily overpower the cool resolutions of the mind.

No wonder St. Bernard said that for men and women to live together without having sexual relations was a greater miracle than raising the dead.⁸⁷

Cardinal Peter d'Ailly declared that the immorality in the nunneries was so notorious that it was common for girls who wanted to enter a

⁸⁵ Lecky, *Morals*, Vol. 2, p. 138.

⁸⁶ Lea, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-295.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

life of prostitution simply to take the veil. One of the reasons for the Church's denunciation of Savonarola was that he declared the nuns in the convents were no better than harlots, and that the whole fabric of morality was being corrupted by the adultery of members of the religious orders.⁸⁸

In order to remedy the evil of the widespread immorality existing in the nunneries, the Council of Saragossa forbade virgins to take the veil unless they were at least forty years of age.⁸⁹

When Sixtus III was tried for the seduction of a nun, he defended himself by repeating the story of the woman taken in adultery and quoted the words of Jesus: "He who is without sin should cast the first stone." The holy gentleman was not convicted.⁹⁰

In 1259, Alexander IV did not hesitate to declare that the people, instead of being reformed, were absolutely corrupted by the ministers who represented God on earth. Louis XV would amuse himself by causing the arrest of all ecclesiastics caught frequenting brothels. It never took long to secure several hundred.⁹¹ At one time in Spain the number of bastard children of the priests almost equaled the number of children of the laity!⁹²

Popes themselves furnished the examples for others to follow. Sergius III's bastard son sat in the pontifical chair, while John XII turned the Lateran Palace into a brothel. So notorious was his profligacy that women were deterred from going near the holy palace for fear of his promiscuous and unbridled lust.⁹³ Pope John XXIII was condemned for notorious incest, adultery, defilement and homicide. He confessed to having violated over two hundred maidens, including a number of nuns. After being deposed, he became Dean of the Sacred College!⁹⁴ A hundred years later, the Archbishop of Canterbury

⁸⁸ Lea, *op. cit.*, pp. 328-342.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 532.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 285.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 292.

No less a Catholic authority than the Reverend James M. Gillis, C.S.P., writing in the *Brooklyn Tablet* of February 17, 1945, admits to the truth, integrity and competency of Professor Henry C. Lea as a historian.

made an endeavor to curb the licentiousness of a certain bishop whose mistress had confessed that she had borne him five children. The bishop admitted his guilt to the archbishop, but claimed immunity on the ground that the acts had taken place in the confessional! ⁹⁵ St. Brice, in the diocese of Tours, was the father of a child born unseasonably to a nun.⁹⁶

If ever the world needed an instance of the utter and impossible relation of morality to religion, it is presented in the cases already recorded. Martin Luther condemned celibacy as "angelical in appearance, but devilish in reality, and a fertile source of sin, vice and corruption."⁹⁷

Cesare Lombroso, reviewing the history and causes of immorality among the celibate priesthood, in his *Crime: Its Causes and Remedies*, says:

"In other cities, the right to commit fornication with impunity for a lifetime could be obtained by the payment of a quarter cask of wine to the bishop's officer, who drew this privilege from the canon *De Dilectissimis* in the decretals of the Pope."

Lea, after a thorough and most painstaking analysis of this situation, was forced to conclude:

"An absolution and indulgence grew to be a marketable commodity, it even became the interest of the traders in salvation to have a brisk demand for their wares. When infraction of the divine precepts could be redeemed with a few pence, it is not surprising if priest and people at length were led to look upon the violation of the Decalogue with the eye of the merchant and customer rather than with the spirit of the Lawgiver."⁹⁸

Clerical celibacy not only corrupted the morality of the community, but, far more pernicious, it corrupted youths who came in contact with the clergy while under their guidance.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Lea, *op. cit.*, p. 243.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 355.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 302.

⁹⁹ Cf. E. Boyd Barrett, *Jesuit Enigma*, p. 187.

If our sense of morality causes us to pass laws to prohibit polygamy, then why not laws to prohibit something far more detrimental to morality than a plurality of wives? If adultery is wrong, then the celibacy of priests is equally so. If the former is in violation of this Commandment, then the other is a secret perversion of it.¹⁰⁰ How much longer will the moral conscience of mankind tolerate the unnatural and corrupting influence of sacerdotal celibates?

THE CONFSSIONAL

It is with reluctance that I discuss the institution of the confessional in relation to this Commandment. No one can read the history of that institution, however, without feeling that unscrupulous priests used it as a medium to commit adultery with their female parishioners under the guise of saving their souls.

This conduct eventually brought on the confessional the condemnation it deserved, but that did not erase the sorrow and misery female penitents had already suffered. The contagion of sexual corruption which such men spread through the medium of the confessional is hardly believable were it not for authentic court records and judicial evidence minutely detailed at the trials of these debauchers who preached that adultery was a mortal sin.¹⁰¹

The Supreme Council of the Spanish Inquisition ruled that solicitation either before or after confession was no crime. Years of debate were required to determine whether a priest was guilty of violating his vows if he secured a girl for another priest's sexual pleasure.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ A great many people do not know the real meaning of priestly celibacy as enjoined by the Catholic Church. The general impression is that both celibacy and chastity are imposed on all priests. This is not true. Celibacy and chastity are required of only a small number of priests who are members of certain specific orders. The majority of priests—in the lay category—are pledged only to celibacy. This simply means, in Catholic theology, *that they will not legally marry*. They take no vow of chastity, and sexual indulgence therefore does not in the slightest degree affect their celibate status. *The Converted Catholic*, Dec., 1942 (L. H. Lehmann, "The Tyranny of Priestly Celibacy").

¹⁰¹ Lea, *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy*, p. 54.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 504.

Yet, despite the devious and subtle methods permitted in the confessional to commit adultery, many scandals were reported to the Church tribunal. Typical was the case of Hilario Caone, of Besançon, an uncurbed profligate who confessed that he had solicited with success some forty women while performing his duties in the Church of San Francisco de Paula of Seville.¹⁰³ Fernando de Valdes confessed having solicited with successful results seven single and three married women and one pregnant woman while in confession!¹⁰⁴ He openly boasted of his sexual conquests and made no secret of his illicit affairs with his female penitents while dispensing absolution!

Abbé Mallet, Canon of Cambria, seduced three Jewish girls and then procured their confinement in convents under the pretext that he was laboring for their conversion! One of the girls went insane as the result of her suffering. Although the Abbé was condemned for his acts of seduction, Church officials defended his conduct on the ground that any offense of religious proselytism was justified. This permitted the worst criminals to wear the cloaks of the martyrs of faith.¹⁰⁵

Priestly solicitation in the confessional became so brazen and shameless that Pope Pius IV issued a bull in 1561 to investigate and punish all confessors guilty of soliciting women during the act of confession.¹⁰⁶

Lea records a case which attracted a great deal of attention in his time. Antoine Mingrat, a priest of Saint Aupe, created scandal by his amours. He was attracted by a young married woman named Marie Gerin and he made a brutal but unsuccessful attack on her virtue. This made it necessary for him to dispose of her. He choked her to death in the parsonage and dragged the body three-quarters of a mile to another town, where he cut off the legs and threw the fragments into the river. He was simply transferred to Saint Quentin and

¹⁰³ Lea, *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy*, p. 517.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 524.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 572.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 501.

allowed to continue his nefarious work without suffering the slightest punishment.¹⁰⁷

In a case recorded as late as 1898, a priest heard the confession of his laundress that she had once committed adultery. When she finished, he told her to wait for him in the anteroom. There, after some talk about his clothes, he made suggestive advances to her which she did not repulse. When she attended mass, he would beckon her to his confessional and make appointments to visit her at her house, finally taking and supporting her as his mistress.¹⁰⁸

History does not record a more revolting abuse of the confessional than that which occurred in our own time. Within the lifetime of the author, there floated down the Hudson River a bloodstained sack which contained the dismembered body of a woman. She had been brutally attacked and murdered. Once the woman's identity was established, it did not take the police of New York long to apprehend the culprit. Several days elapsed, however, before an arrest was made because the evidence of the crime pointed to a Catholic priest—Father "Hans" (Johannes) Schmidt! Being inculcated early in life with the religion of Catholicism, he had been, since his pre-adolescent years, peculiarly affected by the rite of blood atonement, and as a result the sight of blood always had a sexually stimulating effect on him. In fact, so obsessed was he with the element of blood that he used to believe that he was God's favorite priest because on many occasions he imagined he saw real blood in the chalice.

When he first met his victim, Anna Aumüller, who had come to him for confession, he said he fainted. Shortly thereafter, he began to cohabit with her. After this had continued for some time, he asked himself whether he was doing right. He knew he was offending the laws of the priesthood, but felt that if God had given him those feelings and the necessary faculties, he had the right to satisfy them. To make certain, he had sexual relations with her at the altar, meanwhile watching the chalice to see whether God would give him a sign express-

¹⁰⁷ Lea, *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy*, p. 572.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 568.

ing his disapproval. As there was so sign, he thought God approved. It is quite likely that he killed Anna Aumüller because she was pregnant. Perhaps the strangest thing about this atrocious case is the fact that when asked whether he was at peace with God, the murderer said he was! His conscience was clear.

Nor must we fail to mention another recent case where confession was the lure to seduction and adultery—and finally murder. That is the case of the Rev. Joseph J. Leonard, a Catholic priest, and Mrs. Ruth Steinmetz, a comely bride of two weeks. It happened in the Knights of Columbus Hotel (now the Capitol Hotel) in New York City on the evening of November 26, 1934.¹⁰⁹

Mrs. Ruth Steinmetz and her husband came to New York on their honeymoon. She was seventeen and her husband a twenty-two-year-old divinity student. The Rev. Joseph J. Leonard was in New York on a visit. While Ruth Steinmetz and her husband were in the lobby of the hotel, she was approached by Father Leonard, who lost no time in making the acquaintance of the couple. He told them he was the Pastor of the Chapel of Our Lady of the Rosary and spiritual director of the Morris Hall Home for the Aged at Lawrenceville, New Jersey, and asked how long it had been since Mrs. Steinmetz went to confession. When she guiltily admitted it was quite some time, the Rev. Joseph J. Leonard replied: "I will hear your confession, and I think you had better come to my room, where we won't be disturbed." So they went to the room where Father Joseph J. Leonard of Lawrenceville, New Jersey, had registered as "John J. Leonard of Trenton, New Jersey," while the young husband remained outside. The girl returned, however, within a few minutes to tell her husband that the priest had invited them to lunch. While at the restaurant, Father Leonard treated them to highballs, and drank so fast that his two young guests had great difficulty in keeping up with him. After lunch they returned to the hotel and went to the room occupied by the couple. Leonard suggested that Harry go to sleep, and the young

¹⁰⁹ *New York Times*; *Daily News*, Oct. 31, 1937.

husband fell into an alcoholic stupor. Suddenly awaking, he discovered that his wife and the priest were gone!

He hurriedly went to the priest's room and placed his ear against the keyhole. What he heard made him try to enter. The door was locked! He knocked, saying he was the bellboy. As Leonard opened the door, he pushed his way in and found the priest stripped. . . . Then he saw his wife, partly undressed, crouching beside the bed. He cried: "You can't do this to my wife!" Remembering that he had given the priest his loaded pistol to hold for him, the drunk-crazed youth took it from the priest's coat pocket and in frenzy cried: "She's my wife! You've —— her, and now you are going to hell!" Five shots were fired. One penetrated the priest's back and entered the chest of the wife. The "confession" was over, but the priest and the wife were dead.

Church officials made haste to explain that Leonard had not been mentally well. This was also the explanation regarding the murderous action of Schmidt. Confession did not prove good for the souls of Ruth Steinmetz and Anna Aumüller; it merely brought about their deaths.

Of what value is the institution of the confessional to the morality of the community, when the preachers of a doctrine are guilty of committing the very acts which they condemn in others as a mortal sin?

EROTIC ADULTERY

Is it a violation of this Commandment to commit adultery in a dream? There is ample evidence in the Bible that such an act was given serious consideration and condemned as "unclean," the Biblical word for being ritually taboo. I quote *Leviticus, Chapter 15, verses 16 and 17*:

16 And if any man's seed of copulation go out from him, then he shall wash all his flesh in water, and be unclean until the even.

17 And every garment, and every skin, whereon is the seed of copulation, shall be washed with water, and be unclean until the even.

If this quotation is a condemnation of dream pollution, then every potent man and every woman with a healthy libido has been guilty of violating this Commandment. Not all dreams have sexual motives, yet it cannot be denied that dreams of a sexual nature are of erotic origin, and are often the fulfillment of desires experienced during waking hours. I quote *Deuteronomy, Chapter 23, verses 9 to 11*:

9 When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing.

10 If there be among you any man, that is not clean by reason of uncleanness that chanceth him by night, then shall he go abroad out of the camp, he shall not come within the camp:

11 But it shall be, when evening cometh on, he shall wash *himself* with water: and when the sun is down, he shall come into the camp *again*.

This is a recognition by the Bible writer of the prevalence of erotic dreams among soldiers as a result of prolonged continence. The taboo of "uncleanness" associated with its manifestation is indicative of the fear of pollution in matters concerning sex, and the necessity for purification.

Celibates notoriously have erotic dreams, as is proved by their diaries and confessions. Married men and women who have practised continence for some time reveal their subjection and complete surrender to the erotic impulse while asleep. Sexually repressed unmarried women and sexually unsatisfied married women habitually have erotic dreams. In the dream state they can be completely abandoned to their passions, and invariably their phantom partners explore their sexual regions and stimulate their erotic zones in a manner not experienced while awake. What their husbands and lovers fail to give them while awake, these creatures of the night bring them in the painful but inexpressible ecstasy which their unsatisfied libido craves. It is not uncommon for a married woman utterly unaware of any attraction for a man to dream of having relations with him. Equally stimulating are the sexual congresses with phallic symbols. While

dreaming, women have had violent sexual intercourse with snakes and other objects representing the male organ.¹¹⁰

Even among primitive peoples, erotic dreams have their meaning and significance. The Papuans believe that before a young girl begins to menstruate, she dreams that the moon in the shape of a man has intercourse with her.¹¹¹

Men dream of harems where seductive women are as plentiful as fruit in an orchard and where convention and restrictions are unknown. Men known to be wholly devoted to their wives who would no more think of committing adultery than they would think of robbing a bank have confessed to having experienced coitus in dreams with women of their acquaintance and unknown women.

It is equally common for a woman, especially after having experienced some unpleasantness with the opposite sex, to dream of being in a remote part of the earth wholly unfamiliar to her, and surrounded by men she has never seen before. After selecting the man she wants, she experiences the most violent love-making, in a manner heretofore unknown, climaxed by an orgasm of inexpressible joy.¹¹²

There is no accounting for the eerie figures of sexually stimulated imagination which take form, nor for the manner or shape in which they appear.

Among primitives it is believed that erotic dreams are due to their god's desire to copulate with them. From this belief, evidently, comes the superstition that many children are begotten of God.¹¹³

The waking imagination of man has never been able to equal the realities of dreams. In no realm of the unconscious is this so evident as in the activities of sexual conduct. The freedom of action from both legal and social barriers, the choice of partners, the lack of convention, the disregard for the presence of others, the force and vitality of the orgiastic climax are certainly equal to the conscious activities of men and women. While in the dream state, these per-

¹¹⁰ Ellis, *Psychology of Sex*, Vol. 1, p. 193.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 202.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

formances and the emotional responses and physical reactions are identical in results with those experienced and performed during waking hours, the only difference being the consequences! If such acts in the awakened state are violations of this Commandment, in what category is one to place those committed in the dream state?

ADULTERY AND THE VARIED SEXUAL CUSTOMS OF MANKIND

We know that morality is subject to the process of evolution and that standards of morality vary according to climate, culture and condition of the people. We also know that because of the complicated sex mechanism and the great functional differences between man and woman, every conceivable variety of sexual conduct has been practised by the peoples in the different inhabited areas of the earth. What relationship do these varied forms of sexual conduct bear to this Commandment? Why is adultery condemned in some communities as the most heinous of offenses, while in other communities it is as unheeded as myriad other forms of physical action? Does the economic value of a woman enter into the evaluation of her sexual behavior? Is sexual purity measured for its pecuniary value, or for its virtue? Does the fear of blood pollution discount the value of woman's chastity? Is adultery condemned because of its effect on the husband, the family, the tribe or the community? If adultery is condemned, is it because of private or public concern?

Professor James Henry Breasted warns us that "it is important to bear in mind the now commonly accepted fact that in its primitive stages, religion had nothing to do with morals as understood by us today."¹¹⁴

In early Hebrew tribal life, the woman who went to her grave unmarried was disgraced. It was her duty to marry and bear a son, in the hope that he would prove the much longed-for Messiah who

¹¹⁴ Breasted, *The Dawn of Conscience*, p. 18.

would lead his people to salvation. Yet the girl who was not a virgin was denied the privilege of marriage.

That the morality of the Bible is based on a most primitive code of sexual conduct is illustrated by the following passage from *Deuteronomy, Chapter 22, verses 13 to 21*:

13 If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her,

14 And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid:

15 Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth *the tokens of the damsel's virginity* unto the elders of the city in the gate:

16 And the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her;

17 And, lo, he hath given occasions of speech *against her*, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these *are the tokens of my daughter's virginity*. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city.

18 And the elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him;

19 And they shall amerce him in a hundred *shekels* of silver, and give *them* unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days.

20 But if this thing be true, *and the tokens of virginity* be not found for the damsel:

21 Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die; because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you.

VIRGINITY

But if the signs of virginity are fraudulent and the "*tokens of virginity* be not found for the damsel," what happens if she "play the whore in her father's house"? She "shall be stoned with stones that she die." In other words, death was to be the penalty for unchastity.

Does this not show that Biblical morality belongs in the same category as that of other primitive tribes that likewise determined the bride's sexual purity by the cloths on her marriage bed which showed signs of her virginity?

Among the Mandigos the blood-stained sheet of the marriage bed is carried through the streets of the village for all to see. A similar practice prevails among the Kulngo Negroes of the French Sudan. In Southern Celebes the "proofs of virginity" are exhibited to the guests on a silver plate. In other places the cloth is examined by a jury of matrons. Among the Bedawi it used to be the rule to leave the blood-stained cloth bearing "proofs" of the bride's virginity on a lance in the middle of the village for several days. In some instances it was hung out of a window; in others it was carried from house to house. Among the nobles of the Line Islanders, proof of virginity is required on marriage.

In Tonga the nuptial mat was paraded from house to house.

In Greece and Sicily the bride's nightgown was left hanging from her window for several days. In some provinces of Peru the mother publicly deflowers her daughters before witnesses of the marriage contract.

The defloration of the brides of kings was an occasion for great public demonstrations.¹¹⁵ When Charles V of Spain married Isabel of Braganza, the "proofs" of her virginity were solemnly exhibited for inspection to the assembled grandees.

CHASTITY

The sexual purity of women has always exercised a peculiar fascination over men. The prayer of a vestal virgin was supposed to be able to arrest a thief in his flight. In the story of Claudia, a ship bearing the image of the mother of the gods had been stranded in the Tiber. A vestal virgin attached her girdle to its prow and with her

¹¹⁵ Briffault, *The Mothers*, Vol. 3, pp. 340, 343.

virgin hand drew the ponderous mass which strong men had sought in vain to move.¹¹⁶

According to the Chinese legend, on which perhaps the story of the virgin birth of Jesus was based, when but one man and one woman lived on the earth, the woman refused to sacrifice her virginity even to people the globe. The gods, honoring her purity, granted that she conceive beneath the gaze of her lover's eyes, and thus a virgin mother became the parent of humanity.¹¹⁷

Christianity regarded virginity as woman's greatest possession. It is the Christian belief that if a girl dies a virgin, she is more likely to be blessed in heaven for her purity. In fact, we have innumerable instances where sexual purity has become such a fetish that fathers have murdered their daughters for fear that they would become polluted by sex contact.

In some primitive tribes, chastity is regarded as woman's greatest virtue. Among the East African Takue, the seducer of a girl generally pays with his life. The Baziba look on illegitimate intercourse as a serious offense. If the crime is discovered, both the man and the woman are bound hand and foot and thrown into the water to drown. In Dahomey a man who seduces a girl is forced by law to marry her. In Persia an unmarried girl who gave birth to a child would be killed.

The Karaya, a Brazilian tribe, consider sexual intercourse out of wedlock a serious offense to be severely punished, sometimes even by death.¹¹⁸ The Algerian Berbers do not tolerate sexual relations out of wedlock. In Morocco a bride who is found not to be a virgin is frequently sent away by her husband, and in some tribes she is killed by her brother. Illegitimate children are generally killed together with the mother.¹¹⁹ Among the Hindus, female inconstancy is considered abominable. Prostitutes are looked on as the most degraded of the human race. In the Avesta, the religious book of Zoroastrianism, it is written: "Any woman that has given up her body to two men in one

¹¹⁶ Lecky, *Morals*, Vol. 1, p. 44.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ Westermarck, *Marriage*, Vol. 1, p. 139.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

day is sooner to be killed than a wolf, a lion or a tiger." In Greece the chastity of an unmarried girl is anxiously guarded.¹²⁰

Yet the existence of the hymen is no guarantee of sexual purity. The ignorant belief that it is has undoubtedly been the cause of much unmerited suffering. A girl may be perfectly chaste and yet have a ruptured hymen, sometimes without her knowledge, due to a strenuous athletic life.

THE PRIVILEGE OF THE FIRST NIGHT

Even where virginity was demanded of the bride, the taboo associated with spilling the first blood in the act of defloration was at times so strong among certain tribes that it was performed by priests or others specially appointed for such tasks.

When the Philippine Islands were discovered, it was found that virginity in girls was a hindrance to marriage, and that men made it a profession to deflower girls at the age of puberty. Among the Todas of the Nilgiris, in Southern India, a man of strong physique, generally from another clan, spends one night with a girl for the purpose of deflowering her just before she matures. If she waits until after the signs of her puberty, it is considered a disgrace. The women of Nayar beg the men to deprive them of their virginity because otherwise they are unable to secure a husband.

When a young woman of the Queensland tribes shows signs of puberty, two or three men take her away, and she has to submit to intercourse with all. After this, she is considered eligible for marriage.¹²¹ In our society, this would be condemned as the most vicious kind of rape and severely punished; but in certain communities it is an accepted common occurrence.

Chinese women paid Buddhist priests to deflower their daughters before marriage. This was usually done when the girls were from seven to nine years of age.¹²² In Tibet and in Portugal, women gave their children to strangers to be deflowered. On the coast of Malabar,

¹²⁰ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 2, pp. 426, 428-429.

¹²¹ *Idem*, *Marriage*, Vol. 1, p. 120.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 171.

if a girl died with her maidenhood, some male member of the family deflowered her before her burial for fear that she would be denied the benefits of an afterlife.¹²³

The king of Tenasserain permitted his bride to be deflowered by a white man. In fact, it was regarded as a great benefit when it was performed by a stranger.¹²⁴

This taboo takes different forms in different communities. When a Nasamonian marries, says an authority, it is the custom for the bride to lie with all the guests in turn, and each, when he has had intercourse with her, gives her some present which he has brought with him. In the Balearic Isles, the oldest friends lie with the bride first. A similar custom prevails among the savages of Australia, where the bridegroom seldom has his bride to himself until two or three nights after the wedding ceremony. Briffault suggests that the widespread custom of giving all male guests at the wedding night the right to kiss the bride, or dance with her, is merely a symbolic farewell to her days of freedom.¹²⁵

In Morocco the best man is present when the bridegroom has relations with the bride and claims his share of the pleasure. Other customs among them are not fit to mention.¹²⁶

The Kamchadal bridegroom who finds his wife a virgin is greatly put out. He fears to be the first to have intercourse with her because of the *taboo* against spilling blood, and secures the services of the priest to perform the act.¹²⁷ In Guatemala, and among the Arawaks, it was customary for the high priest to spend the first night with the bride. The Samorin must not cohabit with his bride until the chief priest has done so, because the "first fruits" of her nuptials must be a holy oblation to the god she worships. The priest acts as the god's representative.¹²⁸

¹²³ Westermarck, *Marriage*, p. 344.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

¹²⁵ Briffault, *The Mothers*, Vol. 3, pp. 223, 227.

¹²⁶ Westermarck, *Marriage*, Vol. 1, p. 205.

¹²⁷ Briffault, *op. cit.*, p. 316.

¹²⁸ Westermarck, *Marriage*, Vol. 1, p. 171.

The kings of Uganda and of Calicut demanded virginity of their brides, but at their own request had them deflowered by proxy, for fear of the taboo of spilling blood.

The first communion, now performed as a rite of the Catholic Church, is said to be a survival of the deflowering of a maiden by the priests in early times.¹²⁹ In the Talmud also, we read that the virgin, before going to her husband, must sleep with the Taphsar.¹³⁰

It was not until 1642, in Catalonia, that the privilege of the first night as belonging to the clergy was abolished. Until that time the priest either enjoyed the first embrace or passed over the peasants in bed as a symbol of his right.¹³¹

The Bishop of Amiens was prevailed on to abolish the custom of demanding a large sum from the bridegroom for the privilege of having conjugal relations with his wife for the first three nights.¹³²

Undoubtedly, the custom which demanded the privileges of the first night with the peasant's bride is a survival of the marriage customs of primitive societies in which priests enjoyed this privilege for many and varied reasons associated with deflowering. When priests lost power over the people due to the decline of superstition, the secular rulers usurped, wherever possible, the privileges which the priests had enjoyed through fears and taboos. As a result of this, the deflowering of the bride by the lords of the manors continued for some time, although it occasionally met with serious opposition, and was one of the contributing causes of the downfall of medieval feudalism. *Le droit du Seigneur* existed in parts of France until the eve of the French Revolution.

In ancient Ireland it was not only a king's right but his duty to deflower brides before they were handed over to their husbands; and King Conchobarn is praised in an ancient record for his punctilious devotion to duty in having destroyed the virginity of every maid in Ulster. Among the Guanches of the Canaries, it was a matter of

¹²⁹ Briffault, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

¹³⁰ Mantegazza, *Sexual Relations of Mankind*, p. 206.

¹³¹ Lea, *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy*, p. 301.

¹³² Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 178.

considerable anxiety to the bridegroom that the services of a prince of royal blood should be obtained to deflower his bride, for unless a prince could be persuaded to bestow this favor on him, his children would be regarded as bastards and the marriage would be null and void.¹³³ If the woman became pregnant, her child was considered of noble heritage. The children born from relations with her husband were considered commoners.¹³⁴ When one of the great lords of Goa married, it was the custom for him to take his bride to the sovereign and ask him to sleep with her the first three nights.

This custom was widely prevalent throughout medieval as well as primitive times. Histories of Scotland record that King Evenus III enacted a law which authorized his successors to lie with every bride before her husband could approach her. This law remained in force for more than a thousand years. When the custom was abolished, the bridegroom had to pay a tax for the privilege of the first night with his bride.¹³⁵

How are we to judge the standard of sexual acts when among certain peoples it was the custom for even fathers to deflower their daughters? When a Singhalese gave his daughter in marriage, he first slept with her himself on the ground that he had a right to the first fruit of the tree he had planted! ¹³⁶

PROMISCUITY

Just as there are societies where virginity is demanded as a sign of purity, there are also communities where it is of no consideration in evaluating a woman.

Among the Point Barrow Eskimos there is a complete absence of what we consider a moral feeling in relations between the sexes, and promiscuous sexual conduct is taken as a matter of course even among

¹³³ Briffault, *op. cit.*, pp. 230, 231.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

¹³⁵ Westermarck, *Marriage*, Vol. 1, p. 174.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

children.¹³⁷ In the Solomon Islands female chastity is practically unknown, and for two or three years after a girl becomes eligible for marriage she distributes her sexual favors among all the young men of the village. Virginity in a bride has little value to the Kamchdales, and among the Bakongo a woman's honor is measured by the price she costs.

Among the Yakuts and the Tshi-speaking peoples of the Gold Coast, chastity *per se* is of no great importance. It is maintained only because it is the duty of a daughter not to diminish her father's property value in her. Where there is no expectation of selling her, he is little concerned with her sexual indulgences.¹³⁸ In British Central Africa scarcely any girl remains a virgin after the age of five.¹³⁹ Yet, among many of these same people, a woman who shows her face to a stranger is condemned as being guilty of adultery. This is considered the most immoral act she could perform and is often punished by death.

Among the North American Indians a slightly different rule prevails. Here an unmarried girl may indulge in promiscuous relations with members of the tribe, but no inducement could tempt her to have relations with an outsider, particularly a white man. The Missouri Indians consider one of the duties of hospitality to provide visitors with temporary wives, but these must be representatives of other nations. At the present day, among the Indians of the Utah reservation, where complete promiscuity exists, the women refuse to have sexual relations with members of other tribes or with white men. More severe is the rule of the Caribbean races of the Mosquito Coast. Here sexual relations among them are unrestricted, but any woman having relations with one outside the tribe is condemned as an adulteress and put to death. The Masai, whose organized prenuptial love is notorious, will beat a woman to death who has sexual intercourse with a European.¹⁴⁰ The Munda Kols severely punish a girl who is seduced by a

¹³⁷ Westermarck, *Marriage*, p. 136; Vol. 2, pp. 421-424.

¹³⁸ May, *Social Control of Sexual Expression*, pp. 4, 5.

¹³⁹ Westermarck, *Marriage*, Vol. 3, p. 65.

¹⁴⁰ Briffault, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 18, 20.

Hindu, whereas intercourse with a man of their own people is regarded by most of them as a matter of course. Among the Barolongs, death was formerly inflicted on anyone who had intercourse with a European.¹⁴¹

Free sexual intercourse prevails among the young of West African Pangwe, and if the trial proves satisfactory it generally leads to marriage.¹⁴² A similar custom, we are told, prevailed in Scotland and was known as "handfasting." At public fairs men would select female companions, with whom they cohabited. At the end of the year they would either marry or separate. The same custom, in a slightly different form, prevailed in Ireland and Wales.¹⁴³

Among the New Zealand aborigines, a girl's sexual conduct before marriage is her own affair. However, after marriage she remains faithful to her husband. So ingrained is this sentiment of fidelity that girls who submit to strangers for temporary entertainment permit no other men to possess them during that period. Unrestricted license before marriage and fidelity after marriage prevail also among the Land and Sea Dayaks.

Among the Pogy Islanders, cohabitation between unmarried persons is neither a crime nor a disgrace. The girl who has many lovers is much in demand as a wife; the one who had more experience before marriage is considered the more faithful after marriage. Marco Polo noted that in Tibet the more tokens a girl carried around her neck from her lovers, the more sought after she was as a wife. The Brames reckon it a special merit if their wives are noted for their numerous lovers.¹⁴⁴

In certain parts of British East Africa a pregnant girl is considered more desirable for marriage, and among the Bagas-Foreh, in French Guinea, a young woman cannot hope to find a husband unless she has

¹⁴¹ Westermarck, *Marriage*, Vol. 2, p. 40. The Biblical Hebrew was also forbidden to marry outside the tribe on pain of death.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 135.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Briffault, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 316.

two children old enough to walk.¹⁴⁵ They regard a girl who is still a virgin as having no desirable qualities that attract a man.

In Runiana it is desirable for a young woman to cohabit with as many men as possible within a short time. The Hawaiians regard it as a meanness for a man or woman to refuse a solicitation for sexual gratification. The young girls of Madison's Island, of the Marquesas, are the wives of all who can purchase their favors, and a handsome daughter is considered a blessing by her parents because she brings them wealth.¹⁴⁶

Among certain tribes sexual conduct is a matter of indifference. They look upon the sex act as of no more significance than any other physical function.

MODESTY

In primitive customs, especially in the realm of sexual morality, it is discovered that even modesty is of recent origin. The years can be counted since the time that the genital organs were covered from the gaze of the opposite sex.

Among the Negritos of the Andaman Islands, copulation takes place anywhere, in the presence of men, women or children. The Fuegians have no inhibitions against performing the sexual act in public. In Tahiti, copulation used to take place in public, and it was stated that the ladies of the court watched with complete unconcern. It is said that such scenes are quite frequent among the Maori even today. The Indians of New Mexico cohabit in public. The Botocudos are perfectly indifferent to the presence of relatives or friends when performing the sex act.¹⁴⁷

In many savage tribes where there are no taboos associated with sex, the sexual act is considered an amusing sport when indulged in by children. Like their elders, they give presents before hiding themselves in the bushes and imitating them in copulation.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Westermarck, *Marriage*, Vol. 1, p. 161.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

¹⁴⁷ Briffault, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 316.

¹⁴⁸ B. Malinowski, *Sexual Life of Savages*, Vol. 1, p. 56.

Among the Bantu Kavirondo, the bridegroom performs the first act of intercourse with his bride in the presence of women and girls; and among the Lower Congo people, the act is witnessed to see that the husband is potent. If he is unable to consummate the act, the marriage is dissolved.¹⁴⁹ In Sweden and Teutonic countries, until quite recent times, the bride and bridegroom undressed before the guests and went to bed in their presence before they would depart.¹⁵⁰

SEXUAL HOSPITALITY

There exists also in primitive societies what has been called "hospitality prostitution." Among the Kacoodja, a man going away for some time hands his wife over to a friend, who is entitled to cohabit with her. A guest of the Assains (an Arab tribe living in the south of Kortium) is given a house and a woman for the time that he remains with the tribe. Among certain tribes it is considered the height of courtesy for the chief of the tribe to offer his wife to strangers as a gesture of good will.¹⁵¹

The Sioux Indians, in order to show friendship to those they love, offer their wives to them. To refuse is an insult. But if the friend should seek the wife on another occasion without the husband's consent, he would be killed. Other tribes do likewise. The choicest females are offered as a mark of gracious hospitality to strangers, but none dare take a woman without previous consent.¹⁵²

Among the Maori it was a point of hospitality, when a strange chief of high rank paid a visit, for the host to send his guest a temporary wife or wives. In British Columbia, the temporary gift of a wife is one of the greatest honors that can be bestowed upon a guest. The Eskimos also considered it an act of generous hospitality.¹⁵³ In Melanesia, a husband may offer his wife to a friend as an expression

¹⁴⁹ Westermarck, *Marriage*, Vol. 2, p. 436.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 437.

¹⁵¹ Malinowski, *op. cit.*, p. 323.

¹⁵² Briffault, *op. cit.*, pp. 103, 107.

¹⁵³ Westermarck, *Marriage*, Vol. 1, p. 227.

of hospitality. The Koryaks consider it the height of affrontery if a friend refuses to share his wife or daughter. In Madagascar, a missionary barely escaped being murdered because he refused to accept the wife of one of his native acquaintances. It was considered the greatest of insults.¹⁵⁴

Among the Bakunta, on the shores of Lake Edward, a woman after marriage was expected to admit any of her husband's friends to her favors. It is the source of great pride to rich men, who possess many wives, to entertain numerous guests of their clan and provide each one with a separate hut and a wife.

GROUP MARRIAGE

Among the Gilyak, the younger brother is permitted during the husband's absence to have sexual relations with his wife.¹⁵⁵ The same is true in Eastern Tibet and Sikkim. Among other tribes, the brothers, each in turn, enjoy the wife of the eldest, and in many instances the wife selects those who are to cohabit with her.¹⁵⁶ Sometimes, when a woman is married to one man and desires another, she is permitted the embrace of both.¹⁵⁷

The Negroes of Angola exchanged wives to break the monotony of life. The Eskimos of Fury and Kekla Straits, when on a fishing or sealing excursion for any length of time, often exchange wives as a matter of friendly convenience.¹⁵⁸

When two tribal brothers of the Darling tribes of New South Wales have quarreled and wish a reconciliation, one sends his wife to the other's camp and a temporary exchange is effected.¹⁵⁹

Among the Eskimos of Bering Straits it is quite common for two men in near-by villages to agree to become bond-fellows. This permits

¹⁵⁴ Briffault, *op cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 636.

¹⁵⁵ Westermarck, *Marriage*, Vol. 3, p. 110.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 232.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

them the use of each other's wives. It is said that when this agreement prevails, the children, unable to know who their father is, consider one another brothers and sisters. In Repulse Bay it is the usual thing for friends to exchange wives for a week or two. Very often wives are so exchanged that each woman goes from man to man until she has passed through the hands of all.¹⁶⁰ In the Malay Peninsula, during the rice harvest, the men of the Jakun tribes exchange wives.¹⁶¹ Even today in our own country one often hears of men exchanging wives while away together on vacations.

FIDELITY AND UNFAITHFULNESS

In some societies conjugal fidelity applies only to the woman. There are, however, some primitive tribes not blessed with the divine knowledge of the Decalogue who prove interesting exceptions to this rule. Not only do we find that the husband and wife are loyal and faithful to each other, but both are equally punished for disloyalty.

The Igorots of Luzon are so strictly monogamous that if either husband or wife were guilty of sexual indiscretion, the guilty one could be compelled to leave the hut forever. Adultery is practically unknown among the Abipones.¹⁶²

Among the Sakai, punishment for adultery is death.¹⁶³ Although sexual freedom is prevalent before marriage among the Semangs, a high degree of faithfulness is observed by both partners after marriage, and seldom does a married man have relations with another man's wife.¹⁶⁴

The Maori execute a woman who has committed adultery. Similar punishment prevails among the Caribs. In Tahiti, the wife guilty of adultery must die. Among many North American tribes, the punishment for a woman guilty of adultery consisted in cutting her hair—a

¹⁶⁰ Briffault, *The Mothers*, Vol. 3, p. 197.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 2, pp. 650, 652.

¹⁶³ *Idem*, *Marriage*, Vol. 1, p. 121.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

frightful disgrace in itself—or amputating the ears, lips or nose, and sometimes a beating. The punishment prevailing in Mexico for the woman guilty of committing adultery is death by stoning. Married women in ancient Peru who were found to be unfaithful were killed. A similar rule prevailed among certain tribes in Brazil.

At Cumae, in the Campagna, the adulterous woman was stripped and exposed to the insults of the crowd, after which she was ridden on an ass through the city and remained dishonored forever after.

INCEST

Although to people today nothing is more abhorrent than incestuous relations between members of the same family, yet if such relationships prevailed as a marriage institution, it is certainly within the province of this study to mention incest in conjunction with this Commandment. Incestuous unions were far more common than most people imagine and are not uncommon even today.

Until the middle of the last century in France, some fathers lived in concubinage with their daughters. Lugaid, the supreme king of Ireland, married his mother, and a king of Leinster had his two sisters as wives. It is stated that the Pharaohs and Ptolemies married their sisters.¹⁶⁵ This gave rise to the expression that “princes and dogs know no relationship.”

Sarah was Abraham’s half sister, and did not Lot commit incest with his daughters?

The Caribs have no prohibition against sons marrying their mothers or fathers marrying their daughters. Among the Piojes of Ecuador, a widow often takes her son to replace the deceased husband, and a widower his daughter on the death of his first wife.¹⁶⁶

Among the Eastern Tinne of North America, many instances are recorded of marriages between brothers and sisters, fathers and daughters, and mothers and sons. The Southern Indians of the Tinne stock gave their daughters to their sons after they have cohabited

¹⁶⁵ Westermarck, *Marriage*, Vol. 2, p. 91.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 82, 83.

with them. Among the Banyoro of Central Africa, men marry their sisters and daughters. In the harem of King Warus, there were found not only his sisters and nieces, but his own daughters.

In the Marshall Islands, as well as among tribes of the Solomon Group, incestuous unions have not been infrequent, and the Kalangs believe that if a mother and son live together, it will lead to prosperity and riches. Among numerous small, isolated tribes, brothers and sisters marry.¹⁶⁷

In any discussion of morality, incest deserves as serious consideration as adultery. Why did not this Commandment prohibit incest as well, since it is more reprehensible biologically and morally than the other?

A PROVINCIAL TABOO

The different forms of mating which prevail throughout the world are as varied as are other forms of conduct. While monogamy is the strict rule in one place, polygamy is the standard in another, and polyandry the custom in still another.¹⁶⁸ While some communities make marriage a lifetime institution, in other places men can divorce their wives with no more difficulty than writing "a bill of divorcement." Some do not consider marriage of any more concern than eating or plowing together, while others look upon it as a "divine" indissoluble institution. Prostitution or promiscuous sexual relations prevail in nearly all communities and among all tribes, but whereas promiscuity is the rule in some places, it is the exception in others. Whereas adultery is condemned with death in one community, it is looked upon with indifference in another, while still another community regards it as sport for the pleasurable outlet of a complicated and mysterious physical function. In one place the wife of a man is jealously guarded with his life, while in another place it would be considered the greatest insult if you refused his wife as your bedfellow

¹⁶⁷ Westermarck, *Marriage*, Vol. 2, pp. 84-88.

¹⁶⁸ These marriage institutions were and are too widespread and too well known for me to give detailed examples of their prevalence. Cf. Westermarck, *History of Marriage*.

while you were a guest. While the mores of one community consider virginity a woman's most valuable possession, in another community no value whatsoever is placed on chastity, and in some communities it is actually considered a detriment. In one place an unmarried girl is free to indulge sexually with as many men as she desires, but once married she belongs exclusively to her husband; in another place all members of the tribe may enjoy the sexual pleasure of another's wife, although while unmarried it was incumbent upon her to be chaste. In certain places women are as cheap as vegetables, yet it would provoke bitter condemnation if one of the women had sexual intercourse with a man outside the tribe.

In one community, copulation may take place only at certain times of the month or year; in another, in the secrecy of a dark corner; in yet another, in the open fields at planting time; and in still other communities, without regard to time or place.

As society advances, as the rights of woman become more established, as her status as a chattel diminishes, the whole tenor of woman's sexual behavior is regarded in an altogether different light. Certainly no woman will be stoned to death in a civilized society for an act of unfaithfulness. Today adultery is sometimes committed as a means of emancipation. Court records abundantly prove that many women commit adultery in order to furnish evidence to secure a divorce from perpetual slavery in an unhappy marriage. In New York State *alone*, adultery is the *only* legal ground for divorce. (It is a *primary* ground in all other States except South Carolina, which grants no divorces on any ground.)

In view of the great variety of sexual customs through which man has passed, and the great divergencies of sexual acts he has experienced in his process of moral evolution, it becomes increasingly curious as to why such a Commandment as "Thou shalt not commit adultery" was made one of the important parts of the Decalogue.

The failure of this Commandment to specify all the sexual acts contrary both to nature and to the welfare of society is a matter of serious omission. It gives rise to the thought that there must have

been some particular reason why only adultery was mentioned and why all the sex acts definitely antisocial and detrimental to the individual and to society alike were left unmentioned. There *was* a definite reason why abnormal sex manifestations were not included in this Commandment, and there was a very definite purpose for the specific mention of adultery only.

This Commandment was no more intended to guard the sanctity of the home, or to serve as a rule for the purity of sexual conduct, than were the previous ones formulated for the purposes for which they are mistakenly taken to apply today.

The ethics of personal sexual conduct up to the time of the Biblical Hebrews had not yet evolved universally to that state of morality which condemned adultery as an act of moral misbehavior. It was still associated with sinful implications.

This Commandment was a prohibition not founded on morality. It was a TABOO based upon sympathetic magic. It became part of the Decalogue for the same reason as the previous ones.

A precept claiming infallibility should certainly possess the universality of the law of gravitation and the perfection of the arithmetical table. If it fails to possess these undeviating qualities, its imperfection is self-evident and its value either greatly diminished or useless. The evidence presented here raises the question as to whether a rule governing sexual conduct can be dogmatically applied to all people of the earth, in all communities, under all circumstances and conditions, at the same time. The facts we have already adduced prove the utter impossibility of such a rule. The conclusion is inevitable that this Commandment was a provincial precept for a particular tribe of people, and was never intended to be an infallible moral guide in the realm of sexual behavior.

And so we ask: Is adultery a sin? Or is it a violation of a certain standard of sexual conduct? Or is it a wrong perpetrated by one partner on another? Or is it merely an act of unfaithfulness? We shall find the answer in the superstitious beliefs which prevailed among primitive tribes of the cultural level of the Biblical Hebrews.

ADULTERY AS A TABOO BASED ON SYMPATHETIC MAGIC

As the Sixth Commandment was a taboo against shedding blood because of the fear of blood pollution, so we find this Commandment to be a taboo against the adulterous act based on sympathetic magic because of the fear of its detrimental influence on the pursuits of the husband. Beyond that, the authors of this Commandment did not have the slightest knowledge or understanding of proper sexual conduct, according to our present-day standards.

In the section headed "The Second Tables of Stone and a Forgotten Set of Commandments,"¹⁶⁹ we mentioned that the Tenth Commandment of that earlier Decalogue, "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk," would reveal the secret of the origin and meaning of the present Ten Commandments, and the fundamental basis of the religion of the Biblical Hebrews. We now come to that important matter. We emphatically state that the Commandment, "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk," and the Commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," are fundamentally the same: both originated in the belief in sympathetic magic, which accounts for their inclusion in both Decalogues of the tribal Israelites.

The Commandment, "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk," offers indisputable evidence that morality was not the governing motive for these Commandments—for what moral qualities are there in refraining from mixing meat and milk? There was an altogether different reason for such a prohibition, and its presence in the Decalogue, as taught today, only emphasizes the persistence of a superstition long after its origin has been lost and the uselessness of its continuance demonstrated. Despite its elimination from the currently accepted Decalogue, this Commandment is still regarded by orthodox Hebrews as one of the most important of their ritual observances, and has been handed down from generation to generation.

Why were the Biblical Hebrews so much concerned about "seething a kid in its mother's milk" as to make it one of the Command-

¹⁶⁹ Page 48.

ments of the earlier Decalogues? Because it was the belief in sympathetic magic that if a calf was boiled in its mother's milk it would cause the cow's udder to dry up and develop a disease which would impair her usefulness and destroy her value as a means of subsistence. Since they did not understand the nature and cause of disease, they based their beliefs on superstitions with magical associations. The deceptive forces and manifestations of nature are constantly leading man into devious and false paths. If we are still subject to such delusions, one can understand the pitiful mental subjection which prevailed in primitive times. It was one of these delusive beliefs that led to the taboo of drinking milk and eating meat during the same meal.¹⁷⁰

The Hebrews were not the only primitive tribe that observed this superstitious belief in sympathetic magic. Its prevalence among other primitive tribes that had no contact with the Hebrews is proof that it did not originate with them but was current among peoples of the same cultural level as the Israelites. A like belief prevails among the primitive Banyoro tribes. They do not permit milk to be put in an iron or metal vessel for fear that "it would be injurious to the cattle." The Washamba of East Africa never drink milk and eat

¹⁷⁰ Yet the Hebrews today who still fanatically observe this edict provide themselves with two sets of dishes, one for meat, and one for food prepared with milk or milk products. They are designated by the words *fleshack* for the meat service and *milkach* for the dairy meal. No more grievous sin could be committed by the pious Hebrew than to mix his two sets of dishes. Among the stricter observers, if a plate or dish once used for meat should, through error or by accident, be used for milk or a food made from milk, or vice versa, the plate is broken so that it cannot be used again. Nor does this avoidance of any connection between milk and meat confine itself to dishes only. There must be two sets of cooking utensils, two sets of cutlery, and two sets of linen. If circumstances do not permit two sets of linen, the cloth must be thoroughly washed between meals. Even the stomach is not exempt. If one has eaten meat at one meal, he must wait at least six hours before he may partake of food made with milk; when milk has been drunk, four hours must elapse before the person may consume meat! The observance of this Commandment is a test of the purity of a Hebrew; his failure to observe it is condemned as apostasy. He becomes imbued with the spirit of impurity and is cast out of the realm of divine holiness. (*Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 4, p. 598.) A violation of this religious rule is about the nearest thing to a mortal sin that an orthodox Hebrew could possibly commit. However, this superstitious custom is being rapidly discarded by modern people of the Jewish faith.

meat at the same meal; they believe that doing this would cause the death of the cow from which the milk was obtained. Among the Masai, who never allow milk to be boiled, it is considered a great offense to drink milk and eat meat at the same time; so for ten days the Masai lives exclusively on milk and for ten days exclusively on meat. So great is the aversion to bringing the two foods together that they take a strong emetic before changing from one food to the other.

Among the pastoral tribes in Africa at the present day, there is a deeply rooted aversion to boiling milk, based on the belief that a cow whose milk is boiled will yield no more milk and may die as a result. Cow's milk and butter form a large part of the diet of the Mohammedans of Sierra Leone, and therefore they never boil milk for fear of causing the cow to become dry. Nor will they sell their milk to those who boil it. The same belief, based on sympathetic magic, prevails among the Bolloms, who refuse to sell their oranges to those who throw the skins into the fire, "lest it occasion the unripe fruit to fall off."

The belief in sympathetic magic is so powerful among some tribes of Africans that they believe their cattle will become ill if women milk them; because women are subject to monthly "sickness," the cattle will likewise be affected.¹⁷¹

The Mohammedans of Morocco believe that milk drawn from the cow retains such vital connection with the animal that any injury done to the milk will be sympathetically felt by the cow. Milk is never boiled by them in the same pot in which it has been drawn from the cow. They also believe that if milk boils over, the cow will have a diseased udder.

The Masai of East Africa, a pastoral tribe depending for their sustenance on their herds of cattle, consider boiling milk a heinous offense, because it would cause their cattle to cease giving milk. The same belief prevails among the Baganda of Central Africa.¹⁷² The

¹⁷¹ Westermarck, *Morals*, p. 636.

¹⁷² Frazer, *Folklore in the Old Testament*, pp. 365, 366.

Bahima of Central Africa are so obsessed with this superstition that they believe the heat used in boiling the milk will dry up the cow's udder. They tell stories of how certain cows refuse to give milk because their milk has been boiled. They also believe that if a European puts milk in his tea, it will kill the cow which gave the milk.

Among the Somali of East Africa, who are dependent on the camel for their sustenance, "camel's milk is never heated for fear of bewitching the animal." The same belief in sympathetic magic prevails among the Eskimos. During the salmon fishery, no water must be boiled in the house, because "it is bad for the fisher."

The Damaras or Herero of Southwestern Africa, who are dependent on the cow for food, never cleanse the milk vessels out of which they drink or eat for fear the cow will cease to give milk. They believe that by washing out the remains of the milk from the pot, the cow's udders will also be drained.¹⁷³

But what connection, it might be asked, is there between the Commandment, "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk," and the Commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery"? *Both Commandments are founded on the same superstitious belief and are identical in intent and purpose.*

The same sympathetic connection that was supposed to exist between the cow and her milk was believed to prevail between husband and wife; disloyalty on the part of one would affect the welfare of the other. *Under this superstition, it was believed that the unfaithfulness of the wife would prove injurious to the husband's welfare, and adultery therefore became a taboo; hence, the inclusion of a prohibition against it in the Decalogue.*

Just as we found parallel beliefs among primitive tribes similar to the Hebrews who observed the taboos regarding the mixing of meat and milk, so we find them regarding the evil results to the husband and the clan if the wife were to be guilty of unfaithfulness.

Many of the indigenous tribes of the Sarawak are firmly persuaded that were the wives to commit adultery while their husbands

¹⁷³ Frazer, *Folklore in the Old Testament*, p. 369.

were searching for camphor in the jungle, the camphor obtained by the men would evaporate.

When a Borneo Dyak is out head-hunting, his wife must wear a sword day and night in order that he may always think of his weapons, and she must not sleep during the day or go to bed before early morning lest her husband be surprised in his sleep by an enemy. In Madagascar, it is the belief that when the husband is at war, he will be wounded or killed if his wife should be having an intrigue with another man in his absence.

Elephant hunters in East Africa believe that if their wives prove unfaithful in their absence, this gives the elephant power over his pursuer, who will accordingly be killed or severely wounded. Hence, if a hunter hears of his wife's misconduct, he abandons the chase and returns home. If a Wagogo hunter is unsuccessful or is attacked by a lion, he attributes it to his wife's misbehavior at home and returns in great wrath. While he is away hunting, she must not let anyone pass behind her or stand in front of her as she sits; and she must lie on her face in bed!¹⁷⁴ The Moxos Indians of Bolivia thought that if a hunter's wife were unfaithful to him in his absence, he would be bitten by a serpent or a jaguar. Accordingly, if such an accident happened to him, it was sure to entail the punishment, and often the death, of the woman, whether she was actually guilty or innocent. An Aleutian hunter of sea otters thinks that he cannot kill a single animal if during his absence from home his wife is unfaithful or his sister unchaste.¹⁷⁵

The Wayao and Mang'anja tribes of Lake Nyassa believe that the food prepared by an unfaithful wife will poison the husband who eats it. The Ashanti believed that they would cease to be prolific if adultery existed among them. Various Negro tribes attribute drought and famine to the adulterous acts of their wives.¹⁷⁶

If the husband commits adultery while the wife is pregnant, the

¹⁷⁴ The superstition still exists today that, if a person passes between two others, one of the two will lose a friend or have bad luck.

¹⁷⁵ Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, pp. 21, 23.

¹⁷⁶ Geoffrey May, *Social Control of Sexual Expression*, p. 9.

Bahuana believes that it will have a fatal influence on the child.¹⁷⁷ The Southern Bambala in the Congo maintain that adultery is generally the cause of the death of infants. The Thong in Southeastern Africa fear terrible complications at the birth of a child born of an adulterous union. If a woman suffered extreme labor and difficulty in giving birth to a child, it was proof, according to the general belief, that the child was not legitimate.¹⁷⁸

Even in other phases of the sexual realm, sympathetic magic has its definite influence. In British East Africa it is strictly forbidden to have sexual relations while cattle are at pasture for fear that the act would have a deleterious effect on the cattle.¹⁷⁹ It is also believed that if a man cohabits while he is away on a journey, ill luck will come to the village.¹⁸⁰ In New Caledonia, both before and after planting, cohabitation is forbidden.

In primitive times, and among some tribes today, only unmarried men were sent to battle. It was the belief that married men had become weakened by their close relationship with women. If the unmarried men had had sexual relations, they had to be "purified" before going to battle. This took many forms. Some were not allowed to eat food cooked by women. Others must not use weapons women had touched. In Noessa Laut, it is the belief that those who remain continent are invulnerable in war.

The Wagiriami of British East Africa believe that if men cohabit with their wives during wartime they will be unable to kill their enemies, and that if they receive a trifling wound it will prove fatal. Others believe that their eyesight will be impaired and they will not be able to shoot properly.¹⁸¹ This taboo evidently prevented Uriah from visiting Bathsheba, when he was recalled by David before being sent to the forefront of the battle to die so that David could commit adultery with his wife.

¹⁷⁷ Westermarck, *Marriage*, Vol. 3, p. 67.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 317.

¹⁷⁹ Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, pp. 19-25.

¹⁸⁰ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 1, pp. 477, 478.

¹⁸¹ Crawley, *The Mystic Rose*, Vol. 1, pp. 68, 71.

Among the Nagas of Maniour, when the men are in special danger, they must refrain from sexual intercourse; and also when they set out or return from a raid. The Sia of New Mexico are continent four days before going hunting. The Huichols of Mexico must abstain from sexual relations when engaged on a hunting trip. They believe that if a snare is put up by a man in love, the animal will not be caught.

As far as the Decalogue is concerned, it would not have made the slightest difference, from the point of view of morality, if the listing of these two Commandments had been reversed, since the reason for the inclusion of the one is identical with the reason for the presence of the other. If the Tenth Commandment of the "forgotten set" of Commandments, "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk," were the seventh in the present Decalogue, and the Seventh Commandment as we know it, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," were the tenth in the forgotten set of Commandments, the only difference would be that instead of talking about adultery, we would be practising the primitive superstitious custom of not mixing meat and milk at the same meal! Christians would in all probability be using two sets of dishes like Orthodox Hebrews, and the clergy would not have an excuse to refer to the Seventh Commandment as the one they "rarely mention." They would be shouting that "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk" was a God-given command and would portend disastrous results, such as the breakdown of all morality, law and civilization, and the widespread prevalence of crime, as the consequence of its violation. They would also contend, as they now do with the taboos of the other Commandments, that the violation of this one would provoke the Bible Deity to vent his anger on the people, and that they would suffer the consequences for committing so dire a sin as mixing meat and milk at the same meal. For it is the law of all religions that "he who truly fears God will observe his laws without inquiry into the reasons for them."¹⁸²

¹⁸² *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 5, p. 598.

One thing is certain: if this prohibition of mixing meat and milk were the Seventh Commandment of the present Decalogue, this taboo would be observed with greater fidelity than the one mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE OF THE PREVALENCE OF SYMPATHETIC MAGIC AMONG THE BIBLICAL HEBREWS

Not only was the belief in sympathetic magic deeply rooted in primitive Hebrew thought, but the use of magical formulas based on this belief became an integral part of their daily lives.

There is abundant Biblical evidence for the superstitious belief in magic; we need but mention the following instance recorded in *Genesis* of the bargaining between Jacob and his father-in-law, Laban, as to the compensation Jacob should receive for his years of labor. It was decided that Laban give him cattle and goats. The division of the cattle was to be determined by the number of "brown among the sheep" and the "speckled and spotted among the goats." To increase one over the other, this was the method Jacob used. I quote *Genesis, Chapter 30, verses 37 to 41*:

37 And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the hazel and chestnut tree; and pilled white streaks in them, and made the white appear which *was* in the rods.

38 And he set the rods which he had pilled before the flocks in the gutters in the watering troughs when the flocks came to drink, that they should conceive when they came to drink.

39 And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth cattle ring-streaked, speckled, and spotted.

40 And Jacob did separate the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the ring-streaked, and all the brown in the flock of Laban; and he put his own flocks by themselves, and put them not unto Laban's cattle.

41 And it came to pass, whensoever the stronger cattle did conceive, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods.

All so simple! It is regrettable that Gregor Mendel, the geneticist, spent so many years in scientific research to determine the law of inherited characteristics, when all he had to do was to consult his Bible for this great biological secret!

As a result of this Bible story which is based on the belief in sympathetic magic, there arose the superstition that if a child is born with a birthmark, it is because the mother, while pregnant, saw some object resembling the mark on the child. For instance, if a child is born with a long, discolored mark, it is explained that the mother was frightened by a mouse; if a small red mark appears on the child's body, it is explained that the mother had seen or eaten a strawberry. No matter what "mark" the child bore, the superstitious found an explanation for it in some object which a lively imagination considered it resembled, even though the mother might never have seen such an object during her period of gestation. What about the countless mothers who pass through frightful experiences, yet whose children are born without the slightest blemish?

Also from this primitive belief has grown the superstition that a prospective mother who desires to have a beautiful child should look intently at a beautiful object! That this has been the cause of much mental agony is only too well known. Fortunately, however, educated people today no longer believe in the inerrancy of the Bible or in the influence of the mother's impressions on the unborn. But there are still many who believe in these superstitions, as reported by Dr. H. F. Kilander, Dean of the Panzer, New Jersey, College of Physical Education and Hygiene, who made a three-year survey. He said: "Forty per cent of the students and adults felt that a prospective mother could make her child more musical if she listened to good music. About the same number believed 'various marks of disfiguration on the newborn child are due to fright of the mother during pregnancy.'"¹⁸⁸

Among some orthodox Hebrews, as soon as a woman begins to

¹⁸⁸ *New York Times*, May 5, 1939.

have labor pains, all the female inmates of the house loosen their hair, believing that it will loosen the child and facilitate its birth. Among Polish Jews, as a help in easing birth, all knots in the women's clothing are untied.¹⁸⁴ On the cradle of an infant, in Biblical days, the Children of Israel hung bells and other amulets to guard the child against demons. Rocking an empty cradle is forbidden in the belief that a child in the house will die and the cradle indeed will be empty. When the birth of a child is expected, nothing is permitted to be taken out of the house for fear that the child will die and be taken out of the house. If an infant laughs in its sleep, you must lightly tap its lips, as it is supposed to be playing with the angel of death.¹⁸⁵

If someone steps over a child or it walks between the legs of another person, it will cause its growth to be stunted, is another belief.¹⁸⁶

The influence of sympathetic magic still prevails in the observance of Rosh Hashonah, the Jewish New Year, by the orthodox Hebrew. During the ritual ceremony, honey is set on the table and bread is dipped in it, while the head of the house pronounces the words: "May it be His will that this year be a sweet one." The special loaves of white bread and the manner in which they are baked is additional evidence of this influence. The bread is formed round and smooth as a symbol of the desire that the New Year be likewise round and smooth.¹⁸⁷

Even at the present time the superstitious custom of the Tashlich, the "casting off" of sins, is observed by the extremely orthodox. This is the ceremony performed by the entire congregation: When the afternoon services on the first day of Rosh Hashonah are over, the worshipers go to the edge of the river or any other body of flowing water and recite the following ritual: "May God cast our sins into

¹⁸⁴ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 4, pp. 29-31.

¹⁸⁵ Hastings, *Encyclopædia*, Vol. 2, p. 658.

¹⁸⁶ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 4, pp. 29-31.

¹⁸⁷ Idelsohn, *Ceremonies of Judaism*, p. 16.

the depths of the sea." The men then shake the ends of their coat sleeves as though brushing off their sins.¹⁸⁸

Another instance of sympathetic magic is the custom of "Kaporos." This ritual first consisted in killing a lamb, but a chicken is now used instead. Each person could lay his sins on the head of the fowl by swinging the chicken above his head three times and reciting: "The chicken is my substitute and my ransom, and shall be killed that I may survive for a long and peaceful life." White chickens are preferably used because white symbolizes purity and innocence!¹⁸⁹ Women select hens and men select roosters in this idiotic ceremony.

Another ceremony performed by the orthodox based on the belief in sympathetic magic deals with the scapegoat and takes place during the observance of the Day of Atonement, "Yom Kippur." In Biblical times the Jewish high priest laid both hands on the head of a live goat, confessed over it all the iniquities of the Children of Israel, and, having thereby transferred the sins of the people to the beast, sent it away into the wilderness.¹⁹⁰ For the Biblical passage and authority dealing with this superstitious practice, I quote *Leviticus*, Chapter 16, verses 21 and 22:

21 And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send *him* away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness:

22 And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.

The idea of the scapegoat as a means of protection comes from the savage belief that as actual burdens can be shifted from one back to another, pains and sorrows as well as sins can also be shifted!¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸ Idelsohn, *Ceremonies of Judaism*, p. 17.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹⁹⁰ Innumerable such observances based on sympathetic magic exist in the Catholic ritual.

¹⁹¹ Frazer, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

The early Christians, in performing an identically similar ceremony, used as a scapegoat the sacrificial lamb. That is why in its early days the symbol of Christianity was a lamb. Today, however, Christians celebrate this ceremony on Ascension Day to commemorate the ascent of the supercolossal scapegoat in the figure of Jesus Christ, who is supposed to have died for the sins of all mankind! The Brahmans transfer the sins of their people to sacred cows.¹⁹² How far removed are the Hebrews, the Christians and the Brahmans from the Matse Negroes of Togoland, who think that the river Awo has the power to carry away the sins and sorrows of all the people? ¹⁹³

COMPLEMENTARY EXAMPLES OF SYMPATHETIC MAGIC

The belief in sympathetic magic was so widespread among primitive peoples that it influenced nearly all phases of their conduct. A few illustrations will show the prevalence of this belief, its domination over the minds of primitive peoples, and its persistence even in our own times.

Some of us may remember from childhood days that when a button was to be sewed on a garment being worn, we were told to chew a piece of thread while the button was being attached, or our brains would also be sewed up. This particular superstition in sympathetic magic evidently survives from the belief still prevalent among the Saghalian. A pregnant woman may not spin or twist ropes for two months before her delivery because they think that if she did so, the child's intestines might become entangled like a thread. It is still a Hebrew superstition that a pregnant woman should not step over a rope or the umbilical cord will twine around the child's neck and strangle it.

In Saibai, one of the islands of the Torres Straits, it is the custom for a woman who wants a male child to press a fruit resembling

¹⁹² Frazer, *The Golden Bough, The Scapegoat*, p. 216.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

the male organ of generation to her abdomen, and then pass it to another woman who has borne only boys.¹⁹⁴

The Galeareese think that spitting on a pebble establishes a homeopathic connection between them and the pebble which will make their teeth as hard and durable as stone. On the other hand, a child's hair should not be combed before it has teathed, or its teeth will be separated from each other like those of a comb.

Children should not look into sieves, or they will suffer from a skin disease and will have as many sores on their bodies as there are holes in the sieve. In Samarkand, women give a baby sugar candy to suck, and put glue in the palm of its hand, in order that when the child grows up his words may be sweet, and that precious things may stick to its hands as if they were glued.¹⁹⁵

The animistic superstition that the soul of an animal becomes absorbed by the person who eats its flesh is also current in nearly all primitive tribes. Many of the food prejudices of savage tribes derive from this conviction. It accounts for the Biblical Hebrew's proscription against eating the flesh of a pig or hog. It was believed that the one who ate the flesh of the pig would acquire his characteristics. The Tyrolese wears the tuft of the eagle's down in his hat, believing that it will give him the eagle's keen sight and courage.

Among the Dyaks, young men abstain from eating the flesh of deer for fear that it will make them shy and timid, and before a pig hunt, they avoid oil lest the game should slip through their fingers. The warriors of South America avoid eating the flesh of slow-moving and cowardly animals, while they feast on the meat of tigers, stags and boars to give them courage and speed. The story is told of an English merchant in Shanghai who, at the time of the Taeping attack, found that his Chinese servant had brought home a human heart. The Englishman asked him what he was going to do with it. The

¹⁹⁴ Frazer, *The Magic Art*, p. 72.

¹⁹⁵ *Idem*, *The Golden Bough*, Vol. 1, p. 159. The similarity between this and superstitious beliefs prevalent today is obvious.

servant replied that it was the heart of a rebel which he intended to eat in order to gain courage.¹⁹⁶

When a Maori war party is about to start, the priests set up sticks in the ground to represent the warriors, and he whose stick is blown down is sure to fall in battle.¹⁹⁷

In New Zealand, when a male child has been baptized in the native manner and has received its name, small pebbles the size of a large pinhead are thrust down his throat to make his heart callous, hard and incapable of pity.

Round the neck of a Basuto child in South Africa is hung a kite's foot to give swiftness, a lion's paw for security, or an iron ring to give it iron resistance.

The American Indian hunter wears as ornaments the claws of the grizzly bear that he may be endowed with its courage and ferocity.¹⁹⁸

When the natives of Australia give a dance, they make a grass figure of a kangaroo. This is believed to give them the power of the real kangaroo in a hunt.

Equally related is the belief among the Huzuls of the Carpathians. The wife of the hunter may not spin while her husband is hunting, or the game will wind like a spindle, and the hunter will be unable to hit it. In Loas, when an elephant hunter is starting for the chase, he warns his wife not to cut her hair or oil her body in his absence. If she cuts her hair, the elephant will burst the toils; if she oils herself, it would slip through them.

Based on sympathetic magic, tattooing came into existence. It was the belief that if a person was tattooed with the image of a protective animal, it would protect the person from harm. In the Easter Island, a young married man tattooed the vulva of his wife on his chest as a sign that he was married, and evidently with the thought that as long as he had his wife's vulva with him, no one could make use of it.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ Tylor, *Early History of Mankind*, p. 131.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 130-131.

¹⁹⁹ Westermarck, *Marriage*, Vol. 1, p. 515.

There are still many present-day carry-overs of these superstitious beliefs. In the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, New York, there is a miniature pearl-handled knife in one of the showcases. The legend on the attached card says: "Given to the President by Sir Robert A. Hodfield of London in return for the customary copper cent to avoid the 'Cutting of Friendship.'" The giving of any sharp instrument is believed by many to cause a severance of friendship unless counteracted by the exchange of some object, preferably a coin. Such is the tenacity of superstitious belief even among otherwise intelligent people.

THE CHILD AND THIS COMMANDMENT

If ministers tell us that this Commandment is rarely mentioned before adult congregations because of the delicate nature of its subject, one can well imagine how discussions about it would affect the minds of the impressionable and the adolescent.

If a child is told that one of the Ten Commandments of God is not to commit adultery, he is entitled to know the meaning of what he is admonished not to do. Obviously, he cannot refrain from performing any act unless he knows exactly what it is. This Commandment, as part of the Decalogue, acts as a reminder which continuously arouses the dormant curiosity of the adolescent child. Lacking the proper knowledge of sex, this Commandment stimulates the child's desire for information as to what actually happens when adultery is committed. Of what value is the inculcation of this Commandment in the mind of a child of tender age who not only has not the remotest intention of committing adultery, but has not even the slightest conception of what it means?

If knowledge of an adulterous act arouses the curiosity of adults and stimulates them to seek information about the minutest details, what can we expect of children whose curiosity is keener and whose imagination is more vivid? While an adult can generally take the details of adultery as a matter of fact, the mind of the child becomes

tainted and corrupted; it becomes acquainted with sex through a medium of deception, duplicity and the other objectionable factors always present in the act of adultery.

Those misguided people who protest against the imparting of scientific sexual knowledge to our school children by competent teachers should pay a little more attention to the harm done by the teaching of the Decalogue. If they are so solicitous about what books children read, they should become aware of the harm done by this Commandment. As a rule, those religious people who protest loudest against scientific sexual knowledge being imparted to our school children are the very ones who corrupt their minds in the matter of sex by approaching the subject through the channel of the very worst phase of sexual conduct.

You cannot get results by planting seeds in corrupted soil, and you cannot get a high sense of morality from a mind imbued with lurid thoughts of sexual conduct. How morality can be taught to a child by admonishing him not to "commit adultery" is more than I can understand.

Imparting sex knowledge and explaining proper sexual conduct is not an easy task. It is the most difficult function of education, and one of the most important. To guide a child through the adolescent period into adulthood, to teach him to fit himself for a happy married life, is the highest function of education. But to teach him this Commandment, which deals with the very act that is destructive of marriage, is a perversion of education. If marriage is our ideal and we strive to surround it with lofty and beautiful sentiments, it is a strange religion that is bent on acquainting future partners of such a union with the very method by which it is contaminated and destroyed.

At home, in school, in church, the child hears repeated over and over again that one of the commands of God is "Thou shalt not commit adultery." The consequences are that the child soon learns that adultery is associated with lust, passion, seduction, debauchery, sexual depravity, obscenity, deception, faithlessness and the whole vo-

cabulary of offensive and repulsive acts in the realm of sex. Before the child is old enough to receive the simplest instruction in sexual matters, he is already, through overstimulation produced by the words of this Commandment, contaminated and polluted by the nasty side of sex.

Children need instruction in sexual matters; it is vital to their welfare and development. But it must be knowledge that their young, sensitive minds can comprehend and absorb, and it must be imparted in a manner that will not shock their delicate sensibilities. Will anyone have the effrontery to say that shouting the words "Thou shalt not commit adultery" to a child is the proper method of teaching sex in order to enable him to lead a healthy, normal life as well as to avoid possible future tragedies resulting from ignorance about sex? That educators are now becoming cognizant of this fact is evidenced by the statement of the British Board of Education. After stressing the importance of discouraging the old-fashioned fairy tales about birth—"the proverbial gooseberry bush, stork and doctor's bag"—it urged the following method of sex education: "A simple but sound maxim is: Whatever the age of the child and whatever the question he asks, answer him to the fullest extent that he is capable of understanding at that stage."²⁰⁰

The pernicious influence of this Commandment on the mentality of the child is alone sufficient to condemn it as a corrupting force in the realm of sexual behavior.

If the Bible were a moral guide, it should contain the most detailed information and knowledge of the complicated mechanism of the body, its functions and its uses. Within its pages should be found the proper method of imparting to children the correct mode of conduct during their years of growth, particularly to fortify them with knowledge during their critical adolescent period.

If only it contained the proper sex guidance for adults, half the misery of the world would be avoided. It is the pitiful ignorance of man within the sexual realm that is responsible for so many tragedies.

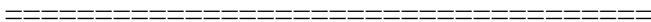
²⁰⁰ *New York Times*, Nov. 8, 1943.

Instead of the Bible being the most authoritative source of sexual knowledge, its pages reek with sexual misconduct of the most revolting nature. Is it any wonder? Throughout the Bible's eleven hundred pages, the words "adultery," "fornication," "whore" and "whoredom" are mentioned more than 500 times, *while the word "morality" is not mentioned once!*

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The Eighth Commandment

“Thou shalt not steal.”

WHAT CONSTITUTES A THEFT?

“**T**HOU shalt not steal”—what? Is it only property that one must not steal, and, if so, what kind of property? Are there not things more valuable than property that can be stolen, and are those things included in this Commandment? Is it not true that

“Who steals my purse steals trash; . . .
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.”

—*Merchant of Venice*, Act 3, sc. 3.

Unless there is a more specific definition of stealing or a more detailed description of what not to steal, this Commandment is impossible to understand, and impossible to observe.

Even Professor Philip Wheelwright, of the Department of Philosophy at New York University, admits that before this Commandment can be made effective “there must be some way of knowing what actions ‘stealing’ is to cover.”¹

Stealing, like morality, very often depends on time and place. What is considered honesty in one community may be condemned as thievery in another. Certain acts considered honest in the past are today classified as flagrantly dishonest. What at one time was considered dishonest, may at another time have both moral and legal sanction. Honesty depends on place and circumstances, and the more inflexible the rule governing honest conduct, the more difficult is its observance. Extremely significant to this study is the fact that of the ten crimes which Biblical Hebrew law punished by stoning, nine have ceased to be offenses in modern society.²

¹ P. Wheelwright, *A Critical Introduction to Ethics*, p. 225.

² Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 1, p. 187.

Is the stealing prohibited by this Commandment condemned from the ethical, moral or legal standpoint? What is the standard by which we are to judge? On whose authority is the standard to be accepted?

Do we not from the moment of birth begin to "take" things which are not ours? Does not the instinct of self-preservation often force us to take what belongs to others in order to survive? Will the value of the article stolen, or the age of the person committing the theft, determine the guilt or innocence of his conduct?

Is the man who "steals" his friend's sweetheart or wife guilty of theft? Or are there exceptions which make it "all's fair in love and war," even though the act is dishonest? Is "stealing" a kiss just as flagrant a theft as stealing a purse? Is the boy who "steals" his brother's ties, or the girl who "steals" her sister's dress, guilty of theft within the meaning of this Commandment? What about the boy who "steals" a ride on his friend's bicycle?

Some years ago a New York judge ruled that a man who enters the home of another to "steal a nap" is not guilty of burglary,³ while another judge ruled that "robbery for love" deserved the court's mercy.

Alexander the Great said he would not "steal a victory," yet there are many business men who "steal a march" on their competitors for financial advantage. Stealing an idea from another, stealing a patent or a valuable trade secret, is just as dishonest as any other form of theft.

I know some people who are so scrupulous about other people's property that they will always make sure that the light is turned off when they leave a hotel room, feeling that failure to do so would put the owner to an unnecessary expense.

How are we to judge those acts which at one time were legal and at another time illegal? Would an act committed under the belief that it had legal sanction violate this Commandment if at a later date such sanction were removed and the act condemned as thievery?

³ *New York Journal*, May 15, 1934.

Sometimes acts are ethically and morally wrong but legally right, and there are many acts condemned by law which possess inherent moral and ethical value.

At one time legal permission and license was granted to commit robbery on the high seas. Did that change the immoral nature of the act? Many laws on our statute books today are not very far removed from those which gave legal sanction to the sea robber. Could a Commandment of this kind be applied in a society where it is lawful to commit deliberate robbery? What is more pertinent than the fact that pocket-picking even today is a recognized and highly unionized profession in Egypt? When King Farouk was married, the King of Thieves issued a proclamation in the newspapers stating that, as a friendly gesture to the other king, he would call off all his thieves during the nuptial celebrations; in consequence, not a pocket was picked.⁴

Forgery, as we know it today, was certainly unknown in Biblical times, since the majority of the people then could not even write. Yet today, forging a person's name to a legal instrument, such as a check, contract or deed to property, may be the means of perpetrating a greater theft than the actual stealing of physical property. William Harriman, the banker, who merely ordered a transfer of balances from one account to another on the ledger sheets of his bank's books, stole millions of dollars by this simple transaction, yet he did not physically take part in the transfer.⁵

Several years ago two well-known bankers were convicted of a "highly technical violation of an intricate banking law" and given long prison sentences. This was done despite their plea that not one person lost a single penny as a result of their act,⁶ and that they had acted in good faith only after receiving the advice of responsible legal counsel.

Are these men as guilty of theft under this Commandment as is

⁴ *Reader's Digest*, Sept., 1938.

⁵ *New York American*, May 17, 1934.

⁶ *New York Times*, Apr. 26, 1924.

the robber who breaks into a home and steals valuable property, or a thief who in the dead of night perpetrates a hold-up on a defenseless man and robs him of his money? The theft of a nickel is considered petty larceny; yet to take some lead, mold it into the shape of a five-cent piece and use it to purchase a single article, makes one guilty of the serious crime of counterfeiting! One can resort to the protection of bankruptcy laws for the relief of debts he is unable to meet, and start anew without a penny's obligation. But if, in doing so, the petitioner "conceals" part of his assets, he is guilty of a dishonest act and is punished severely for it.

There have been innumerable instances where jurors seeking to judge the acts of certain of their fellow men with some degree of certainty have been unable to agree as to whether or not the accused's conduct was dishonest, so difficult is it sometimes to determine the honesty of a transaction in relation to the interpretation of the law. In fact, not only have juries disagreed as to the guilt or innocence of a person accused of stealing, but learned judges, men trained in the art of weighing evidence, have also been unable to agree. There have been cases when both judge and jury adjudged a person guilty of stealing, when in reality he was not; and, likewise, there have been instances in which judge and jury have acquitted a person charged with theft, when in reality he should have been convicted.⁷ There have also been instances when a judge condemned a person as a thief and the jury decided otherwise, and just as many cases are recorded in which a jury condemned a person as a thief and the judge thought otherwise.

In a recent decision, United States Supreme Court Chief Justice Harlan F. Stone rendered a dissenting opinion in a case concerning an activity which the government characterized as a "union racket." It was claimed by the prosecution that nearly a million dollars had been extorted as a result of coercion and violence, yet the highest tribunal in the land gave the stamp of legality to these acts. Justice

⁷ For a detailed account of innocent men suffering the penalty of guilt, see Edwin M. Borchard, *Convicting the Innocent*.

Stone said that in giving legal sanction to them, it "would render common-law robbery an innocent pastime."⁸

Sometimes it is utterly impossible to know with any degree of certainty where stealing ends and honesty begins.

Was Shakespeare right when he said to a band of professional thieves:

"I'll example you with thievery:
 The sun's a thief, and with his great attraction
 Robs the vast sea; the moon's an arrant thief,
 And her pale fire she snatches from the sun;
 The sea's a thief, whose liquid surge resolves
 The moon into salt tears; the earth's a thief,
 That feeds and breeds by a composture stolen
 From general excrement; each thing's a thief;
 The laws, your curb and whip, in their rough power
 Have uncheck'd theft. . . .

 All that you meet are thieves. . . .
 Break open shops; nothing can you steal but thieves
 Do lose it. . . ."⁹

LAW, ETHICS AND CONSCIENCE

To those who might question whether law, ethics or morals should be the standard by which to judge acts in relation to this Commandment, there is left what many claim to be the infallible criterion of conduct—*conscience*. But is conscience the proper guide, and is it always infallible? Are there not many crimes condoned by conscience? A person with an "easy" conscience can, with very little effort, convince himself of the justification of a theft.

In fact, there are many instances when a person has been injured by another and, having no recourse to law to satisfy the injury, and no other means of retaliation except by stealing, will commit theft in order to "satisfy his conscience." Do not many boast of the fact

⁸ *New York Times*, Mar. 3, 1942.

⁹ *Timon of Athens*, Act 4, sc. 3.

that they have "put one over"—meaning a questionably honest act—on a particularly mean individual, and could anything satisfy their conscience more completely than such an act? "Getting even" with people, either through a dishonest deal, misrepresentation or downright fraud, is a widespread means among certain people of salving their conscience. Do we not express satisfaction when we learn that a particularly mean and unscrupulous person has been cheated or fooled? When a miser is worsted in a deal, do we not say that "it serves him right"?

How many times have we heard people tell of their failure to pay their fare on a street car as a proper retaliation for the poor service furnished by the railroad company? Under the ethical principle that two wrongs do not make a right, does not the failure to pay the fare constitute a theft, despite the fact that a feeling of satisfaction follows the act? Yet men of high moral character, men of unimpeachable integrity, who would not otherwise commit the slightest wrong, do not hesitate to cheat a railroad out of its fare in retaliation for its poor service. Lecky, the great moralist, observed: "Nothing is more common than to find extreme dishonesty in speculation co-existing with scrupulous veracity in business."¹⁰

There are some persons who would feel grossly insulted if you accused them of stealing an apple from a grocery store, yet do not suffer the slightest compunction in signing a false proof of loss in order to get more than they are entitled to from an insurance company. A business man whose elastic code of honesty permits him to charge many times his legitimate profit on merchandise will severely rebuke his son for stealing marbles.

How many are like a noted thief who said to his prison keeper, "I may be a thief, but, thank God, I am a respectable man!"¹¹ "Respectable" men have stated that if they could steal a million dollars they would gladly spend a few years in prison for the theft. On their

¹⁰ Lecky, *Morals*, Vol. 1, p. 119.

¹¹ Ellis, *The Criminal*, p. 240.

release their "conscience would be clear" to buy "pleasure" with their stolen money.

So few people have a proper understanding of the principles of honesty. Thousands condemn as dishonest in others acts that they themselves are guilty of committing. This point is well illustrated in a cartoon showing two well-to-do women sipping their afternoon tea. One exclaims to the other, "Do you know, my maid stole six of my Pullman towels!"

Even standards of ethics differ. What might be acceptable in one particular profession would not be accepted in another.

Before the enactment of the Federal Trade Commission and other governmental agencies to protect people from fraudulent methods of commerce, unscrupulous business men shamelessly robbed the innocent purchaser by misbranding and false labeling. Despite careful supervision, and even among tradesmen within the scope of our present standards, there are still dealers who put sand in sugar to increase its weight, adulterate foods, mix water in gasoline, disguise cotton as wool, and resort to many forms of misbranding and mislabeling.

In nearly all countries until recent times, false weights and false pretenses of all kinds were considered ordinary instruments of commerce.¹² Trading is still not supposed to be an absolutely honest undertaking, for the principle of "buyer beware" still governs innumerable transactions. Even in business transactions where legal talent and business acumen are carefully utilized, the courts are continually called on to invalidate contracts because fraud was used in certain representations. Wilson Mizner, noted American raconteur said: "It is criminal negligence to leave suckers lying around to tempt honest men."

Just as "conscience doth make cowards of us all," so it makes us commit many a dishonest act without the implication of being a thief. If a physician leads a person to believe that he is more ill than he really is in order to increase the number of the patient's

¹² Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 2, p. 103.

visits and the amount of his bill; if a dentist pretends to do more work on a patient's teeth than he actually does in order to charge him more for the work; if a politician takes "graft" for selling special favors; if a judge takes a bribe to render a favorable decision; if a business man makes more than a legitimate profit on his merchandise; if a lawyer defends a thief and takes as his fee for services part of the stolen money; if a farmer falsifies the weight and the count of his products; if a laborer fails to give the full amount of the work he is capable of doing; if a real-estate salesman inflates the value of the property he is trying to sell—are they guilty of dishonest conduct under this Commandment? It would be a difficult thing to convince the physician or the dentist that this Commandment is applicable to him in relation to his patients, or the politician, the judge, the farmer, the merchant, the laborer or the real-estate dealer in their dealings. Many do not even remotely associate this Commandment with such acts, so little is their understanding of the concept of honesty.

But even if it were true that a stricken conscience afflicts all who steal from others, how would that recompense the victim? A stricken conscience would merely be punishment for the culprit, but the victim would continue to suffer the loss of his possessions. *Not until the victim of a theft has been satisfied and recompensed for the loss he has sustained can any such feeling of remorse in the thief be a proper expiation for the theft committed.* Will a person with a "bad" conscience have the same reaction to a dishonest deed as a person with a "good" conscience? What about the person who hasn't any conscience at all?

Daniel Drew, one of the early American "robber barons" who said that "the honest people of the world were a pack of fools," and who grew wealthy through his sharp business transactions, was a devoutly religious man. His religious convictions did not in the slightest degree prevent him from using questionable business methods, nor did he apparently suffer any compunction for his dishonest acts. How far removed was Drew from the Italian bandit who begged

the Virgin herself to bless his dishonest endeavors? Or from the thief who invokes God's protection while he breaks into the house? ¹³ How effectively can prayer give our dishonest acts the stamp of divine approval?

Curiously enough, so important was this question of honesty that it became the topic of debate among the students of Newcomb College, New Orleans, Louisiana. On the resolution that "honesty is the best policy" the *negative* side won the debate. "Their leading arguments," said the report, "seems to be that in order to be a success in the world as it is constituted today, one must be a hypocrite, a humbug and a liar, or any parts of these. The audience and the judges approved heartily of the negative side and gave them the prize." ¹⁴

It was Bernard Shaw who said: "We must make the world honest before we can honestly say to our children that honesty is the best policy." How pertinent are these words of Ingersoll: "As long as dishonorable success outranks honest effort, as long as society bows and cringes before big thieves, there will be little ones enough to fill the jails." ¹⁵ The father who said to his son, "Honesty is the best policy; I have tried them both," was merely confessing that in the long run it was not profitable to be a thief. A man who takes the attitude that honesty is the best policy because it will prove more profitable in the end is not a morally honest man; he merely chooses the most expedient course. The inference is that if he could be dishonest and not pay the penalty, he would follow that line of conduct.

Honesty for honesty's sake is an altogether different principle. To be honest whether it proves profitable or not is the highest ethical conduct.

It was Archbishop Leighton who said: "The truth is, there is scarcely one of the Commandments so universally broken, and whereof the breach is so little observed and so seldom repented of." ¹⁶

¹³ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 2, p. 733; also *Robber Barons*, p. 19.

¹⁴ *New York Daily Mirror*, Jan. 10, 1935.

¹⁵ Ingersoll, *Crimes against Criminals*, Vol. 11, p. 165.

¹⁶ Farrar, *The Voice from Sinai*, p. 236.

Add to this the statement of Martin Luther: "It is the smallest part of thieves that are hanged. If we are to hang them all, where shall we get rope enough?"¹⁷ One can then well understand why the philosophic Pope, when in deep reflection viewing men and affairs as they are, cried: "An honest man is the noblest work of God." This great poet could conceive of no greater handiwork on the part of the "Creator" than an honest man. Nor must we forget in this study the figure of Diogenes, with his lamp as his guide, going up and down the highways and byways looking for an honest man—whom he did not find! Carlyle said: "Make yourself an honest man and then you may be sure there is one rascal less in the world."

We all know that honesty is a virtue and that it is its own reward, but are there not times when stealing is justified? Are there not certain situations that arise where failure to "steal" would be the cause of a greater wrong than theft? Has not a mother the right to steal food for her starving child? If self-preservation is the first law of life, are we not justified in stealing in order to sustain life?

If there are exceptions, extreme though they be, to absolute and undeviating honesty, do these not invalidate this Commandment as an all-embracing and all-inclusive law? Just as the Sixth Commandment was found to be inadequate in the interpretation of the pre-emptory precept "Thou shalt not kill," so this Commandment is equally deficient in its application to the multitudinous acts involved in dishonest conduct.

While the Right Rev. Robert Wesley Peach, presiding bishop of the Reformed Episcopal Church, says that "even at the point of death, hunger offers no excuse for theft,"¹⁸ Daniel Willard, late president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, thinks that extenuating circumstances should be considered when judging a theft. In a public address he stated: "While I do not like to say so, I would be less than candid if I did not say, I would steal before I would starve."¹⁹

¹⁷ Hayes, *Ten Commandments*, p. 144.

¹⁸ *New York Times*, Apr. 3, 1933.

¹⁹ *New York Herald Tribune*, Mar. 28, 1931.

How shall we classify this Biblical expression from *Proverbs*, Chapter 6, verse 30?—

.30 *Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry.*

In Mexico, the law permits a first offender who steals food to go free. According to the Swedish Westgota-lag, a poor man who can find no other means of relieving his family's hunger may with impunity thrice appropriate food belonging to somebody else; but if he does it a fourth time, he is punished for theft. According to the Mohammedan law, the hand is not to be cut off for stealing any article of food that is quickly perishable, because it may have been taken to supply the immediate demands of hunger. In China, stealing food under the stress of hunger rarely merits conviction. Among the West African Fjort, open robbery to appease hunger is never punished. A similar rule prevails among the Tahitians.²⁰

It would be monstrous to condemn a man on a charge of moral turpitude for stealing food for his starving family after he had tried all other means to secure sustenance. This is especially unjust in a society where money represents wealth, and where the absence of money makes a person poorer than the most primitive aborigine; particularly so in a society in which our code of property rights bears no relationship to the dishonest methods of its acquisition.

When this Commandment was formulated, the meaning of stealing was definite and concrete. Then it was understood to mean tangible, physical property, such as food, cattle and the few material things that man in early society had acquired—things that could be marked, numbered and identified. The possession of a house, a cow or similar property was invaluable to its owner; to be deprived of them meant, as a rule, starvation or death. For that reason, the theft of those essential articles of sustenance was punishable by death until recent times. It was classified as a capital offense as serious as murder.

²⁰ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 1, p. 286.

In English law, within the last hundred years, there was a long list of crimes involving petty thievery that were punishable by hanging. It is estimated that during the reign of Henry VIII more than 70,000 thieves were hanged.²¹

As possessions became more plentiful and the struggle for existence less severe, the penalty for stealing was naturally lessened. In fact, today stealing has many classifications. The law does not regard all stealing in the same light, and it provides different degrees of punishment for different kinds of theft. The value of the article often determines the seriousness of the theft; very often no notice at all is taken of certain types of petty thievery which are committed a thousand times a day. In early society, and even up to the present century, stealing a horse was regarded as one of the gravest offenses, while obtaining property under false pretenses was until recently classified merely as fraud.²²

We are living in an altogether different society from that of the tribal Hebrews. The manner by which business is transacted today was utterly inconceivable to the minds of those who formulated this Commandment. So rapidly are new schemes and methods devised by unscrupulous people to steal money and other valuables, that the law is unable to keep pace with them. New laws are constantly being demanded to cope with the newer schemes of crime. Just as the misappropriation of money entrusted to another has only recently become a crime under the law, so we find that "false promises" by which swindlers deprive others of their money do not yet legally constitute a crime.

Is not one guilty of a theft who takes advantage of another's ignorance of the law to induce him to surrender valuable possessions with which he would not otherwise part if he were acquainted with his "legal rights"? "Ignorance of the law is no excuse" in the loss of one's property. "Legal robbery" is not only permissible, but quite prevalent. Such a premise is contrary to the very basic principles

²¹ Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

²² Jerome Hall, *Theft, Law and Society*, pp. 18-49.

of honesty and justice. Lawyers themselves have been guilty of giving legal advice which has deprived their clients of valuable possessions. Taking unfair legal advantage of a person is just as dishonest as deliberate stealing.

A person who had stolen a cow was released from custody because no value had been put on the animal, and since no theft can be committed without some loss of value, the judge ruled the act no theft. In another instance it was held that a person charged with stealing live turkeys could not be held for trial because they were found to be dead turkeys. A man was indicted for stealing a pair of stockings, but was ordered acquitted because they were old ones. Similarly, a person who was accused of stealing a duck was acquitted because at his trial he submitted proof that it was a drake.²³ Because of the law's technicality, were these acts any the less dishonest?

Does the technicality of the law determine the morality of the act, or is the act inherently wrong despite the law's failure to condemn it?

We are only too well acquainted with cases where the thief lives on the wealth he has stolen, while the victim struggles for existence in poverty. Why is the thief permitted not only to enjoy the wealth he has stolen from another, but to pass it on for the benefit of his children, while the victim's children are made to suffer not for their sins, or their father's sins, but solely because of the dishonest act of another person?

What about the armed thief who not only steals, but when caught in his dishonest act kills his victim in order to escape with his loot? How can this Commandment be applied to the situation which so often happens, when the thief and murderer escapes and is never apprehended, while the innocent victim has been deprived of both his wealth and his life? Why should the violator of two Commandments triumph over an innocent victim?

Lying and cheating are so essentially a part of stealing that failure

²³ Hall, *Theft, Law and Society*, p. 91.

to include them in this Commandment is almost conclusive evidence that this precept was intended solely for some provincial phase of Hebrew tribal life. Cheating in any game, transaction or undertaking which results in depriving someone of that which rightfully belongs to him is just as much stealing as if a deliberate theft had been perpetrated. This is equally true as regards misrepresentation and other forms of deception. Lying may sometimes be more detrimental to society than stealing, and it is often difficult to determine which is the greater enemy to society—the liar or the thief.

If each dishonest act held within itself the means of detection and exposure, what a great difference that would make! One thing, however, is certain: it would be far more effective in keeping people honest than this Commandment. And Ingersoll said: "If all men knew for a certainty that to steal from another was to rob themselves, larceny would cease."

If the results of dishonesty could be so plainly and effectively demonstrated as in the story concerning the Emperor Charlemagne and the bell-founder, the world would be able to boast more honest people. The Emperor gave the man a quantity of silver to mix with baser metal in the casting of a bell. The dishonest craftsman kept the silver and used a cheap substitute. When the bell was hung it would not ring. It would not even move. So the founder was sent for. When he pulled the rope, the huge clapper fell and crushed him to death.²⁴

Honesty, like any other phase of morality, is a development of evolutionary ethics, and the higher the cultural state, the more scrupulous the individual conduct. If, every time a theft were attempted, the hands became palsied, or if, when a person tried to secure unmerited gain through dishonest statements, "each false [word] as cauterizing to the root of the tongue, consuming it with speaking," this Commandment would at least possess some value, not as a moral precept, but as a warning signal.

²⁴F. J. Gould, *Three Hundred Stories to Tell*, p. 57.

STEALING AS ATAVISM

We do not have to go very far back in history to know that many of the heroes of the past would be classified as criminals today. Many we still regard as heroes were robbers and bandits in the early settlement days. Much evidence makes it necessary to give serious consideration to the thought that the modern criminal is but a reversion to the spirit and daring which were essential to leadership in a barbaric age. Many display the elements of genius at organization and strategy. The "honor among thieves" which they scrupulously observe differs only in kind, and not in degree, from the honor that honest men demand.

In a recent address, Sir Basil Thomson, former director of Scotland Yard, declared that when World War I broke out nearly all the desperate criminals of England, guilty of major crimes, enlisted voluntarily and served courageously through the war.²⁵ He expressed the opinion that this was not unusual, as he had always felt that the burglar, as a rule, was a man who possessed great courage. The man who in peace time becomes a criminal, in time of war may prove to be a great hero.

A noted English scholar quite truthfully states that it may be that a great number of modern habitual criminals merely have the misfortune to live in an age in which their merits and ability are not appreciated. He further states that "with the dispositions and habits of the uncivilized men which he has inherited from a remote past, the criminal has to live in a country in which the majority of the inhabitants have learned new lessons of life, and where he is regarded more and more as an outcast as he strives more and more to fulfill the yearnings of his nature."²⁶ The bold and daring exploits of tribal chiefs that brought them honor and respect from their clans would bring them only long prison sentences in our times. And many

²⁵ Ernest R. Groves, *Personalities and Social Adjustment*, p. 98.

²⁶ Ellis, *The Criminal*, p. 254.

of our "heroes," had they been on the other side of the conflict, would be condemned as "criminals."

Darwin many years ago suggested that stealing and other forms of criminality may be due to *atavism*—the recurrence of traits possessed by our primitive ancestors. Stealing was one of man's first pursuits. This instinct, surviving in many people today, causes them to steal without regard to the need or value of the article. In speaking of the appearance of blackness in sheep, Darwin remarks: "With mankind some of the worst dispositions, which occasionally without any assignable cause make their appearance in families, may perhaps be reversions to a savage state, from which we are not removed by many generations. This view seems indeed recognized in the common expression that such men are the black sheep of the family."²⁷ A proper comprehension of this primitive instinct will help us to understand many acts that otherwise seem criminal.

Many a child, when questioned as to why he has stolen some article, replies: "I do not know what comes over me. It seems as if it were something that I cannot help. I am ashamed of it afterwards. I just see something that doesn't belong to me and I take it." Recently a high-school boy whose conduct was of the highest order, and who otherwise was exemplary, was apprehended for stealing, and, when questioned, replied: "I steal because it makes me feel good to steal, but I am terribly sorry afterwards."²⁸

The impulse to steal may sometimes develop from a propensity in childhood. It is well known that many children steal, and nearly all have a desire to. Many think it "clever" to be able to take something belonging to another child without that child's knowledge. Sometimes encouragement by classmates makes a confirmed thief of the child whose act was done "in fun." Once the habit of stealing is formed in childhood, it becomes extremely difficult to bring a child to a realization of his wrongdoing. He does not consider his acts any worse than begging, and often, because of the proficiency he has de-

²⁷ Quoted, Ellis, p. 253.

²⁸ For similar cases, see William Healy, *Honesty*, pp. 163-169.

veloped in stealing, he feels a certain superiority in both intelligence and courage over other children. Unless propensity is eradicated at an early stage, the child will generally grow up into a dishonest adult.

The children in *Oliver Twist* whom Fagin taught how to steal were completely unaware that their acts were ethically wrong or anti-social. On the contrary, they considered themselves clever and were constantly striving to perfect their technique.

One of the most notorious instances of atavism was that of a noted judge in France, who was regarded throughout the country as the thieves' most hated enemy. It was discovered that he would make the thief he was to sentence describe in detail the intricate technique he used in perpetrating his crimes. At night, the jurist would then duplicate the very thefts for which he had but a few days before sent a culprit to prison.

Indeed, there are innumerable instances of men engaged in keeping other people honest being guilty of what they are assigned to prevent. A striking example is a policeman who is employed to prevent thefts but who himself is guilty of stealing. The press recently reported the case of a "Jekyll-Hyde cop." "The dual life led by former policeman Frank Flors was revealed today with his arrest as a safecracker. By day he protected merchants of Astoria; by night he robbed them, he confessed."²⁹

While assigned to protect the property of citizens, two New York policemen were convicted of stealing over a hundred boxes of candy from a nearby plant. In pronouncing judgment on them, the judge said: "You were sworn to protect the public and you violated all sense of duty by committing robbery. . . . You reduced yourselves to the standard of crooks."³⁰ Another instance is that of a policeman who was called to settle a dispute between two people. He forcibly searched one of the disputants and stole his money.³¹

A grand jury indicted a judge, head of the bar association of his

²⁹ *New York Evening Journal*, Apr. 7, 1930.

³⁰ *New York American*, Mar. 26, 1935.

³¹ *New York Times*, Dec. 29, 1934.

city, for an alleged theft of nearly \$50,000 from an estate of which he was executor and attorney. He held an honored position in the community, was trained to administer justice, and yet when the opportunity presented itself, he acted like a common thief.³²

Attorneys who are supposed to support the ethics of their profession are unfortunately only too often caught in dishonest transactions. The temptation to speculate in stock and bet on horse races was too difficult for one lawyer to resist, and as a result he defrauded a number of men and women of more than \$500,000. Today he is in prison for his thefts.³³

Something far more effective than this Commandment is needed to eradicate the deep-rooted instinct to steal that exists in some people. A mentality deeply ingrained with the cunning of the jungle cannot be easily raised to the cultural level of modern man. We cannot expect the observance of the rules of modern society from a mentality that reverts to its primitive instincts. It is difficult enough, even under favorable conditions, to train a normal intellect to observe the rules and laws of modern society. A child is born with instincts and desires inherited from primitive ancestors, which he will have to learn to suppress in order to be a socially accepted member of society. Thousands are incapable of making this adjustment, and that accounts for our large "criminal" population.

In order that man might survive, nature forced him to practise the most cunning forms of deception, and his propensity to deceive and steal is but a survival of his early struggle against the inexorable forces of life. The conditions which he had to face forced him to deceive his enemies; if he had failed, he would not have been able to survive in the terrific struggle for existence. Those who possessed the greatest amount of cunning were best able to cope with conditions. "Stealing" was essential for survival during that early period of social development. The atavistic instinct to steal is unfortu-

³² *New York Times*, Oct. 13, 1934.

³³ *Ibid.*, Mar. 6, 1937.

nately still too deeply ingrained in some minds, making it impossible for them to be honest according to our present code of morality.

KLEPTOMANIA

Just as there are children born with deformed limbs and crippled bones, so some are born with warped and distorted mentalities. As it would be the height of folly to force a child with physical deformities of sight, of speech or of limb to attempt to see, to speak or to walk as well as those who are physically normal, so it is equally absurd to expect those who are mentally deficient to behave like those who possess normal mentalities. No normal person would steal without some motive, and no normal person would steal if he knew that he would be caught, the stolen goods taken from him, and punishment inflicted for his act.

The ordinary thief steals for a reason. He thinks before he acts, and chooses the most profitable undertaking for the risks involved. But there are some people who have no reason to steal, and who know that the stolen article will be taken from them and restored to the rightful owner, who steal because they cannot help themselves. We call such persons "kleptomaniacs."

To the kleptomaniac, stealing is a compulsion, and precepts and advice are utterly useless against the irresistible desire that obsesses him. The kleptomaniac is no more responsible for his acts than is the crippled child who fails to walk as perfectly as the normal child. Scientific research in this field has confirmed this. In fact, in some forms of post-epileptic automatism the sufferer steals without knowing it, and is embarrassed and chagrined when he learns what he has done. Are the acts of kleptomaniacs to be condemned as thefts and in violation of this Commandment?

Many kleptomaniacs have a neurotic sexual complex. Stealing with them becomes a fetish of an almost ineradicable nature. Honest and scrupulous in all other dealings, they are unable to restrain themselves when confronted with the object that arouses their erotic

desires. The articles stolen are shoes, caps, garters, gloves, pencils and other things.

Not all forms of kleptomania, however, arise from sexual neuroses, nor is it a respecter of social standing. It affects people in all walks of life and all classes of society—the rich and the poor, the cultured and the uncultured, the educated and the ignorant. Persons of high social standing and of substantial wealth have been known to steal from their closest associates. Their acts generally do not come to public attention, but enough instances are recorded in the press to substantiate the above facts. Recently “a highly respected woman principal of a public school was revealed as a kleptomaniac who had been stealing personal belongings for several years from men and women connected with the Parent-Teachers Association. Almost invariably some minor belonging or small sum of money would disappear from the pocket of one of those at the parties. Most of the time the articles or cash were so unimportant no mention was made of it.”³⁴

Particularly during pregnancy are women subject to these emotional disturbances. The following case has innumerable counterparts: A young married woman, on becoming pregnant, would experience a strong impulse to steal which she found difficult to repress; if she succeeded in repressing the impulses of theft, she began to vomit, undoubtedly owing to the conflict of reactions—that of restraining her dishonest impulses or suffering digestive disturbances.³⁵

We do not have to go to the physician's laboratory to find cases of unusual and peculiar circumstances which prompt people to steal. The following is extremely interesting:

“Four times have expectant babies made Marion Hackett, twenty-seven, a criminal and sent her to jail. Four have been born in jail. Only two have lived. With bowed head she blamed her past misdeeds on her physical condition, which she said upset her

³⁴ *New York World-Telegram*, Jan. 11, 1938.

³⁵ Ellis, *Studies in Psychology of Sex*, Vol. 7, pp. 483, 484.

mentally. A jury took pity on her when she told them that her fourth child had been born only a month and a half ago on Welfare Island, where she has been held awaiting trial on a second-degree larceny charge.”³⁶

Dr. Grah, lately physician to the Ameer of Afghanistan, relates the case of a man whose right arm was chopped off as the penalty for stealing. Though he knew the severe punishment that would be exacted for a second offense, he stole again shortly after, was caught, and deprived of his left arm. Still unable to curb his propensity for stealing, he used the stumps of his arms and stole a cheap piece of earthenware. Easily apprehended, because the act had been committed in broad daylight before many people, he was convicted and sentenced to have his head cut off.³⁷

A female thief told the matron of a prison that she tried very hard to refrain from stealing; “but it wasn’t to be. I was obliged to steal, or to watch for someone to steal from. I did try my best, but it couldn’t be helped, and here I am. It wasn’t my fault exactly, but I *did* try.”³⁸ A pickpocket said: “When I see anyone pass with a watch in his pocket, even though I have no need of money, I feel a real need to take it.” Dostoevsky, the Russian novelist, tells of a thief who was devoted to him. He says: “He sometimes stole from me, but it was always *involuntary*; he scarcely ever borrowed from me, so evidently what attracted him was not money or other interested motive.”³⁹

Recently a retired business man was arrested on charges of petty larceny. He was discovered taking small coins—five and ten cent pieces—from newsstands while the attendants were away. His acts become the more inexplicable because when questioned by the police he had more than \$1,300.00 in his possession; in addition, his police

³⁶ *New York Evening Journal*, Jan. 30, 1930.

³⁷ Charles Mercier, *Criminal Responsibility*, p. 223. See also Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*.

³⁸ George S. Dougherty, *The Criminal as a Human Being*, p. 177.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

record disclosed the fact that he had committed similar crimes on several other occasions! ⁴⁰

Every day in the week persons charged with stealing, which was prompted by circumstances utterly beyond their control, are brought into the courtroom. The grave question is whether they are thieves by choice or necessity, and whether a voluntary or involuntary act of theft should be equally condemned and punished. The cold gray bars of a prison cell, even the threat of eternal damnation, cannot restrain those who have an uncontrollable obsession for taking what does not belong to them.

Is this Commandment to apply to each and every individual regardless of his mental or physical condition on the theory of "free will"—that is, that each individual is fully cognizant of what is right and what is wrong and is therefore responsible for his acts? If man were a free agent, as religion tells us he is, he would be fortified against dishonest teachings by knowing instinctively their wrong implications. To apply this Commandment, with all its vengeful implications, to the kleptomaniac, is just as ridiculous as to tell an insane person not to talk irrationally.⁴¹ Precept and moral suasion to the kleptomaniac are utterly useless.

We cannot in justice condemn a person suffering from kleptomania any more than we can justifiably punish a man suffering from a disease which he contracted through no fault of his own. Kleptomania is recognized as a disease by the medical profession, and deserves the same careful medical attention as any of the other ills "that flesh is heir to." The mere existence of such a disease as kleptomania should be sufficient to invalidate the claim of religion that this Commandment is an inflexible precept applicable to all people, under all circumstances, at all times.

⁴⁰ *New York Sun*, Mar. 8, 1944.

⁴¹ It is not so very long since the insane were imprisoned. Today, however, we have asylums for the "criminally" insane—that is, for those who have been guilty of committing some crime against property or persons while suffering from some form of insanity, thereby mitigating the severity of the punishment.

STEALING AS A TABOO IN TRIBAL SOCIETY

In analyzing the Sixth Commandment, we discovered that unless we knew exactly what was meant by the words, "Thou shalt not kill," the Commandment was meaningless. If literally interpreted, it would be impossible to observe, since some form of killing takes place every moment of the day, and will continue to take place as long as the present pattern of living prevails in which one form of life must subsist on the other. This premise is also applicable to the Eighth Commandment. For just as killing in some form takes place every moment of the day and night, so some form of "stealing" is committed.

Just as I have shown that the Sixth Commandment was based on the fear of blood pollution, so I shall prove that a similar taboo is the basis of this Commandment. This is borne out by the use of curses on a thief in the tribe who has escaped apprehension and thereby avoided punishment. Not only do we find Biblical references to support this practice, but it prevailed in other primitive societies.

Among the Samoans, when a theft has been committed in a garden, the owner shouts: "May fire blast the eyes of the person who has stolen my bananas." It is essentially an appeal to the god of the tribe to wreak vengeance on the culprit. A curse very often caused fear and consternation that few other things could produce. The usual curse among the Luang-Sermata was "Evil shall devour you! Lightning shall strike you!" And again, "May the thief be eaten by a white shark."⁴² The application of the curse in connection with thievery was also prevalent among the Arabs. They cursed the thief in order to recover the stolen goods. A taboo was always associated with a curse.⁴³

The Samoans also have a system for the enforcement of property rights. In the case of a theft, the injured party gives the priest a fee of mats. The priest places a curse on the thief; the latter,

⁴² Crawley, *Oath, Curse and Bible Blessing*, pp. 4-17.

⁴³ The taboo of stealing and the resultant curse survive today in an expression which is still common. You often hear a person who has been accused of stealing say, "If I stole this thing, may I [or my wife or children] die."

fearful of the fulfillment of the curse, deposits at the door of the priest an equivalent for the stolen property.⁴⁴ Many superstitious people today believe they can punish a thief by this method.

In primitive times, it was extremely effective. Generally the curse invoked the threat of illness on the culprit, and as he, in the natural course of events, was bound sooner or later to become ill, he would confess and return the property for fear of further punishment. When the curse seemed ineffective, the priest, then as now, conveniently left the matter to God's judgment.⁴⁵ The curse called down on him for stealing, and not the ethical implication of the act, was the effective deterrent to a thief in primitive times.

The primitive origin of this Commandment and its exclusive application to members within the tribe become apparent from a study of the laws and taboos of uncivilized societies.

Property rights are respected within each community, and severe penalties inflicted for violations. However, stealing from neighboring or enemy tribes was never considered ethically wrong. On the contrary, the most daring thief was considered the most honored member of the tribe.

Among the Mbayas the law, "Thou shalt not steal," applies only to tribesmen and allies, not to strangers and enemies. The Tehuelches of Patagonia, although honest among themselves, have no scruples in stealing from anyone outside the tribe. The Abipones, who never took anything from their own countrymen, used to rob and murder the Spaniards, whom they considered their enemies. The high standard of honesty which prevailed among the North American Indians did not apply to foreigners, especially white men, whom they thought it no shame to rob or cheat. A theft from a member of another band was no crime; a theft from one of their own band was the greatest of crimes.

If anything is stolen from his home during his absence, a Guiana Indian thinks that the article has been carried away by someone not

⁴⁴ Crawley, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

of his own race. Among some Eskimos, it is believed that to steal boldly and adroitly from a stranger is an act of heroism.⁴⁶

Of the Greenlanders it is said that if they can purloin or even forcibly seize the property of another, it is a feather in their cap, while stealing from people of the same village or tribe is regarded as wrong. The Savage Islanders consider theft from a tribesman a vice, but theft from a member of another tribe a virtue. Among the Masai, the warriors and old men have a profound contempt for a thief, but they do not consider cattle-raiding from neighboring tribes stealing. The Arab was proud of robbing his enemies and of bringing away by stealth what he could not have taken by open force,⁴⁷ yet if he stole from a tribesman he was dishonored.

Although the Bible is a veritable encyclopedia of stories of theft and murder, one instance will be sufficient to indicate that this Commandment was not intended as a moral precept of honesty. Moses tells the Children of Israel how to acquire the property of others in *Exodus, Chapter 3, verses 21 and 22*:

21 And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall come to pass that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty:
22 But every woman shall borrow of her neighbor, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and raiment; and ye shall put them upon your sons and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.

The Children of Israel faithfully carried out Moses' instructions and believed they were doing the will of their God when they deceived the Egyptians. As one writer has stated,⁴⁸ this was not a momentary freak of fraudulence or a sudden succumbing to temptation, but was perpetrated under the firm belief that they were acting with the favor and approval of their God.

⁴⁶ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 2, p. 4.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-24.

⁴⁸ E. P. Evans, *Evolutionary Ethics*, p. 24.

Why was such an event recorded with such shameless pride in the Bible? The answer is simply that at that time despoiling others was considered an achievement of tribal cunning. Today such acts are condemned as downright deception and thievery. This event is not only proof of the tribal concept of morality exhibited by the early Hebrews, but is also pertinent evidence that ethics develop by an evolutionary process.

Peoples of low moral standard do not have to wait for wars to practise deception. It has been definitely established that during the Middle Ages, throughout most of Europe, it seemed to be tacitly agreed that foreigners were created for the sole purpose of being robbed;⁴⁹ and this, during the time that a particular religious belief held absolute dominance over the people in almost every department of human activity. The clannishness of religion accounts for many of the unnecessary ills of mankind. Once religious delusions have been eradicated and man devotes his energies to solving his own problems, many of the ills that affect us will vanish as if by magic.

Not only was stealing permissible in primitive societies, but it was a settled principle of conduct that the greater the degree of deception practised on a "stranger," the more laudable was the transaction considered. The early Hebrews were no different in this respect from the Balantis of Africa, who punished with death a theft committed to the detriment of a tribesman, but encouraged and rewarded thievery from other tribes.⁵⁰

Knowing nothing of the moral value of honesty, the authors of the Bible cannot be credited with a comprehension of ethical ideals attained more than two thousand years after their time. We cannot, of course, condemn them for their tribal code. We merely believe that this primitive concept of moral conduct should not be imposed on a civilization whose cultural level is separated by an evolutionary progress of nearly thirty centuries.

⁴⁹ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 1, p. 24.

⁵⁰ Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

THE SIN OF STEALING AND THE REMOVAL OF LANDMARKS

As previously stated, the primitive mentality knew nothing about ethics or ethical conduct as we understand these conceptions today. In view of this, what was the meaning of the words, "Thou shalt not steal"? Could they have originated as a curse for committing a particular theft?

The only method known in early Biblical times to determine the ownership of land was by the partition known as "landmarks," and to remove them was condemned as both stealing and a "sin." J. M. Powis Smith,⁵¹ noted Hebrew scholar, states that removing a neighbor's landmark was condemned by Hebrew law as a crime equivalent to land-stealing, and the noted legal authority, John M. Zane, states that the injunction, "Do not remove thy neighbor's landmark," became a curse in the minatory law.⁵²

Probably as significant as anything that might be adduced concerning the association of this Commandment with the removal of landmarks are the following Biblical quotations from *Deuteronomy, Chapter 19, verse 14, and Chapter 27, verse 17*:

Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor's landmark, which they of old time have sent in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it.

Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor's landmark; and all the people shall say, Amen.

This belief was prevalent in nearly all primitive societies. Both among the ancient Greeks and Babylonians, landmarks were inscribed with curses on those who removed them. Among the latter is found this inscription: "Upon this man may the great gods Anu, Bel, Ea and Nuska look wrathfully, uproot his foundation and destroy his offspring." ⁵³

⁵¹ J. M. Powis Smith, *The Origin and History of Hebrew Law*, p. 49.

⁵² John M. Zane, *The Story of Law*, p. 101.

⁵³ Crawley, *Oath, Curse and Blessing*, pp. 4-17.

Since removing a landmark was condemned as a theft and a sin, and since this is the only theft so condemned by the tribal Hebrews, one can well understand how this prohibition might have been restated in the words of the present Commandment. This is exceedingly pertinent when studied in the light of the fact that the Israelites were driven from their land, and a "landmark" no longer had any significance for them in their wanderings over the earth. How futile to have such a Commandment as part of the Decalogue when there was no land to protect, particularly when the reward for observing one of the Commandments was the Biblical Deity's guarantee of their long tenure on the land he supposedly had given them. The reward for observing this edict, as stated in the verses quoted above, is strikingly similar to that offered for the observance of the Fifth Commandment.

This Commandment, "Thou shalt not steal," seems to be but a restatement of the verses quoted above, and to have nothing whatever to do with the moral question of honesty as understood today. If this premise is correct, it is a taboo of primitive superstition and belongs in the same category as the previous ones.

Perhaps this is more understandable when analyzed in the light of Frazer's observation that "there may survive not a few old savage taboos which . . . have maintained their credit long after the crude ideas out of which they sprang have been discarded by the progress of thought and knowledge."⁵⁴

Significant evidence in favor of this premise also lies in the fact that the language used in the Ninth and Tenth Commandments is identical in structure and meaning with the prohibition, "Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor's landmark."⁵⁵ There is more, however, than similarity of expression involved in these Commandments. There is a continuity of thought in behalf of tribal solidarity, and a close relationship with the Fifth Commandment in the matter of reward.

⁵⁴ Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, "Taboo and the Perils of the Soul," p. 218.

⁵⁵ Ninth Commandment: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."
Tenth Commandment: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods."

When the Children of Israel were driven from their land, the Commandment dealing with landmarks had to be changed. And since removing the landmark was condemned as stealing, it is easily understood how this taboo was restated in the words of the present Commandment to be applicable to other tribal thefts. There are no original sources to which one can refer for verification of this premise, but a study of early society and the Bible itself seem to make it indisputable. To restate ancient taboos in words of their original meaning has many difficulties, due to the limitations of language and the changing meanings of words. Many acts are placed in one classification that have many meanings, and require an explanation of the words applied to them to be properly understood.⁵⁶ In using words dealing with ancient customs and beliefs, we are more than likely to misunderstand their actual meanings by confusing them with their present-day use, unless we are familiar with their anthropological derivations. There is no better example of the deficiency of language than this Commandment, which originally was never even remotely applicable to honest conduct in the present sense of the word.⁵⁷

In many primitive communities, removing a landmark has been regarded as a sinful act because of the nature of the taboo placed upon it. In the South Sea Islands, it is a common practice to protect property by making it taboo. Thus, any attempt to use it incurred the curse of the gods.⁵⁸ In Polynesia, the mark of taboo on property often consists of a wooden image of a man stuck in the ground. The scarecrow which we so frequently see in fields and pastures is a survival of this taboo. In Samoa, all kinds of weird figures are used for the purpose of a taboo which acts as a powerful check on stealing, especially from fruit trees and plantations. Innumerable instances could be given, but one should suffice. The "cross-stick taboo" consisted of a stick suspended horizontally from the tree, and implied that any thief who touched the tree would catch a disease running right

⁵⁶ See *The Ethics of Hercules*.

⁵⁷ See "Culture and Human Behavior," by Dr. McClellan S. Ford, in *Scientific Monthly*, Dec., 1942.

⁵⁸ Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 63.

across his body which would remain fixed until he died.⁵⁹ Of the Barotse we are told that when they do not want a thing touched, they spit on straws and stick them all about the object. When a Balonda has placed a beehive on a tree, he ties a "piece of medicine" round the trunk, which he believes will prove sufficient protection against thieves. Jacob of Edessa tells of a Syrian priest who wrote a curse and hung it on a tree so that nobody would dare to eat the fruit. It is said that in the early days of Islam a man reserved water for his own use by hanging some fringes of his red blanket on a tree beside it.⁶⁰

The natives of Timor in the Pacific Islands believe that a taboo is just as effective as traps and dogs in driving away thieves from their property. Among the Washambala, the owner of a field sometimes puts a stick in a banana leaf on the road, believing that anybody who enters the field without permission "will be subject to the curse of this charm."

The Wadahagga protect a doorless hut against burglars by placing a banana leaf over the threshold, and any maliciously inclined person who dares to step over it is supposed to become ill and die.⁶¹ The Akka "stick an arrow in a bunch of bananas still on the stalk to mark it as their own when ripe," and then not even the owner of the tree would think of touching the fruits claimed by another. When Brazilian Indians leave their huts, they often wind a piece of the same material round the latch of the door; sometimes they hang baskets, rags or flaps of bark on their landmarks.

Sympathetic-magic rites were not confined to aborigines. There was a province in Arabia where laying stones on an enemy's ground meant that the owner would be visited with fearful consequences if he cultivated the land. So great was the fear of such stones that nobody would go near a field where they were placed, and this practice was eventually condemned as a "sin."⁶²

⁵⁹ Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol 1, p. 623.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, pp. 58-65.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁶² *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 65.

The Etruscan placed the following curse on anyone who touched or displaced a boundary mark: such a person shall be condemned by the gods; his house shall disappear; his race shall be extinguished; his limbs shall be covered with ulcers and waste away; his land shall no longer produce fruits; hail, rust and fires of the dog-star shall destroy his harvests. "And," says Westermarck, "considering the important part played by blood as a conductor of imprecations, it is not improbable that the Roman ceremony of letting the blood of a sacrificial animal flow into the hole where a landmark was to be placed was intended to give efficacy to the curse."⁶³

In England, until very recently, the annual custom of "beating the hounds" was observed. This ceremony was accompanied by religious services during which a clergyman invoked a curse on anyone who trespassed on his neighbor's land, and blessings on him who regarded the landmarks.⁶⁴

In addition to the belief that the remover of a landmark will be cursed for his deed, there are many other superstitions associated with landmarks and their removal. In Teutonic and Scandinavian lands, it is believed that the Jack-o'-lantern is the ghost of a former remover of a landmark who now haunts it and the boundary lines. In popular Hindu belief, the ghost of a former proprietor will not allow the people of another village to encroach with impunity on a boundary. In South India, witches were believed to ride on a tiger around the boundaries of seven villages at night. In the Hebrides, blight could be removed from cattle by bringing the carcass of one near a boundary stream; the water from such a stream was used with silver to remove the curse of the evil eye.⁶⁵

The old inhabitants of Cumana, on the Caribbean Sea, used to mark off their plantations by a single cotton thread, believing that anybody tampering with this boundary mark would speedily die. A similar idea prevails among the Indians of the Amazon. In Ceylon,

⁶³ Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 68, 69.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁶⁵ Hastings, *Encyclopædia*, Vol. 7, p. 794.

to prevent fruit from being stolen, the people hang up certain grotesque figures around the orchard and dedicate it to the devils, after which ceremony none of the native Ceylonese will dare even to touch the fruit on any account. On the landmarks of the ancient Babylonians, generally consisting of stone pillars in the form of phalli, imprecations were inscribed with appeals to various deities.⁶⁶

Even the Romans came under the influence of this taboo. Jupiter Terminalis was the god of boundaries. According to Roman tradition, Numa directed that everyone should mark the bounds of his landed property by stones consecrated to the god Jupiter, to whom sacrifices should be offered at the festival of the Terminalia. "If any person demolished or displaced these stones, he should be looked upon as devoted to this god, to the end that anybody might kill him as a sacrilegious person with impunity and without being defiled with guilt."⁶⁷ That this prevailed among the Egyptians and was then considered stealing, is substantiated by Professor James H. Breasted, who shows it was stressed in the code of Amenemope, which long antedated the Mosaic precept.⁶⁸

In Greece, land boundaries were supposed to be protected by the god Zeus. This is mentioned by Plato in his "Laws": "Let no one shift the boundary line either of a fellow citizen who is a neighbor, or if he dwells at the extremity of the land, or any stranger which is conterminous with him. Everyone should be more willing to move the largest rock which is not a landmark, than the last stone which is the sworn mark of friendship and hatred between neighbors; for Zeus, the god of kindred, is witness of the citizen, and Zeus, the god of strangers, of the stranger, and, when aroused, terrible are the wars which they stir up. He who obeys the law will never know the fatal consequences of disobedience, but he who despises the law shall be liable to a double penalty, the first coming from the gods, and the second from the law." Such was the belief in nearly all ancient

⁶⁶ Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 65-68.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 61.

⁶⁸ Breasted, *The Dawn of Conscience*, p. 373.

societies; the removal of landmarks constituted a "sin" in the sight of the gods and would be punished severely. In Palestine today, and even here among farm owners, the taboo still persists to such a degree that nobody dares to touch the piles of stone which are placed on the boundaries of landed property.⁶⁹

No group can survive without some regulations regarding the acquisition of those things on which life depends, and this is true even of the animal world. Property rights are as respected among animals as among men. Experience must have taught them that if one does not respect the rights of others within the group, others may not respect his rights, and therefore the animal that steals is punished.

Animals protect their food and other property in a manner similar to that of primitive man. Some rub their bodies against trees and other places which they seek to mark as their own. The individual body odor identifies the spot. The squirrel marks his food with his saliva. It is then unmistakably his and is then buried for future use. No other squirrel would dare appropriate that food unless he were prepared for a bitter struggle.⁷⁰

Bears have been known not only to mark trees with the odor of their bodies by rubbing against them, but to claw them in such a way that they leave a mark of identification. Woe to the animal that seeks to take away these possessions! A struggle to the death ensues. If a stronger animal seeks to wrest the property from a weaker one, the whole pack pounces on him, and he is either killed or driven off. That is the penalty the creature must pay for stealing another's "landmark."⁷¹ Animals do this without the inspired help of a Moses because honesty is a self-regulating force, not because of its inherent moral value, but because of the necessity for self-preservation.

Despite the fact that this Commandment, "Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor's landmark," was discarded when the Children of Israel were driven from the land of their forebears, the taboo asso-

⁶⁹ Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 65.

⁷⁰ There are people who, when they secure something of value, spit upon it as their mark of ownership.

⁷¹ Ernest T. Seton, *The Ten Commandments in the Animal World*, pp. 33-46.

ciated with it was not so easily eradicated. The belief in its efficacy persisted long after its original purpose had been abandoned, and it was restated in the present words of this Commandment. This is evidenced by the transference of its application to the Hebrew custom of using the *mezuzeh*, which is still widespread among the orthodox. The *mezuzeh* is a small wooden, glass or metal case or tube containing a rectangular piece of parchment inscribed with a Bible passage from the *Book of Deuteronomy, Chapter 6, verses 4 to 9, and Chapter 11, verses 13 to 21*. The text had to be printed in twenty-two lines equally spaced in order to possess magical powers.

4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God *is* one Lord:

5 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart.

7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gatcs.

13 And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.

14 That I will give *you* the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil.

15 And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full.

16 Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them;

17 And *then* the Lord's wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and *lest* ye perish quickly from off the good land which the Lord giveth you.

18 Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes.

19 And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

20 And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates:

21 That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.

On the outer side of the parchment, near the top of the roll, is written the word "Shadday," *the ancient name of the Hebrew God, which means "to overpower" and "to treat with violence"—singularly appropriate in the apprehension of a thief.*⁷² An opening is left in the case opposite the word. The *mezuzeh* is affixed in a slanting position to the upper part of the right-hand side of the doorpost as one enters the dwelling, the upper end of the box pointing inward and the lower one outward. Pious Jews kiss their fingers after they touch the *mezuzeh*, reciting, "May God keep my going out and my coming in from now on and evermore,"⁷³ meaning, in early Biblical language, "Mayst thou live long in the land that the Lord, thy God, giveth thee!"

The last verse of the quotation from *Chapter 11*, of the *Book of Deuteronomy*, emphasizes only too well why this Commandment dealing with landmarks fell into disuse. *The Bible God's promise to the Children of Israel was never fulfilled.* That the *mezuzeh* was not originally used for its present purpose is admitted by leading Hebrew authorities.⁷⁴ The very name "*mezuzeh*" is the present Hebrew word for doorpost. During the tribal existence of the Children of Israel it probably either meant or was a synonym for landmark, since houses of the kind used today were unknown then, the tent being the com-

⁷² *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 9, p. 162.

⁷³ Idelsohn, *Ceremonies of Judaism*, p. 64.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

mon type of dwelling. It is quite likely that after the Israelites were driven from the land of their fathers, a new ceremonial use was found for this taboo and charm. They merely transferred the landmark to the doorpost, "ascribing [to it] the power of warding off from the house all harm from without"—the identical purpose of the landmark.⁷⁵ The use of the ancient name of the Hebrew God, "Shadday," is additional evidence that the *mezuzeh* is but a modern adaptation for the supposed magical protective powers attributed to the ancient taboo of the landmark. Modern enlightened Jews consider the *mezuzeh* a primitive superstition, and have abandoned its use.

Lacking the original reason for certain acts, it is naturally difficult to understand the particular motives that inspired them. When an investigation of their relationship to events of the same period is made, however, their origin and meaning become clear. Once direct evidence is lost, time builds an almost unbridgeable chasm between the past and the present, and it is only by piecing together subtle threads of evidence that the gap can be filled and the truth made as apparent as if the actual facts were at hand. Do we need a better illustration of this fact than Darwin's magnificent achievement in discovering the laws of evolution? When first announced, it seemed incredible that man and ape could have had a common ancestry, but when examined in the light of Darwin's findings concerning dormant physical characteristics, such as eyes, ears, hair, bones, instincts, etc., none but the mentally blind could refuse to accept the conclusions of the indisputable evidence amassed by this profound thinker.

RELIGION AND THIEVERY

Ministers of religion do not consider the violation of this Commandment as serious as violations of the previous ones. Why? In speaking of this Commandment, the Rev. G. Campbell Morgan says: "At this point the Decalogue passes from the discussion of the essen-

⁷⁵ Idelsohn, *Ceremonies of Judaism*, p. 65.

tial facts of life to matters of lesser importance.”⁷⁶ Is honesty less important than making graven images? The Rev. Mr. Morgan will not find it “of lesser importance” to violate this Commandment than the Second Commandment. Our law provides no punishment for breaking the latter, but it does exact a severe penalty for committing a theft. This very difference supplies us with a notable example of the evolutionary aspects of ethical conduct in society. In Biblical times, superstitious people considered making a graven image a greater crime than stealing. Today the government encourages, by the expenditure of millions of dollars for schools and teachers, the development of the arts, one of which deals with “graven” images. On the other hand, the government spends millions of dollars for prisons and the prosecution of those who commit dishonest acts. Many clergymen are only too familiar with this phase of law enforcement. The Rev. Mr. Morgan confesses that “it would be interesting, but extremely painful, to pass through the homes of church members, instituting a rigid examination as to the ownership of all books to be found therein.”⁷⁷

The following Biblical text has been used not only to license unrestricted lying, but also to put the stamp of approval on dishonest acts—*Romans, Chapter 3, verse 7*:

“For if the truth of God has more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner?”

No matter how deeply we go into the question of stealing in analyzing this Commandment, we cannot discover thefts more glaring and defiant than those committed in the name of religion. No form of dishonesty equals the lucrative spoils purloined “in the name and for the glory of God.” One of the most outrageous thefts committed in the name of religion is charging the poor, deluded and distressed for prayers. In the thousands of years it has been used, prayer has not been responsible for saving a single soul. “Purgatory,” says

⁷⁶ Morgan. *The Ten Commandments*, p. 88.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

Joseph McCabe, a Roman Catholic priest for twelve years, "is the most lucrative doctrine ever 'revealed' to the Church."⁷⁸ The doctrine of purgatory has filled the coffers of the Church with gold. Millions of dollars have been taken for prayers for the release of loved ones from purgatory—a mythical hell. Prayer for the so-called repose of the souls of the dead should be condemned by law as a protection for ignorant and credulous people, and suitable punishments provided for the fraudulent taking of money for such a purpose.

How succinct does Thomas Paine express this thought in these words: "No man ought to make a living by religion. It is dishonest so to do. Religion is not an act that can be performed by proxy."

Lecky says of this nefarious trade: "A system which deputed its ministers to go to the unhappy widow in the first dark hour of her anguish and desolation to tell her that he who was dearer to her than all the world beside was now burning in a fire, and that he could only be relieved by a gift of money to the priest, was assuredly of its own kind not without extraordinary merit."⁷⁹

Congressman Loring M. Black of New York, in speaking in behalf of a bill to legalize horse racing in the District of Columbia, was opposed by a church delegation. Irritated by this opposition, he turned to the ministers and said: "I don't see how you have the nerve to oppose this bill when you run the biggest gambling business in the world—gambling on the hereafter."⁸⁰

No less notorious than the doctrine of purgatory is the scheme of indulgences. For those outside the Catholic faith who may not know what an indulgence is, I shall quote an authority: "An indulgence is the remission of the debt of temporal punishment due to sin after its guilt has been forgiven."⁸¹ The scandals created by the sale of indulgences throughout the Middle Ages caused Martin Luther to break with the Catholic Church and condemn the practice in the most

⁷⁸ Joseph McCabe, *The Popes and Their Church*, p. 188.

⁷⁹ Lecky, *Morals*, Vol. 2, p. 253.

⁸⁰ *Brooklyn Times Union*, June 3, 1934.

⁸¹ Rev. Hugh Pope, *The Doctrine of Indulgences*, p. 3.

scathing terms. It would be impossible to determine the amount of money that this pious fraud brought to the Church.

In Spain, indulgences could be purchased as easily as postal money orders. A repentant thief who did not know the name and address of the man whose property he had stolen could buy an indulgence for a small sum to wipe out the sin. The claim was made, and undoubtedly correctly so, that by this method of indulgence the Church became a partner with every pickpocket.⁸²

Nor must we fail to mention how the Church fattened on the pious fraud of "holy" relics. "In the Fifth Century," says Joseph McCabe, "Rome began, on a large scale, the forgery of lives of martyrs. Relics of martyrs were now being 'discovered' in great numbers to meet the pious demand of ignorant Christendom, and legends were fabricated by the thousands to authenticate the spurious bits of bone."⁸³ Best known perhaps are pieces of the original Cross. There are phials containing the milk of the Virgin Mary, sold to cure disease. Almost equally lucrative was the prepuce of Jesus Christ, which was carried in a glass case at the head of processions. Its value as a money getter never diminished. No one will ever know how much has been paid to see the two skeletons of Jesus Christ—one when he was a boy and one when he was a man! The bones of saints are still producing revenue. Not to mention "Veronica's Veil" would be to omit one of the choicest bits of fakery. Veronica's Veil is supposed to be a linen cloth with which Jesus wiped his face while carrying the Cross. Through miraculous qualities his image was impressed on it. However, these miraculous powers are unable to account for the existence of at least three such veils, differing in textures and impressions. And then there was the finger of the Holy Ghost, "as whole and as sound as ever." On special occasions a few rays of the star which appeared to the "wise" men were put on display, as well as a phial containing Saint Michael's sweat when he fought with the Devil, an arm of the Apostle James and part of the

⁸² C. R. B. Freeman, *Priestcraft*, p. 73.

⁸³ Little Blue Book 1130, p. 40.

skeleton of John the Baptist.⁸⁴ Martin Luther tells of a bishop who possessed the flames of the Burning Bush which Moses beheld in its fiery glow. Nor must we forget the tear shed by Jesus over the grave of Lazarus, or the legs of the ass on which Jesus rode into Jerusalem—there are no less than five “authentic” sets. There are the rods with which Aaron and Moses performed their miracles before Pharaoh, and a pair of slippers worn by Enoch before the Flood took place.

Joseph McCabe, in commenting on some of these fakeries, said:

“At Lyons the chief treasures shown to the public were some milk and hair of the Virgin Mary. This was Lyons’ set-off to the rival attraction at Soissons, a neighboring town, which had secured one of the milk-teeth shed by the infant Jesus. There seems to have been enough of the milk of the Virgin—some of it was still exhibited in Spanish churches in the nineteenth century—preserved in Europe to feed a few calves. There was hair enough to make a mattress. There were sufficient pieces of the ‘true Cross’ to make a boat. There were teeth of Christ enough to outfit a dentist (one monastery at Charroux had a complete set). There were so many sets of baby linen of the infant Jesus in Italy, France and Spain, that one could have opened a shop with them. One of the greatest churches had Christ’s manger-cradle. Seven churches had his authentic umbilical cord, and a number of churches had his foreskin (removed at circumcision and kept as a souvenir by Mary). One church had the miraculous imprint of his little bottom on a stone on which he sat. Mary herself had left enough wedding rings, shoes, stockings, shirts, girdles, etc., to fill a museum; one of her shirts is still in the Chartres cathedral. One church had Aaron’s rod. Six churches had the six heads cut off John the Baptist. Every one of these things was, remember, in its origin, a cynical blasphemous swindle. Each of these objects was at first launched upon the world with deliberate mendacity. One is almost disposed to ask for an application to the clergy of the law about obtaining money under false pretenses.”⁸⁵

Lecky, one of the most authentic and scrupulous of historians, reviewing the history of the frauds and forgeries of the Church, said:

⁸⁴ Joseph Rhys, *The Reliquary*, p. 37.

⁸⁵ McCabe, *The Story of Religious Controversy*, p. 353.

“Making every allowance for the errors of the most extreme fallibility, the history of Catholicism would on this hypothesis represent an amount of imposture probably unequaled in the annals of the human race.”⁸⁶ He also tells us that “the immense majority of the acts of the martyrs are transparent forgeries of lying monks.”⁸⁷

Joseph Wheless, in his carefully documented book, has collected a veritable encyclopedia of outrageous frauds perpetrated by the Church. He charges that “the Bible, in its every book, and in the strictest legal and moral sense, is a huge forgery.”⁸⁸ The relic business has not ended, and the dishonest trade still flourishes.

Recently it was reported that “Christ’s seamless coat, one of the most precious relics of Catholicism, was exhibited today with solemn exercises for veneration in the ancient cathedral here for the first time since 1891.”⁸⁹

No better example can be given of the connection between religion and thievery than the ministers and expounders of religion in general who are notoriously among the flagrantly dishonest. *How can we expect one knowingly engaged in a dishonest enterprise to exhibit a fidelity of principle greater than that of the profession which he practises?* Or, for a more charitable deduction, shall we say that religion was unable to eradicate their atavistic propensity to steal?

Although there are numerous books dealing with the crimes of preachers, a few current instances should be sufficient to prove the relationship of religion and crime.

James P. Jones, member of the House of Delegates and formerly treasurer of the Virginia Methodist Orphanage, was arrested on a warrant charging him with the larceny of \$38,000 of the orphanage’s funds.⁹⁰ William F. Groves, Superintendent of the St. James Methodist Episcopal Sunday School, was arrested for embezzling \$17,000 in a year from a building and loan association for which he worked

⁸⁶ Lecky, *Rationalism*, Vol. 1, p. 164.

⁸⁷ *Idem*, *Morals*, Vol. 1, p. 197.

⁸⁸ Joseph Wheless, *Forgery in Christianity*, p. xix.

⁸⁹ *New York Times*, July 24, 1933.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, Sept. 19, 1930. See also Franklin Steiner, *Religion and Roguery*.

as solicitor.⁹¹ "The admiring congregation of Reverend Frolkey's church in Le Mars, Iowa, was stunned by the discovery that their beloved minister maintained a gambling den and love nest in a neighboring city and kept his pockets filled with money for his wicked indulgences by a series of bank robberies with mask and pistol."⁹² "The 500 citizens of the little town of Mooreland, Indiana, were shocked recently when their beloved young pastor was arrested on a charge of stealing automobiles. But even more astonishing was his defense. He said that his meagre salary of \$40 a month was not enough to enable him to buy a car in which to visit his parishioners. So he stole three cars at different times 'because the Lord's work had to go on.'" ⁹³

"After exhorting his brethren to lead virtuous lives, Morris Johnson, a lay preacher, would climb from the pulpit, replace the Bible in his hand with a revolver, and take up the more lucrative calling of robbery, according to police yesterday who said that Johnson led a gang of four in more than twenty hold-ups in Brooklyn. Johnson, police say, would rob and preach on the same nights. 'Are you a minister or thief?' police asked Johnson. 'Both,' he is said to have replied, explaining that money was slow in arriving to a clergyman."⁹⁴

The case of Frederick Grant White, a church worker, should prove a lesson to those zealots who are constantly boasting of the saving grace of religion. He was sentenced to Folsom Prison for from twelve to fifteen years after conviction on thirteen fraud charges against women members of his congregation. White was sent to prison thirteen years ago on similar fraud charges when associated with a Los Angeles church.⁹⁵ No doubt, while Mr. White was serving his first term for fraud, he was "born again" by the religious instruction of the prison chaplain, and undoubtedly he was pointed out as a shining example of the redeeming power of religion.

⁹¹ *New York World*, Aug. 19, 1930.

⁹² *New York American*, Oct. 27, 1929.

⁹³ *New York Journal*, Oct. 12, 1931.

⁹⁴ *New York Herald Tribune*, Nov. 13, 1929.

⁹⁵ *New York Sun*, Aug. 18, 1931.

We do not know what the words of this Commandment meant to Austin Drysdale, Bible class teacher and formerly an official of the First National Bank of Philadelphia, but he was sentenced to six months in prison on charges of embezzling \$2,000 of the bank's funds.⁹⁶

Herbert R. Foshay, fifty-four-year-old vestryman of Saint Thomas' Protestant Episcopal Church, Mamaroneck, New York, who resigned as postmaster of that city in 1926 after a shortage of about \$1,200 in the post-office funds had been discovered, was sentenced to a year and a day in Atlanta Penitentiary for robbing the mails of \$35 while he was still in the employ of the post office as a clerk.⁹⁷

T. Edward Jarrell, twenty-six-year-old Methodist Sunday school teacher and cashier of the Plaza National Bank of White Plains, New York, was arrested, arraigned and held for the grand jury on charges preferred by President Edwin P. Day of the bank that his accounts were some \$31,000 short.⁹⁸

Frank A. Scott, fifty-five years old, treasurer of the First Congregational Church of Madison, Connecticut, was sentenced to six months in the county jail on a charge of embezzling \$1,800 of church funds.⁹⁹

Nor must we fail to mention the case of John T. Manton, Senior Judge of the Circuit Court of Appeals of the Southern District of New York, the highest-ranking judge in the United States ever to be convicted of the crime of accepting a bribe. His decisions were notorious instances of "bought justice," yet Judge Manton boasted of his strong religious convictions. Such a system of religion is an evil to society. How can his mere reliance on forgiveness for confessing his sins make amends to those who suffered for his dishonest conduct in selling judicial opinions? His acts cost others their fortunes and their lives, and any religious creed that can soothe the feeling of one who has prostituted his high office should be condemned as a

⁹⁶ *New York American*, June 13, 1933.

⁹⁷ *New York Times*, July 19, 1932.

⁹⁸ *New York Post*, Jan. 9, 1930.

⁹⁹ *New York Herald Tribune*, Dec. 20, 1933.

contributing cause of dishonesty. It certainly cannot be commended as making for honesty.

Rabbi Zeide M. Schmellner, fifty-nine years old, and Miss Mary Berd, his secretary, were convicted of the theft of \$20,000 from Bernard Rudolf, an electrical-supply dealer, who had testified that he gave the defendants \$60,000 in 1932 and 1933 to invest in a mysterious concern that had contracts with equally mysterious customers to furnish them with explosives.¹⁰⁰

In view of the widespread dishonesty and embezzlements by church workers, treasurers and ministers, the boards of trustees of churches are going to bond their employees in the future, putting more reliance in a bonding company than in "God-fearing men." This information comes from Mr. Harry T. Huff of New York, vice-president of the National Surety Company, who in an address said: "One of the largest religious institutions in the country bonded three thousand of its financial secretaries and treasurers last year," while "indications are that all church officials who have the responsibility of handling sums of money for church organizations will be bonded in the near future."¹⁰¹

Fake cures in the name of religion are effective ways of "getting the money" as well as any other dishonest schemes. The Rev. Joseph H. Stokes, who claimed the power to raise fallen arches by "truth and treatment," was fined \$1,000, given a six-month suspended jail sentence, and placed on probation for a year in connection with his spiritual finance scheme. His son, Cecil A. W. Stokes, was sentenced to a year in jail.¹⁰²

Mrs. Annabel Lee Gatlin, lady evangelist of Texas, had saved the souls of 2,000 hardened sinners, but she and her husband were accused of stealing about 200 sinless and soulless cattle, among them some fine horses. She was convicted and served a year in prison.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ *New York Times*, June 24, 1938.

¹⁰¹ *Truth Seeker*, August, 1932.

¹⁰² *New York World-Telegram*, Apr. 19, 1932.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

It is an established fact that religious leaders have been some of the most flagrant perpetrators of deception, fraud and downright thievery. *If it is contended that it was not their religious teachings that caused them to become dishonest, then it must be admitted that their religious training did not prevent their becoming thieves.*

The Rev. Leo Kalmer, Catholic chaplain of the Joliet, Illinois, penitentiary, in an article entitled, "Does Religion Breed Crime?" makes the startling admission that "it would seem so from statistics of penitentiary reports." District Attorney Stanton of Connecticut said: "Within the past ten years five million dollars have been lost in Connecticut by dishonest and other management; in nearly every instance by those who were prominent in church matters." The Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone, the great English Christian statesman, wrote: "To my great pain and disappointment, I have found that thousands of churchmen supplied the great mass of those who have gone lamentably wrong upon questions involving the interest of truth, justice and humanity."¹⁰⁴

The Supreme Court of North Carolina ruled that "the profession of preacher does not necessarily invest a man with that purity of morals which renders him more scrupulous in declaring the truth than another man."¹⁰⁵ And the Court of Appeals of the State of New York said: "Those who for years have given the highest evidence that they would receive the reward of the true Christian, are guilty of grave offenses, moral and legal."¹⁰⁶

In view of all this evidence, imagine a thief being sentenced to attend church as a means of making him honest! This was the sentence John Francis Connaghan received when he pleaded guilty to a theft.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Quoted by Franklin Steiner, *Religion and Roguery*, p. 66.

¹⁰⁵ Sneed v. Greath, 8 N.C., 309.

¹⁰⁶ Court of Appeals, State of New York, 1868.

¹⁰⁷ *New York Journal*, Apr. 22, 1935.

THE NEGATION OF ETHICS

If this Commandment read "Thou shalt be honest," the positive expression might not only act as a deterrent, but it would lack the negative suggestion of committing a wrong. Psychologists tell us that instructions which contain suggestions of things to be avoided often do far more harm than if no suggestion whatever had been given. They often induce a person to do the very thing that the words used were designed to prevent.

Because of the terrific struggle for existence under present economic conditions, particularly when one takes into account man's frailty and the pressure of circumstances, it is almost impossible at times to determine what actually constitutes stealing. Life is not fashioned on a plan where the demarcation between honest and dishonest conduct can always be accurately determined. The pattern of a perfect society was not ordained for us. Environment in a world antagonistic to one's physical and emotional nature is not without influence on conduct. We find ourselves buffeted by countless conflicting interests. The most scrupulous are often faced with perplexities, and the man or woman who always rises above strong personal interests and desires and does the intrinsically right thing is a rare phenomenon.

We cannot produce a high degree of morality by warning a child that he will be punished for violating a religious precept, when all about him he sees the prohibited act being committed with impunity. Such a doctrine is the very negation of ethics.

To pound into the ears of our children the negative suggestion "Thou shalt not steal" does not strengthen their resistance when the opportunity to steal presents itself. In fact, it often has the opposite effect. It is easier for a boy to obey when he is told to come directly home after school than if he is told not to go to the ball game to watch his schoolmates play. To tell a girl that she may not go to a dance, which she was unaware was to take place, only creates the desire to attend. Once curiosity has been aroused and the urge to

participate manifested, the strongest moral strength is necessary to overcome it. Fortifying a child with precepts of a positive good makes that child's resistance to wrong less difficult. The advice to eat foods that are healthful will more likely be followed than the admonition to abstain from eating the tempting ones that are not. "In moral education," says Westermarck, "example plays a more important part than precept. But even in this respect, Christianity has unfortunately little reason to boast of its achievements."¹⁰⁸

The normal infant is neither a moral nor an immoral being, but rather new material from which either can be made. If anything, his inherited primitive traits impel him toward being an antisocial member of our bewildering, artificial and complicated society. It is for education to make of that child a social-minded being. The primary instinct of the newborn child is to satisfy its hunger, to sustain itself. The manner in which this is accomplished does not concern him in the slightest degree. He knows no laws, rules, restrictions or restraints. When these are imposed upon him, the natural tendency is rebellion, and his struggles and tantrums often prove to be effective weapons against these restrictions.

A well-known educator and authority on child psychology states this truth pertinently when he says: "For some time after birth, the child is little more than an incarnation of appetite which knows no restraint, and only yields to the undermining force of satiety. The child's entrance into social life through a growing consciousness of the existence of others is marked by much fierce opposition to their wishes."¹⁰⁹ Dr. M. V. O'Shea, eminent in the field of child education, makes this significant statement: "The factors which may lead a child to take what does not belong to him are often subtle and complex. Unless this fact is appreciated, it will be impossible to protect children from developing the habit of stealing, or cure them when they have entered upon a criminal career."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 2, p. 737.

¹⁰⁹ Healy, *Honesty*, p. 21.

¹¹⁰ Quoted, *ibid.*, p. 10.

The child is not born with the instincts of honesty implanted in its mind. Honesty as we want it practised is a principle that must be taught very much like anything else in the field of human endeavor. We must early inculcate the principles of honesty in the mind of the child if we expect the desired results to follow. How well this is substantiated is furnished by the proofs of an exhaustive study in the field of ethics by Professors Hugh Hartshorne and Mark A. May. The study was sponsored by Teachers College, Columbia University, and was an "inquiry into character education with particular reference to religious education." After their scientific investigation, they were forced to the following conclusion with reference to honesty in children: "It [honesty] is supposed to be present in the child in the form of a ready-made force or mode of behavior requiring only to be evoked by precept, threat or reward. The method is prolific of wise sayings and moral caution, but as a means of producing universal honor among men we certainly cannot boast of its success."¹¹¹

Another eminent authority states: "If morality and intellect are finally demonstrated to be correlated throughout the whole range of individual differences, it is probably the most profoundly significant fact with which society has to deal."¹¹²

Just as the child is taught how to spell, just as he learns the principles of grammar and arithmetic, so he must be taught a code of ethics and the principles of morality. A precept learned without understanding is as useless as a blueprint without explanation would be to an untrained mind. The rules of grammar and the principles of arithmetic are not based upon a supernatural conception but upon a purely scientific foundation; so must the concepts and principles of the moral order be based upon a natural and utilitarian basis.

As it is difficult for some people to understand the mechanism of the solar system, so there are people who will find it difficult to comprehend the complicated principles of higher ethics. They are

¹¹¹ H. Hartshorne and M. A. May, *Studies in Deceit*, p. 27.

¹¹² J. B. Miner, *The Relation between Morality and Intellect*, p. xx.

not to be held responsible for their mental deficiency. Our whole system of criminal jurisprudence will undergo a change when morality is regarded not as a divine plan, but as a purely human institution.

Religion's greatest failure is in the field of ethics, because it considers ritual performances the equivalent of moral acts. McHugh and Cullam found that, "It was never the function of religion to make men virtuous—and it was considered that the greatest sins a person could commit were acts against the faith. These acts were condemned as worse than sins against the moral virtues." That is why religionists are so often embarrassed when confronted with criminal statistics. Bishop Gallagher of Detroit, Michigan, when shown the prison statistics of his community, was forced to admit:

"It is a matter of serious reproach to the Church that more Catholic boys, in proportion to the total number, get into trouble than those of any other denomination. One-fifth [20%] of the people of Michigan are Catholics, but fifty per cent of the boys in the Industrial School for Boys at Lansing are Catholics."¹¹³

Ethical principles, when mixed with religion, are like good food adulterated with preservatives; and just as the adulterated food is robbed of its nutritional values, so ethics are contaminated with superstition and the morality of the act is lost in the confusion of religious ceremonies.

In a paper read before the Ninth International Congress of Psychology, held at Yale University on September 6, 1929, Professor Pleasant R. Hightower of Butler University made this startling and significant report:

STUDENTS OF BIBLE FOUND LESS HONEST

"People have been saying for years that if you give children a knowledge of the Bible, they will walk the straight and narrow way. The result shows that they won't walk the straight and narrow way. It does indicate very definitely that mere knowledge of the Bible of itself is not sufficient to insure the proper character attitudes."¹¹⁴

¹¹³ *New York Times*, Dec. 8, 1936.

¹¹⁴ *New York Times*, Sept. 7, 1929.

Professor Hightower's experiment was the result of a test given to more than 3,300 children, and proves beyond the possibility of a doubt that unless a child is *taught* and *educated*, he will not know.

Dr. George Rex Mursall, chief psychologist of the Ohio Department of Welfare, examined comparable groups of boys in the Ohio Reform School at Lancaster and of supposedly law-abiding children outside. He found that the inmates of the reformatory had received fully as much religious training as those outside. He concluded that "it seems safe to state that there is no significant relation between religious training and delinquent or non-delinquent behavior." This same conclusion was reached in a similar study of conditions among school children in England. In Bradford, England, the City Council appointed Mrs. E. M. Henshaw to investigate and report on juvenile delinquency. She discovered and reported that the Church schools have a substantially higher rate of delinquents than State schools, the rates being in State schools 6.6 per thousand; in Church of England schools, 7.5 per thousand; and in Roman Catholic schools, 15.3 per thousand. She declared: "I think that children get fundamental ethical teaching in school, quite apart from religious teaching, in their contacts with real people as distinct from a superimposed dogma, religious or otherwise." The report includes this statement: "There has in the past been some confusion between the terms 'religious training' and 'character training.' These two are not synonymous."¹¹⁵

When a child is born, it knows nothing about reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic. And if anyone thinks that by merely giving a rule in arithmetic or grammar the child will be able to grasp the subject, his knowledge of education is so utterly deficient that he himself is the best proof of the need for instruction. The complexities of life must be explained to a child before he is able to understand his place in society and the proper conduct he is expected to perform. Education is a slow process. We can learn only by doing. Mere words are

¹¹⁵ *Arbitrator*, July-Aug., 1943, p. 4.

meaningless. Unless the child has the capacity to understand, even teaching will prove valueless.

Not very long ago New York City was stirred by the exploits of a young desperado—"two-gun" Crowley. When he was captured, he boldly confessed to the murder of an officer of the law. "Of course, I killed that cop," he said. "I don't like cops. No, I don't want any lawyer. Get it over with. Repent? Hell, no! My conscience was never so clear in my life. What I want is a square meal." The kind-hearted district attorney suggested a beefsteak. "No, sir; no meat for me," said the young killer. "Don't you know this is Friday?"¹¹⁶

What did Crowley's religion teach him? That it was a greater sin to eat meat on Friday than to murder a man?

Although he was in jail on charges of stealing scrolls from a synagogue at Long Beach, Mohrdehel Rashinsky, eighteen years old, insisted on observing the feast of the Passover. When his breakfast was brought to him, he declined to eat it, asking for special Passover food. This young man would rather take a chance on stealing and letting the law take its course than incur the wrath of the Bible God for eating tabooed food.¹¹⁷ Is not such a religious concept the very negation of ethics?

When Earle Peacox was apprehended after the frightful murder of his wife, he was found to be the proud possessor of a medal for six years of perfect attendance at Sunday school.

A desperate criminal, caught leaving a house after looting it and killing members of the household, was shot dead by a policeman. A search of his clothes revealed a number of religious articles on his person which caused the police to report that the bandit "had attended church just before committing his crimes." How much further removed in mental development was this criminal from the members of a certain African tribe who, when they are about to commit a crime,

¹¹⁶ *New York Times*, May 9, 1931.

¹¹⁷ The Church has not changed. It is still more concerned with getting the culprit "right with God" than inculcating in him a rational attitude as to his position in society and with a view to preventing further antisocial acts. For a study of religion and crime, see: Donald A. Taft, *Criminology*.

lay aside their fetish and cover up their deity that the latter may not be privy to the deed? ¹¹⁸ And how could it be otherwise, since religion is not concerned with morality, but with ritual and ceremony?

This is confirmed by the statement made by the Rev. Charles J. Woodbridge of the First Presbyterian Church, Flushing, New York, who said: "Let me remind you that even the life of extreme self-sacrifice does not make the Christian. Nothing that man can do along the lines of virtue or righteousness will make him anything but an unprofitable servant. We simply cannot save ourselves by morality." ¹¹⁹ How advanced is this present-day evaluation of religion and morality from that of a bishop of the seventh century, canonized by the Church of Rome, who described a good Christian as a man "who comes frequently to church; who presents the oblation which is offered to God upon the altar; who doth not taste of the fruits of his own industry until he has consecrated a part of them to God; who, when holy festivals approach, lives chastely with his wife for several days that with a safe conscience he may draw near the altar of God; and who, in the last place, can repeat the creed and the Lord's prayer." ¹²⁰ In this statement is crystallized the religious viewpoint which is concerned completely with ritual observance and does not require a single act of morality. It is predicated on the belief that man is a sinful being, and it is considered more important to cleanse himself of his sinful heritage than to live a life of moral perfection.

The result of this viewpoint is shown in criminal statistics. Naples, which had the worst record of any European city for crimes against the person, was also the most religious city in Europe. ¹²¹ In Italy and other Church-dominated countries, it was held more infamous to transgress the slightest ceremonial of the Church than to transgress any moral duty. ¹²² However, Laing, the noted historian, stated that

¹¹⁸ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 2, p. 669.

¹¹⁹ *New York Times*, July 7, 1930.

¹²⁰ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 2, p. 736.

¹²¹ Ellis, *The Criminal*, p. 159.

¹²² Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 736.

in no country in Europe did he find so much morality and so little religion as in Switzerland.¹²³ Westermarck notes that "a high degree of religious devotion is frequently accompanied by great laxity of morals," and that, with one or two exceptions, "the practice of religion may be taken as a sure index of low morality in a tribe."¹²⁴ For proof of how wicked religious people can be, we need but recall the tortures of the Inquisition, the horrors of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve, the frightful crimes of the Crusaders, the persecution by the Puritans, and the innumerable other crimes for which religion has been responsible. All these were prompted by the obligation imposed upon the devotees of nearly all religious systems to avenge offenses against their deity, which is not only utterly devoid of any moral qualities, but automatically negates moral conduct.

Professor Hudson Hoagland of Clark University found that "ethics may be something quite independent of religion" and that "there is no necessary connection between religion and the problems of good and evil. Good and evil refer to that which is good and bad for a particular organism at a particular time."¹²⁵ In view of these facts, the conclusion is inevitable that *a greater sense of honesty will be inculcated in the mind of a child who is taught morality without religion than in the child who is taught religion without morality.*

It was the opinion of Robert Erskine Ely, Director Emeritus of the Town Hall, New York, that of the thousands of men who spoke at Town Hall—including Presidents, preachers and other noted personages—"the noblest man, the one really greatest of them all was Prince Peter Kropotkin, a self-professed atheist and a great man of science."¹²⁶

Governor Walter E. Edge, of New Jersey, our former Ambassador to France, in a letter to the *New York Times*, July 21, 1944, recalling the twelve Premiers who held that high office during his four official

¹²³ Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

¹²⁴ Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 735.

¹²⁵ *New York World-Telegram*, Sept. 8, 1941.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, Oct. 10, 1941.

years in Paris said, that Edouard Herriot (an avowed Freethinker and Anticlerical) was beyond doubt the most dependable of them all.

The Rev. Harry Emerson Fosdick admits that many non-religious people are "devoted philanthropists, loyal servants of a better day for mankind, and they will do for the salvation of society more than many of us will do. They are filled with the love of man. . . ." ¹²⁷

Not only in prison statistics, but in previous pages of this book, evidence has been submitted to show that religion has been a failure as a restraining force against committing crimes.

Stealing will continue in direct ratio to the struggle for existence. The rule governing the proportion of murders and suicides to the population rate operates likewise in the number of thefts that will be committed, provided always that conditions are the same. Acts today will be provocative of thefts in the future. By determining the prevalence of the dangers in relation to the child's age classification, the wise parent can assist it successfully across the danger zone. All the prayers in the world cannot save a child whose associations and tendencies do not make for honesty. Intelligent supervision and training are the only effective instruments.

Thievery, like disease, seems to be an ever-present problem, and just as disease was once treated by prayer and other superstitious religious practices without success, so dishonesty will continue to prevail as long as it is believed that it can be cured by religious precepts and taboos.

Just as the scientific study of disease has already eradicated many of the ills of mankind which religion thought had been sent as punishment for sin, so will the application of ethical principles to the problems of dishonesty eradicate this propensity in modern man. Only by educating one to meet the exigencies of changing conditions, and applying intelligent analysis of intent and purpose to the problem when it arises, will the evil of dishonesty be dispelled.

Not until man ceases to devote his energies to the love of God and

¹²⁷ *New York Times*, Apr. 21, 1934.

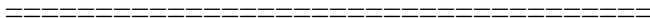
to rely on the performance of his "religious duty," and instead dedicates himself to the eradication of his primitive antisocial instincts by a rationalistic analysis of his troubles, will he achieve any degree of success in solving the problems of society.

I am optimist enough to believe that just as there have been scientific achievements in preventing and curing diseases which formerly plagued the human race with misery and death, so will high moral principles, intelligently applied to ethical conduct, save mankind from the plague of thievery and make the world a community of honest men and women.

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Priestcraft is not a thing of bygone ages, it lives today and will live as long as people do not think for themselves. The clergy, by whatever name they present themselves – Minister, Priest, Bishop, Brother, Pope, etc. – are no more needed to bring people to truth or morality than beggars are needed for a better economy.

But how do we break the chains of the mind that are passed on from one generation to the next by child indoctrination? Priestcraft insists that the child's mind must be trained to believe in the one religion preached, and special schools are provided to assure that no child will escape the deadening influence of the old beliefs that provide the clergy with power, wealth and influence.

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The Ninth Commandment

“Thou shalt not bear false witness
against thy neighbor.”

THE TRIBAL SIGNIFICANCE OF "NEIGHBOR"

IF THE *previous eight Commandments were gems of a moral genius and precepts for the highest ethical conduct—which of course they are not—this Commandment alone would invalidate the Decalogue as a divine revelation.* This Commandment definitely shows these precepts to be rules of conduct, based on superstitious taboos, for the small tribe of Hebrews who formulated them, and is in the same category as other provincial regulations of tribal ethics. If there were a God of the universe, and if he had given all the peoples of the earth a precept to follow, this God would not have restricted giving false witness only against one's "neighbor." Bearing false witness would have been condemned as inherently wrong regardless of whom the testimony might affect.

False testimony is unethical no matter against whom it is given, and if it is considered to be ethically right at certain times and under certain circumstances, the whole fabric and structure of our moral ideal collapses. For "truth is truth to the end of reckoning." Not for the benefit of one's "neighbor" or to the detriment of one's enemy, but truth for truth's sake is the highest ethical concept and the very quintessence of justice. The honorable man will speak truthfully even though it prove to his own detriment. It is essential to the principle of equality before the law that justice be applied equally to my enemy and to me. If we permit an exception for the sake of expediency or for some prejudicial reason, we may some day suffer because of that exception.

Universal justice will never be achieved until all the peoples of the earth are governed by the same laws and enjoy the same privileges. It will not matter then under what flag a man lives, so long as he enjoys liberty, and justice is administered impartially to all.

This Commandment does not say, "Thou shalt not bear false witness." If that were all it said, then it would possess some virtue. But the makers of this Commandment were not concerned with a general application of telling the truth under all circumstances. The three additional words of this Commandment were added for a very definite reason. For the age and for the purpose for which they were intended, *the Commandment would be incomplete without them.* Therefore, in keeping with the primitive moral standard of tribal culture, this Commandment very properly reads: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." These three words, "*against thy neighbor,*" completely change its meaning and preclude its application as an ethical precept for modern society. Without them this Commandment could very easily have universal application, but with them it falls back into the narrow provincial category of the early Israelitish tribal code.

At the time this Commandment was written, anyone who was not a "neighbor" was an enemy. This was the law of tribal life. The boundaries and property of clans had to be vigilantly watched and jealously guarded. It was essential to the solidarity of the tribe that all band together for the common good.

According to Talmudic law, only a brother Hebrew is a neighbor. In another interpretation of this very Commandment, brother and neighbor are synonymous terms which do not apply to anyone outside the clan.¹

The word "neighbor," as used in this Commandment, unmistakably meant a fellow tribesman, a compatriot, and did not, nor was it ever intended to describe a fellow human being in a universal sense. This is verified not only by leading Biblical authorities, such as the Rev. Henry Sloane Coffin, who says that "the Israelites did not apply this Commandment to their dealings with other people," but by the Bible itself.

When properly understood in the light of primitive culture, this Commandment is in perfect harmony as to its origin and meaning with

¹ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 5, p. 620.

the other portions of the Decalogue. The authors of the Decalogue could not have formulated it differently; they were mentally incapable of embodying a Commandment with the broader principle of universal application. All the Commandments belong in the same category and were promulgated for one purpose—to prevent injury to the clan and to promote tribal solidarity for the sake of their Deity's approval.

If this Commandment consisted of the simple statement, "Thou shalt not lie," it would be free from its clannish implication. And if, in addition to this unequivocal declaration that an untruth should not be uttered, the penalty provided for speaking falsely were that the tongue should become palsied, then indeed might such a Commandment act as a sentinel in order that "truth might bear away the victory."

There is no monitor guarding the mind from believing that which is untrue, or restraining the tongue from speaking that which is false.

Professor James H. Breasted, the noted Egyptologist, makes a significant observation in his book, *The Dawn of Conscience*. After an exhaustive study of the evolution of ethics, he confesses:

"Like most lads among my boyhood associates, I learned the Ten Commandments. I was taught to reverence them because I was assured that they came down from the skies into the hands of Moses, and that obedience to them was therefore sacredly incumbent upon me. I remember that whenever I fibbed I found consolation in the fact that there was no commandment 'Thou shalt not lie,' and that the Decalogue forbade lying only as a 'false witness' giving testimony before the courts where it might damage one's neighbor. In later years when I was much older, I began to be troubled by the fact that a code of morals which did not forbid lying seemed imperfect; but it was a long time before I raised the interesting question: How has my own realization of this imperfection arisen? Where did I myself get the moral yardstick by which I discovered this shortcoming in the Decalogue?"

Professor Breasted's answer to his question is predicated on inevitable conclusions, drawn from his researches, that ethics develop

in an evolutionary process and that "the moral ideas of early man were the product of their own social experience." A careful examination of the early religious systems and the moral codes of contemporary times forced him to state that "it is important to bear in mind the now commonly accepted fact that in its primitive stages religion had nothing to do with morals as understood by us today."² Professor Breasted is too considerate when he speaks of only primitive religion and morals as being two entirely separate and distinct departments of human thought. They are just as much separate and distinct today as they were ten thousand years ago. Religion and morals have not only no connection with each other, but are often antagonistic both in principle and practice, as has been factually substantiated in the analysis of the previous Commandments. He also discovered that "man arose to high moral vision two thousand years before the Hebrew nation was born."³

This Commandment survives today, not because of any ethical value that it might possess, for it has none, but because it is associated with a religious taboo. *It is but another striking example of the utter lack of moral value when conduct is predicated upon racial and religious edicts.*

BIBLICAL EVIDENCE OF HEBREW TRIBAL SOLIDARITY

Just as the Bible is replete with instances to support the contention that the previous Commandments were applicable solely to the early Hebrews, so we find innumerable instances recorded in it about their dealings with outside tribes which show that this Commandment was exclusively a tribal precept, and that the word "neighbor" as used in this Commandment had reference only to a fellow Hebrew. The code of conduct which made its adherents honest and trustworthy among themselves, but deceitful and unscrupulous toward strangers, seems to have been prevalent in many similar primitive social groups.

² Breasted, *The Dawn of Conscience*, p. 18.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

This Commandment is as definite a reflection of that cultural level as if it were stamped with the year and age in which it was formulated.

An example of this tribal code is recorded in *Deuteronomy, Chapter 14, verse 21*:

21 Ye shall not eat of any thing that dieth of itself: thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien: for thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God. . . .

You and your neighbor may not eat meat from an animal that "dieth of itself," but it is permissible to give it to the stranger, or sell it to an alien. This one illustration alone should be sufficient to convince anyone of the meaning and intent of the word "neighbor" as used in this Commandment, because it is a far greater offense to sell diseased meat to a stranger than to bear false witness against a neighbor. The contempt with which the stranger was held in primitive society only emphasizes the strong tribal ties which this Commandment was intended to preserve.

Another Biblical passage revealing the clannish principle of tribal solidarity is in *Deuteronomy, Chapter 15, verses 1 to 3*:

1 At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release.
 2 And this is the manner of the release: Every creditor that lendeth *ought* unto his neighbor shall release *it*; he shall not exact *it* of his neighbor, or of his brother; because it is called the Lord's release.
 3 Of a foreigner thou mayest exact *it again*: but *that* which is thine with thy brother thine hand shall release.

Not only are the words "neighbor" and "brother" used synonymously in the above instance, but the additional fact that a fellow Hebrew should cancel his neighbor's debt after seven years, but "of a foreigner thou mayest exact *it again*," is a clannish ethical concept that leaves not the slightest doubt of the meaning of "neighbor" as used in Hebrew nomenclature, and particularly in this Commandment.⁴

⁴ *New Standard Bible Dictionary*, p. 610.

Could there possibly be a stronger illustration than the following to indicate the meaning of the word "neighbor" used in the Biblical sense as part of this Commandment?

19 Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury:
 20 Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury: that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand to in the land whither thou goest to possess it.⁵

The same tribal code accounts for the rule which prevailed among the Hebrews that if an article which had been lost by one member was found by another, it was incumbent upon the latter to see that it was restored to his "brother," but that if the property belonged to a stranger, no attempt need be made to return it.⁶

Equally pertinent to this tribal concept is the following from *Leviticus, Chapter 19, verses 16 to 18*:

16 Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people; neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I *am* the Lord.
 17 Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.
 18 Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I *am* the Lord.

As is well known, the Bible not only sanctions slavery, but, in its clannish application, no Hebrew shall be enslaved by a brother Hebrew. As quoted in *Leviticus, Chapter 25, verses 44 to 46*:

⁵ *Deuteronomy, Chapter 23, verses 19 and 20.* When the Christian Church adopted the Old Testament, it observed this Commandment literally, and as a result refused to charge interest on loans. However, this reversed the order of the Old Testament and permitted the Hebrews to do so. As a result, Bernard of Clairvaux urged the rulers of his day to tolerate the Jews, not because he hated persecution, but in order that Christians might not be constrained to imperil their souls by the sin of usury. (E. P. Evans, *Evolutionary Ethics*, p. 74.) In 1219, the German Emperor Frederick III permitted Jews to dwell in Nuremberg for the same reason,

⁶ *Deuteronomy, Chapter 22, verses 1 to 4.*

44 Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, *shall be* of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids.

45 Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that *are* with you, which they begat in your land: and they shall be your possession.

46 And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit *them* for a possession; they shall be your bondmen for ever: but over your brethren the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigour.

The bondmen and bondmaids "*shall be* of the heathen that are round about you," "but over your brethren the children of Israel, ye shall not rule . . ." This only re-emphasizes the clannish application of the word "neighbor" in its relation to this Commandment.

The conclusion is inevitable that "brother" and "neighbor" as used in these Biblical quotations are identical in purpose with the word "neighbor" as used in this Commandment, and meant a fellow Hebrew only.

The significance of these quotations in relation to this Commandment may be summarized by placing them in the following order:

"Thou must not eat of anything that dieth of itself, but thou mayest give it unto the stranger, or sell it to an alien. . . ."

"After every seven years thou shalt make a release of thy neighbour's debt, but of the foreigner thou mayest exact it again. . . ."

"Thou shalt not lend money upon usury unto thy brother, but unto a stranger thou mayest lend it upon usury. . . ."

"Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart. . . ."

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. . . ."

Not only must you refrain from giving false witness against your neighbor, your fellow tribesman, your compatriot, but, as in the previous instances, it was incumbent to bear false witness, if necessary,

against the stranger when the interest of a neighbor was involved. While the injunction "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor" is negative in defense of tribal solidarity, it is positive in its application to tribal enemies. Among primitive tribes, such as were the Children of Israel, a "stranger" did not merit the same rights and consideration as a "neighbor" and was looked upon as an enemy of the tribe, as revealed in *verse 16*, quoted above—"neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour. . . ."

THE CLANNISHNESS OF TRIBAL LAW

In the lower stages of social life, the interests of the "foreigner" or "stranger" were not regarded at all. In primitive society, the clan or community was considered as a part of one's own body. An injury to an individual member affected the whole community. It therefore became the bounden duty of each member of the clan to protect the community under all circumstances, even with his life, if need be. Although there might be individual differences within the clan, all become as one when dealing with a common foe. The clan-nish thought underlying this Commandment—and the very basis of Hebrew ethics—is the survival of this primitive family group. It is characteristic of certain individual family attitudes even today. Just as the primitive clan, motivated by the interest of tribal solidarity, justified lying and cheating for the benefit of their individual members, so there are today certain family groups that feel justified in lying, indeed believe it their duty to lie, for the benefit of one of their members.

The late Judge Joseph E. Corrigan of New York, who was noted for the number of witnesses he held for perjury, said: "It is considered the proper thing for a blood relative to lie to save his kin, and it is only one degree more noble for a friend to come forward and make the generous gesture."⁷

This same clannish spirit is manifested more prominently in dif-

⁷ *New York Times*, June 10, 1934.

ferent communities, and still more intensified in different nations. That is why there is suspicion of members of different races and believers in different creeds. Do not the orthodox Jew, the fundamentalist Protestant and the pious Catholic still have a different attitude toward members of different faiths than their attitude toward those of their own religious affiliations? The white man feels superior to the black and yellow man. Oriental peoples have a certain natural aversion for each other; the Turk does not readily tolerate the Arab, or the Persian, and these feel similarly toward the Turk. The Syrian considers the Egyptian inhuman, and the Egyptian thinks the Syrian is simple-minded. The Spaniard and the Mexican also are antagonistic. So there is distrust and hatred and suspicion among all peoples that have not been able to overcome their primitive inhibitions.⁸ Westermarck significantly states that "throughout the Middle Ages all Europe seems to have tacitly agreed that foreigners were created for the purpose of being robbed."⁹

Even as late as the beginnings of Roman society, there existed two divisions of the law, classified as the *civil law* and the *law of nations*. The civil law was composed of rules and regulations which governed the Romans exclusively, defining their rights and privileges; the law of nations, known as *ius gentium*, determined the rights and privileges of foreigners. The latter precluded the foreigner or alien from having any share in purely Roman institutions. Controversies involving the interests of aliens could not be decided under the civil law, while under the law of nations they enjoyed privileges until their interests conflicted with those of the native Romans.¹⁰

Indeed, it was not until recent times that foreigners were placed on the same footing with citizens regarding inheritance. It was not until 1790 that the French National Assembly abolished the right of *aubaine* as being contrary to the principle of human brotherhood. It was not until 1870 that foreigners were authorized to inherit and

⁸ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 2, p. 226.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹⁰ Maine XXI-II-III (Ancient Law).

bequeath like British subjects.¹¹ And even today, in the State of California, Orientals are not permitted to own property.

People like that to which they are accustomed or which is their own; they dislike the strange and unfamiliar. The sight of a differently colored skin or strange wearing apparel, the sound of a foreigner's language, arouse antipathies and have greatly influenced the moral valuation of conduct toward foreigners. At the same time, they have strengthened the feeling of mutual interests between tribesmen and compatriots. This enmity between different communities tends to intensify each group's devotion to a common goal and the friendly feelings between members of the tribe.¹² To do good to a friend and to do harm to an enemy was a maxim of the ancient Scandinavians.¹³

Innumerable examples could be cited to show that it is a natural tendency to regard compatriots and coreligionists from a different moral standpoint than persons who are not connected by such ties. The latter are considered to have a lower standard of morality and an inferior sense of right and wrong.

Although Americans permitted the enslavement of the black man, it was considered a grievous sin to enslave a white man. During our slavery era, no one except the Abolitionists believed that the black man possessed the same emotions as his white master. He could be lashed, his family relationships disrupted, and human feelings outraged with impunity.

This narrow provincialism persists to this day. A man's name was stricken from the list of prospective jurors because he said, when examined by the judge, that he would not believe "the word of a Negro in any circumstance against that of a white man." The judge very properly replied: "The jury panel is no place for you. A juror should always be fair and impartial."¹⁴

An ancient provincial law of Sweden permitted a slave to be insulted without redress. In addition, the slave was considered of such

¹¹ Westermarck, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 227.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 74.

¹⁴ *New York Times*, May 23, 1941.

an inferior caste that he was not allowed even to invoke the law.¹⁵ The slave in the United States before the Civil War was no better off. Any dishonest or deceitful method might be used to deprive the slave of anything he possessed; indeed, it was considered foolhardy not to resort to such devious devices. Christianity taught that the black man was "created" to be a slave. How can anyone having such a point of view understand, much less practise, the American principle that guarantees justice and equality to all regardless of race, color or creed?

With reference to this system of ethics prevailing in nearly all primitive societies, E. P. Evans says: "This is the kind of ethics which finds expression in the legislation of all barbaric and semi-civilized races, from the Eskimos to the Hottentots. The Balantis of Africa punish with death a theft committed to the detriment of a tribesman, but encourage and reward thievery from other tribes. According to Caesar's statement,¹⁶ the Germans did not deem it infamous to steal outside of the precincts of their own village, but rather advocated it as a means of keeping the young men of the community in training and rendering them vigilant and adroit."¹⁷

Many primitive tribes have been characterized as bands of thieves because of their raids on other tribes, but among themselves they are just as honest and as truthful as people in more civilized communities. In order to understand fully their behavior, one must know the motives prompting their acts. In early ethics, revenge is enjoined as a duty, and forgiveness of enemies is despised.¹⁸

It is said of the Bedouin of the Arabian desert that he "will be forgiven if he should kill a stranger on the road, but eternal disgrace would be attached to his name if it were known that he had robbed his companion or his protected guest even of a handkerchief."¹⁹

The natives of the interior of Sumatra do not deem it a moral de-

¹⁵ Westermarck, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

¹⁶ *De Bello Gallico*, lib. vi, c. 23.

¹⁷ Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

¹⁸ Westermarck, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 86-94.

fect to deal dishonestly with strangers. The Masai hold any kind of deceit to be allowable in their relations with persons of another race. The Hovas of Madagascar will punish a member of their own tribe who does not speak falsely to foreigners. No stigma was attached to lying and deceit; they were considered proofs of superior cunning, particularly in matters of dispute. A common Moslem doctrine is that a lie is permissible when told to obtain any advantage in a war with enemies of the faith.²⁰

We have parallel instances even today. It is a settled principle of morality (if it can be called such) that nations at war practise the most cunning forms of deception on the enemy. The more trickery employed in deceiving the enemy, the more laudable the act. The question of ethics or morality does not enter into the use of the most reprehensible means to destroy the enemy. This primitive concept of morality governs the conduct of the Japanese today. A well-known authority states that the Japanese are a scrupulously honest people in dealing with each other; that the doors of their houses are never locked, and that thefts are rare among them. Despite this, they would treacherously violate a solemn treaty with another nation if it should ultimately advance their own interests.²¹ What more pertinent illustration of the survival of the tribal code than the dastardly attack by the Japanese on Pearl Harbor, which President Roosevelt said "would live in infamy." While their envoys pretended to talk peace terms, they were plotting to destroy our defenses and confiscate our property. This reprehensible conduct provoked Secretary of State Cordell Hull to say: ²² "It is now apparent to the whole world that Japan in its recent professions of a desire for peace has been infamously false and fraudulent. . . . In all my fifty years of public service, I have never seen a document that was more crowded with infamous falsehoods and distortions—infamous falsehoods and distortions on a scale so huge that I never imagined until today that

²⁰ Westermarck, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-94.

²¹ *National Geographic Magazine*, Aug., 1942, Willard Price, "Unknown Japan."

²² *New York Times*, Dec. 7, 1941. See also "Prelude to Pearl Harbor," by Arthur Krock, *New York Times*, Nov. 8, 1942.

any government on this planet was capable of uttering them.” The *New York Times* reported the deception of the Japanese troops in flying a flag of truce only as a means of perpetrating a treacherous assault on our unsuspecting soldiers.²³ The acts of Hitler’s Germany are equally reprehensible.

Of the Sudra inhabitants of Central India, it is said that in their intercourse with each other they are distinguished for their adherence to the truth, while in their relations with strangers they are generally false and deceptive. While they would never utter a lie or be dishonest in their dealings to one of their own clan, they would not hesitate to lie to or steal from a stranger.

The Indian Islanders are accused by strangers of being faithless and perfidious. Yet, in their domestic intercourse, they display more integrity than one would generally believe they possessed. It is in their dealings with strangers and enemies that their treachery is displayed. The Greenlanders, who understate rather than overstate the value of an article in trading among themselves, lied outrageously in their transactions with the Danish traders. The Touaregs, while scrupulously faithful to a promise given to one of their own people, do not regard as binding a promise given to a Christian. Among the Bushmen, no one is permitted to give information to a stranger, and among the Beni Amer, a stranger can never trust the word of a native because “of their contempt of everything foreign.” When the Kafirs are involved in a lawsuit, witnesses are allowed to tell as many lies as they like in order to make the best of their case.²⁴

Throughout India, Sir W. H. Sleeman found that “the question whether truth or falsehood is to be spoken depends on the relationship between the speaker and the party addressed,” for “if a man had told a lie to *cheat* his neighbor, he would become an object of hatred and contempt—if he had told a lie to *save* his neighbor’s fields from an increase of rent or tax, he would have become an object of esteem

²³ *New York Times*, Oct. 30, 1942.

²⁴ Westermarck, *op. cit.*, pp. 83–112.

and respect.”²⁵ Sir John Malcolm found that the natives of the Sudra of Central India often tell positive falsehoods to strangers, whereas they are distinguished by their adherence to truth in their relations among themselves.²⁶

In the Western Islands of the Torres Straits, it was regarded as meritorious to kill foreigners either in fair fight or by treachery, and honor and glory were bestowed on those bringing home the skulls of natives of other islands slain in battle.²⁷

The Arab who meets an unknown wanderer in the desert acts in accordance with the saying “The stranger is for the wolf.” He is looked upon as an enemy.

The Indian Islanders have been accused by strangers of perfidy and faithlessness; yet, says an authority, these acts must be understood in the proper light. In their domestic and social intercourse, they are far from being a deceitful people. It is only in their intercourse with strangers that the treachery of their character is displayed.²⁸

The Orang-Ot of Borneo, when they meet strangers, turn their backs on them and squat on the ground, hiding their faces; they explain their behavior by saying that the mere sight of a stranger upsets them.²⁹ The Tupi of Brazil call all men not of their race or language “strangers” or “enemies.”

Among the Kafirs of the Kindu-Kush, killing a stranger might not be a crime, but killing a fellow tribesman is held in an altogether different light. The Koriaks consider murder a great crime only when committed within the tribe. The early Aleuts considered the killing of a companion a crime worthy of death, “but to kill an enemy was quite another thing.” Humboldt found that the natives of Guiana “detest all who are not of their family, or their tribe, and hunt Indians of a neighboring tribe who live at war with their own.” The

²⁵ Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 90.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Hastings, *Encyclopædia*, Vol. 2, p. 884.

²⁸ Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 87.

²⁹ Hastings, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 884.

Gallos consider it honorable to kill an alien, though criminal to kill a countryman. To the Fuegians, a stranger and an enemy are synonymous terms. In Melanesia, also, a stranger as such was generally, throughout the islands, an enemy to be killed. Among the Chukchi, it is held criminal to *thieve* or *murder* in the family or race to which a person belongs; but these crimes committed elsewhere are not only permitted, but held honorable and glorious.

Nearly all tribes of the primitive culture of the ancient Hebrews regarded the "stranger within thy gates" as an enemy, and, as has been noted in discussing the Eighth Commandment, the thief is considered an offender only when he steals from a fellow tribesman; stealing from a stranger is praiseworthy.³⁰ Among the Hindus, truth-telling depends on the motive. If false evidence is given for a pious reason, such evidence is called "the speech of the gods."³¹

The code of these primitive peoples is undoubtedly the same as that which prevailed in the Hebrew tribe. Well might such clannish, tribal conduct be expressed in the words of this Commandment: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

The pursuit of truth above racial partisanship, however, is the highest development in evolutionary ethics, and who is right is far more important than the racial or religious relationship of the disputants.

THE STRANGER TABOOED IN TRIBAL SOCIETY

There was another very significant reason why the stranger was not accorded the same consideration as a neighbor in primitive societies: he was a believer and worshiper of strange and enemy gods. This is revealed in the narrative where the Hebrew is prohibited from eating "anything that dieth of itself . . . for thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God," and in the narrative prohibiting the lending "upon usury to thy brother . . . that the Lord may bless thee in all

³⁰ Hastings, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 886.

³¹ Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 91.

that thou setteth thine hand to do in the land whither thou goest to possess it.”

To accord the stranger the same consideration as members of one's own tribe would be inviting the wrath and anger of the tribal god whose jealousy we have already discussed. Tribal solidarity depended on not arousing the jealousy of the tribe's deity. Telling the truth to the detriment of a neighbor and for the benefit of a stranger was a flagrant offense in tribal culture.

While the passages to be quoted below deal with the Hebrew and the stranger in a strictly ritual sense, they are nevertheless additional evidence of the meaning of the word “neighbor” as used in this Commandment. No stranger could partake of those things holy to the Hebrews. The Passover was prohibited by Biblical edict to the stranger. I quote *Exodus, Chapter 12, verse 43*:

43 And the Lord said unto Moses and Aaron,
This is the ordinance of the passover: There
shall no stranger eat thereof.

In conformity with the above prohibition, it is understandable now why a “stranger” could not observe the Sabbath, because “the Sabbath is a sign between God and Israel alone.”³² Nor could the stranger touch things holy to the Hebrew, or offer sacrifices to the Hebrew God, as stated in *Leviticus, Chapter 22, verse 25*:

25 Neither from a stranger's hand shall ye
offer the bread of your God of any of these;
because their corruption is in them, and blemishes
be in them: they shall not be accepted
for you.

The belief in the corrupting and desecrating influence of the stranger could not be more forcibly expressed than in the above quotations. These Biblical prohibitions make clear why a stranger could not be taught the Torah.³³ The same prohibition is repeated in *Exodus, Chapter 29, verse 33*:

³² *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 5, p. 623.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 622.

33 And they shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate *and* to sanctify them: but a stranger shall not eat *thereof*, because they *are* holy.

Certainly, if a stranger cannot eat “those things wherewith the atonement was made,” what chance had he to be put on the same level as a brother Hebrew in the matter of testimony, where the interests of the tribe and the protection of its solidarity were considered the most sacred obligation?

Nor could a stranger offer incense to the Hebrew Deity. I quote *Numbers, Chapter 16, verse 40*:

40 *To be* a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which *is* not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the Lord; that he be not as Korah, and as his company: as the Lord said to him by the hand of Moses.

More significantly even than the previous quotations, the Biblical testimony to follow clearly and unequivocally puts this Commandment in its proper category of Hebrew provincialism, and is additional indisputable proof of its tribal genesis. Not only was the stranger prohibited from touching things holy to the Hebrew or offering the bread as a sacrifice to the Lord, but there was a further restriction placed upon him. He could not even “eat of the holy thing” sacred to the Hebrew. I quote *Leviticus, Chapter 22, verses 10 to 13*:

10 There shall no stranger eat *of* the holy thing: a sojourner of the priest, or a hired servant, shall not eat *of* the holy thing.

11 But if the priest buy *any* soul with his money, he shall eat of it, and he that is born in his house: they shall eat of his meat.

12 But if the priest's daughter also be *married* unto a stranger, she may not eat of an offering of the holy things.

13 But if the priest's daughter be a widow, or divorced, and have no child, and is returned unto her father's house, as in her youth, she shall eat of her father's meat: but there shall no stranger eat thereof.

Nor is that all. The mere fact that the priest's daughter had been "married unto a stranger"—one not a neighbor—was such a profanation of the sacred, clannish tribal code that she herself "may not eat of an offering of the holy things." If, however, she avoided the further impiety of having children by the stranger, she may then "eat of her father's meat"—which had previously been ritually prepared, but her non-Hebrew husband was forbidden—"there shall no stranger eat thereof."

If equal rights in so intimate an association as marriage are denied the husband in a minor ritual matter because he is a "stranger," is it not unthinkable that a wholly detached stranger would be entitled to equality in a far more restricted field affecting the entire Hebrew national interest?

The stranger could not even approach the holy tabernacle. I quote *Numbers, Chapter 1, verse 51*:

51 And when the tabernacle setteth forward, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

Not only was the stranger prohibited from taking part in the religious ceremonies of the Biblical Hebrew or receiving any of the blessings, and prohibited from touching the bread of sacrifice or from eating "those things wherewith the atonement was made," or from offering "incense before the Lord," but, to cap the climax, he "that cometh nigh [unto the tabernacle] shall be put to death."

Do not some religious people even today resent the presence of those of a different faith while performing their religious ceremonies? I remember once, at the request of a friend, accompanying him while he attended his religious services. While there, no one could have acted more courteously than I. Yet, many in the congregation not only showed their uneasiness, but on leaving the church were quite vehement in denouncing my presence in their church, and berated the priest for tolerating me there.

Can we boast of any advance over the Choctaw Indians who think it highly irreligious to bury one of their kinsmen among strangers? Do we not even today practise this clannish tribal custom? Do we not have different cemeteries, not only for different races, but even for those of different religious faiths? Orthodox believers are horrified at the thought of being buried in a cemetery other than where "their people" are interred. They are certain they would "turn in their graves" if such a "catastrophe" happened to them.

In primitive society, special sacrifices are made to counteract the evil influences of association with the stranger. In Loas, before a stranger can be accorded hospitality, the master of the house must offer a sacrifice to the ancestral spirit or it would be offended and send disease to the inmates.³⁴ Among the Battes of Sumatra, a buffalo is usually killed and the liver offered to the stranger. This is supposed to propitiate the evil spirits.

In the Mentawai Islands, children particularly are supposed to be affected by the appearance of strangers. When one enters the house where there are children, the father takes something the children are wearing and gives it to the stranger. This is to protect the children from the evil effect the stranger might have on them. When a Dutch steamship was approaching their villages, the people of Biak, an island off the north coast of New Guinea, shook and knocked their idols about in order to ward off ill luck. North American Indians believe that strangers, particularly white strangers, are oftentimes accompanied by evil spirits.

The people of Nias carefully scrub and scour the weapons and clothes which they buy in order to efface all connection between the things and the persons from whom they bought them. There is a survival of this stranger taboo even today, particularly among women. After a visit to a person of a different race or religion, some women will shake off the "contaminating" effects of the contact. This is done even after casual meetings because of the archaic belief that contact with the person has been contaminating in some way or other.

³⁴ Frazer, *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, p. 104.

In Australia, when a stranger tribe has been invited into a district, the strangers carry lighted bark or burning sticks in their hands as they approach the encampment of the tribe which owns the land to clear and purify the air.

When the Toradjas of Central Celebes are on a head-hunting expedition and have entered the enemy's country, they may not eat any fruits that the foe has planted, nor any animal that he has reared, until they have first committed an act of hostility, such as burning a house or killing a man. They think that if they break this taboo, something of the soul or spiritual essence of the enemy will enter into them and destroy the mystic virtue of their talisman.³⁵

The Bechuanas cleanse or purify themselves after journeys by shaving their heads lest they should have contracted some evil by witchcraft or sorcery from strangers. In some parts of western Africa, when a man returns home after a long absence, he must wash his person with a particular fluid before he is allowed to visit his wife, in order to counteract the evil influence that a strange woman may have cast on him during his absence.

In some primitive communities, when a stranger has entered a hut or dwelling, it is immediately abandoned as having been desecrated.³⁶ How far removed is the orthodox Hebrew of today who will break the dish out of which a non-Jew has eaten, or the bigoted Christian who does not even tolerate a Jew to enter his home—while at the same time worshipping a Jew as the Son of God!

Such was the moral code of the Children of Israel in differentiating their conduct between "neighbors" and "strangers"; it was also their religion. That is why, like other primitive and uncultured peoples, they practised the utmost fidelity in their intratribal relationships, while any consideration of honesty or equality to those outside the clan was condemned as an affront and an offense to their Deity. They practised with fanatical jealousy these primitive, clannish tribal codes of conduct, and observed these taboos with fanatical zeal to show

³⁵ Frazer, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-111.

³⁶ Frazer, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-115.

their devotion to the Biblical Deity for having made them his "Chosen People." There was not the slightest question of either morals or ethics involved in the observance of this Commandment. It was accepted by the Children of Israel solely as a religious taboo to be blindly followed as an edict of their God—for the solidarity of the tribe.

THE FULFILLMENT OF THIS COMMANDMENT

If one touch of nature makes the whole world kin, what is so universal as truth and justice to unite mankind? Truth and justice should be as impartial as gravitation. Can one imagine gravitation acting differently because of a person's beliefs? That is what this Commandment would do in the field of equality. Instead of creating a universal bond of justice between men, it would divide mankind according to racial, religious and clannish groups.

If this Commandment is obeyed, a Catholic has to favor a Catholic in a controversy where Catholic interests are at stake, even to the extent of lying in order to gain an advantage. It means that a Protestant should favor a Protestant, a Jew a Jew, a Mohammedan a Mohammedan, and that nations through their representatives should hesitate to tell the truth when it might be disadvantageous to them.

Hate, and particularly sectarian hatred, can easily be rationalized as having sufficient justification not only to speak falsely, or to withhold the truth, but also to provoke the most reprehensible acts.

What devout religious believer would not lie about some enemy of his religion, if by so doing he might prevent an attack on his faith or because it might possibly benefit by an untruth? The religious believer's conscience would not be "clear" if he did not resort to every devious means to defend his religion.

In 1378, when the infamous Urban VI became Pope, he, as head of the Roman Catholic Church, "made a solemn and general declaration against keeping faith with heretics."³⁷ In 1569, the Spanish

³⁷ F. H. Perrycoste, *Influence of Religion upon Truthfulness*, p. 97.

Bishop Simancas once more asserted the Catholic principle that faith is not to be kept with heretics, "for if with tyrants, pirates and other robbers, who kill the body, faith is not to be kept, far less with confirmed heretics who kill souls." ³⁸ How convenient to resort to false reasoning and Jesuitical sophistry to support an untenable premise!

The Church doctrine as early as the second century ordered that "Christians should hold no conversation, or should interchange none of the most ordinary courtesies of life, with the excommunicated or the heretics." ³⁹

Principles laid down in the Decretals, part of the canon law of the Church, specifically state that "an oath disadvantageous to the Church is not binding." ⁴⁰

From the day this pernicious doctrine was uttered to the present time, the Roman Catholic Church has never issued a repudiation; on the contrary, it has reasserted again and again that it is the duty of Catholics to lie for their Church. ⁴¹ This accounts for the well-known Jesuit doctrine: "To take an oath is in itself a deadly sin; but the man who only swears outwardly, without inwardly intending to do so, is not bound by his oath; he does not swear, he only jests." ⁴² "Intellectual veracity, sincerity in matters of thought and faith, consistency in thinking, is not one of the virtues encouraged by the Church," says Professor Friedrich Paulsen, whose partiality to religion is unmistakable. ⁴³

Martin Luther, after admonishing Philip of Hesse to tell a "good stout lie," defends his advice in the following words: "What would it matter if, for the sake of the Christian Church, one were to tell a big lie?" ⁴⁴

Macaulay, in evaluating the doctrine, said that "pagans, who had

³⁸ F. H. Perrycoste, *Influence of Religion upon Truthfulness*, p. 138.

³⁹ Lecky, *Morals*, Vol. 1, p. 179.

⁴⁰ Perrycoste, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

⁴¹ Bonner, *Christianity and Conduct*, p. 59.

⁴² Perrycoste, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

⁴³ F. Paulsen, *System of Ethics*, p. 682.

⁴⁴ Quoted by C. H. Mochlman in *The Story of the Ten Commandments*, p. 269.

never heard the name of Christ, and who were guided only by the highest light of nature, were more trustworthy members of civil society than men who had been formed from schools of the Popish casuists." And Locke, another great English thinker, says: "The Church [religion] which taught men not to keep faith with heretics, had no claim to toleration."⁴⁵ *All of which proves that there is more likelihood of the truth being spoken if a man is taken on his honor than on his religion.*

Westermarck records innumerable instances in primitive societies where the "totem" bond is closer than the bond of blood or family; that is, people are bound together more strongly by the fetishes of a religion than even the ties of blood.⁴⁶ This is proved by the fact that a marriage between two persons of different religious faiths, though related nationally and by blood, provokes the strongest protests and antagonism; while a marriage between two persons of the same religious faith, though widely separated by both blood and nationality, receives approbation and approval. This primitive conduct prevails today among peoples of religious persuasions, though nationally related, and we see this hateful antagonism between blood-related families divided by the totem fetish. Branches of the same family that have adopted different religious faiths are generally antagonistic to each other. There is still a menacing aspect of this totem bond, as manifested by this Commandment, in the clannish conduct in our own nation in political matters.⁴⁷

We find that strongly religious persons would much prefer to vote for a political candidate of their own faith than for a far superior representative of a different religious persuasion; thus proving that the ties of religion are much stronger than love of country. This bigoted religious attitude is the most dangerous menace to a democracy. In England, during the last century, this clannish division of the people was so pronounced that Lecky says the situation gave rise

⁴⁵ Perrycoste, *Influence of Religion upon Truthfulness*, p. 171.

⁴⁶ Westermarck, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

⁴⁷ Examples were given of this totem bond relative to marriage in the analysis of the Fifth Commandment.

to the maxim that a man's true country or interest was not that in which he was born, but that of his coreligionists.⁴⁸ But, for the very crystallization of this obnoxious attitude, I quote Father Phelan, a Catholic priest: ⁴⁹

"Tell us we are Catholics first and Americans or Englishmen afterwards; of course we are. Tell us in conflict between the Church and the civil government we side with the Church; of course we do. Why, if the government of the United States were at war with the Church, we would say tomorrow, to hell with the government of the United States; and if the Church and all the governments of the world were at war, we would say, to hell with the governments of the world."

This is a perfect example of the strict observance of this Commandment. Whether the government of the United States was justified, in the event of a war with the Catholic Church, would make no difference to Father Phelan. The Church must come first regardless of the justification of the conflict. Could any attitude be more pernicious, or contrary to the principles of national interest or the country's welfare? How can such a doctrine be productive of common good for all and for the peace and security of the nation? Do we need any better proof than the above quotation that the great spirit and principle of toleration existing in free governments is safe only because of the diminished influence of the clergy and the emancipation of the people from their religious doctrines? Does anyone doubt for a moment that if the Catholic hierarchy had the power today, it would repeat its condemnation of toleration to non-Catholics, as it did in France in 1870? ⁵⁰ As a matter of fact, this sentiment was expressed recently by the Rev. Charles E. Curley, who said: ⁵¹

"I proudly declare this country of ours to be thoroughly Christian and Catholic in its very roots. And if, with the passing years,

⁴⁸ Lecky, *Rationalism*, Vol. 2, p. 69.

⁴⁹ *Western Watchman*, June 27, 1913.

⁵⁰ Lecky, *History of Rationalism in Europe*, Vol. 2, p. 70.

⁵¹ *Brooklyn Tablet*, July 3, 1943.

there have been grafted on to it elements which are neither Christian nor Catholic, then I say, let us take a sharp pruning knife to them and cut them off forever.”

These sentiments are only echoes of the pronouncements in the celebrated Encyclical letter against Modernism issued by Pope Pius X in 1917.

The Most Rev. John A. Duffy, Bishop of Buffalo, New York, as reported in the *Worcester (Mass.) Telegram*, of March 31, 1939, said with unashamed arrogance:

“I say publicly here and now that if the United States ever joined in a foreign war with Russia, I would advise every Catholic boy to refuse to serve in the United States Army.”

Pertinent to this very subject is a public statement made by the District Attorney of Bronx County of the City of New York. This official said: “I try to live as a Catholic and administer my job as a Catholic.” An editorial in the *New York World-Telegram*⁵² took District Attorney Foley to task for this clannish statement in the following manner:

“Mr. Foley needed to be set right—if actually he had any illusions—on the matter of religious administration of the prosecutor’s office. He knows as well as anyone, in fact, that he is the District Attorney of the Protestants, Jews, non-Christians and the godless as much as of the Catholics, and that this country is definitely not interested in any possible sectarian way of administering public office. That he tries to live as a Catholic is beyond criticism or comment, but it is altogether an extraneous characteristic under a Constitution which says ‘no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office.’”

Individuals, groups and organizations wrote to the Governor of the State demanding that he remove Mr. Foley, as he was administering his office according to “his theological beliefs.” A petition stated that “District Attorney Foley or any other public official elected

⁵² Apr. 28, 1938.

by the people should administer his office in accordance with the laws of the State and the nation, and not in accordance with his theological beliefs of any kind or sort. Mr. Foley's address was not only un-American, but against every fundamental principle of the Constitution," concluded the protest.

Another instance, equally flagrant, is the statement made by Congressman Paul J. McCarty of Boston, Massachusetts, who said, "I am a Catholic first and a representative second." This attitude of placing religious beliefs above that of sworn public duty raises the question as to whether men such as Mr. Foley and Mr. McCarty, because of divided allegiance, are entitled to hold public office under our Constitution.⁵³ This premise was sustained by Federal Judge John Bright, when he revoked the citizenship of Fritz Kuhn and ten other notorious members of the German-American Bund. Judge Bright said: "It was not intended that memories of his native land should be entirely forgotten, or that he should divorce himself from all political action. Each defendant renounced all allegiance to his homeland; he agreed to support and defend the Constitution and our laws against all enemies, and his faith and allegiance was to be true. These three requirements preclude any divided concept [religious or otherwise]. They contemplate full and complete citizenship."⁵⁴

The primitive totem clanship rises above the thin veneer of culture that we have acquired, and sets at naught the most elementary principles of honesty and morality.

Racial and religious prejudices can become so intense that privations of the worst kind are suffered under their influence, even to the sacrifice of life. History records an instance where a Christian preferred to die rather than be cured by a Jewish doctor; and only recently, in London, an orthodox Jewish patient died rather than allow himself to be saved by the transfusion of blood from a Christian donor. The council of Béziers, 1246 A.D., and the Council of Alby, 1254 A.D., prohibited all Christians from resorting to the services

⁵³ *America*, Jan. 3, 1942.

⁵⁴ *New York Times*, Mar. 19, 1943.

of Israelite physicians.⁵⁵ In France, in 1301, a decree was issued prohibiting a believer in the Hebrew religion from practising medicine on a person of the Catholic faith.⁵⁶

How far removed is Nazi Germany from the ignorance, hatred and bigotry that permeated the European continent during the Dark Ages? The fanatical anti-Semite, Herr Streicher, would even discontinue the use of medical knowledge to cure disease merely because the cures were discovered by Jewish physicians! He finds particularly obnoxious the discovery of Wassermann, known as the Wassermann Test, by which syphilis is determined; Ehrlich's salvarsan, a drug to cure this frightful disease, and Neisser's discovery of the gonococcus germ and his method of curing gonorrhoea. In other words, he would rather see the German people suffer from these two malignant venereal diseases than be cured by the discoveries of Jewish physicians! ⁵⁷

So strong can religious antipathy develop from this totem bond that even respect and honor due national heroes are avoided as if a mortal sin were being committed. There is an instance of the refusal of the Rev. Romaine F. Bateman, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Milburn, New Jersey, to permit citizens of the community to hold a celebration in honor of George Washington. He is reported as having stated:

“Washington and Lincoln were un-Christian and their names are unworthy of being brought before the public.”

Mr. Bateman also remarked that Washington's service to his country was “merely incidental compared with his un-Christianity.”

“I felt that when there is a question of what to preach, we had better stick to Christ, much as we may think of an individual. If we paint a beautiful picture of an individual and praise his standards of life and then ask people also to accept Christ's standard, there will be confusion if the two standards do not agree.” ⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Draper, *Intellectual Development of Europe*, Vol. 2, p. 125.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *New York Times*, May 13, 1935.

⁵⁸ *New York Herald Tribune*, Feb. 18, 1932.

It is notorious that Thomas Paine has been denied his rightful place among the country's immortals for his invaluable contributions to the cause of American independence only because he was the author of *The Age of Reason*.

The influence of this Commandment has gone even further; not only has it been responsible for the denial of honor to our national heroes because of religious prejudice, but it has also corrupted the laws of this country. Religiously minded judges have prostituted their high positions by invoking this Commandment in defiance of the rights of equality before the law by making a religious test the qualification of a witness. *Such conduct is in violation of the oath of office to uphold the Constitution of the United States, and is not an aid but an obstruction to justice, a denial of the fundamental right of every citizen of the country.*

Courts of law were established for the purpose of procuring justice, not defeating it; and if testimony is only to favor a neighbor, of what benefit is a trial? If, because of the prejudice of the court in not permitting the fullest testimony in a case, one party is denied justice, this is just as reprehensible as it would be to permit false testimony.

In the trial of a thief, one judge refused to permit the complainant to testify because he was an unbeliever. The fact that other witnesses testified for him and secured a conviction of the culprit proves that his charge was true, and so would have been his testimony. Because, however, the unbeliever was a "stranger" in the eyes of the religiously minded judge, he was denied the rights of a fundamental tenet of justice. Here the judge followed the precept of this Commandment to the letter. He put the interest of the religious thief above that of the honest unbeliever, because of the very clannishness exemplified by this Commandment. He favored the "neighbor," as religiously defined, at the cost of truth and justice.⁵⁹

In 1897, a Louisiana jury found a wretch guilty of raping a child, but the conviction was reversed by a higher court because it was

⁵⁹ Swancara, *Obstruction of Justice by Religion*, p. 105.

shown that the child had no belief in the existence of a God. The court ruled that because of this there was no guarantee as to the truth of her testimony! ⁶⁰

In Arkansas a man was convicted of first-degree murder on good evidence, but the Supreme Court of that State reversed the conviction. The court held that the testimony of the ten-year-old child who testified against him was not valid because it was not made under "an immediate sense of the witness' responsibility to God"! In another case such testimony by a nine-year-old girl was admitted as valid not because of her intelligence but because she "had been taught to believe that there is a God and a heaven." ⁶¹

In 1791, a Warwickshire jury of Churchmen and Tories disgraced English justice by acquitting several rioters who had destroyed Priestley's house. The jurymen's animus against Priestley's political and religious views was so strong that they had no qualms about perjuring themselves by acquitting the guilty men, although they were very indignant when the counsel for the prosecution reminded them of the obligation of their oath. ⁶²

In a recent case in Illinois, a forger could have had his conviction reversed if he had succeeded in proving that his victim, the prosecuting witness, did not believe in a God and a future state. ⁶³

In the benighted State of Alabama, the legislature at one time enacted a law which provided that "Negroes, mulattoes, Indians and all persons of mixed blood descended from Negro or Indian ancestors, to the third generation inclusive, though one ancestor of each generation may have been a white person, whether bond or free, must not be witnesses in any cause, civil or criminal, except for or against each other." ⁶⁴ Under this law, it has been correctly noted that if a Negro woman had been ravished by a white Christian she could not testify against him. Such a law is intended to defeat the ends

⁶⁰ Swancara, *Obstruction of Justice by Religion*, p. 104.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁶² Perrycoste, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

⁶³ Swancara, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

of justice, and is not only in complete conformity with the purpose of this Commandment, but it gives legal sanction to its narrow tribal concept. The Supreme Court, invalidating this statute, expressed what could happen to persons disqualified as witnesses under it: "The white man may plunder the Negro of his property; he may abuse his person; he may take his life; he may do this in open daylight, in the presence of multitudes who witness the transaction, and he must go acquitted, unless perchance there happens to be some white man present."⁶⁵

In New Jersey, a man was found stabbed in the throat and bleeding to death. While still conscious, he named and accused his assailant. At the latter's trial for murder, the defendant's attorney asked the court to charge the jury to the effect that if the murdered man had no belief in God and in a future state of reward and punishment, they must disregard his accusation. The murderer was acquitted.⁶⁶

Luther Burbank and Thomas A. Edison, two of the greatest men who ever lived, would not have been permitted to testify either for themselves or for others in the courts of the State of New Jersey!

Conrad H. Moehlman, Professor of the History of Christianity at the Rochester Theological Seminary, says: "The numerous literary forgeries and famous lies convict leading Christians of every century of transgressing the Ninth Commandment."⁶⁷ This statement not only reveals the general lack of understanding of the Decalogue, and particularly of this Commandment, but the literary forgeries and lies and other means of fraud and deception by "leading Christians" to advance their religion or destroy those opposed to them are not a *transgression* of this Commandment but a *fulfillment* of it.

This Commandment is only another piece of indisputable evidence added to what we have already discovered about the previous parts of the Decalogue, that religion and religious doctrines were never intended to make for truth and morality. No wonder Père Meslier, the

⁶⁵ Swancara, *Obstruction of Justice by Religion* p. 24.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

⁶⁷ C. H. Moehlman, *The Story of the Ten Commandments*, p. 267.

“repentant” Roman Catholic priest, asked God on his deathbed to forgive him for preaching Christianity. He said that a strict observance of the precepts of religion founded upon the Bible would involve the ruin of nations and destroy all bonds of human society.

THE LAW AND THIS COMMANDMENT

In my preface I quoted a number of prominent men, among whom were a member of Congress, a Governor of one of our States, and a jurist of one of our higher courts, to the effect that the laws of this country were founded on the Ten Commandments. I stated that these men were either ignorant of the fundamentals on which our laws were based, or of the real meaning of the Decalogue. Not only was this Republic *not* founded and not only are its laws *not* based on the Ten Commandments, but the ends sought were in direct opposition to the precepts of the Decalogue.

The edicts of the Decalogue are based on the presumption that certain acts are an offense to God, while the Constitution of the United States is a code of laws specifically enacted to protect the individual in society. The Ten Commandments are based on the proposition that man is a sinful human being, while the Constitution is an instrument in defense of the “Rights of Man.” One is designed to punish sinful conduct, while the other was created to protect inalienable rights and privileges. The Decalogue, in effect, says, “Thou shalt not commit a sin,” while the Constitution says, “Thou hast certain basic rights that may not be abridged.”

The laws of this country were designed to administer justice and equality impartially to all, while the Ninth Commandment was intended to defeat the ends of justice. Equality before the law is one of the cornerstones and firm pillars of our legal structure, while this Commandment was formulated for the very opposite purpose—that of defeating equality before the law by restricting testimony to favor one against the other. *This Commandment does not sponsor the truth so that the ends of justice may be achieved, but that the ends of justice may be defeated by the concealment of the truth.*

The fundamentals of the Declaration of Independence proclaiming the “self-evident” truth “that all men are created equal,” and that they possess the inalienable rights of “Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness,” are the basic principles underlying the Constitution of the United States. The codification of these principles into laws established for the first time on this earth a government truly dedicated to the principle of justice without regard to race, color or creed. In proof, I quote the Sixth Amendment to the United States Constitution:

“In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.”

And as an additional safeguard, the Fourteenth Amendment provides:

“All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law, nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”

Can anything in the above quotations be construed as having been founded on the Commandment, “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor”? On the contrary, it very definitely says that “the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury.” So that the accused may use every means to defend himself, and use every legitimate device to ascertain the truth of the charges against him, he has the additional right of being “in-

formed of the nature and cause of the accusation," and "to be confronted with the witnesses against him." In addition, to protect his interests and defend himself, he also possesses the right and power to "compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor," and, last but not least, "the assistance of counsel for his defense." And if he is unable to pay for such counsel, the courts invariably supply one at the cost of the State whose laws he is charged with breaking and which is prosecuting him in an endeavor to punish him for his alleged acts. Are these provisions of the Constitution anything like the Ninth Commandment?

No matter how damaging the circumstances or the suspicion of guilt, the individual charged with a crime is entitled to a fair and impartial trial, and to present evidence in his own behalf. Under the American system of jurisprudence, even an alien of the worst criminal type is given the full protection of the law, and not until sufficient proof is presented to convince twelve men, *beyond a reasonable doubt*, is he legally declared guilty of the crime with which he is charged.

One of the most dastardly crimes, in my opinion, ever committed in this country was the kidnaping and murder of the infant of Charles A. Lindbergh. When the suspect was arrested, it was discovered that he was not only not a citizen, but an alien with a criminal record. The Governor of the State in which this scoundrel was to be tried made the public declaration that he was to receive a fair trial. He said: "There is an old maxim in law that a man is [presumed] innocent until he is proven guilty. New Jersey will see that Bruno Richard Hauptmann gets a fair trial."⁶⁸ If this Commandment had been invoked against the culprit, then he, as an individual enemy, would have been unable to bring forward any witnesses in his defense; while under our Constitution he enjoyed the benefit of every legal means in his behalf. *Pereat coelum, fiat justitia!* Let the sky fall, but justice be done. It was far more important to give this execrable creature the full opportunity to defend himself than to violate the principles of justice.

⁶⁸ *New York Times*, Oct. 20, 1934.

To adopt the Ninth Commandment in our courts of law as the criterion of justice would be to make religious and racial sectarianism the standard of truth and justice. If we accept the sectarian principle of this Commandment, then we must scrap the Constitution, because the basic secular philosophy of the Constitution is that all men have equal rights before the law without regard to race, color or creed.⁶⁹ If we accept this Commandment, then we must erase from our courts the motto that "The firm pillars of society rest upon the true administration of justice."

If this Commandment prevailed in our courts of law, justice would be impossible and every sentiment toward the equality of man would be stifled. The symbol of equality would have to be tipped with a weight of prejudice in favor of one party; the blindfold covering the two eyes of justice to assure impartiality would have to be removed, and instead one eye would have to be half closed into a wink indicating that only evidence in favor of one party would be heard.

It is well to remember that the Goddess of Justice is a pagan creation and not a Biblical one. No better comparison of the broad cultural attainment of the former and the narrow provincialism of the latter could be used as an illustration than by comparing this Commandment with the evenly balanced scales of the Goddess of Justice, insuring impartiality to all.

Not only has the analysis of this Commandment shown the impossibility of our laws being based on the Decalogue, *but we are confronted with the alternative of either accepting the Constitution of the United States or the Ten Commandments.*

The Decalogue is a code of a theocracy. The Constitution is an instrument of a democracy. The Ten Commandments are based on a divine right with dogmatic edicts. This government is a Republic

⁶⁹ The Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution says: "The right of the citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude. The Congress shall have power to enforce the provisions of this article by appropriate legislation."

based on equal representation of the people with the right to change and alter its laws.

How odious is the comparison of the narrow sectarian doctrine of this Commandment, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," with the words which are carved above the portals of the Supreme Court in the nation's Capital as symbolizing the fundamental principle of universal justice on which our government was founded:

"Equal Justice under Law."

SECTARIAN VS. UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD

Despite the fact that this Commandment expressed the highest moral conception of the Hebrew Deity, and was considered the epitome of divine justice for more than two thousand years, other peoples had broader and more universal sentiments and laid down loftier principles for human relationships. The latter's doctrine was based on the fundamental equality of human beings, that human rights are fundamental and basic, and that principles and not persons are the criterion of justice. These "pagan" and "infidel" opinions maintained that a man was a man regardless of the color of his skin, the language he spoke, or the country from which he came.

The philosophy of the Stoics was based on the theory that truth for truth's sake was the highest ideal and must never be sacrificed to expediency. The Stoics were the first to give the idea of world citizenship a definite, positive meaning, and not only raised it to historical importance, but molded it into a philosophy that has influenced the world and been responsible for much of the mutual understanding and progress which we now enjoy.⁷⁰

Cicero, voicing the Stoic doctrine, said: "Nature ordains that a man should wish the good of every man, whoever he may be, for this very reason, that he is a man."⁷¹ And again: "To reduce man to the duties of his own city, and to disengage him from duties to

⁷⁰ Lecky, *Morals*, Vol. 1, p. 177.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

the members of other cities, is to break the universal society of the human race.”⁷² Seneca said: “Nature made us relatives when it begat us from the same material and for the same destinies. She planted in us a mutual love, and fitted us for a social life.” “My country is Rome,” said Marcus Aurelius; “as a man, it is the world.” With such a broad outlook, is it any wonder that he summarized his philosophy in these words: “There is but one thing of real value—to cultivate truth and justice, and to live without anger in the midst of lying and unjust men.”⁷³

The moralists of ancient India taught that we should devote our lives to the welfare and advancement of others, without any thought of reward, and that we should be happy in the fortune of others although we ourselves were not so fortunate.⁷⁴

The Chinese moralists advocated benevolence to all men without making any reference to national distinction. Democritus of Abdera said that every country is acceptable to a wise man, and that a good soul’s fatherland is the whole earth.⁷⁵

Diderot, the atheist, presents a question that answers itself. He asks: “Which is the greater merit, to enlighten the human race, which remains forever, or to save one’s fatherland, which is perishable?” Diderot, a guiding spirit in the French Revolution, exercised a tremendous influence in making that great event a new era in the movement toward the brotherhood of man.⁷⁶ The whole eighteenth century was influenced by the ideals of those brave men who proclaimed to the world a new doctrine in the words, “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.” Men were looked upon as members of the human race rather than as citizens of any particular country. To be a citizen of every nation, and not belong to one’s native country alone, was the dream of their “infidel” philosophy.

⁷² Lecky, *Morals*, Vol. 1, p. 101.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

⁷⁴ Westermarck, *Morals*, Vol. 2, p. 153.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 176-177.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

Our own Thomas Paine said: "*Independence is my happiness, and I view things as they are, without regard to place or person; my country is the world, and my religion is to do good.*"

The great Buckle truly said: ". . . ignorance is the most powerful of all the causes of national hatred; when you increase the contact, you remove the ignorance and thus you diminish the hatred."

These sentiments for better understanding and equality between the peoples of the earth are not the result of this Commandment, *but despite it*. Man is not the enemy of man, and because one man is of a different color, or speaks a different language, or comes from a different country, does not necessarily make him an enemy to his fellow men. We are, fortunately, rapidly moving toward that ideal of the broader principles of human relationships.

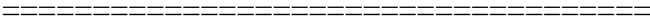
Only as we break down the sectarian and nationalistic barriers that block the path will this cherished goal be completely attained. That such a goal is in sight is only too well attested by the principles of equality which now prevail in civilized society, in contradistinction to the narrow sectarianism as expressed in this Commandment.

If progress is to continue and man is to live in a society of mutual understanding and betterment, then the primary task of education is to eradicate those instincts of tribal and clannish life as manifested in the Decalogue that are constantly plaguing modern society with discord, dissension and conflict. Nor will universal justice ever be achieved on this earth until the meaning of the word "neighbor" as represented by this Commandment is completely obliterated from our social and national existence, and racial and religious sectarianism is eradicated from the heart and mind of man.

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If every American does his or her best for America and for Humanity we shall become, and remain, the Grandest of Nations – admired by all and feared by none, our strength being our Wisdom and kindness.

Knowledge knows no race, sex, boundary or nationality; what mankind knows has been gathered from every field plowed by the thoughts of man. There is no reason to envy a learned person or a scholarly institution, learning is available to all who seek it in earnest, and it is to be had cheaply enough for all.

To study and plow deeper the rut one is in does not lead to an elevation of intelligence, quite the contrary! To read widely, savor the thoughts, and blind beliefs, of others will make it impossible to return again to that narrowness that did dominate the view of the uninformed.

To prove a thing wrong that had been believed will elevate the mind more than a new fact learned.

Emmett F. Fields
Bank of Wisdom

Bank of wisdom
P.O. Box 926
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The Tenth Commandment

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour’s.”

THE HIDDEN MEANING OF COVETING

IF THE previous Commandment alone was sufficient to invalidate the Decalogue as a divine revelation, this Commandment offers conclusive proof that the Decalogue is a series of taboos based on the primitive belief in animism and sympathetic magic.

This Commandment was never intended to prevent envying another's possessions, but rather to avoid the evil consequences of "coveting" in the magical sense.

Coveting was not mentioned as an undesirable trait to be avoided because it is unethical, immoral or antisocial; it was recorded and made part of the Decalogue because the superstition prevailed in Hebrew tribal society that envious thoughts would bring ill luck and misfortune, through sorcery and witchcraft, to the person against whose property the "coveting" was directed. Covetous desires, they believed, would call into existence the malevolent spirits of the "evil eye," which by devious and diabolical methods would cause the loss of the coveted possessions.

This Commandment is identical in purpose with, and differs only as to subject matter from, the Second Commandment, which prohibits the making of graven images, and the Third Commandment, which forbids the mentioning of taboo names. It also furnishes additional and pertinent testimony as to the clannish and tribal application of the Decalogue. Just as in the previous Commandment, to bear false witness was prohibited only against one's neighbor (i.e., a fellow tribesman, a compatriot), so coveting, as mentioned in this Commandment, is restrained only against "thy neighbour's" possessions, "his house, his wife, his manservant, his maidservant, his ox, his ass," and "any thing that *is* thy neighbour's." This restrictive prohibition is tantamount to a non-prohibition against those outside the clanship of

the Children of Israel, as was so conclusively proved in the analysis of the other Commandments.

The narrow, proscribed application of this Commandment, and the specific details of the things not to be coveted, even to "anything that *is thy neighbour's*," is also significant evidence that the word "coveting," as used in this Commandment, had an altogether different definition from the modern one. The real meaning of the word can only be apparent if one understands the primitive mind. Is it conceivable that "coveting" *anything*," no matter how small, insignificant or valueless, could be so strongly and definitely prohibited unless some mysterious danger would result? If this were not so, does the boy who "covets" his friend's bicycle violate this Commandment? Does the dimple-cheeked, blue-eyed little girl who "covets" her playmate's curly-headed doll violate this Commandment? And, if so, is she to suffer from the wrath of this jealous and vindictive Bible Deity all the days of her life? This is so obviously ridiculous that one wonders how such an edict could ever have been imposed on millions of people as an infallible precept in a divine code of morals. If a Commandment of this kind could have been accepted as an eternal truth, is there, in the dogma of a creed, anything too improbable for religious people to accept?

Coveting, as used in this Commandment and as it was originally understood, was a secret treason, a hidden danger from which no member of the clan was safe. The Bible is replete with references not only to this belief among the primitive Hebrews, but the penalties provided for its practices are numerous, definite and ruthless. All stood in mortal fear of the sorcerer, and no punishment was too severe for so diabolical a person. At the time this Commandment was formulated, coveting was considered one of the greatest of evils, and to counteract its effect was of major concern to the people who lived in continual fear of the terrible results they believed inevitably followed its practice.

Lévy-Bruhl, one of the foremost authorities on the thinking processes of primitive peoples, says: "Covetousness is of itself not merely

a feeling of desire but a positive and effectual action of the soul of him who covets upon the thing coveted." To covet, in the primitive meaning of the word, is just as effective as a physical action, and in many primitive communities it is closely associated or synonymous with stealing. Casalis, another authority, says that "covetousness has its own proper meaning." Among primitive tribes its power was a dreaded force of evil, as they knew only too well the "ungoverned desires of the heart."¹

This primitive concept of the word "coveting," as used in this Commandment, is verified by the use of similar words among the Biblical Hebrews. For instance, *keshep*, the Hebrew word for "coveting," means, according to one authority, "a thing done in a secret manner." It also means "poisoner," or "to cast a spell." This same authority says that "there is no doubt that the real meaning of this 'magic' is exactly witchcraft." *Kishif*, another Hebrew word meaning "coveter" or "sorcerer," is defined as "witchcraft" in the Talmud.² Another authority tells us that the medieval Hebrew believed that a man and his wife could be so bewitched by envious persons that they would be unable to cohabit. The Hebrew word *asar*, meaning "to bind," occurs frequently with the meaning "to tie somebody by a knot-charm so that he cannot enjoy relations with his wife."³

There are numerous Hebrew words that have similar connotations. The language of the Biblical Hebrew contained countless words denoting and characterizing the evil spirits which inhabited the provincial universe in which he lived. The Hebrew word *shedim* means "mystical harmer"; the word *rubin* or *ruhotraot* means "evil spirit"; *lilil* means "night spirits"; *telane*, "shade [or evening] spirits"; *tiharire* means "midday spirits"; *zafirire* means "morning spirits," as well as "demons that bring famine and cause storms and earthquakes." So numerous were these spirits of destruction that if man could see them "he would lack the strength to face them, though he

¹ Lévy-Bruhl, *Primitive Mentality*, p. 350.

² Hastings, *Encyclopædia*, Vol. 8, p. 301.

³ Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, p. 127.

could see them by casting the ashes of the fetus of a black cat about his eyes or by sprinkling ashes around his bed he could trace their cock-like footprints in the morning.”⁴

In many languages, as well as in Biblical use, the words “coveting,” “enviousness,” “sickness,” “death” and the “evil eye” are synonymous. The English word “envy” actually means *malignant* or *hostile* feeling that is said to arise from natural jealousy.⁵ This is illustrated by the action of Saul in his envy and jealousy of David as recorded in *Book I of Samuel, Chapter 18, verse 9*:

9 And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.⁶

The word “eyed,” as used in the Bible, had a far more significant meaning than merely to “see” or “look after.”

The *Safer Hasidim*⁷ gives a clue to the Biblical Hebrews’ dread of coveting, as used in this Commandment, and its relationship to the evil eye; it says: “The angry glance of a man’s eye calls into being an evil angel who speedily takes vengeance on the cause of his wrath.” The Talmud also refers to this important phase of the religion of the Hebrews, stating: “One should never open his mouth to Satan,” meaning that evil talk will produce evil results.⁸

Perhaps the most illuminating reference to the meaning of coveting, as used in this Commandment, and the seriousness with which the Children of Israel regarded it, is the words of *Micah, Chapter 2, verses 1-3*:

1 Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand.

2 And they covet fields, and take *them* by violence; and houses, and take *them* away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage.

⁴ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 4, p. 516 (see same for other material).

⁵ Hastings, *op. cit.*, Vol. 5, p. 608.

⁶ See also *Deuteronomy, Chapter 28, verse 54*.

⁷ An authoritative Hebrew book.

⁸ Trachtenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

3 Therefore thus saith the Lord; Behold, against this family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks; neither shall ye go haughtily: for this time *is* evil.

Not only was personal property subject to "coveting" but so menacing was this iniquity that those who possessed the power could "work evil upon their beds"; they could "covet fields and take them by violence." A man's house and even "his heritage" could be taken away by coveting! Those found guilty of this practice could not escape the penalty, for the Lord had said: "Against this family do I devise an evil, from which he shall not remove your necks. . . ."

Coveting was definitely the weapon of the sorcerer, the concealed means of exercising the malign influence of the "evil eye." It was witchcraft in its most diabolical form, and that is why it was prohibited among the Hebrews. That is why envious thoughts of "thy neighbor's" property were taboo. That is why strict and stringent penalties were provided for coveting.

There cannot be the slightest doubt that the Biblical Hebrew believed in witchcraft. Not only did Saul visit the Witch of Endor⁹ and seek her advice, but the Biblical injunction "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live"¹⁰ is conclusive proof of the prevalence of this belief among the Children of Israel. So great was the fear of bewitchment that anyone guilty of its practice was to be put to death! And this injunction carried with it the same authority as any of the Commandments of the Decalogue.

The belief in witchcraft is one of the most damnable the Bible is responsible for perpetrating on mankind. The fear of sorcerers was so great that even the law took cognizance of it, and judges certified to the existence of witchcraft by Biblical authority! To the pages of the Bible belongs the guilt for the innocent blood of the hundreds

⁹ 1 Samuel, Chapter 28. For additional evidence of the belief in witchcraft among the Biblical Hebrews, see: 2 Chronicles, Chapter 33, verse 16; 2 Kings, Chapter 9, verse 22; Micah, Chapter 5, verse 12; Deuteronomy, Chapter 18, verse 10; Nahum, Chapter 3, verse 4.

¹⁰ Exodus, Chapter 22, verse 18.

of thousands of victims shed as a result of this mad superstition. Men, women and children were subjected to every conceivable infamy and every conceivable torture for merely having been accused of committing crimes of which they were utterly incapable. This devilish superstition has persisted almost up to our very day,¹¹ as is proved by the statement of John Wesley that "the giving up of witchcraft was in effect the giving up of the Bible."

The fear of uttering anything that offers the slightest possibility of doing harm or exercising the slightest detrimental influence accounts for the numerous prophylactic expressions and measures prevalent among the orthodox Hebrews. Even today they are resorted to as a means of avoiding this kind of bewitchment. "Don't *beashrei* me" is frequently heard. The use of this expression reveals how deeply rooted was this superstition in nationalistic Hebrew life. It means, in effect, "Thou shalt not covet," or "No evil eye." The prevalence of this expression in Hebrew culture is additional proof that the real meaning of the word "coveting," as biblically used, is "employing witchcraft." Orthodox Hebrews still avoid mentioning the words "evil eye," and substitute a reverse expression, *gut-oig* ("good eye"), so as to avoid the implications and dangers involved in uttering the dreaded words.¹² This taboo against mentioning the dreaded words is identical with the one which forbids mentioning the name of the Hebrew Deity and calls for the use of a substitute, as revealed in the analysis of the Third Commandment.

COVETING, WITCHCRAFT AND THE EVIL EYE IN PRIMITIVE CULTURE

It is only by lifting the veil of the past that we are able to reveal the truth to the present. Just as there are problems in mathematics that cannot be solved by simple arithmetic, but require algebra, geometry and trigonometry, so there are primitive problems of conduct

¹¹ For details of the influence and prevalence of witchcraft, see Lecky, *History of Rationalism in Europe*, Vol. 1, pp. 1-50.

¹² A. A. Roback, *Psychological Aspects of Jewish Protective Phrases*, p. 5.

and social customs that cannot be explained or solved by present-day standards of ethics or morals, but require a knowledge of social anthropology.

The primitive mind, such as was the Biblical Hebrew's, was not only unacquainted with the natural "laws of the universe," but was utterly incapable of comprehending the orderly connection of one event with another; it was believed that everything was the result of good or evil forces, and that these forces operated through the medium of sorcery and witchcraft. Health and disease, famine and abundance, drought and rain, sorrow and happiness, ugliness and good looks, misfortune and success, storms and sunshine, all these and every minor event in life were thought to be the result of unseen forces. It was also believed that these forces for good or evil could be influenced by one's acts. Even death was attributed to some evil power seeking retaliation and revenge for some "sinful" act. It was this superstitious belief, formulated by the Hebrews into a religious system, that corrupted and stultified the minds of all who came under its blighting influence.

Thus, when misfortune came to the members of the early Israelite tribe, whether it was illness, the loss of cattle, the unfaithfulness of a wife, the death of children, the lack of rain for crops, it was believed that all were due to the malign influences of evil-wishing, the envious thoughts of others and the work of sorcerers. How else could the primitive mind explain these bewildering manifestations? When lightning destroyed houses and killed innocent men and women, what reason could be given for the tragedy? When tornadoes and earthquakes devastated the earth, when famine stalked the land, how else could primitive man explain such horror, except that evil forces were wreaking vengeance on someone for some act that had provoked their anger?

To the primitive mind, there was no such thing as an "accident." If a tree fell on a person and killed him, the act was due to some evil influence. If one tripped and fell, injuring himself, it was attributed to some ill wishes. If a child was deformed, mentally or physically,

it was believed that some malign impulse was responsible. If one broke a dish, spilled milk or dropped food, the cause was a covetous wish or evil eye.

"All ailments of every kind," says a noted authority, "from the simplest to the most serious, are without exception attributed to malign influence of an enemy in either human or spirit shape."¹³

The Biblical Hebrews believed that the death of women in childbirth was due to three sins: negligence during the periods of separation, carelessness in respect to the consecration of the first cake of the dough, and improperly lighting the Sabbath lamp. It was their firm conviction that "there is no death without sin."¹⁴

Nowhere was this superstitious belief so strongly entrenched as in its application to sickness and disease. The primitive mind did not know the nature of disease and was unable to comprehend its "mysterious" ways. It could not conceive of one being afflicted other than through the medium of a malign influence. How could the primitive explain his "catching" a contagious disease? With the best of intentions, he visited a neighbor to comfort and aid him, only to find that shortly after he became afflicted with the same illness. How could he explain this except on the supposition that he had been bewitched for something he had done or had failed to do? What else could he believe except that someone had cast an evil eye on him or coveted his good health, thereby transferring the disease to him? On a larger scale, it is easily understandable how an epidemic was believed to be a revenge on a whole people for some ritual disobedience.

The Bible did not help him in his perplexity. It contains no more information on the nature of disease than it does on morals; and just as the Bible does not contain the word "morals" or "morality," so it does not mention the causes and cure of disease. There is not a scientific fact within its pages concerning the nature of a single disease or a single remedy for its cure! How could the Bible be helpful

¹³ Lévy-Bruhl, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

¹⁴ Hastings, *Encyclopædia*, Vol. 4, p. 757.

when it decidedly states that disease is a punishment ordained by its God for failure to do "that which is right in his sight."

I quote *Exodus, Chapter 15, verse 26*:

26 And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I *am* the Lord that healeth thee.

The belief in the power to injure by the medium of thought and intensity of the wish—the efficacy of coveting—prevailed in nearly all tribes whose cultural level was similar to that of the Hebrews.

"Thus, in regard to the aborigines of Australia," says Frazer, "the number of supernatural beings that they acknowledge is exceedingly great, for not only are the heavens peopled with such, but the whole face of the country swarms with them; every thicket, most watering places and all rocky places abound with evil spirits. In like manner, every natural phenomenon is believed to be the work of demons, one and all apparently striving to do all imaginable mischief." "The Negro," says another writer, "is wont to regard the whole world around him as peopled with invisible beings to whom he imputes every misfortune that happens to him, and from whose harmful influence he seeks to protect himself by all kinds of magic means."¹⁵

If a Kikuyu or Kamba cattle owner hears that a man has been admiring one of his cows, he will send for him and insist on his removing the enchantment; this is done by the man wetting his finger with saliva, and touching the beast on the mouth.¹⁶ The Gallas are very jealous of their livestock; a stranger's admiration of it would be attributed by them to a covetous heart and would instantly excite their ire.

The belief prevails in many primitive societies that merely "wishing" evil on someone, even momentarily, is sufficient to cast a spell

¹⁵ Frazer, *Golden Bough*, Part VI, *The Scapegoat*, pp. 73-74.

¹⁶ Lévy-Bruhl, *op. cit.*, p. 349.

and bewitch him. In the Congo district and in West Africa, the natives believe that everyone has the power of making a wish come true.¹⁷ The wives of a late king of the Niger are supposed to have come in a procession to drink poison at his bier because of a belief that they had wished his death. In Calabar, a woman was found tied to a log near the ocean. When the tide came in, she would be dragged into the sea, a prey of the voracious sharks. She was the wife of a chief who had recently died. The chief's brother had selected her as having wished her husband's death.¹⁸

The North American Indians imagine that anyone who wishes the death of another often obtains the realization of his desire. In British Columbia, when one Indian is vexed with another, he will say, to show his anger: "By and by, you will be dead." This often so terrifies the victim that he soon succumbs. The evil-wisher is then charged with having bewitched his friend and is invariably shot.¹⁹

In South America, among the Lenguas of Grand Chaco, when a man expresses a desire for rain or for a cool south wind, his neighbors, if they do not share the desire, protest strongly and implore him not to persist in his wish. When it rains in Northern India and it is desired that the rain continue, anyone who runs out of doors bareheaded is ordered in at once, for it is believed that a bareheaded man wishes involuntarily that the rain cease. Because words were supposed to possess magic powers, taboos were placed on uttering expressions that could possibly be construed as producing evil results. "We can now better understand," says Lévy-Bruhl, "why it is that primitives are so afraid of arousing anger and ill will among their fellows. . . . They fear that they may thereby provoke a bewitchment."²⁰

When a person has been injured and is unable properly to retaliate, he sometimes resorts to a curse, wishing that some harm befall his assailant. If the object of the curse should meet with the

¹⁷ Lévy-Bruhl, *op. cit.*, p. 343.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 343-344.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 345-346.

²⁰ Lévy-Bruhl, *The Primitives and the Supernatural*, p. 168.

misfortune, the results are attributed to the revengeful wish of his victim. This belief not only prevailed among primitive peoples, but only recently such a case was reported in Bangala. A "cheeky" urchin in Bengala received a box on the ears from his uncle. The boy resented the chastisement and said, "I will bewitch you." Shortly afterwards the uncle became ill. The boy was accused of causing the illness and was forced to endure the penalty provided for such acts of sorcery.²¹

In the Loango, the natives believe that whatever happens to a person is caused by an enemy's wishes. If a person falls into the water and is drowned, he has been bewitched; if he is devoured by a wolf or tiger, it is because his enemy, by virtue of his magical powers, has been transferred into a wild beast. In Sierra Leone and among the DeChagge of East Africa, it is believed that no death is natural or accidental, but is brought about by the malign influence of some individual who employs witchcraft for that purpose.²²

When a Samoan was ill, a special inquiry was made of his sister and her children as to whether any of them had cursed him and thus caused his illness. To prove her innocence and remove the spell, she would take some cocoanut water into her mouth and eject it toward or over the body of the sufferer.²³

The first night after a Narinyere man has died, his nearest relative sleeps with his head on the corpse in order that he may be led to dream of the sorcerer who caused the death.

In the West of England, the baneful influence of envy or ill-wishing is evidenced in the common remark after any tragic occurrence, bereavement or serious misfortune, such as a widow being left unprovided for—" 'Tis a *wished* thing for her, sure enough!"²⁴

When lightning struck the house of a native Basttos, killing his wife, injuring his children and burning all his belongings, he was firmly convinced that it had been sent by a neighbor who bore him

²¹ Lévy-Bruhl, *op. cit.*, *Primitive Mentality*, p. 239.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

²³ *Idem*, *The Primitives and the Supernatural*, p. 184.

²⁴ Hastings, *Religion*, Vol. 5, p. 809.

a grudge.²⁵ How far removed from the savage Basttos was the civilized Englishman who told the eminent novelist, Thomas Hardy, that the reason why certain trees in front of his house did not thrive was that he looked at them before breakfast on an empty stomach!²⁶

During the Middle Ages, the Russian subject was forced to take an oath that he would not resort to sorcery, witchcraft or any other magical means to cause harm to the Czar.²⁷

Says the noted authority Lévy-Bruhl: "In support of these views of the essential nature of witchcraft, as the primitive mind usually imagines it, we can bring forward a vast number of facts in which the injurious influence attributed to envy, covetousness, malevolence and the like appears."²⁸

"To the Bergdama the safety of the social group depends upon the sacred fire. Should this be profaned, it loses its virtue and misfortune overwhelms the Bergdama. Now it may happen that the persistent good luck of a zealous and experienced hunter excites the envy of one of his companions who employs magic means to wrest it from him. If it be ascertained that such a crime has been committed, it is essential that a fresh fire be prepared if the whole village, and especially the fortunate hunter, are not to be attacked by dire misfortune, for the crime has defiled the fire in such a way that only its complete renewal can turn aside the calamities that are imminent. They do not need to look far for the guilty person, for it is assuredly a relative. Envy has thus been the instigator of witchcraft, and the person possessed by it has become a sorcerer."²⁹

One of the most effective weapons of the covetous person is the evil eye—a potent agent of the sorcerer. Among primitive, superstitious peoples, if one merely stared at another it was considered that he was planning mischief or actually causing some evil. The foremost authorities in the field of primitive culture acknowledge

²⁵ Lévy-Bruhl, *Primitive Mentality*, p. 48.

²⁶ Frazer, *The Magic Art*, p. 130.

²⁷ Hastings, *Encyclopædia*, Vol. 3, p. 466.

²⁸ Lévy-Bruhl, *The Primitives and the Supernatural*, p. 170.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

that the evil eye and the power to bewitch are often synonymous terms.³⁰ In Arabia Petraea, it is believed that if anyone looks at an animal as if he desired to possess it, the animal will die unless the owner sells it. In the same way, if a man covets a woman, a child, articles of clothing or anything else, his soul has the power to injure the object coveted.³¹ The evil eye was believed to have its impulse in envy, and thus it was unlucky to have any of one's possessions praised.³²

In a detailed description of the Bantu belief with regard to the evil eye, an authority states: "It gradually dawns upon the people that So-and-So possesses the power, owing to the fact that if a person audibly admires a beast belonging to a neighbor, the animal shortly becomes sick. This occurs several times, the various owners compare notes, and it becomes generally known that So-and-So is *kittamengo* (has the evil eye). It would therefore seem," he concludes, "that the idea is not based on an evil glance, but upon an envious thought."³³ The eye was merely used as an instrument, a vehicle of the envy he feels for the owner of the thing coveted.

Among the Shilluk, the power to harm is made operative by looking fixedly at the victim. The person who is bewitched says: "The eye went into me." Again, they consider the eye merely the instrument of their envy and their covetousness. It is the same among the Azande. By a wizard they mean one possessing the evil eye, who, by an inherent power, exerts a baneful influence, occasions misfortune, brings about illness and death.³⁴

Even to be looked at while eating was considered dangerous, as the eater was subject to the malign influence of others who might covet the repast. It was thought that those who were hungry would excite envy, the mainspring of malignant and evil glances. For this reason, it is said, the Pope always takes his meals alone. The kings

³⁰ Lévy-Bruhl, *The Primitives and the Supernatural*, p. 167

³¹ *Idem*, *Primitive Mentality*, p. 350.

³² *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 14th Ed., Vol. 8, p. 915.

³³ Lévy-Bruhl, *The Primitives and the Supernatural*, p. 166.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

of Kacongo, in West Africa, may not be seen eating. It is a capital offense to see the king of Dahomey at his meals. When the king of Tonga eats, all turn their backs. Anyone who saw Muato Jamwo, a great potentate of the Congo country, eating would be put to death.³⁵ Turks of all classes object to being looked at while eating.

In Wadai the sultan always speaks from behind a curtain so that no one may see him and cast an envious glance on him. The practice of veiling the faces of the women throughout the East is considered to have originated from the fear that evil and envious glances would have a blighting effect on them.³⁶

In Shoa, one of the southern provinces of Abyssinia, the doors of the houses are scrupulously barred at meals to exclude the evil eye, and every time an Abyssinian of rank drinks, a servant holds a cloth before his master to guard him from the evil eye. The Thompson Indians of British Columbia think that a shaman could bewitch them most easily when they are eating, drinking or smoking.³⁷

Plutarch observed that envy exerts an evil influence through the eyes. Heliodorus implies that nearly all people have an evil eye, and that if anyone looks at that which is excellent with an envious eye, he fills the surrounding atmosphere with a pernicious quality and transmits his own envenomed exhalations into whatever is nearest to him.³⁸

The Greeks and Romans erected statues to Nemesis, whom they adored and invoked to save them from the covetousness and envy of others.³⁹

In the time of Elizabeth, "eye-biting" witches were executed in Ireland for causing diseases among cattle. It was also believed that they were the cause of cows losing their milk. In the West Highlands, it is believed that if a stranger looks admiringly at a cow, she will waste away unless some of her milk is drunk to break the

³⁵ Frederick Thomas Elworthy, *The Evil Eye*, pp. 425, 426.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 427-429.

³⁷ Frazer, *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 116-117.

³⁸ Hastings, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 5, p. 610.

³⁹ Elworthy, *The Evil Eye*, p. 14.

spell. Turks and Arabs have the same belief as to their horses and cattle; seldom are they seen harnessed without some protective amulet on them. Westermarck observes that in Morocco the havoc which the evil eye is supposed to have caused is tremendous. In some parts of Calcutta it is usual for a mother to blacken her child's face with a burnt stick to preserve it during the day from the evil influence.⁴⁰

Animals have been accused of possessing evil eyes. The peacock, the symbol of Juno, the most envious and ill-natured of the deities, has always been, and is still held to be, a potent mischief maker. Even today there are many people who are horrified if peacock feathers are used as ornaments because the feathers contain a design which to the superstitious appears to be an eye. They become terrified if such feathers are brought into the house, as they believe that death will surely follow. The Irish believe that the hare casts evil eyes on their cattle, and begin a general slaughter of them on May Day! Today, in many parts of England, the hare is looked on as an omen of bad luck, and many refuse even to mention the word "rabbit" for that reason. Pregnant Chinese women dare not look at a hare lest its eye, falling on them, should cause their child to be born with a "harelip." In Brazil there is a tradition that there is a bird with an evil eye that kills with a look.⁴¹ Is not the raven almost universally condemned as "a bird of ill omen"? Nor should we fail to mention the erudite nonsense of Thomas Aquinas on this subject. He said: "The eye is affected by the strong imagination of the soul and then corrupts and poisons the atmosphere so that tender bodies coming within its range may be injuriously affected."⁴²

When King Ferdinand of Naples used to appear in public, he would put his hand in his pocket from time to time. Those who understood his ways knew that he was clenching his fist with the thumb stuck out between the first and second fingers, to avert the effect of a glance of the evil eye that someone in the street might

⁴⁰ Hastings, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 5, p. 610.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Trachtenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

have cast on him.⁴³ Perhaps Ferdinand got his formula to overcome the effects of the evil eye from the orthodox Hebrews: "Whoever is on the point of entering a city and is afraid of the evil eye should stick his right thumb in his left hand and his left thumb in his right hand and say, 'I am of the seed of Joseph, whom the evil eye may not touch.'"⁴⁴

Today we know that there is no such thing as an evil eye, except it be the smiting of a youth by the dreamy and seductive eyes of a maid; that envious thoughts harm no one but the person who envies, as mere envy is wasteful and fruitless; peacock feathers are no more unlucky than the feathers of any other bird, and all the anger in the world cannot bewitch the object that is hated.

COVETING AND COUNTING

As the Bible furnished evidence to substantiate our analysis of the previous Commandments, we now find Biblical evidence in support of our premise in the analysis of this Commandment.

Counting was prohibited among the Children of Israel for the same reason that coveting was condemned. The superstitious basis of sympathetic magic for fear of counting is the foundation of the fear of the evil consequences of coveting. The seriousness with which counting was looked on among the Biblical Hebrews cannot better be illustrated than by the narrative dealing with the taking of the census of the Hebrew people. This was considered such a heinous sin by the Bible Deity that he punished them with a great pestilence which caused the death of 70,000 sons of Israel! No wonder the Biblical Hebrew associated direful results with counting!⁴⁵

Even today orthodox Hebrews use a form of propitiation before counting, such as "May it please God," or "God willing." In addition to this and similar expressions, they use another form of pro-

⁴³ Tylor, *Early History of Mankind*, p. 53.

⁴⁴ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 5, p. 280.

⁴⁵ For a better comprehension of the event, see the *Second Book of Samuel, Chapter 24*, and the *First Book of Chronicles, Chapter 21*.

pitiation, the words *umbeschrien* and *umberufen*, when telling the age of a person, counting the number of children in a family, or the days before a wedding.⁴⁶ This is supposed to counteract whatever evil might result from mentioning the time, number or things that are precious to their owners. Hebrews also avoid counting money unless the protective words are used.

This superstition, with its attendant propitiatory ceremonies and phrases, was not confined to the Israelites, but was prevalent among all primitive groups. The propitiation used by primitive peoples is identical in ceremonial form and purpose with that of the Hebrews. The natives of the Oran colonies, before counting, start with a supplication, "In the name of God," "one, two, three," etc.,⁴⁷ to prevent harm from befalling any one of the number counted.

Among the Bakongo of the Lower Congo, it is considered unlucky for a woman to count her children. The Masai of East Africa count neither men nor beasts for fear lest some should die. Among the Akamba tribe, where the welfare of the cattle is of great concern, these animals are never counted for fear that many will die or disappear. The Gallus of East Africa, and the peoples of North Africa, believe that counting one's cattle will cause evil. It is reported that a missionary who through ignorance counted his workpeople was ceremoniously killed. The Cherokee Indians of North America will not count melons and squashes for fear lest they should cease to thrive. The Omaha Indians keep no account of their years for fear that some evil will result if they do so.

Similar superstitions survive to this day in "civilized" communities. I remember as a lad being told by a playmate that if I counted the carriages in a funeral procession someone in my family would die.

In the Highlands of Scotland, it is considered unlucky to number the people or cattle belonging to any family, or for fishermen to count the number of fish they catch. In Germany, it was the popular be-

⁴⁶ Roback, *Psychological Aspects of Jewish Protective Phrases*, p. 5.

⁴⁷ Frazer, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, p. 307.

lief that counting one's money caused it steadily to decrease. Even today, it is said on excellent authority that the Arabs of Syria are averse to counting their tents, horsemen or cattle, lest some misfortune befall them.⁴⁸

In Shetland, England, it was the common belief that an outbreak of smallpox always followed a census. In Lincolnshire, no farmer counts his cattle; it is thought that the powers of evil would cause some to die if he did. In Denmark, the eggs of a brooding hen are never counted, else the mother will tread on the eggs and kill the chickens. In North Jutland, the people do not count the mice for fear that they will increase. The Greeks and Armenians believe that if you count your warts, they will increase; and, in the Upper Palatinate, a district in Bavaria, people think that loaves in the oven should not be counted, or they will not turn out well.⁴⁹

Some people fear to tell their age because of the belief that it will cut off their years. This superstitious belief among the orthodox Hebrews is so ingrained that many times it causes both amusement and bewilderment in our courts. When an orthodox Hebrew who has been called to testify is asked his age, the judge cannot understand why he refuses to answer the simple question. The witness is silent because he is afraid to mention his age unless the protective word is spoken first. Generally someone in the courtroom acquainted with this orthodox belief asks the attendant to reframe his question in this manner: "*Umbeschrien*, how old are you?" and the witness readily gives his age. This expression has been somewhat facetiously corrupted, and usually, when asking the age of an elderly person, the question is framed in this manner: "I hope you live to be one hundred and twenty years, but how old are you now?"

Just as the Hebrews used a form of propitiation to protect them from the evil results of "counting," so they had protective measures and phrases to guard them against the evil of coveting.

⁴⁸ Frazer, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, pp. 307-313.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 310, 311, 313.

PROPITIATORY PHRASES

The very existence of presumed magical methods as a protection against coveting sorcery and diabolical bewitchment by the evil eye is proof of the intensity of the belief, in Biblical times, in the potency of "coveting."

Perhaps the most common expression used by orthodox Hebrews as a prophylactic against the evil that might result from a "covetous" or praiseworthy remark is *kenanhore*. They say, "*Kenanhore*, what a beautiful, or healthy, or smart child!" The word *kenanhore* is believed to be a protective shield against the evil spirits that might cause the child to lose its beauty, its health, its intelligence, or cause it harm in some other way. The same word is used when mentioning a happy marriage, a fortunate event, recovery from an illness, a successful venture or any number of good things that might be reversed through a "covetous" expression.

There are many other propitiatory gestures and phrases used by the Hebrews. Marriages are constantly in danger of being wrecked by the dreaded evil of coveting. The bridegroom, whose conjugal happiness is envied by someone, is considered especially susceptible. He may protect himself, however, by walking backwards. A glance at the left side of the nose is also protection against the evil eye.⁵⁰ One method of bewitching the bridal pair is to tie three knots during the ceremony; the bride will be forbidden to her husband as long as the knots remain untied. To break the spell, one must kill a hen, drop the blood on the knots, and untie them.⁵¹

Children are constantly in danger of being coveted, particularly those who are healthy and good-looking. To counteract this, a piece of *matzoh* (the unleavened bread used during the Passover) sprinkled with salt is put in the pocket of the child. The sex of the child is also a factor in coveting. If the first child is a girl, this is considered a good omen for the succeeding boys, because it is believed that the

⁵⁰ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 5, pp. 280-281.

⁵¹ Hastings, *Encyclopædia*, Vol. 2, p. 656.

evil eye is then not irritated. If the first child is a boy, the evil eye never ceases its malign influence.⁵²

An example of the efforts of the Biblical Hebrew to avoid the influence of the evil eye is found in the story of Joseph. When he inquired of his brothers about the welfare of his father and his grandfather, they replied: "Thy servant, our father, is well, he is yet alive." From this answer Joseph would know that his grandfather, Isaac, was dead, and at the same time the sympathetic implication of mentioning death was avoided.

To mention the sins of a sick person was prohibited for fear that it would cause the evil influence to affect his condition adversely. It was forbidden to repeat a conversation in which a curse was included. In fact, orthodox Hebrews are sometimes quite perplexed as to whether they should repeat audibly the imprecation of Jeremiah calling down bitter maledictions on the Children of Israel! It is said that a student fell ill and died while studying aloud this portion of the Bible.⁵³

The *tefillin* or phylacteries is an amulet to protect the pious Hebrew from the covetousness of others. It is believed to possess power to ward off demons and the "unwelcome ministrations of Satan." The wearer of the phylacteries was supposed to be immune to all the powers of evil.⁵⁴ Only male Hebrews wear them, and when worn, "the left hand is surrounded by a thousand and the right hand by tens of thousands of guardian angels."⁵⁵ It is believed to be the duty of every pious Jew to use the *tefillin*⁵⁶ every morning to assure him protection throughout the day.

At a marriage among certain orthodox Jews, the bride is taken into an upper room after the religious ceremony, accompanied by all her friends, who remain with her. She is then seated on a chair. Her mother-in-law unveils her, and with a pair of scissors cuts off

⁵² *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 5, pp. 280-281.

⁵³ Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, p. 59.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

⁵⁵ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 4, p. 519.

⁵⁶ Their use today is more widespread than is generally supposed.

the ends of her hair. This ceremony is supposed to be of great importance in driving away evil influences that might harm or enter between the newly married pair.⁵⁷

Another method of counteracting the effects of the evil eye among orthodox Hebrews is the following: Take a handful of salt, pass it around the head of a child that has been bewitched, then throw a little of it in each corner of the room and the balance over the threshold. Another is for the mother to kiss her child three times, spitting after each kiss.⁵⁸ Knotting the strings of the orthodox Hebrew's prayer shawls is also a measure against witchcraft.⁵⁹

Common among orthodox Hebrews is the custom of bringing salt and bread into a new house as a sympathetic form of protection that anyone who lives there shall never be without salt and bread, two essentials for the sustenance of life.

As mentioned in the discussion of the Third Commandment, changing one's name was done to avoid the evil eye and the covetousness of envious people.⁶⁰

Josephus records that Eleazer, who came before the Roman Emperor Vespasian, was able to drive away an evil spirit by using the ring of Solomon and some herbs.⁶¹

The number and variety of charms and amulets used by the Hebrews to counteract the malign influence of coveting, and as a protection against the evil eye, are too numerous to mention here. They are as plentiful as the unrestrained imagination of a superstitious people could invent. Nor, as stated before, were the Hebrews alone in this superstition; it prevailed among all peoples of a low intellectual and cultural level.

As frequently used as the word *kenan'hore* is the gesture "knock wood" among other peoples. It is also supposed to prevent the evil

⁵⁷ Frederick Thomas Elworthy, *The Evil Eye*, p. 425.

⁵⁸ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 11, p. 598.

⁵⁹ Hastings, *op. cit.*, Vol. 5, p. 614.

⁶⁰ Instances were related in the analysis of the Third Commandment.

⁶¹ Hastings, *op. cit.*, Vol. 8, p. 301. Attributed to Josephus' *Antiquities*, Vol. 7, pp. 11-15.

spirits from hearing good news and thereby avoid arousing their jealousy and provoking them to covetous designs. So widespread is this superstition that it has become part of our daily habits. Who has not seen people "knock wood" whenever they speak of a fortunate event? Some facetiously tap their heads when a piece of wood is not handy, believing thereby that the same effect will be achieved—the inference being that they are "blockheads." That this gesture continues despite the fact that its original meaning is no longer understood by those who still indulge in its use is only another instance of how tenaciously useless superstitious customs cling.

Another practice of sympathetic magic is to cross two fingers, which is supposed to prevent the crossing of one's plans by those covetous of the objective, and to check temporarily the evil eye until the event has been culminated. This gesture has the same purpose and is as widespread as "knocking wood" and saying "*kenanhore*."

Spitting is also used as a prophylactic against the evils of coveting, sorcery and the evil eye. When speaking of evil and of evil things, the early Hebrews would press one thumb on the ground, repeat the word "*Pipi*" nine times and spit.⁶² Another method is to spit at the object and utter the word "*Maris*." Spitting on one's breast was supposed to avert the jealousy of the gods.⁶³ The Bible records innumerable instances of its superstitious use by the Hebrews and its symbolic personification. It states that if the father of Miriam (the wife of Moses) had spat in her face when she was born, she would not have contracted leprosy.⁶⁴ In parts of Ireland even today, a newborn child is spat on by its father; neighbors spit on the child for luck the first day it is brought out; and the older women spit on the ground all around it to ward off evil.

As part of the baptismal rite of the Roman Catholic Church, the priest anoints the ears and nostrils of the child with spittle as a measure of protection to ward off evil. Among the Greek Catholics, the

⁶² Trachtenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

⁶³ Hastings, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 464.

⁶⁴ *Numbers, Chapter 12, verse 14.*

baptismal rites have a similar purpose. While the priest opens the service by swinging his censer to exorcise all evil spirits and influences from the four corners of the room, one of the godparents, to make doubly sure, accompanies him by spitting into each suspected nook.⁶⁵

In parts of Wales, it was the custom to spit before the name of the Devil was mentioned. The Mohammedans believe in a demon called "Kninzab," who is supposed to cast doubts on prayer, and in order to avoid his evil influence they spit three times over their left arm.⁶⁶

The Armenians spit on a stone and turn it under, or make cakes of dough, wet them with water and throw them into a fire, the spell of the evil eye being broken as the cakes crack asunder.⁶⁷ Another custom to prevent the evil eye from affecting children was for the mother to spit three times on their bosoms, three being a sacred number. Hence it is recorded that Damoetas, having praised himself, adds that on the advice of old Cotyttaris he had spat thrice into his bosom to prevent fascination.⁶⁸

Hebrews spit on the money collected for the first sale of the day, believing it will bring a good day's business. It is a common custom in Great Britain and Ireland, and also among the Southern Negroes, to spit on money that is received.⁶⁹ The Negro spits on the money he receives as a protective measure, fearing that otherwise that money and any on his person with which it comes in contact will not remain long with him. Some people spit on dice "for luck" before they roll them.

The fear of coveting, in the Biblical sense of casting an evil eye on the possessions of a neighbor, led to all manner of ways and means to avoid its consequences, such as expressing one's approbation in unflattering terms. A handsome boy is referred to as gro-

⁶⁵ Hastings, *op. cit.*, Vol. 11, p. 101.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. 10, p. 102.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. 5, p. 615.

⁶⁸ Elworthy, *The Evil Eye*, p. 413.

⁶⁹ Hastings, *op. cit.*, Vol. 10, p. 101.

tesque. Counting money is avoided for fear that it will diminish. Things that normally make one feel proud are subdued. For instance, when a father took his child to school for the first time, he generally tried to screen him with his cloak for fear that he would receive a “*kenanhore*” and some evil would follow. A double wedding is avoided for the same reason.⁷⁰

In some cases a curse, rags, dirt and filth are supposed to exert beneficial and protective influences over a person, and divert him from the evil eye, which is attracted by beauty and good fortune.

If a herdsman, among the Huzels of the Carpathians, suspects himself of having the evil eye, he will ask one of his household to call him vile and vicious names, thinking that this will undo the effect of the evil eye.⁷¹ Esthonian fishermen believe that they never have such good luck as when someone is angry and curses them. There was a popular belief in parts of Germany that if you wished a huntsman good luck when he went out to shoot a deer, he would not be successful. To avert the ill luck caused by such a wisher, the hunter had to throw a broomstick at him. If he was to have really good luck on his venture, one had to wish that he would break his neck or his leg.⁷²

The Romans were so firmly convinced that they would call forth evil spirits if they spoke favorably about a person that it became customary, when praising and complimenting, to preface remarks with the propitiatory words “Fend evil, I should say.”⁷³ In Italy, it is the custom, before making a “covetous” or praiseworthy remark, to say: “No evil eye take effect.” In England, at one time, it was so feared that praise would have an evil effect that it has now become a tradition not to overpraise. In the Highlands today, as well as in many parts of this country, it is a common thing for a mother whose child has been admired to say that she hopes that no evil will come because of the praise it has received. Undue praise is thought to

⁷⁰ Trachtenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 56, 57.

⁷¹ Frazer, *The Magic Art*, Vol. 1, p. 280.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 281.

⁷³ Hastings, *op. cit.*, Vol. 5, p. 611.

be followed by ill luck. How often do we hear people say that because they have boasted too much, something will surely happen to cause them regret.

AMULETS AND CHARMS

Wearing amulets and charms as a prophylactic against coveting, sorcery and the evil eye is indicative of another form of belief in animism and sympathetic magic. A famous talisman was the caduceus used by Mercury the messenger, which was supposed to protect him from being hindered in his flights by envious eyes when on errands for rival deities. The caduceus is now a medical decoration.

In Italy, double walnuts and almonds are carried as amulets against the evil eye, witches and headaches, and to bring good luck.⁷⁴ The custom of touching the threshold and doorpost with a sprig of the strawberry plant to drive away evil spirits is still widespread in Italy.⁷⁵ The gargoyles on churches were originally used to frighten demons and evil spirits away. The more obnoxious they were, the more efficacious they were believed to be. For the same reason, the phallus-shaped object was used as an amulet. It was believed that the very nature of the object would deflect the evil eye. Many Italians today, if they pass or see a person whom they suspect of exercising an evil influence, will touch their genitals as a prophylactic measure. Pope Pius IX was reputed to be possessed of the evil eye, and the women, while kneeling for his blessing as he passed, would make a counteracting sign under their skirts.⁷⁶

Changing from male to female attire, and *vice versa*, was a method of escaping the evil eye. Among the Egyptian Jews, during the Middle Ages, the bride led the wedding dance with a helmet on her head and a sword in her hand, while the bridegroom adorned himself as a woman and put on female attire. Other superstitious people practised similar methods. In Cos, where the priest of Hercules wore fe-

⁷⁴ Hastings, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 394.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 463.

⁷⁶ Trachtenberg *op. cit.*, p. 54.

male attire, the bridegroom was likewise attired. In Southern Celebes a bridegroom, at a certain point of the long and elaborate marriage ceremonies, put on the garments which his bride had just taken off. Argive brides wore false beards when they slept with their husbands for the first time. Among the Bharias of the Central Provinces of India, the bridegroom puts on a woman's ornaments and carries with him an iron nut cutter or dagger to keep off evil spirits. Similarly, a Khangar bridegroom, in order to avert the evil eye, carries a dagger, and a smudge of lampblack is put on his forehead to disfigure him. If he did not do this, it is thought that his fine appearance in his wedding garments would be too attractive to escape the evil eye.

After a Bharia wedding, the bride's mother dresses in the groom's father's garments and also puts on a false beard and mustache. She dances, holding a wooden ladle in one hand and a packet of ashes in the other. Every time she approaches the bridegroom's father on her rounds, she spills some of the ashes over him, and occasionally gives him a crack on the head with her ladle. This is considered potent against the evil forces.⁷⁷

KNOTS

The belief in the efficacy of knots as an amulet to prevent the evil of coveting was not only prevalent among the Biblical Hebrews, but was also widely practised by other primitive peoples. The Hebrews made use of knots in their round shawl—the *tallith*. In Syria, before a bridegroom puts on his wedding garments, extreme care is taken to see that no buttons are buttoned and no knots are tied, for they believe that if a button is buttoned or a knot is tied, it will put him in the power of his enemies who would deprive him of his nuptial rights by magical means. In Lesbos, the malignant person who would injure the bridegroom on his wedding day ties a thread to a bush while he utters his envious imprecations. Another method of rendering the bridegroom impotent is to tie a handkerchief which has touched some part of his body in a knot.

⁷⁷ Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Vol. 2, pp. 260-261.

Knots have also been used as mediums of bewitchment in causing illness and disease. Among the Hos of Togoland, a sorcerer will tie a knot in a stalk of grass, mention the name of the person he wants to bewitch, and then utter his imprecations. This, it is believed, will surely produce the results desired. Babylonian witches were believed to have caused all manner of evil by tying knots in a cord, muttering the evil and mentioning the names of their victims.

As late as 1718 the parliament of Bordeaux sentenced someone to be burned alive for having spread desolation through a whole family by means of knotted cords, and in 1705 two persons were condemned to death in Scotland for stealing certain charmed knots which a woman had made in order thereby to mar the wedded happiness of Spalding of Ashintilly. Within the past hundred years, it was still the custom in the Highlands of Perthshire for both the bride and groom to unloosen all knots on their garments before the wedding and until the ceremony was over; immediately thereafter, the couple withdrew to adjust their disordered clothes. The less superstitious thought that it was sufficient merely to leave the bridegroom's left shoe unbuckled "to prevent witches from depriving him, on his nuptial night, of the power of loosening the virgin zone."⁷⁸

Unusual things in nature are presumed by the superstitious to have homeopathic qualities. Hunchbacks are thought to possess something that counteracts malign influences. It is not uncommon to see some people touch a hunchback's hump under the belief that it will bring good luck or protect them from harm.

A fox's tail and a crimson thread were hung on the forehead of a horse to protect him from the evil eye.⁷⁹ Many today still use the tail of a rabbit or fox on a bicycle or motorcycle. Even today it is a common sight to see horseshoes nailed to barns and houses for "good luck." Countless people carry a rabbit's foot for the same reason. Bells were placed around the neck of cows to drive away envious and evil spirits.

⁷⁸ Frazer, *Taboo of the Soul*, Vol. 1, pp. 299-302.

⁷⁹ Trachtenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

It was believed that the sign of the cross, a few drops of holy water or the name of Mary or Jesus could put evil spirits to immediate and ignominious flight.⁸⁰

The use of watch charms, earrings, bracelets, necklaces, rings and many other forms of decorations today is but a survival of the primitive custom of using amulets and charms to ward off evil. Is it not time that sensible, educated people discontinued imitating savages and stopped this kind of tomfoolery?

NOISE AS A PROPHYLACTIC AGAINST EVIL

Noise is also supposed to be a prophylactic against the evil eye and covetous spirits. The purpose of blowing the *shofar* (discordant sounds from a ram's horn) on the Hebrew New Year was to drive away evil spirits.⁸¹ When an epidemic occurs in Burma, the whole population makes as much noise as possible to scare away the evil spirits that supposedly brought the disease. Bell ringing, drum beating and playing loud music are resorted to for the same purpose.⁸² It was a German custom to make a great deal of noise on the evening before a wedding and to shoot and crack whips during the bridal procession to frighten away evil influences. For the same reason, orthodox women cry at weddings. They believe their tears will mask their true feelings of joy and thus delude the demons or evil spirits. During eclipses of the sun and moon, great noises were supposed to prevent magicians from doing harm to the stars.⁸³

The Solomon Islanders of Bougainville Straits believe that epidemics are almost always caused by evil spirits. Accordingly, when the people of a village have been suffering from an illness, they beat tins, shout and knock on the houses to expel the demons and so cure the ailment. Whenever cholera breaks out in a Burmese village, the

⁸⁰ Lecky, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 14.

⁸¹ Idelsohn, *Ceremonies of Israel*, p. 14.

⁸² Hastings, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 3, p. 445.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 424.

able-bodied men scramble on the roofs and beat them with bamboos and billets of wood, while all the rest of the population, old and young, stand below and thump drums, blow trumpets, yell, scream, beat the floors and make as much noise as possible. This uproar, repeated on three successive nights, is thought to be very effective in driving away the cholera demon.⁸⁴

It is still the custom in China to fire off crackers on the last day and night of the year for the purpose of terrifying and expelling the devils. The people vie with one another as to who can fire the greatest number of crackers and make the most noise. The louder the noise, the more agreeable the sound, as this is supposed to have a beneficial effect by driving the demons away.⁸⁵ In Corea, the devils are also driven out of the town on New Year's Eve by firing guns and popping crackers.⁸⁶ It is quite probable that the present New Year custom, observed almost universally in the Western Hemisphere, of noise-making, hilarity and revelry is a survival of this primitive superstition concerning noise and its effect in driving away evil spirits.

In Siam, the banishment of demons is annually carried out on the last day of the old year. A signal gun is fired from the palace; it is answered from the next station, and so on from station to station, till the firing has reached the outer gate of the city.⁸⁷ Among the heathen Wotyaks of a Finnish village of Eastern Russia, all the young girls of the village assemble on the last day of the year or on New Year's day, armed with sticks, the ends of which are split in nine places. With these they beat every corner of the houses and yards, saying: "We are driving Satan out of the village."⁸⁸ The Cheremiss, another Finnish people of Eastern Russia, chase Satan from their dwellings by beating the walls with cudgels of limewood. For the same purpose they fire guns, stab the ground with knives, and insert

⁸⁴ Frazer, *The Scapegoat*, p. 116.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

burning chips of wood in the crevices. They also leap over bonfires, shaking out their garments as they do so.⁸⁹

Incense and foul odors are supposed to have the same effect as noise in driving away evil spirits. In North India, a mixture of food and spices, and sometimes the eyelashes of the patient, are waved seven times over a sick child; when these are burned, the foul smell is supposed to free the child from the effects of the evil eye.⁹⁰

In some parts of Silesia, the people burn pine resin all night long between Christmas and the New Year in order that the pungent smoke may drive witches and evil spirits away from their homes. They also fire shots over fields and meadows, into shrubs and trees, and wrap straw around the fruit trees to prevent the spirits from doing them harm.⁹¹ In some parts of Scotland, it was the custom at the end of the year not only to "burn out the Old Year," but also to make a bonfire to burn out all the witches. In the year 1644, an eyewitness saw nine persons, condemned as witches, burned to death.⁹²

Church bells were originally rung during storms to drive away evil spirits, and until quite recently this was considered a protection. F. T. Elworthy relates that near his home are two churches that ring their bells on their respective "saint's day" to drive the devil over to the other parish.⁹³

Just as the "blessed" St. Christopher's medal is a poor substitute for careful driving, so the cross, statues of saints, sacred relics and ringing church bells are poor substitutes for the lightning rod to protect the church from the "demons of the air" and the "wrath of God."

When Benjamin Franklin invented the lightning rod, the church was incensed at the "impious" arrogance of attempting to circumvent the "tokens of divine displeasure." As late as 1783, it was declared that in Germany alone, within the thirty-three years after Franklin's great invention which the church so bitterly opposed as a piece of

⁸⁹ Frazer, *The Scapegoat*, p. 156.

⁹⁰ Hastings, *Encyclopædia*, Vol. 3, p. 445.

⁹¹ Frazer, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 165.

⁹³ Hastings, *op. cit.*, Vol. 5, p. 615.

blasphemy and condemned as the "heretical rod," four hundred towers of churches had been damaged and one hundred and twenty bell ringers killed. In Roman Catholic countries, the opposition to the lightning rod was so bitter, the consequent destruction to churches so frequent, and the loss of lives so great, that peasants feared to attend church services.⁹⁴

A significant illustration of the impotence of propitiatory prayers and sacred amulets as a means of protection against the elements of nature and the "wrath of God," is the case of St. Mark's Cathedral in Venice. In spite of the angels at the summit of the church, the consecrated bells in its tower and the sacred relics with which the church was so richly blessed, it was hit repeatedly by lightning. This seemingly incongruous situation caused consternation and theological embarrassment when the question was asked by parishioners: "Why should the Almighty strike his own consecrated temples or suffer Satan to strike them?" After a lightning rod was erected above its steeple, it was never struck again!⁹⁵

But perhaps the most striking instance of the uselessness of amulets and charms is to be found in the case of the Church of San Nazaro, at Brescia, in Italy. This church boasted some of the most sacred relics, relics that were supposed to possess extraordinary powers in warding off evil and the demons of the air. The government of Venice had stored in the vaults of the church over two hundred thousand pounds of explosive powder. This was in 1767, seventeen years after Benjamin Franklin had invented the lightning rod, but both the government officials and the church authorities had greater faith in the sacred relics than in this infidel invention. During a storm, the church was struck by lightning, the powder in the vaults exploded, one-sixth of the entire city was destroyed and over three thousand lives were lost!⁹⁶

⁹⁴ White, *Warfare of Science with Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 367.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 368.

Could there be a better illustration of the comparison between the superstitions of religion and the benefits of science?

The discovery of the indifference of nature to the morality of the person subject to its laws is as great an achievement of the human mind as was the discovery of the evolutionary process of life. The earth will revolve on its axis, the sun will rise and set, the rains will fall, the seasons will pass according to their accustomed time, men and women will love, and children will be born, regardless of belief or disbelief in the Bible or its God, regardless of prayers or sacrifices. The force of gravity acts alike on the good and bad; poison kills the purest-minded, as well as the most vicious; cold will chill and heat will warm all alike; electricity lights our houses and runs our machinery with the same unconcern as it snuffs out the life of an innocent person; the planted seed will grow according to the soil and moisture, and not according to the social position of the one who planted it; water will drown irrespective of the character of the person unable to swim; fire burns the tender flesh of the child with the same intensity as the hardened criminal; disease attacks the innocent and guilty alike; and death comes to each and all "when it will come"—the inevitable ending of all that lives—as evidence of the inexorable law of life. There will be no mark to distinguish between the devout and the infidel. The atheist and the religious believer will suffer from the same ills and will enjoy the same fruits.

The discovery of the indifference of nature to the individual subject to its unvarying laws has liberated the minds of men from the myriad unseen forces which gripped them in fear. This emancipating discovery drove the evil spirits and demons from the sky, the malign agencies of a jealous and wrathful god; it was a warning to the ghosts "to cover their eyeless sockets with their fleshless hands and fade forever from the imaginations of men." It was the "Emancipation Proclamation" for the human mind.

NEITHER A SIN NOR A CRIME

The authoritative *Catholic Encyclopedia* says that "even when indulged, covetousness is not a grievous sin."⁹⁷ This statement is made despite the fact that the Catholic Church's arrangement of the Decalogue makes coveting the basis of *two* Commandments instead of one! Nor does the law recognize coveting, in the modern meaning of the word, as a crime.

Law applies to those acts of the individual in the social group which are ascertainable and possess some definite technical or moral relationship. To apply legal regulations and restrictions to the present-day meaning of the word "coveting" would be like penalizing dreams or the imagination. John M. Zane, in discussing this Commandment as law, dissociating it from its taboo antecedents, says: "The Tenth Commandment is an injunction against a state of mind. It is not a workable law."⁹⁸ It is because this Commandment was not founded on either ethics or morals that makes it, in a legal sense, an unworkable law. It is because this Commandment was founded on a superstitious belief that makes it impossible to give it status in the light of present-day legal standards of conduct. Does not the very fact that coveting is not condemned as a sin according to the dogma of the Church, and is not considered a crime according to law, make it obvious that the word "coveting," in the Biblical sense, meant something entirely different from what it is understood to mean today?

Coveting at its worst can be classified only as a personal shortcoming, a harmless indulgence in wishful thinking. Everyone knows that it is better to achieve a goal than to envy the accomplishment of another; yet, very often coveting can become the instrument of achievement. The desire to possess things which our neighbor has and which are improvements over our own possessions is often the mainspring of progress. On what authority can coveting honor, re-

⁹⁷ *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 4, p. 462.

⁹⁸ J. M. Zane, *The Story of Law*, p. 100.

spect and admiration of one's fellow man be condemned either as a sin by the dogma of the Church or as a crime by law? Shakespeare poetically expressed it thus:

"By Jove, I am not covetous for gold,
Nor care I who doth feed upon my cost;
It yearns me not if men my garments wear;
Such outward things dwell not in my desire;
But if it be a sin to covet honour,
I am the most offending soul alive."

—King Henry V, Act IV, Scene 3.

Not being acquainted with the primitive meaning of "coveting" as biblically used, even the clergy have been more confused and bewildered concerning the meaning of this Commandment than all the others, particularly when trying to evaluate it in a legal, ritual or moral sense. Dean Farrar, in seeking a legal connection of this Commandment with the laws of society, sadly admits his failure. He says: "Search all the laws of all the world, and you will not find one which resembles it."⁹⁹ A very good reason why such a law cannot be found is that "it is an injunction against a state of mind." Even the prophet Jeremiah admitted this when he said: "For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one *is* given to covetousness."¹⁰⁰ A law for the suppression of thinking can no more be enforced than a law for the suppression of breathing.

The Rev. Frederick David Niedermeyer said, concerning this Commandment: "A government could not enforce it, for there is no way to prove what a man's thoughts are unless they are expressed in word or action."¹⁰¹

R. H. Charles admits that "this Commandment hit widest of the mark because it adds no fresh province to the area covered by the preceding Commandments."¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Dean Farrar, *The Voice of Sinai*, p. 277.

¹⁰⁰ *Jeremiah*, Chapter 6, verse 13.

¹⁰¹ Niedermeyer, *The Ten Commandments Today*, p. 174.

¹⁰² Charles, *The Decalogue*, p. 259.

The Rev. G. Campbell Morgan, however, in his analysis of this Commandment, says: "This Commandment may be broken without the knowledge of any human being."¹⁰³

If this is so, then how can a human being know whether he is or is not violating this Commandment? Surely, if a person is unable to tell whether he is conforming to or disobeying a command, then how can he regulate his conduct? What he may think is perfect conformity may be a flagrant violation, and what he may consider a violation will restrain him automatically from observing it! If this is so, how is it possible either to reward or punish for either obeying or violating its precepts? If no one knows the result of his actions, then of what value can such a Commandment be?

The Rev. J. C. Masse says: "The Tenth Commandment is God's demand that man shall put the reins of government of his life into the hands of God."

How applicable are these words of Professor Tylor to the "learned nonsense" of Biblical "authorities": "To ingenious attempts at explaining by the light of reason things which want the light of history to show their meaning, much of the learned nonsense of the world has been due."

If the purpose of this Commandment was to prevent covetousness, then it should have counteracted this desire by stifling the impulse for the things which do not rightfully belong to us, or condemning it in unmistakable terms as a base impulse. The writers of the Bible, however, were not only wholly ignorant of such a code, but such a conception was utterly beyond their limited comprehension.

"Coveting" is not mentioned in this Commandment as if it were one of the "seven sins" to be avoided as a plague. There are far worse "sins" than "coveting," as we understand them today, that could have been made the basis of one of the Commandments. Meanness, hatred, revenge, duplicity, faithlessness, arrogance and innumerable other obnoxious traits are far greater evils than mere coveting. *If ethical principles and moral conduct were the objective of the*

¹⁰³ Morgan, *The Ten Commandments*, p. 107.

Decalogue, there could have been recorded in the place of this ancient superstition and antiquated taboo a veritable dictionary of acts regarding human behavior that would have been of immeasurable benefit in regulating human conduct for the promotion of peace and happiness among mankind.

As long as the Decalogue is generally accepted as a code of morals based upon a supernatural edict, is any further evidence needed to prove Sir James G. Frazer's observation that "some of the old laws of Israel are clearly savage taboos of a familiar type thinly disguised as commands of the Deity"?

Could there be a more striking example of such "savage taboos" than the Ten Commandments?

Epilogue

HOW could this study of the Decalogue be more appropriately concluded than by quoting these words of Sir James G. Frazer?—

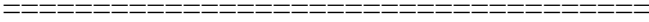
“It is indeed a melancholy and in some respects thankless task to strike at the foundations of beliefs in which, as in a strong tower, the hopes and aspirations of humanity through long ages have sought refuge from the storm and stress of life. Yet sooner or later it is inevitable that the battery of the comparative method should breach these venerable walls, mantled over with the ivy and moss and wild flowers of a thousand tender and sacred associations. At present we are only dragging the guns into position; they have hardly yet begun to speak. The task of building up into fairier and more enduring forms the old structures so rudely shattered is reserved for other hands, perhaps for other and happier ages. We cannot foresee, we can hardly even guess, the new forms into which thought and society will run in the future. Yet this uncertainty ought not to induce us, from any consideration of expediency or regard for antiquity, to spare the ancient moulds, however beautiful, when these are proven to be outworn. Whatever comes of it, wherever it leads, we must follow the truth alone. It is our guiding star.”¹

¹ Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Vol. 1, “The Magic Art,” p. xxvi.

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Bank of Wisdom

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