

THE COMMANDMENTS.

The First Commandments:

Thou shalt have no other god but Me.

1. This commandment requires us (1) to believe in God, (2) to hope in Him, (3) to love Him with our whole heart and soul, (4) to adore Him alone.

2. We fulfil the first three of these duties by the practice of the three theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity.

Of the adoration due to God alone.

3. To adore God is to acknowledge Him as our Creator and Sovereign Lord and to humble ourselves completely before Him.

4. This implies that we must offer to Him an *inward* as well as an *outward* and public worship.

5. We render to God an *inward* worship when we honour Him in our hearts by acts of adoration and of faith, hope and charity, such acts not being apparent to eye or ear.

6. It is *outward* worship when we manifest by the spoken word or by visible action our religious feelings towards God. Such worship is due to Him (1) because our bodies as well as our souls belong to Him, and (2) because it is a direct manifestation of inward worship and a direct aid to it.

7. *Public* worship is congregational worship. Such worship is beneficial and necessary on account of the edification and good example the individual members give to one another. We render it by making the Sign of the Cross, by genuflecting and kneeling, by vocal prayer, by religious singing, by attending Mass and other services, and so on.

8. We must never fail to give God worship at bedtime and on rising in the morning, on entering a Church, during the various religious services and when receiving the sacraments.

9. We may adore none but God, because He alone is the Sovereign Lord of all things visible and invisible.

10. We worship Jesus Christ, because He is, conjointly with the Father and the Holy Ghost, God.

The veneration of saints.

11. We do not *adore* the saints, but only *venerate* them as the friends of God and our intercessors with Him in heaven.

12. This *veneration* consists (1) in honouring them because of the glory they possess in heaven, (2) in invoking them, (3) in following their example.

13. There is this essential difference between the prayers we address to God and those we address to the saints, viz., that we pray to God that *He* himself may grant us grace, whereas we pray to the saints that they may ask Him to grant it to us.

14. The *veneration* we pay to the saints is termed *dulia*, but the worship we give to God is called *latria*, which is due to Him and to Him alone.

15. The veneration we owe to the Blessed Virgin is special of its kind and is above that paid to all the other saints. It is hence called *hyperdulia*.

16. We owe her this special devotion (1) because she is the Immaculate Mother of God; (2) because Our Lord from the Cross gave her to us as our Mother, and (3) because she is the Queen of Heaven and the purest and the most perfect of creatures. By the command of God the Angel Gabriel hailed her as « full of grace »; the Holy Ghost, speaking through the mouth of St. Elizabeth, proclaimed her « blessed amongst women »; and in her own inspired hymn of praise, she herself declares that « From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed ». (*Luke* I, 48). Thus she is placed far above all other creatures.

Honouring relics, crucifixes, and sacred pictures and statues.

17. By *relics* we mean portions of the body (usually the bones) of martyrs, objects that once belonged to, or have been in contact with, a canonized saint, pieces of the True Cross, the holy nails, etc.

18. We all hold as especially precious the relics of great men or of those we have loved and pay honour to their effigy; we even prize objects connected with some important event. Who can then blame Catholics if they honour relics, crucifixes and sacred pictures and statues. The sight of them undoubtedly creates and fosters devotional feeling and helps us to collect our wandering thoughts during prayer, while the crucifix in particular is a perpetual reminder to us of the central mystery of our Faith, the great and glorious Mystery of the Redemption. We do not adore them and it is a gross calumny for Protestants to accuse us of idolatry because of this absolutely proper attitude of ours towards them.

Explanation of the Plate.

19. Here we see persons of every age, sex and condition humbly adoring God of lovingly contemplating Him, while He, the Father of all, benignly opens out His arms towards them, showing with what tenderness He accepts their homage and listens to their humble supplications. Behind, on His right, is Our Lady escorted by angels and, on His left, stand St. Joseph and other saints.
