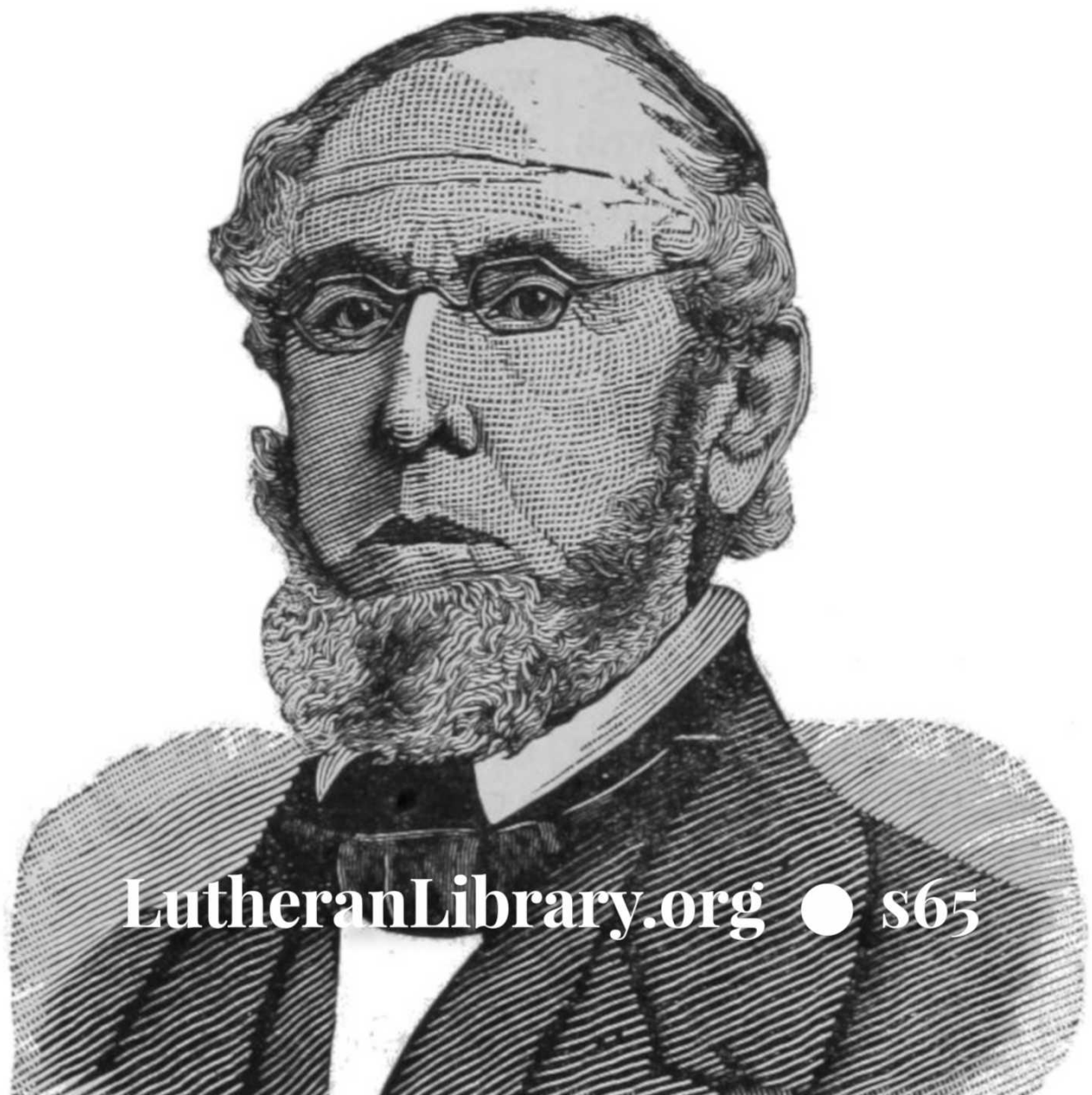


Charles F. Schaeffer

**On The Division Of
The Decalogue**



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On The Division Of The Decalogue

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On The Division Of The Decalogue

By Charles Frederick Schaeffer
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Preface by Lutheran Librarian

In republishing this book, we seek to introduce this author to a new generation of those seeking spiritual truth.

CHARLES FREDERICK SCHAEFFER (1807-1879) was a leader in the formation of the conservative and Confessional General Council of the Lutheran Church. His father and four of his brothers were Lutheran ministers. Charles was ordained in 1829 and served pastorates at Carlisle, PA, Hagerstown, MD, Lancaster, OH, Red Hook, NY, and Easton, PA. As professor he taught theology at Capitol University, Columbus, at the General Synod Seminary at Gettysburg, and finally at the General Council Seminary at Philadelphia, where he also was President.

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On The Division Of The Decalogue

By Rev. Charles F. Schaeffer, D. D., Easton, Pa.

AFTER THE ISRAELITES had reached the wilderness of Sinai, Moses informed them that it was the purpose of God to come down upon mount Sinai in the sight of all, and make a covenant with his people. On the third day the people met with God, and heard his voice which proceeded from the fire, the cloud and the thick darkness. They were deeply affected as they gazed on the awful scene before them, and listened to the solemn trumpet notes which issued from the summit of the mount. The Lord wrote the words which he had pronounced, on two tables of stone, and delivered them to Moses. These “words” constituted the basis of the covenant which God made with Israel, and their eminent rank was demonstrated by the circumstance that they alone were graven by Jehovah upon the two tables of the testimony (Exod. 32:15,16).

The familiar name by which they are known, is that of the “Ten Commandments;” in the Old Testament they never receive this appellation, which is applied to other precepts of the Lord, but they are called, by way of eminence, the “Ten Words”, that is, the Decalogue, in Exod. 34:28; Deut 4:13; 10:4. In these passages the term “commandments” in the English version does not represent the original text with precision. It is possible that after the Babylonian Captivity, the Jews appropriated the name of “commandments” to them, by way of eminence, as we are ourselves accustomed to give specific meaning to a general expression, when we designate the sacred volume by the term “Bible,” that is, Books (*Biblia*), or “the Scriptures,” that is, the writings. Still, the question which the young man addressed to Christ, (Matt. 10:18) evidently in good faith, when the

Lord spoke of “the commandments” (*tas entolas*), combined with the well known fact that the Jewish teachers could not agree respecting the commandments which were entitled to the highest rank (Matt. 22:36), seems to imply that this practice did not yet exist, that the Decalogue had long ago receded from its proper and eminent position, and that it occupied merely a coordinate position among the ceremonial laws. It does not appear to have recovered the distinguished rank which belonged to it, until the Christian Era.

These “Ten words” occur twice in the Pentateuch, Exod. 20:2-17, and Deut. 5:6-21; in neither case are they numbered consecutively by Moses. It is remarkable that not a trace appears in the whole Old Testament of any attempt to designate by ordinal or cardinal numbers the respective places of the “Words” in the entire series, nor does Paul even remotely attempt it in Eph. 6:2. The ancient Jews, Christ himself and the writers of the New Testament appear to have either attached no importance to the order in which they occur, or else to have regarded that order as established so firmly that no additional confirmation of it was needed. They even invert it without hesitation. The two passages in the Pentateuch, containing the original text, correspond to each other, but no writer after Moses adhered precisely to the arrangement which he furnished. In Hosea 4:2, the prophet, who evidently refers to the Decalogue, places “stealing” before “committing adultery.” In Matt. 5:21 and 27, the Mosaic order is adopted, but in a succeeding verse (ver. 33) there is a clear allusion not only to Lev. 19:12, but also to Exod 20:7, indicating that Christ did not deliver the sermon on the mount with any reference to the succession of the ten commandments. In the three parallel passages, Matt. 19:18, 19; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20, while all relate the conversation between the Lord and the rich young man, Matthew differs from the other two, in the arrangement of the first two commandments quoted, (Mark and Luke place “adultery” before “kill”), and the three concur in representing the Lord as placing “Honor thy father, etc.,” after the commandments referring to killing and stealing. Paul quotes the same in Rom. 13:9, but he also places “adultery” before “kill;” the same transposition occurs in James 2:11.

These remarkable variations, and even the omission of several commandments, are easily explained, and can occasion no serious embarrassment. But the interpreter encounters very grave difficulties, when he attempts to specify precisely the words which constitute the first or the

second commandment, or to indicate the sentences which form the ninth and tenth respectively. The expression:

“ten words” in the passages mentioned above, imperatively require him to observe the number ten in any division which he may adopt, when he desires to prefix members to the several commandments constituting the series. The different modes of division which have been proposed may ultimately be reduced to two, which do not admit of being combined, and it is therefore unquestionable that at least one of them is erroneous. Moses could have counted Ten on the two tables in one way only, and the other is consequently a departure from historic truth.

The general question might, possibly, be dismissed as merely a theological, or rather an exegetical problem, since every mode of division presents Ten commandments, and admits of the introduction of the entire text, without additions or omissions. The Lutheran Church in the United States has, however, been compelled to view the question in a new aspect, and assign to it a higher practical importance than its members in other parts of the world have been accustomed to do. The division of the Decalogue which it has retained, differs from the one with which the various surrounding denominations are familiar; the general introduction of the English language into its public worship, and the wide circulation of the English Lutheran Catechism has made the difference perceptible to others. The latter frequently misunderstand the position of the church, and are unable to account for a circumstance which really assumes a grave character in their eyes. We were lately induced to reexamine the subject, in consequence of observing that the eminent Prof. J. H. Kurtz, (in the notes appended to § 47 of his "*Geschichte des alten Bundes*, Vol. II., which has at length been published) adopts an opinion in which he differs from the adherents of both of the usual divisions, and in which we cannot entirely concur with him. We propose to examine the general subject in this article, and avail ourselves of several facts which he introduces in the course of his remarks. It will facilitate the examination of the subject, if we present to the reader's eye the text with its several divisions.

The Lutheran division is designated by I, II, III, etc., and the mode generally adopted by other denominations, by (1), (2), (3), etc. Neither classification observes the modern division of the chapter into verses, which possesses no critical value, and which we also introduce simply for the sake of convenient reference.

Exodus 20:2—17.

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

V3 I. (1). Thou shall have no other gods before me.

V4 (2). Thou shall not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

V5 Thou shall 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:

V6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

V7 II. (3). Thou shall 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.

V8 III. (4). Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

V9 Six days shall thou labor, and do all thy work:

V10 But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shall not do any work, thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

V11 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.

V12 IV. (5). Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

V13 V. (6). Thou shall not kill.

V14 VI. (7). Thou shall not commit adultery.

V15 VII. (8). Thou shalt not steal.

V16 VIII. (9). Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

The Lutheran mode then proceeds thus:

V17 IX. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.

X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man servant, nor his maid servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

But the other mode concludes thus:

V17 (10). Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man servant, nor his maid servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

It is unanimously maintained that the passage Exod. 20:7-16, beginning with:

“Thou shalt not take, etc.,” and ending with the words:

“...witness against thy neighbor,” contains seven commandments; consequently either Ver. 2—6 must contain two commandments, and Ver. 17 only one, or else, the former passage contains one, and the latter, two. This is the point in dispute. If we can arrive at a satisfactory result respecting the former, with which we propose to begin, that result alone would be sufficient to decide whether the latter contains one or two commandments.

The division which is adopted by the modern Jews, (since the era of the Talmud) and recognized by some Christian writers, representing ver. 2 as the first “word,” and ver 3—6 as the second, and which presents only nine commandments, need not now detain us. Origen, after the example of Philo and Josephus, finds the first commandment in ver. 3, the second in ver. 4—6, and, consequently, the tenth in ver. 17, viewed as an individual whole. This division was adopted by the Greek church, and predominates among all the Reformed churches (Presbyterian, etc.). It may be termed the Judaico-Origenistic, or, as we prefer, the Grceco-Reformed division. Clement of Alexandria, on the other hand, speaks in his Stromata (as Prof. Kurtz remarks) of image-worship as prohibited in the first, of the profanation of the name of God as prohibited in the second, and of the

sanctification of the Sabbath day as enjoined in the third commandment. In the subsequent portion of the passage, however, a certain degree of confusion prevails, as he omits the fourth commandment altogether, while his tenth embraces all that relates to “coveting.” Augustine concurred with him in the first three commandments, but his ninth (adopting the order in Deuteronomy) was:

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife,”

and his tenth:

“Thou —— house, nor his man servant, etc.”

This is, strictly speaking, the Augustinian mode. The occidental or Western church, (Latin) as contradistinguished from the church in the East, (Oriental, Greek), adopted the leading features of this mode, with the exception that it followed the text of Exodus, and read the ninth commandment thus:

“Thou shall not covet thy neighbor’s house,”

and the tenth thus:

“Thou shall not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor etc.”

This form was generally retained in Europe, even after Popery was fully developed. At the Reformation, Luther and his associates, while carefully separating the wheat from the chaff, discriminated accurately between Christian and popish elements in the doctrines and usages which they found. They retained the Lord’s day or Sunday, not because popery had introduced it, but because it was a holy day anterior to the origin of popery. They retained not only the general doctrine of the Trinity, but also fully coincided with the Papists, in opposition to the Greek church, in teaching that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Son also (filioque); and the Reformed churches happily concurred with them subsequently. Thus, too, they adopted the ancient division of the Decalogue prevalent among the

Papists, not because the latter recognized it, but, as in the other cases, for reasons which were entirely independent of popery. This division may be called the Latino-Lutheran.

The first question which we now propose, is the following:

Is the Lutheran church sustained by sound exegetical principles in presenting all that appears in ver. 3—6 as one commandment only?

Before we examine the internal evidence, one circumstance appears on the surface, which, if not decisive, at least possesses great weight. Each of the fifty-four *parashahs* or larger divisions of the Pentateuch, is sub-divided in the Hebrew manuscripts used in the synagogues, into smaller sections, termed *sederim*, that is, orders or ranks; these sub-divisions are indicated by the Hebrew letter S (for *setuvnah*, that is, shut) and a vacant space preceding the next word in the same line, or else by the letter P (for *petuchah*, that is, open) denoting that the remainder of the line is to be blank. These distinctions, which are omitted in all the versions, may be seen in printed Hebrew Bibles, and are strictly retained in the Hebrew manuscripts. The period of their origin is not now known, but it is quite possible that they are not much later than the return from the Babylonian Captivity (536 B. C.) or the age of Ezra, and may embody traditionally the division actually made by Moses himself; the proof of the contrary cannot be furnished. Now in the Hebrew manuscripts, the whole passage, Exod. 20:2—6 is one undivided section, followed by P, the initial letter of *petuchah*, and the same occurs in the corresponding passage in Deuteronomy; the succeeding commandments are each followed by S, the initial letter of *seturnah*. This very ancient classification assigns all the words preceding:

“Thou shalt not take the name, etc.,”

to the first commandment. The whole genius of Judaism would have repelled this arrangement with scorn, if it had proceeded from a Christian

source; we are constrained to assign it to a period anterior to the Talmud, which varies from these ancient marks, and adopts a division allied to the Graeco-Reformed mode. Still, we are not accustomed to ascribe a very high value to the exegesis of the Jews or to their diacritical signs, and as the other marks and signs of Hebrew manuscripts impose no fetters on the interpreter, we concede that if internal evidence does not accord with this argument, the claims of the Latino-Lutheran division are somewhat feebly supported.

How many commandments will an unbiased reader find in ver. 2—6? One — or two — or three?

The Origenistic or Graeco Reformed division recognizes two:

- a. the prohibition of polytheism in general, and,
- b. the prohibition of image worship, whether of a distinct god like Moloch or Dagon, or of a symbol of Jehovah in the form of a creature.

Prof. Kurtz himself finds only one command, containing in ver. 3, a general, and in ver. 4, a special prohibition, and it is not usual to regard the whole passage as comprehending more than at most, two divisions. The reader, however, who tests with an unbiased mind the principle which furnishes the Origenistic division may, possibly, like ourselves, perceive that the whole passage really assumes a tripartite form — that is, if we deny that the whole constitutes one commandment, a logical necessity, and the striking historical illustrations furnished by the Scriptures, alike compel us to recognize three commandments. As the fundamental principle: 1) o thy neighbor no harm — assumes at least a fourfold form in the succeeding commandments, (kill — adultery — steal — false witness), so the fundamental principle of the passage before us, which evidently is: Worship Jehovah alone — assumes a threefold form:

- a. Thou shalt have no other gods before me;
- b. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, etc.;
- c. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, not serve them, etc.

It is not the purpose of the passage to institute or enjoin directly the worship of Jehovah, which duly it presupposes, since it is not addressed to a people unacquainted with his name, but to those who recognize his claim; the whole force of the words is directed solely against the sin, in any of its forms, of detracting from the honor which belongs to Jehovah exclusively, by setting forth additional objects of worship. Accordingly, three forms of the same sin are specified:

- a. the association of other objects of worship with Jehovah, or polytheism, strictly defined — “thou shalt have no other, etc.,”
- b. the fabrication of objects of worship — “thou shalt not make, etc.,”
- c. the actual worship offered to them — “thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them,” where “serve” is merely an expegetical repetition of “bow down.”

Numerous instances, illustrative of the first of these specifications occur in the books of Kings and Chronicles; it will be sufficient to refer to one only — the people whom the king of Assyria placed in the cities of Samaria “feared the Lord (Jehovah) and served their own gods, etc.” (2 Kings 17:33), as the Jews themselves had frequently done. The impious doctrine of Polytheism, viewed as the source of overt acts, is, therefore, first condemned, and the toleration of it prohibited. The second specification contains a prohibition of the fabrication of objects of worship. It refers to a sin entirely different in its form from the preceding, and comprehends the impious sentiments of him who connives at idolatry by furnishing or erecting objects of worship. Aaron was too intelligent to revere as a god the golden calf which he made, and may have tranquillized his conscience by regarding it as a symbol of Jehovah, Exod. 32:4. Moses did not charge him with having been guilty of polytheism, but of fabricating an image, and thus conniving at, and encouraging, that conduct of the people which detracted from the honor due to Jehovah alone, Exod. 32:21. Jeroboam also seems to have professed that his golden calves were symbols of Jehovah (1 Kings 12:28); but the fabrication and erection of these objects constituted his “sin,” which the sacred writer so frequently deplors in the history of the succeeding kings. The sentence of condemnation which the Lord pronounced in his case, described his sin in the following emphatic words:

“For thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and hast cast me behind thy back.” (1 Kings 14:9).

“They that make” idols are specially condemned in Ps. 115:8; 135:18. Isaiah speaks with scorn (ch. 44) of the wretched man who warms himself and bakes his bread at the fire made of a part of the tree, of “the residue whereof he maketh a god.” Demetrius of Ephesus, Acts ch. 19, was doubtless not only a skilful artificer, but also a man of great intelligence and worldly wisdom, as his position, his great influence, and the artful address which he made to the craftsmen, abundantly show; he had probably, like the intelligent men of that age, learned to see the folly of the mythological system which constituted the popular religion, and it is scarcely possible that he sincerely worshipped the goddess to whom his personal interest alone taught him to render homage. Still, he made articles which tended to maintain a false worship that was derogatory to the honor of God. And who are they that maintain the idolatry practiced by Papists, but artful priests? These deride in their hearts the credulity of their serfs, who would long ago have been emancipated from their thralldom, if they were not taught to worship the images which the pope and his agents, the modern silver-smiths of Ephesus, continually cause to be made. The true key to popery, which explains its image-worship and its confessional, is furnished in the words:

“Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.” (Acts 19:25.)

The third specification:

“Thou shalt not bow down, etc.,”

then proceeds to describe with increased distinctness the impious practice of offering direct worship to other objects besides Jehovah. That this distinction is very clear and strictly logical, is demonstrated by the case of Naaman the Syrian, (2 Kings ch. 5,) whom the Savior mentions in Luke 4:27. After the miracle of cleansing him had been wrought, he conformed to the first specification, when he confessed before Elisha: “Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel,” implying that he abandoned his polytheistic doctrines. That he designed to observe the second rigidly, and not even encourage, or contribute to, the fabrication of any image, is

demonstrated by his desire to carry with him a quantity of the earth or soil of Palestine, on which he might stand in Syria, when he worshipped Jehovah; although the request may have proceeded from imperfect religious views, it indicated honesty and sincerity of heart. The third specification, however, embarrassed him; the essential difference between it and the former seems to have been instantly suggested to his own mind. His office as a personal attendant of the Syrian king, required him to support the latter when he “bowed himself” before the idol Rimmon, and the king’s act of adoration necessarily required the attendant “on whose hand he leaned,” to bend forward, bow or prostrate himself also. He entreats the Lord to pardon the external bodily act, since his views and feelings did not concur with it.

We find, accordingly, three distinct precepts, referring to three different forms of the sin of idolatry, or the recognition of the claims of any inanimate object or living creature to man’s worship, in addition to those of Jehovah. The proneness of the Israelites to idolatry, of which their whole history abounds in mournful instances, did not consist directly in a disposition to abolish the worship of the true God, whose existence and claims their infidelity does not appear to have usually denied. The temptation which exercised the greatest power over them, from the age of Solomon to the Babylonian Captivity, rather led them to combine the worship of additional deities with that of Jehovah. This circumstance accounts for the complex character of the passage before us — it refers prophetically to their conduct after they should have entered the holy land. A simple prohibition of idolatry would have been sufficient in the case of a people transplanted from idolatrous Egypt to a region surrounded by monotheistic nations: the case of Israel was the reverse. A single monotheistic people is seen in the midst of polytheistic nations, several of which had attained to a high degree of culture that naturally exercised a powerful influence on Israel. The jealous God, “whose name is Jealous,” Exod. 34:14, the only true God, to whom the future was known like the past and the present, mercifully afforded additional protection to his chosen people, by unfolding the meaning of the first specification, and closing every avenue to the entrance of idolatry, when he prohibited in the second the fabrication, and in the third the actual worship, of any god besides himself.

Let us now assume for a moment, that the Origenistic or Reformed mode of division, which contracts ver. 17 into one commandment is correct, and

proceed to compute the number of the commandments. Ver. 17 contains one, the preceding verses, 7—16, as all admit, contain seven; the three which we have now found, would furnish, as a result, eleven commandments. As this number, however, conflicts with the statement of Moses, who finds only ten, we again glance at the passage, for the purpose of discovering the error in our computation. We perceive it at once when we examine the Sabbath-commandment, ver. 8—11. This also contains three specifications:

- a. “Remember, etc.”
- b. “Six days shalt thou etc.”
- c. “In it thou shalt not, etc.”

But all these sentences, referring to the same duty, confessedly constitute only one commandment. So too, the whole passage, ver. 2—6, is obviously tripartite: one fundamental principle pervades the whole: Worship Jehovah alone. Now if such a commandment be admitted to be divine, consistent with all the truths of revelation (which none deny), and also direct and comprehensive, then it follows, that,

- a. polytheism, or the doctrine that there are more gods than one, is prohibited; for if they existed, why should they not be recognized and adored? It follows, that,
- b. the fabrication, for the purpose of worship, of any image either of another god, who really does not exist (1 Cor. 8:4; 10:19) or of God himself, who is a spirit, incapable of being truly represented by any material object, (John 4:24) and whom no man hath ever seen (John 1:18; 1 Tim. 6:16; 1 John 1:18) is a self-contradiction and wickedness. It follows, that,
- c. any personal act, for instance, bowing down before such an idol (the act representative of other acts of worship, sacrifices, etc.) is a direct denial of the exclusive claims of Jehovah.

The inference is now plain, that as in the last commandment of all, the servant, the ox, etc., are merely examples, not constituting several distinct commandments, so in the passage before us, (precisely as in the analogous case of the Sabbath-commandment), these three prohibitions constitute one

general prohibition of polytheism, specially referring, first, to the doctrine itself, secondly, to any connivance, and, thirdly, to any act, sustaining such a doctrine. Hence we are authorized to count the whole passage as a single commandment.

Seven others follow, which occasion no difficulty; we need two more, in order to complete the number Ten. Now the remainder of the series is in the following words: Verse 17:

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his man servant, nor his maid servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor’s.”

The Origenistic or Greeco-Reformed mode is here compelled to exclude any exegetical investigation, and to assume that this verse constitutes one commandment, since it had already obtained nine, by assigning two to the passage of which we have now disposed. That division is, as we have seen, unquestionably erroneous; the passage necessarily contains either three precepts, referring to the same general topic, which position the Mosaic word: “Ten,” forbids us to assume, or else it contains one, as the whole design or purport plainly implies. We are therefore already prepared to find two in the concluding words just quoted, either according to the Augustinian or the Latino-Lutheran mode, which agree in form, but differ in the position of two important words.

A very remarkable variation of the text in Deuteronomy from that in Exodus appears in one place, when they are compared. Both texts obviously divide the passage, ver. 17, into two commandments, by actually commencing two independent sentences (“Thou shalt not covet, etc.” — “Thou shalt not covet, etc.”) indicative of two entirely distinct offenses.¹ The circumstance that the same word “covet” recurs, no more indicates that one commandment only is given, than the repetition of the word “neighbor” implies that the present verse and the preceding: “false witness against thy neighbor,” constitute only one commandment — a combination which no one advocates. The real difficulty which we here encounter is rather occasioned by the transposition of the words “house” and “wife.” The Augustinian division does not exhibit the former but the latter in its ninth commandment, thus:

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife.”

Prof. Kurtz, in the note which suggested this article, concurs with Augustine in rejecting the Graeco-Reformed division, and refers us to the elucidation of this point in the third volume of his work, which he has not yet published; he anticipates its appearance by announcing that he adopts Augustine’s mode, and that the true form of the ninth commandment is, in his opinion, the one now given; the tenth, then proceeds:

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house, nor his man servant, etc.”

He explains the variation in the two texts provisionally, by the hypothesis that it was occasioned by transcribers, and that the text in Exodus is to be amended according to the true reading in Deuteronomy. He concedes, at the same time, that the results of Kennicott’s examination of the Hebrew manuscripts offer a very feeble support to this conjectural emendation.

We are by no means satisfied with this proposed alteration. The distinguished theologian whom we have mentioned, rarely adopts an opinion on insufficient and hazardous grounds, and it is quite possible that he may announce a change in lire views in the forthcoming third volume, as he has already done in one or two analogous cases, in the preceding two volumes. We prefer to leave the two texts unaltered, to discover, if possible, a mode of reconciling the apparent discrepancy, and, if two commandments are furnished by ver. 17 (Exod. ch. 20) to search for the rationale of the distinction made between them. That the ancient people of God understood the two sentences, beginning with:

“thou shalt not covet,” as constituting two distinct commandments, is demonstrated by the insertion between them in the Hebrew manuscripts, of the *Setumah* mentioned above. It appears from a reference which Kurtz makes that Kennicott ascertained, after inspecting a large number of MSS. of the Old Testament, that this letter S (*Samekh*) was wanting in about one-third of the whole number, but occurred in the remainder. We are not informed of the details. Possibly, those manuscripts in which it is wanting, did not introduce this sign with critical accuracy in other cases. Even if they omit it in the present passage, and insert it in others, the question still demands an answer: Whence did the other and more numerous manuscripts obtain it? The jealousy, amounting even to superstition, with which the later

Jews guarded against alterations both in the text and in the diacritical signs, forbids us to regard the latter in any other light than as indications of the most ancient mode of interpretation, which counted the words: “Thou — house,” as the ninth commandment. We do not, however, regard this argument as decisive, and, indeed, do not need it, when other and more important considerations demand our notice. Still, it is remarkable, that both here and in the case of the first commandment, this very ancient traditional division, precisely coincides with the Latino-Lutheran mode.

We are desirous of adopting one of the two texts as the standard, and of being freed from the embarrassment occasioned by the variation in the other. The ten commandments were written twice by Jehovah himself; Moses is commanded, at the same time, to observe rigidly in the construction of the tabernacle, the pattern shown to him in the mount, (Exod. 25:9, 40.) It may be easily perceived that if the conscience of Moses, so solemnly addressed, taught him to observe the utmost precision in the proportions and materials of the ark, table, etc., it would have scarcely allowed him to depart from the exact living words which the Divine Being had pronounced, and we rightly judge that transcribers would record these important words with religious care and fidelity. The text in Exodus, a transcript from the tables, therefore presents the original unaltered order of the words. The book of Deuteronomy is well known to be a repetition of the Law, omitting many of the details of the former books, and adding others not previously prescribed. Various earlier laws are amplified, some are slightly modified, and the whole assumes the character of a spoken address or oration. When Moses repeats the Ten Words, it would be very unmeaning to assert, as Rosenmueller does, (*Scholia*, ad Deut. 5:17—19) that he recited them simply *memoriter*, which would imply a degree of carelessness or confusion, of which a well-trained Sunday School pupil ought not to be guilty, and which would be inexcusable in one so familiar with the text as Moses was. It is more decorous to assume that he spoke paraphrastically, and inserted elucidating clauses, in accordance with the general design of the address. He expanded, for instance, the Sabbath-commandment, by specifying the ox and the ass, while he retained the word “cattle,” as well as by a specific reference to the connection between the exodus of the nation and the design of the Sabbath day. In the last commandment, he appends the “field” to the “house” mentioned in Exod. 20:17. For the purpose of retaining the concinnity of the ninth, which mentions only a single object,

he temporarily places the word “wife” there, inasmuch as, on this particular occasion, his principal object is to impress on the minds of the people the peculiar agricultural principle, to which we shall immediately advert, and to which their present position on the threshold of the holy land gave far greater practical importance than it could possess during their sojourn in the remote region of Sinai. The fuller form in Deuteronomy is, accordingly, an explanatory repetition of the original words, and we may, in strict accordance with the principles of Biblical criticism, assume that the precise words now found in the latter book, are the precise words pronounced by Moses on that occasion. It is indeed to this amplified repetition of the Ten Words that we consider ourselves indebted for the solution of the problem of the exact division of the whole. We allude, for instance, to the word "field/ 5 which suggests the following statement:

The nomadic life of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, was not intended to characterize the history of the nation. God had designed the Jews to be an agricultural people, as all his laws and promises unequivocally demonstrated. When a pastoral people, like the Scythians or Tartars, in the course of their wanderings, conducted the herds and flocks which constituted their property to new pasture-grounds, the latter, like the hunting-grounds of our own Indian tribes, temporarily belonged to the whole community; after they had been depastured, and the tribe had removed to another spot, these grounds were abandoned to any strangers who might in their turn claim them. Property in land cannot exist among nomads. But as soon as a pastoral tribe changes its habits, and adopts the agricultural mode of life, the right of property in land is established.

“The utility, or rather necessity, of enacting some general regulations, that should secure to every individual the peaceable enjoyment of the produce he had raised, and of the ground he had cultivated and improved, is, indeed so very obvious, that it suggested itself to the first legislators. The author of the book of Job places those who remove their neighbors’ landmarks at the head of his list of wicked men; and the early Greek and Roman legislators placed these marks under the especial protection of the God Terminus, and made their removal a capital offense. Society may, in fact, be said to have grown out of the institution of a right of property in land, etc., etc.” Brande’s Diet. art. Right of Property.

In accordance with the instructive remarks of this writer, we would expect to find that in the Mosaic Laws, which unerring and divine wisdom gave, special protection was given to property in land. Such provisions are, accordingly, made. Jehovah declared himself to be the proprietor of the soil,

and the tenure by which the Israelites held it, is strikingly illustrated by some of the features of the feudal system that at one time prevailed extensively in Europe.

“The land shall not be sold for ever, for the land is mine, for ye are strangers and sojourners with me.” Lev. 25:23.

In a religious aspect, the whole soil of Palestine was holy unto the Lord: in another aspect, the Mosaic laws regulated, among other business transactions, the purchase or transfer of real estate. In order to elevate agriculture to the high rank which God designed it to hold, and to give additional distinctness to the sacred character of the soil, real estate, consisting in houses and fields (or, in modern law terms, in “lands tenements and hereditaments”) was made inalienable, by certain general laws, e. g. Levit. 25:10, 13:24, 27, 31; ch. 27:22—24. The laws of inheritance and of redemption, which would not permit the real estate of one tribe to be permanently acquired by another, are explicit in stating the few exceptions which may occur. The general law was clearly defined in the case of the daughters of Zelophehad, Numb. ch. 27 and ch. 36. Boaz carefully avoided an infringement of the light of redemption attaching to another, Ruth 3:12; 4:3, etc. Naboth, who received with horror the proposal of Ahab, which implied a violation of Numb. 36:7, was more willing to die than to alienate the inheritance of his family, 1 Kings 21:3. Another illustration occurs in Jerem. 32:8. Now, the ten commandments were not designed merely for the period of forty years, during the wanderings of the people in the wilderness, but also for the subsequent period of their abode in Palestine. Like many other commandments, the Ten Words refer more or less distinctly to the special providence of God, and to temporal sanctions of the law. A special blessing resting on the harvest of the sixth year of every successive series of seven, supplied the people with food for three years, including the sabbatical or seventh year, Lev. 25:21. On the recurrence of the three great festivals, when every male among the Jews was commanded to visit Jerusalem, the country, thus left apparently defenseless, was specially secured by the Lord from hostile invasions, Exod. 34:24. In the decalogue a similar prophetic intimation is given. The obedient child is encouraged by the promise of a long life on earth — a temporal blessing of eminent value, in the absence of the higher blessings

revealed and promised by the second or better covenant. Thus, too, the commandment before us refers to the sacred character given to real estate, which is declared to be inalienable; it places a temporal interest in a religious aspect, and forbids the individual to covet that object to which he never can secure a permanent right, and the title to which, as an abiding portion of his property, can therefore be obtained only by fraud or violence, that is, by a direct violation of the divine law.

Covet not that which never can be thine own permanently, is, then, the spirit of the words:

“thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house.”

Now the Ten Words are designed to be explicit, so that even the young, whose minds are still undisciplined, can perceive the full extent of their application, “Thou shalt not steal,” is a precept informing the mature intellect, that if the minor outrage of depriving another of his money or goods, is a grievous sin, it must be a sin still more grievous to take his life. Nevertheless, the law wisely specifies this sin also: “thou shalt not kill.” But the law designs to banish unholy sentiments as well as obviate unholy acts. Covetousness is a deadly sin. It implies ingratitude to God, as well as dissatisfaction with his ways, and is equivalent to the crime of rebellion against him. It as much attempts to dethrone the Almighty, as he who hates his brother is a murderer, (I John 3:1-5). The deceitful heart of man might consent to refrain from coveting property not transferable permanently, and in consideration of such supposed self-control or self-denial, seek for an indemnity by coveting objects that are capable of being transferred from one owner to another in perpetuity; it might thus ultimately suggest fraudulent or violent means for obtaining that coveted object. A second commandment therefore places the sin of coveting in another aspect. The Jewish agriculturist who observed, for instance, a house and field in the possession of his neighbor, all of which seemed to be adapted to certain plans which he had formed respecting the improvement of the adjoining farm belonging to himself, was by no means forbidden to desire to rent them. He was perfectly at liberty to offer his neighbor an equivalent for the transfer for a period of years (to the year of jubilee) of that property, and then convert it to his own uses. He had not been guilty of covetousness in this transaction, which would receive the sanction even of the most elevated

principles of Christianity. Under what circumstances would he violate the commandment prohibiting covetousness? The mode in which he might become guilty is twofold — he might, in the first place, have secretly purposed to withhold the legal equivalent, or “valuable consideration,” the price of the purchase or lease, by any fraudulent course, while he designed to take actual possession of the property; thus he would be guilty of covetousness, that is, of entertaining a desire for the possession of an object to which he had no lawful claim. Ultimately, this case could be referred to the law: “thou shalt not steal.” But he might become guilty, in the second place, (and this is the main point here contemplated) by trampling on the special law in Levit. 25:24, etc., by which he or his heirs were required to restore the property to the family of the former owner in the year of jubilee. This law, which was evidently designed, in its civil aspects, to protect the people from the pressure of pauperism on the one hand, and from the evils of that monopoly of land on the other, which has made some of the British peers so inordinately wealthy, appears to have been practically abrogated by art, influence and cupidity during the decline of the Hebrew commonwealth. Of this particular and flagrant offense the prophets grievously complain.

“Woe to them that devise iniquity . . .and they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away, etc.” Micah 2:1,2; see also Isa. 5:8. Now, even as the abolition of the defendant’s right to be tried by a jury, would seriously disturb all our own republican institutions, so the violation of this commandment appears to have had a tendency to undermine the very foundations of society as it was constituted by Moses, and we might have consequently expected that in the original articles of the covenant between God and his people, namely, in the Decalogue, a distinct and specific law would refer to the tenure on which portions of the holy land were held. “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house” was therefore designed, not only to protect the individual Jew’s real estate, but with a still wider and deeper application, to preserve the whole framework of society from dissolution.

If we then regard these words as constituting the ninth commandment, the tenth and last would read simply thus:

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his man servant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor’s.”

A difficulty still remains which must be removed before we can with entire satisfaction adopt this course. Do the objects here specified, really seem to

be so distinct from the “house,” as to constitute with propriety an independent and distinct commandment? Several considerations may here be submitted, which seem to furnish unequivocally an affirmative answer. When we carefully investigate the spirit or genius of the whole series, it is apparent that the opinion according to which the commandments on the second table are designed solely for the neighbor’s benefit, is one-sided and superficial. Even those of the first table do not refer solely to God’s honor. It could not essentially impair the glory of the great God, if in a remote planet, in a small tract on the surface of that planet, a worm of the dust should bow before an idol, or take the divine name in vain — such a loss could not really harm the Holy One, nor cast the slightest shade on the divine glory in heaven. But, such an act would, on the other hand, be disastrous to that worm of the dust — it would rob him of divine favor, aggravate the personal guilt which already oppressed him, and add another degree to the corruption of his heart. The commandments of the first table are, accordingly, also designed to secure man from evil, and teach him to watch over the purity of his heart, as well as they are designed to promote the glory of God. The same object is seen in the commandments of the second table. The rights of parents, the purity of married life, life itself, property and reputation, are protected in five successive commandments. But the establishment of these laws has a two-fold benevolent purpose; they protect the neighbor, it is true, but they are also designed to preserve the tempted individual himself from committing these trespasses, in view of the disastrous influence which such transgressions, committed by him, will have on his own heart, in hardening it still more, and on his whole state, in which lie thereby becomes an object of divine wrath. We find the same principle in the last two commandments. They both declare: “Thou shall not covet.” The former, while it designs to extinguish in the individual soul that deadly feeling of discontent with his lot, which would convert him into a rebel against God, also protects the body politic or the state; for the perpetual annexation to one estate of integral portions of another, would subvert the whole structure of the Jewish civil polity. Thus one commandment at least is given as a safeguard of the state. The succeeding commandment then proceeds to complete the merciful work of the Decalogue, by forbidding a sin which seems more venial, but which also corrupts and destroys the soul.

The difficulty arising from the common practice of overlooking the vital difference between the “house” in the ninth commandment, and the objects mentioned in the final sentence, admits, further, of being removed in the following mode:— Several principles which are regarded by British and American legal writers as the glory of the Common Law, as it is usually styled, are already distinctly announced by Moses. The main features of the law of Trespass, as recognized by the courts in Pennsylvania, for instance, may, as we are informed by an eminent jurist, be easily traced in the laws enacted by Moses. By another well-known principle of the Common Law, the punishments of crimes and misdemeanors are proportioned to the “different degrees of atrociousness” in the several offenses. A gradation is perceivable in the successive sections which constitute any general law on crime. Such a principle of gradation, *a majore ad minus*, appears in the Decalogue. Thus, in “kill, adultery, steal etc.,” the loss of life, as the greater, precedes the loss of property as the less. On the first table, the most comprehensive or the greater sin, idolatry or polytheism, precedes the minor, the profanation of the Sabbath. The same principle obtains in the last two commandments. Both forbid covetousness, precisely as all on the first table forbid irreverence toward God in descending degrees, and as the series: “kill, etc.,” forbid the infliction, in diminishing degrees, of injuries on the neighbor. The last two now refer, not directly to God, nor to the neighbor, but more directly to the individual himself: “thou shalt not covet,” that is, “thou shalt guard against sins, which, while they seem to refer to the creature, man, alone, at once array thee in rebellion against God.” The two forms of the sin, as in the previous instances, are then arranged “according to the different degrees of atrociousness.” to use the words commonly found in preambles in the Pennsylvania laws. The “coveting” of inalienable property is a more heinous sin than the coveting of alienable property. The latter alone is described in the tenth commandment.

The distinction which the Common Law makes between real and personal property, is obviously founded on the distinction between things movable and immovable; it already occurs in the Decalogue. Real estate was declared by Moses to be inalienable, and in ordinary cases, merely the usufruct or temporary use, until the next year of jubilee arrived, was granted to the purchaser, or, more properly, the lessee. Rut personal property of every description (the precious metals and stones, cattle, etc.) could at any time be sold unconditionally or without any encumbrances. The only

difficulty which now appears, arises from the mention of a “wife.” Professor Kurtz denies, in the note to which we have already adverted, that she can be placed in the same category with servants, as a *mancipium* or property, and promises to prove the truth of his position in the next volume of his *History of the Old Covenant*, which is not yet completed. He cannot, however, refer us to sources of higher authority than the laws of Moses, and to these we accordingly direct our attention.

The Hebrew or Oriental wife of antiquity, and the Christian wife of Europe or America, move in two different spheres. Their respective position and privileges are as unequal as those of an inhabitant of an eastern country, ruled by an irresponsible despot, on the one hand, and of a free citizen of England or the United States, on the other. The gospel has completely changed the relations which oriental usages established between the two sexes, and restored to the female the equal rank of which they had deprived her. An unnatural degradation of the female sex invariably results, as history demonstrates, from polygamy, which the Mosaic laws did not directly abolish, but sedulously discountenanced by many remarkable provisions; (for these, which it is not now necessary to set forth in detail, see Winer’s *Bibl. Realwörterb.* art. *Vielweiberei.*) The toleration of the practice of collecting several lawful wives of the same husband, and several lawful concubines, necessarily extinguished all those pure and elevated sentiments, which, according to Christian principles, unite one husband and one wife together in the Lord. The charms of domestic life, the holy character of conjugal love (Ephes. 5:22—33), the sacredness of parental and filial love, were clouded or destroyed. “From the beginning,” says Christ, “it was not so.” (Matt. 19:8)—polygamy was not contemplated at the original institution of marriage. After it was introduced and had become prevalent, the acquisition of a wife was regulated by principles entirely different from those which we revere.

“Among the Jews, and generally, throughout the East, marriage was considered as a sort of purchase, which the man made of the woman he desired to marry.” Horne’s *Introd.* Vol. III. Part IV Chap. III. p. 408.

“Wives, who were thus purchased,” says John, (*Bibl. Archaeol.* § 153) “were too apt to be regarded as mere servants by their husbands, etc.” Direct information respecting the case before us (the true position of the

“wife” in the last commandment) is furnished by the chapter succeeding the one in Exodus which contains the Decalogue. The “book of the covenant which Moses read to the people, Exod. ch. 24, evidently contained the whole of ch. 20—23, or, the conditions of the covenant, including the Decalogue itself; the whole is an expansion of the fundamental principles expressed in the brief clauses of the Decalogue, and serves as a paraphrase or commentary. In Exod. 21:7, the case is stated of a man who”sells his daughter to be a maid servant, etc.” The following note of Prof. Bush (Notes, critical and pract. on Exod. 21:7) explains the facts with great accuracy and precision:

“It is clear from the context that when this was done, it was, usually at least, upon some engagement or expectation that the person who bought her would take her, when of age, as his wife or concubine. Her purchase as a servant was her betrothal as a wife. This is confirmed by the comment of Maimonides, who says: ‘A Hebrew handmaid might not be sold but to one who laid himself under obligations to espouse her to himself or to his son, when she was fit to be betrothed.’ Jarchi also on the same passage says: ‘He is bound to espouse her to be his wife, for the money of her purchase is the money of her espousal .’”

Such a national custom, if it does not altogether brutify, at least perverts the judgment and debases the heart. When a wife is thus regarded as an object of purchase, treated as a servant, and viewed as the personal property of her husband, it cannot occasion wonder that loose principles respecting divorces prevailed among the Jews. The character of the nation was harsh, their duties were stern, the genius of their religion was austere, their usages were unmarked by delicacy, and they could record without compunction the deeds which necessity dictated, but which a Christian nation, in happier times, could not consistently perform.

“We destroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones of every city; we left none to remain.” Deut. 2:34.

The office of the executioners of God’s wrath was appropriately assigned to them. Now, that the lawgiver represents the “wife” solely as any other portion of a man’s personal property, coveted only for the services which she can render in the household, and not as an object of carnal and impure desires, is demonstrated by the fact that a previous commandment (“adultery”) already refers to the sin of coveting her as a female and not as

property. When such views prevail, as derogatory to the man's honor who entertains them, as to the woman's dignity who suffers from them, we may understand that it was indeed "because of the hardness of their hearts" as Christ says, (Matt. 19:8) that Moses suffered the Jew to part with a wife by simply furnishing her with a writing or "bill of divorcement," (Deut. 24:1, etc.) How could the sanctity of marriage be established on Christian principles in that age among a people accustomed to believe that the marriage tie was scarcely stronger than the bond existing between the head of the family and any personal property, such as a servant or an ox? Thus the wife was literally reduced to the level of her husband's servants and cattle; she might be transferred from his jurisdiction at any time, and become the lawful wife of another, as the cattle of her first husband might become permanently the property of another. It was quite consonant with such usages, that the Jewish widow could not inherit by law, as it is well known, any portion of her deceased husband's property; she was commended to the generosity of her sons, it is true, but she was as dependent and as destitute of property of her own, as the servants themselves, and hence it is not surprising that the prophets frequently complain of the unfeeling and cruel manner in which widows were treated. The want of civil rights, such as the gospel was really the means of giving to the female, actually placed her in the same category with the husband's servants and other property.

The repetition of the phrase: "thou shalt not covet," which would be altogether inexplicable, if the whole of ver. 17 constituted one commandment, is now easily explained. The Decalogue adopts the descending scale, in the enumeration of specific offenses belonging to one general class, in order to obviate all dishonest evasions. In the case of "coveting," the sin which that term embraces, may be committed in many forms. The lawgiver comprehends the whole in two commandments. Guard — says he — against the sin of coveting that to which thou hast no rightful claim. Beware of that sin, first of all, when thou art tempted to seize objects which never can be permanently thine own. But, secondly, guard against the sophistry of the corrupt human heart, and covet not even those objects which may be lawfully transferred to thee as thy permanent property. Thy sin may seem to thee to be venial, if thou canst succeed in alienating thy neighbor's wife, or servant, or cattle or other personal property, seeing that all these may be legally transferred. Thou art therefore commanded to

watch over thy heart, since thou art now taught that all coveting is a grievous sin. This sense, which we find in the lawgiver's words, is emphatically expressed by that division of the Decalogue, which presents the whole of ver. 17 in the following form, according to the Latino-Lutheran mode:

Com. IX. Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's house.

Com. X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor etc.

The distribution of the contents of the Decalogue, when two tables alone are designed to contain them, was unquestionably made according to the principle of their internal coherence. The first table contained the duties referring to God, the second, those referring to man, beginning with: "Honor thy father, etc." The arrangement of Philo, with whom R Stier seems to agree, cannot possibly be correct. The latter (Reden Jesu, II. 412, 413) thinks that if we are only able and willing to read, we must find an undeniably clear decision of the question in Matt. 22:39, 40. He divides the ten commandments into two pentades, and thus places the fourth, or his fifth: "Honor, etc.," on the first, because, as he says, parents are the human representatives and images of God. To this arrangement, for which we cannot find a single substantial argument, and which may be demonstrated to be unnatural by many considerations, our present purpose does not require us to advert in detail. It would not, perhaps, be unjust to adopt Stier's own method of disposing of some of his opponents, by saying, for instance, that the results of this mode of distribution may be seen in an exaggerated form in the Chinese worship of ancestors, established by Confucius (KoungTsee) on the one great and only moral and religious duty of filial piety. It is more usual, we believe, to assign, according to the Graeco-Reformed or Origenistic mode, four or a tetrad to the first, and six or a hexade to the second table, while our own mode, the Latino-Lutheran, arranges the whole ten into two classes, a triad and a heptade, the former, or three, embracing the duties referring to God, the latter, or seven, those referring to man.

In the interpretation of the Old Testament, there is an exegetical element found in the symbolical meaning of certain numbers or numeral words, which frequently renders important services. The oriental mind, according

to Prof. Kurtz, and some of the most eminent recent theologians (Bahr, Hengstenberg, Bertheau, Baumgarten, etc.) regarded the number Ten as the symbol of completeness or perfection; and the emphasis with which the lawgiver speaks of “Ten Words” indicates his design of expressing the thought, conformably to the common view of the Israelites, that these words were perfectly and fully adapted to the basis of the covenant made with them. The numbers four and six are also significant, but have no special religious associations connected with (hem. The two numbers which our division furnishes, a triad and a heptade, are, on the contrary, repeatedly presented, in the Old Testament particularly, as sacred numbers. Thus, the number Three is distinguished, not only in consequence of its reference to the Holy Trinity, but also to many deeds and events directly connected with the three Divine Persons. The number seven, which is so remarkably prominent in the whole sacred and, specially, in the festival service of the Mosaic law, is also otherwise distinguished in the Scriptures as a sacred number, in things which involve man and his interests. It cannot be doubted, accordingly, that three of the whole ten words, occupied the first table, referring to God, and seven, beginning with “Honor, etc.,” were inscribed on the second, referring to man.

It is frequently supposed that inasmuch as a different usage prevails among the several denominations in the United States, which, in the aggregate are here more numerous than the members of the Lutheran church, and as the precise division of the Decalogue is seemingly unimportant, it would be expedient if the church in this country should abandon her venerable usage, and adopt a foreign one. We are by no means prepared to exhibit this apparent liberality of sentiment. We should certainly be surprised to discover that our mother, the Lutheran church, had been so imperfectly educated, that religious organizations subsequently formed, were required to become her teachers at this late day. In this dark world of sin, every single ray of divine light, every particle of truth is precious — too precious to be ever resigned. There certainly was a mode of division which Moses received directly from God, since he counted ten words — it was as certainly not the Origenistic, which really furnishes only nine, or else eleven, or even twelve, if “coveting” occurs in two. After examining other modes of division, and vainly attempting to account for them satisfactorily, we have found none so consistent with itself and scriptural, so logical and significant as the old established Lutheran mode. We can recognize the

impress of divinity upon it, and would fear lest we should touch it with a profane hand, by assimilating it to any other form. We so learned the Decalogue in childhood, and our riper judgment has taught us to revere its Lutheran form. Honest attention to adverse arguments has failed to convince us of their truth, and we fervently hope that the Lutheran Catechism, that precious volume, on which the blessing of God so signally rests, will always exhibit that division of the Decalogue which it has hitherto maintained, and which is, in our view, invested with a sacred character.

1. It may be here mentioned incidentally that the comma in Exodus after “house,” is merely a modern point, as well as that the number of the verse, 17, is also a modern arrangement, having no authority. The original text not only allows, but also seems to require the following punctuation. “Ver. 17. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house. Ver. 18. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife, etc.” The Hebrew word *tachmod* is used twice in Exodus, and in both cases is rendered in the authorized English version “covet.” In Deuteronomy, the same word is prefixed to “wife,” but another and a nearly equivalent word (*tithavveh*) is there prefixed to “house,” and the whole should read in Deuteronomy thus:

“Ver 21. Neither shalt thou covet thy neighbor’s wife. Ver. 22. Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbor’s house, his field, etc.”

The Septuagint regards both words as synonymous, for it employs the same word in translating them into Greek (*epithumeseis*) thus using the same word four times. ←

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