The Commandments VIII.
Numbers 35:15-34
Matt 5:17-26 1 Tim 1:5-17
435
845
322
365
525
The Sin of Murder

Exodus XX: 13.

Thou Shalt not Kill.
Now I addressing to night an audience of Prison Convicts or Street Rowdies, I might deem it necessary in discussing the Sixth Commandment to dwell upon the awful guilt of Murder in its more direct and common forms. But as this simple injunction of four words has a marvelous scope, it may be found that none need an exposition of it more than those whose very education, refinement are the means of concealing from them their own liability to become indirectly chargeable with the guilt of taking another's life. Especially when, venturing beyond the letter of the command, we contemplate its spirit.
it will become apparent that no one of us however pure is exempt from the liability of daily transgressing the intent of the injunction. Thou shalt not kill.

First and most obviously this forbids all unnecessary or unlawful, unjust or violent taking of human life. Of course there is no reflexion here to animals, though the wanton and cruel slaying of beasts is beyond a question a wrong of a similar character as that here prohibited. Neither does the command conflict with the right of every man in self-defense or of every community in the prevention of crime or the infliction of legal penalties. Indeed as far back as
the time of Noah God had said whose shed
cloth man's blood, by man shall his blood
be shed, and the very words of this command
imply that nothing is forbidden but the un
just or unlawful shedding of blood. The
word rendered Kill, literally means to
break or crush in pieces, and indicates a
violent and passionate commission of mur-
der. Accordingly when Christ (Matt 19: 18.)
recited this command in the ears of the rich
young man he said Thou shalt do no
murder, a word only used of malicious
premeditated crime.

We may lay it down then as the first
broad principle of this commandment,
that it is the divine recognition of the first of man's three grand rights rested upon instinct. Life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness. New God throws his own law as a safeguard about human life. By an unwritten law recorded unmistakably within us we are commanded to take life in order to save our own, whenever such an alternative is the only resort, or in the defence of the lives of our families. The instinct of Self-preservation demands it, and God's laws cannot conflict whether written on tablets of stone or in scribed in invisible letters upon the flesh by tablets of the heart.
I should hesitate long before taking life how even to save my property from destruc- 

truction, especially if the apprehension of punishment of the offender were possibly 

the strong arm of the law, since this might be an unnecessary taking of life. The fact 

that the law does not regard this as murder or even manslaughter does not prove 

it to be justifiable upon biblical grounds. It is a very solemn thing to take human 

life even under aggravation—to send a soul instantly into eternity, especially 

in the midst of the perpetration of crime. But how much the more so when that ac-

tual act might have been rendered un-
necessary by the employment of other measures, even at the sacrifice of property. Upon similar principles the command forbids all sanguinary and aggressive war fare which is wholesale massacre, however authorized by national measures. But upon the same principle wars of defense are entirely right and justifiable, for it is only the instinct of self-preservation applied to the national life. Nay it may be necessary in self-preservation to become aggressive and conquer an enemy in his own territory. But if the object be not the acquisition but simply security and peace, nothing in it is at variance with the
old or new Testament. Never in human his-
tory has a man been raged more entirely
righteous than that to which this na-
tion has roused herself like a mighty gi-
ant from sleep,starting up and "shaking
his invincible locks." New every dearest
interest of Liberty, Law, Religion, Right
are intimately involved. The welfare of
all future generations is at stake and not
to fight—to cover over this deadly wound
by any plaster of compromise—to arrange
for Peace at any less price than entire
submission to the authority of the govern-
ment would be to subvert the whole theo-
ry of the gospel, put peace before purity.
No! So the wound must be cauterized by the red hot iron of war, and then the proud flesh of this festering swell nigh fatal sore will give way to a natural healthy—normal growth. If the vindication of this government cost the blood of a whole generation it would be iniquity as any price to purchase a paltry peace. But war is always to be the last resort—the extreme measure. It is fearfully demoralizing and piles hecatombs of human sacrifice upon its altars of fire. Of course, all wilful murder however disguised, all duelling however dignified with titles of honor, all slaughter following upon the heels of san-
quinary laws or religious persecutions—all sacrifice of human life, where necessity does not demand it—where it is not in indication of righteous law, or in preservation of human life liberty is forbidden by both the letter & spirit of this divine precept.

There is a barbarous array of practices not confined to barbarous nations, prevalent even among Christian communities known to the medical profession sometimes even aided & abetted by physicians. Practices which delicacy forbids me to men lion here, but which it is to be feared in the eyes of God involve all the guilt of murder & of infanticide.
We may proceed a step further and affirm the second broad principle of this command that whatever tends to desecrate human life or endanger or shorten it is virtually comprehensively forbidden.

What right has a man to become a wholesale or retail vendor of poison - to make money out of the souls & bodies of men & women's children. Talk of the crime of slaveholding; it is hardly to be compared with rum-selling. The slaveholder profits by the hard labor, the brow, the wear - the degradation & bondage of the slave. In return for which he gives him sometimes a good home, sometimes a Christian education.
A rum-seller gathers in his purse the price - not only of human labor - but of human life and happiness, both here & hereafter for no drunkard enters into the Kingdom of Heaven. Every barrel of liquor which he rolls out of his storehouse bears an invisible brand burned there by the indignation of God - and of human eyes could read it - it would be found: "Death & Hell." He knows that that "firewater" as the simple Indian calls it is to go forth to minister to an appetite which when you would quench it burns but the more fierce & furious. He knows that the liquor he distills is not the juice distilled by Nature thru the channels of the vine, but adulterated
with fatal drugs generally entirely upon manufactured article. Mr. Buxton, a great London brewer and a Master of Police, stated at a late meeting of the distillers that owing to a short supply of hops the London brewers had come to the conclusion to use strychnine. It was an admirable substitute, but only this drawback that it was in danger of killing off 15 per cent of their customers annually, but that for this year they must be compelled to put up with this misfortune. But life is not all that is manly; only sacrifice freed in this inhuman business. The rum seller knew that that same liquor is to burn up human hopes & happiness—and
sweeping myriads of wretched forsaken rivers, children into an untimely grave, kind as in many a poor victim soul the flames of the bottomless abyss.

This fearful example must stand as a representative instance. Others might be given but let this suffice to establish the general truth that no man has a right to enslave any practice or engage in any business which is to imperil or destroy or shorten human life. Better he should starve than kill. Better he should be poor than impoverish others. Better he should be wretched than inflict misery or send a river of fire to seep thro human hearts as well as bodies.
Directly connected with this is a third principle broader still upon which this injurious proceeds: that the indulgence of all hate or revenge or evil feeling is a virtual violation of the command. Our Saviour says, an wording its spirit, Matt 5: 21-22 Ye have learned that it was said by them of old time: Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother: Raca! shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say: Thou fool! shall be in danger of hell fire!
Here Christ goes back from the act to the feeling and
condemns as violations of the commandment all
states of mind which lead to or tend toward the
destruction of life. To be angry at a fellow-man
without a cause—i.e., without occasion for holy
indignation—is to be a murderer. 1 John 3:15.
He that hateth his brother is a murderer. Raca
means Rascal, and implies a stronger degree of
anger such as leads to the use of intemperate
expressions or opprobrious epithets. Pole which
in this connection involves impious atheism
ungodliness as its prominent idea, implies a
yet deeper wrath since it is the most of
fensive little which could well be applied to
a Jew. The idea of the whole passage
is plainly this that any indulgence in the feelings or tempers of heart which lead to acts of revenge or malice or murder is dealt transgression of the commandment. And for a plain reason. If a man never allows evil passions to control him and evil motives to sway him he will never commit those acts which come from such sources. Do away with cherished anger which is malice. If you do away with all the causes of premeditated murder and prevent that slavery of a man to his own passions which makes him their almost involuntary tool when under unusual circumstances of provocation.
Here some may take occasion to confute a common error founded in forgetfulness of this principle. It is sometimes said that the name and guilt of murder should not be attached to what a man does in a moment of ungovernable passion. It is said he is insane to a degree unconscious of what he is doing and therefore irresponsible. That he ought not to suffer death. But the capital offence lies not in the act of murder but in the previous indulgence of appetite or passion which brought him into a state of intoxication or insanity. For giving up the double throne of Reason and Conscience to the Devil within him and thus tacitly
resigning

giving up the empire of his soul to Satan,

crime he is responsible before God and man

and thereby the crime, whose result

is murder, the guilt is his own, but it lies

back of the act to the cherished feeling or

appetite which prepared the way. The

man who kills another in a fit of intoxica-
tion is chargeable with all the guilt of mur-
der. Aye with a greater guilt than that. For

suppose that I have power to dethrone your

reason & send you a raving maniac or a

dumb and idiot through these streets—sup-

pose that in consequence of this you lay vi-
en hands upon another & kill him, the

common sense of community charges
me with the guilt not only of that murder but
with a far greater guilt the voluntary dethroning of your reason which made such horri
cible results possible. Now suppose that in
stead of my dethroning your reason you your
self do deliberately and voluntarily unseat that
monarch of your being and give yourself up to
the temporary insanity of drunkenness: sup
pose that during that period of spiritual
anarchy you commit the crime before men
tioned, is not yours the double and terrible guilt
of taking another's life and of daring to
dethrone your Reason by your own act and
thus exposing yourself to the fearful liability
of perpetrating even greater crimes.
But we may proceed one step further and assert that the spirit of our text comprehensively forbids also all careless or wanton disregard of the happiness of others which may thus embitter their existence, shorten their life, if not by violence at least prematurely through the working of natural causes. The Apostle Paul in his first letter to Timothy speaks in connection with lawless, disobedient persons, ungodly, profane, murderers, who are mongrels of a very singular class whom he calls by the awful name of murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers. And who are parricides and matricides. Is it necessary
that a man should rise up and with weapon of destruction slay his father or mother in order to incur this fearful guilt? No. is so. Here is a young man—your knew him—so did I. He was brought up carefully, prayerfully—it may be true owing to some grand error in his education at home he early broke through the restraints of a parent's rule. He began to frequent places of dangerous enticement where vice was veiled in attractions. The theatre & its three attendant gates to Hell was before him. The gambling saloon—the drinking saloon and the brothel. He began with an occasional attendance at the theatre only for the pleasure of hearing a dramatic perform
anee, but he was breathing an atmosphere emregnated with moral malaria. Evil company swayed his weak resolves and from the theater he went to the gambling saloon not to risk money but to witness an exciting game. The steps which lead from the gambling saloon to the barroom are not many, and he presently finds himself taking a glass of wine with a friend—only for sociability, but fascinations are throwing a delicate, invisible but well-nigh fatal network about his soul and from one degree of vice to sensuality behold him sinking to another and so on to the last of all whose inner gates open directly into the chambers of hell!
During this career of dissipation there has been at least one anxious heart, whose bitterness no human soul has known. Sleepless eyes have kept their weary vigils through the long long night watching sometimes until early morning before the familiar step was heard upon the threshold, and then the sleepless of anxiety only gave place to the sleeplessness of weeping. Entreaties followed admonitions—warning the wayward son of the results of his course—beseeching him by all the power of a mother's love to yield to affection what he would not yield to argument. All was vain and when the last faint gleam of hope went out in the darkness of despair...
the lamp of life began to flicker & burn low in its socket until it too went out. That com-
mon man is often by grief & someone was a
murderer of a mother. Do not think I am
lining an extreme case. If I could go in
yonder at the candle of the Lord to reveal my
hidden things, I could show you tonight in
this village many a heart which hiding its sorrows within itself has already half con-
sumed itself. There are murderers of fathers
murders of mothers here. Perhaps here.
And there are murderers of wives. Perhaps
some murderers of husbands - not a few of
sons & daughters in society at large. They
bear no trammel by which to be discovered.
to allow violence every strand of love by Adam and Eve. In this letter, the author describes the process of love and violence, which is...
hour when it shall beat for the last time. No words can portray the guilt of one who triplingly, frivolously or carelessly wounds a human heart in its deepest power of loving. It is murder, for it shortens as well as embitters human life. Some hearts there are constitutionally strong; they can bear ill usage; some there are which have become so callous by these very habits of tripling that they are as feelingless as marble but the guilt of the flir or coquette is no less great because the consequences were less serious; since they might have been the worst.

I was yet a boy when an illustration of these truths was forced upon my notice — a
cases so thrilling in interest yet so horrible in its features that I recorded it unnecessarily in deed for it left its own indelible impress.

There was a young lady residing during a summer season in one of the most beautiful villages of our eminestate. She was a queen for grace, beauty— a woman for refinements & culture. She formed the acquaintance of a young man (Mr. Bordinavé) who was impressed with her seeming loveliness and came entirely under the power of her singular fascinart. He was a man of no strength of character, though of uncommonly powerful emotional nature. She observed her influence over him and remarked to
a lady friend that she meant to have some fun. He continued for months to visit her and at last handed her a superb present as a token of his love. She quietly returned them causing them to be laid upon his table together with a note intimating that upon her part the affair had been one of sport. A sleepless night of unrevealed suffering left him a raving maniac at early morn before the latest winter sun had risen he rose scribbled a few unintelligible words and with a lantern in his hand secretly left the house, and before the new year's sun arose he was in eternity. I knew the parties and one month after a party of my friends found hung from a stump
in the forest a frozen human body, almost covered with the winter's mending sheets of snow. The inequity has long been repented of—but there is somewhere in the world today a woman with a heart whereon memory has crushed who will tell you that whoever trifles with a human love incurs the guilt of murder. Nor is it less a crime because it leaves a palatal poison to work its way slowly to the result so that the heart dies before the body—no it is now heinous for cruelty is added to crime. It may be grief tears which are brought down with sorrow to the grave but if it is your conduct which brings them there you stand guilty of murder.
And if this be the guilt of killing the body
what shall be said of the appalling crime
of destroying souls. Think of those who
talk through our streets the destroyers of
virtue, chastity or who from behind the coun-
ter of a legalized trade barter poison for
pence. Great as is the guilt of him who sheds
the blood of his fellow man I would not for a
thousand worlds, ever exchange places with the de-
bauche. He is a wholesale
murderer of souls. And if there be in the aw-
ful Pandemonium one cell where more than
mounted fury found eternal anguish it must
be reserved for him who passing by the body
leads a weak soul to the paths of endless death.
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