

51. The First Commandment.

Thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve. *Matt. 4, 10.*

The First Commandment reads thus: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." God says to every soul: "I am the Lord; that is My name; and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images." He is the only true God, and therefore all mankind should adore and worship Him. But, alas! all the world has forsaken Him.

There are the fools, who say, "There is no God." There are the heathen nations, who bow down before an idol of their own imagination. The world is far from the true God. It burns its incense to other gods. Some say, Nature is god. The Mohammedans believe in Allah. The Jews and Unitarians deny the divinity of Christ. The great majority of men worship the god of this world, the prince of darkness, who blinds their understanding.

And what about us? Are not the Christians also tempted with idolatry? Or is God wrong when He proclaims with a voice of thunder that all the world *is* idolatrous? Are there not many idols that they fear, love, and trust in? Are they not continually tempted to make mammon their god, to trust in riches and earthly goods? Take warning, then, and be on your guard when the love of money, which is the root of all evil, seeks to fasten its fangs upon your heart, when avarice and greed seize upon you. You cannot serve God and mammon. You must worship the Lord alone, and Him only must you serve.

And, verily, it is well to serve a Lord so gracious, merciful, and kind! His yoke is gentle and His burden light. He gives us abundantly, not only of spiritual and temporal gifts in general, but the very store with which to serve Him: willingness of heart and mind, true faith, love and gratitude to Him. For every service not based upon gratitude to God for His tender mercies and not begotten of faith in Jesus is a vain service and ill-pleasing to our heavenly Father. Hence, if your service is to be a right service, pleasing to God, see that you serve Him willingly.

Prayer.

O holy and righteous God, Thou alone art God, and besides Thee there is none other. Yet such is our innate wickedness and perversity that we do not fear, love, and trust in Thee as we ought, but give the service of our hearts and hands to many other gods. Forgive us, we beseech Thee, for our dear Redeemer's sake and give us grace to renounce henceforth every allegiance to him who is the ancient enemy of God and man and not again to place our confidence in man or to lean on our own understanding. For this, we pray Thee, give us Thy Holy Spirit. Amen.

Holy Spirit, all divine,
Dwell within this heart of mine;
Cast down every idol-throne,
Reign supreme — and reign alone.

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