

## INTERNATIONAL S. S. LESSON.

Sunday, Aug. 23.

The Commandments. B. C. 1401. Ex. xx. 1-11.

**GOLDEN TEXT, Matt. xxii. 37, 38.**—Jesus said unto him—Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.

Commit vs. 3-11.

## INTRODUCTION AND CONNECTION.

The principal events that come between our last lesson and this, are—the miraculous supply of water at Meribah (ch. xvii. 5-7)—the victory over Amalek (ibid. viii. 13), the visit of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, and the appointing of rulers to assist Moses in the management of public affairs (ch. xviii.)—the covenant between God and the people, and the solemn preparations for the giving of the law (ch. xix.).

Obedience to God's requirements had been observed by the good, as a rule of life, from the earliest time; and these, in the form of rule and precept, had been handed down from fathers to their children, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. But when a separate people was to be raised up for Himself, He came nearer; and gave them, first, orally, and then in writing, a summary of that Law under which His moral government in all worlds is maintained. This, although given to Israel, was not for them alone, but for all men. It was to be a standard, by means of which all men might estimate their position before God;—a schoolmaster, to bring them to Christ for salvation from the guilt and curse it could reveal, but from which it was powerless to save.

## LESSON NOTES.

(1, 2.) *And God spake all these words.* They were uttered in a clear, distinct voice, so loud as to be heard above the noise of the thunder and the rumbling of the earthquake (Heb. xii. 19, 20), and were afterwards written on tables of stone by God Himself. I am the Lord—"Jehovah, their Elohim"—their own God. *Who brought thee out of the land of Egypt.* Men are prone to forget what God has done for them; hence, God very often reminded Israel of His gracious dealing; as much as to say—remember me, especially by my mercies. *Out of the house of bondage,—of slavery—the place where their lives had been made bitter by hard servitude.* They had been slaves,—God had set them free, and He would have them remember it.

(3.) *Thou shalt have no gods before me,* that is, in His presence, in His sight;—not merely in preference to Him, as some tell us; for that would imply that it did not matter how many they had, so long as they were not preferred to Himself; but not any in His sight, either openly or secretly honoured.

(4.) *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything,*—that is for idolatrous use, or with idolatrous intent. This does not, of course, include those emblematical figures wrought in the tabernacle, and afterwards in the temple, under the direction of God.

(5.) *Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them.* The simple act of bowing down, even though without any mental consent to idolatrous worship was forbidden. It was an outward show of worship which, although it went no farther, God would not for a moment tolerate. *I, the Lord, thy God, am a jealous God.* God is not jealous in our human sense of the word, which often means little more than suspicion and mistaken ideas; but that He will admit of no rival in the soul that professes to love Him—will accept no heart divided between Himself and unhalloved objects, will allow no object less worthy than Himself to hold the first place in our affections. Why? Because He is the only Good, the only Pure, the supremely Excellent One, and by securing our undivided affection He would raise us up and make us like Himself. *Visiting the iniquity, etc., etc.* This is the natural law of hereditary or transmitted evil; which equally with the direct precepts of written law is from God—His own appointment and design.

(6.) *And showing mercy, &c., &c.,—that is, gracious—interposing to save those who keep His commandments in love.*

(7.) *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, &c.* This prohibition includes not only the profane, but the irreverent; and even the careless use of the name—(any of the names or titles)—of God. Why? Because thus the sensibilities of the soul are blunted, conscience is deadened,

and not only actual sin is committed, but the capacity to sin is increased.

(8-10.) *Remember the Sabbath day (cessation, or rest day) to keep it holy.* This was the day originally set apart by God Himself as a day of rest from the work of creation; and is referred to here as a day that was known, and, probably, to some extent observed among devout men. It was now established by a statute, for all time and all men, as a day of cessation from secular pursuits—a day of rest from labour of all kinds, and to be kept holy to the Lord. *Six days shalt thou labour—*that is, their period of toil should be restricted to six days; *but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God* (Gen. ii. 2); *in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, thy son, daughter, man-servant, maid-servant, cattle, nor stranger within thy gates.*

Thus the head of every household was made responsible for the proper observance of the Sabbath in his own family. Comp. Neh. xiii. 16-21.

(11.) *For in six days God made, &c.* This is the grand, special reason for the observance of the Sabbath—*God did so.* He finished His great work of creation in what He is pleased to call *six days, and rested on the seventh.* He assigns no reason but His own example in the matter, and this, surely, to every devout soul, should be reason enough. What God is pleased to do, and then make binding upon us under the solemn precedent of His own example, must surely be for our highest interest to observe; and its observance should be to us much more than a duty—it should be our highest and sweetest privilege.

## QUESTION SUMMARY.

(For the Children.)

(1.) What words did God speak? To whom did He speak them? Are they intended for the Israelites alone, or for all people? (2.) Whom did God say He was? What had He done for that people? Had He, then, a good right to command them? Has He the same right to command you? What has He done for you? (3.) Repeat this commandment. What does it mean? That we shall not have any object of worship but God. (4.) What are we not to make for the purpose of worshipping it? If there is anything we love more than God is not that idolatry? (5.) What are we told here not to do? Read the story of some who would not bow down to an idol (Dan. iii.) (6.) To whom will God always show mercy? (7.) What are you told here not to do? What is it to take God's name in vain? (See note.) (8.) In what way are we to remember the Sabbath? How can we keep the Sabbath holy? By keeping it pure from whatever is offensive to God. (9.) In how many days are we to do our work? How much of our work? (10.) What is the right name of this day? What is the meaning of Sabbath? (11.) Who set us the example of resting on that day? What did God rest from? What, then, would He have us rest from? What did God do to the Sabbath day? If God blessed and hallowed the Sabbath how should we treat it?

## CONCERNING THE BEHAVIOUR OF GIRLS TO YOUNG MEN.

MARY WAGER-FISHER.

Many girls, during a season of gaiety, as has been the past winter with its abundant sleighing, which always develops social festivities, make the acquaintance—or fancy that they do—of "new" young men, with whom possibly they have "fallen in love," and expect to marry. To "fall in love" need not necessarily be an extremely serious matter, but to marry, is. As Mr. Tallage very pithily put it, "marriage is to a young man the most tremendous thing between the cradle and the grave." If it be "tremendous" to a man, it is super-tremendous to a woman. Moreover, it is one of those arrangements, the force and importance of which, no one before marriage can fully realize. It requires at least three or four years of married life, for either a man or a woman to understand its full significance, and for some persons even a longer time. The wedding-frock, the wedding, the honeymoon, are very small account in comparison with what lies in the future. I believe that it is generally conceded that when a girl is bent upon marrying a certain

person, it is a waste of words to attempt to dissuade her otherwise. There may be some use, however, in attempting to persuade her to find out who it is whom she is going to marry.

I have two cases in my mind; young women who married men with whom they were so very much in love that they would "die" if they had to live without them, and who learned after a little while that the men had already been married, and their wives were still alive and well. One of these cases was a peculiarly sad one. The young lady lived with her parents in a university town in central New York, and the man she married first saw her in the street, from the piazza of the hotel where he was stopping, inquired who she was, where she lived, and learned various particulars about her family. Among other things, he learned that she had relatives living in an adjoining state. His first step was to forge a letter of introduction from one of these distant relatives, and then he called upon the young lady with his credentials. Of course, she and her parents thought it must be all right, and at the time gave the matter little thought. However, as the young man's attentions became very marked, and the young people announced that they were "engaged," the parents thought it worth while to inquire into the young man's antecedents, etc., so they dispatched a letter to those distant relatives who returned answer that they had given no such person a letter of introduction, and the matter being pursued, it was found out that the fellow was from a certain town in New England where his wife was meantime living.

"Oh," exclaimed the mother with a deep sigh, "how thankful we should be that we have learned this before it was too late." "Ah, mother, it is too late," shrieked the stricken girl; "we are already married." They had been secretly married a fortnight before, at the continued solicitation of the young man who was "so madly in love,"—and the girl who, in her foolish fondness, thought her lover the most perfect person in the world, weakly yielded to his persuasions, and they were married by a country parson upon one of their many rural rides. The young man nearly escaped the officers, who were placed upon his track by the outraged father of the girl, but finally he was captured, tried for bigamy, and sent to five years' imprisonment in the Auburn State Prison. The affair killed the girl. On the day before the convict was to be taken to prison, she begged of her father as a dying request, to be allowed to see the man she had married. Her request was granted, and the sheriff brought him to her bedside, where she lay with the touch of death upon her. She stretched out her thin arms toward him, beseeching him in words that moved everyone about her to tears, to promise her that he would reform and lead a better life. The fellow simply sneered at her prayers, and when asked by the sheriff if he had no pity for his victim, he lightly laughed and said that girls who "took up with any fellow that happened along weren't worth much." On the following day she died.

As the bigamist was being escorted to Auburn, there was one other person who should have gone along, manacled with him, for ten years' imprisonment, and that was the country parson who had married them.

The villain uttered a grave truth when he said that a girl who takes up with any fellow that happens along is not worth much. It is precisely what any girl who marries without knowing to whom it is she intrusts, her happiness may rightly label herself with "not worth much." And this leads

me to what I had in my mind to say at the outset, that very many girls nowadays do not seem to put a very high valuation upon themselves. Only a few years ago young men felt obliged to behave themselves with outward decorum, at least, when in the presence of young women. They never presumed to make use of tobacco in their society. But now I see them smoking cigars, sitting or standing with hat on head, or lounging with crossed legs mounted comfortably high in the air, in the immediate presence of young women whom they are supposed to respect, and all this with no protest from the young women themselves.

Women are unquestionably the conservators of society, and there is no moral force so strong to restrain vice of any description as the decided and emphatic protest of women against it. The man does not live who does not respect and honour a woman the more for such protest, and respects that woman most who puts him upon his best behaviour, and develops within him his best energies. If the young woman, who, when asked if tobacco smoke is offensive to her, replies, "Oh, not at all!" thinks that her agreeable reply raises her in the esteem of the smoker, she is entirely mistaken. There are women who do not dislike fresh cigar smoke, at least they say so. But no woman likes stale smoke—the smell of tobacco six hours old, or the smell of a man's breath that smokes or chews. They are all disgusting and abominable, and nobody knows it better than do the men addicted to the vice, and who never fail to deplore seeing their sons form the habit. If a man uses tobacco before marriage with as much nicety as is possible, he will be very likely to indulge in it without the nicety in his own home, and the wife will have stale smoke and a disgusting breath to catch whiffs of, *ad infinitum*.

Some one has said, "Of course, marry for love; but when you are about to fall in love, see that it is with somebody who has money." Money, honestly earned, is never an objectionable feature in a matrimonial alliance, but what is of far more consequence, and far greater importance (as the other may be of no importance whatever) is to marry a man of good family. Girls often say, "Oh, but I'm not marrying his family." But they do, in a way, nevertheless. One can't get away from early habits and early associations, and the influences under which the ordinary young man has grown up, fashions him for all time. A family may be very poor, and still be refined and gentle, but no amount of money or position can cover the vulgarity of low birth and low breeding, and no amount of love or fondness can long abide it with happiness.

Moreover, in marrying, a girl should bear in mind that she should consider the welfare of a probable posterity, as well as her own, and before accepting a man as her husband, she should ask herself whether in all probability he will make a good father, as well as a good husband, and whether he is free or not from such taint in the blood as develops into scrofula, insanity, or other painful and ruinous maladies. The sort of flimsy "sticks" that some girls accept as husbands, and *vice versa*, is amazing, and if a girl cannot marry, and satisfy her head as well as her heart, she had far better remain unwedded, which is both honourable and respectable, while to be married to an inferior or unworthy person is continual degradation.—*Rural New Yorker*.

—All sects are different, because they come from men; morality is everywhere the same, because it comes from God.