

the sea-voyage, the "roughing it," all combine to straighten out the bow, and allow it to regain its elasticity; and at the same time, without interfering with this, they can do much for their Lord's honor, and the salvation of precious souls, by holding meetings, distributing good books, papers and tracts, and speaking a word whenever opportunity may offer.

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The Sabbath School.

LESSONS FOR APRIL.

FIRST SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—*The Ten Commandments.* Ex. xx. 1-17.

This chapter contains the Ten Commandments as given from Mount Sinai,—called in Deut. iv., "the ten words," (original), and His covenant, and more commonly known as the *moral law*, because it lays down rules for the regulation of men's morals for all time. The *ceremonial law* consisted of ordinances typical in their nature, and temporary in their direction, and was abrogated by the coming of Christ (Heb. ix. 10); but the moral, being founded in the relation subsisting between God and His creatures, is lasting. The latter is both a transcript of the Divine character, and an exposition of man's duty and is deserving of the utmost attention on our part. This law has never yet been abrogated. Sooner shall heaven and earth pass away than one tittle of the commandments cease. When we read them or hear them read, we should pray, "Lord incline my heart to keep this law."

V. 2 contains the preface whose object is to recall the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and therefore the obligation to keep his commandments. Lest any should think that this is peculiar to the Hebrews, we are taught that this preface has a voice to us, that because God is the Lord and our God and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep His commandments. In other words, because we have been delivered from a worse bondage, and are under the rule and authority of God equally with Israel, therefore we are under as strong obligation to hearken to and keep God's commandments.

The first commandment is found in verse 3rd, which sets forth the true object of worship and forbids idolatry. Where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden, and where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded.

V. 4. There is a clear distinction between the first and second commandments. The first tells you *whom alone* you are to worship; the second *how* he is to be worshipped, viz., nei-

ther by carnal imagination nor carved images, but as He has appointed in His word. The Roman Catholic Church has left the whole second commandment out of the Decalogue, because it so pointedly condemns image worship, but this is "taking away from this Book," which is condemned in Rev. xxii. 19; and the addition of a second command against idolatry shows God's jealousy for His worship, and men's need of being cautioned against idolatry, both civil and spiritual. (1 John v. 21.)

V. 5. Jealous, i. e., allowing no rival. Visiting upon the children has been objected to, but by reference to Ezek. xxiii. you find that it is only when the children walk in the steps of their fathers, and that the punishment is confined to temporal judgments.

V. 6. Vast is the disproportion between the works of justice and mercy! Justice is to the third and fourth generation; mercy to thousands of generations.

V. 7. In vain, i. e., unnecessarily. Profanity is useless, false oaths are here forbidden, and as reverence lies at the root of religiousness, most necessary it is that this command should be inculcated. How many instances on record of the swearer being punished in this life. The blasphemer of old was sentenced. Lev. xxiv. 16. If vilifying the Queen is punishable, and defaming a man's character actionable, how much more heinous and to be one day punished will be the profanation of God's name, titles, attributes, ordinances, word and works. Let the young pause before mentioning in common conversation the dreadful Name of God, and let them join against profanity equally with intemperance.

V. 8. The fourth commandment is equally binding with the others. It was written on the tables of stone and preserved in the ark, and is therefore of the same authority and perpetuity with the other nine. Remember calls attention to the institution in Gen. ii., before the fall, so that the Sabbath was made for man and not for the Israelites, and is therefore binding upon all men at all times. The word Sabbath signifies rest. As to the keeping of the day see Shorter Catechism, Q. 60.

V. 10. Observe it is the seventh portion of our time He demands, no matter whether it be reckoned on the first day of the week or on the seventh, whether in Australia, where the Sabbath is necessarily on a different day from ours here, or in Nova Scotia; still it is just the seventh portion of time demanded. The day may therefore be changed; and we can allege good reason in favour of the change of the day, (Q. 59 Sh. Cat.) and yet the sanctification of the entire Sabbath under the name of the Lord's day (Rev. i. 10) holds. We may consider the Sabbath as a type. All types are of full force till the thing signified by them takes place; but the thing signified by the Sabbath is that rest in glory which remains for the people of God.

N. E.—Those countries and people that have observed the Sabbath have prospered;