

The Sabbath School.

LESSONS FOR JUNE.

FIRST SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—*Preparation for receiving the Law*.—Exodus xix. 1-13.

Sinai is between the two gulfs in which the Red Sea terminates. Robinson and Stanley have shewn very clearly that the scene of the glorious events described in this chapter and the 20th, is not that selected by the monks but in the same vicinity. Tradition in this, as in very many other cases, is wrong. The travellers mentioned point out a scene that answers fully to that described by Moses. The mountain peaks rise from six to eight thousand feet. A wide plain extends below—affording room for the encampment of the Israelites. *Sinai* from *Seneh*, the acacia bush which abounds here.

Vv. 1, 2.—The Israelites left Egypt on the 15th day of the first month, and reached Sinai on the 1st of the third month—that is in about 46 days. A few days of preparation were spent before the Mount, and then on the 50th day—Pentecost—Jehovah delivered the Law. The delivering of the Law, or Pentecost, was 50 days after the Passover. It was on the day of Pentecost that the Old Testament church was favoured with the greatest and most wonderful revelation of God and His will. What made this day remarkable in the history of the New Testament church? See Acts ii. 1.

V. 3.—*Went up unto God*—into the cloud which was the sign of God's presence. He was to be God's spokesman to the people and tell the terms on which Jehovah would enter into covenant with them.

V. 4.—Eagles' wings. See Deut. xxxii. 11, 12.

V. 5.—*Covenant*—the national Covenant promising possession of the Holy Land on condition of national obedience.

V. 6.—*Kingdom of priests*, separated from other people, having access to God, serving Him with acceptance.

V. 8.—The people were willing to accept God's terms and enter into the Covenant.

Vv. 9-13.—The Lord was to manifest Himself in awful majesty and due preparation was to be made on the part of the people. The washing of their clothes, and other observances, were signs of the purifying of their hearts. The Mount was not to be touched, to indicate the holiness of God. See Heb. xii. 18-21. The scene that followed was grand and awful: the thick cloud, the sound of the trumpet, the mountain burning with fire, the thunder and lightning, the signs and tokens of a present God!

LESSONS.

1. How condescending on the part of God to enter into covenant with people who were but lately a nation of slaves! We are slaves of sin, yet God is willing to receive us and make us partakers of the benefits of the Covenant of Grace.

2. The care of the eagle for its young, of the bird for its brood, all the love that is on earth is but a faint shadow of the love of God for His people and His care over them. We should remember God's past kindness, v. 4.

3. All the earth is God's, but we, if we serve Him, are His peculiar treasure, v. 5. See 1 Peter ii. 9.

4. Christ has made us kings and priests unto God. Rev. i. 4.

5. Moses spake to the children of Israel what God commanded him. So must ministers, teachers, and all who speak for God, be faithful to Him who sends them.

6. The people promised well, (v. 8) but alas, how soon they forgot their vows. Let us watch lest we should fall like them.

7. How awful is Mount Sinai, where God proclaims His law! We dare not approach Him there amid lightnings, thunder, earthquake, thick darkness, and the sound as of a trumpet. How then can we approach God? For a reply see Heb. xii. 24, &c.

DOCTRINE.

We should prepare to meet God. Amos iv. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 6; Matt. xxv. 13, &c.

SECOND SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—*Jesus teaches to pray*. Matt. vi. 1-18.

The Pharisees boasted of their righteousness, and Jesus here exposes its hollowness, first, in the matter of ALMSGIVING, vv. 1-4; second, with regard to PRAYER, vv. 5-15; third, with regard to FASTING, vv. 16-18. They gave their alms to be seen of men; they prayed in public places that men might see them; when they fasted they disfigured their faces that all might know of their fasting. Everything was done with an eye to effect—for show—for the praise of men.

V. 1.—In this verse read *righteousness* instead of *alms*. The warning applies to the three manifestations of "righteousness," alms, prayer, fasting. We are not to perform any duty merely to win the praise of men. Such a motive renders alms, prayer, and fasting valueless in the sight of God. *Almsgiving* is our duty towards our neighbour; *prayer*, towards God; *fasting*, towards ourselves.

V. 2.—*Trumpet*. Perhaps the Pharisees sounded a trumpet to collect the poor and to attract notice. The expression is probably figurative, meaning—Do not try to draw attention when you give alms. *Re-*