

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From the International Lessons for 1881, by Edwin W. Rice, as issued by American Sunday-School Union.)

LESSON VIII.

AUG. 21.]

THE MANNA

Exod. 16: 1-8.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 4.

1. And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt.

2. And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:

3. And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

4. Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.

5. And it shall come to pass that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.

6. And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the Lord hath brought you out from the land of Egypt:

7. And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the Lord: for that he heareth your murmurings against the Lord: and what are we, that ye murmur against us?

8. And Moses said, This shall be, when the Lord shall give you in the evening flesh to eat and in the morning bread to the full; for that the Lord heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him; and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.—JOHN 6: 32.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—The Lord feeds his people.

INTRODUCTORY.—The utter and signal destruction of Egypt's host with its leader precluding further pursuit, was the occasion of the song of praise which we have in Ex. 15: 1-21. Leaving the Red Sea they march into the wilderness to Marah, where there were bitter waters unfit to drink, until Moses, as directed by God, sweetened them by a tree which he cast into them. At Marah the Israelites, forgetful of the Almighty Hand which had led them, murmured against Moses. Thence they marched southeast to Elim.

TO THE SCHOLAR.—Notice the impatience of the Israelites, the faith of Moses, and the long-suffering mercy and love of God.

NOTES.—ELIM (the trees), a pleasant valley abounding in water and trees, 15: 27, where the Israelites probably halted several days. Its locality is near to either Wady Gharandel, or Wady Useit or Wady Taiyibeh, three of the most fertile spots in this part of the wilderness.—WILDERNESS OF SIN, a plain now desolate, wild and bare, extending along the east coast of the Red Sea, and called El Markha. At the time of the wanderings it may have afforded fair pasturage.—SINAI (burning bush), applied sometimes to the peninsula between the two arms of the Red Sea; sometimes to its central group of mountains or of one of them, also called Horeb. As to where the Law was given, see Introduction, next Lesson.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) ISRAEL'S FAITHLESS MURMURS. (II.) GOD'S FAITHFUL PROMISE. (III.) MOSES' EXPOSTULATION AND MESSAGE.

I. ISRAEL'S FAITHLESS MURMURS.—(1-3.) ELIM, see Notes; ALL THE CONGREGATION, perhaps hitherto they had marched in companies until they came together in the Wilderness of Sin, see Notes; SINAI, see Notes; SECOND MONTH, Zif or Ziv, our April or May; they had left Rameses on the 15th of the first month. Up to this time they had been provisioned, but now they were in a desert place and hungry; DIED BY THE HAND OF THE LORD, referring probably to that judgment by which all the first-born of Egypt died; FLESH POTS, an Egyptian word; TO THE FULL, plenty; ASSEMBLY, translated "church" in the Greek, Acts 7: 38.

II. GOD'S FAITHFUL PROMISE.—(4,5.) WILL RAIN, "am about raining," implying abundance; BREAD, food; FROM HEAVEN, the sky, marking its miraculous character; CERTAIN RATE EVERY DAY, or "a day's portion in its day," i.e., each day only enough for that day's use; PROVE, try them, whether they will trust him from day to day, and WALK IN MY LAW, i.e., obey the command to gather no more than one day's supply; SIXTH DAY, i.e., the day before Sabbath; PREPARE, see verse 23; TWICE AS MUCH, etc., i.e., enough for that day and the Sabbath, when there was none to gather, verse 27.

III. MOSES' EXPOSTULATION AND MESSAGE.—(6-8.) SAID, in order to appease their murmuring; AT EVEN, afternoon; SHALL KNOW, by what will take place; THE LORD, not Moses and Aaron; GLORY OF THE LORD, not the miraculous supply of food, but the wonderful manifestation mentioned in verse 10; AGAINST THE LORD, because Moses was God's representative; FLESH, of quails, verse 13; BREAD, verse 14, 15; NOT AGAINST US, BUT, etc., complaint and dissatisfaction against God.

TEACHINGS:

- (1.) How soon we forget God's past blessings. (2.) How sinful to repine against God's dealings. (3.) God provides food, but we must "gather" it. (4.) As our day is, so shall our strength be.

ILLUSTRATION.—Sin of Murmuring. "Consider that murmuring is a mercy-inbittering sin, a mercy-souring sin. As the sweetest things put into a sour vessel become sour, or put into a bitter vessel, bitter, so murmuring puts gall and wormwood into every cup of mercy that God gives into our hands. The murmurer writes 'Marah,' that is, bitterness, upon all his mercies: and he reads and tastes bitterness in them all. As 'to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet,' so to the murmuring soul every sweet thing is bitter."

CHRIST the TRUE TRIED RODDEN

Murmured at by the people who B laspheme him.
A bhorred by the great who R efuse him.
N eglected by the rich who E xclude him.
N ourishes the needy who A ccept him.
A ppeases the hungry who D esire him.

LESSON IX.

AUG. 23.]

THE COMMANDMENTS.

Exod. 20: 1-11.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 3-7.

1. And God spake all these words, saying, 2. I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

3. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. 4. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

5. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

6. And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

7. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

8. Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. 9. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work:

10. But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

11. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

GOLDEN TEXT.—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.—MATT. 22: 37, 38.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—The Lord is our law-giver.

INTRODUCTORY.—Leaving the wilderness of Sin, the Israelites reached Dophkah and then Alush, Num. 33: 12-14. At these places nothing of moment occurred. They arrived at Rephidim (now identified with Wady Feiran), where there being no water, they resort not only to murmurs, but almost to open rebellion against Moses, who again interceding, procured out of "the rock in Horeb" a miraculous supply, and called the place Massah and Meribah, to commemorate their temptation and strife. Some time probably after, they were called on to fight their first battle. Amalek opposes their march, but God being on their side they gain the victory. Read Ex. 17: 16. Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, hearing of all the wonders which God had wrought for Israel, visits Moses, and observing all his anxiety and labor, advised him to divide the people into companies, and appoint over each, rulers or arbiters to settle petty differences. Moses followed this reasonable counsel, and now, in the third month from the time they left Egypt, we find the people in the wilderness, which is at the foot of the range of the same name, where "the ten commandments" were given to Moses. As to this range it is now the prevailing opinion that Moses received the law from God on Jebel Musa (Mount of Moses), a mass 2 miles long by 1 broad, having at the north end a peak 7,363 feet high, and proclaimed it to the people from Ras Sufsafeh, the northern peak of Jebel Musa, which is 6,937 feet high. At the base of this peak is a plain, Er Rahah, 2 miles long by half a mile wide, which afforded more than sufficient standing room for the 2,000,000 Israelites.—See SCHAFF'S Bible Dict. This introduction will serve for the next lesson also.

NOTE.—THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, 34: 28, called by various names, 24: 22; 31: 18; Deut. 9: 9, 10, literally "the ten words" or decalogue, according to the Greek, were given to Israel as God's covenant, or contract, with it, and a testimony or witness against man's sinfulness. They are binding upon all men in all time, Matt. 5: 17-20. They are commonly divided into two parts; those referring to our duty to God, and those to our duty to man. "The number ten symbolizes the comprehensiveness and completeness of this moral law" which is summed up in Christ's golden rule. (Matt. 7: 12, cf. Rom. 13: 8-10; 1 Cor. 13.)

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) WITH REFERENCE TO GOD HIMSELF. (II.) WITH REFERENCE TO THE SABBATH.—GOD'S DAY.

I. WITH REFERENCE TO GOD HIMSELF.—(1-7.) GOD SPAKE, God uttered in the hearing of man and angels, Deut. 5: 4; Ps. 68: 17; Acts 7: 54; Gal. 3: 19; WORDS, precepts; LORD, Jehovah; HOUSE OF BONDAGE, or of slaves, referring to their servile condition; v. 2 gives the reason why God alone is to be worshipped: grateful love for deliverance. It is the preface; BEFORE ME, "before my face," meaning, "besides me"; GRAVEN IMAGE, or ANY LIKENESS, meaning any carved image or form, see Deut. 4: 15-19; for the purpose of worship as v. 5 explains; BOW DOWN NOR

SERVE THEM, not to be made for worship. They were not to be idolaters; JEALOUS, God is love, and love claims fidelity, and He is "jealous for his own honor;" VISITING THE INIQUITY, or wrong doing; not its guilty penalty, see Deut. 24: 16, but its consequences descend to nations and individuals; HATE ME, sin is practical hatred of God; SHOWING MERCY UNTO THOUSANDS, God's mercy endureth for ever, Ps. 138: 8; TAKE IN VAIN, use lightly, irreverently, and falsely; prohibits profanity and perjury; HOLD HIM GUILTY-LESS, pronounce innocent, acquit.

II. WITH REFERENCE TO THE SABBATH, GOD'S DAY.—(8-11.) REMEMBER, keep in mind, observe; SABBATH, "rest after labor"; KEEP IT HOLY, sanctify it, Deut. 6: 12, set it apart for sacred purposes; SEVENTH DAY, since Christ rose from the grave on the first day, Christians observe it instead of the seventh day; OF THE LORD, "unto the Lord"; THOU SHALT NOT DO ANY WORK, thou shalt do no strictly worldly work. See Christ's words and example, Matt. 12: 10-13; Mark 2: 23-28; STRANGER, foreigner, not a Jew. The law of Sabbath observance is world-wide; WITHIN THY GATES, within the whole district wherever they might be located; HALLOWED, made holy.

TEACHINGS:

- (1.) As Creator and benefactor God is entitled to make laws and demand obedience. (2.) God's law being just and right in itself requires observance. (3.) God's honor, as well as regard for his own law, cannot admit any other object to share in that allegiance which his creatures are bound to yield. (4.) Infringement of God's laws entails punishment not only on those who actually do so, but on others to whom they are related. (5.) God's mercy provides a remedy for the evil thereby sustained. (6.) The obligation to keep one day in seven holy is taught not only by the highest example and most direct command, but has been recognized by Christ's true disciples in all ages. (7.) In keeping the Sabbath shall we follow their example or the example of the world?

LESSON X.

SEPT. 4.

THE COMMANDMENTS.

Exod. 20: 12-21.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 12-17.

12. Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

13. Thou shalt not kill. 14. Thou shalt not commit adultery. 15. Thou shalt not steal.

16. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

17. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.

18. And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off.

19. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

20. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: or God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.

21. And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.

GOLDEN TEXT.—And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.—MATT. 22: 39, 40.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—The law is holy.

INTRODUCTORY.—Some suppose that the Commandments in last lesson were written on one of the two tablets of stone, 31: 18, and the six in this lesson on the other. It is more probable that each tablet contained five. Those of this lesson have direct reference to our duty to our fellow men.

TO THE SCHOLAR.—Study carefully the Daily Readings. Examine yourself, and see which of the commandments you have not broken in thought, word or deed. Go to Christ for strength.

NOTE.—THUNDERINGS, LIGHTNINGS, TRUMPET, MOUNTAIN, SMOKING, the terrific accompaniments of the giving of the law, 19: 20. They resembled closely the phenomena at the eruption of a volcano no volcano being at work, 19: 18. They were evidently miraculous, and meant to impress upon the people the solemnity of the occasion, the importance of the law, and the majesty and power of God. See Introduction to last lesson.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) SINS OF ACTION. (II.) SINS OF WORD AND THOUGHT. (III.) FEARING GOD.

I. SINS OF ACTION.—(12-15.) HONOR, revere, show regard; FATHER...MOTHER, as representing God. The range of this law extends to rulers; DAYS MAY BE LONG, i.e., that thou mayest live long in the land. Deut. 5: 16, cf. Eph. 6: 3. Though applying primarily to Israel, this promise is of wider application, as is proved by experience, KILL, "murder," applies only to the taking of human life from malice. On this and the next commandment, as to adultery, see Christ's words, Matt. 5: 21-32; STEAL, i.e., depriving either God or man of what belongs or is due to either, whether goods or money, reputation or estate.

II. SINS OF WORD AND THOUGHT.—(16, 17.) BEAR FALSE WITNESS, cf. Deut. 19: 16-19, "answer falsely," with reference to a court of justice; but applicable to all our intercourse with our NEIGHBOR, said by Rabbinists to mean only a fellow Jew; by Christ as equivalent to our fellow man, Luke 10: 25-37; COVET, "desire," Deut. 5: 21; the sin consists in allowing the desire to be a working motive to disobedience of any

commandment, as its scope implied. The Roman Catholic Church, omitting the Second Commandment, divides the Tenth into two, so as to retain the number ten.

III. FEARING GOD.—(18-21.) SAW, perception through any of the senses; here they heard and saw; THUNDERINGS, LIGHTNINGS, etc., see Note; NOISE OF THE TRUMPET, not from a real trumpet, but resembling the noise of the cornet made of a ram's horn, used by the priests for assembling the people; REMOVED, farther from the mountain; SPEAK THOU WITH US, they felt their need for a middle man; HEAR, give heed and obey; the heads of the people and elders spoke; LEST WE DIE, the awful phenomena terrified them, and made them dread destruction, Deut. 5: 23-27. They felt they could not hear God's words, but through Moses as their mediator; FEAR NOT, i.e., that God will destroy you. How often has it been graciously repeated by God himself; TO PROVE YOU, i.e., to give you an opportunity to show your obedience, trust; HIS FEAR MAY BE BEFORE YOUR FACES, i.e., that regard and reverence for him may be ever in your hearts and minds, and prevent you from sinning against him; MOSES DREW NEAR, "was made to draw near"; THICK DARKNESS probably of the cloud upon the mount, 19: 16.

TEACHINGS:

- (1.) Listen your words and your feelings; God does; they may be assiduous as any deed. (2.) Be satisfied with what God gives you. (3.) God is terrible to the sinner, but becomes a loving Father through Christ. (4.) Through our Mediator we can come to God at all times and in every place. (5.) Every "temptation" or "trial" is an opportunity to show our faith and love.

GOD'S LAWS ARE HIS

I. JUDGMENTS, VI. COMMANDMENTS,
II. ORDINANCES, VII. STATUTES,
III. WORDS, VIII. PRECEPTS,
IV. WAYS, IX. NAME,
V. FAITHFULNESS, X. TESTIMONIES.

PSALM 119.

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