

English Teacher's Notes.

This narrative affords a striking and a sad illustration of the instability of good resolutions. A few weeks only have elapsed since Jehovah came down with thunder and lightning, with fire and smoke, on the top of Sinai—a sight, one would think, never to be forgotten even when far away from the scene—and Israel is still encamped in full view of the holy mountain. Yet already had they forgotten the solemn words trumpeted forth in their ears, and their own not less solemn promises of obedience, and have deliberately broken the plainest of the commandments in the most literal sense—making to themselves a graven image, bowing down to it, and worshipping it. God's almost piteous lament over them seven hundred years afterward by the mouth of Hosea might well have been spoken even at this early period: "O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? For your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away." Hosea vi. 4.

Yet might not this divine expostulation be still more fitly addressed to us? How far greater are our privileges than Israel's! Yet how readily are we drawn out of the path of steadfastness!

At first it seems as if the people broke both the First and Second Commandments; but the former was not really infringed, except by the setting up of their own wills against God's. For they evidently regarded the golden calf neither as a god itself nor as the image of some heathen deity, but as the representation to them of their own God who had brought them out of Egypt. (See ver. 4; Psa. cvi. 20.) Yet it is in this way that idolatry is fostered. In Greece and Rome of old (see Acts xvii. 29) the better informed among the people professed to worship, not the idol, but the invisible deity whose image it was—and so in India and Africa now; but this soon gives place, in the minds of the poor and ignorant, to the actual worship of the visible and tangible piece of wood, or stone, or metal. The same result follows in Roman Catholic countries; priests and doctors may distinguish between the worship offered to God and the adoration paid to images, but no such distinction can be grasped by the mass of the people. Hence the absolute prohibitions of the Second Commandment, which are not arbitrary, but dictated by God's unerring knowledge of our human nature.

The particular form of the image Aaron made was derived from the worship of the country

they had just left, the bull Apis being one of the principal Egyptian idols. This greatly enhances the guilt of the people, and it led naturally to the adoption of the shameless games and dances that accompanied Egyptian worship, (see vers. 6, 19, 25,) which contrasted with the purity enjoined on them when approaching the presence of Jehovah, (chap. xix :) shows that the golden calf really served to mind them, not, as they professed, of the God who brought them out of the land of Egypt, but of the gods some of them had worshipped in the land of Egypt. (See Josh. xxiv 14.)

I believe that in many of the populous cities there is a great need to warn children against the image-worship of the Church of Rome; but even where this is not the case, the lesson may suggest a most practical application. For the worship of some earthly object, even while we profess to be, and think we are, worshipping God, is common enough among old and young.

To explain this show by Psa. lxxiii. 6; lxxiii. 25, what true worship involves, and then ask, What do *you* "remember on your bed?" What is that beside which *you* "desire nothing upon earth?" Look at Phil. iii. 19, "whose god is their belly;" at 2 Tim. iii. 4, "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God;" at Psa. lii. 7, "the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches." "These be thy Gods!" is what we may justly say to too many boys and girls. Some, like Esau, make a god of their appetites; some, like Herod the tetrarch, of their pleasures; some, like the young ruler, of their money. But think—can our appetites, or our pleasures, or our money deliver us out of bondage, the bondage of sin, and lead us to the heavenly Canaan? No, God alone can do that; therefore cleave to him, and to him only.

Do we want an image of God because he is so far above and beyond us? Well, he has given us one. Christ, the God-man Jesus, is "the image of the invisible God," (Col. i. 15,) "the express image of his person," (Heb. i. 3;) and "he that hath seen him" hath "seen the Father," (John xiv. 9.) Learn the character of Jesus, and you will "know God." See John i. 18.

Blackboard Exercises.

Our last blackboard lesson set forth that which we should keep *in* our hearts; the present lesson illustrates what should be kept *out* of our