

supposed to be utterly incorrigible. Lord Shaftesbury inquired of the poor fellow, "Shall I make a man of you?" "Yer can try," was the despairing answer, "but yer can't do it." Still he added, "I'll try too." He did try, though it was a hard matter, and in two years the once incorrigible criminal was filling a respectable position, reclaimed from vice and misery by the kindness and pains of the Christian nobleman.

Now this was a covenant—an agreement—in which both parties undertook something. The nobleman undertook to be the poor criminal's friend, and to "make a man" of him. But the criminal undertook to go through the needful discipline (in a strict reformatory) and to do his utmost towards realizing the kind intentions of his benefactor. It was a covenant in which the kindness, the condescension, the grace, were all on one side. But, on the other side, there was loyalty to that kindness and earnest co-operation with it. Both parties fulfilled the conditions, and very happy and blessed was the result.

We read to-day about a covenant very similar in its beginning, but very different in its ending. The kindness, the grace, the condescension, were all on one side. God had chosen not a great nation, but "the fewest of all peoples" (Deut. 7. 7), a race sunk in Egypt, in ignorance, misery, and even in idolatry (Josh. 24. 14), to be his own peculiar people, and undertake to do great things for them. But there was something required on their side. See chap. 20. 5, 6. They must promise obedience to God's commandments as set before them by Moses. To this end, after their first preliminary promise twice repeated (chap. 19. 8; 24. 3), a solemn assembly was held, and the law which had been written down by Moses was read in their hearing. Then followed the third and most solemn repetition of the promise of obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifice, showing that only through blood could God enter into covenant with sinners at all. And after the sprinkling of blood came the wonderful sight—Aaron and the seventy elders being brought, as well as Moses, near to God, and granted a wonderful and blessed vision of his glory.

But this covenant was never observed by Israel; in the very next lesson we shall read how they failed at the very outset to fulfill their part. And therefore the Golden Text points unto a "better covenant, established upon better promises." Heb. 8. 6. The terms of the first ran thus: If ye will obey my voice and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people." In the second there is no "if" and "then;" it is simply and absolutely, "I will be to them a God and they shall be my people." And mark the contrast as shown in the three principal points of the passage referred to.

First. There was "the book of the covenant," which Moses read in the ears of the people. It was a book of laws to be kept. And when the Israelites had heard it they answered, "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." But the

book of the new covenant, or Testament, as it is called in the Epistle to the Hebrews, is not a book of things to be done, but of things which have been done; it is not an announcement of law, but a narrative of grace. It relates how the work that sinners never could have performed was performed for them by Christ. The question is not now of fulfilling, but of accepting the covenant.

Second. There was "the blood of the covenant." But Israel saw only the type and shadow of the reality. It was the blood of "bulls and of goats" which was sprinkled on them. Heb. 9. 19. But sinners now can look back on the atoning death of Christ, and see his precious blood shed for them, and know that by that blood they are cleansed once and forever. Heb. 10. 2, 48.

Third. There was what we may term the fellowship of the covenant. After the promise made and the sprinkling of blood, "there went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel." They had not only a sight of the glory of God, but in the sight of that glory they held a sacrificial meal, "They saw God and did eat and drink," the type and expression of fellowship. But this was a special and isolated case. The majority of the people did not participate in it, nor did they in any sense come near unto God, except as represented by the priests. But every one who accepts Christ now enters into the full fellowship of the covenant and has "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." Heb. 10. 19.

The Lesson Council.

Question 1. What was the book of the covenant?

The collection of laws contained in Exodus 20. 22; 23. 33; which are probably the oldest written legislation of the Pentateuch.—Prof. M. S. Terry, D.D., Garret Biblical Institute.

The weight of authority seems to be that it included so much of Exodus as lies between 20. 22 and 23. 33, or possibly to 24. 2; to this some add the ten commandments. The interval evidences show that parts of this came from the Patriarchs 20. 24-26; 21. 6; 23. 19, etc., and their great respect for the fathers led Moses to adopt these maxims into this book of the covenant. Between these verses we have, (1) the essential forms of worship, 20. 22-26, (2) the civil and moral rights of the Jews between themselves, and between the nation and Jehovah, 21. 1-23; 19, and (3) the attitude of Jehovah to the children of Israel. 23. 30-33.—A. D. Vail, D.D.

The book of the covenant primarily included the paternal and national covenant made by God to Abraham (see Gen. 17. 1-14) respecting the future of Israel, and which was transmitted from generation to generation, as an inspiration to unity, activity, and success; but more comprehensively it included the entire legal economy established by and through Moses, as recorded in Exod. 20., together with all the minor precepts and promises given at various times and in various places during their long and eventful history in the wilderness.—Rev. J. W. Mendenhall, D.D., Ph.D.

Writings containing the laws of the four foregoing chapters, namely, 20. 23, which are often designated "the Mosaic covenant." Possibly embraced historical traditions from the Patriarchs, decisions of law, and