

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

INTRODUCTORY. Moses was summoned alone into the Divine presence and continued in the mount with God forty days (Ex. 24: 18). During this time he received instructions regarding the priesthood, the tabernacle and the Sabbath. Two stone tablets were also given him upon which God himself had written the Ten Commandments (31: 18). The parallel narrative is found in Deut. 9: 11-21.

LESSON PLAN. I. Sin. vs. 1-6. II. Wrath. vs. 7, 8. III. Intercession. vs. 30-35.

I. SIN. 1. Delayed—He was gone about 40 days (Ex. 24: 18; Deut. 9: 9) if we are to include the week with the leaders in the lower part of the mountain (24: 9, 16). **Gathered themselves together**—The word implies "in a tumultuous manner". Doubtless the "mixed multitude" (Ex. 12: 38) contributed a good deal to the discontent but the blame is never thrown on them. **Unto Aaron**—He had been made Moses' deputy (24: 17). **Make us gods**—R. V. marg. "A god." They demand a visible object of worship. It was a breach of the second commandment that was proposed. This is the craving of all ritualism. (Rom. 1: 20-25; Col. 1: 15; Heb. 11: 27.) Priests and doctors of divinity 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. In condescension to the weakness of our finite nature God has given us a representation of himself which we may worship with all our hearts. (Col. 1: 15; Heb. 1: 3; John 14: 9; 1: 8.) **This Moses the man**—They speak slightly of him. He had not been a great while known to the mass of the people. Thousands of them had only seen him at a distance. He seemed to have abandoned them, or to have perished in the flames on the summit of the mountain. The daily manna and the cloud-enveloped Sinai had become too common to impress them. **We wot not**—sounds very like "we care not".

2. Aaron said—The narrative is necessarily condensed, but there is no hint that Aaron tried to dissuade them. He weakly yielded at once. (Deut. 9: 20.) One with God on his side would have been more than a match for them all. Moses often faced the angry tribes alone. (1 Chr. 16: 11; 29: 12; Ps. 68: 35; Jas. 1: 5.) Some supposed that he hoped, by making such a demand, he would ask something which they would refuse and so give him an excuse for not complying with their request, or at least temporizing until Moses returned. Crafty measures, when principles should be asserted, never succeed. **Golden ear-rings** R. V.—"Rings." The word stands for nose-rings as well. These were worn by both men and women. They were massive and of solid gold.

3. People readily make greater sacrifices in order to gratify their own fancies than they are willing to make for the cause of Christ.

4. He fashioned it—Probably a wooden model was made. Then the gold was cast into plates and beaten out. The model was then overlaid with the gold and carefully finished and engraved. **A molten calf**—The idea

was borrowed from the worship of the sacred bull (*Apis*) in Egypt, but this was not an image of Apis but of Jehovah. The Chaldeans also worshipped the bull; but with them it was usually winged and human-headed, representing the combination of wisdom, strength, and omnipresence. The only painting of Mnevis, another Egyptian bovine deity, that has been discovered, is bright yellow, evidently intended to represent a golden image. (Compare Judges 17: 34; 1 Kings 12: 28; Rom. 1: 23; Isa. 42: 8.) **This is thy god** (R. V. marg.)—It was a symbol of Jehovah. (Ps. 106: 19, 20.)

5. When Aaron saw it—How the people regarded the calf. This would seem as if Aaron was without any plan of action and was carried along by the multitude. He adroitly, as he doubtless thought, drew the people back to thoughts of Jehovah. He was simply going on from bad to worse. **A feast to the Lord**—Calling it that did not make it any the less idolatrous. Aaron could not in this way retrace the false step he had taken.

6. Burnt offerings—These were wholly consumed by fire. **Peace offerings**—Part burnt, part given to the priests, and the rest consumed by the worshippers. "There is nothing about sin offerings in connection with this new worship."—(Lange.) (1 Cor. 10: 7.) **Sat down to eat**—A sacrificial feast. Such feasts were enjoined as part of the Mosaic ritual. But this one was doubtless characterized by licentiousness, gluttony and drunkenness, after the manner of heathen orgies. **Rose up to play**—Not innocent games, but disgusting and shameless excesses (verse 19, 25). "The words imply not only such sports as singing, dancing, and merry making in general, but in some cases also a species of conduct which the epithet 'wanton' as correctly defines as any term which we deem it proper to employ."—(Bush.) (Judges 21: 21; 1 Sam. 18: 6, 7; 2 Sam 6: 5; 1 Kings 18: 26.)

II. WRATH. 7. Go, get thee down—**"Make haste to descend."** (33: 1; Deut. 9: 12.) **Thy people**—God disowns them. For the moment they cease to be His people. Moses feels keenly the implied rejection. **8. Quickly**—So soon is the covenant broken. Their ingratitude to their Redeemer is all the more glaring. **A molten calf**—The language of infinite contempt. "In these days a certain school choose to represent God as looking down coldly and calmly on sin, and dealing with it in quite an unimpassioned manner, but Revelation does not thus reveal God. He hates sin; He waxes hot against sinners; He is grieved at His heart. Is not this whole picture of the apostasy of Israel suggestive of our own age