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for
TEACHERS
AND
YOUNG PEOPLE.

Vol. XXIX.]

JULY, 1895.

[No 7.

The Cathedral Chimes.

I CLIMBED the winding stairway
That led to the belfry tower,
As the sinking sun in the westward
Heralded twilight's hour.

For I thought that surely the music
Would be clearer and sweeter far
Than when through the din of the city
It seemed to float from afar.

But lo, as I neared the belfry,
No sound of music was there;
Only a brazen clangour
Disturbed the quiet air.

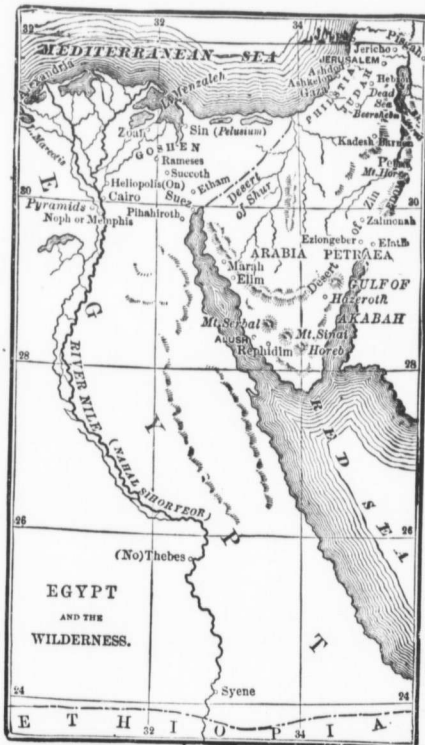
The ringer stood at the keyboard,
Far down beneath the chimes,
And patiently struck the noisy keys,
As he had uncounted times.

He only knew his duty,
And he did it with patient care;
But he could not hear the music
That floated through the air.

Only the jar and the clamour
Fell harshly on his ear,
And he missed the mellow chiming
That everyone else could hear.

So we from our quiet watch towers
May be sending a sweet refrain,
And gladdening the lives of the lowly,
Though we hear not a single strain.

Our work may seem but a discord,
Though we do the best we can;
But others will hear the music,
If we carry out God's plan.



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Sunday School Banner.

W. H. WITHROW, D.D., EDITOR.

TORONTO, JULY, 1895.

Epworth League and Sunday-school Progress.

At the recent meeting of the joint Sunday-school and Epworth League Board in Toronto, the Rev. Dr. Withrow, who for the last twelve years has acted as secretary of the Sunday-school Board, and for the last five and a half years secretary of the Epworth League in Canada, submitted the following report, the publication of which was requested by the Board:

The retiring secretary of the Sunday-school and Epworth League Board has pleasure in presenting his report on the work of this joint Board as submitted to the late General Conference, with such supplementary information as he has since been able to gather. From the reports made to the secretary and to the Rev. T. Albert Moore, Superintendent of Junior League work, the following additional figures have been tabulated: Epworth Leagues reported at the General Conference, 1,032; Epworth Leagues reported to me up to May 1st, 1895, 182 (of these 116 are Epworth Leagues of Christian Endeavor, and 66 Epworth Leagues simply); Junior Leagues, 126; increase, 308; total, 1,340. These will be still further supplemented by the complete returns from the conferences.

The increase in the number of schools, of

teachers and scholars, has been exceedingly satisfactory, that of schools in the last eight years being 622; of teachers and officers, 4,024, and scholars, 61,361. This indicates the deep sympathy and hearty co-operation of our ministers and members in Sunday-school work, inasmuch as this large increase has been reached without the aid of a travelling secretary, and without one penny of expense in the way of secretarial expenses, beyond a very trifling amount for postage and similar office expenditure.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL AID FUND.

A very important element in this growth of our schools has been the Sunday-school Aid and Extension Fund. This began on a very small scale twenty years ago, the first year's income being \$297, which increased to \$4,720 in 1893.

In the last twelve years, during which time the present secretary has had the administration of this fund, schools have been required to contribute in part payment toward the grants made. These part payments have increased from \$193 in 1883, to \$1,974 in 1893. In 1894, on account of the stringency of the times there was a falling-off in both collections and part payments.

The amount of correspondence in connection with the Sunday-school and Epworth League department has grown to very large proportions, and has absorbed a great deal of the time and attention of the secretary, the number of communications reaching over five thousand a year. The labours of my secretary were recognized by this Board for the two years ending respectively July 1st, 1893, and July 1st, 1894, by a grant of \$50 each year from the Epworth League Fund, and respectful application is made for a similar amount for the year ending the 1st July, 1895.

The requests for grants for poor and destitute schools have been so numerous, and in many cases so urgent, and the evidences of extreme need have been so great, that this Sunday-school Aid and Extension Fund, which is sustained by annual collections from our schools throughout the Connexion, has been to a considerable extent overdrawn. The overdraft was largely caused by the failure to obtain the anticipated advance in collections through the conferences for 1893 and 1894, and in part payments, there being, owing to the financial stringency of the times, instead of such advance a considerable decrease. During the current year efforts have been made to increase the amount of grants, and to insist upon larger part payments. A special appeal has been made for an increase in the annual subscriptions, to the conferences.

NEWFOUNDLAND.

The financial crisis in Newfoundland has, however, caused a special distress and increased need in the schools of that colony. In many

cases the need was so great that it was felt it would be cruel to deprive the schools, and to a large degree the entire adult population of almost, if not quite, the sole religious reading they received, and grants were continued though in a lessened degree, even in the face of smaller anticipated part payments. Very many expressions of gratitude have been received, and very blessed revivals have visited schools and churches, both in St. John's and in the outports.

My own visit to the Island last summer gave me such a conception of the poverty of the people and the needs of these schools as I had not before. In many places the people see no money the whole year round, their earnings being received in orders on the local stores. In some cases the scholars collected and sold fish in order to pay for their grants. No fund in our Church is more purely missionary in its character than this Sunday-School Aid and Extension Fund, and the general testimony is, that none is doing with so small an amount, so large an amount of good. Besides the money thus expended, through the kindness of schools and friends in sending second-hand books and papers, the secretary has distributed, gratuitously, to poor schools, over 50,000 volumes of books, and many thousands of papers sent him for that purpose.

The papers also increase the regularity of attendance at school, and the holding of the schools the whole year round. The annual report shows that 417 schools were kept open the entire winter, which were closed the winter before.

The missionary givings in our Sunday-schools have been well sustained, some schools having given the entire amount of their weekly collections to the Missionary Fund. The legislation of the General Conference has suggested the additions to the collections to be taken in the schools, one for the Educational Fund, and one for the Superannuation Fund. It is expected that, as the Sunday-school Aid and Extension Fund collections have grown from very small beginnings to very large proportions, these collections also, in time, will increase, and will create an intelligent sympathy with the various benevolences of our Church.

The growth of the Epworth League in Canada has not been surpassed in proportion to our numbers by its growth in the great Methodist Episcopal Church, and it has not been nearly equalled by the growth of the League in the Methodist Episcopal Church South, with five times our membership. This has been chiefly caused by the hearty co-operation of the brethren upon the circuits, inasmuch as the secretary has not been able, in addition to his increasing editorial labours, to respond to more than comparatively few of the requests to do field work in the interests of either Leagues or Sunday-schools.

The testimony that reaches the secretary is that the growth of the schools and the greater

regularity of attendance has been very greatly promoted by the Sunday-school periodicals. Notwithstanding keen competition from undenominational, broad-gauge American rivals, the circulation of our own papers has been exceedingly gratifying, that of *Onward* during the last year being an increase of over 2,000 copies, and that of the other papers having steadily advanced from year to year. We now issue considerably more than one Sunday-school paper for every scholar in our schools, an average far in excess of the average of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States or any other Church that I know of.

THE NEW SECRETARY.

The secretary, in retiring from the duties of the office, which he has discharged to the best of his ability, but in a manner far below his ideal, wishes to put on record, first, his devout gratitude to God for the great development of our Sunday-schools and Epworth Leagues, and second, his sincere and heart-felt thanks to the members of successive Boards who have given him such hearty co-operation and support, and especially to Warring Kennedy, Esq., the indefatigable treasurer, who amid the many duties of his busy life has ever taken a profound interest in our Sunday-school work, and has preserved an annual record with the greatest minuteness and fidelity of every penny's receipts and expenditure, including the amount in dollars and cents granted to every school throughout the Connexion, and the amount contributed in part payment by such schools. The kind co-operation and sympathy of the ministers and Sunday-school superintendents and officers throughout the Connexion, their many words of kindly sympathy and commendation have been an unpeakable joy amid the often onerous and exacting duties of the office. I bespeak for my successor in the discharge of its obligations, what I am sure he shall have, the same generous sympathy of this joint Board, of its two treasurers and of the faithful ministry and laity of the Methodist Church in Canada and Newfoundland.

By the blessing of God we may look for, under the administration of a special Sunday-school and Epworth League Secretary, a new era of unequalled growth and development. The man to whom this labour is assigned, and who can give his whole time to this important sphere of operation, will occupy a position of unique influence. He can lay his hand upon a lever of more than Archimedian power to lift the world up nearer to the heart of God; he can aid as can no other man in the moulding and development of the Church of to-morrow, which is to-day in our schools and our leagues. With the generous help of the pastorate and laity—for no man can do this work alone, it is too mighty for the mightiest—he can help to lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes of the tabernacle of Methodism in this land. By the promotion of the home department of

our Sunday-schools, of teachers' institutes, and Bible study courses of reading, of which the present writer has been able to do little, he can promote that greatest need of our schools and leagues—more efficient teaching and studying of the Word of God. So shall the Church of the future be trained as never before for Christian activity. So shall our sons grow up as plants in their youth. So shall our daughters be as corner-stones polished after the similitude of a palace.

A Half-Hundred Suggestions for the Superintendent.

BY HENRY SCHADE.

1. Be a man of prayer, push, pluck, punctuality, patience.
2. Be in hearty sympathy with the pastor, consult often.
3. Be at school before time, to greet teachers and scholars.
4. Begin and close all meetings on time. Wait for none; Christ is never late.
5. Be on the alert at every communion for new teachers, permanent and substitute.
6. Be at least one week in advance of lesson study.
7. Be on the quick alert to notice any special interest in the school.
8. Begin all meetings—business, study, social—with singing and prayer.
9. See that library books are not distributed before close of session.
10. See that all teachers have class books of their own.
11. Speak of the revision of class records at the close of each quarter.
12. Speak occasionally of giving as an act of worship.
13. Have pianist play first line before singing.
14. Have singing after Scripture reading and prayer, to admit late comers.
15. Have special funds for library, Christmas, etc.
16. Have doors locked during reading and prayer.
17. Have everything in the exercises bear on the lesson for the day.
18. Plan your work outside, work your plan inside.
19. Make much of the teachers' meetings; also church and Young People's Society of Christian Endeavour.
20. Make a liberal use of the mail to get large attendance and interest.
21. Prepare slips for each day's exercises.
22. Plan ahead for quarterly exercises; prefer review.
23. Never scold from the platform; reprove lovingly if needed.
24. Never allow interruption in class study.
25. Write letters of congratulation and counsel to converts.
26. Visit as much as you can, especially the sick.
27. Ring warning-bell five minutes before close of lesson.
28. Let no concerts, anniversaries, etc., interfere with lesson study.
29. Put title, golden texts, central thought, on blackboard; drill on them.
30. After ringing the bell, wait for perfect order; second ring must be an exception.
31. Encourage scholars to bring their own Bibles.
32. Use discretion in selection of your helpers in opening exercises.
33. Do not conclude that a delegated work needs no looking after.
34. Endeavour to clinch the nails of truth taught by illustration.
35. Make the most of an answer in teachers' meeting.
36. Acquaint yourself with every department of the work.
37. Keep an eye on all without interference.
38. Commendation better than fault-finding.
39. Listen to no tale-bearers.
40. Never speak ill of one to another.
41. Show no preference for favouritism.
42. Do not teach, unless absolutely necessary.
43. If a reward is offered, see that it is given.
44. Be firm without being arbitrary or arbitrary.
45. Be approachable to teachers and scholars.
46. See that the hymn-books, etc., are distributed before the opening.
47. Don't try to do all the work yourself.
48. Never be content with present attainments; make Excelsior your motto.
49. Do not be constantly making changes. Hold fast to the good.
50. Never forget that the pastor is also head of the school.—*Sunday-school Times*.

How Can We Study the Bible?

THIS question was asked by a Sabbath-school scholar, of his teacher, not many days ago. It is a pertinent question. We suggest some answers.

1. Go aside, where you will be alone, and ask the Lord to help you to understand the truth. This is the most important of all preparations.
2. Put yourself as near as may be in the circumstances of the writer. For instance, in the lesson of Ephesians or Colossians or Philemon, try to grasp the fact that Paul was writing from a Roman prison and in the face of possible or probable death for the sake of Christ.
3. Ascertain and enter into the circumstances of the people addressed. Find out what intelligence they had, what spiritual privileges, and

what laws and customs. This from Bible dictionaries.

4. Seek for the main object or purpose of the book. No man writes without aiming to accomplish something by his writing. And a phrase has a very different significance according to the aim or purpose then before the author. It will pay to spend much time on this, for there are many great misunderstandings that arise from the failure to do this. For instance: Many readers approach the Epistle to the Romans with the feeling that it is the epistle of predestination, and they read it in more or less of a combative mood. On the contrary, it is an epistle of salvation by grace and love, as opposed to the idea of a salvation by purchase on the part of the sinner. Be sure to get the main object of the writer clearly in mind.

5. Ascertain the aim of the chapter or section of the book that is under consideration, and then you will apprehend the relation of each verse to this object.

6. If in any doubt as to the exact meaning of some particular verse, use the marginal references freely. They will guide you to other passages in which the same idea is expressed in different phraseology, or in which some slightly variant form of the idea is given. This will help greatly.

7. In pausing to ponder over a verse, other verses which would throw light on it often come to mind, but at the moment we cannot lay hands on them. For such occasions always have a good concordance at hand and use it freely.

8. If you have a Teacher's Bible, do not hesitate to use the "index" freely. The difference between the concordance and the index is that the concordance will point you to texts which contain some particular word that is in mind. The "index" points you to passages that bear on the theme in hand, though the phraseology be utterly different.

9. Use good commentaries as aids to suggest thought. Do not follow them slavishly, but avail yourself of their suggestions.

10. Seek opportunities to talk over the passage in hand with some thoughtful friend.--*The Presbyterian Journal.*

Sunday-school Officers.

THEIR SELECTION.

1. They should be chosen from the very best material the church affords, apart from all considerations of mere "policy" or personal compliment.

2. The three conditions of choice should be: First, a genuine *piety*; second, a *willingness* to take the office and make the most of it; third, *capability* and *expediency*. The last is worth little without the others.

3. There should be an *annual election*, at which each officer, according to his deserts, should be re-elected or displaced.

4. Age and experience are better qualifications than youth and inexperience. Too many schools are "daubing with untempered mortar."

I. THE MISSIONARY.

Every Sunday-school should have one or more somebody with the pastoral instinct—going the year round from house to house upon his twofold mission: first, to find and bring in *new scholars*; second, to follow up and reclaim the scholars who are slipping away. His work should be reported to the school quarterly and to the church annually.

II. THE SECRETARY.

1. He should be provided with a good *record book*, and keep it accurately and neatly.

2. His record should contain—(a) the complete roll of officers, teachers and scholars; (b) the actual attendance from week to week; (c) the *individual attendance record* of every officer, teacher and scholar; (d) the weekly minutes of the school.

3. The weekly report should be read by the secretary from the platform in such a way as to be *heard and understood by the school.*

III. THE TREASURER.

A practical and successful business man makes the best treasurer.

1. His book should show, in order, plainly: (a) The receipts and collections of the school, posted weekly, and balanced and reported each week and quarter; (b) the items of expenditure of the school, with date, amount and voucher for each; (c) an *individual credit account* with each member of the school, exhibiting at a glance how well the *habit* of systematic giving is being developed in each.

2. Along with the regular weekly report it would be well to bulletin before the eyes of the school some educative items like the following (taken from the blackboard of a New York mission school by the writer):

TO-DAY'S OFFERING.

February 25.

Total present	560
Number giving.....	490
Number not giving.....	70
Amount given	\$15 80
Average	24-5c.

IV. THE LIBRARIAN.

1. In a school with a library of reading books—(a) he must know the books, and guide the scholars in their selection; (b) he must keep the books from loss and damage; (c) he must secure

their distribution and return by a method quick and quiet, and that does not interrupt the work of the school.

2. Apart from a library (which few schools have) the librarian—(a) should purchase all needed "helps" for the school, and have charge of them; (b) should distribute supplies, song-books, Bibles, papers, etc., *before or after* the school session, and not while it is at work; (c) should invent a plan of preventing the property of the school from being carelessly or wantonly carried off to the homes. This ought to be done, and can be done.

V. THE CHORISTER.

The chorister (and organist) should—(a) select the music for the day in advance of the session; (b) should persist in securing general work and hearty singing from the entire school; (c) should *drill the school frequently* in correct methods of congregational singing. The good chorister, whether musical expert or not, is the one who gets everybody to sing; to sing without dragging, and to sing "with the spirit and the understanding."

VI. THE SUPERINTENDENT.

He is "the eye, the ear, and the last word."

1. He should have one or more assistant superintendents, for use rather than ornaments, and should *train them* to take charge of the several parts of the programme until they can slip familiarly into any place.

2. He should come to the school before it begins, in time to see that everything and everybody are in place.

3. He should make a special study in advance of each day's programme, and keep it "out of the ruts."

4. He should make provision for absent teachers, and a supply of new teachers, as needed.

5. He should *not* teach a class, unless in some emergency, but should give his time and watchful oversight to the management of the school.

6. As far as possible he should come in touch with teachers and scholars in *their homes*. He will win victories there that would be lost in the schoolroom.

7. He should be a loyal and intelligent *Methodist*, and train his school in the ways and doctrines of his Church, and form in them a habit of church attendance and support.

8. He should be a faithful Bible student, and should maintain a "teachers' meeting."

9. He should aim to make of his school these three things: First, an *orderly* school, known for its good manners; second, an *intelligent* school, versed in the Bible, the Catechism, and history of his Church; third, a *reverent* school, where scholars are brought to Christ and built up in Christian character.

VII. THE PASTOR.

The pastor is *ex officio* an officer of the school.

1. He should attend every session.

2. If he teaches (which is not best), it should be a teacher-training class of young Christians.

3. He should help specially in the teachers' meetings and the lesson review of the school.

4. He should keep in close touch with officers, teachers and scholars *as pastor*.

5. He should have right of way, under proper limitation of time, to speak to the school as he pleases.

6. He should carry pencil and notebook, as chief recruiting officer of the school, in all pastoral visiting.

7. He should at times preach to the scholars directly, and exhort the adult membership of the church as to its duty to attend and help in the Sunday-school.—*Sunday-school Magazine*.

Spiritual Results.

REV. J. MADISON HARE.

THE question naturally arises, "What are the spiritual conditions of the Burlington Sunday-school?" To which it is replied, that about nine-tenths of those uniting with the Church come from the Sunday-school. In the selection of teachers, spirituality and a devoted Christian life are the first qualifications. Several of the classes hold their own prayer-meetings after the Sunday-school session. Here young Christians are encouraged to take part and the unconverted urged to decision.

The teachers are the pastor's helpers or workers in the after-meeting held every Sunday night during eight months in the year, at which time they take their places in various parts in the room, and when any persons express desire to seek Christ, they accompany them to the inquiry room.

Teachers are encouraged to pray for their scholars. They are encouraged to do faithful work and not worry over results, which is the Lord's business. Frequently the subject of the mid-week prayer service is related to the Sunday-school. The one solemn purpose above and beyond all others is to win the unconverted to Christ and to secure spiritual results in the Christian life.—*Baptist Superintendent*.

THERE are one hundred and twenty thousand lepers in India. It is not considered that the segregation of these will diminish the number of lepers. Improved sanitation and good diet are the only means, and we may add improved morals, which reduced the number of lepers in Europe, and it is believed that these will do it in India. So says the report of the Government Commission on Leprosy.

Finishing thy Work.

FINISH thy work ; the time is short ;
The sun is in the West :
The night is coming down—till then
Think not of rest.

Finish thy work ; then wipe thy brow ;
Ungird thee from thy toil ;
Take breath, and from each weary limb
Shake off the soil.

Finish thy work ; then go in peace ;
Life's battle fought and won.
Hear from the throne the Master's voice :
" Well done ! Well done ! "

Finish thy work ; then take thy harp,
Give praise to God above ;
Sing a new song of mighty joy
And endless love.

Give thanks to Him who holds thee up
In all thy paths below ;
Who made thee faithful unto death,
And crowns thee now.

—W. H. Robert.

Book Notices.

An intensely interesting illustrated article in the weird ways, strange stories, and curious customs of "The Indians of America," by Rev. Dr. Pierson, opens the *Missionary Review of the World* for June. Dr. Josiah Tyler, author of "Forty Years Among the Zulus," follows with a description of some of the ignorance, degradation and cruelty practised in connection with "Fetichism in Africa." Two timely and able articles on "Madagascar" come from the pens of Rev. James Sibree and Rev. Geo. Cousins. "Arabia and Its Missions" furnishes the subject for another interesting paper accompanied by a map and illustrations. The work among "The Mountain Whites of America" is also graphically described by Mrs. S. M. Davis, recently returned from a visit to those neglected and degraded people of our land. Published monthly by the Funk & Wagnalls Co., 30 Lafayette Place, New York city. \$2.50 a year.

Religion in the Common Life ; or, Topics of the Day Regarded from a Christian Standpoint : A course of sermons delivered by various preachers of the Church of England. Cloth, 12mo, 168 pp. \$1.00. New York and Toronto : Funk & Wagnalls Company.

This is a volume of applied Christianity. It is no systematic attempt to solve all the problems of life, but it is a collection of discourses by various eminent divines, each one being

invited to pay particular attention to some one portion of the field. In this way variety and freedom of thought have been preserved, while unity of purpose has not been lost. The problems are just the ones for which most people are seeking solutions, and this effort to apply to them the principles of the Christian religion is happily conceived and skillfully carried out. Some of the titles of the discourses are : Religion and Social Uses of Discontent ; Use of Leisure a Test of Character ; Religion and Politics ; Is War Consistent with Christianity ? Fairness ; Social Power of the Holy Communion ; Amusements in the Light of Christian Ethics ; Individualism and Socialism ; Problems of the Poor ; Etc. Among the authors are : Archdeacon Farrar, Dean Pigon, Dr. Wace, Archdeacon Sinclair, Canon Browne and Rev. J. F. Kitto.

The Estrangement of Young People from Christianity. Translated from the French of Eugene Bersier, by J. E. RANKIN, D.D., LL.D., President of Howard University, Washington, D.C. Cloth, 16mo, 58 pp. 50 cents. New York, London and Toronto : Funk & Wagnalls Company.

This excellent address of Bersier is in the nature of a confidential talk with young men and women brought up in the Protestant faith, but who have reached that crisis in their lives in which the teachings of childhood no longer carry conviction and in which they must pass in review before their own minds the claims made by old beliefs. Every young person, M. Bersier thinks, must encounter this experience, and with many it is the decisive experience of life. It is the time when the instincts of the child begin to yield place to the reasoning powers that assert themselves and insist on putting all things to the test. The objections to Christianity that then begin to occur are touched upon in this little book with a most skilful hand, they are considered in a most candid spirit, and the fundamental truths of the Christian religion brought out as only a master of expression and one closely observant of the young could bring them out. It must prove most serviceable reading placed in the hands of those verging upon manhood and womanhood, and, read at the right moment, is likely to determine the destiny of the reader.

Messrs. Walter Baker & Co., the largest manufacturers of pure, high grade Cocos and Chocolates on this continent, have found it necessary to issue a special notice cautioning consumers of their goods against the recent attempts which have been made to substitute other manufactures, bearing labels, and done up in packages, in imitation of theirs. A sure test of genuineness is the name of WALTER BAKER & Co.'s place of manufacture—"DORCHESTER, MASS."

Primary Department.

In addition to the questions for intermediate and younger scholars in our lesson notes, we give the following:

B.C. 1491.]

[July 7.]

LESSON HELPS FOR EVERY DAY.

- M.* Read the lesson verses. Exod. xx. 1-17.
Tu. Learn what David says of God's law. Psalm xix. 7, 8.
W. Learn a prayer for you to offer. Psalm cxix. 18.
Th. Find that God does speak with men. Deut. v. 24.
F. Find what Jesus said about the law. Matt. v. 17.
S. Learn the beautiful law that Jesus gave. GOLDEN TEXT.
S. Learn how *you* can keep God's law. Rom. xiii. 10.

THE LESSON STORY.

You have not forgotten how the people of God were marching from Egypt to the promised Land.

We left the story a year ago with the passage across the Red Sea. Nearly three months later the great company encamped on a broad plain in full view of Mount Sinai, and there God spoke to them through Moses, His servant.

He said He would come down on Mount Sinai and speak to Moses so that the people could hear Him. He told Moses to tell the Israelites to wash themselves and be clean, and on the third day to come and stand before the mountain.

On the third day, in the morning, there was a thick cloud resting on Mount Sinai, and God was in the cloud! There was bright lightning and heavy thunder, and the mountain shook and trembled. God was in the mountain!

Then Moses led the people to the foot of the mountain, but he went up to the top of the mount with God.

Then God spoke the words of the Ten Commandments. Four of these tell us our duties toward God. The remaining six teach us our duties to one another.

In the Golden Text Jesus gives us one short commandment which embraces all the rest. Love makes us right with God and right with one another!

B.C. 1491.]

[July 14.]

LESSON HELPS FOR EVERY DAY.

- M.* Read how quickly Israel forgot God. Exod. xxxii. 1-8.
Tu. Find what Moses saw when he came. Exod. xxxii. 15-19.
W. Read about Aaron's poor excuse. Exod. xxxii. 21-24.

Th. See how Moses pleaded for the people. Exod. xxxii. 30-35.

F. Find how useless are idols. Psalm cxv. 2-8.

S. Learn the GOLDEN TEXT.

S. Think, do I worship God alone?

THE LESSON STORY.

Moses stayed in the mount of God forty days and forty nights. God was giving him the law for Israel and telling him about the things that were to be made.

All this time the Israelites in their camp at the foot of the mount were waiting for him to come down.

By and by they grew impatient. They came to Aaron and said they knew not what had become of Moses, their leader, and asked Aaron to make gods to go before them. Aaron told them to bring all their golden ear-rings to him, and he melted them and made an idol in the shape of a calf.

Then Aaron built an altar before it, and the people held a feast and offered sacrifices to the golden calf.

When Moses came down he found the people dancing before the calf. He was angry, and broke the idol in pieces. Then he called all who were on the Lord's side to stand by him, and those who had broken God's law were slain with the sword.

The next day Moses went before the Lord and prayed Him to forgive the sin of the people. And the Lord heard him, and said He would still go with the children of Israel.

B.C. 1491.]

[July 21.]

LESSON HELPS FOR EVERY DAY.

- M.* Read the lesson verses from your Bible. Lev. x. 1-11.
Tu. Learn why we should obey God exactly. Deut. vi. 24.
W. Find what God had said about the priests. Verse 3.
Th. See what direction the Lord gave Aaron. Verse 9.
F. Learn what strong drink may bring. Verse 2.
S. Learn what this lesson teaches. Lev. xi. 44.
S. Learn how believers should live. Titus iii. 8.

THE LESSON STORY.

After the tabernacle of worship was built God told Moses to consecrate Aaron and his four sons to be priests. Aaron was the high priest.

It was their duty to attend to the worship of God in the way that He commanded.

But Nadab and Abihu, two of the sons, thought they would offer incense in their own way.

God's way was to light the incense from the fire that was always kept burning on the golden altar. But they lighted it one day with strange fire. Perhaps they thought it would make no difference. They were careless about obeying God. This shows that there was sin in their hearts.

God was displeased with their sin and sent fire that burned them to death. They were carried out of the camp, and God would not allow Aaron and his other sons to show any sorrow for these who had sinned so lightly against Him.

Then the Lord told Aaron that no priest should drink wine or strong drink when they were going into the tabernacle. It is possible that Nadab and Abihu had been drinking wine, which made them careless and disobedient. God is holy, and His people must serve Him with clean hands and hearts.

B.C. 1490.]

[July 28.

LESSON HELPS FOR EVERY DAY.

- M.* Read about the cloud and the tabernacle. Num. ix. 15-23.
Tu. Read about the silver trumpets. Num. x. 1-10.
W. Read the lesson story. Num. x. 29-36.
Th. Learn what the Lord had promised Israel. Exod. vi. 7, 8.
F. Learn the GOLDEN TEXT.
S. Learn who has promised to lead us. Isa. xlviii. 17.
S. Read No. 163 in the Methodist Hymnal.

THE LESSON STORY.

The Israelites were still on their journey to the promised Land. God led them, and the sign of His presence was the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night.

The people did not travel all the time. When the pillar of cloud stopped they knew that the Lord wanted them to stop. Then they made their camp and set up the tabernacle.

When the Lord wanted them to move on the cloud rose up and moved forward. This was the way in which the Lord led them.

Now the time came for them to leave the wilderness of Sinai, and they prepared to go at the Lord's command.

Then Moses spoke to Hobab, his brother-in-law, and asked him to go with them. He said that the Lord had promised good to Israel, and that Hobab should find blessing if he would follow in the Lord's way.

But Hobab said that he would return to his own land and his friends there. It was not easy then any more than now to leave all to follow God!

Moses was not discouraged, but urged Hobab still to go with them, and said that they would do him good. And so they journeyed for three days, and then the cloud rested again, and the people rested.

Opening and Closing Services.

THIRD QUARTER.

OPENING SERVICE.

I. Silence.

II. Responsive Sentences. [Psalm 107. 1-8.]

Supt. O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever.

School. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;

Supt. And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south.

School. They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.

Supt. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.

School. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.

Supt. And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.

School. O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

III. Singing.

IV. The Ten Commandments, or the Apostles' Creed.

V. Prayer, followed by the Lord's Prayer in concert.

VI. Scripture Lesson.

VII. Singing.

LESSON SERVICE.

I. Class Study of the Lesson.

II. Singing Lesson Hymn.

III. Recitation of Title, Golden Text, Outline and Doctrinal Suggestion by the school in concert.

IV. Review and Application of the Lesson by Pastor or Superintendent.

V. Supplemental Lesson. [Special lessons in the Church Catechism may here be introduced.]

VI. Announcements (especially of the Church service and week-evening prayer-meeting).

CLOSING SERVICE.

I. Singing.

II. Responsive Sentences.

Supt. O taste and see that the Lord is good;
School. Blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

Supt. O fear the Lord, ye his saints.

School. For there is no want to them that fear him.

III. Dismissal.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

THIRD QUARTER: STUDIES IN JEWISH HISTORY.

B.C. 1491.]

LESSON I. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

[July 7.]

GOLDEN TEXT. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. Luke 10. 27.

Authorized Version.

Exod. 20. 1-17. [Commit to memory verses 3-17.]

[Study connection in 19. 1-20. 21.]

- 1 And God spake all these words, saying,
- 2 I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of E'gypt, 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 anything 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 showing 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.
- 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 manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

Revised Version.

- 1 And God spake all these words, saying,
- 2 I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of E'gypt, out of the house of bondage.
- 3 Thou shalt have none other gods before me.
- 4 Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor the likeness of any form that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the
- 6 fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing 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 a sabbath unto 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,
- 11 nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 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.
- 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 do no murder.
- 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 manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

TIME.—B. C. 1491. This date, the most important in history, may be readily remembered, because what is perhaps the next most important date is about as many years after Christ as this

was before Christ—the discovery of America, A. D. 1492. **PLACE.**—Mount Sinai, in the wild peninsula southeast of the Isthmus of Suez. The tribes are believed to have been assembled in

what is now known as the Wady (Plain or Valley) er Rahah, which opens in front of Ras Sufsafah, a precipitous cliff which forms the northwestern extremity or front of a great mountain range, Jebel Musa, "the Mountain of Moses," which Hebrew, Moslem, and Christian traditions alike point to as the mountain of the law. **INTRODUCTORY.**—The lessons of last June brought us to the passage of the Red Sea by the children of Israel. They marched southward, guided by the pillar of cloud and fire, till they reached the vicinity of Mount Sinai, where the law was given to Moses. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The existence of God.

HOME READINGS.

- M.* The Ten Commandments. Exod. 20. 1-7.
Tu. The Ten Commandments. Exod. 20. 8-17.
W. The commandments written. Deut. 27. 1-10.
Th. God's law perfect. Psalm 19. 7-14.
F. Delight in the law. Psalm 119. 1-16.
S. Christ's summary. Mark 12. 28-34.
S. Love proved by obedience. 1 John 2. 1-11.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 2, New Canadian Hymnal.

Lo! God is here! let us adore.

No. 23, New Canadian Hymnal.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!

No. 289, New Canadian Hymnal.

Sing them over again to me.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. Our Duty to God, v. 1-11.

When and where was the law proclaimed?

Learn all you can of the position of the camp of Israel before Sinai.

Had Moses ever been at this mount of God before?

How were the commandments given to Moses?

Carefully compare the account of the commandments as given by Moses in Deut. 5. 6-21, and note differences, if any.

Does God mean by the expression "thy God" that they had chosen him, or he them?

Make a list of several ways in which men to-day transgress the first commandment.

What is the purpose of the second commandment?

What attributes of God is it intended to declare?

In what sense is God a "jealous God?"

How does he visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children?

How does God show his mercy to those who serve him?

What is declared in Deut. 7. 9?

What sin does the third commandment forbid?

What was the penalty for false swearing? (Lev. 24. 16.)

How is this commandment interpreted by Christ? (Matt. 5. 34-37.)

What is required by the fourth commandment?

What do you think it means to-day?

What is the physical need of a day of rest?

What reason is here given for observing it?

In what spirit should it be kept? (Isa. 58. 13.)

Why is the first day observed at the present time, instead of the seventh?

2. Our Duty to Man, v. 12-17.

What fulfillment of the promise in the fifth commandment is related in Jer. 35. 18, 19?

What reason for the sixth commandment is given in Gen. 9. 6?

What is the essence of murder? (1 John 3. 15.)

What is Christ's definition of the crime forbidden in the seventh commandment? (Matt. 5. 28.)

What rights are defended by the eighth commandment?

What is the prayer in Prov. 30. 8, 9?

What does the ninth commandment forbid? What does it require?

What is Christ's warning against covetousness? (Luke 12. 15.)

What spirit will preserve us from covetousness? (Heb. 13. 5.)

How did Christ express the sum of this series of commandments?

Practical Teachings.

What is here taught—

1. As to the character of God?
2. As to the service of God?
3. As to the love of God?
4. As to our love for our fellow-man?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. Our Duty to God, v. 1-11.

By whom were the commandments given? To whom did God first speak them? (Exod. 19. 20.)

What had the Lord done for his people?

What is the first commandment?

What may we not make or worship?

What reason is given for this prohibition?

Which commandment forbids profane swearing?

Why is this forbidden?

What is the fourth commandment?

What did the Lord do in six days?

To whom does the seventh day belong?

Who are forbidden to work on that day?

What is our whole duty to God? (Eccles. 12. 13.)

2. Our Duty to Man, v. 12-17.

To whom is honor due, and why?

What says Paul about this command? (See Eph. 6. 2.)

What is the sixth commandment?

Whom does John declare to be a murderer? (See 1 John 3. 15.)

What is the seventh commandment?

What does the eighth commandment forbid?

What duty to man does the ninth commandment enjoin?

What will help us to keep this law? (See Rom. 13. 10.)

What are we forbidden to covet?

What words sum up the whole law? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

What conduct will show our obedience? (See Micah 6. 8.)

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. Our sole rule of duty?
2. Four duties toward God?
3. The duty of love to man?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Where did the Israelites start to go from Egypt?

Who was their leader? **Moses.**

Where did they encamp three months after crossing the Red Sea?

Who spoke to them there?

Through whom?

What did God say he would do?

What did Moses tell the people to do? [after?

What rested on Mount Sinai the third morning

Who was in the cloud?

What did the people see and hear?

Why did the mountain shake?

Where did the people stand?

Who went up into the mount?

What words did God speak?

What do the first four commandments tell us?

What do the others teach?

What do we find in the GOLDEN TEXT?

Remember—

Self cannot keep God's law.

The good self—God in us—can keep the law, which is love.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

BY ROBERT R. DOHERTY, PH. D.

General Statement.

Nearly three months have passed since the people of God marched from the Land of Oppression over the emptied floor of the Red Sea. They have seen the water flow from the mitted rock in Rephidim (Exod. 17. 1-7). They have repelled the Amalekites and have wondered to see how fast their foes fell while Moses's hands were upraised in prayer (Exod. 17. 8-16). Over sandy stretches, through deep valleys, and under beetling crags they have trod their toilsome way, and now are encamped on a broad plain in front of Mount Sinai. The gray brow of the mountain is crowned with glory; lightnings flash, thunders roll, and the earth throbs and quivers at the approach of Israel's God. While the voice of the trumpet sounds long and loud and the hearts of the people sink with terror, Moses alone walks boldly up the steep sides of the mountain and receives the command that no foot of man or beast may draw near while the voice of the Almighty proclaims his law. The silence is broken by the voice of Jehovah proclaiming himself to be Israel's God, the God who has led them out of bondage, and who now renews the covenant made long ago with the fathers. He adopts them as his people, and proclaims one by one the Ten Commandments as the cardinal principles of law and conduct. These commandments are destined in future centuries to be adopted as the foundation for all human government. The Son of man gave as an authoritative condensation of them the words of the Golden Text.

Verses 1, 2. God spake. The Ten Commandments were spoken audibly from the summit of Mount Sinai, which was probably Ras Sufsafeh, the Israelites being encamped upon the plain Er Rahah. **All these words.** Some commentators are of opinion that each commandment was originally given in a single short sentence, and that the lengthened forms of the second, third, and others are explanatory additions afterward made by Moses. **The Lord thy God.** "Jehovah thy God." That is, among the multitudes of gods of whom you have heard, I who speak am yours, and your ONLY god, and my name is JEHOVAH, which, unfortunately for the vividness of our English ver-

sion, is always printed LORD. Being under God's peculiar care, these people were under obligation to especial service. (1) *God's mercies toward us personally demand our love in return. Brought thee out.* Not Moses, but God, is proclaimed as their deliverer and as entitled to their gratefulness. **House of bondage.** (2) *God liberates men from the service of sin that they may render him the service of free hearts.*

3. Thou shalt. Each individual is addressed. (3) *With every word of God there is a "thou"—a personal address. No other gods.* There is no command to worship, for man needs and must have some God. No people of earth are so debased as

to be without a religion. (4) *God's world has no atheists.* In opposition to the views current in the ancient world, where each nation, and even every village, had its own divinity, God here proclaims his own unity. **Before me.** Literally, "upon my face," as if every idol were held up as an insult before the face of God. (5) *Whatever any man holds as his supreme object in life is his god.*

4. Shalt not make unto thee. Shalt not make for worship. The later Jews interpreted this law as a prohibition of all statues and pictures, which was a slavish following of the letter rather than the spirit. **Graven image.** The word here is meant to include all idols, whether worshiped by the Egyptians or imaginary representations of heavenly beings, as angels. **In the earth.** Images of heroes or beasts. **Water under the earth.** The word "under" has here the meaning of "lower in level," referring to the earth as rising above its surrounding sea. The Philistines worshiped a fish god, and other peoples formed images representing sea monsters. To this day more than one half of the human race are worshipers of idols.

5, 6. Shalt not bow down. Every influence conspired to make the Israelites idolatrous; within them, the craving of the human heart for a visible object of devotion; around them, the example of all the neighboring races, and indeed of the whole world. (6) *Nor is it easy now to keep the heart fixed upon an unseen God, amid the fascinations of the world of sense.* **A jealous God.** God regards his people as pledged to his service by the terms of the covenant, and he demands all their love. "Anger, jealousy, etc., are ascribed to God not as passions, but as the feelings of a holy being in regard to that which is evil."—*Murphy.* There is here an allusion to Israel as united with her Lord by marriage vows, a figure illustrated throughout all the succeeding history, and especially in the prophecies. (7) *Let us not forget that there is a side of severity, as well as of grace, in the divine nature.* **Visiting the iniquity.** That is, bringing the results of one generation's sin upon another. **Fathers upon the children.** The race is a unity, and one evil member affects all the rest, tainting the blood for generations. (8) *God intends that men shall dread and hate sin, seeing its terrible results.* **Third and fourth.** God only knows just what measure of responsibility to attach to those whose wickedness is the result of descent from wicked parents. **Hate me.** (9) *Love of evil is hate of God.* **Mercy unto thousands.** "To the thousandth generation;" that is, forever. Witness God's mercy to the Jews as the reward for their great father's faith. (10) *God's mercies last longer than his wrath."*

7. The name of the Lord. So careful were the later Jews of God's name that they would not destroy a scrap of paper until they had looked to

find whether the word "God" were written upon it; and they never pronounced the name of Jehovah correctly, but always with a change of its vowel sounds, claiming it too sacred for mortal lips, until at last the true pronunciation itself was lost. **In vain.** That is, to no purpose; in false swearing, in profanity, in careless and reckless reference, so common at the present time. **Not . . . guiltless.** Because the crime is so easily and thoughtlessly committed is no reason for supposing it will be lightly passed over by the Judge of all men.

8, 9. Remember. The use of this word indicates that the Sabbath was already known, though probably it had been neglected, and now received a fresh sanction. **Sabbath day.** The rest day. Both for man's own needs, physical, moral, and spiritual, and for the honor of God the Sabbath was instituted. **Keep it holy.** Keep it consecrated; that is, devoted to God. (11) *One day in each week is not man's property, but God's.* **Six days shalt thou labor.** (12) *God's law recognizes the claims of the present life upon all men.* (13) *Every man should have some work to do.*

10, 11. Not do any work. That is, no secular work, but only such as belongs to necessity, to mercy, and to religion. **Thou, nor thy son.** The wife is not named, being considered one with the husband. **Manservant.** (14) *We should permit those who serve us to serve God also.* **Thy stranger.** "The sojourner," one who from another land was dwelling or traveling in Israel, and while among God's people should be expected to show respect for God's law. **For in six days.** The six days of the week being a commemoration of the six creative periods in the history of the earth. **Rested the seventh.** The closing period, that of rest, is the one in which human history is passing, for since the advent of man no great change has come across the face of the earth. **Blessed the Sabbath.** The essence of the commandment is the consecration to God of one day in each week. The Old Testament proclaims God as the Creator and Ruler; hence that day was chosen which represents his completed work. The New Testament teaches Christ; and when he rose from the dead on the first day of the week, a new lesson was given to the race, not superseding, but supplementing, the old, and ever pointing the race to the only work greater than creation—that of complete redemption.

12. Honor thy father. As our parents are the human authors of our life, the self-denying protectors of our tender years, our guardians and earliest instructors, and the representatives of the divine relation, they are entitled to all reverence, obedience, and to support and care in their declining years. **That thy days may be long.**

A direct promise (and the only commandment containing a promise) of long life, both to the individual and the nation, as the result of filial honor. This promise in its literal fulfillment may be modified by other laws of heredity and of circumstance, yet in general will be found true. And national life follows from the same cause, since the respect for parental authority leads to civil order, as is illustrated by the long duration of Rome, and still longer of China, two nations remarkable for the filial virtues. (15) *God watches over and blesses those who revere their parents.*

13. Thou shalt not kill. Life is to be held sacred as God's most precious gift and as the basis of human existence. This law forbids: 1. Murder. 2. Passions which lead to murder (1 John 3. 15). 3. All business which destroys life; for example, rum-selling. 4. All employments and amusements which risk the life or injure the body. 5. All evil habits which tend to shorten one's days and are a slow suicide. 6. But it is to be interpreted in the light of other laws authorizing the killing of men: (1) In self-defense; (2) as the penalty of crime, after due trial; (3) in war, waged justly or necessarily. (16) *God regards human life at higher value than the world's estimate, as shown in its history.*

14, 15. Not commit adultery. A prohibition of all sensuality, not only in outward act, but in thought (Matt. 5. 28), guarding the sacredness of marriage, protecting the family, and watching over the social relations, out of which may spring so much of good or of evil. (17) *Beware of bad thoughts, bad conversation, bad books, and bad pictures, which may soil the heart and wreck the character. Thou shalt not steal.* To steal is to take from another that to which we have no just right, or to withhold from another that which is his due. Whether done under cover

of law or in an overreaching bargain, or by taking advantage of necessity, or by false representations as to value, it is equally wicked in the sight of God, and sure to be required. Dishonesty is a forsaking of permanent for temporary advantages. (18) *To keep this commandment, let us do to others as we would have them do to us (Matt. 7. 12).*

16. Thou shalt not bear false witness. That is, make a false statement. This command requires truthfulness in all utterances. We are not to state an untruth knowingly, nor by look or gesture convey a misapprehension, nor by concealing a part of the truth mislead another. (19) *There are no "white lies" in God's sight. (20) How solemn is our responsibility, since we carry with us the reputations of our fellow-men! Against thy neighbor.* As interpreted by Christ in the parable of the Good Samaritan, this means any fellow-being, near or far, friend or foe.

17. Thou shalt not covet. A final command, which places a wall around all the rest by interposing a check upon the heart itself, since the beginning of every crime is within. To covet is to desire that which belongs to another, not in a passing, incidental way, but with a longing impulse, which might lead to wrong for its gratification. Just where lies the boundary between the innocent and the guilty wish it is not easy to decide; hence the need of watchfulness over the desires. (21) *There may be covetousness without coveting.* One is the passion for accumulation, the other the specific longing for that to which we have no right. (22) *The best guard against both covetousness and coveting is the spirit of contentment. Neighbor's house.* Put for all property. **Neighbor's wife.** A check upon that sensual lust which is in danger of leading to social crime.

CRITICAL NOTES.

Verse 1. God spake. God is a spirit, consequently without bodily form and organs like man. True, we read that "God answered Moses by a voice" (Exod. 19. 19) and face to face (Deut. 5. 22). Though many Jews and Christians take this in its literal sense, St. Paul believed it was through the instrumentality of angels (Gal. 3. 19). Stephen (Acts 7. 53) and the author of the Hebrews (2. 2) shared in this view. **All these words.** The Ten Commandments, or the covenant between God and his people. They are also called the ten words (Deut. 4. 13), the tables of the covenant, and the two tables of stone written with the finger of God (Deut. 9. 9, 10). The important truth here is that the Ten Commandments, to this day the foundation stone of every system of good government, were not evolved from the laws of Egypt or any

other ancient nation, but were communicated directly from heaven by Jehovah himself. Though much that is true and elevating is found in the one hundred and twenty-fifth chapter of the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, there is nothing like the ten words in their entirety. Though God had a special people and the decalogue and other oracles of God were first given to Israel, they are so comprehensive as to embrace all men and to be suitable for all times. Though given four thousand years ago in the wilderness to a wandering people, no civilization has yet outgrown them. Every word is so clear and unambiguous that men everywhere have no difficulty in understanding them.

2. I am the Lord thy God. Wherever in our English Bible Lord is printed in small capitals, as here, it represents the Hebrew word *Yahweh*, or Je-

hovah. It is always a proper name, and refers to God as the God of grace and mercy, in special covenant relation to Israel; hence, Jehovah thy God. The word is probably the third person singular, future tense, of the verb "to be." God in giving his name to Moses (Exod. 3. 14) naturally employs the first person, "I am," etc., but Moses in speaking of it employs the third person. Jehovah thus signifies "he will be," "he will continue to exist;" hence, the self-existing, eternal One. **Which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt.** The deliverance from Egypt is emphasized as something which could not have been accomplished without special divine interposition.

3. Thou shalt have no other gods. The use of the second person singular shows that it is an individual matter between God and every man. Polytheism was the great drawback of the ancient nations. It was the besetting sin of Israel till after the Babylonian captivity. A firm belief in one God, with all that this implies, is one of the pillars of religion and morality. The Jews at this time probably believed in other gods (see Exod. 15. 11; Judg. 11. 24). The nations around worshipped many gods.

4. Any graven image. *Pesel*, generally rendered "carved" or "cut," is also applied to molten images. Egypt was famous for its carved and painted objects representing sacred animals and gods. **Any likeness of anything.** That is, any picture to represent God. For an amplification of this verse see Deut. 4. 16-19. Pictures and statuary, as such, were not forbidden; even the Jews had the cherubim, brazen serpent, etc. These, however, must not symbolize the divine. The ignorant fail to distinguish between the idol or picture and what it is intended to represent. This is why the heathen and degraded Catholics adore and worship wood and stone. **In heaven above.** Whether sun, moon, or stars, or whether angels or birds or what else. **In the water under the earth.** In the sea, which seemed to be all around, and even under the earth. We may have here reference to Egyptian worship, which was very realistic and anthropomorphic.

5. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them. That is, to the images, harmless enough in themselves, but attracting from God, who is a spirit, and who claims all our affection and adoration. There is only one short step between adoration of pictures and images in worship and idolatry. **A jealous God.** Ever watchful over the best interests of his children; as worthy of their love as a faithful wife is of the entire heart of her husband. **Visiting the iniquity of the fathers.** We may not be able to explain this, but we see all around us the effects of sin. The consequences of disease, poverty arising from profligacy, neglect of early training, etc., are visible everywhere. There are many problems we cannot solve

in this world. Better acknowledge our inability to explain mysteries than to dogmatize. There is one comforting fact; there is no guilt in such suffering. God's love for his friends is infinitely greater than his hatred of his enemies. Though the effect of sin may show itself for three or four generations, the Lord shows mercy unto the thousandth generation of them that love him. "Where sin has abounded grace has much more abounded."

7. Thou shalt not take the name . . . in vain. The primary reference is to perjury, or swearing falsely in the name of Jehovah. It may also include blasphemy and irrelevant use of the divine name in a trifling or careless way. Every insincere prayer may be a violation of this command.

8-12. Remember the Sabbath day. Notice the positive form of this and the next commandment. The word "remember" shows that the Sabbath was observed previous to the proclamation of the law on Sinai (see Exod. 16. 23). Sabbath means rest. It is a physical, no less than a moral and religious, necessity. The way it is observed is a thermometer to the spiritual life of a community. **To keep it holy.** Set apart not merely for rest, but for worship, meditation, and communion with God. Stated periods for worship are as necessary for the soul as regular meals and sleep for the body.

Six days shalt thou labor. The stress is not on working six days—though this is the duty of men in general—but on keeping one day sacred to God. Let all our affairs be so arranged as to enable us to observe the Sabbath inviolably. **The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord.** A seventh part of our time should be regularly given to God. As it is a physical impossibility to observe precisely the same hours in every portion of the globe, it is evident that the Lord cares but little about the exact time, though this seems to trouble some modern Christians. **Thy manservant,** etc. All those in our employ are to enjoy equal benefits as far as the Sabbath is concerned.

12. Honor thy father, etc. Not merely obey and help, but respect and honor them. In some sense parents stand in God's place; thus they are worthy of special regard. **That thy days may be long.** Lack of due respect to parents is generally accompanied with a lack of reverence for God. Disobeying God tends to shorten life. Not all bad people die young, but the chances of the good for longevity are better than those of the wicked. The power and greatness of the Chinese are mainly due to the filial respect of the child for his parent.

13. Thou shalt not kill. Life stands in the forefront of earthly gifts. To take life is one of the greatest crimes, demanding the most summary punishment (see Gen. 9. 6). There-

are various ways of murdering besides the one generally known by that name. This and the following commandments should be studied in connection with Christ's comments thereon in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5, 24, *ff.*). This commandment does not prohibit capital punishment, which is sanctioned by both the Old and New Testaments. (Comp. Gen. 9, 6; Num. 35, 30, *ff.*; Acts 25, 11; Rom. 13, 4.)

14. Thou shalt not commit adultery. The family relation is necessary for the preservation of life. Any violation of this command endangers the entire structure on which society is based. This commandment has a deeper meaning to us than to the ancient Jews (see Matt. 5, 27-32). Whatever suggests sensual thoughts, whether lewd pictures, bad books, filthy conversation, or what else, should be avoided.

15. Thou shalt not steal. Take nothing that is not your own. Anarchy and socialism are nearly related to robbery. The spirit of this law may be violated by charging exorbitant prices for goods or services, or by paying too little for the same. Taking usury comes under the same category.

16. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Either in a court of justice (Exod. 23, 2) or anywhere else; not even in a newspaper or on the stump during a political campaign. As a rule a liar will do anything mean. "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord," and should be to us also. We should never tell anything bad about another unless we know that it is true, and tell that only when it is positively necessary.

17. Thou shalt not covet. Not only are we to act and speak what is right, but we are also to guard our inmost thoughts, since the genesis of all evil is in the heart (Mark 7, 21, 22). The stream cannot be clean if the source is impure. Covetousness may be defined as an inordinate desire to possess that which does not belong to us.

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

Our Duty to God and Man.

I. DUTIES TOWARD GOD.

- 1. Worship.** *No other gods.* v. 3, 4.
Worship the Lord thy God, Matt. 4, 10.
- 2. Service.** *Nor serve them.* v. 5, 6.
Serve him in sincerity. Josh. 24, 14.
- 3. Reverence.** *Not take the name.* v. 7.
Reverend is his name. Psalm 111, 9.
- 4. Honor.** *The Sabbath day.* v. 8-11.
Sabbath a delight. Isa. 58, 13.

II. DUTIES TOWARD MAN.

- 1. To Parents.** *Honor thy father.* v. 12.
Obey your parents. Col. 3, 20.
- 2. To Human Life.** *Shalt not kill.* v. 13.
Hateth his brother....murderer. 1 John 3, 15.

- 3. To the Family.** *Not....adultery.* v. 14.
Out of the heart. Matt. 15, 9.
- 4. To Property.** *Shalt not steal.* v. 15.
Steal no more. Eph. 4, 28.
- 5. To Character.** *Not....false witness.* v. 16.
He that backbiteth not. Psalm 151, 3.
- 6. To the Heart.** *Not covet.* v. 17.
Without covetousness. Heb. 5, 13.

Thoughts for Young People.

The Law of God.

1. *There is no duty to God or man which is not comprised within this decalogue.* Our Lord afterward compresses the Ten Commandments into two, and says, "On these two hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22, 40).

2. *The Ten Commandments have to do with our inner life quite as much as with our outward conduct.* In the Sermon on the Mount our Lord explains this, taking the sixth and the seventh of the ten as specimens, and showing how they forbid not only the outward acts named, but the words and the thoughts from which the acts spring.

3. *The true way to keep any of the commandments is to cultivate the virtue which is precisely opposite to the thing forbidden.* Rom. 13, 8-10: "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law" (that is, the second table of the law). Why? Because "love worketh no ill to his neighbor." Love a man and you will not wrong him, and thus without thinking of the law you will keep it.

4. *To break one commandment is to break all* (James 2, 10). Young people do not always see the truth of this, and yet it would seem to be almost self-evident. Suppose a garden with ten gates, and a father says to his children, "You must stay in the garden and not go outside." What would be thought of the boy who, when charged with breaking the rule, pleaded that he had only gone out of one of the gates?

5. *Christ has borne for us the penalty of our disobedience of the law.* As soon as a soul feels that the breaking of one law breaks all, he becomes hopeless. The whole moral world would be hopeless to-day were it not for the good news of the Gospel. Christ has kept the law which we could not keep, and "by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5, 19).

Lesson Word-Pictures.

BY REV. E. A. RAND.

The law has been given. Trembling Sinai, flashing Sinai, smoking Sinai will be remembered on account of this very law. It goes into all the tents in the stretching valley below the frowning mountain.

There is one tent in which lives a thoughtful,

serious, godly Hebrew, Jonathan. What pictures of reverence for God and love for man he is unconsciously making!

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me," cries the law.

Go into Jonathan's tent. Watch his conduct there. What a putting of God before all things!

Clear, like the wilderness sun coming up above Sinai and shining in solitary, golden splendor, rises that thought of God before Jonathan. It is God always. That tent is a temple of God's presence. What a beautiful scene it is as Jonathan and his family bow there in prayer before God! Father, mother, the little children, the grandparents bending in the hush of prayer, while Jonathan pleads in their behalf the love of his Maker. No graven images there to be worshipped. Jonathan carries the thought of God's supremacy through all his life.

The tabernacle is to be furnished some day.

There will come a time when Jonathan will look on old Egyptian coin with graven heads, and will be heard then and make them uppermost in his regard? They will go to God's house, and God remain supreme in Jonathan's tent.

That thought of God's supremacy will affect Jonathan's speech. God is in all his thoughts, and he speaks carefully, reverently, filially. In Jonathan's tent there is no taking of God's name in vain.

What an attractive picture that is where Jonathan's white-haired father and mother sit in the tent, and around them are children's children, and they plan for the hallowed keeping of the Sabbath day! Together they will sing Miriam's song by the Red Sea, together bow in prayer as it ascends to God. What a picture it will make when Jonathan's household go down the street of the great encampment and stand in the tabernacle courts while the altars smoke and praise ascends to God! It is no hardship to Jonathan to keep God's day, for God keeps Jonathan's heart, a supreme presence there.

Then, take the honoring of father and mother. You expect this in Jonathan's tent, pictures of filial beauty succeeding one another like a perpetual panorama. God commands this, and Jonathan loves the command.

Take the next line of the law. Who expects to witness a scene of killing in Jonathan's life, when all through the day he feels the restraint of God's nearness reining in his temper.

Who looks for immorality in Jonathan's life, when the hush of God's holy presence is upon the Hebrew's heart, and all the time he is cultivating purity?

Who expects to see Jonathan in the posture of a thief, and then of a culprit dragged off before Moses? Jonathan is all the time thinking of what is due to God and due his neighbor, and he sees to it that

his neighbor has that due, and God shall have his share. Who expects to see Jonathan stealing about, slipping from tent to tent, whispering some hateful tale of a neighbor's faults? All this cannot be, for God moves him, and all the time Jonathan is hunting up his neighbor's merits and rejoicing in these.

And who expects to find Jonathan in a posture of covetousness, his hands going out like rakes, clutching at everything belonging to his neighbor, in his house, in his family? All the time God, supreme in Jonathan's affections, moves him to give out his substance, not to take in another's. Reverent, loving Jonathan, may your example move others to make and hold God supreme, and so help them find the path of delight in God's commands.

Orientalisms of the Lesson.

BY REV. J. T. GRACEY, D. D.

The Hebrews could have acquired the art of engraving from the Egyptians, but did they have anything that could be called "writing?" Were these commandments in symbol, or was there an alphabet? Some of the foremost scholars of the last generation declared the Bible erroneous in attributing writing to the Hebrews at the time of the exodus. Von Bohlen and Vatke declared that no writing could be established in any Semitic people prior to the tenth century before Christ, and doubted the evidence of even so early a date. Others declared that it could not be put down earlier than the time of the Judges. It was even affirmed by some writers that the Egyptians had no alphabet till they received it from the Greeks, and they thought parchment could not have been made because of the superstitions of the Egyptians. It is but little more than sixty years since the assertions were first made. These critics lived to see the proof that the Egyptians at the time of Moses were "a nation of writers." The discovery of the Tel el Amarna tablets has revealed the very correspondence of the period.

The Jews called these "ten words" "the pillars of the law and its roots." Egyptians had a minute classification of no less than forty-two sins which the dead were to declare or prove themselves free from before Osiris and his assessors at the judgment which followed this life, but nothing so grandly simple and comprehensive as these, commandments has ever been discovered in Egypt, Arabia, China, or India. What is sometimes termed the ten commandments of Buddhism would never have been named in connection with the Hebrew decalogue but for the fanciful resemblances to biblical texts which modern ingenuity exalts in these several religions.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain" caused the Jews in a later period to cease to pronounce the name "Jehovah" at all.

Similarly the Yezidies of Persia have such a dread of the name of "Satan" (Shaitan), whom they worship, that they never utter it, and are insulted by anyone else speaking it in their presence. The interpretation of this commandment as applicable to perjury or false swearing finds many an illustration among oriental nations. Egyptians punished perjury with death. Romans said the perjurer was the object of divine anger in this world and in the next. The Egyptian form of oath was, "By the life of Pharaoh." The heathen form of Polycarp's day, which the old martyr refused to utter, was, "By the genius of Cæsar," the "genius" meaning the geni or spirits. This oath was made the test of recantation, and the African martyrs refused to take it.

The teachings of Confucius inculcate the greatest reverence for parents, the whole social and civil structure of society being based on this filial regard; so with the Hindoos the greatest regard is had for progenitors. But unfortunately in all these countries this reverence has degenerated into ancestor worship, and thus obedience to this command has culminated in the grossest violation of the second commandment. Egypt knew something of this filial reverence, the saying being quoted from Ptah-hotep, "The son who accepts the words of his father will grow old in consequence." Again, "The obedient son will be happy by reason of his obedience; he will grow old; he will come to favor."

The Teachers' Meeting.

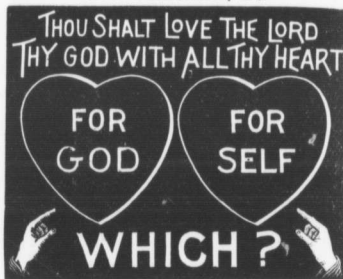
A word-picture of the proclamation of the law.
 ... A map of the Sinaitic group of mountains....
 Explain each commandment.... The first commandment: (1) God's unity; (2) The duty of serving God alone; (3) Some things which men place before God.... The second commandment: (1) Heathen idolatry; (2) Idolatry in Christian lands.... The third commandment: (1) What it forbids; (2) How it is broken; (3) What it requires.... The fourth commandment: (1) Its principles; (2) How to keep the Sabbath; (3) Common violations of the Sabbath.... Each of the other commandments, analyzed in similar fashion.... Study the meaning of the Golden Text. Recall circumstances in which it was spoken.... What God requires of men in relation to himself: (1) Recognition; (2) Remembrance; (3) Obedience; (4) Worship; (5) Reverence; (6) Love.... Attributes of God as shown in this lesson.

References.

FREEMAN'S HANDBOOK. (Connecting verses.)
 19. 10: Cleanliness in worship, 126. 19. 16: The trumpet, 447.

Blackboard.

BY J. T. HARTNAGEL, ESQ.



BY GEORGE W. PEASE, ESQ.

THE LAW GIVEN.

DUTIES TO GOD MAN STATED.

A KEPT BROKEN LAW BRINGS LIFE. DEATH.

NO SALVATION IN THE LAW,
 FOR
 ALL HAVE SINNED.

"For whosoever shall ... offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

WHAT IS THE LAW?

A SCHOOLMASTER

TO BRING US TO THE

SAVIOUR.

TURN FROM

LAW
 TO
 LOVE.

GOOD DEEDS
 TO
 RACE.

SAVED BY

GRACE. NOT BY WORKS.

By Way of Illustration.

BY JENNIE M. BINGHAM.

The harmony of the two tables. The first table calls to worship and the second to service, "the one looking Godward and the other manward." There is a command which tells us to be fervent in

spirit and diligent in business. These commands do not conflict. Our earth has two movements—one on its axis and the other in its orbit around the sun—and they in no way interfere with each other. Those who render best service to God render best service to man. The worshipers are the workers. The house of worship made possible the asylum and the hospital. The best servant of God has proven himself to be the best servant of man.

The commandments a covenant. They are a covenant as well as a law, bringing God into promise and pledge with man. It is the word "covenant," and not "testament," that should name the old law and the new Gospel of the Scriptures. The word does not mean "a will," since such testamentary dispositions of property were wholly unknown to the Jews until they came in contact with the Romans; it means "a covenant," an interchange of obligations and service.—*Farrar.*

The commandments a standard of measurement. Only as we lay our lives and thoughts upon this yardstick are we able to estimate their worth. Paul says, "I had not known sin, except through the law." Like the flash of sunlight into the noisome cellar, revealing the sources of poison and of death, so this law of God is lifted as a revelation of evil and a standard of character. It becomes a sort of searchlight shining down the ages, whereby we see the holiness of God and the sin of men. Sinai becomes a schoolmaster to lead men to Jesus Christ, by making plain our inability to walk this path and scale these toppling crags of duty, and hence our need of help. As hunger drives us to the house of bread and thirst to the springs of water, so his law of righteousness sends us to his Gospel of grace and love.—*Rev. W. R. Davis.*

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

No. 1.

From all that dwell below the skies.
In thy name, O Lord, assembling,
O day of rest and gladness.
With joy we hail the sacred day.
The Will of God.

No. 2.

O thou to whom in ancient time.
In the rosy light of the morning bright.
Praise the Lord.
Hail, holy morn.
Lord! in the morning thou shalt hear.

The Lesson Catechism.

1. Where were the Ten Commandments given?
At Mount Sinai.
2. How were they given? **By the voice of God.**
3. Repeat the Ten Commandments: First? Second? Third? Fourth? Fifth? Sixth? Seventh? Eighth? Ninth? Tenth?
4. What command does our Lord give? **GOLDEN TEXT: "Thou shalt love,"** etc.

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

35. What do you mean by the word sacrament?
I mean an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.
36. What is the relation of these sacraments to the new covenant?
They are signs and seals of the covenant of grace established in Christ.

B. C. 1491.]

LESSON II. THE GOLDEN CALF.

[July 14.]

GOLDEN TEXT. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. 1 John 5. 21.

Authorized Version.

Exod. 32. 1-8, 30-35. [*Commit to memory*

verses 7, 8.]

[Study connection in chap. 32.]

1 And when the people saw that Mo'ses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aa'ron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Mo'ses, the man that brought us up out of the land of E'gypt, we wot not what is become of him.

2 And Aa'ron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me.

3 And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aa'ron.

4 And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods,

Revised Version.

- 1 And when the people saw that Mo'ses delayed to come down from the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aa'ron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Mo'ses, the man that brought us up out of the land of E'gypt, we know not what is become of him.
- 2 And Aa'ron said unto them, Break off the golden rings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden rings which were in their
- 4 ears, and brought them unto Aa'ron. And he received it at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, and made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Is'ra-el, which brought thee up out of the land of E'gypt.

O Is'ra-el, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

5 And when Aa'ron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aa'ron made proclamation, and said, To-morrow is a feast to the Lord.

6 And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

7 And the Lord said unto Mo'ses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves:

8 They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Is'ra-el, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

9 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Mo'ses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin.

10 And Mo'ses returned unto the Lord, and said, O, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold.

11 Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.

12 And the Lord said unto Mo'ses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.

13 Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee; nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them.

14 And the Lord plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aa'ron made.

15 And when Aa'ron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aa'ron made proclamation, and said, To-morrow shall be a feast to the Lord.

16 And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

17 And the Lord spake unto Mo'ses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest up out of the land of Egypt, have

18 corrupted themselves: they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed unto it, and said, These be thy gods, O Is'ra-el, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

19 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Mo'ses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make atonement for your

20 sin. And Mo'ses returned unto the Lord, and said, O, this people have sinned a great sin,

21 and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou

22 hast written. And the Lord said unto Mo'ses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I

23 blot out of my book. And now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken

24 unto thee: behold, mine angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them. And the Lord smote the people, because they made the calf, which Aa'ron made.

TIME.—B. C. 1491, the same year as the last lesson, but a little later. **PLACE.**—The plain before Mount Sinai; what is now known as the Wady er Rahah before Ras Sufsafah. **CONNECTING LINKS.**—The chapters between the last lesson and this are nearly filled with special commands which were afterward woven into the great system of Hebrew law, the details of the design of the tabernacle, and the setting apart of Aaron and his sons for the priestly office. We are told of the terror of the people when they "saw the thunders, and lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking." Chapter 24 tells us of a remarkable vision of the God of Israel given to Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. It is astonishing how close together came the Ten Commandments on stone and the golden calf. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The penalty of sin.

HOME READINGS.

M. The golden calf. Exod. 32. 1-8.

Tu. Intercession by Moses. Exod. 32. 9-14.

W. The calf destroyed. Exod. 32. 15-24.

Th. Punishment (part of lesson). Exod. 32. 30-35.

F. Impressive reminder. Deut. 9. 7-21.

S. Folly of idol worship. Psalm 106. 16-27.

S. Trust in a living God. Psalm 115. 1-18.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 209, New Canadian Hymnal.

Oh, for a closer walk with God.

No. 214, New Canadian Hymnal.

Oh, h ar my cry, be gracious now to me!

No. 210, New Canadian Hymnal.

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Sin of Israel, v. 1-8.

What was the sin of Israel?

What sin of heart led to their disobedience of God's command?

What real cause might they seem to have had for alarm about Moses? but were they really alarmed about him?

Was the golden calf intended to be a substitute for Jehovah's worship?

From what system of idolatry did they probably borrow their idea of a golden calf?

Of what material was it made?

How was the gold gotten?

Did Aaron make the calf?

What is the GOLDEN TEXT?

What did the people do after their worship in the presence of the calf?

What did God say to Moses?

2. The Prayer, v. 30-35.

What did Moses say to the people?

What did he promise to do for them?

What confession did he make to God?

What humble proposition did he make?

What was God's reply?

What was his command?

What was his promise?

How did he punish the sin of the people?

Study the connection of verses 9-29.

Practical Teachings.

Where does this lesson show—

1. The evil influence of image worship?
2. The evil results of weak will?
3. The self-sacrifice of a heart in harmony with that of God?
4. The inevitable evil consequences of sin?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. The Sin of Israel, v. 1-8.

What sinful demand did the people make?

Why did they make this request?

How long was Moses absent? (See Exod. 24. 18.)

What did Aaron require the people to do?

What offerings did the people bring?

What did Aaron make from the gold?

What did the people say when they saw the image?

What commandment had been broken?

What preparation for worship was made?

What was the next day to be?

What offerings did the people present?

What then did they do?

What command did Moses receive?

What sin had been committed?

What did Moses do when he saw the camp? (Verses 19, 20.)

What demand did he make of the people? (Verses 26, 27.)

2. The Prayer of Moses, v. 30-35.

What did Moses say to the people the next day?

What confession did he make to the Lord?

What prayer did he offer?

How did he show his anxiety for the people?

What did the Lord say about the sinners?

What did he bid Moses to do?

What did he promise to do?

What did the Lord do to the people?

What warning have we against like sin? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we shown—

1. The corrupting power of sin?
2. That sin brings punishment?
3. The power of prayer?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

How long was Moses in the mount with God?

What was he doing there?

Where were the Israelites?

What made them impatient?

What did they ask Aaron to do?

Who was Aaron? **Moses's brother.**

What did he make for them?

Of what did he make it?

What did he build before it?

What did the people do then?

Who saw this from the mount?

What did the Lord tell Moses to do?

What did Moses find the people doing?

What did Moses do?

What call did he make?

Who obeyed his call? **The sons of Levi.**

How many were slain?

What did Moses do the next day?

What did he ask God to do?

What did God promise him?

Remember—

That an idol is anything we put before God.

That nothing is safe that takes us off the Lord's side.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

General Statement.

After the giving of the law (Exod. 19-23) Moses was called to the summit of Sinai. There God instructed him concerning the Sabbath, the establishment of the priesthood, and the construction of the tabernacle. Forty days and nights he remained on the mountain top. When he returned with two tables of stone upon which God had written the commandments, he found that the Israelites had fallen into idolatry. They had induced Aaron, their high priest, to make them a golden image of a calf, and they had worshipped it and indulged in heathenish festivities. Evidently the Israelites regarded this

golden calf neither as a god itself nor as an image of some heathen deity, but as the representation to them of their own God who had brought them out of Egypt. Yet it is in just this way that idolatry is fostered. Priests and doctors may distinguish between the homage offered to God and the adoration offered to images, but no such distinctions can be grasped by the mass of the people. God's wrath was aroused by the wickedness of the Israelites, and the last of our lesson tells of Moses's pathetic prayer for the people whom he so greatly loved, and of their forgiveness by the Lord. The time was, according to common chronology, July, B. C. 1491, perhaps seven weeks after the giving of the law. We are to think of the Hebrews as being still encamped in Er Rahah, the valley which spreads out before Mount Sinai. The full importance of this incident can be understood only when we bear in mind the course of events to which it was incidental. God was turning a rabble of slaves into an organized nation, and was preparing them to be custodians of spiritual truth for all races and ages. It was absolutely necessary that they should be so disciplined that the moral law, once received by them, should permanently influence their national life.

Verse 1. Moses delayed. The forty days spent in sweet and profitable communion with his Maker seemed short to Moses; to Israel encamped at the foot of the mountain they seemed long. **Gathered themselves together.** Came in a tumultuous crowd. **Unto Aaron.** Moses's brother, who was, in Moses's absence, chief ruler. **Up, make us gods, which shall go before us.** Better, a god. They wanted a god that they could see. The miraculous manifestations of the true God had become common and uninspired to them. The pillar of cloud and fire, the manna fresh falling every day they were accustomed to now, and already the spirit of ingratitude and distrust controlled them. Who knows whether these manifestations are not, after all, purely accidental and natural? The land they came from was full of gods of stone and brass and gold. They must have an image too. **This Moses.** He was almost as great a mystery to them as was the God he expounded. After all they had known him only a very, very short time, and now they supposed they should never see him again. **Wot.** Know. These were the people who had seen the thunder and lightning descend on the top of Sinai, they had heard these solemn words of promise and threat and had made no less solemn promises of obedience, and now they break the plainest of all the commands.

2. Aaron said. He was a man who studied expediency and not duty. **Break off the golden earrings.** The service of sin demands as many sacrifices, and more, than are demanded by the service of God. These idolaters were called upon, first of all, to sacrifice for the sake of the golden calf their covetousness and their love of display. Where these golden earrings came from we can only conjecture.

3. All the people . . . brought. They gave with cheerfulness what was needed for their purpose. Spiritual worshippers may sometimes learn wholesome lessons of self-sacrifice from those who are far beneath them in devout intelligence.

4. Fashioned it with a graving tool. Some translate this, "bound it [the gold] in a bag;" some, following our translation, interpret it

to mean that with a "graving tool" he made a mold into which he poured the molten gold. It is impossible to determine certainly just what were the characteristics of this golden calf. Throughout the East the bull was the representative of creative force. In many places its worship did not rise above the worship of one of the forces of nature; but often some spiritual apprehensions clustered about it also, as may be inferred from the fact that often the image of the bull was given wings and a human head—symbols of omnipresence and omniscience. Calf worship was familiar to all peoples in Aaron's day. **These be thy gods, O Israel.** The plural form here has no special emphasis. The whole narrative indicates that it was still Jehovah whom they worshipped, but in worshipping they broke the solemn covenant they had made with him to obey his command, and they displayed a sad lack of intelligent faith. **Which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.** All men are tempted either by superstition or by skepticism, and often by both. These poor, ignorant Hebrews could not believe that the invisible Jehovah could take care of them without Moses. They must see somebody or something, and if they can no longer behold the majestic genius who guided them, they must at least have an image to look at. But they were superstitious also, and with celerity they passed from the worship of the invisible God to the worship of the molten calf. These two sins, skepticism and superstition, opposite as they seem to be, are often committed by the same people on the same account.

5, 6. When Aaron saw. Saw how greatly pleased the people were. **He built an altar before it.** Being the high priest, he was prompt to take it in charge. **Made proclamation.** In the absence of his brother he was the chief ruler, and his proclamation had despotic force. **To-morrow is a feast to Jehovah.** Aaron evidently desired to keep the people true to the true God, but he cared little how far they deviated from spiritual worship. "To-morrow" does not necessarily mean the day after the earrings had been brought, for doubtless the making of the calf had

occupied several days. **Burnt offerings.** Offerings entirely consumed on the altar. **Peace offerings.** Such as were partly consumed and partly eaten by those who offered them. **Sat down to eat and to drink.** Worship and feasting went arm in arm in those days. **Rose up to play.** To indulge in singing and dancing and merry making, but not as people nowadays might do without other impulse than the liveliness of their hearts, but dancing and sporting in honor of their god. The worship of most idols included revelry in which there was very little restraint and much appeal to every passion. While condemning the Hebrews for their sin we should remember that they were a very ignorant people, and they were the only people in all the wide world who undertook to worship God without some visible representation. Idolatry had at that time learning, wealth, power, popularity, and all the natural longings of the human heart on its side.

7. Go, get thee down. Make haste to descend; do not tarry; there is need of thy immediate presence. **Thy people, which thou broughtest out.** God's treatment of Moses here is very tender; he seeks to awake in him the affection which has its full manifestation in verse 32. **Corrupted themselves.** Their sin was greater than he knew. They had broken their solemn oath to God, had turned away from spiritual worship to sensuous worship, had rebelled against the most wonderful love ever shown to human beings. Their folly was as great as their sin, for in the wide wilderness, unguided and alone, they turned from the Guide who had brought them safely thus far.

8. They have turned aside quickly. A few weeks were enough to enable them to forget their covenant. In connection with the study of this verse we should read verses 9-29. When Moses saw the people in their wild worship, he trembled with indignation and shattered the tablets of the law on the rocks of Sinai. He burnt the idol and reduced what remained to powder. This he strewed in the water of the stream from which they drank, as a symbol of their sin. This may seem to us a whimsical punishment, but it was a clear demonstration to these barbarians of the folly and sin of their course. This calf was Jehovah, was it? Well, can Moses grind Jehovah to powder? We talk nowadays of men swallowing their own words when they are compelled to retract what they have said; these men were compelled to swallow their own deeds, as it were. Lastly, Moses summoned those who were on the Lord's side, and they took their swords and slew three thousand men, doubtless the ringleaders and the turbulent, and very likely, as Dr. Edersheim suggests, in a state of licentious attire, not yet sobered into shame.

30. Moses said. He had already been able to save the people from instant and complete destruction (verse 14), but it was necessary to bring them back to their forfeited position as God's children. **Ye have sinned.** Though the leaders had been cut off, the masses who had followed them in idolatry still remained; and it was essential that they should realize the depth of their wickedness. (1) *Every man who has held any object dearer than God's service is guilty of idolatry.* **Unto the Lord.** (2) *The first step in the way of pardon and salvation is to seek God.* **Peradventure.** He speaks without certainty, for he has received no assurance of forgiveness for the people. (3) *How much higher is our privilege, since we sue for a pardon promised in advance!* **Make an atonement.** The word atonement means "reconciliation;" and Moses hoped that he might be the mediating agent to bring peace between offending Israel and its offended Lord. (4) *Our peace is already purchased and our atonement made in Christ.*

31, 32. O, this people have sinned. He offers no extenuation, but in behalf of the people confesses the crime and humbly seeks forgiveness. (5) *Those who would be saved must first recognize themselves lost.* **If thou wilt.** An entreaty so earnest that its very utterance is broken and unfinished: "If thou wilt forgive their sin—" the rest being left unspoken, as the possibility of an unforgiveness darts across his mind. **If not, blot me . . . out.** So fully does he identify himself with the people for whom he pleads, that he will suffer their fate, even to exclusion from the privileges of the covenant. God had already offered to give him Abraham's place as the father of a new nation (verse 10), but he will sooner perish with Israel than be exalted by Israel's downfall. (6) *See the self-sacrifice of a noble nature!* **Thy book.** The book of life in which, as in a record, the names of the citizens of the kingdom were enrolled.

33, 34. Whosoever hath sinned. One step had been gained in the work of mediation, in that God consented not to destroy the nation as a whole, but only those individuals who had rejected him. (7) *Every soul stands single and alone before God.* **Lead the people.** He was to resume his place, and the people were to be restored to their privileges. **Mine Angel shall go.** The visible token of God's presence with his people in the pillar of cloud and fire. **When I visit.** "In the day of my visitation I will visit their sin." In the after discipline of the people the results of their sin were to be realized; yet it was to be discipline as to children, and not judgment as to enemies. The Jews have a tradition that in every affliction of their people there is an ounce of the powder of the golden calf. The sword was withheld, but it was not sheathed

35. The Lord plagued the people. This may indicate some unmentioned scourge of calamity or disease, but it more likely refers to the sum total of trials, penalties, and judgments during the forty years' wandering in the wilderness. **They made . . . Aaron made.** They made

it as its responsible originators, Aaron as their agent; and both were held to a measure of accountability. **The calf.** Probably an image of wood, covered with plates of beaten gold, in the form of Mnevis, the ox divinity, which they had seen, and doubtless worshipped, in Egypt.

CRITICAL NOTES.

Verse 1. Moses delayed to come down. He had been on the mountain forty days (Exod. 24. 18). He needed intimate communion with God before fully entering upon his great work. So did Elijah (1 Kings 19. 8). Our blessed Lord also was in the wilderness forty days. The meeting of these two Old Testament saints with our Saviour on the Mount of Transfiguration will be readily recalled. For parallel account, see Deut. 9 and 10. **Gathered . . . unto Aaron.** Who, with Hur, was left in charge of the people (Exod. 24. 14). **Up, make us gods.** Better, as in the margin, "a god," for only one image was made. The plural is the plural of dignity or majesty. While Moses was in holy communion with God, the people were indulging in sin. It is always hard to await an important decision. The Hebrews were by descent polytheists and idolaters (Josh. 24. 14; Ezek. 20. 18; and Gen. 35. 2). Their long residence in Egypt had rendered them quite familiar with idol worship, so that they were easily moved to ask for a visible representation of some divinity who could protect them in the wilderness. **This Moses.** This is the language of disgust and impatience. **We know not.** A great improvement upon the obsolete "wot" of the Authorized Version. It is possible they feared Moses had perished in the terrible storm on Sinai (see Exod. 24. 17), or that he had deserted them.

2. Break off the golden rings. Aaron might have suggested this, hoping that they were not equal to the great sacrifice asked of them. If so, he made a fatal mistake. He wished to please the people, but did not think the women and children would part with their ornaments. Have there not been priests and ministers since Aaron's time who have acted from policy? Whatever Aaron's motives were, his act was regarded as sinful (see Deut. 9. 20). **In the ears . . . of your sons.** Arabs of both sexes to this day wear earrings. Assyrian and Egyptian monuments prove that men, as well as women, wore earrings.

3. All the people brake off the golden rings. When people are moved religiously, there is no end to their sacrifice. If so much could be done for a false worship, how much ought the children of the living God to be willing to do? The devotees of Satan, who worship at the shrines of selfishness and passion, expend countless treasure for gratification.

4. Fashioned it. The various articles con-

tributed. **With a graving tool.** The ornaments were probably melted, then made into thin plates, which were laid over a wooden or stone figure in the shape of a calf (see Isa. 40. 19). This view is in harmony with verse 20, where Moses is said to have "burnt it with fire," and is more probable than that there could have been a solid calf made. It is well known that there were smelting furnaces from remote ages in the regions of Sinai. The Israelites were doubtless acquainted with smelting processes. Some would render the Hebrew *chrt* "bag," and then translate, "He collected it [the gold] in a bag and made it a molten calf." Apis, the sacred bull, symbolizing the sun or Osiris, called Serapis by the Greeks, was worshipped all over Egypt, notably at Memphis (as Mnevis), and at Heliopolis, not far from the land of Goshen. **These be thy gods.** The plural as in verse 1. The Israelites could not have believed that the recently formed idol could have been a god; they simply saw Jehovah symbolized in the image. Thus their sin was a violation of the second, rather than of the third, commandment. **Which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.** It has been objected that the people could not have attributed their deliverance from Egypt to the god of that land. When we remember that the worship of the calf or cow was widely extended and well known to the ancient Chaldeans, from among whom Abraham emigrated, this objection disappears.

5. Built an altar before it. The same as to Jehovah. **To-morrow shall be a feast to the Lord.** That is, to Jehovah, the national God of Israel. This proves clearly that they did not attribute divinity or life to the golden calf.

6. And offered burnt offerings. Such sacrifices as were entirely consumed (see Lev. 6. 5-13), while peace offerings were partly burnt upon the altar, but mostly eaten by the one making the sacrifice; the priests also received their portion (see Lev. 3. 1-10; 4. 10-26). **And the people sat down to eat and to drink.** Of the sacrificial meats and drinks. These joyful occasions were permitted in the regular worship, especially during the great feasts. **And rose up to play.** Having indulged too freely in the festivities, they proceeded to dancing (verse 19) and lewd amusements (verse 25). What made the worship of the heathen especially demoralizing were the orgies inseparably connected with them.

In all ages dancing and lewdness have been too often connected.

7. And the Lord spake unto Moses. The people had forgotten God; he had not forgotten them. So to-day, though we may indulge in sin and lose sight of God, his eye is always upon us. **Thy people.** The pronoun "thy" is used as if God disclaimed any connection with them, or as if they had forsaken God altogether.

8. They have corrupted themselves. They have engaged in corrupt practices like the nations around them, and especially Egypt. See *Herodotus* ii, 60, and iii, 37. How hard to indulge in one sin without committing many others, or to do anything of a doubtful nature without ending in positive wickedness! **They have turned aside quickly.** They have been impatient to forsake God. Their lack of faith is very great. The connecting verses should be read most carefully by every scholar and teacher.

30. Sinned a great sin. They cannot return to Jehovah without first realizing the enormity of their sin. **Peradventure I shall make atonement.** Moses, though he had interceded for the people while yet on the mountain (see verses 11-13), had received no promise of pardon for them. Forgiveness depends upon the attitude of the sinner. God is ever ready to hear the voice of the truly penitent.

32. If not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book. This refers to the register wherein the names of the citizens were inscribed (see Psalm 69, 28; Dan. 12, 1; Rev. 3, 5). With this noble trait in Moses's character compare St. Paul's words (Rom. 9, 3). Like the brave captain of a ship, though wrecked without his fault, he would rather sink with his crew than save himself alone.

33. Whosoever hath sinned against me. God will not plague the people indiscriminately; consequently Moses will not be put to death. He who deliberately sins is worse than the man who suddenly yields to temptation. This explains why only three thousand people were slain (verse 28), while the nation as a whole is spared. Compare Ezek. 18, 4-20.

34. Now go, lead the people. God graciously yields to Moses's entreaties. This shows the value of intercessory prayer. The people also had truly repented (see 33, 4). **Nevertheless.** This grievous transgression will leave its mark. Sin may be pardoned, but its effects remain through life. If God forgave sin without any penalty, what incentive would there be for fallen men to a godly life?

35. And the Lord smote the people. This refers to the sufferings in the wilderness, and perhaps to some special occasion, as at Kadesh (Num. 14, 26, ff.). **Because they made the calf, which Aaron made.** Aaron could not

have been as guilty as the ringleaders who were killed, yet he showed remarkable weakness.

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

Mediation for Sinners.

I. THE SINNERS.

- 1. Forgetful.** *Make us gods.* v. 1.
Beware lest thou forget. Deut. 6, 12.
Remember all the way. Deut. 8, 2.
- 2. Idolatrous.** *Burnt offerings.* v. 6.
Idols are silver and gold. Psalm 115, 4-8.
Covetousness... idolatry. Col. 3, 5.
- 3. Corrupt.** *Rose up to play.* v. 6.
Neither... commit fornication. 1 Cor. 10, 9.
Who being past feeling. Eph. 4, 19.

II. THE MEDIATOR.

- 1. Voluntary.** *I will go up.* v. 30.
We have a great high priest. Heb. 4, 14.
We have an advocate. 1 John 2, 1.
- 2. Reconciling.** *An atonement.* v. 30.
Now received the atonement. Rom. 5, 11.
He is our peace. Eph. 2, 14.
- 3. Interceding.** *Forgive their sin.* v. 32.
Made intercession. Isa. 53, 12.
Able to save. Heb. 7, 25.
- 4. Self-denying.** *If not, blot me.* v. 32.
Being made a curse. Gal. 3, 13.
Gave himself for me. Gal. 2, 20.

Thoughts for Young People.

Lessons from the Golden Calf.

1. Every sin is a series of steps leading downward. No sinner plunges into the worst evil headlong; he goes a little at a time. Let the story of the golden calf bring a personal lesson to you.

2. Do you want an image of God because he is so far above and beyond you? Well, he has given us one. Christ, the God-man Jesus, is "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1, 15), "the express image of his person" (Heb. 1, 3); and "he that hath seen him" hath "seen the Father" (John 14, 9). Learn the character of Jesus and you will "know God." See John 1, 18.

3. The consequences of sin are bitter. As one drop of ink colors a whole glass of water, so one gross sin, one shameful action, one hour's compliance with antichrist, will color and stain all the great things that ever you have performed. It will stain and color all the good prayers that ever you have made, and all the good sermons that ever you have heard, and all the good books that ever you have read, and all the good works that ever you have done; and, therefore, whatever you do, keep off from sin, and keep off from all sinful compliances as you would keep off from sin itself.

4. The consequences of righteousness are full of

delight. Because the pleasures of righteousness and holiness are not so gross as to come under the cognizance of the world's carnal senses, as their brutish ones do, therefore they laugh at the saints, as if their joy was but the child of fancy. But let such know that they carry in their bosoms what will help them to think that the pleasures of a holy life are real, and that there are incomparable delights and pleasures peculiar to the holy life which the gracious soul finds in the way of righteousness.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

Daytime at Sinai. I think of Aaron sitting in the door of his tent. He is looking up to the gray, stony heights of Sinai. It was up those forbidding slopes that Moses walked one day, dwindling, dwindling, at last vanishing from sight altogether. Gone, gone into the presence of God, to commune with him, to receive wisdom from him, and then to come back and bring to Israel law and precept and blessing. It has been so long since Moses disappeared up those mountain slopes, and how Aaron has missed his brother!

When will Moses appear again?

Then the people are so uneasy.

They wonder where Moses may be. What is he doing? When will he return? What would the people better do? What is the good of this new religion that Moses has been teaching?

Aaron knows of their uneasiness.

How he would like to see again the form of Moses coming down the mountain to address and still the people! They are getting to be so restless. They are muttering and, for all that Aaron knows, are plotting mischief.

Hark!

Aaron hears the noise of angry voices, of tramping feet, and here are the people! O how many there are! It is enough to frighten one, this abrupt, multitudinous appearance.

And what do they want?

They cry, "Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him."

Make gods, O Israel!

The nation that passed through the Red Sea, Jehovah leading, now make graven images and let these senseless lumps lead them?

O Aaron, stand firm!

Shout, "No!" Send them away!

Aaron, though, weakens. He yields. He says, "Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me!"

And they brake off these trinkets.

They dash them at Aaron's feet. The pile grows. All through the camp they are breaking earrings, and running with them to Aaron and throwing them on that heap.

What if Moses should suddenly appear and see all this?

"He won't come back!" somebody may be saying. "Lost on the mountain!"

And now Aaron kindles a hot, devouring fire. He melts the earrings. He shapes them into a golden calf, and tells Israel, "These be thy gods, which—brought—thee—up out of the land of—Egypt!"

O Aaron, what if Moses should suddenly appear and hear you?

And now Aaron builds an altar before the senseless image and proclaims, "To-morrow is a feast to the Lord."

What does he mean?

The people don't ask him, but rising early they offer burnt offerings, peace offerings too.

And then what an after-scene of rioting and shame!

What if Moses suddenly should appear just now!

And suddenly he does appear, coming down the mountain path!

He sees it all.

He rebukes the idolatry, and, grinding the idol in pieces, mingles the dust with water and compels the idolaters to drink the unclean potion.

Then come the separation of the people into two parts and the going out of the sword against the transgressors. And then, last of all, is that scene of an almost heart-broken man, prostrate on the ground, pleading with God for the forgiveness of Israel.

Orientalisms of the Lesson.

Earrings of gold set with pearls are commonly represented on the tombs of Egypt. One of these pictures at Thebes represents ladies comparing earrings. Even the processes of making these earrings are shown on the monuments from beginning to end. Modern museums abound in specimens of this Egyptian jewelry, not only earrings, but bracelets, ankle ornaments, great finger rings, and other ornaments, delicately engraved and inlaid with precious stones and enamels. Scarabs with countless engravings abound, and one is spoken of with the name of a queen cut on glass. All this is abundantly treated in Wilkinson's *Ancient Egypt*.

But were these all Egyptian? The Hebrews had earrings long before they went into Egypt. Gen. 35 contains an account of the people adorning "strange gods" represented on the earrings worn by the people, which they gave up at Jacob's demand. These earrings probably bore the images of heathen gods. They were not nose rings nor finger rings, but all "earrings." The Greeks were particularly fond of idol earrings. On some of these Cupid was engraved. Van Lennep says to this day earrings are worn by the

women in Mesopotamia and Assyria, made of signet rings engraved with idol images, which they string and suspend from their ears, "hanging down to their shoulders."

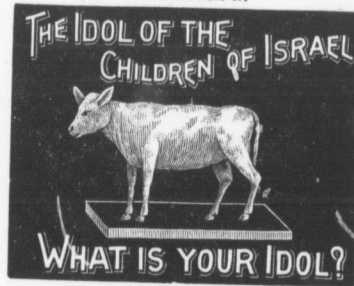
The worship of oxen was not peculiar to Egypt. The Hindoos hold the cow sacred, the cow and the Brahman having been simultaneously created at the beginning. Eating clarified butter, a product of the cow, destroys sins. Images of other gods are anointed with milk, curds, and butter. Hindoos strict in their religion, according to Ward, worship the cow daily. If you speak among Hindoos of eating cow flesh, they will stop their ears. If a man sell a cow, he will be tormented in hell as many years as there are hairs on the cow. There can be scarcely a more humiliating picture than that of a scholarly Brahman, when dying, holding the tail of a cow as the means of receiving blessing in departing this life. The great Indian mutiny, which shook the British throne to its foundations in that land, grew out of the supposed fact that the rifles introduced to the native army required the use of cartridges greased with bullock's fat. Quarrels are constantly occurring with the Mohammedans over the "cow question," and the great riots of recent occurrence in Bombay which alarmed the government were known as the "cow war."

The sacred bull called Apis was worshiped in a splendid temple at Memphis. He was daintily fed and cared for, and led in procession through the streets, being greeted with applause. On his death all Egypt mourned until a successor was appointed. The dead bull was embalmed and placed in the mummy pits, or in tombs specially prepared for them, with great pomp and ceremony. Fifty and a hundred talents were spent on a single funeral. Dean Stanley describes these tombs in long galleries with high-arched vaults, under which reposes the most magnificent black marble sarcophagus that can be conceived. The coffin is rather a chamber—a breakfast party has been held in one of them—grander than the sarcophagi of the Theban king. "And all for the successive corpses of the bull Apis." These coffins form part of the great temple of Serapis, in which Apis mummies are deposited.

But was this calf of Aaron's Egyptian at all? Learned scholars like Wilkinson and Dr. Bartlett say this calf was the image of the god Apis or Mnevis, and that the dancing and the singing which took place at the same time are delineated on the sacred monuments as part of the sacred worship in the temples and in the processions as they approach the courts. Other able scholars deny outright that any sufficient grounds for this are found. They say the Egyptians did not worship the image of Apis at all, and that the live animal only was worshiped in Egypt at that period. Renouf says the chariot and horses of the sun which the kings of Judah had set up "at the en-

tering in of the house of the Lord," and which Joash burnt with fire, show the Israelites to have had an independent mythology of their own.

Blackboard.



MAN'S WEAKNESS.

ISRAEL TURNS

FROM GOD'S WAY TO HIS OWN WAY.

BREAKS the COMMANDMENTS.
WORSHIPS the CALF.

"Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death."

GOD'S GOODNESS.

ISRAEL TURNS

FROM HIS OWN WAY TO GOD'S WAY.

REPENTS
AND
RECEIVES FORGIVENESS.

THE STEPS.
PETITION. PARDON. PEACE.

"Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?"

By Way of Illustration.

Verses 1-8. *Dis-trust.* We need patience under God's delays. Sabbath school teachers, failing to

see the fruit of their labors and to receive answers to their prayers, have ceased their efforts, questioning even the good of effort and the power of prayer. Preachers of the Gospel, sowing much and reaping little, seeking souls with an unselfish love, only to be coldly criticised and called "professional," have been tempted to question the use of generous concern for others, and have laid down their office with sad hearts. Parents, whose prayers for their children have seemed unavailing, have ceased their parental efforts. Plainly the lesson here is of loyalty to God when for the time being we have no token of the divine presence or approval.—*Twitcheil.*

Idolatry. That person or thing which stands first in our choice and first in our love, that is our God. To put anything before the true God is idolatry. This sin does not belong alone to the age of Moses. Our idol may be money, ambition, appetite, or pleasure. A lady who heard Romaine in London said: "I like your preaching, and can give up everything but one." "What is that, madam?" "Cards, sir." "You think you could not be happy without them?" "No, sir." "Then they are your god, and to them you must look for salvation."

Aaron's disloyalty. Aaron lacked the moral courage to stand alone against a majority. "The demand of that hour was for a hero." Noah's experience shows us that a man can serve God no matter how many around him are serving Satan. It is not easy to be a saint in the world of sinners, but saintliness is possible, as Joseph found in Egypt, and Obadiah in Samaria, and Daniel in Babylon.

Interceding prayer. As when one string of a lute is touched the others tremble, so Christians should be responsive to their brothers' troubles. As John Knox poured out his agonized soul in the constantly repeated prayer, "O Lord, give me Scotland or I die," so we should pray constantly for our unsaved friends. God gave him Scotland in spite of queen and cardinal. And God will answer our intercessory prayers.

The Teachers' Meeting.

Here is a swift backsliding....I. Notice its causes: (1) A superficial conversion; their hearts were as heathen as ever; (2) A formal religion; their service of God was in form, not in heart; (3) A lack of faith; but let us not blame them unduly, for even now, after thirty-five centuries of education, comparatively a small part of the world has arisen to the height of faith without sight; (4) The lusts of the flesh....II. Notice the results: (1) Rapid steps downward—forgetting God, forsaking him, following an idol, gross wickedness; (2) Alienation from God; yes—

terday God was their friend, to-day their enemy; (3) Suffering; much of the agony of Israel through the ages has been the dregs of the bitter cup drunk that day....III. Notice some requisites for the backslider's return: (1) Need of a Mediator; such was Moses, such is Christ; (2) Need of a gracious God; (3) Need of repentance.

References.

FREEMAN. (Including connecting verses.) Ver. 2: Earrings, 66. Ver. 4: Metallic idols, 137. Ver. 6: Calf worship, 138. Ver. 32: Register of names, 876.

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

No. 1.

Father most holy!
God is good.
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty,
O holy Saviour! friend unseen.

No. 2.

Hear thou my prayer.
Give ye to Jehovah.
O join with the worshiping angels.
Whenever trials press my soul.
Fear not, O troubled soul.

The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. Who made a calf idol for the Hebrews to worship? **Aaron, the high priest.**
2. Did they intend to worship another God? **No; they worshiped an image of Jehovah.**
3. Is there anything wrong in this? **Yes; "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image."**
4. What does the GOLDEN TEXT say? **"Little children, keep yourselves from idols."**
5. What did Moses do? **He prayed that the people might be forgiven.**
6. What did God say? **"Mine Angel shall go before thee."**

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

37. What is the outward or visible sign or form in baptism?
Baptizing with water "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."
38. What is the inward and spiritual grace signified?
Our being cleansed from the guilt and defilement of sin, and receiving a new life from and in Christ Jesus.

B. C. 1491 or 1490.]

LESSON III. NADAB AND ABIHU.

[July 21.]

GOLDEN TEXT. Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee. Lev. 10. 9.

Authorized Version.

Lev. 10. 1-11. [*Commit to memory verses 9-11.*]

1 And Na'dab and A-bi'hu, the sons of Aa'ron, took either of them his censor, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not.

2 And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.

3 Then Mo'ses said unto Aa'ron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.

4 And Mo'ses called Mi-sha'el and El-za'phan, the sons of Uz-zie'l the uncle of Aa'ron, and said unto them, Come near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp.

5 So they went near, and carried them in their coats out of the camp; as Mo'ses had said.

6 And Mo'ses said unto Aa'ron, and unto E-le-a'zar and unto Ith'a-mar, his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people: but let your brethren, the whole house of Is'ra-el, bewail the burning which the Lord hath kindled.

7 And ye shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: for the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you. And they did according to the word of Mo'ses.

8 And the Lord spake unto Aa'ron, saying,

9 Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations:

10 And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean;

11 And that ye may teach the children of Is'ra-el all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto them by the hand of Mo'ses.

Revised Version.

1 And Na'dab and A-bi'hu, the sons of Aa'ron, took each of them his censor, and put fire therein, and laid incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he had not commanded them. And there came forth fire from before the Lord, and devoured them, and they

2 died before the Lord. Then Mo'ses said unto Aa'ron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying,

3 I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.

4 And Aa'ron held his peace. And Mo'ses called Mi-sha'el and El-za'phan, the sons of Uz-zie'l

the uncle of Aa'ron, and said unto them, Draw near, carry your brethren from before the sanc-

5 tuary out of the camp. So they drew near, and carried them in their coats out of the camp;

6 as Mo'ses had said. And Mo'ses said unto Aa'ron and unto E-le-a'zar and unto Ith'a-mar, his

sons, Let not the hair of your heads go loose, neither rend your clothes; that ye die not, and

7 that he be not wrath with all the congregation: but let your brethren, the whole house of Is'ra-el, bewail the burning which the Lord hath

8 kindled. And ye shall not go out from the door of the tent of meeting, lest ye die: for the

9 anointing oil of the Lord is upon you. And they did according to the word of Mo'ses.

10 And the Lord spake unto Aa'ron, saying,

11 Drink no wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tent of

meeting, that ye die not: it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations: and that

ye may put difference between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the

12 clean; and that ye may teach the children of Is'ra-el all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto them by the hand of Mo'ses.

TIME.—B. C. 1491 or 1490. **PLACE.**—The plain before Mount Sinai, probably the Wady er Rahah, before Ras Sufsafeh. **INTRODUCTION.**—The Lord had just signified in a miraculous manner his acceptance of Aaron and his sons as priests, by kindling the fire upon the altar and consuming the sacrifice. This fire was never to be extinguished. The sin here charged is probably that of using other than this hallowed fire from the altar of sacrifice in their presentation of incense. Prayer can only be acceptably offered on the basis of an adequate atoning sacrifice, and God can only be acceptably approached in the way that he has himself prescribed. Other irregularities have also been suspected, as that they had not yet been authorized or directed to offer incense; that this was not the appointed hour for its presenta-

tion; and it has been inferred from Lev. 16. 1, 2 that they may even have ventured into the holy of holies.—*Green.* Verses 9, 10, 11 intimate broadly that the priests were drunk when their crime was committed. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The wrath of God.

HOME READINGS.

M. Nadab and Abihu. Lev. 10. 1-11.

Tu. The incense altar. Exod. 20. 1-10.

W. Privileges of Nadab and Abihu. Exod. 24. 1-10.

Th. Cause of stumbling. Isa. 28. 1-7.

F. Unfaithfulness of priests. Ezek. 22. 23-28.

S. Uzziah's presumption. 2 Chron. 26. 14-21.

S. God's goodness and judgment. Nahum 1. 1-10.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 98, New Canadian Hymnal.

Depth of mercy, can there be ?

No. 103, New Canadian Hymnal.

Lord, I despair myself to heal.

No. 108, New Canadian Hymnal.

A charge to keep I have.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. **God's Wrath**, v. 1-7.

Who were Nadab and Abihu ?

What privileges had they enjoyed ? (Exod. 24. 9, 10.)

What is meant by "strange fire" ?

Why was this offering sinful ?

Why was it punished so severely ?

What similar judgment took place in the history of the ark ? (2 Sam. 6. 6, 7.)

What did Moses say concerning this calamity ?

How did such an event glorify God ?

Is God glorified by the destruction of the wicked ?

In what spirit did Aaron receive the death of his sons ?

How did his conduct illustrate Psalm 39. 9 ?

What commands did Moses give to the priests and the people ?

How did all this show the sacredness of God's worship and service ?

What was Christ's command in Luke 9. 59, 60, and its reason ?

2. **God's Warning**, v. 8-11.

What caution did God give to Aaron and his remaining sons ?

What was the reason for this warning ?

In what condition should men worship God ?

Is there here any reason why people should not use strong drink ?

What is the universal attitude of Scripture toward drunkenness ?

What are Paul's declarations concerning the intemperate and riotous ? (1 Cor. 6. 10.)

If the wrath of God against the sin of these priests was so terrible, what may we expect in view of our greater light ?

Practical Teachings.

How does this lesson teach—

1. The holiness of God ?
2. The danger of neglecting God's commands ?
3. The importance of teaching God's law ?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. **God's Wrath**, v. 1-7.

Against whom was God's wrath shown ?

What sin did they commit ? (See Exod. 30. 9.)

What swift punishment came to them ?

What similar judgment came to some who defiled the ark ? (2 Sam. 6. 6, 7.)

What did Moses say about this affair ?

What direction had the Lord given to the priests ? (Exod. 19. 22.)

What answer did Aaron make ?

What command did Moses then give ?

To whom was this command given ?

How did they carry out the bodies ?

What did Moses forbid to Aaron and his sons ?

What would those forbidden acts express ?

Why were they to be so careful ?

Who were to lament the calamity ?

What words might a Christian use in such a case ? (See 1 Sam. 3. 18.)

2. **God's Warning**, v. 8-11.

What further law was given to Aaron and his sons ? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

How long was this law to be in force ?

What distinction would this show ?

What duty was committed to these priests ?

What is the duty of all of God's teachers ? (See Isa. 52. 11.)

What is a good motto for all Christians in regard to strong drink ? (Rom. 14. 21.)

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. Reverence in God's service ?
2. Obedience to God's commands ?
3. To abstain from strong drink ?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What was built for the worship of God ?

Who were made priests ?

Who was the high priest ?

Who were Nadab and Abihu ?

What did they offer to God ?

What was God's way to do this ?

Whose way did they take ?

How did God show his displeasure ?

Why was he displeased ? **They disobeyed him.**

What was Aaron forbidden to do ?

What did the Lord then tell Aaron ?

Why do we think Nadab and Abihu may have been drinking ?

How should God be served always ?

To what does drink lead ? **To carelessness and strong disobedience.**What may it also cause ? **Wrong teachings.**

Remember—

That Self-will leads to Disobedience.

That Disobedience leads to Death.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

General Statement.

The tabernacle with all its sacred furniture now stands complete upon the plain in the center of the camp of Israel. Before it in the open court the great brazen altar rises, smoking with the first morning sacrifice and bright with the fire which on that day has fallen from the heavens. But ere the sun sets over the crown of Sinai the joy of the people has been turned to sorrow by an act of sacrilege, followed by a judgment of wrath. The two eldest sons of Aaron—*young men who awhile ago climbed the steep of Sinai and saw the sapphire pavement under Jehovah's feet, who have received the high privileges of the priesthood and entrance into the sanctuary—disregard the express command of the Lord. They fill their censers with common fire, instead of lighting them at the altar of burnt offerings, and in a tumultuous manner, perhaps excited by strong drink, they press toward the curtained sanctuary. In a moment the lightning of God's anger flashes, and the two priests fall dead at the vestibule of the holy place. Their aged father, standing at his post by the altar, is forbidden to show the customary signs of grief, while their relatives bear forth the bodies, clad in their priestly vestments, and bury them outside the camp. Thus God's majesty is vindicated, and his house is shown to be sacred in the presence of all the people.*

Verse 1. Nadab and Abihu. The two eldest sons of Aaron, who had been permitted to meet with God in the mountain (Exod. 24. 9), and had just been consecrated to the priestly office. (1) *The enjoyment of privilege adds to the weight of responsibility, and makes sin all the more sinful.* **His censor.** A bowl in which frankincense and other gums were mingled with coals of fire, making a fragrant cloud of smoke. **Incense.** This was offered twice a day, at the hours of morning and evening sacrifice, the latter being about three P. M. The incense was to be lighted with the fire from the altar of burnt offering, and then placed upon the golden altar in the holy place, close by the inner veil. **Strange fire.** Probably, instead of using the fire on the altar of burnt offering which fell from heaven at the consecration, they took common fire and conducted the service in a disorderly way, perhaps being intoxicated with wine, and certainly showing the spirit of irreverence and disregard for God's command. (2) *God's orders are to be obeyed faithfully, even though we may not fully understand the purpose.* **Com-manded them not.** Rather, "which the Lord had forbidden them." (3) *Whoever enters upon God's worship lightly and carelessly follows in the path of these offenders.*

2. Fire from the Lord. Perhaps a flame darting forth from the Shekinah in the holy of holies, or a lightning stroke from the heavens, though the precise manner of the event must be unknown. **Devoured them.** That is, "slew them." Their bodies and even their garments remained uninjured. Their penalty was: (1) Sudden; (2) Deadly; (3) Public; (4) Supernatural; (5) In the line of their crime; as they sinned by fire, so they died by fire. **Died before the Lord.** That is, in or before the tabernacle where God dwelt. Perhaps reasons for this sudden and terrible event may be given: (1) It was necessary to vindicate the majesty of God, which had been

affronted by their irreverent acts; (2) To impress upon the Israelites the sanctity of God's house and service; (3) Being the first offense, to administer a penalty which would deter from its repetition. See the instances of God's visitation upon first offenses with Adam, the sabbath-breaker (Num. 15. 32), Achan, Ananias, etc. (4) *How careful should we be to deal reverently with God's holy name, since those who affronted his honor received such punishment!*

3. This is it that the Lord spake. This may mean, not that God had said this in form, but that it was the spirit of his instruction. The precise words are not found elsewhere. **I will be sanctified.** That is, if men will not honor and recognize God, he will secure his own recognition by their destruction; either he will be honored by them or upon them. **Before all the people.** As their sin had been public, so was their penalty. **Held his peace.** In the silence of grief, yet submissive to God's will, realizing the justice of the event. "Rebellion speaks; resignation holds its peace."

4, 5. Mishael and Elzaphan. Cousins of the two slain priests; and, without the special command of Moses, not permitted to enter the sanctuary. **Out of the camp.** For burial, that the living might not be defiled nor infected. **In their coats.** They were buried with their priestly vestments, for these would be regarded as profaned. The dead bodies in the robes of their order, borne through the camp, must have formed an impressive lesson of the danger in offending God.

6, 7. Uncover not your heads. By taking off of priest's miter or disheveling the hair, which were common signs of mourning. **Neither rend your clothes.** By tearing them open in front, one of the common tokens of grief. The garments and the persons of the priests were both sacred. **Lest wrath come.** They were to ac-

count the service of God, which they performed on behalf of the nation, as more important than their own private griefs; and they were not to act as if repining against God's dealings with their relatives. (5) *God's cause should lie nearer to our hearts than any family ties.* **Let . . . the whole house of Israel.** The people might well mourn over the event, that it might make the deeper impression upon them. **Shall not go out.** To accompany the dead bodies to the grave. **The anointing oil.** They had received the anointing which consecrated them to the service of God.

8, 9. Unto Aaron. Since this was a precept relating especially to Aaron's family, it was given to him in person, and not through Moses. **Do**

not drink wine. It may be implied that the two priests committed their crime while under the influence of liquor; hence the prohibition. **Strong drink.** A term for intoxicating drink other than wine, and generally referring to stronger varieties. **Lest ye die.** By some act committed while intoxicated. (6) *See here the dangers into which strong drink leads men.*

10, 11. Difference between. That they may keep their minds in condition to know the difference between things holy and unholy. (7) *One is held responsible for lack of knowledge if he has the power to obtain knowledge.* **Teach the children of Israel.** Since they could not teach the laws of God unless they kept themselves in a state to comprehend them.

CRITICAL NOTES.

Verse 1. Nadab and Abihu. They were perhaps the eldest sons of Aaron and ordained priests (Exod. 28. 1). They, with their father and the seventy elders, accompanied Moses part way up the mountain, but while Moses communed directly with God, they worshipped "from afar off" (Exod. 24. 1, 9, 12). **Censer.** A kind of pan for burning incense. It is said that censers were made of brass, silver, or gold. **Incense** was offered twice daily (Exod. 30. 7, 8). For the ingredients composing it see Exod. 30. 34, ff. **Offered strange fire.** We know that on the great Day of Atonement the priest had to take fire from the altar of burnt offering (Lev. 16. 12). It is likely the same was true of other days. If that be so, then strange fire must have been ordinary fire. There is but little ground for thinking that it was incense made of the wrong ingredients, which was called "strange incense" (Exod. 30. 9). Others say that they offered incense at the wrong time. Incense symbolized prayer. It was common in the worship of ancient nations. It is still used not only by heathen people, but in the Greek and Catholic Churches.

2. And there came forth fire. How, is not said. Probably as lightning from heaven. The fire descended from heaven in the case of the sacrifice (Lev. 9. 24). Similar divine visitations are recorded in Num. 11. 1, 36, 35; 2 Kings 1. 10-12. **Devoured them.** That is, killed them as electricity does in our day. Neither their bodies nor garments were destroyed (verse 5). **They died before the Lord.** Probably in front of the tabernacle, though the phrase "before the Lord" is indefinite. Could it be established that they attempted to enter the holy of holies, the phrase would be appropriate and easily understood.

3. I will be sanctified. The verb is often translated reflexively. **In them that come nigh me.** That is, in my priests (Num. 16. 5; Ezek. 42. 13). A priest ought to be so holy as to re-

flect my holiness. Those approaching me to intercede for others must be holy vessels, so as to communicate divine truth in all its purity. **And before all the people I will be glorified.** They sinned publicly, they shall be punished in the same way. The laws of God cannot be violated even by his ministers with impunity. God is just, no less than merciful. The law is honored when the guilty suffers. **Aaron held his peace.** Thus silently recognizing the justice of God. Orientals are very demonstrative in their sorrow; hence the significance of the language used here.

4. Mishael and Elzaphan. These were Levites and near relatives of the deceased priests. The words sons, uncle, and brethren in this verse need not be understood literally. **Draw near.** The Levites assisted the priests under whose direction they worked. For the duties of the Levites see Num. 3. 6, ff.; 18. 3, ff.

5. They . . . carried them in their coats. Their garments had been defiled; consequently they must be disposed of along with the dead. For a description of the priest's coat see Exod. 28. 40, 41; 89. 27.

6. Let not the hair of your heads go loose. Do not remove your turbans so as to let your hair flow loosely over your faces, as if in deep mourning. **Neither rend your clothes.** Another very common sign of grief. **That he be not wroth with all the congregation.** Sympathy or any public manifestation of sorrow on the part of Aaron and his sons, who were representatives of God's government, would be disloyalty. **Let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning.** Not so much mourn for the two priests, but lament the great sin which necessitated such rigorous punishment.

7. And ye shall not go out from the door. Your duty is at the altar; let others attend to secular work. Whether this was a special or a perpetual prohibition is not quite

clear. The laws regarding priests and contact with their dead relatives are given in Lev. 21. 1, ff. Compare our Saviour's words (Matt. 8. 22). **For the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you.** The priests, their garments, and, in short, all the utensils and furniture of the tabernacle were anointed and consecrated to the service of God; consequently a priest must not endanger himself by coming in contact with the dead. For the law of purifications in case of such defilement see Num. 19. 11, ff. Laws prohibiting priests from coming in contact with dead people were known to the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans.

8. And the Lord spake unto Aaron. As the head of the priesthood, and to be communicated by him to the rest.

9. Drink no wine. Those who regard the five books of Moses as a patchwork of various documents loosely put together have no difficulty in accounting for this abrupt prohibition regarding wine. Supposing, however, that the two priests had indulged too freely in the use of wine and strong drink, the abruptness of the prohibition vanishes. There are the strongest reasons for taking this view. **Strong drink.** Hebrew *shecar*, evidently containing more alcohol than wine, was prepared from grain, honey, palm dates, and other fruits. It sometimes includes the term wine (Num. 28. 7). **When ye go into the tent of meeting.** When performing their office in the sanctuary. From this we may infer that they were allowed the use of such beverages when in their houses and in social life. Let us not forget that the precept when given must have amounted to an almost absolute prohibition, as the service of Aaron and his two sons could have been little less than continuous. Other nations had stringent laws regarding the use of intoxicants by their priests. It is well known that strong drink excites the passions, dulls the feelings, disturbs the judgment, and affects the whole mind and soul. It was therefore very necessary that he who officiated in God's house should abstain from it. If anyone should have his mind clear, it is the man who stands between a holy God and a fallen race. Under the new dispensation we are a peculiar people, a nation of priests, and may hold direct communion with God every hour of the day; let us therefore put away the unholy thing at all times.

10. That ye may put difference between the holy and the common. Men addicted to the use of intoxicants cannot draw fine distinctions, especially in things pertaining to the salvation of the soul.

11. And that ye may teach. God's minister is preeminently a teacher. His duty is to teach the observance of God's law. In order to teach successfully the mind must not be stimulated

with spirits, intoxicants, narcotics, etc. And, above all, those who would teach the law of God must observe it themselves.

Analytical and Biblical Outline. The Requirements of God's Worship.

I. OBEDIENCE.

Fire... commanded them not. v. 1.

Keep his statutes. Deut. 6. 2.

Obe... better than sacrifice. 1 Sam. 15. 22.

II. REVERENCE.

Sanctified in them. v. 3.

Keep thy foot. Eccles. 5. 1.

Serve... with reverence. Heb. 12. 28.

III. SUBMISSIVENESS.

Aaron held his peace. v. 3.

I opened not my mouth. Psalm 39. 9.

Not rash with thy mouth. Eccles. 5. 2.

IV. HOLINESS.

The anointing oil. v. 7.

Clean, that bear the vessels. Isa. 52. 11

Holiness becometh... house. Psalm 93. 5

V. ABSTINENCE.

Drink not wine. v. 9.

Be not drunk with wine. Eph. 5. 18.

Hearts be overcharged. Luke 21. 34.

VI. THOUGHTFULNESS.

Between holy and unholy. v. 10.

Be ye not unwise. Eph. 5. 17.

That ye may approve. Phil. 1. 10.

Thoughts for Young People.

The Dangers of Strong Drink.

1. Strong drink brings the danger of forgetting and neglecting the commands of God. (Verse 1.) As a class churchgoers are not addicted to the use of intoxicants. Not merely is it true that Christian leaders teach and practice "total abstinence;" the other truth is just as evident, that indulgence in liquor makes men hostile to the Church of Christ. Strong drink leads to irreverence and contempt for God's house.

2. Strong drink may bring the danger of sudden and terrible death. (Verse 2.) These men were impious—insulted God while leading in his worship. But how many in other circumstances daily risk their lives because of the chain of the wine cup!

3. Strong drink brings not only woe upon its victims, but sorrow to their friends. (Verse 3.) How many suffered from the curse of this sin! and how many to-day bear untold suffering because of the sins of others!

4. Strong drink leads to the numbing of the faculties and a misunderstanding of truth. (Verses 9, 10.) Just as the body of a drinking man becomes torpid and he cannot keep awake, so are his mind and heart besotted and made dull.

5. *Strong drink may cause evil example and erroneous instruction to others.* (Verse 11.) Every man is a teacher of his fellows. We should all practice the apostolic maxim, "If meat [or drink] make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat [drink no liquor] while the world standeth."

Lesson Word-Pictures.

Israel is sojourning in the wilderness. The solitary land lies all about them, and above them tower the still more lonely mountains. The great host is at rest in the tents reaching afar in every direction. In the center is the tabernacle. From its altars daily smoke the appointed offerings. From the censers steals a perfumed breath up into the heavens. In the service of God's hallowed courts the white-robed priests glide softly about.

But what is that singular procession going from the tabernacle through the camp, and then out into the solitary land beyond? Two bodies are borne along. These forms are still and hushed and will never stir again, while the white robes hanging down and fluttering in the wind proclaim that they were priests. On and on moves the sad, silent train. People stand in awestruck rows and look on. Perhaps a woman comes to a tent door and peeps out over her veil. Children in fright cling to their mothers' robes and look at the procession slowly going by.

"Two dead priests, Nadab and Abihu," whisper the people, "the sons of Aaron. They offered strange incense."

On and on moves the funeral procession, the people ahead giving way as it approaches, those on either side shrinking back to their tent doors, and so down through a wide, affrighted space the solemn bearers of the dead move steadily, slowly forward. The space without the encampment is reached, and there the dead are laid away. On what two lonely graves the night shadows will steal pityingly down, as if mourners!

"But where is Aaron, the father of Nadab and Abihu?" the people ask. "Where are Eleazar and Ithamar, their brothers?"

Back in the tabernacle, laying the burnt offerings on the altar coals, swinging censers, or officiating in some other part of the service.

Is Aaron's head uncovered in sorrow? Are Eleazar and Ithamar's white robes rent from top to bottom? No; Aaron's head is still covered. The robes of his living sons are without the slightest break in the cloth.

Why did not all these three reverently, tearfully follow those silent forms solemnly borne away?

"For the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you," they were told.

Thus closely were they set apart to their work. Was that the only regulation?

Hark! "Do not drink wine nor strong drink!"

A winebibber at the altar of God's house! He approaches the place of offering, his vision dim, his hands trembling, his gait unsteady.

A winebibber praying! His tongue hesitates, he stammers, his brain is in a tempest.

A winebibber speaking to the people! He halts in his ideas, he gasps, he drivels, he is dumb.

O shame, shame! Forbid it! "And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean," says a solemn voice, giving the reason of the prohibition.

Orientalisms of the Lesson.

The idea of a sacred fire kindled from heaven is found in the case of Noah, when "the fire of the Lord" consumed the sacrifice (Gen. 8, 20). It was ever-burning fire that was on the altar of the Hebrew nation, which had been kindled from heaven. The command (Lev. 6, 13) was, "The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out." Similar thoughts about the perpetuity of sacred fire are found in the history of many nations. What it commemorated in these nations is not easily determined. It is supposed that among the Greeks it was the heavenly origin of fire itself.

The Romans had a somewhat similar ritual in the worship of Vesta, their goddess of fire, which required the guardianship of an ever-burning sacred flame. This fire was on the central hearth of the city, or the *festia* of the village; it was the sacred symbol of home and family life. It was the first duty of the women to watch their fire and see that it was never by any accident allowed to be extinguished.

The ancient fire-worshippers of Persia erected altars on the mountain tops and daily supplied them with fuel, keeping the same fires burning from age to age and from generation to generation. They were never allowed to go out. In every place where their successors, the Parsees of the present day, are settled an everlasting fire is kept burning, fed with perfumes and costly woods. No degradation must be allowed to come to the sacred element. Even blowing on it with the breath is not allowed, as the exhalations are unclean and impure. Wherever the wind carries the flame it is supposed to slay thousands of demons.

The Hindoos have a suggestive custom. Among a class of Brahmins, when the boy at eight years of age is invested with the sacred thread, a fire is kindled which it is his duty to preserve uninterrupted until his death. From this fire he must kindle all the sacrifices he offers which require the

use of fire, also the fire used at his marriage ceremony, and finally the funeral pyre which consumes him must be lit by his surviving relatives at this same flame.

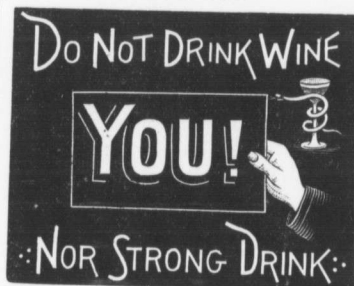
The sacred fire of the Hebrews was to be ever kept burning on the great altar of brass, and from that fire was to be taken to kindle the incense placed on the incense altar, or on the great day of atonement in the holy of holies. It was not allowable that these censers should be lighted with any other fire. These men took their "censers." The daily censer was made of brass, though, according to the Mishna, in the second temple they were made of silver, while that on the yearly sacrifice was of gold. The daily censer may have had a stand for setting it on the altar of incense; those used on the day of atonement seem to have been furnished with a handle. The Greek and Roman censers were suspended by chains and were swung by the priest, and the Roman Catholic Church has followed this model. If the Hebrews followed the Egyptian models, however, they were held in the hand, and the incense was made into small round pellets and dexterously tossed onto the fire. The Jewish incense was in the form of paste, probably rolled in the same form and thrown in the same way; hence some have thought that the Hebrew censer was in some one of the many Egyptian shapes. According to the Gamaara the sacred fire on the brazen altar was divided into three parts, from one of which the coals were taken for the incense, from another the fire for burning the victims, while another part was kept to supply the first two. If for any of these uses fire was obtained elsewhere, it was called "strange fire." The fire on the altar of the second temple was kindled from heaven, as was that of the first temple. There were sixteen prefects whose duty it was to prepare the incense, one of whom had to be responsible that it should always be ready at the moment it was needed.* The priest entered the holy place alone, and did not tarry long lest the people should grow alarmed, thinking him to be struck dead. They were thus concerned because Zechariah tarried so long. It has been thought that the close connection between this incident of Nadab and Abihu's destruction and the direction that the priests should not drink strong drink when they went into the tabernacle, lest they die, showed that drunkenness may have been the occasion of their careless or reckless use of "strange fire." God will have no bacchanalia wherein drunken men reach out their hands to drag his sacred fire from the altar, nor wherein they desecrate the altar with unhallowed worship.

Dr. Bartlett says the completest confirmation of Scripture representations about the culture of the vine and the manufacture of wine in Egypt is fur-

* This incense was to be kept exclusively for Jehovah, and kindled only at his fire.—Bartlett.

nished by the early pyramid tombs at Thebes. The drunken man is carried home by his servants, who hold him by the head and feet, or he lies helpless on the shoulders of three men; and servants support women no longer able to support themselves. Thus it is not out of keeping with the period that the sons of Aaron, who had been reared in Egypt, might have gotten drunk.

Blackboard.



A WARNING WORD.

WINE AND STRONG DRINK

BROUGHT TO

NADAB AND ABIHU | ISRAEL
DEATH. | SORROW.
SHAME.

BRINGS TO

MEN TO-DAY | HOMES
DEATH. | SORROW.
SHAME.

"DO NOT DRINK WINE
NOR
STRONG DRINK."

"It shall be a statute forever."

By Way of Illustration.

Verses 1-8. "Strange fire." In our days of electric spark and lucifer match it is difficult to understand either the ancient value or the sacredness of fire. We see, as in the case of Abraham in pre-

paring for the sacrifice of Isaac, that he took not only the wood, but also the fire from his home, carrying it three days until it was needed on Mount Moriah. "Sacred fire," we presume, was the fire kept perpetually burning upon the altar, properly sanctified and exclusively acceptable to God. By "strange fire" we understand the fire brought from the outside by willful men either in their pride, self-will, and presumption or with maudlin imitation, as by drunken men, of the holy rites. We see in Nadab and Abihu the first of a long line of blasphemers who burlesque religion and drag holy things into the mire of mockery. However God is to be worshiped, he is to be approached only with reverence and with that which is pure and holy. Men may divide on the question of worshiping God with incense, light, vestments, musical instruments, varieties of posture; but whatever the method, holiness becometh God's house.—*W. E. Griffie.*

Professor Palmer used to give a representation of an Arab merchant going through his prayer, one sentence being a devout invocation of Allah, the next an announcement of the price at which he would sell his articles. In 1470 Bishop Grindall, in York, gave orders that no peddlers would be permitted to sell their wares in church, business having become combined with devotion, such as in churches on the Continent, where worshippers arise from their knees to offer their business cards to strangers in attendance.—*Sunday at Home.*

Church forms are valuable in their own place. They are frames in which to set pictures of truth. They are dead poles, no doubt, yet useful to support living plants, and very beautiful when the bare stem is festooned with green leaves and crowned with flowers.—*Guthrie.*

Verses 9-11. Intemperance will conquer men in any position. Alexander the Great began the second night's carousal with twenty guests at table. He drank the health of each guest severally. After this he called for Hercules's cup, which held an incredible quantity. After twice emptying this extravagant bumper, he fell instantly to the floor. Seneca says, "Here, then, this hero, unconquered by the toils of prodigious quiches, exposed to the dangers of sieges and combats, lies subdued by intemperance." He died of fever a few days later, at the age of thirty-eight years.

Intemperance promotes crime. Cruikshank, the artist, offered one hundred pounds for proof of a violent crime committed by a total abstainer, and the money remains unclaimed to this day.—*Farrar.*

When the Duke of Wellington, in one of his campaigns, heard that a large supply of wine lay in his march, he at once sent out a body of troops to

knock every wine barrel on the head. He knew he could not trust his soldiers if they drank it.

The Teachers' Meeting.

Show who Nadab and Abihu were.... Their rank, privileges, and social position.... The precise nature of their crime.... Draw a diagram, showing altar, court, sanctuary, etc., to illustrate the story.... The characteristics of their penalty.... The reasons why it was so severely punished.... The benefits to Israel of this occurrence.... Against what does it warn us? Profanity, irreverence, intemperance, etc.... The duties required in God's worship.... The application to the use of strong drink.

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

No. 1.

Yield not to temptation.
Dare to do right.
Will Jesus find us watching?
Soldiers who to Christ belong?
Oft in danger, oft in woe.

No. 2.

The praying spirit breathe.
Jesus, Saviour, pilot me.
Sinner, What Say You?
Be with me every moment.
Temperance Rally.

The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. Why were Nadab and Abihu destroyed? **For offering strange fire.**
2. What caused them to offer strange fire? **Intoxication from the use of wine or strong drink.**
3. What was its effect upon them? **It made them unable to distinguish between holy and unholy.**
4. What command did God therefore give to Aaron? **GOLDEN TEXT: "Do not drink wine nor strong drink," etc.**
5. What is the lesson we ought to learn? **"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."**

CATECHISM QUESTION.

39. What are the actual privileges of baptized adults?

They are made members of the visible Church of Christ; and their right, as penitent believers, to the blessings of the Christian covenant, is sealed to them.

B. C. 1490.] LESSON IV. JOURNEYING TO CANAAN.

[July 28.]

GOLDEN TEXT. Come thou with us, and we will do thee good : for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel. Num. 10. 29.

Authorized Version.

Num. 10. 29-36. [*Commit to memory verses 33, 34.*]

[Study connection in chap. 9.]

29 And Mo'ses said unto Ho'bab, the son of Rag'u-el the Mid'i-an-ite, Mo'ses' father-in-law, We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Is'ra-el.

30 And he said unto him, I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred.

31 And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes.

32 And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee.

33 And they departed from the mount of the Lord three days' journey; and the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them.

34 And the cloud of the Lord was upon them by day, when they went out of the camp.

35 And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Mo'ses said, Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.

36 And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Is'ra-el.

Revised Version.

29 And Mo'ses said unto Ho'bab, the son of Re'u-el the Mid'i-an-ite, Mo'ses' father-in-law, We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Is'ra-el. And he said unto him, I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred. And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou shalt be to us instead of eyes. And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what good soever the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee.

33 And they set forward from the mount of the Lord three days' journey; and the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them three day's journey, to seek out a resting place for them. And the cloud of the Lord was over them by day, when they set forward from the camp.

35 And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Mo'ses said, Rise up, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee. And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, unto the ten thousands of the thousands of Is'ra-el.

TIME.—About B. C. 1490. **PLACES.**—The wilderness of Sinai and the region northward toward the east of the peninsula. **INTRODUCTORY.**—The Book of Numbers, from which our lesson is taken, gives us, besides two censuses and many detailed laws and ordinances, the history of the children of Israel from the second year of the exodus to the beginning of the fortieth year. The invitation to Ho'bab was probably given soon after the northward journey of the people was begun. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The goodness of God.

HOME READINGS.

M. Journeying to Canaan. Num. 10. 29-36.

Tu. The guiding pillar. Num. 9. 15-23.

W. Jehovah's promises. Exod. 6. 1-8.

Th. Remembering the way. Neh. 9. 5-12.

F. Loving-kindness acknowledged. Isa. 63. 7-14.

S. The almighty keeper. Psalm 121.

S. "He leadeth me." Psalm 23.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 156, New Canadian Hymnal.

When I can read my title clear.

No. 195, New Canadian Hymnal.

Stand up! stand up for Jesus!

Ye soldiers of the cross!

No. 148, New Canadian Hymnal.

My Father is rich in houses and lands.

He holdeth the wealth of the world in his hands!

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. Companionship, v. 29-32.

Who was Ho'bab?

Who was Raguel?

When had God said "I will give it you?" (Gen. 12. 7.)

When had the Lord spoken good concerning Israel? (Gen. 32. 12; Exod. 3. 8 and 6. 7, 8.)

In what way does Moses furnish us an example to invite others to come to God?

What was Ho'bab's first reply?

How does the reason he gave for his refusal re-

semble reasons given to-day for turning away from God?

What lesson can we learn in our efforts to save souls from Moses's importunity?

What was the first reason Moses gave? (The large amount of good that Hobab would receive if he went.)

What was his second reason? (The large amount of good that Hobab would do if he went.)

How could Hobab be to the Israelites "instead of eyes?"

Repeat the GOLDEN TEXT?

2. Leadership, v. 33-36.

How long was the first journey of the Israelites from Mount Sinai?

Whither were they going? (To Kadesh-barnea.) How long is the route from Sinai to Kadesh in the most direct course? (About eleven days' journey.)

What was the ark of the covenant of the Lord? How was it carried?

What constant providential guide had the Israelites when they journeyed from the wilderness? Repeat the morning prayer of Moses.

Repeat Moses's evening prayer.

Practical Teachings.

Where in this lesson are shown—

1. The value of godly fellowship?
2. The advantage each individual can be to the Church of God?
3. The guidance of God?
4. The sure victory and inheritance of his children?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. Companionship, v. 29-32.

Where did Moses say that the Israelites were going?

Whom did he invite to go with them?

What was his invitation? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

By what other names is Hobab known? (See Exod. 2. 18; 3. 1.)

What did Hobab reply?

What entreaty did Moses utter?

Why did he thus urge Hobab?

What promise did Moses make to him?

What wise words should we heed in our choice of companions? (Prov. 13. 20.)

2. Leadership, v. 33-36.

Whence did they start, and how far go?

What mountain is here meant? (See Exod. 3. 1.)

What leadership had they in this journey?

What token showed the Lord's presence?

How did this cloud appear by night? (Num. 9. 15, 16.)

What sign had they when to go or to stop? (Num. 9. 17-22.)

What said Moses when the ark removed?

What when the ark rested?

Under what leadership may we always be safe? (See Psalm 23. 1, 2.)

Teachings of the Lesson.

What are we taught in this lesson about—

1. The choice of companions?
2. Following God's leadership?
3. Relying on God's care?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Where were the Israelites going?

Who was their leader?

What was the sign of his presence?

Who has promised to lead us? (Isa. 48. 17.)

How did the travelers know when to stop?

When did they go forward?

What wilderness were they now about to leave?

Who had been with them there? **Hobab.**

Who was Hobab?

What did Moses ask him to do?

Why did he ask Hobab to go with them?

What is always the way of blessing? **The**

Lord's way.

Was Hobab willing to go?

Why not?

Did Moses do right to urge him to go?

To what country are Christians traveling?

Should they try to take others along?

How many days did the people go forward this time?

Why did they rest again so soon?

Remember—

You have set out on a journey.

God wants you to take some one with you.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

General Statement.

We have had two lessons from Exodus and one from Leviticus; now we turn to the Book of Numbers, from which Lessons IV and V are taken. It is the fourth book of the Pentateuch, and receives its name from two numberings of the people described in it—a census near the beginning and a census near the end of the forty years' wandering. The Israelites have now started from the plain of Rahah, at the base of Mount Sinai, and are journeying northward through the wilderness to Kadesh-barnea, on the southern edge of Palestine. The calculations of chronologists place this incident about the middle of May, B. C. 490. A very trying experience was evidently before the people. The desert is intensely hot, bare of

vegetation, rough, visited by terrible sand storms, and haunted by hostile tribes; but the Israelites started on their journey with bright hopes, for they felt confident of rest and comfort in the land to which they journeyed. Our Lesson Hymn gives a beautiful picture of the progress of the tribes as they followed their "awful Guide in smoke and flame." That Moses should urgently ask Hobab's companionship and guidance was most natural. The simple chants, "Rise up, Lord," and "Return, O Lord," may almost be said to have been the beginning of Hebrew psalmistry, and the first chant was assuredly the inspiration of Psalm 68. The children of Israel had been at Sinai for nearly a year. Probably no year was ever spent so full of civilizing processes. They had come from Egypt a herd of barbarians; they left Sinai a nation at least half-civilized. According to the usual understanding of the census given in the first two chapters of Numbers, there were about two million of the children of Israel. There were, that is to say, counting the Levites, six hundred and twenty-five thousand five hundred and fifty men twenty years old and upward. But it has been suggested by Professor Beecher that the numbering was "technical," and not individual; that is, that the army was divided into thousands and hundreds much like our own "regiments" and "companies," but that these were often deficient in numbers, so that to say there were six hundred thousand men only means that there were six hundred groups of men, each of which by its full complement would number one thousand men.

Verse 29. Hobab, the son of Raguel.

Raguel should be Reuel, as in the Revised Version and in Exod. 2. 18. It seems to be reasonably certain that Reuel and Jethro were the same. "Jethro" means Excellency, and should be so translated; it was a title of Reuel. Hobab was either a son or a younger brother of Reuel; the phrase "son" is indefinite. **The Midianite.** Midian was the region in which Moses had spent the middle forty years of his long life, and where he found his wife. It is a wide desert with patches of grazing. **Father-in-law** might be translated "relative by marriage." The word may be used for either father-in-law or brother-in-law. **We are journeying.** About to journey. The march was just beginning. **The place of which the Lord said, I will give it you.** So had the Lord said often (Gen. 12. 7; 13. 15; 17. 8; 28. 13; Psalm 105. 9-11; Exod. 3. 8). It was a very desirable country, "on the road to everywhere." Its frequent changes of masters in later times show how important its possession was to the world's conquerors. **Come thou with us.** (1) *Those who are bound for the heavenly kingdom should encourage their friends to come along with them. We will do thee good.* (2) *No one can associate with the religious without receiving good.* Whatever blessings Israel enjoyed should be shared by Hobab—manna, pillar of fire, miraculous help, holy law, inheritance in the promised land. **The Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.** God always speaks good concerning God's people.

30. I will not go. The mere invitation is often insufficient to bring our friends to Christ. (3) *The things of this world, which are seen, draw strongly from the pursuits of the other world, which are not seen. I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred.* It is to be remembered that to go with the Israelites meant to Hobab much more than a long and inconvenient

journey. It meant participation in a series of desperate struggles; it meant a change from the life of a nomad to the life of a citizen; and, more than either of these, it meant the thorough committal of himself to the newly formulated religious creed of Sinai.

31. Leave us not, I pray thee. (4) *Even a decided refusal may be overcome by earnest persuasion.* We say "overcome" because from Judg. 1. 16; 4. 11; 1 Sam. 15. 6 it is evident that Hobab yielded to Moses's entreaty, and that his descendants were incorporated with Israel. The great reason for the earnestness of Moses is to be seen in the next clause. **We are to encamp in the wilderness.** How fraught with dangers this was may be seen from the General Statement. It would be hard to find a company less adapted to wilderness wandering than were the Hebrews. The very bulk and bigness of the crowd was against it, so much against it as to long puzzle archeologists how they could have been fed (though that question is more easily answered now that the wilderness of Sinai has been more carefully explored). In the second place, they had been slaves and toilers in the midst of Egypt's civilization, and had none of the instincts of nomads. Their weakness and their strength were alike characteristic of permanent people. **Thou mayest be to us instead of eyes.** What need had Moses of eyes except to see the guiding pillar of fire and cloud? If the Israelites were miraculously guided to Palestine, what was the need of an additional shrewd Midianite? The answer is ready; (5) *No promise of divine guidance is designed to supersede the use of the best natural helps within reach.* The miraculous cloud showed the general route, but it needed the experienced desert wanderer to point out the pastures and shade and water. Besides, without doubt Hobab was of service in quite another way; he was a chief of a powerful tribe, who knew well the characteristics of the

Arabs, and both as a warrior and a strategist his presence would be useful. Revivalists have not shown as ready disposition to follow the example of Moses in his second argument as they have always done in his first. Moses does not flatter Hobab with the notion that he can confer a favor on God—that mode of reaching sinners is as mistaken as it is common—but he clearly shows what advantage he may be under God to God's people.

(6) *God furnishes superhuman helps when human helps cannot be reached, but not till then.* (7) *One of the surest ways to make men thorough Christians is to encourage them in the performance of the lesser Christian duties.* Young people should be Christians not only because thus they may reach heaven, but because God has work to be done in this world which only they after conversion can do.

32. If thou go with us. It is interesting to note not simply that Hobab did go with them, but that he went just as Moses asked him to go, as guide and scout. Judah was the foremost tribe in the march from Sinai to Canaan. Hobab and his tribesmen would naturally march in front of Judah, and we find centuries later that the sons of Hobab dwelt among the sons of Judah. **What goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee.** (8) *We can give nothing good to others that we have not first received from the Lord.* (9) *Always those that suffer with the people of God shall reign with them.*

33. They departed. On a journey eleven days long. **The mount of the Lord.** Sinai. **Three days' journey.** Before they stopped for any length of time. **The ark of the covenant.** The golden box which contained the law written on tables of stone. That law was God's covenant with the Israelites; hence the name. We must not suppose that the people walked seventy-two hours without halting, but that there

was no permanent stopping place for the ark until the three days' journey had been made. The ark was wrapped in purple-blue cloth, and was carried separately from the rest of the sacred furniture in front of the whole army. Usually it was placed in the midst of the host. **A resting place for them.** Kibroth-hattaavah, where were the "graves of gluttony." Here where so many died an immense number of graves have been found.

34. The cloud of the Lord was upon them. Rather, above them, rising while in the way. It is possible, as some scholars have suggested, that the upper part of the "pillar" of cloud floated back and spread out as a protecting shade over the whole procession. Repeatedly in the East caravans and armies have followed a conspicuous flame carried high in the front as a signal. **By day, when they went out of the camp.** In the morning when they started on their march.

35. When the ark set forward, . . . Moses said. What Moses said was a sort of public prayer for his nation. The beginning and the closing of every day of the march were marked by public devotions. **Rise up, Lord.** Be ready to help us. Much as the millions of Hebrews moving over the trackless wilderness needed help and guidance, a God who would "rise up" and march with them, their need was not as densely hidden as is ours, their future was not as densely hidden as is ours, their way was not harder to find than our way through the ordinary trials of life. (10) *Christ is our pillar of cloud and fire.* **Let thine enemies be scattered.** Not the Hebrews' enemies at all, but God's enemies. This warning watchword was warlike.

36. Return, O Lord. The evening watchword was restful and festal. God was leading them through a desert of privation, but even there he provided them with guidance and rest, and "will he not much more care for you?"

CRITICAL NOTES.

Verse 29. Hobab, the son of Reuel. The Authorized Version has Raguel, though the same Hebrew word as in Exod. 2. 18 is used, where we read Reuel, and where it is said that Zipporah, Moses's wife, was the daughter of Reuel. Thus it is evident that Moses and Hobab were brothers-in-law (see Judg. 4. 11, Revised Version). Hobab has been confounded with Jethro, which means Excellency, and was probably the title given to Reuel. It should be remarked that the word *chothen*, rendered "father-in-law" in this verse, simply denotes a relative by marriage. Jethro was an old man and had seven grown-up daughters when Moses first met him, or forty years before the events narrated in this chapter (see Exod. 2. 16). It is not probable that he would be invited to accompany the Israelites. Moreover, it is said

that he returned from Moses at Sinai to his own land (Exod. 19. 27), or Midian. **The Midianite.** The Midianites were a powerful people, whose territory, though not well defined, extended over portions of the Sinaitic peninsula, taking in large tracts in Arabia on both sides of the Ælantic Gulf, and reaching alongside of Edom and Moab far to the north (Num. 22. 1-4). **Come thou with us.** Hobab accompanied the Israelites, and his descendants settled in southern Palestine (Judg. 1. 16; 4. 11). **And we will do thee good.** This passage shows clearly that Moses was not so narrow as we sometimes think, and that there were non-Israelites who worshiped Jehovah. Moses would do good to the followers of the Lord, regardless of nationality. Can we do less? Moses needed Hobab's help. The latter could as-

assist the great lawgiver in various ways. No one lives to himself. We are all dependent. Let us not rebel, but attract all to the service of God. How many men who might be useful are wasting their energies in the service of Satan! **For the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.** He had promised to be their God (Exod. 6. 7, 8), to lead them into a land flowing with milk and honey (Exod. 3. 8), and to make them into a very great nation (Gen. 32. 12).

30. I will not go. We are not told how Hobab happened to be in the camp of Israel or how long he had been there. We simply know that when first asked to go with Moses he refused. He thought of his own land and people, and found it hard to break off old ties. So to-day many prefer to remain with old acquaintances in the wilderness of sin than to march with God's people to the heavenly Canaan.

31. Leave us not. Though our pleadings with the unconverted may be unheeded, they should be earnestly repeated. We may reasonably believe, though not stated here in so many words, that Hobab yielded to Moses's entreaties (see comments on verse 29). From this let us learn to be diligent, notwithstanding repeated rebuffs, in trying to bring men to Christ. **Thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness.** Hobab, being the son of a priest, belonged to the ruling class. Having spent his life among the nomadic tribes in the wilderness, he would be a valuable acquisition to the Israelites. It is to be supposed that he knew every well, rivulet, green spot, and suitable place for encamping. In our day how many persons of culture and influence there are outside the Church who, if converted, would be exceedingly useful in building up the kingdom! **Shalt be to us instead of eyes.** Strange language for Moses, the man of God, in such intimate communion with God, who was divinely led by the pillar of cloud. But, after all, are we not obliged, even while doing God's work, to employ all the natural means within our reach? If Hobab can point out a secluded well, it is not wise to ask God to reveal that spot by a miracle or to make a new spring.

32. What good soever the Lord shall do unto us. God is no respecter of persons; equal blessings for equal services in God's kingdom. "If we suffer with God's people, we shall also reign with them" (2 Tim. 2. 12; Luke 22. 28, 29). As Ruskin has wisely said, "God wants every man to be a Christian not simply because he wants that man to be happy, but because there is work for him to do."

33. They set forward from the mount of the Lord. That is, from Sinai or Horeb. Horeb was a general term used of the country and hills around Sinai (Exod. 3. 1; 4. 27, etc.). **Three days' journey.** A phrase often used in

the Old Testament (Gen. 30. 36; Exod. 3. 18; 8. 27, etc.), and probably not to be taken literally, but for a very long journey made in one very long day, which may have been one whole day and parts of two nights. A march that was made till they reached another convenient camping place, perhaps Kibroth-hattaavah (Num. 11. 34, 35; 33. 16). **The ark of the covenant.** So called because in it were deposited the two tables of the law or covenant (Exod. 25. 21). It also contained the pot of manna and the rod of Aaron (1 Kings 8. 9; Heb. 9. 4). For a full description of the ark see Exod. 25. 10-22.

Went before them. It symbolized the presence of Jehovah, whom men were to follow. Whether the ark was separated from the tabernacle with the rest of its sacred furniture is a disputed point. Certain it is, however, that the ark did not always head the procession, as here and in Josh. 3. 3, *ff* (see Num. 2. 17). The phrase "went before them" does not necessarily imply "local precedence," any more than when we say that a general led his army to victory. **To seek out a resting place for them.** Not simply the next place of encampment, but the land of Canaan, their final rest.

34. The cloud of the Lord was over them by day. For a description of this cloud see Exod. 13. 21, 22; Num. 9. 15, *ff*. We are not to conceive of the Israelites as a well-organized modern army marching over a regular pike or military road, but rather as a promiscuous crowd of men, women, and children, numbering anywhere from one to three millions, together with immense flocks of sheep, cattle, etc. These would be scattered far and wide over the wilderness, but the cloud being high could be seen from any distance. We know from ancient history that the Greeks, Persians, and Egyptians employed "fire and smoke as signals in their marches." We read of an Egyptian general that he was "a flame in darkness at the head of his soldiers."

35. Rise up, O Lord. This verse may be regarded as a formula or a prayer, which was repeated by Moses at the beginning of every day's march, as the next verse is one uttered at the close of the day. **Let thine enemies.** Not the enemies of Israel, but those of God. The Hebrews were selected not to found a mighty Jewish dynasty, but to build up the work of God on earth. How it must have encouraged the weary travelers in the wilderness to know that they were not fighting their own battles, but the battles of the living God!

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

The Church of God.

I. ITS AIM.

Journeying unto the place. v. 29.

Desire a better country. Heb. 11. 13-16.

II. ITS PROMISE.

The Lord said....will give. v. 29.

Given unto us....promises. 2 Peter 1. 4.

Promises of God....are yea. 2 Cor. 1. 20.

III. ITS INVITATION.

Come thou with us. v. 29.

Seek ye the Lord. Isa. 55. 6.

Come unto me. Matt. 11. 28.

IV. ITS INFLUENCE.

1. *Will do thee good.* v. 29.

Given thee....them that sail. Acts 27. 24.

2. *What goodness....the same.* v. 32.

Ye shall be a blessing. Zech. 8. 13.

V. ITS GUIDE.

The ark of....the Lord. v. 33.

To show you....what way. Deut. 1. 33.

Guide thee with mine eye. Psalm 32. 8.

VI. ITS PROTECTION.

The cloud of the Lord. v. 34.

Came between the camp. Exod. 14. 19, 20.

I am with you alway. Matt. 28. 20.

VII. ITS TRIUMPH.

Thine enemies....scattered. v. 35.

The heathen for thine inheritance. Psalm 2. 8.

Break....the oppressor. Psalm 72. 4.

Thoughts for Young People.

On Pilgrimage.

1. *Life is a pilgrimage.* We leave the city of destruction, as Bunyan would say, to go to the celestial city; but the trouble is, few of us recognize the true character of the city of destruction.

2. *God calls all to be pilgrims.* We cannot remain in this world if we would. By every providence of our lives he seeks to keep us from being attached to this world by our affections.

3. *The promises are great.* It is a reasonable thing, as well as a right thing, to be a Christian. Great and special blessings are promised to the people of God, and to serve him is the highest privilege.

4. *We do not know the way ourselves.*

"We know not what's before us,

What trials are to come;

But each day passing o'er us

Still brings us nearer home."

5. *Our Guide is true, loving, strong, and wise.* The Bible stands as a pillar of cloud and fire.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

There are signs of the departure of Israel from their protracted camp at Sinai.

People are calling together their flocks, driving in their herds, packing up their goods, looking over their camels to see if they are in marching order, and when the signal is given it will take but a short time to strike tents and move off.

It will be good to get away, but it will be good

also to have all possible help through the wilderness. There are two men talking about this very thing—Moses, the great leader, and Hobab, his brother-in-law.

Moses, with his wise, serious face, is looking thoughtfully at Hobab, and among other words saying in kindly tones, "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good."

Hobab shakes his head. He prefers to stay with his kindred. Moses is not discouraged. He will try again.

O, how God blesses our "try again" for a friend, a father's or mother's "try again" for their children, the pastor's "try again" for one of his flock!

Moses cries, "Leave us not," and reminds Hobab how useful he may be to Israel as eyes on the journey that Hobab knows about. Hobab may do some good, may he? How interesting is that time of indecision! How much hangs on our willingness to listen to another's "try again!"

What will Hobab do?

You can see two possible streams of history flowing out from this proposition of Moses. If accepted, there will be a home in Canaan and descendants amid the tribes of Israel; if rejected, there will be a stay in Midian.

Look ahead and into the land of promise, and you will find Kenites in Israel. O Hobab, what an important decision you made in the wilderness!

The camp is now breaking up. The tents are coming down. The herds are all in and are ready to start. Hark, here comes the tramp of armed warriors! They are marching ahead.

All are going.

"Forward!" is the cry.

Farewell to Sinai!

Farewell to the mount of God!

But what is that far ahead?

O, blessed the life of one or the life of the nation that has the heavenly Guide going on before.

It is the ark of God now going on before. A resting place for Israel will be found, and Israel tramps on confidently.

What a vast procession!

You hear the heavy tramp of Israel's warriors. You hear the bleating of the flocks, the lowing of the herds. Here come the camels burdened with Israel's goods. And what long files of men and women there are, pilgrims going on to their homes in Canaan!

The journey by day may be protracted, but there will be sweet rest at night. The tents will be pitched, the camp fires gleam, the evening meal be eaten, the watchers set for the night. In the morning the ark of God will be taken up again. "Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered!" begins Moses's salute to the ark. Through the day the ark will be borne on and on. At last the night shadows will roll like drapery down the

mountain slopes, and Moses's greeting will be whenever the ark shall rest, "Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel."

Blackboard.



JOURNEYING TO

EARTHLY | HEAVENLY

CANAAN.

MOSES SAID | CHRISTIANS SAY

TO

HOBAB | ALL MEN

"COME THOU WITH US, AND WE WILL DO THEE GOOD."

COMMUNION
WITH
CHRIST.

COMPANIONSHIP
OF
CHRISTIANS.

SHALL I JOIN ?

"The Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

GOD'S PEOPLE

GUIDED
BY
GOD.

JOURNEYING
WITH
JESUS.

HELPFUL AND HOPEFUL.

HARDSHIPS NOW. HEAVEN AT LAST.

START TO-DAY.

"What goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will he do unto thee."

Orientalisms of the Lesson.

The "ark of the covenant" is said in verse 33 to have gone before the people. The rabbis said there were two arks, one which was deposited in the tabernacle and one which went before the hosts in their marches. They fancifully said, also, that the one which preceded the camp on its journeyings contained the broken tables of the law which Moses threw down in his anger at the idolatry of the Israelites. Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians* describes and illustrates the processions of the Egyptian worship represented on the monuments, where an ark or chest, surmounted by a pair of winged figures like the cherubin, constantly appears. The Greeks, the Romans, and the Etruscans also had in their ritual something similar to this chest.

The ark of the Israelites was "overlaid with pure gold." Specimens of this kind of work are found in Egypt dating from a very early period, both of overlaying and inlaying. The ornaments of Aah-hotep are spoken of as a small ax with cedar handle covered with gold leaf, a bronze blade with a thick coating of the same material, and a dagger and case ornamented with figures of females in gold leaf, the handle partly covered with triangles of gold, and its edge thus covered also. Bartlett is a stout advocate of the Egyptian origin of many things among the Hebrews, but even he does not attribute the carrying of the ark in these marches to imitation of the Egyptian ark and its processions.

Burning lights were carried before the armies of Egypt in marching into battle. The march of Alexander the Great was preceded by an altar of silver on which flamed "the sacred and eternal fire," and by huge torches raised on poles. The light from these was visible by night and the smoke by day. These again were all temporary expedients. But the Hebrews were led through their entire journey by this strange cloud, alternating between smoke and flame day and night.

By Way of Illustration.

Journeying to Canaan. We value a path according to its destination. If it be ever so pleasant and easy, and leads to a malarious swamp or an uninhabitable desert, we would not choose it. The path from a prisoner's cell to the gallows might be paved with gold and tapestried with Syrian embroideries, and it would be an unpleasant path. On the other hand, we will endure patiently a very rough road if it leads to a desirable place. J. E. Tuttle says: "It is a great thing to be journeying toward the Lord's place. The sacrifice of the present is unthought of in the vision of the prize it secures. Paul counted all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. Christ hin-

self for the prize set before him endured the cross and despised the shame. William Carey forgot that suffering preaching to the heathen might bring him in the contemplation of the end toward which he toiled. Get on the way to the Lord's place. Put yourself in the pathways of divine purposes. It will exalt life. Toil is no longer toil when it leads to the place of God."

Verses 29-32. Invitation. A minister who believed in personal invitation said one day to a prominent business man of his congregation, "My brother, the church needs you, and you need the Lord Jesus Christ." This personal invitation, the first the man had ever received, brought him to Christ. Often the invitation must be repeated. "When will you stop asking me to become a Christian?" said a young lady a little curtly to her patient, loving Sunday school teacher. "I will stop when God stops loving you and wanting you. This is such a treasure which I am urging you to possess that I can only cease urging when you accept."

Hobab's opportunity. This was the crisis of his life. The successful man is the one who uses his opportunities. There can be no more awful punishment than memory when it must look back upon the lost opportunities of a life. Even as a statue with the fountain water trickling through its hand into the basin beneath, so do we let opportunities slip.

Verses 33-36. Guidance and protection. The Lord has never left his people without guidance. He guided in the cloud and pillar. He guided through human leaders who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Christ called himself the Good Shepherd, who went before his sheep to lead them to safe pastures. And of the Holy Spirit Christ said, "He will guide you into all truth."

A traveler among the mountains of Madeira set out for a distant summit, but was soon lost in a thick mist. He would have despaired, but his guide kept calling out from before, "Press on, master, press on; there's light beyond." When God calls out, "Be strong, I am with you," we need not fear.

The Teachers' Meeting.

One of the most suggestive methods for teaching this lesson is presented by the *Illustrative Notes*. The lesson is regarded as asking the question often asked, Why join the Church? 1. Because of its aim. 2. Because of its fellowship. 3. Because of its promises. 4. Because of its needs. 5. Because of its guidance. 6. Because of its victories. . . . Or, 1. The pilgrimage of life (verse 29). Then compare it with the spirit-

ual pilgrimage referred to in the New Testament (Heb. 11. 8-10, 13-16; 1 Peter 2. 11; 1 Cor. 2. 9, 10; Rev. 21. 1-4; 22. 1-5). 2. The invitation given to come to the promised land (verses 29-32). Two modes presented, one of which was unsuccessful. Contrast the means to be used to draw others into the kingdom of God, and seek New Testament illustration of invitations. 3. The guiding pillar (verses 33-36). The dangers, the unknown way, the guide. Christ is our guide (John 1. 4, 5, 9, 17, 18; Heb. 1. 3). Christ is our way (John 14. 6). We are led into troubles to fit us for everlasting life (2 Cor. 4. 17, 18; James 1. 2, 3; 1 Peter 1. 7, 8).

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

No. 1.

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah.
He leadeth me.
Lead, kindly Light.
My times are in thy hand.

No. 2.

Our Father Watcheth o'er Us.
Father, to thee my soul I lift.
A mighty fortress is our God.
Glory be to God on high.
Go forward, Christian soldier.

The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. What did Moses say to Hobab? **GOLDEN TEXT: "Come thou with us,"** etc.
2. What advantage did he say Hobab would be to the Israelites? **"Thou mayest be to us instead of eyes."**
3. Did Hobab go? **He did; and shared in the promised blessing.**
4. What was carried in the march? **"The ark of the covenant of the Lord."**
5. What did Moses do every morning and evening? **Prayed for God's presence.**

CATECHISM QUESTION.

41. What are the privilege and duty of parents who dedicate their children to God in baptism?

Their privilege is to claim the fulfilment of the promise of the Spirit to their children, and their duty is, in dependence on this promise, to "nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord." (Ephesians vi. 4.)

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