

THE KEEPING OF THE COMMANDMENTS.

"Out of Egypt Have I Called My Son."

WHEN the Lord visited and redeemed His people, to take them into the land of promise, the land which He swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to give to them; when He took them unto himself to serve Him only in the keeping of His holy law, He said, first of all: "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me," etc.

Israel missed God's call; they believed Him not, and therefore could not enter into His rest. These fell in the wilderness. And the generation that went into the land of Canaan did not in that go into "the land" and the "rest" to which the Lord would have taken the people when they first left Egypt, had they only believed. They drifted further and further away from God until they actually rejected Him, that they might be like the nations.

And they became like the nations. They failed exactly as had their fathers before them. For, in the days of David, the Lord said still: "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest." Heb. 3:7-11; 4:7, 8.

But still they hardened their hearts, and went further away from the Lord, until they got into such darkness that it was the very darkness of "the shadow of death," which is "darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness." And there the people sat, when there shined unto them a "great light," even the light of God, in which darkness itself is light. Isa. 9:2; Job 10:21, 22; Matt. 4:16.

Christ came. Again God visited to redeem His people, to make them not simply servants, but *sons* of God, that we "might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life." And at that time again God said: "Out of Egypt have I called my Son."

Why was it necessary that the infant Jesus should be taken into *Egypt* at the time of the slaughter of the innocents by Herod? It was not alone to escape the decree of Herod, that Jesus was taken *into Egypt*, for that decree could have been easily escaped by a much shorter journey. This was done to teach all people forever the deep spiritual lesson of the true deliverance from Egypt.

Jesus came into the world to take the place of man, to be our substitute and surety. Mankind is overwhelmed in the darkness and bondage of sin—Egyptian darkness, a darkness that may be felt. He was made to be sin; upon Him was laid the iniquity of us all; He was numbered with the transgressors; He was made in all things like those whose substitute He became.

Therefore He was taken *into Egypt*, and was *brought out* again, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, *Out of Egypt* have I called my Son;" and that by this object lesson there might be emphasized anew, and forever, the great lesson taught from of old to all people, the great truth that men become the *sons of God* only by their being called *out of Egypt*.

The Ten Commandments express the whole duty of man. All that ever a man can do, in deed, word, or thought, in righteousness, is covered by the Ten Commandments. All man's service to God is in the keeping of this His Law. And when it was written of Christ, and it was fulfilled in Christ, as the Example of all mankind, that "out of Egypt have I called my Son," this was simply speaking anew to all mankind the words which, that great day, God spoke from heaven, as the preamble to the whole Ten Commandments and their keeping: "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

This is the universal lesson: that no man can serve God, that no man can keep a single one of the Ten Commandments, except he is first delivered, by the power of God, from the darkness of Egypt, from the darkness of the shadow of death, from the realm and bondage of sin.

This is the lesson of the whole Bible. Look, for instance, at Eph. 2:1-10: how men are dead in trespasses and sins, in the darkness of this world; walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the ruler of the darkness of this world (Eph. 6:12), the spirit that works in the children of disobedience. But God, who is rich in mercy, has quickened us together with Christ, and has raised us up together with Him, to live and walk with Him. And this He did, not by our works, nor because of our works, but of His own mercy and grace: "for we are His workmanship, *created* in Christ Jesus *unto good works*, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Thus is the lesson taught, that no man can do good works except he is created unto it by the power of God.

How strongly this lesson is emphasized in the book of Galatians, which is just now the subject of the Sabbath-school studies. What are generally regarded as the practical things of the Christian life are not mentioned until *the end of the book*—brotherly kindness; bearing one another's burdens; communicating in all good things; the sowing and the reaping, whether to the flesh or to the Spirit; doing good to all men, especially to the household of faith. These things come only in the few verses of the very last chapter. After men have been delivered from this present evil world, into the glorious liberty of the children of God, and are standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,—the liberty by love to serve one another,—filled with the Spirit, so that all the fruits of the Spirit are shining in the life, reflecting the sunshine of righteousness,—only THEN it is that the generally considered practical things of the Christian life are enjoined.

Why is this? It is the same universal, divine lesson, that no man can do good works, no man can possibly do the "practical things of the Christian life," who has not first *the Christian life as a practical thing*. And, therefore, it is made perfectly plain that

deliverance from the darkness and bondage of sin; the finding of the sonship of God; the ability to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free; the receiving of the fullness of the Spirit of God in the life,—*these things are the practical things* of Christianity, equally with the others. Indeed, in a sense these are the more practical things; because so certainly must these precede the others that, without these, the other practical things of the Christian life can never be seen at all.

Therefore when, from Mount Sinai, God would speak, with a voice that shook the earth, the practical things of the life of man, He spoke *first of all* this original practical thing of the life of man—deliverance from the realm and bondage of sin:—

"I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Ex. 20:2.

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

Yet this is not the preamble of only *the first* commandment, but of the whole law, as if it were as follows:—

"I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: 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; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

"I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

"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.

"I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

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

"I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

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

"I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

"Thou shalt not kill."

"I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery."

"I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

"Thou shalt not steal."

"I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

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

"I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

"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 any thing that is thy neighbor's." Exodus 20.

And since, when He sent His only begotten Son to redeem us indeed, He renewed and emphasized this preliminary thought, in the words, "Out of Egypt have I called my Son," it is as if *this* were the preamble and the whole law—is expressed in the great of the whole law of God. And all of it—the preamble and the whole law—is expressed in the great thought of the Third Angel's Message: "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

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