

Faith of Our Fathers

[A WEEKLY INSTRUCTION FOR YOUNG AND OLD.]
THE LAW OF GOD IN GENERAL.

Q. 1. What is the law of God?

A. It is the manifestation of his will to man, declaring what he requires of man to do and to avoid, in order to please God and save his own soul.

Q. 2. Where is this manifestation of the will of God to be found?

A. In the ten commandments; which are an abridgment of all that we have to do, as the creed is an abridgment of all we have to believe, and the Lord's Prayer an abridgment of what we have to ask of God, in order to be saved.

Q. 3. When did God manifest his will to man in the ten commandments?

A. After he had brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, and carried them through the Red Sea, into the wilderness, he there appeared to the whole people in a most awful manner, and with his own mouth promulgated, in the hearing of the whole multitude, the ten commandments; and he afterwards wrote them with his own finger on two tables of stone, and gave them to Moses, to be preserved in the ark, as the continual rule of our actions.

Q. 4. What account does the Scripture give of this awful scene?

A. It is thus described in the Book of Exodus, chap. xix. "And God said to Moses, Go to the people and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their garments; and let them be ready against the third day; for on the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people, upon Mount Sinai; and thou shalt appoint certain limits to the people round about, and thou shalt say to them, Take heed ye go not up into the Mount, and that ye touch not the borders thereof: every one that toucheth the Mount, dying he shall die: no hands shall touch him, but he shall be stoned to death, nor shall he be shot through with arrows; whether it be beast or man he shall not live. And Moses came down from the Mount to the people, and sanctified them, and when they had washed their garments, he said to them, Be ready against the third day, and come not near your wives. And now the third day was come, and the morning appeared; and behold thunders began to be heard, and lightning to flash, and a very thick cloud to cover the Mount, and the noise of the trumpet sounded exceeding loud, and the people that were in the camp feared. And all Mount Sinai was on a smoke, because the Lord was come down upon it in fire, and the smoke rose from it as out of a furnace; and all the Mount was terrible. And the sound of the trumpet grew, by degrees, louder and louder, and was drawn out to a greater length. Now from the midst of all this dreadful apparatus, the voice of God was heard by the whole people, when he pronounced to them his law, saying,

"I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no strange gods before Me. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth; thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them: I am the Lord thy God, mighty and jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy to thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that shall take the name of the Lord his God in vain.

"Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day; six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: on it thou shalt do no manner of work; thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy beast, nor the stranger that is within thy gate. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them, and rested on the seventh day: therefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it.

"Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be long-lived upon the land, which the Lord thy God will give thee.

"Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house. Neither shalt thou covet his wife, nor his servant, nor his hand-maid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is his."

Q. 5. Why did God proclaim His law in so tremendous a manner?

A. For several reasons. (1) To give credit and authority to Moses, and to persuade the world that he was sent by God; thus God says to Moses, "Lo now I will come to thee in the darkness of a cloud, that the people may hear me speaking to thee, and may believe thee for ever." (Ex. xix. 9.) (2) To teach us with what profound reverence and respect we ought always to receive instructions on the laws of God, and hear His word: which appears, from the great preparation he required of his people, to fit them for receiving his law, and the distance he obliged them to keep from the mountain, while it was given to them. (3) To fill our minds with the wholesome fear of God, considering how tremendous and awful a Being He is; and (4) To make us exceeding careful in keeping and obeying His commands; for, when "all the people saw the voices and the flames, and the sound of the trumpet, and the Mount smoking, being terrified and struck with fear, they stood afar off, saying to Moses, Speak thou unto us and we will hear; let not the Lord speak to us, lest we die. And Moses said to the people, Fear not, for God is come to prove you, and that the dread of Him might be in you, and you should not sin." (Ex. xx. 18.)

Q. 6. Why did God begin the declaration of His law, by these words, I am thy Lord thy God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage?

A. To imprint in our hearts a just sense of the infinite power, dominion, authority, and majesty of our Divine Lawgiver, who is the "Lord our God," a Being of infinite perfections, who has an unlimited power and the most absolute dominion over us, and over all creatures, who can do with us whatever He pleases, and who alone can defend us from all dangers, deliver us from all evils, and bestow upon us all good both for time and eternity; and from this consideration to make us receive His law with greater respect, and observe it with the greatest fidelity.

Q. 7. Why does God add to the first command these words, "for I am the Lord thy God, strong and jealous, visiting," etc.?

A. To imprint in our minds a just sense of His infinite power and severity as our judge, and of His ardent zeal for the faithful observance of His law, assuring us that He will most undoubtedly punish all those who transgress it, and amply reward those who are careful to obey it.

New Plymouth

(From our own correspondent.)

March 2.

Owing to the present over-crowded congregations, three Masses each Sunday, commencing from Sunday the 11th inst., are to be celebrated at St. Joseph's Church.

An effort is being made to organise a monster bazaar to be held during the winter months, to raise funds to effect necessary improvements to the church.

New Plymouth was fortunate in having a week-end visit from the Sistine Choir Soloists.

At the present time our town presents a festive appearance; the band contest commenced here last Monday, and there has been a great influx of visitors.

INGLEWOOD.

The Sistine Choir Soloists have come and gone. To say that Inglewood enjoyed a unique treat in having these incomparable singers is putting it mildly. Though the notice was necessarily short, people came from as far as Toko. The Soloists attended the 11 o'clock Mass, and at evening devotions gave a number of sacred selections. After the devotions Father Forrestal, on behalf of the people, thanked the Soloists for their great kindness, and afterwards entertained them and local choir at the presbytery.

If you appreciate GOOD TEA, you can now obtain the celebrated "GOLDEN BREW" by Mail Order. See offer, page 22 this issue.—James Cooney, Oamaru.

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