

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

"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 shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments." Ex. 20:4-6.

The Second Commandment is repeated, in substance, twelve times in the Old Testament.

It occurs, in substance, eleven times in the New Testament.

The penalty for breaking it was death. Paul says: "Covetousness is idolatry."

He also says: "We know that no idol is anything in the world, and that there is no God but one."

The worship of an image, or of God through an image, is forbidden.

John says: "Guard yourselves from idolatry."

Idolatry played an important part in the ancient apostasy. — Romans 1:22, 23.

The folly of idolatry is shown in Isaiah 44:9-20.

Idolatry thrives in the human heart. It abounds everywhere today.

The artist lets us into a neglected portion of this commandment.

The father meditates behind prison bars — the children gather firewood from the street.

Other children are pointing at them unkindly with accusing fingers of shame.

The sad, lonely wife works and weeps in a little house around the corner.

The iniquity of the father is being borne by the children.

The little girl feels keenly the shame, her brother feels her sorrow and shares the shame.

The father repents and weeps, but all too late.

Right living prevents such scenes. Think, fathers, think! For their sake—for God's sake think now—and turn.

"WE HID AS IT WERE OUR FACES FROM HIM"

BECAUSE He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." That is ever the way; men do not want to be troubled with your woes. Laugh, and the world will laugh with you, but do not imagine that it will shed tears because you weep; instead it will turn its back upon you, hide its face from you, and pronounce you a depression and a bore. We fail, perhaps, fully to realize how much of the sadness and loneliness of Christ was due to this lack of human sympathy. Even His own disciples thought more of the position they were to occupy in the coming kingdom than they did of his declaration of all the tragedy that awaited Him at Jerusalem.

The fact that "He was despised and rejected of men" was very largely due to his being "a man of sorrows;" had He been a successful clown, or a triumphant conqueror, the crowd would have been eager for his society, but it had no use for the troubled, weary Rabbi. There is a wealth of comfort in this verse for those of us who have something of the like experience. When the world closes its ears to the recital of our woes, when even our friends

prove cold and unsympathetic, we can turn to One who understands, because He knows, the sense of loneliness and the pangs of heartache which oppress us; One who will never fail us in our hour of need; One whose tender love and loving tenderness will be ample compensation for the indifference and rejection of men. Burdened soul, do not in thy sorrow seek comfort of the worldling!

"Go, tell it to Jesus. He knoweth thy grief;
Go, tell it to Jesus, He'll send thee relief."

Christian faith does not say that everything is right; it does not deny that the night is real and dark. What Christian faith does say is that the morning cometh. The darkness shall be light. The burden shall be lifted. The hard experience which we cannot understand, which seems to contradict not only our own best plans but the purpose of God, shall somehow work out into a good which we never imagined.—George Hodges.

That was an acute saying of Horace Mann: "The problem is not the founding of the school, but the finding of the schoolmaster."