

SCHOLAR'S NOTES.

(From the International Lessons for 1875, by Edwin W. Rice, as issued by American Sunday-School Union.)

LESSON XIV.

APR. 4.]

ISRAEL'S PROMISE.—Josh. xxiv. 14-18. COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 16, 18.

14. Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt: and serve ye the Lord.

15. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord choose you this day whom ye will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

16. And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods:

17. For the Lord our God he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, among all the people through whom we passed:

18. And the Lord drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwell in the land: therefore will we also serve the Lord; for he is our God.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The Lord our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey.—Josh. xxiv. 24.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—The Lord has a right to our service.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Josh. xxiv. 14-18. T. 1 Sam. xii. 6-22. W. Ps. cxix. 1-24. Th. 1 Kings xviii. 21-40. F. Luke xvi. 18-31. Sa. John vi. 47-60. S. Ps. cv. 1-45.

TO THE SCHOLAR.—This is the farewell or dying address of the great captain Joshua to the tribes assembled at Shechem. Read the whole chapter and then study the "promise of the people" in the lesson.

ORDER OF EVENTS.—(27.) Israel's promises

NOTES.—Joshua's earnest and solemn address, and his choice of the Lord as his God led the people to make the same choice, and to repeat it, as in v. 21. This was the last public act of Joshua, and probably just before his death.

EXPLANATION.—(14.) Now therefore, because of the Lord's past goodness to you; in sincerity, not in outward appearance only, but in truth; put away the gods, out of your mind, or perhaps a few yet worshipped idols secretly (see v. 23); flood, or river Jordan. (15.) seem evil, wrong, hard or unreasonable to serve God; choose you, so Moses urged Israel to a choice (Deut. xxx. 15); me and my house, he and his family are on the Lord's side (see also Ex. xxxii. 26.) (16.) God forbid, strong words, showing horror at the idea of forsaking the Lord for idol-worship. (17.) brought us, the people recall the Lord's mercies in bringing them into Canaan. (18.) we also serve the Lord, in their choice they would follow Joshua.

ILLUSTRATION.—Wise choice. A great king once said to a favorite, "Ask what thou wilt, and I will give it thee." He thought, "If I ask to be made general of all the army, I shall get it: if for great riches or half the kingdom, I will gain it; but I will ask for what will give me all these; so he said to the king, "Give me thy daughter to wife." This made him heir to all the wealth and honors of the kingdom. So he who chooses Christ becomes an heir to all the wealth and glory of the Father's kingdom.—Foster.

TOPICS AND QUESTIONS.

(I.) JOSHUA'S CHARGE. (II.) HIS CHOICE. (III.) THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE.

1. Where were the tribes gathered? State what Joshua related to them. (See vs. 2-13.)

Whom did he urge them to fear and serve? How? v. 14.

What were they to put away? Where had they served these gods? If they thought the Lord's service hard, what were they to do?

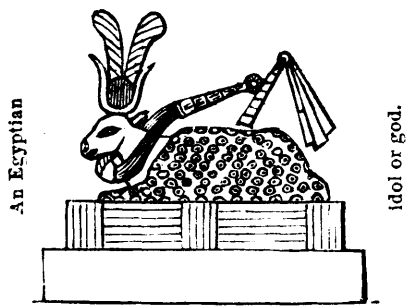
II. What choice did Joshua and his house make? When before were the people called to make a similar choice? (See Ex. xxxii. 26 and Dent. xxx. 15.)

How had Joshua shown his trust in God in former days? (See Num. xiv. 6, 7.)

III. State the answer of the people. v. 16. Why did they make this choice? v. 17, 18. What truth in this lesson teaches us—

(1.) That we should serve the Lord, whatever others may do?

(2.) That the mercies of the Lord to us should lead us to serve him?



An Egyptian

idol or god.

LESSON XV.

APR. 11.]

THE PROMISE BROKEN.—Judg. ii 11-16 About 1428 B. C.

COMMIT TO MEMORY v. 12.

11. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served Baalim:

12. And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger.

13. And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.

14. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.

15. Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed.

16. Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them.

GOLDEN TEXT.—They soon forgot His works, they waited not for his counsel.—Ps. cvl. 13.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—Men rob God.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Judg. ii 11-16. T. Deut. xxxi. 16-20. W. Ps. lxxviii. 56-77. Th. 2 Kings xvii. 7-33. F. Ps. cvl. 34-48. Sa. Lev. xxvi. 14-33. S. Josh. xxiii. 1-17.

TO THE SCHOLAR.—Notice how soon Israel fell into the very sin which Joshua warned them against. Vs. 14-16 give a summary of the events which are related more fully in the following chapters of the book of Judges. Some learned men think the events in chs. 1. and 2. to verse 5, happened before Joshua's death: others place them after his death.

FINDING THE MEANING OF.—Baal, Baalim, Ashtaroth, spoilers, judges.

ORDER OF EVENTS.—(28.) Death of Joshua (29.) The Canaanites conquered. (30.) The angel at Bechim. (31.) Israel's promise broken.

NOTES.—The book of Judges is not a connected history, but contains accounts of important exploits of the persons raised up to rule and deliver Israel after the death of Joshua and before Saul became king, a period of one hundred and forty to one hundred and sixty years. The book is usually divided into—(1.) Preface (ch. 1. to iii. 6.) (2.) Main Narrative (ch. iii. 7 to xvi. 31.) (3.) Appendix (ch. xvii to xxi.)

EXPLANATION.—(11.) did evil, a common phrase for falling into idolatry: Baalim, plural of Baal, meaning the images of that idol. (12.) And they, or "For they forsook," this verse explains what the evil was. (13.) Ashtaroth (plural), images of Astarte, a goddess of the Phenicians like Venus. (14.) anger of the Lord was hot (see same words in Ps. cvl. 40): he delivered, permitted them to be overcome; spoilers, or robbers—i. e., nations about them; sold them (see 1 Sam. xii. 9); not . . . stand, (see the warning, Lev. xxvi. 17.) (15.) whithersoever they went, what contrast to the promise in Josh. i. 9! greatly distressed, for forsaking God. (16.) judges, rulers, deliverers. (This is the first mention of judge.)

ILLUSTRATION.—Christian Idolatry. "You cannot find any more gross, any more cruel idolatry, on the broad earth than within one mile of this pulpit: dark minds, deluded souls, whose god is the dice-box or the bottle, false gods more hideous than Moloch or Baal, worshipped with shrieks, worshipped with curses, the hearth-stone for the bloody altar, the drunken husband for the priest, and women and children for the victims."—Dr. Chapin.

TOPICS AND QUESTIONS.

(I.) ISRAEL'S IDOLATRY. (II.) ISRAEL'S DISTRESS. (III.) ISRAEL'S DELIVERERS.

I. How long did Israel serve the Lord? v. 7. Give the title of this lesson.

What promise was broken? When was the promise given?

What reason did they give for serving the Lord?

After Joshua's death what did Israel do? v. 11. What did they not know? (See v. 10.) State how they did evil in the sight of the Lord. v. 12.

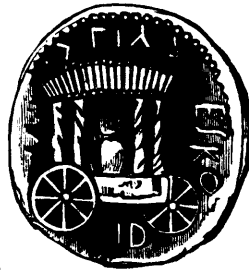
What idols did they serve? v. 13.

II. Into whose hands were they delivered?

Who had enabled them to stand before their enemies? How was the hand of the Lord against them?

Where were they warned of this Astarte in a Car trouble? (See Lev. xxvi. 17.)

III. What shows that the Lord was still merciful to them? Whom did he raise up? Why called judges? Out of whose hands did the judges deliver them? Who is the great Deliverer of sinners?



From Sidon.

PROVIDING FOR OUR OWN HOUSEHOLDS.

We assume that there is no text or command in all the Scriptures which gets more attention and more willing obedience than that which requires men to provide for their own households. Christian and heathen alike overdo this branch of duty, and yet we apprehend there is no divine injunction more imperfectly understood. It is made to justify every expenditure, and it forgets altogether that severe denunciation against those who join field to field and add house to house. When God sent the daily manna for the nourishment of his people, it was found that when they gathered more than was required for their daily necessities, the surplus stank on their hands, and bred worms and disease. Has God changed his dealings with us? The spirit of greed which showed itself then has been doing so ever since, to the detriment of our fellow-creatures and the dishonor of our Heavenly Father, to whom we pray for our daily bread. This prayer, by the way, appears strange on the lips of those who have already abundance of this world's goods, nearly all of which is held and administered for their own households. One of the reasons, no doubt, why Christianity has not overrun the world with Pentecostal speed, is because so many of Christ's followers trust their bank books more than their Bibles, and have little or nothing in common with their poor brothers.

Those who call themselves Christians are really as guilty in this matter as the veriest worldling. No doubt the command to provide for our families was rendered necessary by those idle loafers, and in every age, who will not work, and therefore should not eat. In every circle we see such men and women, who are wholly unproductive, and wasting their years in worthless living, while their families grow up without education, without religion, ill clad and half fed. These are the fellows who are worse than infidels. We see them in the beer gardens and whiskey dens. Here is a so-called disciple of the Lord with his name on the church roll, worth a hundred thousand, perhaps half a million, enjoying himself immensely, his personal expenditures for the year creeping up to many thousands of dollars. The family content themselves with giving their cast-off clothing to Christ! Is not the pulpit largely responsible for the prevalence of such grievous selfishness?

But whilst the wealthy few overdo providing for their own households, the poor many underdo it, and this latter is incalculably the greatest injury to society. Every man who spends a cent on useless and selfish indulgence in drink or tobacco, whilst his family is in any respect in want of comfortable food and clothing, and suitable education, is neglecting to provide for his own household, and is in so far worse than an infidel. This is a grievous charge, but reason and experience fully bear it out.—N. Y. Witness.

—When we are fullest of heavenly love we are best fitted to bear with human infirmity, to live above it and forget its burden. It is the absence of love to Christ, not its fullness, that makes us so impatient of the weaknesses and inconsistencies of our Christian brethren. Then, when Christ is all our portion, when He dwells with us and in us, we have so satisfying an enjoyment of His perfection that the imperfections of others are as it were swallowed up, and the sense of our own nothingness makes us insensible to that which is irritating in individual feelings and habits.—Hare.

—We read in classic story of an Athenian who, hesitating whether to give his daughter in marriage to a virtuous man with a small fortune, or to a rich man who had no other recommendation, went to consult Themistocles on the subject. "I would bestow my daughter," said Themistocles, "upon a man without money, rather than upon money without a man."

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