

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From the International Lessons for 1881, by Edwin W. Rice, as issued by American Sunday-school Union.

LESSON VI. [About 8. A. D.]

THE BOYHOOD OF JESUS. Luke 2: 40-52.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 49-52.

- 40. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.
41. Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year to the feast of the passover.
42. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.
43. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.
44. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey, and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.
45. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.
46. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.
47. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.
48. And when they saw him, they were amazed, and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.
49. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?
50. And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.
51. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them; but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.
52. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

GOLDEN TEXT.

And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.—Luke 2: 40.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Jesus Christ was truly human.

REVIEW QUESTIONS.—From what chapter was last lesson?—About whom?—How old was Jesus?—Why in the temple?—Location of Temple?—Prophecy concerning Christ?—What was said to Mary about a sword?—What aged woman prophesied?

NOTES.—THE CHILD, After the visit of the wise men and the return from Egypt, all the gospels are silent concerning the childhood, youth and early manhood of Jesus, until the baptism at the age of thirty, excepting Luke, who permits us to catch this beautiful picture of the boyhood of Jesus. Only one other possible hint is given concerning this obscure period and that also by Luke, who in chap. 4: 16, speaking of his return to Nazareth after his active ministry had commenced, says, 'and, as his custom was he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day.' Our lesson gives us the only glimpse of nearly thirty years of the Saviour's life.—FEAST OF THE PASSOVER, the first of the three great annual Jewish feasts. It commemorated the last night in Egypt when the angel of the Lord 'passed over the blood sprinkled houses. It typified the atonement of our Lord; see Exod. 12.—TEMPLE, on Mount Moriah, built by Solomon, rebuilt by Zerubbabel; present temple was the work of Herod, and was destroyed by Titus.—DAY'S JOURNEY, no particular distance, but we may regard it as meaning from 25 to 30 miles.—NAZARETH, 66 miles north of Jerusalem, 14 from the sea of Galilee; first mentioned in connection with Jesus; it was his home for 30 years; it was held in disrepute by the Jews; it has a population at the present time of 5,000 or 6,000.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) A BOY'S JOURNEY. (II.) A BOY'S WISDOM. (III.) A BOY'S OBEDIENCE.

I. A BOY'S JOURNEY. —(40-45.) WAXED STRONG IN SPIRIT, in understanding; FILLED WITH WISDOM, learned as other children learn; GRACE, gracious in manner, words, and acts; JESUS was thoroughly a child, but a holy, sinless child; strong, active, robust, healthy, growing, wise, gracious, obedient; WENT, as the law required; TWELVE YEARS OLD, the age when Jewish boys became "sons of the law," Jesus must now go to the feast in obedience to the law; RETURNED, started for Nazareth; TARRIED BEHIND, deeply interested in the rites of the temple; KNEW NOT, they trusted his wisdom; THE COMPANY, caravans often numbered many hundreds; several millions attended this feast; DAY'S JOURNEY, see Notes; KINSFOLK, etc., friends and neighbors.

II. A BOY'S WISDOM.—(46-50.) AFTER THREE DAYS, one departing, one returning, one searching in the city; DOCTORS, teachers of the law; HEARING—ASKING, a listener and learner, not teacher or "disputer"; ASTONISHED, wondered, Jesus had doubtless studied the law at home; AMAZED, stood speechless at the scene before them; SON, a gentle, tender rebuke; SORROWING, anxiously. HOW IS IT, first recorded words of Jesus; WIST, knew; BUSINESS, "in the things or affairs of my Father."—Lange.

III. A BOY'S OBEDIENCE.—(51, 52.) WENT WITH THEM, obedient to their wish; SUBJECT UNTO THEM, the model for all children; STATURE, age; AND MAN, true piety attracts and holds the love and esteem of others.

OUR SAVIOUR, ONCE A CHILD, OBEYANT, OUR EXAMPLE.

POINTS TO NOTICE.—Wherein does this lesson teach: (1.) That our Father's business should be our business? (2.) That religion does not interfere with home duties? (3.) That true piety is approved of God and man?

LESSON VII.

FEB. 13.] [A. D. 26.] THE PREACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. Luke 3: 7-18.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 15-18.

- 7. Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?
8. Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.
9. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.
10. And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?
11. He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.
12. Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?
13. And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.
14. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.
15. And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;
16. John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:
17. Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.
18. And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance.—Luke 3: 8.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

We must forsake sin, if we would receive Christ.

CONNECTED HISTORY.—"For nearly 18 years after the Passover visit to Jerusalem, a deep obscurity rests over the life of Jesus. The quiet valley and hills of Nazareth saw him gradually ripen into youth and manhood—as son, brother, citizen, neighbor, friend—like others. He must have looked out on the world of men from the calm retreat of those years as he, doubtless, often did on the matchless landscape from the hill above the village. Year after year passed, and still found him at his daily toil, because his hour was not yet come. In gentle patience; in transparent blamelessness of life; in natural and ever active goodness; in tender love and ready favor to all around; loved, honored, but half veiled in the mysterious light of perfect manhood and kindling divinity, 30 years passed quietly away."—Gielkie.

REVIEW QUESTIONS.—What event in the life of Jesus does the last lesson record? How old was Jesus? Occasion of visit? What caused his parents to return? Among whom did they seek him? Where found? What doing? His reply to Mary? His home where? His character?

NOTES.—VIPERS, venomous serpents, emblems of deceit and destruction. PUBLICANS, collectors of the Roman revenue; Cicero styled the office as "the basest of all livelihoods," and they were looked upon as the "wolves and bears of human society." THE JEWS viewed them with supreme contempt. SOLDIERS, connected with the Roman legions. JOHN the Baptist, son of Zacharias and Elisabeth, baptized Jesus in Jordan, imprisoned by Herod, who being influenced by Herodias beheaded him. HEROD, son of Herod the Great, "weak, tyrannical, unscrupulous, capricious, sensual, superstitious." HERODIAS, left her husband Philip, tetrarch of Iturea, to be the wife of his brother Herod.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) JOHN AND THE MULTITUDE. (II.) JOHN AND HIS ENQUIRERS. (III.) JOHN AND CHRIST.

I. JOHN AND THE MULTITUDE.—(7-9.) MULTITUDE, see Matt. 3:5; VIPERS, referring to Pharisees and Sadducees, Matt. 3:7; FRUITS, Acts 26: 20, see v. 11; WORTHY, meet; REPENTANCE, literally, a turning about; THESE STONES, of the wilderness around him; THE ROOT, expressive of utter destruction; TREE—HEWN DOWN, impenitent individual typified and punished.

II. JOHN AND HIS ENQUIRERS.—(10-14.) TWO COATS, teaching unselfishness; LET HIM, divide with needy; PUBLICANS, see "notes"; EXACT NO MORE, a rebuke of their unscrupulous extortion; IS APPOINTED, fixed rates were established; SOLDIERS, doubtless a portion of Herod's army.

III. JOHN AND CHRIST.—(15-18.) EXPECTATION, suspense; CHRIST OR NOT, a query which John soon answered; WITH HOLY GHOST, produces renewal; WITH FIRE, see Acts 2: 3, 4; FAN, winnowing shovel; PURGE, cleanse; GARNER, subterranean storehouse; CHAFF—BURN, see Matt. 13: 30 and 40-43; FIRE UNQUENCHABLE, points to a terrible hereafter for the impenitent.

POINTS TO NOTICE.—What words in this lesson teach: (1.) That to be great is to be humble? (2.) That the good and bad mingle together here? (3.) That a separation will surely be made?

DO IT NOW.

BY PHEBE CARY.

If you're told to do a thing, And mean to do it really, Never let it be by halves; Do it fully, freely.

When father calls, though pleasant be The play you are pursuing, Do not say, "I'll come when I Have finished what I'm doing."

If you are told to learn a task, And you should begin it, Do not tell your teacher, "Yes, I'm coming in a minute."

Waste not moments nor your words In telling what you could do Some other time; the present is For doing what you should do

Don't do right unwillingly, And stop to plan and measure; 'Tis working with the heart and soul That makes our duty pleasure.

THE FATAL DOOR.

The Chevalier, Gerard De Kampis, was a very rich and a very proud man. Soon after the completion of his magnificent castle, he wished to have a house-warming, and, accordingly, all his great neighbors were invited to a great feast. At the conclusion of a sumptuous repast, his guests made speech after speech, in which the host was lauded to the skies, and told that he was the most fortunate man alive. As the Chevalier loved flattery, we can imagine how proud and delighted he was.

One among the guests, however, said nothing for a time. When each man had made his speech, he uttered the following singular observation upon the happiness of the host:—

"Sir Knight, in order that your felicity should be complete, you require but one thing; but this is a very important item."

"And what thing is that?" demanded the Knight, opening wide his eyes.

"One of your doors must be walled up," replied his guest.

At this strange rejoinder, several of the guests began to laugh, and Gerard himself looked as much as to say, "This man has gone mad." Wishing, however, to have the clue to this enigma, he continued—

"But which door do you mean?"

"I mean that through which you will one day be carried to your grave," replied the other.

The words struck both guests and host, and made the latter reflect most seriously. The proud man remembered the vanity of all earthly things, and from henceforth he no longer thought only of the perishable treasures he had once gloried in. He was completely altered, and made good use of his riches.—Selected.

IS CHRIST YOUR SAVIOUR?

The question of prime importance to you is not, Are you a Christian? but, Is Jesus Christ your Saviour? These two questions may seem to aim at the same point; but they involve very different processes of mind in their answering; and herein consists the superiority of the latter form over the former. Your hope of salvation must rest not on what you are, but on what your Saviour is and does. If you look at yourself to find a ground of hope, you will never be satisfied—unless you are deceived. But if you look at Jesus, you can see reason enough for hope. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners—not Christians, but sinners. If you are a sinner, you may be sure that you are one of the very class Jesus Christ came to save. If as a sinner you trust yourself to Jesus Christ as the Saviour of sinners, he will not fail you; you may be sure of eternal safety. The question, Am I a Christian? has troubled many an anxious mind for weary years; and the more the enquirer has pondered it, the less hope there has seemed of its settling. But there need be no such trouble in settling the question, Is Jesus Christ my Saviour? Whom did Jesus Christ come to save? Are you one of that class? Do you want him to save you? Is he able to do so? Is he willing? Do you trust yourself to him? These are the questions for you. The more you look away from

yourself, and the more you fix your gaze on Jesus, the firmer your ground of hope will be. There is a great deal of time wickedly wasted on self-examination that might be profitably given to the contemplation of the Saviour.—S. S. Times.

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