

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From Westminster Question Book.)

LESSON VII.

Feb. 12, 1882.] [Mark 3: 20-25.]

CHRIST'S FOES AND FRIENDS. COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 31-35.

- 20. And the multitude cometh together again so that they could not so much as eat bread. 21. And when his friends heard of it they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself. 22. And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils. 23. And he called them unto him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? 24. And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26. And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. 27. No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house. 28. Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: 29. But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: 30. Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit. 31. There came then his brethren and his mother, and standing without, sent unto him, calling him. 32. And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. 33. And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? 34. And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! 35. For whosoever shall do the will of God the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"He that is not with me is against me."—MATT. 12: 30. TOPIC.—Christ Misjudged and Misunderstood.

LESSON PLAN.—1. FALSE CHARGES. 2. THE UNPARDONABLE SIN. 3. CHRIST'S KINDRED. Time.—Midsummer and autumn, A. D. 28, shortly after the last lesson. Place.—Capernaum.

HELPS TO STUDY. INTRODUCTORY.—After our Lord had chosen his twelve apostles, he delivered "The Sermon on the Mount." Matt. chs. 5-7; Luke 6: 17-49. Then he returned to Capernaum. Immediately after his return he healed the centurion's servant. Matt. 8: 5-13; Luke 7: 1-10. The crowds continued to follow him, so that he had no time even to eat. His friends became alarmed at the intensity of his labors, and tried to restrain him.

I. FALSE CHARGES.—V. 20. EAT BREAD.—So Christ's work may sometimes interfere with our bodily comfort and convenience. V. 21. HIS FRIENDS—his relations. HE IS BESIDE HIMSELF—he knows not that he is killing himself with over-work—the same complaint we sometimes make of earnest workers who seem to over-tax their strength. V. 22. Jesus now made a third circuit through Galilee with the twelve. Matt. 11: 2-19; Luke 7: 11-8: 3. On his return to Capernaum he healed one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb. Matt. 12: 22. FROM JERUSALEM—they were jealous spies sent to watch him. HE HATH BEELZEBUB—this charge ascribed all that he said and did to the devil, and made the Spirit of God that rested on him the spirit of Satan. V. 23. HOW CAN SATAN—Will the leader of a party work against his own followers? If he has helped me to heal these possessed persons, he has helped me to undo his own work. V. 27. NO MAN CAN ENTER—that Jesus cast out devils showed that he was more than a match for Satan, and would overcome him.

II. THE UNPARDONABLE SIN.—(28-30.—V. 28. ALL SINS—no matter how great in guilt and number. BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST—scribe to the devil what is clearly the work of the Holy Spirit. HATH NEVER FORGIVENESS—and therefore its punishment must be eternal. 1 John 5: 16.

III. CHRIST'S KINDRED.—(31-35.) V. 35. HIS BRETHREN—either the children of Joseph by a former marriage, or the younger children of Joseph and Mary: probably the latter. SENT UNTO HIM—they could not themselves reach him on account of the crowd. Luke 8: 19, Vs. 34, 35. His true disciples—those who do, as well as hear, the will of God—are his nearest kindred. "He is not ashamed to call them brethren." Heb. 2: 11.

TEACHINGS: 1. We are either the foes or the friends of Jesus—for him or against him. 2. We should be open and decided in our attachment to him—never ashamed to own our love to him. 3. Hatred of Christ leads men into the greatest sins. 4. It is a fearful sin to ascribe to Satan what comes from God. 5. Those who do, as well as hear, the will of God are the friends of Jesus. REMEMBER what a tender love Jesus had for his followers. Much as he loved his mother, he loved his disciples as well. He still loves them. He will always love them. His heart is full of affection for them. Should we not love him with all our hearts? Will you not love him?

LESSON VIII.

Feb. 19, 1882.] [Mark 4: 1-20.]

PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 3-8.

1. And he began again to teach by the seashore: and there was gathered unto him a great

multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.

- 2. And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrines, 3. Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow: 4. And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. 5. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: 6. But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. 7. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. 8. And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred. 9. And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. 10. And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. 11. And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: 12. That seeing they may see, and not perceive: and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them. 13. And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables? 14. The sower soweth the word. 15. And these are they by the wayside, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. 16. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; 17. And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time; afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. 18. And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word. 19. And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. 20. And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."—REV. 2: 29.

TOPIC.—Christ's Lesson on Hearing. LESSON PLAN.—1. A LESSON ON HEARING. 2. THE LESSON NOT UNDERSTOOD. 3. THE LESSON EXPLAINED.

Time.—Autumn, A. D. 28, the same day as the last lesson. Place.—The Sea of Galilee, near Capernaum.

HELPS TO STUDY.

INTRODUCTORY.—Whilst Jesus was by the seaside the people came in great numbers to hear him. So he went into a boat and sat down and taught them, while they stood on the shore. Our lesson to-day is the first of the parables which he then spoke.

I. A LESSON ON HEARING.—V. 1. THE SEASIDE—The Sea of Galilee. V. 2. PARABLES—word-pictures or stories used to make plain some truth. V. 3. A SOWER—observe, there is the same kind of seed throughout the parable. The difference in the ground makes the difference in the result. V. 4. BY THE WAYSIDE—the Jewish fields were not fenced in from the roads as ours are, but had paths or roads running through them. Seed falling on these hard-trodden paths would lie upon the surface, where the birds would see it and pick it up. STONY GROUND—very thin soil over rocks. In such a place, on account of the greater warmth, the seed will spring up sooner than when the soil is deeper. But the roots will be baked in the hot, dry season, and the plants wither away. V. 7. AMONG THORNS—upon soil in which there were the roots of thorns. The briars grew faster than the seed, and choked and killed it. V. 8. GOOD GROUND—rich soil well tilled. There the seed grew well and bore grain—in some places a hundred times as much as was sown, in others sixty, in others thirty. V. 9. WHO HATH EARS—he wanted his hearers to attend carefully to what he had said.

II. THE LESSON NOT UNDERSTOOD.—V. 10. ASKED OF HIM THE PARABLE—what is meant and why he taught in parables. V. 11. THE MYSTERY—the great truths of the gospel. UNTO THEM THAT ARE WITHOUT—that did not believe in him. They were so earthly, so sensual, that they would not see the truth. Their hearts were hard, and they would not receive his teachings. V. 12. NOT PERCEIVE—because they do not desire to know the truth. NOT UNDERSTAND—because they do not use the proper means.

III. THE LESSON EXPLAINED.—V. 14. THE WORD—the seed is the word of God, the truth which he has revealed; the sower is the one who makes it known to his neighbors; the ground is the heart of the hearer. V. 15. THEY BY THE WAYSIDE—they hear the truth, but it falls upon their hearts like seed on the beaten road. SATAN COMETH IMMEDIATELY—he finds means to take the truth from the mind of the careless hearer. Vs. 16, 17. The stony-ground hearers. There are two good signs in these hearers: they hear the word and receive it with gladness. But there is one great defect: THEY HAVE NO ROOT IN THEMSELVES. The hard heart of sin is only covered over with a thin surface of feeling, and they endure only for a little while. When they are tried they fall, as the rootless grain withers before the sun. V. 18. AMONG THORNS—a large class of hearers is described. They hear the word, but the CARES OF THIS WORLD—the desire of gain, the love of pleasure—CHOKE THE WORD, just as briars and weeds choke the growing grain. V. 23. GOOD GROUND

—hearts honest, sincerely seeking the right, will receive the truth and bring forth fruit.

TEACHINGS:

- 1. Our hearts are the soil in which are to grow the harvests of life and eternity. 2. The word of God is the good seed that brings forth fruit unto eternal life. 3. It is a great privilege to hear the gospel; we must take heed how we hear. 4. We must prepare our hearts by casting out everything that is contrary to the word. 5. We must set a high value on the word, counting it more precious than gold or silver. 6. We must hear it prayerfully and with faith. 7. We must receive it gladly, as good news from heaven.

REMEMBER that your pastor and teacher are sowers of the good seed. In what kind of soil do you receive it? Are you careless and unfruitful hearers, or are you producing the fruits of a holy life? Seek to have good and honest hearts, that the truth may prevail over your sins. Become in your turn sowers of the good seed. Even the youngest may find ways of doing this.

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