

Scripture Lessons.

THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON DEPARTMENT.

FOURTH QUARTER—STUDIES IN MATTHEW.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1873.

LESSON V.—*Jesus and the Young.*—Matt.
xix. 13-22.

GOLDEN TEXT, PROV. viii. 17.

An English Teacher's Notes on the Lessons,

BY EUGENE STOCK.

This lesson happily combines two narratives which, though contiguous, are not often taken together. First we see "Jesus and the young," that is, infants of tenderest age, as the Greek word used signifies. Then we see "Jesus and the young," that is, the young man in the full tide of manhood, just passing into middle life. The contrast shown in their respective receptions by our Lord is most instructive.

Inversions of the order of Scripture incidents are often helpful in teaching, and in this case it will be well to take the young man first. Of him we have two pictures:

1. *The young man coming to Christ.* Would he not be called a singularly happy man? (a) He was well off. (b) He was evidently highly respected; for, though still young, he was a "ruler," as St. Luke tells us, that is, a member of the great Jewish Council, the Sanhedrin. (c) He was not like many rich young men, the Prodigal for example, "wasting his substance in riotous living." "Touching the righteousness which is of the law," he was "blameless," (compare Phil. iii. 6.) And although he was not really happy, because he knew there was a *life eternal* which he had not secured, yet he was a seeker after the right way, and he came to the right person for guidance. No wonder that, as St. Mark says, "Jesus, beholding him, loved him."

2. *The young man going away from Christ.* "He went away sorrowful. Why? Because

he really wished to do what would gain him eternal life, and what Jesus said must be done he could not do. Two directions were given him: to give his wealth to the poor, and to come and follow Christ. Why the former? Abraham and David had great possessions; many in the early Church were well off, yet on them this test was not laid. No; but *their* riches did not keep their hearts from God; *his did*, as the result proves. Abraham had a harder test. He was called to give up his only son, the child of promise; and he stood the test, for he loved God *most*. The young ruler could not give up his money; what did he love *most*?

Yet possibly, if this giving to the poor would of itself have gained him eternal life, he might have thought it worth while—for he might get rich again. But it was the following Christ—the coming down from his high pedestal of influence, confessing himself a sinner, joining the despised Nazarene, entering the Kingdom "*as a little child*" (see Mark x. 15)—that was what he could not do.

Many in our Sunday-schools are like that young man. It may not be money that keeps them from Christ, but there is something that does. And although many are only too glad to keep away as far as they can, there are those who would like to be Christ's disciples, who know that to be so is the way to be happy, who feel it would be a "sorrowful" thing to go away altogether, and yet who are kept back. We have seen an eagle on a perch—it spreads its wings—rises into the air—longs to fly away—suddenly a check, it is pulled back by the chain. Let us entreat our scholars to find out what is the chain that holds them back from Christ.

Then will come in the previous narrative of the young children brought to Jesus. Why were they taken up in His arms and blessed? Were they more welcome to Him than the young man? Not at all. He loved both. But in their case there was *no chain*. Let us say, Come then to Christ while you are children; every day you grow older it will be harder to come, for sin's fetters are getting stronger day by day.

If you tarry till you're older,
You may never come at all.

As the Golden Text says, "Those that seek Me early shall find Me."