

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

From the International Lessons for 1880, by Edwin W. Rice, as issued by American Sunday School Union.

LESSON VIII.

MAY 23.]

THE JUDGMENT.

Matt. 25 : 31-46.

[About A. D. 30.]

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 31-34.

31. When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

32. And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

33. And he shall set the sheep on the right hand, but the goats on the left.

34. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye, blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

36. Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

37. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

38. When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

39. Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

40. And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

41. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

42. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

43. I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

44. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

45. Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

46. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

GOLDEN TEXT.

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.—Matt. 25: 46.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

We should act in view of eternity.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) THE SEPARATION. (II.) ON THE RIGHT HAND. (III.) ON THE LEFT HAND.

I. THE SEPARATION.—(31-33.) SON OF MAN, Jesus is to be our Judge (Acts 17: 31); HIS GLORY, not in obscurity, as at first; HOLY ANGELS WITH HIM, "to call the court" (1 Thess. 4: 16); to elect (ch. 21: 31); to bundle the tares (ch. 14: 40); to be witnesses of the saints' glory (Luke 12: 8), and of sinners' misery (Rev. 14: 10)—"Hem-ry"; SIT, mediatorial work ended; THRONE, "of his final eternal kingdom"; BEFORE HIM (Rom. 14: 10; 2 Cor. 5: 10); ALL NATIONS (Phil. 2: 9-11; Rev. 20: 13); SEPARATE, prior to the final judgment (ch. 1: 41); SLEEP, GOATS, lit images for the righteous and the wicked; RIGHT HAND, place of honor; LEFT HAND, the opposite.

II. ON THE RIGHT HAND.—(34-40.) THE KING, of kings, possessing all power and authority; COME, what a welcome! YE BLESSED (ch. 15: 15); PREPARED FOR YOU (John 14: 2); 2 Cor. 5: 1; 1 Pet. 1: 4; 1 Cor. 2: 9; H. B. 11: 10; YE GAVE... T. OK... CLOTHED... VISITED... CAME, God work do not snaffle us to the Kingdom, but to glory; INTEREST, in its growth success. Who were not saved by the blood of the body, "but will be more stress laid on them in the judgment of the great day than is commonly imagined"—"Henry"; LORD, WHEN, the truly righteous are about to glory in their acts of self-denial; THE LEAST, poor, unknown, oppressed, a few of Christ's true representatives; MY BRETHREN (ch. 10: 40-42), Christ identifies himself with the humblest act of charity and is more among us than we imagine.

III. ON THE LEFT HAND.—(41-46.) DEPART FROM ME, here they drove the King away, there they will be cast out; now they are invited to come, then they will be commanded to depart; YE CURSED, go not with a blessing, but the curse of the King; EVERLASTING FIRE (see ver. 40); whatever the punishment will be, it will be as severe as the pain and anguish of fire on the body, eternal in its duration; PREPARED FOR THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS, not for the condemned; a kingdom was prepared for them, but choosing the devil's service, now they must share his company; YE DID IT NOT, every sin of omission as well as commissions is directly against the King eternal; EVERLASTING... ETERNAL, both the same word in the original; hence the punishment of the wicked will be as endless as the blessedness of the righteous.

LESSON IX.

MAY 30.]

GETHSEMANE.

Matt. 26: 36-50.

[About A. D. 30.]

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 40-44.

36. Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Geth-sem-a-ne, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here while I go and pray yonder.

37. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zeb-e-dee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

38. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

39. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

40. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What could ye not watch with me one hour?

41. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

42. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

43. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

44. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

45. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

46. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

47. And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.

48. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whosoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast.

49. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master, and kissed him.

50. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Not as I will, but as thou wilt.—Matt. 26: 39.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Our Saviour was a man of sorrows.

INTRODUCTORY.—The public ministry of Jesus is finished; hence the chapter opens, "When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples," to prepare them for the closing scenes in his earthly life. Two days yet intervene before the betrayal. A part of this time is spent in Bethany, "in the house of Simon the leper," where the woman anoints his head with precious ointment, which draws from the disciples words of indignation, but which receives Christ's approval. Judas takes occasion to bargain with the chief priests, for 30 pieces of silver, the betrayal of his Master; the Last Supper is instituted, Peter is told of his denial, and the events of our lesson follow.

TO THE SCHOLAR.—Remember, the events in this lesson took place not far from midnight on the evening of the day before the crucifixion, and just after the utterance of those beautiful chapters, the 14th, 15th, and 16th of St. John. Read those chapters and the wonderful prayer of the 17th.

NOTES.—GETH-SEM-A-NE, "press of oil" is a garden or yard situated in a level place between the brook Kedron and the base of Mount Olivet. There is at the base of Olivet a secure enclosure, containing several very aged olive trees surrounded by a fence or hedge, which is claimed to be the garden of Gethsemane.—ZEB-E-DEE, a fisherman, Gal. 1: 19, and father of James and John.—JUDAS, surnamed Iscariot, one of the twelve apostles. In the early part of the evening he had covenanted with the chief priests, for thirty pieces of silver, to betray unto them Jesus. He is conspicuous among the disciples for dark traits of character, and he is one of the chief actors in the events of a very dark history. Filled with remorse at the enormity of his crime, he returns the silver to the priests and hangs himself.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) JESUS' GREAT SORROW. (II.) THE THREE PRAYERS. (III.) THE BETRAYAL.

I. JESUS' GREAT SORROW.—(36-38.) THEN, connect this verse with the 30th; THEM, the disciples; GETHSEMANE, see Notes; SIT YE, spoke to the eleven, Judas not being with them; GO... YONDER, in the dark foliage of the garden alone; HE TOOK, Peter, James, and John, who also witnessed the raising of Jairus' daughter, and also the transfiguration; BEGAN, commencement of the great struggle; VERY HEAVY, depressed, dejected, or dismayed with anguish; "sore amazed" (Mark 14: 33); EXCEEDING SORROWFUL, not fear of the cross, but sorrow such as no one else can feel; EVEN UNTO DEATH, an angel came to the rescue, strengthening him. (See Luke 22: 43, 44.)

II. THE THREE PRAYERS.—(39-44.) A LITTLE FARTHER, "a stone's cast"; FELL ON HIS FACE, the posture of intense earnestness; MY FATHER, the plea of tender filial love; IF IT BE POSSIBLE, no suffering should be coveted; THIS CUP, not the cross, but the fearful agonies of the garden; "cup" is omitted by the best MSS.; NEVERTHELESS, perfect submission, willingness to meet all necessary suffering, however intense; THE DISCIPLES, the three; ASLEEP, Luke says,

"for sorrow;" what must have been the Master's grief? WHAT, not surprise, but gentle rebuke, to remind them and us that the agonies of Jesus were far beyond their power to endure; THE SECOND TIME, no aid or encouragement from the disciples; the Saviour turns again to God; SAYING, substantially the same prayer; ASLEEP AGAIN, and Mark adds, "neither wist they what to answer him."

III. THE BETRAYAL.—(45-50.) SLEEP ON, watching is now needless, or will ye sleep now? THE HOUR, of betrayal; BETRAYED, by one of his friends; SINNERS, enemies; JUDAS, ever after an abhorred name; MULTITUDE, Roman soldiers, (John 18: 3), captains of the temple (Luke 22: 52), chief priests, servants, etc.; I SHALL KISS, usually the signal of friendship and love; FRIEND, rather, companion, associate; WHEREFORE, a question the full import of which Judas well knew; LAID HANDS ON JESUS, bound him; TOOK HIM (see verse 53).

GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.—"The present Garden of Gethsemane is in the shape of an irregular quadrangle, the circuit of which is about seventy paces. It is now enclosed by a hedge, as the pilgrims used to injure the olive trees which it contains. These seven venerable olive trees, with trunks burst from age and shored up with stones, are said to date from the time of Christ. Some of them are certainly of great age and size (nineteen feet in circumference), but we have no mention of old olive trees here before the sixteenth century. It is, moreover, well authenticated that Titus and Hadrian cut down all the trees around Jerusalem, and that the Crusaders found the whole region absolutely destitute of wood. It is, however, possible that these old trees are remote descendants of those which grew here in the time of Christ."—Bedecker's Handbook.

SORROW OF JESUS. SLEEPING DISCIPLES. SON OF MAN BETRAYED.

TO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION.

Four generations before this present time, a Christian husband and wife agreed to spend one hour of the first Sunday of every month in special prayer for the conversion of their children, one after another, as they should arrive at a sufficient age; and also to plead for spiritual blessing upon their descendants to the remotest generation. These parents began to do this as soon as their first born emerged from childhood, entering into a written covenant with each other, with the understanding that each child, when converted, and his or her companion, if married, should also sign and observe the same covenant. It is a good thing if you make a covenant to have it in writing. Eleven children came into this Christian home, under the sheltering wings of prayer, two of whom died in early childhood, and nine—seven sons and two daughters—lived to a mature age. Eight of these nine children, with their husbands and wives (for they were all married), ultimately united in the same covenant with their parents. The ninth died in early manhood, but not until he had given evidence that he too had become a child of God.

I would like to make a pilgrimage to see this covenant, where God and parents, husbands and wives, had united in covenant together. It would be like the spot where Moses saw the Lord in the burning bush—holy ground. Six of the sons, having been hopefully converted, became honored officers in the Church of Christ, and married eminently Christian wives. The daughters were also converted in early womanhood, married Christian husbands, and trained their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The whole family, sons and daughters, with their husbands and wives, were gathered, by the blessing of a covenant-keeping God, into one common fold. Thus God's mercies covered two generations.

But these covenant blessings did not cease with the second generation. Forty-two grandchildren lived to years of discretion in the line of these blessed generations. Of these all but one, or possibly two, have been converted, and most of them have reared Christian families. Five of these grandchildren of the original covenant-makers, and one great-grandchild, became ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Three of the grandchildren and one great-grandchild have been sent out to foreign lands as missionaries to the heathen. The great-grandchildren of this covenant family are very numerous, and a large number of them are still young in years. They are so widely scattered that they cannot now be readily traced. The older portion of them hold very respectable, and some of them quite conspicuous and useful positions in society. How many of this fourth generation are now Christians cannot be ascertained at this time. But it is not known that a single adult descendant of the original covenanted parents has died without giving comforting evidence of true piety. The aged patriarch

who gave me these facts with modest reluctance and deep emotion, is the last survivor of the eleven children of the original pair. What a river of blessing flowing out from a little spring in this Christian family!—The Christian.

THE VALUE OF A GOOD RELIGIOUS NEWSPAPER.

A wealthy merchant in one of our cities, an earnest Christian, with a large, happy family, had the great joy of seeing all his children early converted to Christ. A friend said to him one day, "Sir, you seem to have been wonderfully successful in bringing up your children. Few parents of so large a family have the happiness of seeing them all early converted to God. May I ask you, sir, if there is anything peculiar in your method of training?" "You may, sir, certainly; and I reply, that under God I attribute the early conversion of my children to the children's column of a religious newspaper." The religious newspaper is not only a force but one of the mightiest forces in the religious life of to-day. The shrewd Catholic Church understands this. We are all sometimes surprised at the devout loyalty of the Catholic masses to their church.

"I suppose some Christian families feel that the price of a good religious paper is more than they are able to pay. But the value of such a paper when taken and read is above all price in money. The cost at the most is only six pennies a week. There are many mothers who so prize the assistance of such a paper in the education of their families that they would sooner wear one hat less a year, than dispense with their paper. There are fathers who would buy a coat cheaper by the cost of the paper rather than be deprived of its blessing. So deeply do I feel the need of such a paper as an educating force in my own life and home, that I count it not at all among the luxuries but necessities of my table. And I am sure that where it is taken and read, and not laid upon the shelf to stay there, it will be an invaluable educator of both the home and the church into that life which we live by the faith of the Son of God."—The Rev. C. Towle, in Christian Intelligencer.

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