

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From the International Lessons for 1879, by Edwin W. Rice, as issued by American Sunday-School Union.)

LESSON XVII.

APRIL 27.]

THE COMING SAVIOUR.—Isa. 42 : 1-10.—[About 712 B. C.]

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 1-4.

- 1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him; He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. 2 He shall not cry, nor lift up, Nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. 3 A bruised reed shall he not break, And the smoking flax shall he not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. 4 He shall not fail nor be discouraged, Till he have set judgment in the earth: And the isles shall wait for his law, 5 Thus saith God the Lord, He that created the heavens, and stretched them out; He that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; He that giveth breath unto the people upon it, And spirit to them that walk therein: 6 I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, And will hold thine hand, And will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, For a light of the Gentiles; 7 To open the blind eyes, To bring out the prisoners from the prison, And them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. 8 I am the Lord: that is my name: And my glory will I not give to another, Neither my praise to graven images. 9 Behold, the former things are come to pass, And new things do I declare: Before they spring forth I tell you of them. 10 Sing unto the Lord a new song, And his praise from the end of the earth. Ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; The isles, and the inhabitants thereof.

GOLDEN TEXT.

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.—Matt. 3 : 17.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Christ is the model of all true service.

CONNECTED HISTORY.—Isaiah having foretold the captivity of Judah in Babylon, had announced their deliverance, which was to come through Cyrus. From Cyrus as a temporal deliverer, the prophet goes on to foretell their spiritual and full deliverance from the captivity of sin, through the Messiah.

NOTES.—The Book of I-sa'iah contains chiefly prophecies with some history. It was probably written and arranged by Isaiah himself. The first portion of the book relates mainly to the Jewish people and their foes, with prophecies about Assyria, Moab, Egypt, Syria, Edom, Tyre, and some historical facts of the reign of Hezekiah. The second portion is chiefly a prophecy about the Messiah; Isaiah has been called the "Gospel Prophet." Of sixty-six chapters, forty-four are quoted or referred to in the New Testament, and Isaiah is named as the author of the prophecy twenty-one times. He is said by tradition to have been slain asunder when ninety years of age, and during Manassah's reign. Smoking Flax, or "dimly burning" wick of the Eastern lamp, which was often made of flax or other similar material, laid in a narrow urn-shaped vessel, used as a lamp.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) THE SAVIOUR'S CHARACTER. (II.) THE SAVIOUR'S MISSION.

I. THE SAVIOUR'S CHARACTER. (1.) BEHOLD, the prophet represents God as speaking; MY SERVANT, see Matt. 3 : 17; ELECT, or chosen, 1 Pet. 1 : 20; DELIGHTETH, Luke 3 : 22; JUDGMENT, satisfy justice or law; GENTILES, all nations except the Jews. (2.) NOT CRY, Christ works silently in the heart; NOR LIFT UP, that is, "nor shout;" BRUISED REED, a heart struggling against sin, yet weak as a broken reed, he will not crush, but strengthen; SMOKING FLAX, weak conscience, he will quicken by grace, see Note. (4.) FAIL, grow weak; DISCOURAGED, or "broken," not hindered; ISLES, the most distant lands; LAW, his reign, or government.

II. THE SAVIOUR'S MISSION. (5.) STRETCHED THEM OUT, poetical, describing the creation of the heavens, as if they were set up as a tent; COMETH OUT OF IT, as herbs, trees, etc. (6.) TRUE, the Messiah; RIGHTEOUSNESS, for just and holy ends; FOR A COVENANT, in fulfilment of a covenant; PEOPLE, Israel; LIGHT, Luke 2 : 32. (7.) BLIND EYES, physically blind, and also spiritually blind. John 9 : 39; FROM PRISON, bondage of sin. (8.) GRAVEN IMAGES, idols, Ex. 20 : 3, 4. (9.) FORMER THINGS, those early foretold.

What do we learn in this lesson of—

- 1. The purpose of the coming Christ?
2. His manner of work?
3. His success in his mission?
4. The result of it, to Jews and Gentiles?

Knowledge of Christ.—John Flavel compares our progress in the knowledge of Christ to that gained by those settling in a newly discovered continent. At first they sit down by the sea side, and upon the borders of the land; gradually they search further into the heart of the continent. The best are only on the borders of this vast continent of knowledge.

LESSON XVIII.

MAY 4.]

THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR.—Isa. 53 : 1-12. [About 712 B. C.]

COMMIT TO MEMORY, vs. 3-5.

- 1 Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? 2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, And as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, There is no beauty that we should desire him.

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- 3 He is despised and rejected of men; A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; And we hid as it were our faces from him; He was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, And carried our sorrows: Yet we did esteem him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: The chastisement of our peace was upon him; And with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned every one to his own way: And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, Yet he opened not his mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before her shears is dumb, So he openeth not his mouth. 8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: And who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living: For the transgression of my people was he stricken. 9 And he made his grave with the wicked, And with the rich in his death; Because he had done no violence, Neither was any deceit in his mouth. 10 Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; He hath put him to grief: When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. 11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; For he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, And he shall divide the spoil with the strong; Because he hath poured out his soul unto death: And he was numbered with the transgressors; And he bare the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.—1 Pet. 2 : 24

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Our salvation is through Christ's suffering.

NOTES.—Sheep. The sheep of the East are not placed in fenced fields, but led out to pasture, and watched by a shepherd. His voice they know, and will usually follow and keep near to him; but sometimes they stray away for grazing and are lost in the mountains. His generation, or "His manner of life who would declare," alluding to the trial of Christ, when no one was allowed to bear witness to his character, as was usual in criminal cases. His grave. Hebrew sepulchres were usually on some elevated place. Verse nine is rendered "And his grave was appointed [by his enemies] with the wicked, but with a rich man was his tomb." So was it; Christ was placed among malefactors by the Jews; but Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, gave him a tomb. No form. The Bible avoids any particular description of the personal appearance or face of Christ. All paintings of him are only the idea of artists, without authority, as are various descriptions in ancient writings.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) REJECTED OF MAN. (II.) SUFFERING FOR MAN. (III.) HIS PERFECT SACRIFICE.

I. REJECTED OF MAN. (1.) REPORT, "revelation" or doctrine, in regard to the Messiah; ARM, power. (2.) HE, the Messiah; SHALL GROW, or rather "grew;" BEFORE HIM, in God's presence, see Luke 2 : 52; DRY GROUND, barren or neglected soil. So Christ came out of barren or despised Nazareth; FORM, see Notes. Some render "No form nor comeliness, that we should wish to look on him; no beauty that," etc. (3.) GRIEF, Heb. "sickness;" WE HID, Heb. "as a hiding of faces from him," or "from us."

II. SUFFERING FOR MAN. (4.) BATH BORNE, foretold, as if already past; OUR SORROWS, literally "pains" caused by sin; SMITTEN, as if he had sinned. (5.) WOUNDED, "pierced" or tormented; STRIPES, or bruises

- 6.) ALL WE, Rom. 3 : 10; GONE ASTRAY, as sheep from an Eastern shepherd; THE INIQUITY, penalty for sin, 2 Cor. 5 : 21. (7.) LAMB, Rev. 5 : 6, 12. (8.) TAKEN FROM PRISON, or "taken away by distress and judgment;" HIS GENERATION, see Notes; CUT OFF, by violent death. (9.) MADE HIS GRAVE, see Notes. See Matt. 27 : 38, 57, 60.

III. HIS PERFECT SACRIFICE. (10.) PLEASED, God permitted, or was willing; WHEN THOU, etc., or "when his soul shall have made an offering for sin;" HIS SHEEP, the fruit of his work, saints. (11.) TRAVAIL, suffering of soul. (12.) DIVIDE THE SPOIL, Matt. 12 : 29; WITH THE GREAT, or "with a great company"; NUMBERED WITH TRANSGRESSORS, Mark 15 : 28.

What do we learn from this prophecy—

- 1. Concerning Christ's humiliation?
2. About his suffering and death?
3. About the fulness and success of his work as a Saviour?

LESSON XIX.

MAY 11.] THE SAVIOUR'S CALL.—Isa. 55 : 1-11. [About 712 B. C.]

COMMIT TO MEMORY, vs. 1, 6, 7.

- 1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, Come ye to the waters, And he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat, Yea, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. 2 Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? And your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, And let your soul delight itself in fatness. 3 Incline your ear, and come unto me: Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, Even the sure mercies of David. 4 Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, A leader and commander to the people. 5 Behold thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, And nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee, Because of the Lord thy God, And for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee. 6 Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, Call ye upon him while he is near; Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts: And let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; And to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. 8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are my ways higher than your ways, And my thoughts than your thoughts. 10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, And returneth not thither, But watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: 11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: It shall not return unto me void, But it shall accomplish that which I please, And it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

GOLDEN TEXT.

If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.—John 7 : 37.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Salvation is free to all.

CONNECTED HISTORY.—The prophet follows his picture of Messiah's character and sufferings, by a prophecy of the fruits of the Messiah's work; the enlarging of the Church and its safety. In view of the promise of Messiah, the prophet makes a general call to repentance and faith, and describes the success of the Church.

TO THE SCHOLAR.—Study this invitation of the Lord, as if it was directed to you alone. Be careful to accept now of grace so freely offered.

NOTES.—Da'-vid—beloved, a son of Jesse, and the King

of Judah and Israel after Saul; reigned 40 years, 1055-1015 B. C.; was a great warrior; author of many Psalms; appointed Solomon as his successor on the throne; the Messiah was of his house and lineage, according to promise. Thorn. There are eighteen or twenty Hebrew words in the Old Testament which are translated in our version, thorns, briars, thistles, etc., without much regard to the uniformity of rendering. The thorn here intended was clearly regarded as a useless, if not troublesome bush. Fir, in our version, probably includes three varieties: (1.) the Scotch Fir; (2.) the Larch; (3.) the common Cypress; all of which are still found in Lebanon. It was one of the most useful of trees for building, and various other purposes, and hence is contrasted with the useless thorn. Myr'-tle, formerly myrtles appear to have been more common than now near Jerusalem. They are still found in Samaria and Galilee, and are used to form booths during the Feast of Tabernacles, as they probably were in Isaiah's time.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) THE GRACIOUS INVITATION. (II.) THE GRACIOUS PROMISE. (III.) THE GRACIOUS FULFILMENT.

I. THE GRACIOUS INVITATION. (1.) EVERY ONE, Jew or Gentile; WATERS, see John 4 : 10; 7 : 37; BUY, Heb. "weigh," as money was weighed in payments. (2.) SPEND, Heb. "weigh." Coined money was not very common, hence gold and silver were paid out by weight; SATISFIETH NOT, see John 6 : 35. (3.) INCLINE YOUR EAR, listen and obey; COVENANT, agreement.

II. THE GRACIOUS PROMISE. (4.) HIM, David and David's son, Christ; LEADER AND COMMANDER, see Matt. 4 : 19; 7 : 29; John 13 : 34. (5.) SHALL CALL, through Christ, this doubtless refers to the calling of the Gentiles. (6.) NEAR, ready to hear. (7.) THE WICKED, perhaps the openly sinful; UNRIGHTEOUS, the outwardly moral, but inwardly corrupt man; OUR GOD, the God of Israel; ABUNDANTLY, literally, "he will multiply to pardon."

III. THE GRACIOUS FULFILMENT. (9.) HIGHER—YOUR THOUGHTS, God's ways and thoughts infinitely greater and purer than man's. (10.) RETURNETH NOT, that is, not without doing its appointed work. (11.) VOID, empty, useless; SENT IT, God sends his Word for a special purpose.

Which verses in this lesson teach—

- 1. The freedom of the offer of God's grace?
2. The need of immediate repentance?
3. The pardon of those who return to God now?
4. Final triumph of the Gospel?

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