

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

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

LESSON VIII.

FEBRUARY 22.] GIVING AND PRAYING.—Matt. 6 : 1-13. [About A. D. 28.]

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 3-6.

- 1. Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. 2. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 3. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; 4. That thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. 5. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 6. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. 7. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking. 8. Be not therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. 9. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. 11. Give us this day our daily bread. 12. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.—Matt. 6: 6.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Acceptable service must come from the heart.

NOTES.—ALMS, in Christ's time, were of two kinds—(1) Of money for the poor of the place, received in a chest in the synagogue on the Sabbath; (2) of food or money for the poor in general, collected daily from house to house. Almsgiving had so much stress laid on it that it was commonly called by the general name of "righteousness." TRUMPET, or cornet, was an instrument made of a ram's horn, and used at the solemn festivals in the temple service, and by the ancient Hebrews for signals of various kinds. It was also used in the synagogue service at the close of the day of atonement. The reference to it in the lesson is figurative of the vain display made by Pharisees. They did not really blow a trumpet. SYNAGOGUES were buildings erected and dedicated to the worship of God—whenever possible, in the highest spot in or near the town or city to which they belonged. There the stated religious services of the Jews were held, both the daily and weekly. Synagogues probably had their origin in the meetings of the schools of the prophets in Samuel's time, although it is not until Ezra's time that we read anything definite of them (Ezra 8: 15; Neh. 8: 2). They were to Judaism what churches are to Christianity. CLOSET.—This is called the "secret chambers" in ch. 21: 26. It was a kind of cellar or store-room. In most houses there was a room on the housetop specially use for prayer.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) TRUE ALMSGIVING. (II.) TRUE PRAYER. (III.) THE MODEL PRAYER. I. TRUE ALMSGIVING. (1-4) ALMS, in v. 1, should be "righteousness" in general, of which alms (v. 2) are only a part; TO BE SEEN, the motive—in order to be seen; REWARD (25: 31-46); HYPOCRITES, originally meant actors in the theatre; here, religious pretenders; IN THE STREETS, when giving alms to beggars; THEY HAVE, the names of large givers were publicly announced in the synagogues; LET NOT THY LEFT HAND, a figure of speech to express modesty and simplicity in giving. II. TRUE PRAYER. (5-8.) WHEN THOU PRAYEST, better, "when ye pray"; THOU SHALT NOT, "be not"; SPANDWG, a common posture in prayer (1 Sam. 1: 26; Mark 11: 25; Luke 18: 11, 13). They are not blamed for the posture, but for the display; SYNAGOGUES . . . CORNERS, the most public and frequented places. The Pharisees arranged to be just at such places when the hours for prayers arrived; SHUT THY DOOR, so as to be quite private, unseen, and unheard. Public prayer is not meant to be condemned, but the making of private prayer public, and especially the wrong motive in it; IS IN SECRET, unseen and unheard, yet is present everywhere; VAIN REPETITIONS, as if there were merit in the duration and the number of words of a prayer. This was expressly taught by some rabbins (see ch. 23: 14). III. THE MODEL PRAYER. (9-13.) AFTER THIS MANNER, "thus," for example; WHICH ART, who art; HALLOWED, kept holy sanctified, in thought and conduct; KINGDOM, reign, freely acknowledged government; WILL BE DONE, freely, voluntarily; IN EARTH AS . . . IN HEAVEN, literally, "as in heaven, so also upon the earth." This may apply to all the three preceding petitions; DAILY BREAD, literally, "our bread of subsistence"; NEEDFUL for our sustenance; not only "bread" but "food" in general; DEBTS, sins, trespasses; AS WE FORGIVE, "have for-

given: "as" means "in like kind," not degree EVIL, spiritual and physical, conflict with which is "temptation"; FOR THINE . . . EVER (see Luke 11: 2-4); this part of the prayer was perhaps added to the text at a later date.

LESSON IX.

FEBRUARY 23.] OUR FATHER'S CARE.—Matt. 6 : 24-34. [About A. D. 28.]

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 31-34.

- 24. No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other, Ye cannot serve God and mammon. 25. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? 26. Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? 27. Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? 28. And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29. And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? 31. Therefore take no thought saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32. (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek); for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34. Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.—1 Pet. 5: 7.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

The Lord takes care of his people.

NOTES.—MAMMON was not the name of any person or idol, but means simply "riches." In figurative language riches were personified, as in our lesson. FOWLS.—Palestine abounds in birds of various kinds. No less than three hundred and twenty-two varieties have been found there, among them our timouse, sparrow, wren, thrush, blackbird, swallow, robin, and the lark and nightingale, besides the raven, hawk, owl, etc. LILIES OF THE FIELD.—No particular variety is referred to here, there being many different kinds there. In Galilee one very brilliant red or purple lily is especially prevalent, growing several feet high, with a woody stem, which is gathered often with other shrubs and grasses for fuel (v. 30). SPIN.—Spinning in ancient times was not much different from that of more recent days. It was the occupation of women, who thus manufactured out of the material for clothing (Prov. 31: 13, 19, 22, 24). SOLOMON, "peaceful," youngest son of David and Bathsheba (1 Chron. 3: 5; 2 Sam. 11: 3); succeeded his father as king of Israel (1 Kings 2: 11, 12); built the temple at Jerusalem; renowned for wisdom and splendor. He reigned forty years. OVEN.—These here meant were portable, made of clay, in the shape of a jar, wider at the bottom than at the top, and about three feet high. They were used for baking and roasting.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) WORLDLY ANXIETY FORBIDDEN. (II.) WORLDLY ANXIETY NEEDLESS. (III.) ONE THING NEEDFUL. I. WORLDLY ANXIETY FORBIDDEN. (24-25.) SERVE, in the sense of being bound to, belonging to; TWO MASTERS, at the same time; HATE THE ONE, clearly obliged to serve him; HOLD TO THE ONE, cleave to him whom he serves; DESPISE THE OTHER, and not serve him; MAMMON, see Notes; TAKE NO THOUGHT, literally, "be not distracted" in your thoughts, be not anxious; MORE, greater, of more importance; MEAT, food that sustains life; IF GOD HAS GIVEN LIFE, he will not withhold what sustains it; RAIMENT, clothing. II. WORLDLY ANXIETY NEEDLESS (26-30.) FOWLS, see Notes; AIR, "the sky," through which the fowls fly; SOW . . . REAP . . . GATHER, tollsome occupations of man; BARN, called "garner" in 3: 12; buildings for the storage of grain; BETTER, because made in God's image, the highest of his creatures and his children in Christ; CUBIT, about eighteen inches; STATURE, better "span of life" or "age"; CONSIDER, "study"; LILIES, see Notes; TOIL NOT, in gathering materials; SPIN (see Notes), to make the material into raiment; SOLOMON, see Notes; GLORY, pomp and splendor; LIKE, as wonderfully and beautifully; GRASS, of which the lilies form a part; TO-DAY IS, living and growing, and the next day is cut down, dried and used for fuel; OVEN, see Notes; MUCH MORE . . . YOU, who are destined for eternal life; OF LITTLE FAITH, because you act as if doubting it. III. ONE THING NEEDFUL. (31-34.) ALL THESE THINGS, the satisfaction of bodily appetites and wants; GENTILES, "nations," all not Jews, heathen; KNOWETH, and will therefore supply your need; SEEK YE FIRST, not first in time only, but as first and greatest in importance; the great object of life; KINGDOM OF GOD, the condition in which his will is freely done; RIGHTEOUSNESS, that which has been explained in all the preceding; true spiritual purity; ADDED, supplied over and above; SHALL TAKE THOUGHT, "will have, or bring, cares" of its own; THE THINGS OF should be omitted; EVIL, THEREOF, the troubles, etc., belonging to itself.

FRANK ANDREWS AND HIS PONY.

Frank sent his pony to Warren, Penn., to spend the winter. He placed him in the care of Jerry, an old attache of the family. Jerry regarded Billy as a very unmanageable animal, as he could not catch him when he was loose in the lot, and he required assistance to get him into the stable. Jerry could not understand who such an untuly and hard-to-be-governed horse should be kept for the use of a little boy. Spring came, and Frank arrived in Warren, and you may imagine Jerry's surprise, when he saw Frank run up to Billy in his pasture, throw his arms around the pony's legs, and cover them with kisses. Billy seemed to enjoy Frank's caresses. He submitted to the bridle, and, in the presence of his young master, docility marked his every movement. He appeared to delight in submitting to Frank's wishes and demands. Jerry and others were astonished at the new behavior of this hitherto incorrigible little horse. The cause was soon manifest. Frank was both kind and considerate; he never struck Billy, and he never rode him upon fatiguing journeys. By men, Billy had been whipped, had been pushed beyond his natural gait, and had been compelled to go long distances. Heavy weights were put upon his back; hence he dreaded them, and made every effort to escape from them. What a lesson Frank and Billy furnished? It is the key to the whole treatment of dumb animals by those who have them in their care. By kindness they will love you, and cheerfully serve you. When abused, they give you an unwilling service, and will avoid you whenever an opportunity offers. —Cor. "Our Dumb Animals."

A MAN THAT WAS NOT TO BE BOUGHT.

BY THE REV. J. G. HALL. Six or eight years since, in one of the towns of Eastern Massachusetts, there was a Mr. D., a livery-stable keeper, about whom I once had the opportunity of learning the following fact. Among his many other good habits, one was never to suffer his own feet or his horses' feet to tread profanely on the Sabbath day. The illustrative fact referred to was this: On a certain Sabbath morning three gentlemen from Boston, putting up with their wives at the village hotel, said to their host that they would go to Mr. D. and get three single-horse buggies, and take each his wife and go to the camp-meeting, about six miles off. "It will be of no use," said the host, "for Mr. D. never lets his horse on the Sabbath." "I never saw the man yet that money wouldn't buy," rejoined one of the party. So they went and rang the bell at Mr. D.'s door. Mr. D. himself answered the call, and invited them in; to whom he said, after they had made known their errand, "Gentlemen, I should be glad too accommodate you, but it is against my principles to let my horses go for hire on the Sabbath day." "How much do you usually have a day for your single horses?" asked the gentleman who was the chief speaker. "Two dollars and a half a day usually sir," answered Mr. D. "Well, then," returned the gentleman, "here are three five dollar bills; please take them and let your man harness the horses, and we will go away very quietly and will return just after dusk, and without noise." "Gentlemen," said Mr. D., I can only repeat what I have already said, that it is against my principles to hire out my horses on God's day, and I must persist in declining your very liberal offer." At this the chief speaker on the other side stepped up closer to the sturdy Sabbath-keeper and, slipping into his hand a bright-looking bill, said to him, "There, Mr. D., take that, and let your man quietly harness the horses for us." The tempted one, looking down at what was thrust into his hand, saw that it was a new one-hundred-dollar bill on a Boston bank, a glittering prize; but without hesitating a moment and evidently without any inward struggle with the spirit of greed, he calmly but emphatically said, "Gentlemen, my principles in this matter are fixed, and should you bring me all the money in the city of Boston it would not alter them. If you would like to attend worship our bell is now ringing, and I should

be most happy to show you a seat, but I cannot let my horses go on the Sabbath," and he handed back the bill. As the baffled temper took the rejected money he also looked at Mr. D. admiringly in the face, and stretching out his hand toward him, said, "I want to shake hands with you, Mr. D.; I have sometimes heard of such men as you are, but I never saw one before." Likewise said they all, and each of the other two shook hands with him, expressing also their pleasure, and adding that before they returned to Boston they would like a supply of his cards that they might know whom to direct their friends and acquaintances to as they visited the village. And as the secular week opened all these gentlemen returned repeatedly to Mr. D.'s stable to obtain horses and carriages for their pleasure, thus testifying in the most express manner their approbation of his conscientious and unswerving conduct. And so will it be in all ordinary cases where Christians are punctilious in matters of professed principle, scrupulous on points of worldly conformity, high-minded, resolute, and incorruptible on all questions of duty. To be not only true to ourselves but also useful to others are among the reasons for which God has called us to his kingdom and glory. As says our chief English poet, "Heaven doth with us, as we with torches do, Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike As if we had them not." Or, as says the greatest One of all, "No man lighteth a candle and putteth it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house." —Illustrated Christian Weekly.

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