

The Sunday School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XXI.

THE JUDGMENT.

May 23, 1880.

Matt. xxv. 31-46.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."—Matt. xxv. 46.

HOME STUDIES.

- M. Matt. xxii. 15-33 ... About the Resurrection.
- T. Matt. xxii. 34-46 ... Lawyer's Question.
- W. Matt. xxiii. 1-12 ... Warnings against Evil Examples.
- Th. Matt. xxiii. 13-49 ... Woes against Scribes and Pharisees.
- F. Matt. xxv. 1-13 ... Parable of Ten Virgins.
- S. Matt. xxv. 14-30 ... Parable of Ten Talents.
- Sab. Matt. xxv. 31-46 ... The Judgment.

HELPS TO STUDY.

After delivering the parable of the Marriage Feast, which formed the subject of our last lesson, the Saviour wisely answers the insidious questions of the Pharisees regarding the payment of tribute to Cæsar and of the Sadducees regarding the resurrection; re-affirms the moral law in reply to a lawyer; and addresses His disciples and the multitude in condemnation of pharisaism and hypocrisy.

Then follows the account of the widow casting her two mites into the treasury, recorded by Mark and Luke, but omitted by Matthew; and that of certain Greeks desiring to see Jesus, preserved only by John.

Matt. xxiv. tells us of Christ's taking leave of the temple; His prophecies regarding its destruction and the persecution of His disciples; the signs of the end of the Jewish state and dispensation; with an almost imperceptible transition to His final coming at the day of judgment. The chapter closes with an exhortation to watchfulness. Close parallels are to be found in Mark and Luke.

Matthew alone has preserved the parable of the ten virgins, that of the five talents, and the description of the scenes of the judgment day, which is the subject of our present lesson.

The following is a convenient division: (1) *The Judge*, (2) *The two Classes to be Judged*, (3) *The Award of the Righteous*, (4) *The Sentence of the Wicked*.

I. THE JUDGE.—Vers. 31. Christ has come, in humilitated, to save; He will come again, in glory, to judge. The Son of Man: The divine representative of humanity. The union of the divine and human natures in Christ, besides rendering Him a suitable Mediator between God and man, also qualifies Him to act as judge of the whole human race. John v. 27: "And hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man."

The holy angels, as distinguished from the fallen angels (See Jude, vi.) shall be His attendants.

II. THE TWO CLASSES TO BE JUDGED.—Vers. 32, 33. "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

All nations. This term is used to denote the whole human race, probably for the purpose of correcting a mistaken notion, common among the Jews, to the effect that the Gentiles were to have no part in the resurrection.

And He shall separate them. There is nothing to indicate any difficulty in distinguishing the two classes from each other—no greater difficulty than a shepherd would have in distinguishing sheep from goats. The criterion is, not nationality or rank, or wealth, or knowledge, but *character*, as exhibited in the record of past deeds. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body." (2 Cor. v. 10).

There will only be two classes before the judgment seat, and every human being that has ever lived, lives now, or shall hereafter live, in this world, must take his place in one or the other of these two classes. The question, Which class shall it be? is our great life-question; it must be decided before life's close; and to make sure of that it must be decided now.

III. THE AWARD OF THE RIGHTEOUS. Vers. 34-40. Some one says, "We are justified by faith but we shall be judged by our works." This is in accord with the whole teaching of Scripture, and in particular with the teaching of the passage now before us. It is those who believe in Christ that are made holy; it is those who have been made holy that shall stand at the Judge's right hand in the judgment; and it is by the record of the good deeds that they have been enabled to accomplish that their sanctification shall there and then be proved before the universe.

The King. Christ had often spoken of the kingdom, but He now for the first time calls Himself the King. As King of the whole earth He shall judge the nations.

Come, ye blessed of my Father. Christ now says to all, even to the vilest sinners, "come;" but in that day He will say it only to the righteous. It is those who "come" now and seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness that shall in that day be invited to "come" and inherit the kingdom.

Prepared for you. "It did not," says Jacobus, "come to them of chance or of their own superior goodness, or of their sovereign will, but of God's free choice, according to the election of grace (Rom. viii. 29, 30; 1 Pet. i. 2). And this was obtained in God's gracious purposes. From the

foundation of the world, that is from all eternity. (Comp. Ephes. i. 4, 5). This points back before the world was, to a founder, builder, designer of it. The same God wrought their salvation. This shows that on God's part their salvation is all of grace. No man deserves it—none can have any claim—and if He has chosen to save some, and so has sent Christ into the world, none can complain, for it is a free gift, and He can do what He will with His own (Matt. xx. 15). Besides, while it is of free grace on God's part, it is shewn to be according to their works. "Without holiness no man shall see God."

For I was an hungred, etc. In agreement with the tenor of the intercessory prayer recorded in John xvii., Christ regards His people as one with Himself, and assumes the obligation of rewarding all services rendered to them. It is unpretending service, for which no credit is claimed, that shall be praised and rewarded at the judgment.

IV. THE SENTENCE OF THE WICKED.—Vers. 41-46. As long as we are in this life Christ keeps saying "come." He never tells anybody to go away from Him till the very last.

Depart from me. Will He not once more say "come?" Not to those who have refused. It is in this life, and not in the judgment, that salvation is to be secured, if secured at all.

What dreadful crimes have those on the left hand committed? Why should these terrible words of unalterable doom be addressed to them? What have they done? Nothing—that is enough to condemn them. There are criminals of all degrees among them, and no doubt their crimes will all be laid bare; but in the Judge's summing up there is not a word said about positive evil-doing; it is sufficient for the condemnation of any one that he has never performed an action springing from a pure and disinterested motive, or prompted by genuine love to God and man, and that he thus has nothing to shew whereby to prove his sanctification.

Everlasting punishment . . . . . life eternal. Both of these must be regarded as unending. It is the same Greek word that is translated "everlasting" and "eternal."

"THE TIME IS SHORT."

I sometimes feel the thread of life is slender,  
And soon with me the labour will be wrought;  
Then grows my heart to other hearts more tender,  
The time is short.

A shepherd's tent of reeds and flowers decaying,  
That night winds soon will crumble into naught;  
So seems my life, for some rude blast decaying,  
The time is short.

Up, up, my soul, the long spent time redeeming;  
Sow thou the seeds of better deed and thought;  
Light other lamps, while yet thy light is beaming,  
The time is short.

Think of the good thou might'st have done, when brightly  
The suns to thee life's choicest seasons brought;  
Hours lost to God in pleasure passing lightly,  
The time is short.

The time is short. Then be thy heart a brother's,  
To every heart that needs thy help in aught;  
Soon thou may'st need the sympathy of others,  
The time is short.

If thou hast friends, give them thy best endeavour,  
Thy warmest impulse and thy purest thought,  
Keeping in mind, in word and action ever,  
The time is short.

Where summer winds, aroma-laden hover,  
Companions rest, their work forever wrought  
Soon other graves the moss and fern will cover,  
The time is short.

Up, up, my soul, ere yet the shadow falleth;  
Some good return in latter season wrought,  
Forget thyself, when duty's angel calleth,  
The time is short.

By all the lapses thou hast been forgiven,  
By all the lessons prayer to thee hath taught.  
To others teach the sympathies of heaven,  
The time is short.

WHAT IS TO BECOME OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE?

When vacant churches are looking out for a minister, what point, among others, is uppermost in their minds? Is it not that someone shall be called who can attract the young people? And further, is it not a complaint that is not infrequently made against a conscientious and faithful pastor, "The young people don't seem to be interested in him!" That will in all probability be made the entering wedge to his dismissal. Who are these "young people?" Why, in the majority of cases, they are children of members of the church. To whom, under God, are they primarily responsible? To their parents? Of course, will be the prompt answer. Who is responsible for their religious training and culture? Why, their parents. Is not the Bible very explicit on that subject? But, as a matter of fact, it is well known that many, very many parents are "very guilty" in this matter. Are they

authorized to expect a blessing upon their children when they fail to do what God requires them to do? Is not the principle, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me," as applicable to this as to all other departments of Christian duty? Reducing the subject down to its last analysis, what is the requirement that parents really make of pastors? Why, that they shall cure their defects; that they shall do a work which God says parents must do. The question, then, "Will this or that minister attract the young people?" is a question that has no right to exist. What, then, is to become of our young people? Why, they must be cared for as the Bible directs. Parents and churches must get back to Bible principles on this subject. Parents should feel that they are to blame if their children do not love the church, and walk in the ways of truth and godliness. Take them with you to church from their infancy. Teach them the truths of our holy religion. Pray with and for them. Let parents do their duty, and the question, "What is to become of our young people?" will be satisfactorily answered.

WHO WAS THE BAD BOY?

Little Annie was prettily dressed and standing in front of the house waiting for her mother to go out to ride.

A tidy boy, dressed in coarse clothes, was passing, when the little girl said:

"Come here, boy, and s'ake hands with me. I dot a boy dus like you named Bobby."

The boy laughed, shook hands with her and said: "I've got a little girl just like you, only she hasn't got any little cloak with pussy fur on it."

Here a lady came out of the door and said: "Annie, you must not talk with bad boys on the street. I hope you haven't taken anything from her? Go away, and never stop here again, boy!"

That evening the lady was called down to speak to a boy in the hall. He was very neatly dressed, and stood with his cap in his hand. It was the enemy of the morning.

"I came to tell you that I am not a bad boy," he said;

"I go to Sunday school, and help my mother all I can. I never tell lies, nor quarrel, nor say bad words, and I don't like a lady to call me names, and ask me if I've stolen her little girl's clothes from her!"

"I'm very glad you are so good," said the lady, laughing at the boy's earnestness. "Here is a quarter of a dollar for you."

"I don't want that!" said Bob, holding his head very high. "My father works in a foundry, and has lots of money. You've got a bigger boy than me, haven't you?"

"Yes, why?"

"Does he know the Commandments?"

"I'm afraid not very well."

"Can he say the Sermon on the Mount, and the twenty-third Psalm, and the Golden Rule?"

"I am very much afraid he cannot," said the lady, laughing at the boy's bravery.

"Does he not ride his pony on Sunday, instead of going to church?"

"I am afraid he does; but he ought not," said the lady, blushing a little.

"Mother don't know I came here," said the bright little rogue; "but I thought I would just come round, and see what kind of folks you were, and I guess mother would rather your boy would not come round our doors, because she don't want little Mamie to talk to bad boys in the street. Good evening!" And the boy was gone.

THE work of Protestant missions in China since 1842, when they were first planted there is thus summed up: Chinese communicants 13,000, of whom two-third are men. Organized congregations 312, with nearly 700 church edifices and chapels. There are 473 foreign missionaries, 73 native ministers, 92 Bible women and 21 theological schools. Children attending Sabbath school, 3,000, and 7,000 receiving secular education from the missionaries. The converts contribute \$9,000 annually; 18 churches are self-supporting, 243 partially so.

A poor old deaf man resided in Fife; he was visited by his minister shortly after coming to his pulpit. The minister said he would often call and see him; but time went on, and he did not visit him again until two years after, when, happening to go through the street where the deaf man was living, he saw his wife at the door, and could therefore do no other than inquire for her husband. "Well, Margaret, how is Tammas?" "None the better o' you," was the curt reply. "How! how! Margaret?" inquired the minister. "Oh, ye promised twa years syne to ca' and pray once a fortnight wi' him, and hae neer darkened the door sin' syne." "Weel, weel, Margaret, don't be so short? I thought it was not so very necessary to call and pray with Tammas, for he is sae deaf ye ken he cannot hear me." "But, sir," said the woman, with a rising dignity of manner, "the Lord's no deaf!" And it is to be supposed the minister felt the power of her reproach. *Leisure Hour.*

THE world does move, even in Spain. A little child was to be buried in the cemetery at Maltona, near Bilbao. His father had become a Protestant and was determined that his child, though baptized by the priest, should be buried in the Protestant part of the cemetery. The priest objected on the ground that the child belonged by baptism to the Romish Church. When the coffin reached the cemetery it was seized and placed in the receiving vault. Priest and Protestant then appealed to the Governor, and he to the Minister at Madrid. The latter telegraphed. "Parents have the right to decide for themselves in what cemeteries the bodies of their children shall be buried."