

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From Westminster Question Book.)

LESSON IV.

April 23, 1882.]

[Mark 6: 45-56.]

CHRIST WALKING ON THE SEA.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 47-50.

45. And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people.

46. And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.

47. And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land.

48. And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.

49. But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out:

50. For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.

51. And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered.

52. For they considered not the miracle of the loaves; for their heart was hardened.

53. And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore.

54. And when they were come out of the ship straightway they knew him,

55. And ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was.

56. And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee."—Isa. 43:2.

TOPIC.—Christ's Ready Help in Trouble.

LESSON PLAN.—1. CHRIST AT PRAYER. 2. CHRIST BRINGING DELIVERANCE. 3. CHRIST HEALING THE SICK.

Time.—April, A.D. 29. Place.—The Sea of Galilee and Plain of Gennesaret.

HELPS TO STUDY.

INTRODUCTORY.—The miracle of our last lesson produced a very great effect on those who were present. They determined to take Jesus by force and make him king. But his kingdom was not of this world. His disciples to distinguish him, he walked on the sea to Bethsaida, on the west shore of the Sea of Galilee. Then he sent the people away.

I. CHRIST AT PRAYER.—(45-47.) V. 45. UNTO BETHSAIDA—a village near Capernaum, on the north-western side of the lake. V. 46. TO PRAY—he often went away alone to commune with his Father. Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12. In this he has set us an example.

II. CHRIST BRINGING DELIVERANCE.—(48-52.) V. 48. HE SAW THEM TOILING—though absent from them, he watched them. **FOURTH WATCH**—between three and six o'clock in the morning. HE COMETH—to deliver them. WOULD HAVE PASSED—this was to try them. V. 49. A SPIRIT—a phantom, a ghost. V. 50. BE NOT AFRAID—Jesus is often very near, and we know it not. (For the account of Peter's rash request, see Matt. 14:28-31.) V. 51. THE WIND CEASED—he controls winds and waves; so he can give peace to our hearts in trouble. **AMAZED BEYOND MEASURE**—more than they had any right or reason to be. THEY CONSIDERED NOT—they had forgotten. If they had only remembered what he had done the day before, they would not have been surprised at what they now saw. **HARDENED**—dull of apprehension.

III. CHRIST HEALING THE SICK.—(53-56.) V. 53. GENNESARET—a small plain three miles long and one mile wide, on the Sea of Galilee, near Capernaum. V. 55. They took their sick from one place to another as they heard of his going to any town. **IN THE STREETS**—literally, "in the market-places." **THE BORDER OF HIS GARMENT**—such was their belief in his power to heal that they thought this would be enough. To those who believed it was enough. (See also Mark 5:27.) It was the touch of faith, not the garment, that secured the effect.

TEACHINGS:

1. We should find time every day for private prayer.
2. In danger and distress Christ sees us, and will come to our relief.
3. We should seek to bring to Jesus those who need him.
4. Jesus can make us perfectly whole; he that could heal the body can save the soul.

REMEMBER that Jesus watches over his chosen ones in the darkest hour. When they pass through the deepest waters he will be with them. Amid the loudest roar of the tempest they shall hear his voice, "It is I; be not afraid."

LESSON V.

April 30, 1882.]

[Mark 7:1-23.]

THE TRADITION OF MEN.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 9-13.

1. Then came together unto him the Pharisees and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.

2. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashed, hands, they found fault.

3. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.

4. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other

things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables.

5. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?

6. He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

7. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

7. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups; and many other such like things ye do.

9. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

10. For Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death:

11. But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free.

12. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;

13. Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which he have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

14. And when he had called all the people unto him he said unto them, Hearken unto me, every one of you, and understand:

15. There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.

16. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

17. And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.

18. And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive that whatsoever thing cometh from without entereth not into the man, it cannot defile him;

19. Because it entereth not into the heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?

20. And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

21. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

22. Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

23. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."—Mark 7:7.

TOPIC.—Formalism. **CONFESSION OF FAITH.**—2. THE HONORING OF TRADITION. 3. THE NEGLECT OF THE HEART.

Time.—Summer, A.D. 29. Place.—Capernaum.

HELPS TO STUDY.

INTRODUCTORY.—After our Lord's return to Capernaum, many of those who were present among the five thousand came to him. In answer to the question how he came over the sea, he spoke to them upon the bread of life. John 6:22-65. During this sojourn at Capernaum he spoke the words of to-day's lesson. Parallel passages, Matt. 15:1-20.

I. THE WASHING OF HANDS.—(1-5.) V. 1. PHARISEES—scribes—they were probably sent from Jerusalem by the Sanhedrim to enquire into the character and mission of Christ, as messengers were also sent to John. (See John 1:19.) V. 2. FOUND FAULT—it was not for cleanliness, but as a religious ceremony, that they thus washed.

II. THE HONORING OF TRADITION.—(6-13.) V. 6. HONORETH ME WITH THEIR LIPS—their religion was a religion of forms and of hypocrites. God requires pure hearts as well as clean hands—inward holiness as well as outward observances. They, LAYING ASIDE (treating with neglect) the commandment of God, HELD TO (strictly observed) the tradition of men. V. 9. FULL WELL—their guilt and folly are exposed by a sarcastic commendation. They set aside the commandment of God to observe human tradition. God's command was, "Honor thy father"; but their gloss was, "Instead of supporting father and mother a man may simply give the sum intended for their support to the temple treasury and say, IT IS CORBAN—a gift consecrated to God." Then he is free from any further burden in their support. **MANY SUCH LIKE THINGS**—this was only one specimen.

III. THE NEGLECT OF THE HEART.—(14-23.) V. 17. THE PARABLE—this refers to the words in v. 15. V. 18. CANNOT DEFILE HIM—cannot pollute his soul; cannot make him a sinner. V. 19. ENTERETH NOT INTO HIS HEART—does not reach or affect the mind, the soul, and therefore cannot pollute it. V. 20. THAT WHICH COMETH OUT OF THE MAN—his words; the utterance of his feelings; his conduct as the expression of inward malice, anger, etc. V. 23. DEFILE THE MAN—make the soul corrupt and unclean in God's sight. (See Matt. 15:20.)

TEACHINGS:

1. Outward forms will not save us without inward purity.
2. Men may be very particular as to forms, and yet be without true religion.
3. God looks within, and nothing will please him but heart-service.
4. As the heart is the source of all evil, we should carefully watch it.
5. We should value forms as we do the cover of a book—only for what is within.

REMEMBER that your heart must be pure if you would have your words and actions right. Do not trust in any outward forms for salvation. Pray God to give you a clean heart.

ALL AT FULL LENGTH.

In books and newspapers, when we come to a stroke like this —, or perhaps to one letter with such a stroke after it, it general-

lv means an oath, or some other bad word, which the author would not put down full because it was so bad.

But there is a book where there are no strokes, but all the bad words which people say are put down at full length. It is a book which no man has ever read. But everything that is in it will come out one day.

It is the book of God's remembrance; the book, or books, of which it is said, "And the books were opened: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books."

Everything in those books is set down at full length: all the sins, all the oaths, all the bad words, all the wicked thoughts.

Are there any bad words written there against your name? Any oaths, such as would be put down in a common book, or newspaper, with a —? Ask God to forgive you for them. Pray that the blood of Jesus may blot them out. They must be blotted out before the books be opened, or you are lost! And nothing can do it but that precious blood. Oh, seek it, and then go and sin no more.

WOODCOCK TELEGRAPHY.

On a number of occasions, writes Maurice Thompson to the *Chicago Tribune*, I have closely observed the woodcock's system of telegraphy. The bird's mandibles are furnished with extremely sensitive nerves, so arranged that when the point of the bill rests upon the ground, the slightest sounds are conveyed to its brain. Standing upon the water-saturated earth of a spouty bog, our bird utters a faint, keen cry, scarcely audible at two rods' distance, then immediately lets fall his head till the tip of his bill touches the ground, and listens attentively. If his mate hears him she replies, puts her bill on the ground and listens in turn. So the love messages go back and forth as long as the birds have anything to say. This sort of thing usually happens in the soft twilights from May to the middle of August, though occasionally I have seen and heard it in the broad light of a summer day. In the listening attitude. Shall try to get further studies."

Five years later I succeeded in getting three more sketches and last year (1880) I got four more. Many of these and kindred sketches have been obtained at the end of indescribable care and labor. The woodcock is so shy, so attentive, so sensitive, that the least sound will cause it to skulk and hide—a thing it does with even greater cunning and success than the quail. The only way in which I have ever been able to get near enough to the bird to sketch its natural attitudes has been to crawl on the wet ground through tangled weeds and shrubs, until I reached a hiding place on the border of its feeding range, and there patiently and silently watch for its coming. This I have done over and over again for days together without getting a single sight of the bird.

SUNDAY LABOR AND INSANITY.

While visiting a friend a short time ago, I was shown an album. One portrait in it was that of a fine, handsome man in the full vigor of life. "You might have taken a lease of his life," remarked his sister. "But now there is no hope of his recovery," observed his brother. "His sorrowing wife is more lonely than a widow, and two dear little children are worse off than orphans." "Why?" "Because the husband and father has lost his reason. That heaviest of all human calamities has overtaken him." "And what has caused him thus to lose his reason?" "Overwork and anxiety," was the reply. "He held a good position, with a fair income; but he lost his position, lost his income, and lost his reason for the want of rest. Ceaseless toil produced softening of the brain. He had no time to go to the house of God on Sundays. He was too busy; he had writing to do." Poor fellow! how little did he think that soon all his time would be spent in the dreary society of those afflicted like himself! If he had taken his Sundays for rest and worship, if that busy brain had thrown away the books one day in seven, he might now have been happy in the bosom of his family.

Take another case—that of a man in more humble circumstances. For seven years he filled the position of a ticket-taker at a London pier, from eight o'clock in the morning till dusk, day after day, and week after

week. In seven years he had only two days' rest. At last his reason tottered, and he was carried away, a victim of Sunday pleasure-seekers—a victim of those who carry out the principles of the Sunday League.

Other cases might be given, showing how the minds of great men have given way under the strain of ceaseless toil; but these two instances have come under the writer's own notice. If the circumstances of the many thousands of insane who fill our asylums were investigated, it would doubtless be found that many a promising youth, many a strong man, has been bereft of his reason for want of rest, for want of one calm, holy Sabbath day in seven, when the mind could turn from things earthly to things heavenly; when the soul could commune with its Creator, and obtain strength from on high to bear the trials and the difficulties of the week.—*From Pearl of Days.*

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