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THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Lesson in the International Series for December 23, 1900—Parable of the Pounds.

[Prepared by H. C. Lenington.] THE LESSON TEXT. (Luke 19:11-27.)

11. And as they heard these things, He added and spake a parable, because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

12. He said therefore: A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

13. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them: Occupy till I come.

14. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying: We will not have this man to reign over us.

15. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

16. The first came, saying: Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

17. And he said unto him: Well, thou good servant, because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

18. And the second came, saying: Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

19. And he said likewise to him: Be thou also over five cities.

20. And another came, saying: Lord, behold, here I stand, and I have kept thy pound hid up in a napkin.

21. For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man; thou takest up that thou layest not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

22. And he said unto him: Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow?

23. Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

24. And he said unto them that stood by: Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.

25. (And they said unto him: Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

26. For I say unto you: That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

27. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.—Rom. 14:12.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

This lesson in circumstance and surroundings as well as in our Gospel record immediately follows the last. Jesus was speaking to the same people as at the house of Zaccheus murmured that He had gone to be a guest with a sinner, but He was also speaking to a great multitude who had accepted Him as the Messiah and were expecting "that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." He was traveling toward Jerusalem, was only 15 or 20 miles from that city, and the multitude expected Jesus was there, and there to establish His earthly reign. The parable, indeed, but, also like the nobleman, He would have to go away to receive it; that is, He was to die. The nobleman, we are to understand, was not to receive some distant kingdom, but was to go to some distant place where the chief authority resided in order to be made king over his home province, where he would reign. The object of the parable was to show those who expected Jesus to immediately found an earthly kingdom how to wait in faithful, patient service for the coming of the kingdom.

LESSON ANALYSIS

The Nobleman and His Kingdom... Vs. 11-12
The Ten Pounds..... Vs. 13
The Accounting..... Vs. 15-23
The Rebellious Citizens..... Vs. 14-27

The Nobleman and His Kingdom.—As explained in the introductory paragraph, the nobleman was to be king not over a distant kingdom, but over the province which he was leaving for a time. The length of his absence was for an indefinite period.

The Ten Pounds.—Certain of his cares had to be shouldered by others during this absence. Like a wise man, he did not entrust the whole to any one servant, but divided the work share and share alike among ten servants. There is one interesting point about this parable that is not brought out in the similar parable where one servant was given five pounds, another two, and a third only one pound. Here every man had only one pound. Different men of different abilities used this pound. No complaint was made that the pound was not enough for the abilities of the servant, but the greater ability was so used to make more of the pound which was entrusted to his care.

One man did not put his pound to any use at all. He kept it and returned it. As far as mere honesty was concerned, no fault could be found. But he had not done that which he had been left to do. The nobleman had said: "Occupy till I come." He meant that it should be used and invested. The nobleman had not said anything about how much should be returned. He was merely to make the best possible use of it. Had he lost it in a legitimate way no fault could have been found, but he had not obeyed his master. He had made no use whatever of his talent.

The Rebellious Citizen.—The reference to the citizens who did not want the nobleman to be king and who had protested against his authority was meant as a warning to the enemies of the kingdom Jesus came to establish. Jesus' kingdom was surely to come on earth. Some time right will ultimately triumph. The entire destruction of the forces of evil is the only logical outcome.

Wheat and Chaff.

The grasping hand cannot grasp God's hand.
Salt in the sermon may smart, but it will heal.
It is easier far to sow sin seeds than to uproot them.
Success is not in what you have, but in what you are.
A Bible is of little value till it is the worse for wear.
People who clear away new paths will be bruised by the thorns.
The perpetual protest of Christianity is the only thing that saves this world from ruin.—Ram's Horn.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Lesson in the International Series for December 30, 1900—Review.

[Prepared by H. C. Lenington.] THE LESSON TEXT. (Matthew 23:23-33.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—Then crowned the year with thy goodness.—Psa. 65:11.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

In the first place we are to recall that Jesus was the Son of God. This gives authority to His teachings. His coming was heralded by the angels, His star was seen by the wise men of the east, and other signs showed that He was no ordinary man, but the promised Messiah sent to redeem His people, and having in Himself the essence of the Divine nature.

He was the Son of Man, being a lineal descendant of David, king of Israel, and having for His mother the Virgin Mary. Being the Son of Man, "He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." This gives us affinity with Jesus Christ and furnishes the promise that through Him, the God-Man, we may rise above our lower and meaner selves and come into fellowship with all that is divine.

Recall the opportunities of the time of Jesus' coming. This was no accident, but a part of the divine plan. There has been no other period in all history when all the nations of the known civilized world were included in one great empire, and this under Roman rule. This meant universal peace, that there was one language that could be generally understood, and easy access to all parts. The Jews had gone into every land, and being an essentially religious people, carried with them the Old Testament writings as we know them.

Recall the childhood and youth of Jesus and His probable surroundings, advantageous and otherwise. Remember that all Jewish children had abundant opportunity to become familiar with the Scriptures, and that at Nazareth, His childhood home and a sort of international crossroads, He would come into contact with all types of people. Into the midst of all this place the picture of the boy Jesus at the age of 12, seeking to learn of the Jewish rabbis, and the purpose of His life which was thus early brought out by the question: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

Then comes the introduction to His public ministry. The first event was the preaching of John the Baptist, then the baptism of Jesus; thirdly, the descent of the Holy Spirit, and last, His temptation in the wilderness. For 40 days He thought and prayed and fasted. Here with His life before Him He was met by the three greatest temptations that could come to a man of His human temperament and capacities. The first was the temptation to command the stones to become bread. This may be interpreted as the temptation to put physical and material things above that which is spiritual. The second was to cast Himself from a pinnacle into the crowded court of the temple. This would have gained him immediate recognition, but not so could He become the redeemer of the world. The last temptation was to become the recognized ruler of all the kingdoms of the earth. This was a subtle temptation, for He had come to establish His kingdom on earth. It was the temptation of power and involved the putting of Satan in the place of God. We are not to suppose that the temptations of Jesus were not genuine. He was human as well as divine, and these temptations were the battles between the two natures for supremacy, and the divine triumphed.

Jesus' ministry extended over parts of at least three years. The first year was the year of beginnings. At Cana of Galilee He performed His first miracle. At Jerusalem He accomplished His first reform by driving out of the temple the money changers. His first recorded discourse was contained in the conversation with Nicodemus. His first great ministry was in Judea. It was during this year that He began gathering about Him a body of disciples. It was from among these disciples that He afterwards chose 12 to be apostles.

The second year was the year in which He laid down the great fundamental principles of the kingdom of Heaven. These are contained mainly in the Sermon on the Mount. Very briefly in the Beatitudes Jesus points out those who will come into the kingdom.

The third year was one of many notable events, and early in it there began to show signs of gathering opposition. It was during this year that John the Baptist was beheaded. Then we have the rejection of Jesus at Nazareth, the sending forth of the Twelve and the feeding of the five thousand. The main discourses of this year were: On the Sabbath, on humility, on welcoming sinners, to the rich young ruler and the talk at the home of Zaccheus. The notable parables uttered included that of the great supper, the lost sheep, the lost coin, the prodigal son, the unjust steward, the rich man and Lazarus, and the pounds. It was in this year that His transfiguration occurred.

Bits of Truth.

When you open your heart to just love will leave your life.
Fidelity to old truths demands hospitality to new ones.
It takes more than a high price to make a thing highly precious.
A man's wealth may be measured by his capacities, not by his coin.
There is only one single step from the level rock over the precipice of ruin.
If men put more sense into their sacred service the world would put more faith in their sanctity.—Ram's Horn.

POOR PLACE FOR ICEMEN.

People in the Tropics Don't Indulge Much in Frozen Water—Not Essential to Comfort.

According to the consular reports more ice is consumed in Chicago during 24 hours of hot weather than is consumed by all the Latin American states except Mexico in 12 months. In Chicago ice is considered a necessity all the year round, and in the Latin states it is considered in some places a luxury. In very hot weather, but not an over-desirable luxury. There are medical men, says the Chicago Chronicle, who attribute the longevity of life in the tropics to the absence of ice-cold water and beverages, which force an unnatural and hurtful temperature of the stomach and open the system to disease attacks with little or no power of resistance. This is especially true, they say, of those who are subjected to much physical exercise, for cold drinks greatly shock the system without materially quenching thirst.

The nights in the tropics are nearly always cool, which enables butchers to prepare meat in the evening for the next day's consumption without fear of it spoiling meanwhile. As for fruits and vegetables, they are so plentiful all the year round, so cheap that it does not pay to go to the expense of erecting cold storage houses or keeping refrigerators to preserve them. So while nature has not provided the Latin American states with ice-making weather, it has provided them with a climate and ground productions which make ice not an absolute necessity. The laws of nature always conserve man's best interests.

Most of the principal cities in the Central and South American states have one or more small ice factories, but none of them can find a market for the production. This comes in part from the inability of the people to pay the price, which runs all the way from one cent to eight or more cents a pound, in part from no pressing desire to have ice and in part from a superstition that ice, especially manufactured ice, is not healthy. It may be said that family ice consumption is confined entirely to the wealthy and those in fair circumstances, and they buy it in quantities merely sufficient to serve ice water and cool wines at mealtime. It is believed, however, that if the factories would introduce improved machinery so as to reduce the cost of production and then manufacture the article in large quantities at low prices to consumers the people would in time give them support.

The New Orleans and Galveston ice factories are trying to build up a trade in Central and northern South America, but the waste by melting is so great that there is little if any profit in the business. It is said an American company is talking of constructing a number of floating ice plants, which they propose to move from coast town to coast town as occasion and demand may seem to justify. But it is clearly to be seen by the consular reports that two things will have to be done before the ice trade in the Latin states will amount to much. The cost of ice must be reduced so as to meet the ability of the people to pay and the people must be educated into looking upon it as a necessity rather than an expensive and unimportant luxury.

But American money and enterprise is at work and if possible ice will be made a popular commercial commodity in the tropics.

What It Was.
"What is your age?" asked the lawyer.
"Must I answer that?" Inquired the feminine witness.
"You must," said the judge.
"Truthfully?"
"Yes, truthfully."
"Oh, well, if I must I must," she said, resignedly. "My age is—a secret."—Chicago Post.

Where He Sold Them.
Mr. Ralsem—Yes, we get good prices for our cabbages, but we have to haul them so far there is no money in it.
Mr. Quizit—But I thought you were within a square of the market.
Mr. Ralsem—The market? Oh, yes. But the tobacco factory is two miles away.—Baltimore American.

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All Over.
Their moment of parting was now close at hand. They had loved each other with all the fervor of two weeks at the Virginia Hot Springs, and now, as they stood at the station platform, he with his dress-suit case at his side and she with a tear in her eye, it seemed almost more than she could bear.

"Never mind, dear!" he said, after a short pause. "The time will soon pass and I shall no doubt see you in town."

"But you mustn't!" she exclaimed, impulsively. "If we should happen to meet by chance you mustn't notice me, you know."

He looked at her dumfounded. "Why not?" he asked.

"Because it would never do," she replied, earnestly. "Why, you have no idea how particular papa and mamma are about the people with whom I associate."—Town Topics.

The Good Time in the Morning.
No use weepin' w'en de sun don't shine;
Keep all de mo'ners in de hopeful line;
Good time comin' on de road we gwine,
Good time comin' in de mawnin'.

No use in weepin' on de rocky way;
Black sky showin' er de rainbow ray,
Light is a-breakin'; hit'll soon be day—
Good time comin' in de mawnin'.

—Atlanta Constitution.

FEMINE LOGIC.



His Opinion.
"Do you think that it is a man's duty to acknowledge always he is in the wrong when he has a difference of opinion with his wife?"

"Well," answered Mr. Meekton, reflectively, "better late than never. But it really seems to me he ought to have had sufficient perception to know that he was in the wrong before there was any discussion of the matter whatever."—Washington Star.

Reformed.
"I love you almost better than I do my life!" he declared.

"That," she replied, "isn't saying much, considering the way you've been wasting it."

Then he threw his golf sticks away and told his papa he was ready to go to work in almost any capacity.—Chicago Times-Herald.

The Sting of Love.
He stood where the maid had stood—beside the beautiful, blushing rose—
And he lovingly bent his head and sighed,
And he buried his mouth and nose
Among the petals so sweet and rare
That the fair maid's lips had pressed—
And a bumble bee that was resting there
Preceded to do the rest.

—Town Topics.

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