

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Acting Director of Sunday School Course.)

LESSON FOR DECEMBER 13

THE GREAT COMMISSION.

LESSON TEXT—Matt. 23:14-20; Luke 24:36-49.
GOLDEN TEXT—Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.—Matt. 28:20.

This lesson consists of two paragraphs which constitute what might be termed two commissions or two parts of the Great Commission. There are four distinct accounts of the final commands of our Lord to his disciples, each presenting a different phase of the work he committed to his followers. In this lesson we have for our consideration two of these aspects which ought not to be confused.

1. The Appearance in Jerusalem, Thomas Being Absent. Luke 24:36-49.

(1) The Resurrected Lord, vv. 36-43.

The Emmaus disciples reported to the disciples, and those gathered with them in Jerusalem, the things they had experienced, especially in the breaking of bread. This occurred late in the evening (see Luke 24:39, 43). While they, and the others, were rehearsing the many things that had taken place on that first eventful day, Jesus himself suddenly appears in their midst without the opening of a door and asks them of their thoughts. Once before he had thus searched them (Luke 9:46, 47), but now the occasion is quite different. Fear of the Jews had crowded them into this room but no closed door except that of the human heart can keep out the risen Lord. Simon's report (ch. 24:34) and that of the Emmaus disciples were not sufficient to allay their fear. Fear at this visible evidence of the supernatural is true of us all, but when Jesus truly is present there is peace no matter what may be the turmoil without, or the fear within.

Man of Flesh and Bone.

This appearance was a demonstration that it was he himself, and to add proof upon proof he first showed them his pierced hands and feet, and then called for fish and ate it before, and doubtless with, them. Jesus is today a man of flesh and bone as much as when he walked Galilee's hills. His blood he poured out upon Calvary. The evidence of the literal, physical resurrection of Christ is so overwhelming that the unbeliever does violence to his reason not to accept it.

(2) The Ascended Lord, vv. 44-49.

This coming of Jesus and his message of peace and assurance brought also a commission that this great fact be told to others. The event recorded in these verses did not occur in Jerusalem but upon Mount Olivet and constitutes the final appearance of Jesus. As he had done often before, so now he sets his seal upon the Old Testament, expressly speaking of its books under their accepted three-fold division (v. 44). In these there are between three and four hundred direct, not to speak of the indirect, prophecies concerning him. What we need is to have the Holy Spirit that we may "understand" (v. 45), the purpose of his life and death. Jesus taught his disciples what that purpose is (v. 47), viz., the "remission of sins," based on the sure ground of his finished work. This, and this alone, is the gospel and it is to be preached in his name unto all nations—a missionary suggestion—but beginning at home, in Jerusalem. Verse 48 tells us of that other needed preparation to make us effective witnesses, the endowment of the Holy Spirit.

Some Disciples Doubted.

II. The Appearance to the Eleven in Galilee, Matt. 28:16-20. This event took place much later than that mentioned in the first part of the previous section. As we carefully read this section it suggests that Jesus was somewhat removed from the disciples, yet their vision was so clear that they worshiped him, though some doubted. Drawing near to the disciples he first of all emphasizes his supreme authority, "all power is given unto me," and on that authority he commissioned them to their work of discipling "all nations." Mark's rendering of this commission (16:15, 16) is more inclusive, "to the whole creation," including all of man's welfare, social as well as spiritual. For Jesus thus to claim authority and to send forth his ambassadors and still not be "the very God of the very God" is to stamp him either as an impostor or a lunatic. Because all power is his, therefore the obligation and the accompanying Holy Spirit who will enable us to teach the things he has commanded. There is back of the commission "all power" and accompanying it a blessed fellowship, "Lo, I am with you all the days."

The sad thing is that after nearly two thousand years we have carried out so poorly the great commission.

And lastly the disciple is not to go in his own strength or wisdom. His parables describe fully the age upon which the disciples were entering. As they went forward and as we "follow in their train," to devote ourselves to the enterprises of his kingdom, he declared that he would be with them and with us until the time of the consummation of the age.

"When we go his way, he goes our way; but if we go our own way we go it alone."

THE WAR OF ROSES

By CATHERINE M. PATTERSON.

Theodora stood idly in front of the open window of her room at the inn. She looked directly at the mountains that loomed up in the light of a splendid moon that would be at its height about 11 o'clock. Just the right time, she thought. The right time, for what? For whom? The double thought brought an impatient toss of the head.



"I do wish I had common sense," muttered Theodora. "Just the smallest atom of it, at least enough to get me through tonight. Here I am, a grown woman with a brand new A. B. dangling at my scalp belt and to save my soul I don't know whether I care more for Jimmy Welting or Don Cunningham. They have both proposed, and auntie knows it, moreover, she says it is perfectly disgraceful the way I've kept both those 'adorable boys,' auntie's own words, mind you." Theodora was addressing herself to the mountains.

"I know Jimmy sent these red roses; they make me think of him. But at the same time, these Killarneys are beauties, too, and I do love pink roses." Into the center of the exquisite flowers went Theodora's face.

"Botheration," she exclaimed angrily, "why must my night be pestered with these two who have been with me the whole blessed day? Now, I have their pesky flowers to choose between." No cards had come with the two corsages, but intuitively Theodora had attributed each to the proper sender.

"If I wear the red roses Jimmy will be camping on my trail the entire blessed evening, and if I wear the Killarneys Don will come to me the very first thing with that almost pensive smile he wears when I've been unusually nice to him before Jimmy's very eyes. I know what I'll do. I'll wear part of each corsage. That will keep the boys guessing."

She pinned the roses to her girdle. "Mercy!" she exclaimed, "what a combination! But I'll wear it any way. I do hope auntie and the rest of the chaperon brigade won't think I'm quite out of my mind."

And catching up a bespangled scarf that Jimmy had once compared to a diamond-studded cloud, Theodora, to use her own expression, collected auntie, and the two made their way to the veranda outside the large living room, where the orchestra was playing the first waltz. A masculine form, evidently on the lookout, approached at once.

"May I have the first dance, Teddy?" asked Donald Cunningham.

"Surely," said Teddy, looking up at him with her sweetest smile. "Why not?" she asked herself. "I'm wearing his roses as well as Jim's."

"I do hope it will be Donald Cunningham. His mother was a Van Courtney," auntie said to herself as she watched her niece. Of medium height, slender and the possessor of heavy black hair above gray eyes veiled with long black lashes, and a complexion that was the despair of the girls her own age and the envy of those who had passed farther on life's pathway, Theodora was worthy of any one's attention. Suddenly auntie spied Teddy's corsage, in sharp contrast to the white chiffon frock.

"Good gracious," she exclaimed aghast, "what ever possessed the child?" Quite overcome, she sank into the nearest rocking chair.

In the meantime the wearer of the red and pink roses was blissfully unconscious of her relative's consternation. Teddy was having the time of her life—with only one thing to mar the pleasure of being the belle of the hop. Jimmy had taken only one dance to Don's eight. Not that Teddy was lacking in partners, but she wondered not a little at the unusualness of it all and down in her heart of hearts were the coals of rebellion.

"Wish I hadn't worn his roses," she was thinking, and at this juncture the ever self-possessed Jimmy put in an appearance.

"My dance, I think, Teddy. But suppose we sit or rather walk it out. The stars are glorious. So is the moon."

Out under that same moon, down a path that was sufficiently outlined with trees to afford some privacy, a man took a girl's hand between his own, and in a voice that trembled just a little, said:

"Teddy, dear, you are wearing my flowers tonight, and doesn't that mean that you care a little and that there is some hope for me?"

Was it the moon? Or was it Jimmy? Teddy's resolve went glimmering and Jim had won.

One night, on their honeymoon Teddy asked, apropos of various things:

"Jimmy, suppose I had worn the pink roses that night?"

"Wouldn't have mattered in the least, dear," replied Jimmy between cigar puffs. "I sent those, too."

Government by Commission.

Government by commission, first carried out in the United States, has been hailed as an almost revolutionary step in the science of city administration, but a step even in advance of this has been conceived by the city of Leeds, England. This city, with a population of 500,000, has a low death rate, clean streets, an excellent street railway system and gas works, the latter two municipally owned. Now the city has delegated its administrative power to an executive committee of seven aldermen, which committee has appointed J. B. Hamilton, former manager of the street railway department, as city manager. To date the change in city management has effected a saving of \$30,000, and "Manager" Hamilton proposes by effecting the same methods that he would in the administration of a large business to make a still further saving.—Milwaukee Civics and Commerce.

Some Long Dramas.

Serial drama has been popular in China for centuries. Their most famous play, "Pi-Pa-Ki—The Story of the Lute," written in the fourteenth century, is divided into twenty-four sections and innumerable acts and scenes, and takes several days to perform. And Chinese plays of forty long acts, lasting a week or two, are quite common in England the longest play ever written, but not performed, was an unnamed drama, in twenty-five acts, by Mad. Nat. Lee.—Argonaut.

The Smuggled Box.

A joker had some fun with the customs officials at New York some years ago. A servant had gone ashore from a German liner with a basket and was about to leave the pier when a passenger whispered to a customs officer that he had better see what the basket contained. Following the tip, the basket bearer was detained, and a wooden box was found among a lot of soiled linen. The box contained another and this still another box, the third securely fastened with screws. When these were removed a card was discovered on which was written in three languages. "This is the 1st of April. Many happy returns of the day."

No Fresh Air For Him.

No doctor would ever have made Lord Brampton—best remembered as Sir Henry Hawkins—subscribe to the new theory that it is beneficial to sit in a draft. "Few people had a greater objection to fresh air than Hawkins," writes J. A. Foote, K. C. "At one time he had a sort of movable sentry box constructed for his use in court in order to prevent any possibility of a draft. He once expressed his preference for suffocation rather than chill on the ground that it was a slower death.—London Standard.

The Adjutant Bird.

It is stated that the adjutant, or marabou, a tall bird of India, of the stork species, will swallow a hare or a cat whole. It stands five feet high, and the expanse of the wings is nearly fifteen feet.

Goethe.

Besides his five or six consummate works, which by universal consent are practically above criticism, it may be said that Goethe's songs are the best in the world. He is the greatest of all literary critics, and in subtle and abundant observation of human life and in the number and value of his wise remarks and pregnant sentences he is one of the greatest writers of all time. Goethe may be classed as one of the "greatest men."—New York American.

The Golfer's Apology.

Your golf enthusiast is a cucumber in some respects. While playing over a corporation course the other evening, says a writer in the Glasgow News, I witnessed an amusing little incident which eloquently illustrates the golfing point of view. A ball driven from the tee sailed gracefully in the direction of the green and administered a hard knock on the unoffending cranium of a player who was striding his masher shot a few yards from the green. "I'm very sorry my ball hit you," said the driver when he reached the offended one. Then, as he caught sight of his ball lying close to the hole, he ejaculated in a cheerier voice. "Oh, it isn't so bad; I'm well up to the pin!"

Bolivian Indians.

Bolivian Indians are sociable creatures. Their houses are always in groups, and a community of them, though numbering not more than half a dozen, is called an estancia. In the interior, if an Indian desires to change his place of residence, he is not allowed to settle in another village until the authorities thereof have looked into his private history, when, if the record is not satisfactory, he is ordered to move on. But that rarely happens, for they are like cats in their attachment to familiar places.

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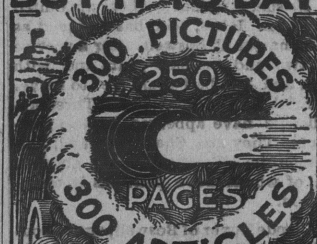
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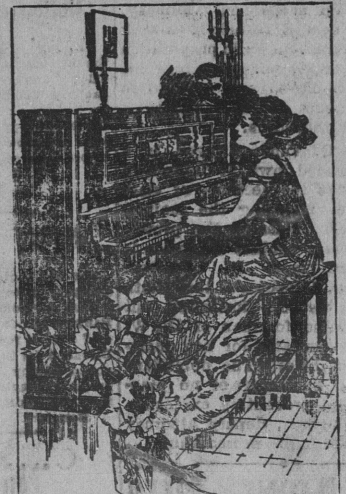
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