

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

THIRD QUARTER: STUDIES IN LUKE'S GOSPEL.

A. D. 29. LESSON XII. WARNING AGAINST COVETOUSNESS; or, The Misuse of Riches. Luke 12, 13-23. Sept. 22.

EXPLANATORY.

VERSE 13. ONE OF THE COMPANY. A man preoccupied with his own interests that he can give no attention to the Saviour's discourse; so selfish as to demand him to stop his ministry to the souls, and right his particular wrongs. 1. "Even the preaching of the Son of God cannot arouse all men's hearts from temporal to spiritual concerns. 2. "How often people make the church and the Gospel the instrument of accomplishing their own worldly aims. 3. "While the Gospel sounds in men's ears their hearts are often employed about their own gains. Speak to my brother. It is probable that his wrong was real and his complaint just. 4. "But a righteous cause does not justify an unseemly action." 5. "How many of the quarrels and disputes of men are connected with money!" Brother disputes with brother, and families are separated over the division of an estate. Divide the inheritance. Among the Jews the usage was for the eldest brother to have a "double portion," and the others an equal share of a father's property.

14. MAN. The word conveys a gentle rebuke for the untimely demand. A judge or a divider. One word refers to a magistrate having official authority, the other to an arbitrator who decides a dispute voluntarily submitted to him by the opposing parties. Christ, though King of kings never assumed the functions of a civil magistrate. 6. "He who comes to save a world must not be encumbered by secular affairs." His kingdom is spiritual, not temporal; his Gospel is to establish everlasting principles, not to enact special laws.

15. UNTO THEM. Not utterly to the interrupting hearer, but to all the multitude. Covetousness. That is, not a prudent forecast of future needs and a provision against them; but an eager, inordinate desire to accumulate property. Whoever holds as his chief aim in life "to get rich," is covetous, whether his methods be honest or fraudulent. A man's life. The real life of a man does not consist in a bodily existence by eating and drinking, but in the spiritual nature. "Not what he has, but what he is, through time and through eternity, is his proper life."—F. W. Robertson. Abundance. 7. "Riches will not impart happiness, nor is a life without them always miserable." What we have within us is of more consequence than what we have around us.

16, 17. THE GROUND. It was not by robbing private citizens nor plundering the public treasury that this man obtained his wealth. He became rich by that most honorable avocation, tilling the soil. The Saviour gives him no rebuke for possessing his riches, nor for increasing them, but solely for setting his heart upon them. There is an old legend of a man whose heart, after death, was found wanting from his body, but discovered hidden in one of his treasure-chests; so are many in the world at the present time. Brought forth plentifully. The bursting barns and the waving harvests were the gift of God through the bountiful hand of Nature. 8. "How many receive his blessings, forgetting who bestows them!" Thought. Literally, "dialogued with himself." What shall I do? "Other men are perplexed to get wealth; this man is perplexed how to dispose of it."—Whedon. 9. "Increase of riches is only increase of cares." No room. "Thou hast barns—the bosoms of the needy, the homes of widows, and the mouths of orphans."—St. Ambrose.

18, 19. MY BARN. In Oriental countries harvests are often stored in caves, or among rocks; but this rich farmer was one of the few who possessed buildings erected for the purpose. Some expositors, however, think that the "barns" were only pits, like coal-vaults, which he proposed to enlarge. Build greater. "Rather raise thy treasure to a higher and safer floor, from earth to heaven."—St. Augustine. Soul, thou hast much goods. "There is great stupidity to lay up in a barn the portion of a soul. The soul, when it is hungry, cannot feed upon musty grain."—Anot. For many years. 10. "How hard to realize that we are not to live forever, that we may die at any moment!" Take thine ease. As yet uneasy, he hopes to find rest when his repairs shall be completed, and his new barns filled. 11. "The pleasure of the worldling is always in the future, never in the present." Eat, drink, and be merry. This is not a wicked, but simply a world-

ly, ignorant sensual conception of life. His aspirations rise no higher than the level of the physical.

20. BUT GOD SAID. Another speaker, though unheard by men, interrupts the complacent words of the rich man to his soul. 12. "Whether men will or not God will have somewhat to say concerning man's life and destiny." Unto him. God spoke to him as he speaks to all, by the inner voice of conscience. 13. "Men often do not hear, and oftener do not heed, when God speaks to them." Thou fool. For the elements of his folly, see Analytical and Biblical outline. This night. Men sometimes borrow money "on call," to be paid on the instant of demand; so every man holds his soul, liable to summons at any day. 14. "How important to be always ready for the call of death!" Required of thee. "Of the righteous, his soul is not required, but he commits it to God, for his body lies upon it as a light burden; but of the sinner, who has enfeebled his soul, it is required."—Theophylact. Then whose shall those things be? And if these are his all and his only, what then shall be his portion?

21, 22, 23. TREASURE FOR HIMSELF. The sin is not in laying up treasure, but in laying it up for self. Rich toward God. A man is rich toward God to the degree in which he employs his treasures in doing good. "God's rich man, and man's rich man may be paupers to each other."—Whedon. Unto his disciples. He delivers the parable to the multitude and its explanation to the disciples. Take no thought. That is, no solicitude or over-anxiety. We should consider the body and care for its needs, but not account it of more importance than the soul. The life is more than meat. Food and clothing are not the only requisite for life, but these are all the worldling considers in his estimate. Said a millionaire, "All I get for taking care of my property is my board and clothes." There are interests of the soul which are vast as eternity, while those of the body are but for time.

GOLDEN TEXT: Take heed, and beware of covetousness. Luke 12, 15.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION: Personal accountability.

The next lesson is Third Quarterly Review.

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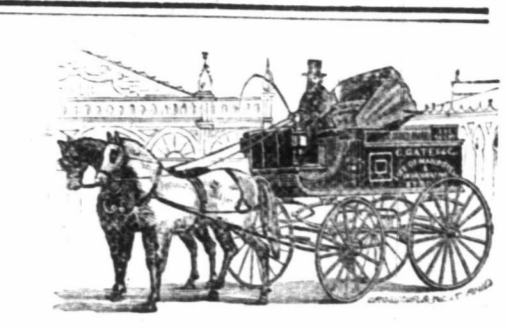
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