

The rabbis have a story to the effect that there were once two brothers who tilled the same farm. After harvest one of them said to his wife: "My brother is a lonely man without wife and children; I will go and carry some of my sheaves into his field." That same night his brother said: "My brother has wife and children, and needs the harvest more than I do; I will carry some of my sheaves into his field." The next morning their respective heaps were unchanged, and so it happened night after night, until one moonlit night the two brothers met. On that spot the temple was built, according to the story. And what more fitting spot for a place of worship than one which saw, according to the legend, such a display of brotherly love?

4. It is one thing to be not far from the kingdom; it is another thing to be actually within it. A newspaper writer tells of the mate of a ship which often sailed to Venice, but the mate had never gone ashore there in spite of the fact that he had had so many opportunities to do so. He had been told that he ought to. He had seen pictures of the great square at St. Mark's, and knew it

was worth visiting. But he always told himself that he would go ashore next time. He had sometimes been in port there for three weeks, and yet had never set foot on the enchanted ground. There are not a few people like that ship's mate. They almost enter the kingdom, but always hesitate about the final step which would commit them to it.

5. Our liberality is one test of our religion, especially if it is liberality like that of the poor widow in our lesson. One day a missionary sermon was preached in the town of L'Orignal in Quebec. An old Roman Catholic lady was present. At the close of the sermon she left the church, and the preacher thought she had been offended by something in the sermon. But she came back with a contribution of twenty-five cents, and this is what she said: "Take that and use it for the heathen in China. I have only thirty cent. I had brought five for collection. But after what I have heard I decided that I would keep the five cents for myself and give the rest for missions." And the preacher could not but think of the poor widow who won the commendation of Jesus.

FOR TEACHERS IN THE SENIOR AND ADULT DEPARTMENTS

In introducing the lesson to-day, call attention to the parable at the beginning of chapter 12, a parable which, in Matthew, is linked to two other parables of warning. The effect of this teaching of Jesus is brought out in Mark 12:12 and in Luke 20:19. This helps to account for the attempts recorded in Mark 12:13-27 to induce Jesus to make such statements as will bring him into disrepute, and thus make it easier for the rulers to carry out their designs upon him. Let the discussion centre about the application of religion in three different directions:

1. *Religion and citizenship*, vs. 13-17. Although this paragraph is not included in the passage printed as our lesson, it is sufficiently important to merit some consideration. Draw attention to the unusual cooperation of Pharisees and Herodians as a result of common opposition to Jesus, and to the attempts at flattery in order to disarm Jesus. Make clear the dilemma in which they hoped to place Jesus,—he was to be made appear either as a disloyal Jew or as a rebel against Rome.

Point out the skill with which Jesus gets at the heart of the situation. The Pharisees are willing to make use of the Roman coinage, and, by implication, of the other advantages of the Roman rule. Well, they should be willing to pay for what they get. Ask the class whether it is fair to accept the privileges of citizenship and then reject its responsibilities. Then point out how Jesus goes on to show that there are obligations which they specially owe to God.

2. *Religion and love*, vs. 28-34. Was this scribe in league with the others who were trying to catch Jesus in his talk? What would lead us to believe that he was not? Call attention to the comprehensive nature of Jesus' reply. Show how the two commands are not to be considered as simply standing at the head of a lot of others, but as summing up in themselves the whole law of righteousness. What did Jesus mean by his comment in v. 34? "To be friendly to the ideas of the kingdom and sympathetic with its spirit, was the next thing to actual submission to it."