

SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for
TEACHERS
AND
YOUNG PEOPLE.

Vol. 22.]

APRIL, 1888.

[No. 4

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The Sunday-School Banner

IS designed to afford aid to Sunday-School Teachers and Heads of Families in the Religious Training of the Young, and to excite throughout the country a deeper interest in Sunday-School Work.

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OPENING AND CLOSING SERVICE FOR SECOND QUARTER.

I. Silence.

II. Responsive Sentences.

Supt. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

School. The same was in the beginning with God.

Supt. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

School. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

Supt. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

School. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

Supt. As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.

School. The law was given to Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

III. Singing.

IV. Prayer.

V. Scripture Lesson.

LESSON SERVICE.

I. Class Study of the Lesson.

II. Singing Lesson Hymn.

III. Recitation of Title, Golden Text, Outline, and Doctrinal Suggestion, by the school in concert.

IV. Review and Application of the Lesson, by Pastor or Superintendent.

V. The Supplemental Lesson.

VI. Announcements (especially of the Church service, and week-evening prayer-meeting).

CLOSING SERVICE.

I. Singing.

II. Responsive Sentences.

Supt. If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and

the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

School. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.

III. Dismissal.

THE APOSTLES' CREED.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the

right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to Judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. *Amen.*

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

I.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

II.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

III.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

IV.

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy

stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

V.

Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

VI.

Thou shalt not kill.

VII.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

VIII.

'Thou shalt not steal.

IX.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

X.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.



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SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

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VOL. XXII.]

APRIL, 1888.

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The Easter Voice.

THE Grave was voiceless once!
A black, insatiate depth, unlit by sun,
Into which fell and vanished, soon or late,
The brave, the wise, the lovely, one by one
Caught in the grasp of a resistless fate;
Borne where reply, return and hope were none.

The Grave was voiceless once!
Strong men stood helpless, saw their loved
ones go,
And rent the air with wild and fruitless
cries:
Only the echoes answered to their woe.
Iron seemed the earth, and brass the shining
skies,
Deaf to their struggles and their agonies.

The Grave was voiceless once!
But since the Lord arose from deathly strife,
And conquered Death, it speaks and sweetly
sings:
"I am the Resurrection, and I the Life.
Dust unto dust; but dust with hope is rife.
There is a second birth for buried things."

The Grave was voiceless once!
O Christ! who, after three days spurned the
grave,
Who art the very Life of Life, indeed:
We stay us on Thy promise, and are brave,
Although our hearts are dumb with pain and
bleed,
We know that Thou art true and strong to
save.

The Grave was voiceless once!
But, listening now where frenzied hearts of
yore

Listened, we catch from the dark depth
beneath,
Sweeter than voice of larks which sing and
soar,
"Weep not, beloved, I have vanquished
death,
And those who live in Me shall die no more,
—SUSAN COOLIDGE, in *Independent*.

A Crowded Number.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER was never
during its history so crowded as it is this
month. We are giving more copious and com-
plete Lesson Notes than ever before, and when,
as in April, five Sundays are included in the
month, almost everything but the Lesson Notes
must be crowded out, even the frontispiece
picture, and its place given to those valuable
notes. This loss has its compensations; for we
are sure that our readers desire nothing so
much as the greatest amount of light from all
sources that can be thrown upon a sacred page.

THE oldest Protestant church edifice in
America is described in the February *American
Magazine*, as well as the earliest steam railway.

THE question whether the wheat of Manitoba
can be transported through Hudson's Bay direct
to Liverpool is of serious moment to Canada.
On this subject, in the *American Magazine* for
February, J. Macdonald Oxley throws what-
ever light recent exploring expeditions can
afford, aided by illustrations and details of
existence in a region where mercury freezes
solid.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

SECOND QUARTER: STUDIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

A. D. 30.]

LESSON I. THE MARRIAGE FEAST.

[April 1.]

Matt. 22. 1-14.

[Commit to memory verses 11-14.]



1 And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said,

2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son.

3 And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.

4 Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fiddings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.

5 But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:

6 And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.

7 But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.

9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

10 So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

A parable somewhat similar to this had been given by Jesus a few months earlier, during his ministry in Perea. It was like this parable in its beginning, but unlike it in its ending, and may be found in Luke 14. 1-24. This was delivered in one of the courts of the temple, on Tuesday in passion week, the last day of the Saviour's public teaching. It was delivered before an audience of scribes and Pharisees who had already decreed his death, and had bargained with the traitor for his betrayal. Yet the Teacher does not hesitate in his utterance nor lower his claim to be revered as the Son of God. He pictures the Jewish people as a com-

11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:

12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how comest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

14 For many are called, but few are chosen.



General Statement.

pany invited by a king to a marriage feast, and scorning the summons. With the tongue of a prophet he proclaims the impending destruction of their city as the result of their rejection of himself and his messengers. And he depicts in no less graphic language the doom of the hypocritical or deluded professor of religion, in the sudden judgment which befel the man who appeared at the wedding feast without wearing the wedding garment. So, alike for neglecters, for opposers, for persecutors, and for pretenders, this last public parable of Christ has a solemn warning.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verses 1, 2. Jesus answered. He answered either the unspoken thoughts of a muttered complaint of his hearers in the temple. By parables. The best definition of the parable is that given by Lyman Abbott. "A fictitious narrative, true to nature, yet unobscure, veiling a spiritual truth under a symbol, for the purpose of conveying it to minds reluctant or indifferent." The kingdom of heaven. God's dealings with men, especially those having reference to redemption. Is like. Notice that the Great Teacher constantly finds parallels to the spiritual world in the natural. A certain king. This king is God himself, the only real monarch of the universe. (1) *God reigns, let the earth rejoice!* Made a marriage. Rev. Ver., "a marriage feast." Representing the tender and close relation which the Son of God holds toward his Church on earth, his glorious Bride, and the joy attending it. (2) *May we belong to that true Church which is the Lamb's wife!* Rev. 21. 9. For his son. Our Saviour, who, as the founder of his Church, calling it into union with himself, is the heavenly Bridegroom.

3. Sent forth his servants. The prophets, the apostles, and all who deliver the message of God to men. To call them. In the East the invitation to a feast is given twice, first to inform the guests, and then to notify them when the entertainment is ready. Them that were bidden. In the interpretation, this represents the Jewish nation, who as God's chosen people received the first call of the Gospel. They would not come. As by their coming they would show loyalty, so by their neglect and rejection they proclaimed themselves traitors to their King. (3) *Every hearer who fails to come is guilty of disloyalty to God.*

4. Sent forth other servants. Perhaps referring to the preachers of the Gospel after the ascension of

Christ, as Peter on the day of Pentecost, Stephen, and others. I have prepared my dinner. Notice that the second call is more direct and urgent than the first. My fiddings are killed. Is there a figurative allusion here to the blood of the cross, since the Gospel feast was not full until Christ's blood was shed? Come unto the marriage. So God calls still through his messengers, inviting men to partake in the joys of the Gospel. (4) *Mark the long-suffering grace of God!*

5. They made light of it. Literally, "they caring not." This verse represents the attitude not only of the mass of the Jews, but, in a larger interpretation, of the mass of the world, to the Gospel call. They do not oppose nor reject, they simply do not care. One to his farm, another to his merchandise. Here are two classes of the careless, unthinking multitude; one enjoying the good things of this life, the other seeking them. (5) *How much men lose who neglect God's call for the enjoyments and aims of the world!*

6. The remnant. Rev. Ver., "the rest." Primarily, the rulers of the Jews, but also the opposers and persecutors of Christ in every age. Took his servants. Rev. Ver., "had hold on his servants, and entreated them shamefully." So argued Stamben, the two Jameses, Paul, and many others of the early workers for Jesus; so, too, have suffered martyrs for the Gospel in many ages. Here the parable looks beyond the time in which Jesus lived.

7. When the king heard thereof. (6) *And what is there in the universe or in the flesh which our King does not he regard?* He was wroth. God is not an impassive Brhuma, a "King Log," without feeling. He is stirred with a righteous indignation against wickedness (which, however, has in it nothing like passion or

malice), more than a wiser man who forty cut-purses people. Jerusalem is terribly desolate, and in plain or in the

8. The Jews preached to receive it, the Jews proclaimed it, the Jews requested, and they who whosoever worthy of it

9. Go ye in Matt. 22 "unto the of the streets people. A tion is to all out from that but they must

10. Gail preaching class. But the Church main unch condition of became good. Furnished: Chrome in a the Lamb.

11. Who king does not assembled, spring bring

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TIME.—70 PLACE.— RULERS.—

see. DOCTRINE

QUESTIONS

1. The Feast

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malice), and nothing excites God's just wrath more than a wrong done to his servants or to his cause. Sent forth his armies. Referring here to the Romans, who forty years afterward were the unconquerable executioners of God's wrath upon Jerusalem and the Jewish people. Burned up their city. In the year 70 A. D. Jerusalem, where this parable was delivered, was utterly destroyed, and more than a million of Jews were slain or sold into slavery.

8. They saith he. Notice that the Gospel was not preached to the Gentiles until the Jews had refused to receive it. We are not, however, to suppose that if the Jews had accepted Christ he would not have been proclaimed as the Saviour of the Gentiles. The wedding is ready. The wedding feast is still ready for guests, until the judgment-day shall end the invitation. They which were bidden were not worthy. For whosoever rejects God's call shows himself to be unworthy of it.

9. Go ye therefore. So Christ said afterward "Go," in Matt. 28. 19. Into the highways. Rev. Ver., "unto the partings of the highways;" "the inter-ctions of the streets, where their voice would reach many people. As many as ye shall find. Now the invitation is to all; none are too poor or too low to be shut out from the feast. Bid. (7) We may bid men to God, but they must bring themselves.

10. Gathered together all. Referring to the preaching of the Gospel to every nation and every class. Both bad and good. Perhaps a reference to the Church on earth, in which are many who still remain unchanged; though it may refer to the original condition of the guests; some were bad originally, but became good when they put on the garment of the feast. Furnished with guests. (8) There are no vacant thrones in heaven, and no empty seats at the banquet of the Lamb.

11. When the king came in. At royal feasts, the king does not make his appearance until the guests are assembled. Here the parable, as says Whiston, "at the spring brings us to the judgment day." To see the

guests. Rev. Ver., "to behold," which is a stronger word, expressing a close inspection. (9) Happy privilege of saints, to meet their King at the heavenly feast! A man which had not on a wedding garment. At original feasts each guest wears a robe or a scarf, which is presented to him as he enters. Not to put it on would be an insult to the host. The wedding garment is the righteousness and holiness which every true believer in Christ obtains, not ours by nature, but bestowed through the grace of God. This man represents, therefore, the one who is in the Church, but not in character a disciple of Jesus. (10) How should we endure the eyes of the King when he stand before him?

12. Friend. Rather, "companion." It is the same word employed by Jesus when addressing Judas at the reason. Matt. 26. 50. How camest thou in hither? Words which imply that the lack of suitable attire; a tither from culpable neglect or from intentional contempt for his king. (11) While we are to come to Christ as we are, we are not to remain as we were. He was speechless. Literally, "he was muzzled, or gagged;" his mouth was stopped; there was nothing to say. (12) Any who talk impiously about God now will be hushed when they see him in judgment.

13. To the servants. The word here is not that will of the ruler. (13) God has men as messengers of mercy, and angels as executioners of wrath. Bind him hand and foot. He who refuses to wear the robe of a Christian shall be compelled to wear the livery of a criminal. Outer darkness. In the parable, outside doors of the palace and in the darkness of the night; interpreted to mean the dismal state of the lost. Weeping and gnashing. We know not what woes are here dimly described, but certainly these words are not without meaning.

14. Many are called. The whole world, Jews first, Gentiles afterward. Few are chosen. A hint that the proportion of the finally saved may not be large. Four classes of people in the parable are lost, one only are saved. (14) May we be in that happy number!

HOME READINGS.

- M. The marriage feast. Matt. 22. 1-14.
- Th. Invitation of wisdom. Prov. 8. 1-10.
- W. Invitation of love. Rev. 22. 18-17.
- Th. The wedding garment. Phil. 3. 7-14.
- F. (Good Friday). Heb. 10. 1-10.
- S. (The burial of Christ). Matt. 27. 57-66.
- S. (Easter-Sunday). Acts 2. 39-56.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. Rev. 19. 9.

LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 208, Dominion Hymnal.
There is a glorious world of light,
Above the starry sky.
- No. 213, Dominion Hymnal.
Around the throne of God in heaven,
Thousands of children stand
- No. 214, Dominion Hymnal.
O, think of a home over there,
By the side of the river of light.

TIME.—70 A. D.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

RULERS.—Same as in lessons of last quarter, which see.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The grace of God

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Feast.
To what did our Lord here liken the kingdom of heaven?
What Oriental custom is suggested by the action mentioned in ver. 3?
Who were the ones that had been bidden, whom Christ had in mind?
What had occurred in past history which ver. 7 vividly suggests?
What classes of people are portrayed by ver. 5?
What was the character of this feast? ver. 4.

2. The Guests.

- What reason does the king give for the lack of guests at his feast?
What means were taken to provide guests?
What is meant by the gathering of "bad and good?"
Of what is this class of guests a prophecy?
Would a Pharisee understand the meaning of this language?
What only preparation was expected of the guests?

3. The Garment.

- What evident custom was alluded to in ver. 11?
How was the guest to obtain a wedding garment?
What was perhaps meant by the wedding garment in this parable?
What did the lack of it show in regard to the man himself?
What did the king's question show concerning his attitude toward his guests?
What is the application of the parable?

Practical Teachings.

- The grace of God provides the best things possible for us freely.
- The love of God calls us over and over again to come, for all things are ready.
- But his grace and love compel no one to come.
- Love is a prophecy of the wrath of God against sin. The Scriptures surely teach this doctrine. Do you believe it?
- Have you received the invitation?
How wide is God's grace? It takes in the world.
- No wedding garment. Then it is possible to be in the company of the redeemed and still be unsaved.
- This man was simply not prepared. He was cast out. Are you prepared? Speechless? heard; taken away; cast out; in the darkness; weeping. What a picture of a lost soul!

Hints for Home Study.

1. Find the different characters who act in this parable, and make a list of them; for example, "a king," "his son," "his servants," etc.
2. Now write the persons or things represented by them; for example, "a king" represents God; "his son" represents Jesus, etc.
3. Find all the parables that you can which are about the kingdom of heaven.

4. Read in the fourteenth chapter of Luke a similar parable about a supper.
5. Compare this with our lesson, and see how they agree and how they differ.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. The Feast.

With what form of teaching did Jesus again instruct the people?

With what comparison did he begin?

For what purpose did the king send out his servants?

What response did those bidden make?

Who were then sent out?

What was their message?

What invitation carries with it blessedness? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

2. The Guests.

How was the second invitation received?

What excuses were made? Luke 14, 18-30.

Where did these people go?

What was done to the servants?

How was the king affected by this treatment?

How did he punish the murderers?

What then did he say to his servants?

Where did he bid them go?

Whom were they to invite to the outer darkness?

What was the result of this order?

Of what class were the guests? Luke 14, 21.

3. The Garment.

Who came in to see the guests?

Whom did the king find there?

What question did he ask the guest?

What was the man's reply?

What order was given to the servants?

What would they be in the outer darkness?

What was said about many and few?

What is the wedding garment? Rev. 19: 8.

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That the gospel is an invitation to a marriage feast?

2. That all who will may come to the feast?

3. That the unworthy will be finally cast out?

Hints for Home Study.

Find to how many persons or things Jesus likened

"the kingdom of heaven."

Find other parables which show that bad people

sometimes find their way into the Church.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

How did Jesus often speak to the people? In parables.

What is a parable? A story that makes clear and plain the truths of God.

What is the parable of this lesson? The story of the prince's wedding.

To what did Jesus compare the kingdom of heaven?

To a royal wedding-feast.

Who refused to come to the wedding? Those who were first invited.

How did they treat the king's servants who bade them come? With coldness and indifference.

What did some do? They persecuted them and killed them.

What did the king do when he heard of it? He destroyed them in his wrath.

What did he tell his servants? That those whom he had asked were not worthy.

What did he command them? To invite all they could find in the highways, both good and bad.

How did these receive the king's invitation? They accepted it, and came to the wedding.

Who came in to see the guests? The king.

Whom did he see at the table? A guest without the wedding-garment.

What was the wedding-garment? A dress given by the king to every guest.

What did the king ask this guest? "Friend, how camest thou in without the wedding-garment?"

What did he reply? He could give no excuse.

What did the king say to his servants? "Bind him, and cast him into outer darkness."

What did Jesus wish to show the Jews by this parable? How they had treated God's Son, whom he sent first to them.

What did he wish to teach the whole world? That every one is invited to be saved and taste the joys of heaven. (Repeat the Golden Text.)

What does he offer to all? The wedding-robe of righteousness.

What must we do with it? Put it on and wear it.

Words with Little People.

How would you treat the invitation of a real king, asking you to his son's wedding?

The King of kings invites you to the marriage feast of his Son.

He offers you a stainless and beautiful wedding garment to wear.

How have you received his invitation—the offer of his gift, with coldness and contempt, or with joy and acceptance?

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. Who were first told that the time had come for the marriage feast of the king's son? "Them that were bidden."

2. Whom did Christ mean to point out by this description? The Jews, God's chosen people.

3. How did the king treat their refusal to come, and their wicked violence? He utterly destroyed them all.

4. Who then received of his boundless bounty? All that could be found.

5. What was the only condition of their presence at the feast? Having on the wedding garment.

6. How does our Golden Text describe the condition of these guests of the king? "Blessed are they," etc.

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

The Founder of the Feast.

I. HIS KINDNESS.

Sent... to call... bidden, v. 3.

"The marriage of the Lamb is come." Rev. 19. 7.

"Unto all people a feast." Isa. 25. 6.

II. HIS LONG-SUFFERING.

Sent forth other servants, v. 4.

"Not willing that any should perish." 2 Pet. 3. 9.

"All day... stretched forth my hands." Rom. 10. 21.

III. HIS WRATH.

He was wroth, v. 7.

"The wrath of God is revealed." Rom. 1. 18.

"Upon the children of disobedience." Eph. 5. 6.

IV. HIS GRACE.

As many as... And... bidden, v. 9.

"Whosoever will, let him take." Rev. 22. 17.

"Ho, every one that thirsteth." Isa. 55. 1.

V. HIS OMNISCIENCE.

Came in... saw a man, v. 11.

"I know my sheep." John 10. 14.

"He knoweth them that trust in him." Nah. 1. 7.

VI. HIS JUSTICE.

Bind him hand and foot, v. 13.

"Depart... ye that work iniquity." Matt. 7. 23.

"So shall it be at the end." Matt. 13. 49. 10.

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

The Gospel invitation.

1. God invites men to share in the joys and privileges of the Gospel, a feast in which all may sit down to enjoy fellowship with himself, his Son, and the redeemed among men. How high the honor, and how rich the enjoyment!

2. Men fail to accept and heed the invitation of God. Some are busy and pass it by, some scorn it, some persecute its messengers; and only a few, apparently, avail themselves of its privileges.

3. God is very kind, and he repeats his call, pressing it upon men. But God is just, and his justice requires that wrath shall fall upon those who thus scorn and reject him. How fearful the responsibility upon those who will not come to Christ!

4. The Gospel invitation bids all to come as they are,

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but it provides for every one who comes the wedding-garment of a new heart, a new life, and the righteousness of Christ. Let us put on the "new man" in Jesus Christ.

5. Those who are found among God's people without the newness of character which God gives will be cast out from his presence into darkness and misery.

An English Teacher's Notes on the Lessons.

THE queen of England, on the occasion of her jubilee, gave a very large garden party at Buckingham Palace, to which some thousands received invitations. The queen's invitation is always looked on as a command, and every thing conspired to make this command a very pleasant one to obey. There must have been thousands of persons who would gladly have gone if they had only been invited. But it is evident that a limit had to be observed. Neither space nor circumstances permitted of the invitations being scattered broadcast. Had this been done the crowds would have been too great for admission.

In the parable which is the subject of our lesson we have an invitation with a limit. Certain persons have been "bidden," or called, to a royal marriage feast. Strange to say, when the final summons (according to the Eastern custom) is sent them, they not only refuse to accept it, but fall upon the messengers, ill-treat, and slay them.

Then the king, after taking vengeance on the murderers, seeks for other guests to grace and to enjoy the festivities. And this time the invitation is issued without a limit. The servants are sent out this time to call "as many as they shall find" to the wedding. It is plain that it was not incapacity for receiving any number which caused the first limitation.

But after the crowds who have received and accepted the second invitation are gathered together, we find that there is still a further limitation, for one of them is excluded from the feast. Nor can we wonder at this. The queen of England's garden party was a less formal matter than many of the court festivities; but there are some occasions on which a certain style of dress is absolutely necessary to admission into the royal presence, and any neglect in complying with the usual rule would result in exclusion. This is well understood beforehand, so that guests may not be taken unawares. Were all ranks and classes invited to attend on these occasions, numbers would be unable to do so on account of the expense of procuring a suitable dress. In the parable this is not the case. Though not stated, it is implied in the story that, according to Eastern custom, suitable robes were provided for the guests, so that they were not dependent on their own resources. The limitation, though rigid and unalterable, could touch no one but by his own fault. Moreover, so great was the offense committed by neglect of the rule imposed and the provision made that not merely exclusion but punishment followed.

All this is to illustrate the "kingdom of heaven," that is, "the kindness and love of God" coming

out into the world, and seeking to draw sinners to himself.

There had been a temporary limitation to this. God's mercy and grace were first revealed to the nation of Israel, and even when our Lord was on earth he was sent to these first (chap. 15, 24), because his purpose was that others should be blessed through them. Gen. 12, 2. When Israel had, as a nation, rejected God's invitation of love, the door was thrown wide open to all. The invitation is now to be scattered broadcast, not miraculously, however, but by means of messengers (the teacher has a good opportunity here of enforcing the duty of foreign missions) who are to bid "as many as they shall find" to the feast. There is absolutely no limitation whatever; it is, "Whosoever will."

But this limitless character of the invitation brings with it a limitless responsibility. The parable says nothing about any of the second company of invited ones refusing, although numbers do actually turn a deaf ear to the message of God which is delivered to them, and, following the example of the first company, absorb themselves in other things. For the invitation now issued to all makes all responsible. Each one to whom it is repeated is considered in the parable as a "guest." It is incumbent on each one to be ready for the feast.

Then comes the final limitation: "Many are called but few chosen." "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." For this final and glorious calling is only for those who have made themselves ready by putting on the "wedding garment." And what is this? Not merely the righteousness or justification from guilt which is imputed to all who believe in Jesus (Rom. 4, 5), but also that holiness, "without which no man shall see the Lord," Heb. 12, 14; Rev. 19, 8. But this we cannot and have not to provide. We have only to put it on: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. 13, 14; compare 1 Cor. 1, 30. It has been said that there are three steps in the Christian life: out of self—into Christ—on to glory. The fact is that the first two are one; and they are the necessary preparation for making the final step, to which there is but one alternative—the terrible penalty of those who disobey the command of their sovereign Lord and refuse his provision of mercy—"outer darkness."

The Lesson Council.

Question 1. What is meant by the wedding garment?

The donning of a wedding garment, in an actual historical incident such as that of the parable, would imply respect for the king and his son, as well as a due appreciation of an act of great condescension. Any man who, having accepted such an invitation, should appear in his mean every-day garb would proclaim, quite as distinctly as any one who refused the invitation, his contempt for the king and his condescension. In the application of the incident to the kingdom of heaven, therefore, the wedding garment must be understood to represent such conduct on the part of the recipient of salvation as betokens a fitting sense of the divine mercy and grace.—Prof. Marcus D. Buell.

Spiritual fitness to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Col. 1. 12. "As is the dress, so is the heart," and those to whom our Lord spoke knew what culpability the prophet Zephaniah attributed to those who were foreign and improper apparel at Jehovah's sacrificial feasts. Zeph. 1. 7, 8. The parable does not tell how, but implies in the nature of the case that every invited guest had it in his power to be provided with suitable apparel. The neglect of one thus to provide himself exhibited both an inner and outer unfitness to be there.—*M. S. Terry, D.D.*

2. *How are the expressions "outer darkness" and "weeping and gnashing of teeth" to be interpreted?*

The Greek word *the outer*, translated the "outer darkness," puts here in very sharp contrast the ascension of the man expelled from the feast, from what they were in the midst of, festivity and joy. It is a darkness—outside the place, all the greater from the contrast to the light within. But as darkness alone is merely negative, the absence of light, the moral meaning might only be that after the judgment the condition of the impenitent is one of silence or death. But to prevent that interpretation there is added the "weeping and gnashing of teeth" which imply a conscious condition of misery, a cry of pain, and an increasing sense of loss that leads to the gnashing or grinding of the teeth. This last word means possibly resentment added to suffering. But in any case it must mean punishment and a hopeless condition following the final judgment.—*Rev. A. D. Vail, D.D.*

2. *What is the meaning of the words "called" and "chosen"?*

"Many called"—"few chosen"—one of our Lord's terse and pregnant sayings. See chapters 19. 30; 20. 16. "Many" all are invited—"whoever will may come," but "few" are chosen "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth," because they do not obey the call. In this case the guest received no welcome. But was excluded as unworthy because he preferred to come in his own dress rather than to be "clothed with the garments of salvation" provided by the King as essential to fit appearance at the joyous nuptials and glad festivities of his son's marriage. There is no support here to what the Westminster divines teach as "effectual calling"—the "called" are clearly distinguished from the "chosen."—*A. M.*

Cambridge Notes.

BY REV. JAMES HOPE MOULTON, B.A.

The present parable differs widely from that of the Great Supper (Luke 14. 15-34) both in purpose and in detail. While the earlier parable only depicts generally man's amazing folly in despising God's bounty, this is definitely evangelical, and turns on the active revolt or passive indifference of the world against the King's Son. The "free" critics assume their identity, and have various explanations of the genesis of either from the other, with extraneous matter thrown in. None deign to show why similar illustrations should not be used liberally, to stimulate thought. See note introductory to chap. 24. 36. VER. 1. *Answered* unspoken thoughts, as often. VER. 2. *Likened*. See note on chap. 13. 23. *Certainly*. Again see note just quoted (which should read, "a man (that is) a king"). Comp. chap. 20. 1; 21. 33. *Marriage*. The covenant relation of Jehovah and his people is constantly set forth by this figure in the prophets, for example, Isa. 62. 5; Hos. 2. 19. Under the New Covenant the marriage of Christ and his Church is invested with a yet profounder sig-

nificance. See especially Rev. 21, and comp. Eph. 5. 32; James 4. 4 (R. V.). The exhortation in the Ephesians suggests that here again "earth is the shadow of heaven," rather than an illustration of it. Comp. Eph. 3. 15 (R. V., margin). The parable naturally cannot state (1) that the King's Son himself condescended to "call" the invited guests, and (2) that the chosen guests and the bride represent the same persons. VER. 3. *Servants*. "Slaves," contrasted with the "ministers" of ver. 14; for these see chap. 13. 30, 41. The invited guests are the chosen people "called" first by the prophets. The messengers of this verse were the Baptist and others sent during Christ's life, proclaiming that the kingdom of the Son, long promised, was come. For this double invitation see esp. Esth. 5. 8, with 6. 14. VER. 14. The last appeal to the Jews, between the ascension and the fall of Jerusalem. *Dinner*.—Our "wedding breakfast." Comp. John 2. 12 (R. V.). It was a midday meal, and the guests go off to their day's work instead of coming. Here, therefore, the feast represents the privilege of the external Church in this life, Luke's "supper" standing for the life of the redeemed in heaven. Verse 13 shows that the King did not come in until the evening, till when the guests had feasted apart from him. Comp. Gen. 43. 22. Thus the inspection answers to the final judgment. VER. 5. *Made light of*. The same word ("neglect") in Heb. 2. 3. These seem to be Jews of the dispersion, who gave up their Messianic hopes for earthly gain. VER. 6. Strauss's objection to the verisimilitude of this is shallow. They were summoned to show fealty to the King's Son, and they seize the opportunity murderously to vent a long-slumbering hatred. VER. 7. *Armies*. The legions of *Titus*—heathens, but God's armies. Comp. Isa. 45. 4, 5. *Their city*, no longer his. Comp. chap. 23. 38, and note. The vengeance does not reach the indifferentists of ver. 5, who are punished by exclusion. The language is general, allowing the exception of individuals, but the Jews in Palestine were always dealt with as a nation. VER. 8. Comp. Esth. 13. 46. *Then*, not implying subsequence to the event of ver. 7. VER. 9. *Partings of the highways*, where several roads converge, so that they could meet the largest possible number. Such an instinct took Paul to Corinth and to Rome. VER. 10. *Bad and good*, Comp. chap. 13. 48. But here many "bad" became "good" after accepting the invitation. Comp. Augustine of the church, "He loved her foul that he might make her fair."—*Trench*. VER. 11. *Behold*. The word implies a searching inspection. *A man*. Not one sinner in the crowd can escape that scrutiny. Obviously set against ver. 14, we are told nothing of the proportion of lost to saved. *Wedding garment*. Gifts of splendid raiment were so common in the East that only sheer perversity could reject the assumption that these garments were expressly provided for the guests. Like those of ver. 5, therefore, he "made light of" the invitation and came in the ordinary attire of a man picked up on the streets, in the "filthy rags" of his own righteousness, instead of the "fine linen" which is the "righteous acts of the saints." Rev. 19. 8. Comp. 7. 14, and 22. 14 (R. V.). VER. 12. *Friend*, Comp. chap. 20. 13, and 26. 50. A neutral word ill, "comrade" naturally used in reproof. *Speechless*. Lit., "gagged." Obviously he could not plead poverty, as his modern apologist do for him. VER. 13. *Bind*, that he may not sneak back again. *There*. Christ's own command, pointed by the reality typified in that dreary night—outside the monarch's feast. *The weeping*. What a touch of infinite pathos the R. V. restores in that little "the!" Remorseful weeping, disappointed

rage—yes, what is that those—be excluded? Comp. ch. 13. 28. Ver. 13. As such words future of the necessity 9. 27.

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LESSON 7

INTRODUCTORY read invitati coived such a ties, why they to-day is abo To be tan whom it was to us to-day. 1. Pin up a talk about k Bring out the noticed by a palace of a king that a great f leasting of his

rage—yes, enough of both in this sad world. But what is the sum of all the ages' sorrow to the wall of those—be they many or few—who have deliberately excluded themselves forever from a Father's presence! Comp. chap. 8. 12; 13. 42, 50; 24, 51; 95. 30; Luke 13. 28. VER. 14. We may perhaps deduce from our Lord's answer to the disciples in Luke 13. 23, that in such words he meant not to satisfy curiosity as to the future of mankind, but rather to enforce on each hearer the necessity of intense personal effort. Comp. 1 Cor. 9. 27.

Herean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Show when, where, to whom, and for what purpose this parable was delivered.... Compare it with "the parable of the excuses," Luke 14. 1-24, and note the differences of circumstances and contents.... Analyze this parable into its elements, and present an application from each.... **The King.** Who is he? What traits of character or of royalty does he show? See Analytical and Biblical Outline.... **The Son.** Who is he? In what relation to us is he represented?.... **The Feast.** How does this feast represent the Gospel? What are the enjoyments at a feast? Who partake in it? What does it promise to us? What does it require of us?.... **The Messengers.** Who are they? What is their message? How are they treated by men?.... **The Guests.** Find three kinds of people who did not go. Find two kinds who did go.... **The Garment.** What is it? Who wear it? Who are without it? What becomes of such?.... Finally, what does this parable urge us to do and to be?

References. FREEMAN'S HAND-BOOK. Ver. 3: Doubtful invitations, 691. Ver. 11: Host and guests, 692. Ver. 13: "Outer darkness," 412.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

17. Is this the reason why we believe the Old Testament? There are many other reasons, but this is the chief reason. Our Lord honoured the Old Testament, and we must honour it, and receive it as the word of God.

18. How does the New Testament teach his religion?

It contains the history of his life and death, the record of his teaching while he was among men, and the doctrine which he taught the Apostles by his Spirit after he ascended into heaven.

Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

LESSON THOUGHT. *I may be the King's Guest.*

INTRODUCTORY. Show small envelope; open and read invitation to a child's party. Ask who ever received such a one? Let children talk a little about parties, why they like to go, etc. Then tell that the lesson to-day is about an invitation to a great wedding party.

To be taught: 1. Who sent the invitation. 2. To whom it was sent. 3. That this very invitation comes to us to-day.

1. Pin up gilt paper crown. Let this lead to a little talk about kings, what they do, how they live, etc. Bring out the thought that it is a great honor to be noticed by a king, and that a visit to the beautiful palace of a king would be a great pleasure. Now tell that a great king invited many guests to the wedding feast of his son. He did not send invitations like this [showing envelope]. He sent servants to call the guests,

and tell them that the king wanted them to come. Do you think they would feel honored and pleased? The king's feast would be very nice. How glad they ought to have been!

2. But they were not! Some laughed at the invitation, and went on with their work. Some said they had not time to go, and some treated the servants very badly who came to invite them. What strange people! You do not treat an invitation to a party like this. O, no! you are glad to go, and can scarcely wait for the time to come. What kind of people do you think they were who treated the king in this way? Were they his friends? Were they kind, polite people? O, no! they were rude, unfriendly people, and the king was sorry and displeased when he found that they did not want to come to his supper. Tell what he did, and how he found guests to eat his supper.



3. This story is one of the parables of Jesus. God is the King. His invitation is to us to come to Jesus. He sends it in his letter to us. [Read from Bible, "Come unto the marriage," and "come unto me."] He sends it by the preacher, one of his servants; by the

teacher, another of his servants; by any one who tells you how Jesus loves you, and wants you to be his child. How do you treat God's invitation? Do you send his servants away? Do you laugh when you hear it, and go on with your work or play? Or, do you listen and accept? Which will you do to-day?

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, 654.



This illustration is designed for the purpose of bringing before the school the Gospel invitation, and to cause a heart-examination to see if any one has rejected it. What have I done with my invitation? Read 1 Tim. 2. 3, 4; Matt. 11. 28; John 6. 37; Rev. 22. 17; 2 Pet. 3. 9; John 3. 16; Heb. 2. 3. What is this on the blackboard? A pigeon-hole, or a place in a desk where papers are filed. Explain about it. Papers laid away there for future reference are sometimes forgotten. So we perhaps treat the invitation; put it away, and think that "some time," when all worldly business is finished, our fortune made, and nothing else to do, we will take it out and accept it. What is this other design? An invitation card with the word "Come" written on it, the very word we have been reading so often. How is it treated? Neglected? Yes, the dust and spider-web of indifference cover it. It is forgotten and treated as unworthy of notice, and "made light of." Last is the invitation rejected, and "entreated spitefully." Close

the lesson by calling attention to the fate of those who have thus treated the king's invitation. Draw the card of invitation with white chalk; & the sides of the pigeon-hole with brown; & the spider's web with light blue or gray; the words in other colors.

Lesson Word Pictures.

"What is all this noise about?" wonders the old blind beggar, Bartimeus, sitting by the road-side.

"Men on horses riding by and riding hard! O, it is a great clatter! Say!" he now bawls. "Somebody tell us what this noise is for!"

"Hush there, you old blind beggar!" says a cold, sneering voice. "It is not for you."

"Ho, Simon, that you?" In a whisper Bartimeus ejaculates, "That frozen old Pharisee!"

"Yes, it is Simon. Now, be quiet!"

"But what is going on?" persists Bartimeus, "Come, now I can't see."

"Well, if you must know, the king is going to make a marriage feast for his only son, and those horsemen are the king's messengers taking the invitations out. But none of us are going—none in my city."

"Why not?" asks Bartimeus.

"O, hush! I care not to go. I have some new phylacteries I want to try on and some land I must plow. Now, hush!"

A marriage feast! How the soul of Bartimeus is excited by the thought. He never was at such a banquet—or any other, indeed; but what honor it would be to receive an invitation from a messenger! What joy there, to lie on the soft royal couches; and what a distinction if the king's eye should rest upon one in some special notice! And what if the king should say, "Ah, there is Bartimeus!"

"And Simon does not wish to go!" muses Bartimeus. "None of his kind or his city. That is strange!"

Yes, strange indeed! And look! The people who received the king's invitation are making light of it! There goes Simon, out to his oxen and his field. His brother has gone to the market-place. His son has hurried to his vineyard.

But look! There is a rabble bursting out of the city gates. They are driving the great king's messengers into the fields, into Simon's. They are stoning the messengers. And there is Simon! He has seized stones. He joins in the assault, till at last from the ground toward the sky the dead messengers turn their blood-stained faces, pleading for vengeance. And judgment comes! The king's armies thunder at the

city gates. The murderers are seized. Instead of a city, there is soon a great ash-heap, smoking toward the heavens.

But hark! Horsemen are coming again! "The King's messengers?" wonders Bartimeus. Yes, and Bartimeus can scarcely believe it, but he is invited to the great marriage-supper. A brother-beggar, Lazarus, is also invited! Yes, every body is asked, all up and down the highway, at the road-corners, everywhere! And now, from highway and hedge, from every place they are thronging to the marriage supper of the great king's only, darling son. A woman from Jericho—one Rahab—he is going. A great Syrian captain, Naaman, has heard of the supper, and he is going. A poor gleaner, one Ruth, a Moabitess, and a woman from Samaria whom all frequenters of Jacob's well must remember, and a Syro-phenician woman whose name I never knew—these are all going. There goes a hated tax-gatherer, a publican, one Matthew.

"And who is this?" asks Lazarus of Bartimeus. "I really think it is Dives, at whose door I beg. What robes of purple and fine linen he wears!"

The countenance of Bartimeus falls.

"Lazarus, where are our wedding garments!" he asks. They stop, look at their mean clothes, shake their heads. However, they cannot stay away, but of they hurry, Lazarus leading along Bartimeus. Such a quantity of cripples, of the blind, of poor folks, of people from afar, as went to that feast! And O, what joy when in the very doorway of the banqueting house stood the King's darling Son and handed each man a wedding garment! He saw that blind beggar and gave him back his sight. Such a marriage-supper! Bartimeus did so rejoice, while Lazarus found an old friend, Abraham, and lay in his bosom all through the supper. But who has ventured in without a wedding garment? It is Dives in his purple robes. "I don't want a wedding garment," he is saying. "My robes are good enough." Just that moment he looks up and sees two searching eyes. They seem to shoot out fire. Dives drops his head.

The King's awful voice is now heard, speaking to Dives. O, why has he despised the King's bounty, and come in here relying on his self-righteousness! Why did he refuse and dishonor the only Son's wedding garments? The King's servants advance. They seize the culprit. They bind him. They lead him away. He is banished to the gloomy darkness of the night, while the great supper in light and joy goes on, for the great King has words and looks of love for those in the wedding garments given by his dear Son.

A. D. 30.]

LESSON II. CHRIST'S LAST WARNING.

[April 8.]

Mat. 23. 27-39.

[Commit to memory verses 27-39.]

27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

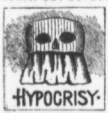
29 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous.

30 And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

31 Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

32 Will ye up then the measure of your fathers.

33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?



34 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:

35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous A'bel unto the blood of Zach'aria's son of Bar'a-chias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

37 O Je-ru-sa-lem, Je-ru-sa-lem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

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General Statement.

The last hour of the last day of the Saviour's public teaching has come. He has met in turn each of the great parties of the Jews, and had vanquished all in the controversy. He had answered the inquiry of the Pharisees and the Herodians concerning the tribute-money, by pressing upon them the demand to render not only to Cæsar but to God his due. He had replied to the Sadducee's supposed case of the woman with seven husbands in the resurrection, and had shown the fallacy of their views. He had shown to the thoughtful lawyer that the two great commands of the divine law are love to God and love to man; and he had driven them all to silence by his own questions, which they could not answer. Then he turned to his disciples and the multitudes around them, and began his last

memorable warning against the Pharisees and the scribes. Unlike other teachers, he could look down into the hearts of those whom he rebuked. He knew every secret purpose and every wicked thought of his adversaries: how selfish were their aims under all their pious pretensions; how their obedience to the letter of the law was but a form to cloak their disloyalty to its spirit; how bloody and dark were their purposes toward himself, for they were counting the hours until they would have him in their grasp; and he gave a denunciation which was all the more terrible because it was the wrath of the Lamb; a tender nature aroused to a righteous indignation, the Just Judge drawing the sword of his sentence upon the convicted criminal.

Explanatory and

Practical Notes.

Verses 27. Wee unto you. At once a denunciation and a prophecy, the most severe ever spoken by Christ. We have no right to follow him as an example in such denunciations, for we have not his omniscient knowledge, and the Pharisees and the Herodians, though not all the Pharisees were covetous, cruel, and immoral, like the fair tomb concealing the putrid corpse. (1) *God seeks reality of character, and not merely appearance.* (2) *Christ can see our hearts as clearly as he sees those of the Pharisees.*

28. Even so ye also. When Christ spoke bitter words he spoke them to men, and not about them; and he spoke them not from "coward's castle," as they could not answer him, but on the floor of their own temple, where they might answer if they could. **Appear righteous.** They acted religiously, attending the services, praying on the street corners, giving rigorous interpretations of the law, and winning the praise of men for their apparent piety. **Unto men.** Full of hypocrisy. Such are men to-day who wor-ship as Church-members, but oppress their employees or cheat their customers; who give liberally while they rob their fellow-men. (3) *The best cure for hypocrisy is not in renouncing the profession of religion, but in renouncing the practice of sin.*

29. Ye build the tombs of the prophets. The "fanatics" and "cranks" of one age are often the heroes of another; the heroic age is always back of us. More than once Moses was in danger of being stoned during his life-time, yet in another generation he was the ideal of the nation. Paul, Luther, Wesley, Lincoln, John Brown, all are instances of men thoroughly hated in their own time, but honored in the succeeding age. Herod the Great, one of the worst of men, built the sepulcher of David. Ruskin speaks of those who crown the statues when they had not crowned the brow, and pay honor to the ashes which they had denied to the spirit.

30. And ye say, If we had been. There is no doubt that they were honest in their reverence for the great men of the past; but their crime was in persecuting the

best men of their own time, just as their fathers had done before them. We would not have been partakers. Their assumption of superior character was without foundation, for they were showing exactly the same spirit, only under greater light. (4) *How little do men know of their own hearts!* The blood of the prophets. See Heb. 11, 37, 38, for the treatment of God's worthies by their own times.

31. Ye be witnesses unto yourselves. They confessed that these persecutors of the past were their own ancestors; and in their spirit and conduct they showed that they themselves were their children. For on that very day they were plotting to slay their own Saviour.

32. Fill ye up. The *ye* is emphatic, and is expressed in the original, "and ye, fill ye up." It is a solemn irony, not an exhortation; and it is also a prediction: "And I know full well that ye will go on in the same way." **The measure of your fathers.** The Bible represents each evil nation in its career as filling up its own cup of crime to the full, and then being destroyed. "The fathers had filled the cup of Judah's wickedness up to a certain level, and their sons were pouring in more guilt until the vessel should be full. Forty years after the vial of divine wrath was poured out upon the city, and the land. (5) *And what shall we say of our nation, in view of the evils in our time!* (6) *Let us strive to keep out the bitter and to pour in the sweet into our national life.*

33. Ye serpents. The brood that hiss and crawl and bite and poison—fit characterization for the Jews of that time. **Generation of vipers.** Rather, "offspring of vipers." Their parents had been snakes, and so were they. **Escape the damnation of hell.** "The judgment" (Rev. Ver.) which will give them the sentence and penalty of perdition. (7) *Their only escape may be ours also, in repentance or turning from sin.*

34. I send unto you. God's mercy was shown in sending them the prophets; man's guilt in slaying them. **Prophets.** As Elijah, Isaiah, and John the Baptist; men who spoke by direct inspiration from God. **Wise men.** Men who spoke with wisdom of lower degree of inspiration, as Solomon's writings are on a lower plane than David's songs. **Scribes.** Teachers who added nothing to the Scriptures, but gave comments upon and interpretations of them. **Kill and crucify.** Though the Jews never crucified criminals, they indorsed and promoted the crucifixion of Christians by the Roman power. As martyrs the New Testament names Stephen, James, and Antipas; and many others are known to have suffered death. **Scourge in your synagogues.** Strange as it may seem to us, the synagogue or local house for worship was the place where courts were held and offenders were punished by scourging. **Persecute . . . from city to city.** So Saul drove out the disciples from Jerusalem; and so Paul was driven from many cities in Asia Minor. (8) *No man lives in vain who suffers or dies for Christ's cause.*

35. Upon you may come. The nation is regarded as a unit, and that age as the culmination of Jewish history received the result and reward of all previous ages of sin. The whole people suffered in this life, and each individual meets his own judgment before God, with a remission of reward or punishment hereafter. **Righteous Abel.** As first among men who perished for religion and faith. **Zacharias son of Barachias.** A prophet who was slain in the reign of

King Josiah. See 2 Chron. 24. 20-32. He was, however, the son not of Baruchiah (Rev. Ver.), but of Jehoiada, the statesman, reformer, and high-priest. Baruchiah is a copyist's mistake, from confusing the Zachariah of Chronicles with the minor prophet Zechariah, who was the son of Berechiah. Zech. 1. 1. The two chiefs, "Whom Jehovah knows," and Berechiah, "Whom the Lord blesses," and Berechiah, have nearly the same meaning, and may have become interchangeable in the tradition of the event. Between the temple and the altar. The altar stood in front of the sanctuary or holy house, in the court of the priests.

36, 37. Upon this generation. The evils came in the destruction of the city and temple, the annihilation of their national existence, and their dispersion throughout the world. O Jerusalem. A deep emotion of tenderness follows the stern denunciation, for Justice and

love mingled in the Saviour's heart. Gathered they children. He refers not only to his own repeated visits to the city, from which he had again and again been driven, but also to the appeals of the prophets as his messengers. Gathereth her chickens. A picture suggesting ideas of love, protection, rest, warmth, care. Ye would not. Not God's will, but man's, was wanting for his salvation.

38, 39. Your house. No longer God's house, for God was forsaking it in his Son. Ye shall not see me henceforth. That hour marked his last appeal and his final departure. Till ye shall say. He looks beyond the present to an hour when the true Israel, the regenerated remnant, shall welcome him as their Saviour and King. A prediction fulfilled through all the centuries when any soul of Jewish race accepts Jesus as the Messiah.

HOME READINGS.

- M. Christ's last warning. Matt. 23. 23-33.
 Th. Christ's last warning. Matt. 23. 34-39.
 W. Hypocrisy. Ezek. 33. 27-32.
 Th. What God requires. Micah 6. 1-9.
 F. Acceptable service. Isa. 58. 1-11.
 S. Prophets killed. 3 Chron. 24. 13-22.
 S. Sincerity in service. Matt. 6. 1. 6. 16-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Psa. 51. 10.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 245, Dominion Hymnal.
 O happy is the child who hears
 Instructor's warning voice.

No. 258, Dominion Hymnal.
 Jesus, my Truth, my Way,
 My sure, unerring light.

No. 122, Dominion Hymnal.
 Be it my only wisdom here,
 To serve the Lord with filial fear.

TIME, PLACE, RULERS.—Same as in last lesson.
 DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The fulfillment of prophecy.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Final Warning.
 Unto whom was the denunciation of this lesson addressed?
 What position did they occupy in the Old Testament Church?
 What was it that made them hypocrites?
 What was the pretense that they made?
 What is the thought that connects vers. 30 and 31?
 What is the meaning of ver. 32?
 How did they accomplish this?
 What is the warning that is implied in these words of Christ?

2. The Final War.
 What was actually came upon the Jews in less than half a century from the time of this lesson?
 What is meant by the term "whited sepulchres," which is used in connection with the first denunciation of woe?
 Did Jesus mean that he really would send prophets and others, as told in verse 34?
 What was the house which was left desolate?
 Did Jesus ever visit the temple again after this leaving?
 Who was the Zacharias who was slain?
 Where in the lesson is Christ's tender heart shown?
 What is the danger which to-day threatens the Christian?

Practical Teachings.

Appearing to be a true servant of God, and being so, are vastly different.
 Profession is easy; confession is very hard. These Pharisees made loud professions; no one of them would confess himself a sinner.

Art, not heart, characterized these Jews. They could build tombs and garnish sepulchres; they could also kill and crucify prophets and wise men.
 Dear student, do you appear to be, or are you, a Christian? Have you confessed Christ as well as professed? Is your religion one of heart, or one of art? Which?

Christ left the temple forever. "Ye are the temple of the Holy Ghost." Has he left you? What a desolation that will be, when Christ leaves you!

Hints for Home Study.

1. Find from a Bible dictionary all that you can about the burial customs of the Jews.
2. What prophets had been put to death by the ancestors of these Jews?
3. Read the whole of this twenty-third chapter, and note how many woe Christ pronounces upon the Pharisees.
4. Find the first sermon preached, and see how it differs from this one.
5. Find from Roman history when and how "these things" came upon them.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. The Final Warning.
 Over what city did Jesus lament?
 What crimes had Jerusalem committed?
 What had Jesus desired to do for her children?
 Why had he not succeeded?
 How were they now left?
 When would they see Jesus again?
 When had he been thus welcomed? Matt. 21. 9.

2. The Final Woe.
 Upon whom did Jesus pronounce a woe?
 To what did he liken these hypocrites?
 How did they appear outwardly?
 How were they inwardly?
 What did they do to tombs and sepulchres?
 How did they profess to be better than their fathers?
 Of what were they witnesses?
 What were they told to do?
 What were they then called?
 What danger were they in?
 What teachers were sent to them?
 What would they do to these messengers?
 What guilt would come upon them?
 When would these things occur?
 How can we escape the hypocrite's doom? (Golden Text.)

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—
 1. That God hates false pretenses?
 2. That wickedness is progressive?
 3. That opportunities lost cannot be regained?

Hints for Home Study.

Learn what other teachers called the Pharisees a "generation of vipers."
 Read the accounts of the killing of Abel and Zacharias.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Who were the scribes and Pharisees? Great and learned members of the Jewish Church.
 What did Jesus pronounce upon them? Woe, or sorrow and punishment.
 For what reason? Because they were hypocrites.
 What is a hypocrite? One who pretends to be what he is not.
 What did the scribes and Pharisees pretend to be? Righteous and without sin.
 What did Jesus know? That their hearts were full of pride and selfishness.
 What had they forgotten? That God looks upon the heart.
 Whom did the Pharisees pretend to love and honor?

The prophesied.

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The prophets of God who had been slain and persecuted.

What did they do to show the people their great respect? They rebuilt and beautified the tombs of the dead prophets.

What did Jesus tell them? That they had the same spirit as their fathers who murdered them.

Why did he speak so to them? He knew that they were seeking to kill him, their promised Messiah.

What did he declare unto them? That they would persecute and murder the prophets he sent to them.

To whom did he refer? To his apostles and followers.

What did Jesus say should surely come upon them? Most awful punishment.

Why did Jesus weep over the holy city, Jerusalem? Because he loved it.

How did he say the Jews would some day acknowledge him? With gladness, shouting, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Words with Little People.

A hypocrite is one who is not true and cannot be trusted.

One who goes to Church and Sunday-school not to please God, but to make others think well of him.

One who is very sweet and pleasant when visiting, but cross and selfish at home.

One who talks much and does little.

If Jesus should come to you to-day, what would he say? "Woe, hypocrite," or, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. Against whom did Christ pronounce this final woe? Against the scribes and Pharisees.

2. Why did he pronounce these woes upon them? Because they were hypocrites.

3. What else did he call them? Serpents, a generation of vipers.

4. What words of Christ teach us to-day our danger? "Except ye repent, ye shall likewise perish."

5. What should be our prayer, that we may escape the sin of hypocrisy? "Create in me a clean heart."

THE CHURCH CATECHISM.

37. Did God leave mankind in sin and misery? No. God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3. 16.

38. What did the Son of God do to save sinners? He became man; lived, suffered, died, and rose again.

39. How did he become man? Christ, through God, took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man, having a human body and soul.

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

Sins and Penalties.

I. THE SINS OF THE PHARISEES.

1. Hypocrisy. "Whited sepulchers." v. 27.

"Ye... make clean the outside." Luke 11. 39.

2. Iniquity. "Full of... iniquity." v. 28.

"Out of the heart... evil." Matt. 15. 19, 30.

3. Self-righteousness. "We would not," etc. v. 30.

"Establish their own righteousness." Rom. 10. 3.

4. Persecution. "Kill and crucify." v. 34.

"Ye have been... murderers." Acts 7. 52.

II. PENALTIES OF THE PHARISEES.

1. Judgment. "How can ye escape the judgment." v. 33. (Rev. Ver.)

"This is the condemnation." John 3. 18, 19.

2. Guilt. "Upon you... blood." v. 35.

"Deliver me from blood-guiltiness." Psa. 51. 14.

3. Destruction. "House is left." v. 38.

"The desolation... is nigh." Luke 21. 30.

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

The Spirit of the Pharisees.

1. The great crime of the Pharisees which Jesus here unmasks and rebukes was their hypocrisy, a pretense

of being holy and religious and God-fearing, when they were really wicked at heart. God hates all pretense.

2. With this is closely allied the spirit of self-righteousness. "We are not like our fathers, O no; they killed the prophets; see how we honor them." They vaunted their own goodness. Let us be humble, and not make a show of our godliness.

3. Another crime of the Pharisees was their persecuting spirit. They were ready to kill all who differed from them. This is not zeal for the truth, but zeal for the party; and it is often seen at the present time, both in Church and in State.

4. Notice how clearly Christ saw the spirit of these Pharisees, under all their fine disguises, and how sternly he denounced it. Let us keep in mind that he can see our hearts as thoroughly as he saw theirs.

5. See, especially, the tenderness of Christ toward these wicked people; how eager he was to save them. If any are lost, it will not be because Christ is unwilling to have them come to eternal life.

English Teacher's Notes.

I REMEMBER once going with some friends to see a dwelling-house which they thought of taking, but had not as yet seen. I shall not soon forget the close, offensive, unwholesome smell that greeted us when we opened the door. However, we went in and proceeded to survey the rooms. We picked our way, taking care to avoid contact with the walls, for all was dusty, dirty, and wretched. At length we came to the head of the stairs leading to the kitchen, but further we could not go; we had had enough to make us very glad to get out again into the fresh air. I do not remember any thing striking about the exterior of the house. But supposing it had been newly painted from top to bottom, adorned with a handsome porch, and in every way made to look attractive, that would never have reconciled us to the inside. Before that house could be fit to live in the inside needed to be thoroughly cleansed and purified.

We read but a short time ago how our Lord cleansed the temple at Jerusalem from the traffic that was polluting it. Two days (in the last week of his earthly life) had passed since then, and he now stood for the last time in that "house of God," his own proper dwelling. It was the center that week, the passover week, of an imposing and costly worship. Multitudes thronged its courts and passed in and out of its gates. Gentiles as well as Jews were there to offer their homage to Jehovah, the God of Israel. Every thing was fair as to the outward appearance. And round about our Lord, as he there taught, stood the representatives of the religious life of the nation—the scribes, and Pharisees, with their long robes, fringes and phylacteries, indicating their devotion to the law. But our Lord could not rest here. In spite of the outward cleansing which had taken place, that temple with its splendid worship was defiled, offensive to the holy One.

What defiled it? The worshippers themselves, and especially those who seemed the most important and

the most zealous. Looking from the temple porch across the valley of the Kedron (or of Jehoshaphat), the eye might rest on a structure known as the "tombs of the prophets" built over the rock-hewn sepulchers, which shone out conspicuously on the slope of the Mount of Olives, having probably, according to Jewish custom, lately been newly whitened (this was done once a year, in the twelfth month, the month Adar). Outwardly these tombs looked clean and fair and imposing, but what was within? Just moldering bones and dust, on which no one would wish to gaze, and the touch of which rendered a Jew ceremonially "unclean," thus excluding him for a time from all religious rites. These showy monuments had been erected by the descendants of those who "killed the prophets." Were they then different from their fathers? Their hearts at this moment were full of malice and hatred against our Lord; they were planning his death and taking every means to secure it; and in like manner they would, later on, persecute his followers. Could there be a more striking picture of these men than the "whited sepulchers" to which our Lord compared them?

If such were the religious teachers of the people, what could the crowd be? We know how shortly after those who had welcomed the Lord Jesus into their city cried out, "Let him be crucified." The indictment brought first against the scribes and Pharisees is further brought against Jerusalem generally. Verse 57.

What was wanted here? Just that of which our Golden Text speaks—the inward cleansing of the heart. And the same holy One who had two days before purged the temple courts could have given this inward cleansing. To the disciples he could say shortly afterward: "Ye are clean;" "Ye are clean through the word that I have spoken to you," John 13. 10; 15. 3. But to "Jerusalem," who would not hear and do his word, he could only say mournfully, "How often would I have gathered thy children. . . and ye would not."

It is not religious bringing up, association with Christian people, attendance at Church or class, Bible reading, Bible knowledge, nor a good moral walk that can make any person fit to appear before the holy One. The one thing needed is heart cleansing. And he who teaches us to pray, "Create in me a clean heart," has provided a fountain, even the precious blood of Christ, applied by the Spirit, through the word, in which all may wash and be clean.

The Lesson Council.

4. *Wherein did the iniquity of the Pharisees consist?*
The manifold hypocrisy against which the seven or eight woes of this chapter are uttered; namely, 1. Keeping people out of the kingdom; 2. Pious extortion; 3. Fanatical proselytism; 4. Impious casualty; 5. Sacrificing justice and mercy to legal technicality; 6. Outward bonnet of purity united with gross inward corruption; 7. Professed honoring of murdered prophets and saints, while plotting murderous designs against Jesus.—*M. S. Terry, D.D.*

The iniquity of the Pharisees consisted in making a pretense of uncommon holiness and a fair outward show of obedience and humanity, while inwardly their hearts were full of that corruption which hated divine truth, which spurned God's messengers of mercy, and would not even suffer the messengers to live.—*A. M.*

5. *How could the blood of Abel come upon that generation?*

There is a sense in which the sins of all the past generations are visited upon the present. Each age is in part the resultant of the vices of all the ages back of it. The crime of Cain wrought its effect upon the next age, and that upon the succeeding. The results of forty centuries were gathered upon the head of the Jews in that age.—*W. B.*

6. *Who was Zacharias, the son of Barachias?*

The only ground for this question is in the fact that Zacharias the son of Barachias was a prophet and not a martyr, while Zecharias the son of Jehoiada was slain by command of the king. 2 Chron. 24. 20-22. This is doubtless a mistake that has crept into the text of Matthew. The legend of the blood of Zecharias remaining on the pavement of the court of the temple for two hundred and fifty years was well-known in the time of Christ, and the name of Zecharias son of Jehoiada, as a famous martyr, was as well-known then as that of Stephen now.—*Rev. A. D. Vail, D.D.*

Five different historical persons have been proposed for him, whom we will consider in their chronological order: 1. That he was Zechariah the son of the high-priest Jehoiada, slain in the temple under Joash (2 Chron. 24. 20-22); and that his father's name has been changed to Berechiah by an error of copyists. 2. That he was Zechariah the son of Jerebchiah in the time of Isaiah (Isa. 8. 2); but there is no mention of his violent death. 3. That he was the prophet Zechariah the son of Berechiah, in the reign of Darius (Zech. 1. 1), a different person from the prophet Zechariah in Uzziah's day (2 Chron. 26. 5); but there is no evidence that either of these was martyred. 4. That he was Zacharias the father of John the Baptist, who, if Origen says correctly (in commenting on the passage), was slain in the temple; but there is no proof that his father's name was Barachias. 5. That he was Zacharias the son of Baruch, slain, according to Josephus (*Wars of the Jews*, 4. 5. 4), by the Zealots in the temple; but this was under Vespasian, and Jesus therefore could not have been referred to it. Of all these identifications the first is decidedly the most probable, as it is indeed the only clear or scriptural instance available; occurring, moreover, near the close of the last book of the Hebrew Bible, as does Abel near the beginning of the first.—*James Strong, S. T. D.*

The Zechariah who was stoned in the court of the temple, as narrated in 2 Chron. 24. 20-22.—*M. S. Terry.*

Cambridge Notes.

Our Lord here solemnly and publicly sums up words spoken earlier in private. For the subjects of his denunciation see Schurer (*Jewish People*), §§ 25, 26). Briefly, the scribes, or "lettered men," were the repositories of the law, both written (Moses) and oral ("tradition of the elders"). Their work was "1) the more careful theoretical development of the law itself; 2) teaching it to their pupils; 3) its practical administration, as learned assessors in courts of justice." Most were Pharisees (comp. Mark 2. 16, R. V.), but they are often associated with the Sadducean "chief priests." Chap. 13. 52, and ver. 34 below, preserve the original

meaning of *Ex* Pharisees (Per representative expressed a rigid adherence to their law. Ho Christism ("pity) mainly checking doctrine is and by St. Pan urrection, deni (Zakotites, or dependent on 22. 31. All the which made the importance of prejudiced") er "faults of te reaches far bey arraigning to VER. 23. Woe." One of their inily science t The pentateuch explicit as to tit tions for the Lake 18. 12 (R. of the law to the saw it. Micah's titling were no science. VER. clean. Comp. 7. 4) Fall from their own tre The question he considered is assured. V year to save persons whom unconscioquity, strictly clamant! Va for the deeds of rial. Yet part of apart for the pu Men rarely wish a few days the VER. 31. Sons. VER. 32. Comp of the sentence (R. V.). God's their fathers' cr nunciation, chap come and gone, "flee." VER. 31 In the earlier sp "Wisdom of God "Word of God," the title of a lost degradation of a Jewish Church men with an ex men. Versed in Scribes. Equippe word. All alike gifts. Comp. Ep Acts 7. 59; 12. 2 of Jesus and James in the Comp. Acts 22.

meaning of Ezra's title, "Student of Scripture." The Pharisees (Perushim-separatists) "were the orthodox representatives of post-exilic Judaism." Their name expressed a rigid exclusiveness and an uncompromising adherence to the national independence and the letter of their law. Here they are lineal descendants of the Chasidim ("pietists"), whose obstinate legalism eventually checkmated Judas the Maccabee. Their system of doctrine is expressly approved by our Lord (ver. 3) and by St. Paul. Acts 23, 6. They believed in the resurrection, denied by their opponents, the Sadducees (Zadokites, or priestly caste), whose faith was mainly dependent on the letter of the pentateuch. Comp. chap. 22, 31. All the more deadly, then, was the hypocrisy which made their orthodoxy worse than useless. The importance of this denunciation—in which some "unprejudiced" critics, ignoring verses 37, 38, have traced "faults of temper" and "Jewish bitterness!"—reaches far beyond the limited sphere of the Pharisee, arraiging to all time the fend of religious hypocrisy. VER. 23. *Woe.* "Alas for you!" a cry of sorrow. *Tithe.* One of their innumerable points of casuistry, in which lofty science the Pharisees rivaled Pascal's Jesuits. The pentateuch (for example, Lev. 27, 30) was not very explicit as to tithes, and the Pharisees either made distinctions for themselves or tithed all they acquired Luke 18, 12 (R. V.). *Mercy.* What an unfamiliar side of the law to them! Yet it would seem that Balaam saw it. Micah 6, 8. *The other.* Even the trifles of the tithing were not indifferent when really due to conscience. VER. 24. The creatures were both unclean. Comp. chap. 19, 24. VER. 25. See Mark 7, 4 *Full from.* The practice by which they filled their own treasures. VER. 26. Comp. chap. 7, 5. The question of external cleanness cannot even be considered until the purity of the contents is assured. VER. 27. Tombs were whitewashed every year to save passers by from defilement by stepping on them unconsciously. Comp. Luke 11, 44. VER. 28. *Iniquity,* strictly "lawlessness." They the law's official champions! VER. 29. A Jewish saying deprecated this, for the deeds of the righteous were their fittest memorial. Yet part of the temple offerings were definitely set apart for the purpose. VER. 30. *Say,* sincerely enough. Men rarely wish to repeat their ancestors' sins. Yet in a few days they were about to eclipse them all. VER. 31. *Sons.* Yes, the heredity was *spiritual.* VER. 32. Comp. Gen. 15, 16; 1 Pet. 3, 12. The irony of the sentence is like that of chap. 21, 45 and 50. (R. V.). God's patience would only make them crown their fathers' crimes. VER. 33 recalls the Baptist's denunciation, chap. 3, 7. Elijah and the Messiah had come and gone, but they had not stirred a step to "flee." VER. 34. What majesty in that emphatic *I!* In the earlier speech (Luke 11, 49) this is said by the "Wisdom of God," a conception very near that of the "Word of God." There is no reason for supposing it the title of a lost prophecy. *Scribes.* He attacked the degradation of a noble office. The ministry of the Jewish Church was to be revived. *Prophets.* Rare men with an exceptional awakening mission. *Wise men.* Versed in the practical wisdom of godliness. *Scribes.* Equipped for teaching by the study of the word. All alike were *sent* by Jesus, but with different gifts. Comp. Eph. 4, 11. The priesthood became the privilege of *all* Christ's people. 1 Pet. 2, 9; Rev. 1, 6, 5, 10 (R. V.). *Kill.* As Stephen and (indirectly) James. Acts 7, 59; 12, 2. *Crucify.* As Simeon, "brother" of Jesus and successor of his martyred brother James in the "bishopric" of Jerusalem. *Sourge.* Comp. Acts 22, 19; 26, 11. Like modern mosques,

the synagogues were used as courts of law. *Persecute.* Comp. Acts 9, 1; 13, 50; 14, 19, etc. VER. 35. They were deliberately adopting the crimes of history as their own. Comp. chap. 27, 25, with Acts 5, 28. *Shed. Lit.* "being shed;" it still cried to heaven. It was believed that Zechariah's blood was never stanch'd till the temple fell. *From . . . to.* From beginning to end of the Jewish canon, in which Chronicles stood last. Comp. Gen. 4, 10, and 2 Chron. 24, 22. *Son of Baruch.* Properly, this describes the "minor prophet" so named, but the subject of these words was son of Jehoiada. Either 1) Jehoiada, who died at 130, was *grandfather* of Zechariah; or 2) the patronymic, omitted in Luke 11, 51, and in one great MS. here, is due to a copyist's confusion between the two Zechariahs—helped perhaps by the memory of a Zacharias, son of Baruch, murdered in the temple forty years later. *Sanctuary.* That is, the temple building, the holy place and holiest. *Altar,* of burnt-offering, in the priests' court. VER. 36. Read Josephus to see how. VER. 37. *Killeth . . . stoneth.* Chap. 21, 35. *Hen.* Converts to Judaism were said to come "under the wings of the Shekinah." VER. 38. *Your house,* no longer mine. Jer. 12, 7. The word "desolate" here and in Luke 13, 35 is due to some copyist's misunderstanding. Here (chap. 24, 1) he leaves the temple finally, as far as public visits are concerned. In the solitary paschal night he may have led his disciples thither again for the discourse of John 15. (See Westcott.) VER. 39. *See.* That is, as a teacher; henceforth he only talked with his own. *Blessed.* Following the children they had scorned. Chap. 21, 15.

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

It would be well to draw a diagram of the general ground-plan of the temple, omitting details, and showing its courts and prominent buildings. Point out that Jesus probably taught in the court of the women. . . . Give a word-picture of the scene; the Saviour, the disciples (Judas among them, watching for his chance); the scribes, Pharisees, multitude around. . . . Notice now this rebuke and warning. It was given, 1) Boldly, 2) Publicly, before all, not behind his enemies' backs. They might have answered if they dared. 3) By one who saw the heart, as we cannot see it. 4) Tenderly, and with love. It may be read in such a tone as to show no bitter, but a sorrowful, spirit. 5) Notice, too, that at the close he gives hope even for his enemies. . . . What now were the sins for which the Pharisees were rebuked? Search the lesson, find them, and define them. . . . Show how the same sins are committed now. . . . Notice the illustrations given in the lesson. Get the scholars to point them out and show their application. . . . What penalties are here named as results of sin? . . . How may these penalties be escaped? See the last verse of the lesson.

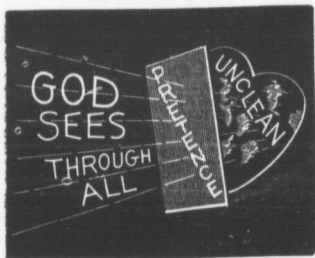
References. FREEMAN. Ver. 27: Whitewashed tombs, 702. Ver. 29: Decorated tombs, 703. Ver. 34: Discipline of the synagogue, 656.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

19. How does the Lord teach us by his Spirit?
All the Scriptures were written under the Holy Spirit's inspiration; and he who inspired them will show their meaning to such as humbly ask him.
20. What do you mean by the Holy Spirit's inspiration?
That he put it into the minds of holy men to write, and instructed them how to write.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



This is a lesson on hypocrisy, or pretense. The Saviour rebuked this sin more than any other. It is represented on the board as something to cover up the condition of the heart. The all-seeing eye of God penetrates through all pretense. He is not deceived. Have the scholars read the following Scripture selections: Jer. 17. 9; 13. 23; 2. 22; Micah 6. 6, 7; Isa. 64. 6; Psa. 49. 7, 9; 143. 2; Eph. 1. 7; 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20.

DIRECTIONS FOR COLORS. Riys, white; screen, yellow; heart, red; words, white, shaded with blue.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *God knows the heart.*

INTRODUCTORY. Print "Pharisee" on the board. Talk familiarly about Pharisees, how they looked, dressed, and acted. The children will be interested in hearing some of the minute ways in which they kept the law. Perhaps they will think them very good people to be so careful about keeping the law of God. But Jesus called them by a strange name. (Print "Hypocrite" on the board.) Jesus could not make a mistake, for he could see all that was in the hearts of these men.

THREE QUESTIONS. 1. What is a hypocrite? 2. What does God think of hypocrites? 3. How can we be true in the sight of God?

1. Tell story of two little cousins, Gertie and May. They both belonged to a mission-band. Gertie lived in a large, fine house, here. [Make square to stand for Gertie's home.] May lived in this much smaller house. The children were asked to earn the pennies they gave, or save them from money given them to spend. May always had some pennies to give which she had earned. When the leader of the band asked how she earned them she would tell modestly. Gertie was selfish, and wanted to please self first. So she did not earn or save pennies, but asked mamma for them. Yet she wanted to seem to be as unselfish as May. So, when she asked for ten cents, or five cents, to take to missionary meeting, she would say, "Please give it to me." Then she would call it her own, and tell the teacher she saved it from her own money. She wanted to seem to be what she was not, unselfish and loving. Gertie was a hypocrite, or one who pretends.

2. Print "Woe" above "Hypocrite." This means sorrow and suffering. A hypocrite will surely be punished, because God sees, if no one else does. Show a gay, pretty box. Open, and show dirt and rags. This is like a hypocrite—fair outside, but vile within. Jesus said to the Pharisees, "How can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Unless we are true, God cannot be pleased with us.



Jesus is the only true One. Little May had asked Jesus to live in her heart; Gertie had not. May could not be selfish or untrue, for she knew Jesus would not stay with her if she were. The way we can be true is to take Jesus for our Truth. Ask him to come to our hearts and make them clean and pure. Call for Golden Text, and impress it.

our hearts and make them clean and pure. Call for Golden Text, and impress it.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

A stir in the old cemetery. Simon, the Pharisee, is standing before that sepulcher.

"It must be whitened," he says. "It shall be fair and seemly."

He wipes away the dust, and then beautifies with color. He continues to take away discolorations and then whitens, till at last how fair seems the old sepulcher! Simon goes to another memorial. "Some old prophet remembered here!" he murmurs. "Somebody stoned to death! Noble soul!"

It is streaked by the rain and disfigured by the dust, but he scrapes and chinks, whitening patiently every where till the sepulcher stands out fair and comely. Simon goes through the cemetery. The sepulchers at last are white as Hermon's drifts of snow.

Now, Simon, look within these sepulchers. He raises some stony door, lets in a searching beam of golden light that like a key shall unlock and reveal the mystery. But how quickly he lets that stone go back into its place, and with what a startled air he steps back! Only corruption and the bones of the dead within! Simon, Simon, that is your hypocritical self. Who pays more tithes or makes longer prayers or is more scrupulous in wearing his phylacteries than you? And yet whose heart is more of a sepulcher in which are corruption-heaps of avarice and injustice, dishonesty and impurity? Your grandfather helped stone that old prophet, whose tomb you garnished, and if you had been alive in that day you would have had a stone for the poor old martyr.

A viper in the path! Just there at the base of that rock! Look out! Don't you see him? His eyes are like a sleepy fire. He is lying motionless. But look out! He is sly. He is stirring. He is raising his head. He is protruding his fangs, and now he darts forward. Ah, that old Pharisee has stung you!

* * * * *

A rabble in the streets.

And see! They are pressing hard some victim of their spite, one who had faithful words for their sin, but would die to save them. They are hustling him away to some place of punishment! There, fast falls the cruel scourge on the helpless sufferer, or in a more solitary spot he hangs upon the cross, his outstretched arms pleading for mercy. And there in the temple is Zacharias, the son of Barachias. Between the temple and the altar he stands, and his persecutors like a pack of wolves fall upon him. Down, down, before their blows, he goes, till at last his bleeding face makes in death its mute appeal to heaven.

* * * * *

And now witness our Saviour saying last warnings to heartless Jerusalem. He looks about him. He seems to bring all the people before him in his all-comprehending, loving look. It is like the mother-bird reaching out its wings to its young. How they run to that shelter! And Christ with his great mother-heart would have gathered Jerusalem to his arms and shel-

tered it from salem turn lift him to ness of C death. Al hope and

A. D. 30.]

Matt. 23.]



Son of man 45 Who th lord hath m in due

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Verses 42.
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tered it from the fiery storm of the future. But Jerusalem turns from him. Jerusalem will thrust him out, lift him to his cross, and leave him to the awful loneliness of Calvary, to its darkness, to its agony, to its death. And Jerusalem in turn shall be exiled from hope and mercy. A foreign soldiery will girdle it and

shut it up to famine and pestilence. It shall hear the thunder of war. It shall go down under the trampling heel of the victor. O solitude and night and woe, when Jerusalem shall be an outcast, and, reaching up its pleading hands, cry for the sight of him and call him blessed that cometh in the name of the Lord.

A. D. 30.]

LESSON III. CHRISTIAN WATCHFULNESS.

[April 15.]

Matt. 24. 42-51.

[*Assign to memory verses 42-44.*]



42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

43 But know this, that if the good-man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

44 Therefore be ye also ready: for ye know not such an hour as ye think not the son of man cometh.

45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

46 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

49 And shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of.

51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

General Statement.

On the afternoon of the Tuesday before the pass-over, soon after uttering the burning rebuke of the last lesson, Jesus turned from the temple for the last time. Followed by his disciples he walked out of the Beautiful Gate, and across the marble floor of the Court of the Gentiles. Once more he passed under the columns of Solomon's Porch, out of the Gate Shushan, and into the valley of the brook Kedron. The disciples called his attention to the gigantic stones in the eastern wall; and the Saviour solemnly answered that the time was near at hand when every stone should be overturned, and the stately house of God should become a desolation. Slowly the little group climbed the Mount of Olive, and at its summit paused to look once more upon the city, glowing under the setting sun. In that hour Christ gave to his disciples an extended prophecy of his own coming, of the fall of Jerusalem,

and of the end of the world. In his address, events near and far are brought together, for his words reached from the coming desolation of the city down to the final judgment. The key-note of his warning was the word "watch." He bade his followers be ready at any moment for the sounding of the trumpet and the neither man nor angel, not even the Son himself, knew the time, which was locked in the secret counsels of his Father's will. He bade them remember that his kingdom was to be like a household, whose Master is absent in a distant land, and whose servants are left with their several duties, which they are to fulfill until their lord returns at some hour unknown and unexpected. So stands Christ's Church in expectant attitude, with face uplifted toward the heavens, saying, "Even so; come, Lord Jesus!"

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 42. Watch. We are to watch over ourselves, to keep our spiritual nature alert; against temptation; that our adversary may not obtain advantage over us; in the duty which our Master has intrusted to us, and for the coming of the Lord. **For ye know not.** That Christ will come is an article of the true Christian creed; and because we know not *when* he will come is an argument for being always ready. **Your Lord doth come.** There are three senses in which this expression is used: 1. Christ came in the end of the Jewish state, when the new dispensation finally took the place of the old. 2. He will come in the final success of the Gospel, when all the earth shall be evangelized. 3. He will come finally in the judgment day, to be seen by all mankind. In all of these meanings we find Christ's coming or advent mentioned in these chapters. (1) *He who lives aright is ready to meet his Lord.*

live as to be always ready for it. The extravagance and follies of some who emphasize this previous doctrine of the Church should not lead us to utterly ignore spirit, we do not know, but that he will come is certain. **As ye think not.** It is idle then for any man to compute either the day, the year, or even the century when Christ will come. But it is just as foolish, in the light of Scripture, to declare that he will not come.

43. But know this. "You do not know the hour; but you may know this." **The good-man of the house.** Rev. Ver., "the master of the house." **Had known in what watch.** The Roman division of time from sunset to sunrise into four watches was prevalent among the Jews. Each watch was from two to three hours long. **The thief would come.** Christ often illustrated the suddenness and unexpectedness of his second coming to the approach of a thief, and the apostle uses the same comparison in 1 Thess. 5, 2, and 3. **His house to be broken up.** Literally, "to be digged through," a natural expression when the houses are largely built of a mud cement, through which a burglar could dig his way more easily than he could force the door.

45. Who then. The question comes to every disciple, as a motive to faithfulness. **A faithful and wise servant.** Faithful in the trust left with him, and wise in watching over his master's interests. **Whom his lord hath made ruler.** His lord here is the Saviour, professed follower of Christ who by appointment, by social position, or by ability would acquire an influence in his Church. **Over his household.** The household of Christ is his Church on earth. **To give them meat.** That is, food. Let it be remembered that the rulers in the Church do not live for their own gain or honor or ease, but for the good of others.

46. Blessed is that servant. He shall be blessed in his own happiness in doing his Master's will; and he shall be rewarded with his Master's favor. **Shall find so doing.** And equally blessed he who is always ready, even though his Lord does not come in his day of life.

44. Be ye also ready. We are not to look upon the coming of the Lord as that of an enemy to be feared, but of a friend whom we would welcome, and for whom we would be prepared. This does not require that Christians should always be talking or thinking of the Saviour's coming, but that they should so

47. Verily. The sentence with which Jesus was wont to preface an important declaration. **He shall make him ruler.** Rev. Ver., "will set him over all that he hath." Thus in the parable of the talents the faithful ones be ruler over all. But how can *all* the faithful ones be ruler over *all*? Simply in the fact that in the kingdom of God each recipient enjoys the benefit of all the others' blessings. (2) *In the divine riches, no one loses by another's gain.*

48. But and if. The Rev. Ver. omits "and." That

evil servant. The professed disciple of Christ who lives unworthily, or uses office in the Church for his own advantage. Strictly speaking, such a one is rather a *falsely* than an evil servant. **Should say in his heart. My lord delayeth his coming.** Thinking that his absent master cannot or will not call him to account, he begins to transgress his commands, to neglect duty, to use his position for his own advantage, and to wrong his fellow-servants. (3) *If men really believed that Christ will come to execute justice they would not disobey him.* (4) *The germ of all evil-doing is selfish.*

49. **Shall begin to smite his fellow-servants.** Primarily, the application may be to Church officials, as "some popes and bishops, who "lord it over Christ's heritage," and wrong those under them. "But there is a wider reference to all men, for all men are equally responsible to God, and our fellow-men are our fellow-servants." (5) *There may be distinctions of rank among men but there are none before God.* (6) *Feilers must meet their account in the judgment, as well as us who rule.* **Drink with the drunken.** Not only doing wrong to God's cause, but also wasting the opportunities given by God in pleasure, and leading an animal ex-

istence. Thus three sins are laid at the door of this evil servant; unbelief, pride, and pleasure-seeking. There have been periods in the history of the church on earth when this was but a faint picture of its condition.

50. **The lord of that servant.** The wicked servant has a lord, even though he does not know it. **Shall come.** Men may disbelieve in Christ's coming, but their disbelief will not prevent it. **When he looketh out.** The unlooked-for coming of Christ will be a welcome event to his true saints, but a day of terror to the unfaithful. To those who have died or may die before the advent of Christ, he comes in their summons to another world, and so this parable applies to all.

51. **Shall cut him asunder.** The cruel customs of the ancient world, in which men were often sawn asunder, are used to represent the spiritual penalties which must be understood in our bodily state. **Hypocrite with the hypocrites.** Men who pretended to a godliness which they did not possess. Weeping and gnashing of teeth. The tokens of extreme agony which all must endure who knowingly disobey their Lord's will. There is no hint, in these words, of another probation to those who have wasted the opportunities of this life.

HOME READINGS.

- M. Christian watchfulness. Mat. 24. 36-41.
 Th. Beginning of the discourse. Matt. 24. 1-14.
 W. Continuation of the discourse. Matt. 24. 42-51.
 Th. The Christian armor. Eph. 6. 10-18.
 F. Watch and remember. Deut. 4. 1-9.
 S. Watch and pray. Rev. 3. 1-6.
 S. Watch and repent. Mark 13. 25-37.

GOLDEN TEXT.

And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.
 Mark 13. 37.

LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 107, Dominion Hymnal.
 Stand up! stand up for Jesus
 Ye soldiers of the cross!
- No. 128, Dominion Hymnal.
 A charge to keep I have,
 A God to glory.
- No. 108, Dominion Hymnal.
 Am I a soldier of the cross,
 A follower of the Lamb?

TIME.—30 A. D. The Wednesday of Passion Week.

PLACE.—The Mount of Olives.

RULERS.—Same as before.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—Fidelity.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Faithful Servant.

To whom were the teachings of this lesson directed?
 What was the great duty that was here inculcated?
 Why were the disciples bid to "watch?"
 How had Jesus in this same teaching described his own coming?
 What impression did this figure, of a householder and a thief, make upon Peter? 2 Pet. 3. 10.
 How did Peter explain the apparent long delay of Christ's coming? 2 Pet. 3. 8.
 What is the reward which earthly masters give for fidelity?
 By what parable did Christ very soon teach the nature of heavenly reward for fidelity?

2. The Evil Servant.

What will be the language of the unfaithful servant?
 On what ground will he base his wicked action?
 Give the steps in wickedness which characterize the evil servant.
 Among whom does Jesus here class the intemperate, or, as he calls them, "the drunken?"
 Is there to be any mercy for such an evil servant?
 What is to be his portion?
 Is there a hint here of another opportunity for watchful and faithful service?
 What is the evident teaching of Matthew's Gospel concerning future punishment?

Practical Teachings.

There is nothing more sure than that Christ is coming again. We may not live to see him come in clouds. But to each of us his will come? When? We cannot tell. Watch therefore, that ye may not come into temptation, and be like unto them, who say, Peace and quietness shall be unto us for ever. Watchfulness will make us patient, faithful, honest, trustworthy, gentle, temperate, discreet, guarded, and ready for what may come.
 Here is blessing for fidelity. Here is weeping for infidelity. Which is yours? Once more, watch.

Hints for Home Study.

1. Look at the prophecy in vers. 1 and 2 of this chapter.
2. Find when this prophecy was fulfilled, and how.
3. Find what led to the discourse of Jesus.
4. Write down the things that a watchman, stationed at a post of danger, ought to be. For example, a flagman at a railroad crossing; or a sentinal on a rampart; or a picket outside a camp.
5. Find how many of these qualities are shown in Christ's picture of the faithful servant.
6. Commit to memory all these verses.
7. Find and learn three other texts which say "watch" besides ver. 42.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. The Faithful Servant.

What duty is here urged?
 Why should we always watch?
 What should we do besides watching? Luke 21. 36.
 What is said about the Goodman watching against a thief?
 What would he thus have prevented?
 For what ought we to be always ready?
 What question is asked about a wise servant?
 What servant is pronounced blessed?
 What honor will his lord give him?
 What reason will he give for thus honoring his servant? Matt. 25. 21.
 Upon whom is the duty of watching enjoined?
 (GOLDEN TEXT.)

2. The Evil Servant.

What would an evil servant say?
 To whom would he say this?
 What cruelty would he begin to practice?
 What bad company would he keep?
 What surprise would overtake him?
 What punishment would his lord inflict?
 Where would he assign him his portion?
 What principle justifies this sentence? Luke 16. 10.

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That the son of man is coming again?
2. That no man knows when he will come?
3. That we ought always to be ready for his coming?

Hints for Home Study.

Find a parable about faithful and wicked servants.
 Write out all the New Testament passages you can find about the Lord's coming again.

QUESTIONS.

What did the Lord say to the wicked servant?
 What can we know of it?
 What was the text?
 When do we master do?
 What can we do?
 What will be the result?
 Why does he not ready for?
 Why does he not ready for?
 What will Jesus' Kingdom be like?
 Why? Because?
 Why? Because?
 What does it mean?
 What will Jesus' Kingdom be like?
 What will be the result?
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 What will be the result?

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ANALYTICAL

- I. THE FAITHFUL
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 II. THE EVIL S
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QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What did Jesus tell his disciples? That some day he was coming to judge the earth.

What command did he give them? "Watch, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."
What word did Jesus leave for us? (Repeat Golden Text.)

When does a thief break into a house? When the master does not know he is coming.

What could the master do if he knew the thief was coming? Watch, and prevent all the trouble.

What will the coming of Jesus bring to all who are not ready for him? Fear and trouble.

Why does he tell us to watch always? That we may be ready to receive him.

What will we do if we are watching and waiting for Jesus? Keep our hearts and lives right in his sight.

What does Jesus call us? His servants.

Why? Because he has given us work to do.

Why does Jesus call the unfaithful servants hypocrites? They slight his work, because he is away.

What does he expect of each one of us? To work as honestly as if he were standing by.

When may Jesus come? At any moment.

What will he bring to those who are faithful? Blessing and honor.

What will the unfaithful servant receive at his hands? Swift and terrible punishment.

Words with Little People.

There is a work for you to do.
It may not be what you like, but if God gives it to you, you must accept it.

It may be only little things he wants done lovingly and well.

If you forget it or neglect it, if you do it tardily or unwillingly, if you love your own ease best, you are a wicked servant, and great will be your punishment.

If you are faithful and earnest, if you put work first and self last, if you work for love of Jesus, you are a wise servant, and great will be your reward.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. What does Christ say might happen to the householder who did not guard his house? It might be broken up.

2. What did he say would happen to the evil servant who neglected his duty? He would be cut asunder.

3. What lesson did Jesus teach from these two illustrations? Therefore be ye also ready.

4. What did he call such a one as was always ready for his coming? A faithful and wise servant.

5. Were these teachings meant for more than the twelve to whom he spoke? "And what I say unto you," etc.

THE CHURCH CATECHISM.

40. What example does Christ's life afford us? An example of perfect goodness and holiness.

41. What did Christ suffer for us? "He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Phil. 2. 8.

42. Why did Christ thus suffer and die? To offer to divine justice full atonement for the sins of the world.

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

Two Servants.

I. THE FAITHFUL SERVANT.

1. Watchful. "Watch therefore," v. 42.
"Let us watch and be sober." 1 Thess. 5. 6.

2. Wise. "Faithful and wise," v. 45.
"As good stewards," 1 Pet. 4. 10.

3. Working. "To give them meat," v. 45.
"Be instant in season." 2 Tim. 4. 2.

II. THE EVIL SERVANT.

1. Careless. "My lord delayeth," v. 48.
"In the last days scoffers," 2 Pet. 3. 3.

2. Haughty. "To smite," v. 49.
"Lords over God's heritage," 1 Pet. 5. 3.

3. Dissolute. "Drink... drunken," v. 49.
"Count it pleasure to riot," 2 Pet. 2. 13.

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

"Watch!"

1. We should watch for the Lord's coming; not trying to find when he will come, but living always in readiness for his coming, vs. 42-44.

2. We should watch as servants and stewards of Christ over his cause, which he has left in our keeping. Every one of us is, in some sense, a "ruler over the household" of our absent Lord, v. 45.

3. We should watch for opportunities of doing good to our fellow-men, especially to those who are our fellow-servants toward Christ, v. 45.

4. We should watch against unbelief, which is in danger of arising in our hearts because Christ does not come, and his cause does not seem to be under his care. To the eyes of most men the Lord does not seem to watch over his Church, v. 48.

5. We should watch against selfishness and pride and the spirit of self-seeking, regarding the world as made for us, and men as existing for our commands, v. 49.

6. We should watch against living for pleasure merely. God has placed life in our keeping not for selfish enjoyment, but for the doing of good, v. 49.

English Teacher's Notes.

THERE are three kinds of watching: 1. When information reached King James I. of England that a sudden blow was preparing for those who should assemble on a certain day in the houses of Parliament, he immediately caused a watch to be set, and this resulted in the discovery of Guy Fawkes and the "Gunpowder Plot." That is the watching of caution. 2. If you were to enter a school-room whence the teacher was absent, and find perfect silence and every head bent over the books and slates, you would say, "The teacher is evidently expected back at any moment, the scholars are watching for him;" that is the watching of duty. 3. When the queen of England passed through the street of her capital on the occasion of her jubilee, crowds were waiting to see her. They did not count the waiting time long or dull. They listened eagerly for the distant sounds of joy which told she was near at hand. They were not distracted by other things. Every ear, every eye was ready. That was the watching of desire.

The two first form the subject of our passage for to-day. The third is touched upon in the passage immediately succeeding it. But while the two latter are illustrated from both sides, a double picture being given in each, it is not so with the first. There is only one picture to illustrate that—the picture of the man who was unconscious of the approach of danger. And there is a reason for this.

1. The picture shows us the thief approaching the unwatched house, and finding an easy entrance. For want of watching the dwelling of the careless owner is broken through (Rev. Ver.), and his property stolen. He was not ready to meet the danger, and therefore ruin has come upon him.

This is one picture of the man who is not ready when Christ the Lord returns. The Lord says, "Behold, I come as a thief." Rev. 16. 15; see also 1 Thess. ver. 2; 2 Pet. 3. 10. But upon whom does he thus come? "If, therefore, thou shalt not watch,

I will come on thee as a thief." Rev. 3. 3. This is a coming fraught with terror and woe. The sinner who would not seek pardon, the unclean who would not be made clean (Rev. 22. 11), the unbeliever who said, "Where is the promise of his coming?" (2 Pet. 3. 4)—to these the coming of Christ will be the knell of ruin.

There is no reverse side to this picture. Let a man take the alarm and fly to the cross for shelter and wash his "robes in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7. 14), and his watching need not be one of caution in the sense of fear—caution in the face of danger. To his own people Christ does not come "as a thief." 1 Thess. 5. 4. They may and should take up the watching of duty and of desire.

2. The second picture has two sides to it. On the one side there is the faithful servant, who in his master's absence is diligently attending to his duties—a picture variously presented in common daily life: in the school-boy whose lesson is studied ready for the teacher's coming; the workman whose task is properly performed when the master's back is turned; the daughter who keeps every thing at home in good order during her mother's absence. Thus the loyal servant of Christ must be about his Master's business because he expects his Master's return, and may look forward to the blessing and the reward pronounced on him "whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing."

The other side of the picture shows us a scene not, alas! altogether unknown in ordinary life—the servant who is unfaithful to his trust, who uses his master's goods as his own, and utterly neglects his master's interests during his absence. Such a servant has his counterpart in many a one who makes a certain Christian profession, who takes the place of a servant of Christ by acknowledging outwardly the Lord's claim upon him, but whose life and labor and love are spent on other things, while the Master's business and the Master's return are utterly left out of sight. To him the coming of Christ means terrible and just retribution.

May each one take to heart the message of our Golden Text, and watch not as those in fear of surprise from an enemy, but as happy servants looking for their Master's return to complete their work and crown it with his approval.

The Lesson Council.

Question 7. What is meant by the coming of the Son of man?

As generally and prophetically used by our Lord and his apostles, it means the judicial re-appearance of the Messiah in a twofold sense, the nearer event being (as usual in Scripture) typical of the later: 1. At the downfall of Jerusalem, and the consequent breaking up of Jewish power. 2. At the end of the world, and the final determination of the destinies of all human beings. These two thoughts are somewhat intermingled, but never confounded, in this entire passage (Matt. 24. 1-25. 46), the dividing line between them being at Matt. 25. 31, where Mark (13. 37) and Luke (21. 36) end the dis-

course, as they refer only to the first event. Compare Matt. 24. 3, where the phrase, "and of the end of the world," occurs, with Mark 13. 1-4; Luke 21. 5-7, where the fate of the temple and the city is exclusively mentioned.—James Strong.

Cambridge Notes.

Despite the similarity which obviously exists between this discourse and those in Luke 12 and 17, we are safest in regarding them as distinct. Our Lord seems to have deliberately adopted the practice of contemporary oral teachers in repeating his words on different occasions, so as to impress them the more forcibly upon his hearers. The present chapter contains some of the darkest sayings in the Bible, but they lie mainly in the first part. Especially the word "immediately," in ver. 29, has been used very plausibly against our Lord's omniscience, reducing some apologetes to desperate shifts of exegesis. All is made clear by this analysis, given from Prof. Milligan's most convincing work on the Apocalypse (Macmillan, 1886). Vers. 7-14 present a general outline of the history of the Church and the world to the second coming. The subject is then resumed under two special aspects: the Church in her relation 1) to the evil world, vers. 15-22; 2) to the evil in herself, vers. 23-28. In vers. 29-31 the second coming is described, following "immediately after" the world's last days. After ver. 6 all references to the fall of Jerusalem are strictly typical. Finally, these truths are practically applied; first, those relating to the question about the temple, vers. 32-35 (answer in vers. 4-6), and then, those in the reply concerning the consummation of the age, ver. 36; 25. 46. The Apocalypse is to be regarded as an inspired expansion of this discourse of Jesus. For other points Prof. Milligan's book should be consulted.

VER. 38 refers to the end of the dispensation whose beginning is predicted in ver. 34. *Neither the Son, Comp. Mark 13. 32.* Omitted by timid copyists in the more widely read Gospel. Jesus "emptied himself" (Phil. 2. 7) even of his divine knowledge (comp. Luke 2. 52), but only of what was inconsistent with human limitations. Man, as such, cannot comprehend eternity. He can only see the future in perspective, like a landscape seen from a high mountain, contrasted with the bird's-eye view. The God-man saw it with divine clearness but with human perspective. We dare not speculate further, only remembering that his limitations must teach us our own. VER. 37, Comp. 1 Pet. 3. 20; 2 Pet. 2. 5. As before that primeval world-judgment, a faithful Church would be witnessing to an apostate one—the Jerusalem of true believers to the Babylon of hypocrites, Protestant, papist, or heathen. The end presupposes (see Luke 21. 24, Comp. ver. 14 and chap. 28. 19) that every Gentile knows the Gospel as every Jew knew the law. VER. 38. The picture of a careless and worldly life. VER. 39. That is *could* not know. VERS. 40, 41. Complete outward similarity, complete inward contrast, illustrated also in many parables. *Taken.* As "elect" (ver. 31). Mill. The common Oriental hand-quern, worked by two women, usually slaves. VER. 42. The precepts have a twofold application. *Individually* we watch for his coming at death; as *members of the Church*, for the end. The Church can never know "on what kind of day" it will come, and must constantly prepare. Vers. 38, 48, comp. Mark 13. 35, describes aspects of the mystical Babylon. VER. 43. Comp. Rev. 3. 3; 16. 15; 1 Thess. 5. 2, 4; 2 Pet. 3. 10. The householder did not even know the thief was coming at all, or he would have watched.

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2 Peter 1. 21. M
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Why should Christians need warning more exact? For the word "watch" (unconnected with the verb "watched") see note on chap. 14, 25. *Broken*. Lit. "dog." Oriental houses were most easily entered through the earthen or loose stone wall. VER. 45. This slave was a steward (Luke 16. 1), intrusted with the general oversight and especially the feeding of the slave household. Note the spiritual application. A definite Christian ministry is not exclusively or even mainly intended. VER. 46. So "watchfulness" is *active*, a keeping awake for duty. VER. 47. Comp. Luke 19. 17, 19; chap. 19. 28; 2 Tim. 2. 12; Rev. 30. 4. Note that every faithful steward has this authority given him: the rule of one does not exclude another. Comp. the race, in which all win the prize. The reward consisted in the opportunity of higher service. VER. 48. Comp. Psa. 10. 4 and 11; 2 Pet. 3. 4. VER. 49. *Begin*. Thought at once becomes action. The Dark Ages illustrate this verse abundantly. VER. 51. *Cut him asunder*. Comp. 1 Chron. 20. 3; Heb. 11. 37 (of the traditional martyrdom of Isaiah). He is treated as a "double-minded" hypocrite. (Jas. 1. 8. Unless we adopt the marginal rendering we must suppose in this word and the following clauses the letter of the parable gives way to the spirit, describing the sinner's continuance among those he resembles. The closing words point to the same reality as chap. 22, 13. etc. (see note there).

Hebrew Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Describe the departure of Jesus from the temple, and give an account of his discourse on the Mount of Olives. Show in what senses he used the expression, "Coming of the Lord." Find in this lesson and the verses of the context what we are to watch for, and what we are to watch against. What should be our spirit in looking for the coming of Christ? How should we act in view of it? What sins are warned against in this lesson? ILLUSTRATIONS. Army defeated because one man on guard was asleep; ship lost because the watcher was careless; train wrecked by flag-man failing to give the right signal, etc. Persian poet wrote:

"A thousand years one poor man watched
Beside the gate of paradise,
But while one little nap he snatched
It opened, and shut—ah! was he wise?"

In "Rabbi Karshook's Wisdom," by Robert Browning

"Would a man 'scape the rod?'"
Rabbi Ben Karshook saith,
"See that he turn to God
The day before his death."

"Ay, could a man inquire
When it shall come!" I say.
The Rabbi's eye shoots fire—
"Then let him turn to-day."

References. FREEMAN. Ver. 43: Night-watches, 743; house broken up, 415. Ver. 51: Cutting asunder, 883.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

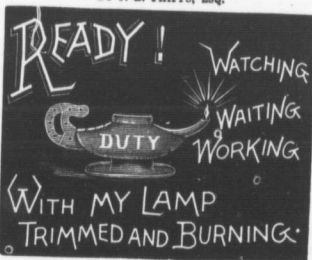
21. How is it proved that the Holy Spirit inspired the Old Testament Scriptures?

Chiefly by the words of our Lord and his Apostles. Matthew xxii. 43. He saith unto them, How then doth David in the Spirit call him Lord?


2 Peter i. 21. Men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



This is a lesson on watchfulness. The lamp represents duty, and it should be always kept trimmed and burning; that is, we should be doing our duty in all the walks of life, performing the work God has given us to do, whether it be great or little. "Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing." We must be able to respond to the summons, "AM ready!" and not cry for more time. Be ye ready.

DIRECTIONS. If this style of lamp is too difficult to draw, make a parallelogram,  and write the word "Lamp" on it. Underneath draw a long line; at one end write "Working," and at the other end "Duty," thus representing the line of duty. If you can use both sides of the blackboard, leave this design to use with next Sunday's lesson.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

It is night. How dark it is around the house! There has been an invasion of the neighborhood by thieves. Master of the house, you would do well to watch to-night! The robbers may come any hour!

"No danger just now," he says; "I will sleep—and watch by and by."

It is soon a silent, slumbering household. No noise but the heavy drip of the dew falling from leaf to leaf of the shrubbery in the shadowy court. It seems so peaceful, retired, secure. But hark! Do you hear those suspicious sounds, those muffled, stealthy blows? It is some one slyly breaking through a wall! Awake, master, awake! O, no; he is dreaming of peace in the midst of invasion. Those blows are more pressing and numerous. Awake, master, awake! Some one has entered the house! A robber is rifling your treasures! A plunderer is filling his arms. A sneak is crawling back through the wall! Awake, awake! Too late! In the morning the master rubs his eyes, confusedly sees that hole, and then gives the alarm.

They rise side by side, those homes where the stewards, Faithful and Faithless, have charge of the estates of their absent lords.

"My master may come any day!" exclaims Faithful. "I must deal justly with my faithful servants. The fields must be well tilled. All obligations must be met. My accounts must be ready for examination."

And then what joy to have the master come! At last he is here! He suddenly has come! It is the twilight hour. The sun is flushing the hills with glory. The contented laborers come from the fields singing their happy harvest songs and bringing their sheaves with them. It is a stewardship of loving care. Without, thrift and peace. Within, a good conscience. Rise,

happy servant! Thy master has come to sup with thee, to honor thee, to crown thee with his golden "Well done!"

But Faithless, this very day he has been sneering at the idea of his master's return.

"The master coming to redress thy wrongs, dost thou affirm?" he says to a child of labor. "Thy hire is not paid to thee? Take that, and that, and that!"

Again and again he swings the lash. He leaves a mourning fellow-servant behind him and hurries to the banquet room. Who there will moan to him of hire held back, of obligations neglected, of fields unprepared? Who here will tell him the master will return? Who sneers again at any thought of the speedy appearance of that absent Lord.

"Now for the banquet!" he cries. "Bring out the dishes that are richest. Set forth the rarest viands, the costliest wines. The master coming! Ha, ha! No sign of that. We will be merry, fellow-banqueters!"

The feast goes on.

The rioters toss off their cups. The mad laugh mounts to the ceiling. Who hears the murmur of the laborer whose hire has been withheld? Who catches the moan of him that the scourge has bruised? Let the feast go on, merrier, louder, madder!

* But look!

Why is that look of sudden surprise in the face of the faithless steward? Why does he drop his cup? Why does he stare with awe-struck eyes at the door of the banquet hall?

There stands his lord and master! He has just returned.

Come off from thy luxurious couch, O Faithless! Stand before the master with his eyes of fire that search and burn! Tell of thy fellow-servants beaten! Tell of thy laborers defrauded! Tell of thy fields uncultivated! Tell of resources squandered, of trust betrayed, of stewardship despised!

O, day of reckoning when the Master returns suddenly!

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *Watching for Jesus.*

INTRODUCTORY. Make a mountain on the board. Print "Mount of Olives." Let some child point out this mountain on the map. Tell that Jesus took his

disciples, [how many had he?] and went to this mountain. He had something to tell them.

We are Jesus's disciples if we are trying to learn of him. He has something to tell us to-day. Who wants to hear it? Who is willing to come away from play, from every thing, and be alone with Jesus a little while, to hear what he will say to us?

THE GOOD SERVANT.

Tell the story (with enough detail to keep the interest of the children) of a man who had a great house, with many people living in it. He had to go away, so he put one of his servants in charge of the house, and told him what to do. He said, "I will come back some day," and then he went away. Tell how the servant thought of his master's words, and tried to act each day as though the master were there. When the master came he was pleased, and gave the good servant who was faithful a reward.

THE EVIL SERVANT.

Again the master went away, and left his house in the care of a servant. For a little while the servant did as the master told him to do: then he said, "It will be a long time before the master will come," and he began to be careless and neglect his work. He thought of himself and his own pleasure, and forgot his master. One day the master came, when the servant was not thinking of it, and found things all wrong, because the bad servant had not obeyed. Then there was sorrow and trouble. Disobedience always makes trouble.

WHO WILL WATCH FOR JESUS?



Make outline of a tower, or pin up a picture of one. Teach that all are servants of the great God. He has given each one something to care for, and he is coming some day when we do not look for him. Then he will see if we are doing his work as he told us to do it.

If we are watching for Jesus we will think of his words and obey them. But if we do not watch we shall forget what he said and do as we please. Little children need to watch for Jesus, in their play as well as in their work. If we forget him we shall be selfish, disagreeable, unloving. What if Jesus should come some day when we are angry! Watch for Jesus!

LESSON IV. THE TEN VIRGINS.

A. D. 30.]

Mat. 25. 1-13.

[Commit to memory verses 10-13.]



1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

Jesus is still sitting with his disciples upon the Mount of Olives. He has been giving to them solemn warnings of events to come, and, as in a dissolving view, things far and near have been brought together—the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world; for in the divine perspective a thousand years are but as one day. He closes his warnings with three impressive

7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil: for our lamps are gone out.

9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

10 And while they went to buy the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

13 Watch therefore: for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

General Statement.

pictures—the parable of the ten virgins, and of the talents, and the scene of the last judgment, which is not a parable, but a prophecy. The first of these pictures is our lesson. In it we see the Oriental wedding-party starting forth with songs and musical instruments from the bride's house for that of the bridegroom. On its way it passes at some friendly mansion where the

bridesmaids assembled, each in on its arrival in the bridegroom. They are awfully prepared and trimmed here, going out, and then; herself. Tho

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bridesmaids are awaiting it. Ten girls are there assembled, each with her lamp ready to join the procession on its arrival. The hours of evening pass, and the bridegroom delays his coming, until all fall asleep. They are awakened by the heralds of the throng, and hastily prepare to take their places. Each one rises and trims her lamp. Half of them find their lamps are going out, and they ask their companions to supply them; but that cannot be, for each has only enough for herself. Those who need must go and buy, or be left in

darkness. They hasten, hoping to reach the bridegroom's hall in time for the feast; but they fail. Those whose lamps are burning enter in; and as the banquet begins the outer court is shut. And it cannot be opened to admit those who were not ready when the bridal party passed their door. Thus does Christ present the important lesson that those who would enter in with him to the marriage supper of the Lamb must obtain the oil of grace before his final coming.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 1. Then. At the time of the Lord's coming, and of the end of the present dispensation, already referred to. **The kingdom of heaven.** God's administration of affairs on the earth in relation to the salvation of men, which is the aim in all God's dealings. The expression may here mean, what it does not always mean, the church on earth. **Ten virgins.** Ten bride-maids, the usual number at a marriage in the higher classes of the Orient. Here they represent the Church, the recognized and pressed followers of Christ, or, as Abbott says, "the disciples as they appear to the world." **Took their lamps.** The weddings of the East are generally held in the evening, and each guest brings his own lamp or torch, as the streets are not lighted. **Went forth to meet.** In the Oriental custom of marriage, the bridegroom, accompanied by his friends, goes to the bride's house, is welcomed by the bride and her maidens, and then all set forth together in joyous procession to the bridegroom's house, where a feast is held, which often lasts a week or longer. Sometimes the bridesmaids wait in a body at some house on the way, and join the procession when the groom, the bride, and the party pass by. **The bridegroom.** Here representing the head of the Church, the Saviour of the world, coming in his glory. Notice how many of the illustrations of Christ's Church are pictures of joyful scenes—a supper, a marriage, a triumphal procession. (1) *God's people are the happy ones of earth.*

2. Five of them. We do not think that any stress is to be laid on the number or the proportion. There than at other times were wise. (3) *The greater question is not "How many are wise," but "Am I among the wise?"* **Were wise.** Thoughtful of the future, and ready for it, as is every one who by faith in Christ and through the enjoyment of grace prepares for a life beyond. (4) *The wise men is he whose plans reach beyond the present state.* **Five were foolish.** Here referring to those who outwardly belong to Christ's Church, but inwardly have no spiritual life; professors, but not possessors, of divine grace. (4) *Every one who sits in church or Sunday-school belongs to one or the other of these two classes.*

3. Foolish took their lamps. The ancient lamp was not unlike a modern gravy-dish, with a wick fastened in its mouth. In the bridal procession it was held up on a handle as a torch. The best interpretation is that which regards the lamps in the parable as the outward appearance of Christians, their profession and influence. But this depends upon the oil, which represents the spiritual endowment within, the grace of God in the heart. **Took no oil with them.** They had such oil as was already burning in the lamps, sufficient for a time, but none for future needs. (5) *What is a lamp without oil, and what is a disciple without grace in the heart?*

4. The wise took oil. As the hour of the bridegroom's coming was uncertain, they showed forethought in taking an extra supply for the replenishing of their lamps when he should appear. (6) *Grace for yesterday will not answer for to-day; we must have a fresh supply for returning needs.* How can we obtain needed grace? Through the means of grace—prayer, the Scriptures, the public and social services of God's house, and the sacraments.

5. While the bridegroom tarried. A hint that the Saviour's coming was not to be so soon as it was expected. **They all slumbered and slept.** As both wise and foolish were sleeping, we may infer that there was nothing wrong in this condition, which simply represents ignorance of the time when Christ comes. (7) *He who has prepared for his Lord's coming is truly watching for it, even while sleeping.*

6. At midnight. The parable purposely represents the call at this hour, which was later than in most marriage feasts, and therefore all the more unexpected. **There was a cry made.** The call of the heralds in the bridal procession, representing the shout and the voice of the archangel at the coming of the Lord. 1 Thess. 4, 16. **Behold, the bridegroom.** It came to the Jews in the Roman invasion, when the Church in every revival and awakening; it will one day break upon the ears of all men when Christ appears; and, in a sense, it comes to every man in the hour of death.

7. Then all those virgins arose. Until the sudden emergency arose, all seemed alike. But the moment of surprise revealed the true character of each one. **Trimmed their lamps.** While they had been sleeping their lamps had been burning, and now the wicks required trimming, and the oil replenishing. So when Christ comes, whether in an hour of awakening, at death, or in the judgment, each soul must see whether it is ready to meet him.

8. The foolish said. Their foolishness consisted in their lack of preparation for that hour of the bridegroom's coming. They were people of the present hour, not of the future. **Give us of your oil.** Just so many a dying man has appealed to his Christian neighbors for help which they cannot give. **Our lamps are gone out.** Rather, as Rev. Ver., "are going out for want of the oil, which must be freshly given." (8) *Is not this a picture of what often happens after a revival?*

9. Not so; lest. Rev. Ver., "peradventure." **Not enough for us and you.** It was not just to ask them to give up what they had provided against an hour of need to those who had made no provision, when they would lose their all by the surrender. And, in the interpretation, no person can impart his supply of grace to another. The Christian father cannot give salvation to his son, nor can the loving wife save her husband. **Go ye rather to them that sell.** The interpretation of this is to be found in Isa. 55, 1. God is the merchant of heavenly blessings, but he gives them freely to all who ask.

10. While they went to buy. Probably at such an hour they would find the shops closed and the oil not to be obtained. We can only infer from this that there are times when it is too late to seek God. Whether any soul ever desires to seek at such times we know not. **They that were ready.** In being ready consisted their wisdom. They had prepared for this hour, and their preparation was not in vain. **Went in with him to the marriage.** They went in with the bridegroom; and they went in to the marriage feast. The presence of Christ and the communion of saints are the two highest privileges of the redeemed in the heavenly state. **The door was shut.** The door of opportunity may be open long, but there comes a time when it is closed forever.

11, 12. Afterward came. They came in the dark, they came alone, and they came in vain. **Open unto us.** We are not warranted in inferring that God refuses to give salvation to any who call upon him; but we do find here nothing that suggests a "future probation." **I know you not.** None are recognized as belonging to the heavenly company who are without the light of holiness and the oil of grace. (9) *We must get our oil in time if we would sit down at the feast.*

13. Watch therefore. Not meaning "keep awake always," but "be always ready." **Ye know neither the day nor the hour.** And hence it behoves us to be ready on all days and at every hour.

HOME READINGS.

- M.* The ten virgins. Matt. 25, 1-13.
Tu. Always ready. Luke 12, 31-40.
W. The door shut. Luke 13, 23-30.
Th. Value of wisdom. Prov. 8, 11-21.
F. Wisdom and folly. Matt. 7, 21-29.
S. The Lord's coming. 3 Pet. 3, 5-14.
S. Open and shut. Rev. 3, 7-13.

GOLDEN TEXT.

And they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut. Matt. 25, 10.

LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 45, Dominion Hymnal.
 God has said, "Forever blessed
 Those who seek me in their youth."
 No. 51, Dominion Hymnal.
 Saviour, while my heart is tender,
 I would yield my heart to thee.
 No. 58, Dominion Hymnal.
 Come, every soul by sin oppressed,
 There's mercy with the Lord.

TIME, PLACE, RULERS, AND CIRCUMSTANCES.—The same as in the last lesson.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—True wisdom.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

- The Wise.**
 From what custom is the figure of our lesson drawn? How did the five wise virgins show their wisdom? What does the taking of oil show concerning the habits or character of these five? What is the character which in this lesson and the last Christ depicts as acceptable to God? What were the advantages which the action of the wise virgins secured for them? From what annoyances or fears were they delivered? What is meant by the tarrying of the bridegroom? In the present day who are represented by the wise virgins?
- The Foolish.**
 How did the foolish virgins show their folly? What does their action show concerning their character? What trait of character is shown by their request in ver. 8? What must have been their state of mind while going to buy? To what mortification were they subjected by their folly? Is there any hint here that the door was ever opened? To whom in the present day can we compare the foolish virgins? What similarity do you discover between the ending of this lesson and the beginning of the last one? What great truth must have formed the burden of these teachings of Christ?

Practical Teachings.

There are wise ones in the world. There are also foolish ones. The wise reap reward. The foolish suffer loss. It is of no use to buy oil after the bridegroom comes. Preparation for the coming of Christ is an individual affair; it cannot be passed on from one to another. I cannot have oil enough for you and me both. No other man's righteousness will help you. Is your lamp trimmed? There was a door that was shut on the foolish virgins. Jesus himself says the kingdom of heaven is like that. Will you enter with the Bridegroom, or will he say, "I know you not?"

Hints for Home Study.

- Begin by carefully reading this lesson three times over, slowly, thoughtfully, and with a purpose to remember it.
- Now tell it over as accurately as you can without the aid of the book.
- Write five questions, next, on each part of the Outline.
- Now compare these questions with the questions of the Question Book.

5. Make a note of such things as you want to know about, and cannot find any thing about. Give it to your teacher.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

- The Wise.**
 With what comparison does the lesson begin? For what purpose did these ten people set out? How many of them were wise? What shows that they were wise? Until the bridegroom came, what did all do? When were they aroused? What cry did they hear? What then did all do? When the bridegroom came, who went in with him? (GOLDEN TEXT.) What then occurred? What will they do who are wise? Luke 12, 35, 36.
- The Foolish.**
 How many foolish virgins were there? What shows that they were foolish? What midnight request did they make of the wise? What did the wise reply? What happened while they were gone to buy oil? When they returned what did they say? What reply did the bridegroom make? What does this story enforce? Why ought we to watch? How does Jesus say he will come? Rev. 16, 15.

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

- That it is necessary to make preparation for heaven?
- That we ought to be always ready for heaven?
- That one may be too late in getting ready?

Hints for Home Study.

Find some Scripture characters who may be likened to the foolish virgins. Find two passages of Scripture which show us that the present is the only time we have in which to get ready for heaven.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

- Where were the ten virgins going? To meet the bridegroom, and accompany him to the wedding. What did the wise virgins do? They took oil with them, to keep their lamps filled and burning. What did the foolish ones forget? To take oil with them for their lamps. How long did they wait for the bridegroom? Until midnight. Who suddenly awakened them? The servants of the bridegroom. What was their message? "The bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." What did they do? "They arose and trimmed their lamps." For what did the foolish ask the wise? For oil, to keep their lamps from going out. What did the wise reply? "We have not enough to give you; go and buy for yourselves." Who came while they went to buy? The bridegroom. Who went with him to the wedding? The wise virgins, whose lamps were trimmed and burning. (Repeat Golden Text.) Who were shut out? The foolish virgins. Who refused to let them in when they came back? The bridegroom. Why did Jesus speak this parable to the disciples? To teach them to be ready for him when he come. How may we be ready for his coming? We must watch, lest we neglect our duties, and pray for God's love in our hearts.

Words with Little People.

You are like the wise virgins if you are ready to meet Jesus now; if you are watching and praying for yourself and others; if you are faithful in little things as well as in great things; if you are trying to be brave and unselfish and loving. You are like the foolish virgins if you are careless and neglectful and disobedient to God's commands; if you love your own pleasure and comfort; if you are afraid to have Jesus come now. Look, therefore, carefully how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil."

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THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. How does Christ illustrate the principles of the last lesson? **By the parable of the ten virgins.**
2. In what respect, were they alike? **They all took lamps and went forth.**
3. In what respects did they differ? **Five were prepared, five were not.**
4. What was the result of the wise preparation of the first? **They went in to the feast.**
5. What happened while the foolish tried to repair their mistake? **"The door was shut."**

THE CHURCH CATECHISM.

43. How are we benefited by Christ's resurrection? **He rose for our justification, and ascended to the right hand of God, where he ever liveth to make intercession for us.** Rom. 4. 25; Eph. 1. 30; Col. 3. 1; Heb. 7. 25.
44. Did Christ make this atonement for all mankind? **By the grace of God he tasted death for every man.** Heb. 2. 9.

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.**The Elements of the Parable.**

- I. THE BRIDEGROOM.
 - To meet the bridegroom. v. 1.
 - "Thy Maker is thy husband." Isa. 54. 5.
 - "Christ is the head of the Church." Eph. 5. 23.
- II. THE WISE VIRGINS.
 - Five of them were wise. v. 2.
 - "As a chaste virgin to Christ," 2 Cor. 11. 2.
 - "Your lights burning." Luke 12. 35.
- III. THE FOOLISH VIRGINS.
 - Foolish... to sleep no oil. v. 3.
 - "A form of godliness," 2 Tim. 3. 5.
 - "Have not the Spirit of Christ." Rom. 8. 9.
- IV. THE LAMPS.
 - Took their lamps. v. 1.
 - "Ye are the light of the world." Matt. 5. 16.
 - "Shine as lights in the world." Phil. 2. 15.
- V. THE OIL.
 - Oil in their vessels. v. 4.
 - "The earnest of the Spirit," 2 Cor. 1. 22.
 - "That holy Spirit of promise," Eph. 1. 13, 14.
- VI. THE WAITING.
 - While the bridegroom tarried. v. 5.
 - "Yet a little while," Heb. 10. 37.
 - "One day... thousand years." 2 Pet. 3. 8.
- VII. THE CRY.
 - Behold, the bridegroom cometh. v. 6.
 - "The Lord himself shall descend," 1 Thess. 4. 16.
 - "In a moment... last trump," 1 Cor. 15. 52.
- VIII. THE MARRIAGE.
 - Went in... to the marriage. v. 16.
 - "The marriage of the Lamb," Rev. 19. 7.
 - "Will sup with him," Rev. 3. 20.

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.**The Lessons of the Parable.**

1. The Saviour stands in very close and tender relation to his Church, as close as that of the bridegroom to his bride. How deep and strong his love must be!
2. Not all of those who belong to the Church are true members of it. Some are wise, and have a genuine, enduring, spiritual life; others are disciples only in name and appearance, the foolish virgins.
3. The difference between the true and the false, the wise and the foolish, is not shown at once. There are many who seem to be Christians, but are not. God knows them, though man may not.
4. The difference is revealed in some moment of trial, and it will be shown when the Lord appears. Not all the virgins will go in to the marriage.
5. Each must obtain for himself the oil of God's grace,

for no one can give it to another, no matter how much he may desire to do so.

6. If we do not obtain God's grace here, it will be too late for us to obtain it hereafter; for then the door will be shut.

English Teacher's Notes.

WHEN in the habit of traveling in London by the Metropolitan Railway it was more than once my lot to hasten down the long staircase which led to the departure platform only to find the gate at the bottom shut. I have stood there and seen the latest passengers taking their places in the train which was just about to start, but I could not join them; that barrier shut me out. I might have been but two minutes after time, but it was all the same as if I had been longer; the gate would not open for me, and I was left behind. And why left? Not because I did not wish to go; not because I did not intend to go; but because I was too late.

Our Golden Text for to-day rightly concentrates our attention upon the crowning act in the history which the parable relates, "They that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut." Two words, or rather ideas, are here prominent: ready, and shut. Let us look first at the latter of the two.

What was it that was shut? The door of the house where the festivities were taking place which accompanied an Eastern marriage. It was not long open. It opened only to receive the bridegroom and the bride, with their attendant train. The "virgins" could not have taken their place beforehand, and there have awaited the arrival of the pair. The door must be entered when the proper moment came, and those who did not entertain found it hopelessly closed against them. No matter how fixed had been their purpose, nor how real their desire to be of the party assembled inside, they found themselves left out of the joy and the brightness. The opportunity was lost, and could not be regained.

Now what does this door signify? Not the door of God's mercy, which is open night and day, and has been open since man first fell, but the door of entrance into bliss. That is not always open. You cannot go in when you please and secure your seat. It opens at the moment of death for God's ransomed ones, and they enter with Christ. Comp. 2 Cor. v. 8. And it will open at the glorious moment when he comes again, and they that are ready "shall go in with him" to joy eternal. But we cannot tell the day nor the hour. Therefore it behooves those who desire to enter to watch and be ready.

Now what constituted readiness in the case of the "ten virgins?" The bridal procession took place at night, and it was necessary to carry lamps or torches. The bright flame was not only to light the way, but was a symbol of joy and gladness. Moreover, it was the sign that they were invited guests. Strangers who might chance to pass would say on noticing them: "Ah, they are waiting for the bridegroom; they are to share in the festi-

ties." But it was not enough to have lamps in their hands. The five foolish virgins had these equally with the wise. Nor was it sufficient to have them once lit. All the ten went forth originally with their lamps burning. Yet when the moment came for them to join the procession only five were ready. The other five were roused from their slumbers to find their lamps "going out" (or smoking). They had no supply of oil to refill them, and before they could procure it the opportunity was over, the bridegroom had passed into the house, and the door was shut. The difference between the wise and the foolish lay simply in this; that the latter had merely the outward show, the former had the secret supply from whence it was fed; and this supply it was that insured their readiness. When the bridal procession approached, the flame, fed from the oil in their vessels, gave forth its bright light, and so they could join the company and enter with the bridegroom.

What does this teach us? That when our Lord returns it is only those who show the distinguishing marks of his people that can go in with him to the "marriage supper of the Lamb," those in whose hearts and lives the fire of his love is burning. No one of us may rest on the thought that it has been once lit. It is continuance alone which proves reality: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." John 8. 31. Last June a lady in London sallied forth into the streets to see the queen's jubilee procession. She obtained a foremost place, and held it for some hours amid all the pressure of the surrounding crowd. But just as the procession was approaching her strength failed, and she had to be borne fainting from the scene. She lost her share in the sight because she could not hold out. But this was not her fault. She had no means of insuring a supply of strength. Those who would be ready when Christ comes may insure it. The gift of the Holy Spirit in the heart (symbolized by the oil) is given to those who ask.

And the shut door, so terrible to those outside, meaning for them infinite disappointment and loss, is to those inside the sign of everlasting gladness and security, for from that home of bliss they shall "go no more out." Rev. 3. 12.

The Lesson Council.

Question 8. Does the parable of the ten virgins apply only to a specific time, or to all times in the history of the Church?

This parable, with its lessons of vigilance, patient endurance, and constant preparedness for the coming of the bridegroom, applies to all times in the history of the Church. It is a call to us now to have not the mere vessel, but the abiding principle, of spiritual life—the source of light and the secret of endurance; so that whether the "Son of man shall come" to meet us, or we shall be called to go out through death to meet him, we shall be ready to enter in with him to the marriage supper of the Lamb.—Rev. W. P. Thirkield, B. D.

9. Who are meant by the foolish virgins?

While the wise virgins were true friends, and deeply

interested in whatever concerned the bridegroom, and especially on an occasion of such importance, the foolish virgins were so only in appearance and not in heart. Theirs was an empty profession, a mere external form without the sustaining power of true and hearty goodwill. So, alas, too many have the outward profession common to all who bear the Christian name but lack the essential element of constant preparation for meeting Christ. While the "wise" had that supply of the Spirit which is the source and support of the new birth, and so were ready to go in, the "foolish" were radically deficient. Theirs were only a few faint gleams—extinguishing before fully lighted up. Like the "stony-ground" hearers, where the good seed sprang up not, having no root, so quickly withered, so they, when the hour of decision came, realized their own folly and wickedness as well as the wisdom of those whom beforehand they esteemed as over-careful and too much in earnest. A graphic but appalling picture of the almost saved but finally lost. So also the wise and foolish builders both reared their houses—the one for eternity, the other for destruction.—A. V. M.

Cambridge Notes.

The trivial disappointment of five thoughtless girls has been transformed by the magic of our Lord's words into an image whose tragic power has captivated the greatest minds. Milton's noble sonnet (No. IX) and Tennyson's dirge in "Guinevere" (hymn 375) contain beautiful applications of it. The difficulties of the parable largely consist in the supposed necessity to press every detail, for which process it is less suited than many others. We must remember that only Christ's own application (ver. 13) is essential; others may or may not be true.

VER. 1. Then. At the time. Comp. chap. 24. 50. **Ten.** Probably the usual complement, ten being a perfect number. **Virgins.** Apparently there is no mystical meaning. As with us, the bridesmaids' part was always filled by young girls. **Lamps.** Better, *torches* (as margin), rods wrapped at the end with tow. The meaning "lamp" never occurs in Greek. **Bridegroom.** See chap. 22. 2, note. It appears that the bridegroom comes from far, to hold the feast in his bride's house, and not his own, as would be more usual. Comp. Judg. 14. 10. The maidens have been waiting there, and will go forth to escort him when he arrives, and the exact hour being unknown. Oriental weddings were always celebrated at night. Comp. Luke 12. 35-38. **VER. 2.** The foolish are naturally mentioned first (B. V.), as the parable turns on them. **Wise. Lit., prudent.** The word only implies plain, practical sense. Comp. chap. 24. 45. **Lake 16. 8.** Not only wisdom, but common prudence, bids us watch. **VER. 3. For.** Showing that the "foolish" were so characterized purely on account of this thoughtless behavior. Giddy with excitement, they passed the day thinking, doubtless, of their dresses and what not, sparing no leisure for the necessary preparations taken by their sensible sisters. If they thought at all they assumed that somebody would certainly have the things they needed—most of us have suffered from such easy-going confidence. The very triviality of this lends enhanced power to the application. Even in the trifles of earth such thoughtlessness brings annoyance, and men can face eternity in this spirit! **With them.** That is, themselves; so "their torches" (vers. 1, 3, 7). These torches emphasize the necessity of individual preparedness; no common stock would be possible. We need not find exact meanings for the torches, vessels, oil, and sellers. They belong to the frame-work, and the only point is

the reading. **Torried.** Slumbered. **Sat waiting.** some represent 13. 36. If the sleeping, the foolish could wise warn sudden sh. the process: then was st. burning all. ciently sup. Nothing co. they shared. left in the phasis in th. **Sell.** It is th. anxiety to h. what they s. **Went.** Were had no right. would be cr. share their eagerly path. **VER. 12, 13.** **Kn.** word than t. They were s. **VER. 13.** **Not.** their true fo. reck on hours. absolute filg. into hours, n. our sun-dial. therefore, is. our life, whe. complete whe.

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the readiness for joining the procession. VER. 5. *Turried.* Between the first and second advents, *Slumbered.* Lit., "nodded," or "dozed," as they sat waiting. It is hard to resist the impression that some reprehension is intended. Comp. ver. 13 and Mark 13. 36. If not, and they could rely on timely awakening, the sleep must represent death. In any case the foolish could no longer discover the omission, nor the wise warn them. VER. 6. A very vivid picture. The sudden shout is that of the crowd, on the lookout for the procession. VER. 7. *All.* The difference between them was still unnoticed. VER. 8. The torches had been burning all the time, and those of the foolish, insufficiently supplied, were now "going out." VER. 9. Nothing could make up for final unreadiness. Had they shared it, the whole procession might have been left in the dark midway. There is a sympathetic emphasis in the original: "I fear it will never suffice." *Sell.* It is the only expedient they can suggest in their anxiety to help them: there may be yet a chance of doing what they should have done ere nightfall. VER. 10. *Went.* Were just starting. *Shut.* To keep out all who had no right to join the feast, numbers of whom would be crowding in. And now the late-comers must share their exclusion. VER. 11. *Lord, Lord.* How eagerly pathetic is the repetition! Comp. chap. 7. 21. VER. 12. *Knowe.* Comp. chap. 26. 72, 74. It is a stronger word than that in chap. 7. 23. Comp. John 10. 14, 27. They were strangers to him, like the uninvited crowd. VER. 13. Note the sublime simplicity of the words in their true form (R. V.). We fix our points of time and reckon hours, days, years, but what do we know of the absolute flight of time? How can we divide the day into hours, not knowing when it shall end? We have our sun-dials, but the sun is clouded or set. Our duty, therefore, is to finish each work as it comes, so that our life, whether as individuals or as a race, may be complete whenever terminated.

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Obtain a clear conception of the marriage customs referred to in this parable, and tell the story of the marriage and the ten virgins... Explain carefully lamps, went forth to meet the bridegroom, oil, trimmed their lamps, door was shut, etc.... Present the interpretation of the persons in the parable. 1. The Bridegroom. 2. The wise virgins. 3. The foolish virgins. 4. "Them that sell." v. 9.... Interpret also the things in the parable. 1. The waiting. 2. The call. 3. The procession. 4. The feast. 5. The failure to enter.... What does this parable tell us to do? 1. To prepare. 2. To watch. 3. To trim our lamps.... Against what does this parable warn us?... Read to the class or to the school Tennyson's song, "Late, late, so late," etc.... See some thoughtful notes and illustrations in *The Study* for the Second Quarter.

References. FREEMAN. Ver. 1: The marriage procession, 707. Ver. 3, 4: Torches, 708. Ver. 10: The closed door, 709.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

22. How is it proved that the New Testament is inspired by the Holy Spirit?

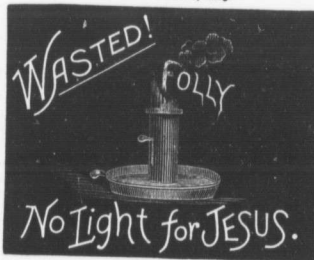
The Saviour told his apostles that they should be witnesses of him, and promised that the Spirit should bring his words to their remembrance, and teach them things to come.

St. John xv. 26, 27. When the Comforter is come, whom

I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me; and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



The lesson taught in the familiar parable of the ten virgins is represented on the blackboard by a candle nearly burned out. The wick forms part of the letter F in the word "Folly." Above it is written the word "Wasted," and beneath it, "No light for Jesus." The blackboard lesson of last Sunday may be used with this one to show the lamp trimmed and burning. The lesson taught from the blackboard is that of a wasted life, spent in folly, giving no light for Jesus. Read Prov. 27. 1; James 4. 13, 14; Heb. 3. 13; 2 Cor. 6. 2; Prov. 11. 21. An object illustration can be given by using two candles, or lamps, one being ready for use, giving out a bright light; the other wasted or empty.

DIRECTIONS FOR COLORS. Candle, white; wick, red; also the word "Folly;" candlestick, yellow; the word "Wasted," brown, with red on the lower part of the letters; and the sentence in white.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT: *How love watches.*

Introduce the lesson with a story of a sick child, and the mother's anxious watch over him. Tell that she was close by him day and night. Sometimes she slept a little, but the least sound from the sick child awakened her. Tell that she kept every thing near that she needed for his comfort. She thought ahead, and was ready when he called. Why did she do all this? Because she loved him. Love watches faithfully. Love does not get tired. Jesus told a story to show the difference between a loving servant, and a careless servant.

1. In the country where Jesus lived it was the way, when a man was married, to bring his bride home in the night. Some of his friends would take lamps in their hands and go out to meet him.

Once a man was married, and ten of his friends got ready to go out and meet him. They watched so long for him, that at last all fell asleep. Five of them were friends who loved him very much. The others were his friends, but did not love him much. At midnight there was a loud cry, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh." Then all rose, and trimmed their lamps. Those who loved him, and had thought ahead to get ready to go and meet him, soon had their lamps burning brightly, and were starting out to meet the bridegroom. These were the loving friends.

2. But the careless friends had not thought to fill

their lamps full of oil, and while they were sleeping their lamps had gone out. They wanted the others to give them oil, but they had none to spare. So they hurried away to buy some, and the bridegroom came while they were gone, and his friends who loved him enough to be all ready to meet him went in with him to the wedding-feast, and the door was shut. The careless ones could not go in!



The Lesson for Us. Jesus is the Bridegroom. He is coming some day. He wants us to go out to meet him. We must have our lamp of love and obedience and goodness all ready to carry. We cannot get it ready in a minute. We must think before the time comes, and make ready. If we love Jesus we will watch every day—watch to see what he says; watch to see that we speak and think and act right.

Lesson Word Pictures.

Ten virgins are going forth to greet the bridegroom when he shall come. Lamps are in their hands. It is night. Overhead are many sparkling little stars, as if a great host with silvery lamps had gone forth to meet the heavenly Bridegroom when he shall come to claim his bride. They are ready above whenever the Master may come. But see below! Dark-browed Miriam and fair-eyed Hannah stand side by side.

"Look into your lamp, O Miriam!" cries Hannah. "The Master may come any moment. Your oil, make sure of your oil!"

"Time enough," cries dark-browed Miriam. "The bridegroom is not here. Time enough!"

And why carries the bridegroom? You see no lights; you hear no music heralding his happy coming. The night deepens, and still he does not come.

"Your oil, your oil! He will come soon!" still cries Hannah.

"Time enough!" mumbles the sleepy Miriam.

She folds her hands. She drops her head. She is fast asleep.

It is midnight. There is a hush around the darkened

door-way, a hush up in the shining heavens. Hark! What means that sharp, echoing cry? Why those bright, twinkling lights turning the corner of the street? It is, it is the coming of the Bridegroom! And there is the warning voice, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh! Go ye out to meet him." Wake, Miriam, wake! Trim your lamp! Go forth, go forth! Alas! she confusedly wrings her hands.

"Oil, oil!" she drowsily murmurs.

She has neglected her lamp. Excitedly she now turns to this one and that one.

"Give, give!" she begs again and again.

Ah, no, Miriam! They cannot feed your lacking lamp, lest they be in darkness. And look! Quick, quick! There it is, the great procession coming near!

"So soon!" she murmurs. "O, my lamp, my lamp!"

As she hurries away she can see the attendants lifting their flaring lamps. She hears the joyous music. She can make out the bridegroom's friends as they bear him forward. Haste, O, Miriam, haste! She is now hurrying away, bewildered, wondering if she will be in season by the time the jubilant procession reaches the door-way. It is quickly there, at the very portal. Watchful, steadfast Hannah is ready, her light of welcome shining clear and radiant like her beautiful eyes beaming with joy. The wise and faithful bear her company. With her they enter the house. Rejoicing friends, the exultant musicians, the bridegroom himself—all, all have gone in, and the door is shut.

But hark! Why this babble outside? Who draws nigh in the darkness, confusedly talking lifting their disordered robes, then halting in dismay before that closed, dark door-way!

"Not shut!" they cry.

They try the portal. It is in vain.

"Lord, Lord!" implores Miriam.

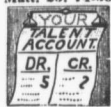
"Lord, Lord!" beseech her tardy companions.

"Open to us!" they wail in chorus, those foolish virgins.

And then that solemn voice from within is heard, tender yet firm, "Verily, I say unto you, I know you not!" Too late! Too late!

A. D. 30.]

Mat. 25. 14-30.



[Commit to memory verses 20, 21.]
14 For the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.

17 And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.

18 But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliverest unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside the five talents more.

21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

22 He also that had received two talents came and

LESSON V. THE TALENTS.

[April 29.]

said, Lord, thou deliverest unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.

23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not sowed:

25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.

26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not sowed:

27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

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General Statement.

The parable of the ten virgins represented the Church on earth, as waiting and expectant for the coming of the Lord! Immediately following it the Saviour gave to his disciples, sitting on the Mount of Olives, another parable, to represent the Church in the absence of its ascended Lord, as working while awaiting his return. In it we are warned against the danger of sluggishness and inactivity. The householder, who is traveling in a distant land, is our Saviour, no longer visible on the earth. His servants, to whom he has entrusted his servants, are his professed followers: not only pastors and teachers, but those who are members of his Church among men. The talents, distributed in various measures, are the opportunities of usefulness, in the possession of property, ability, or influence,

which each enjoys in proportion to his power to use them. There are some, of large and of small abilities, who realize the sacred trust left in their care, and strive to employ it for the glory of God and the good of men. There are others who waste the treasure in sin, or hoard it for themselves, hiding that which was given them as a means of doing good. The day of reckoning is that hour when the Lord shall return and summon all men to an account before his bar. Those who have used aright the opportunities which God has bestowed will then be rewarded in the approval of their God, in the larger privileges of heaven, and in the fellowship of the redeemed with their Redeemer. Those who have neglected God's trust shall lose it, and shall sit down to eternal remorse and woe.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 14. The kingdom of heaven. This is omitted in the Rev. Ver., as not in the original text. It should read, "For it is as when a man," etc. As a man traveling. Christ, the Head of the Church, ascended to heaven and no longer visible to his disciples, is the householder in this parable. (1) *In one sense Christ is absent, but in another sense he is present with every follower.* A far country. Heaven is far only because we can have no direct communication with its inhabitants. In spirit the true believer finds it near. But our parable deals only with the outward and the visible. **His own servants.** Disciples, who are the professed servants of Christ, are here meant; but the principle presented in this parable applies to all men, whether Christians or unbelievers, for all have received gifts from God. **Believed unto them his goods.** He entrusted to them all that he had, for he was to be absent, and they were his representatives. (2) *All that Christ has, of gift or opportunity, he bestows upon his people.*

15. Unto one he gave five talents. The talent was a weight, not a piece of money; and as these were silver (as is shown by the Greek word in verse 18 for money), it would be worth from \$1,500 to \$2,500 of our money. In the parable it represents, not precisely what a person possesses, but what he is capable of doing good to others by what he possesses. The measure of opportunity in a life-time to extend Christ's kingdom and to lift up our fellow-men is expressed by the talents. One person may do good through money, another through intellectual acquirements, a third through social advantages, a fourth through power to speak or write. **To another two.** The group of two talents may represent the Christian of average ability or opportunity; the preacher of fair but not great power, the layman of the middle class, the person of moderate means. **To another one.** This may stand for the professed Christian who has but little of earthly possessions, or mental ability, or social influence. He can do but little for Christ's cause, but he can do something. **According to his several ability.** Here is the key to the interpretation of this parable. God gives to every person opportunities of usefulness proportioned to his ability. To the rich man he gives wider opportunities, to the poor man narrower. He intrusts the man of genius with a greater trust of privilege in doing good than the plain man of slight ability. **Took his journey.** As Christ took his on the day of his ascension, leaving his disciples to carry on his work among men. He is still absent, and his followers on earth are his stewards as well as his servants. (3) *Every Christian has some measure of opportunity to do good in his Master's cause.* (4) *Whichever you possess is the gift of Christ, to be held in trust for his cause.*

16. Then. Rev. Ver. "Straightway." (5) *There is a suggestion of promptness in getting about our work in that word "straightway."* He that had received the five talents. The disciple whose large wealth or commanding abilities or high position gives him abundant opportunities of doing good. **Made them other five talents.** In the interpretation of the parable this does not mean merely that the millionaire is to gain another million, the student to obtain more knowledge, the legislator to make himself a senator. It means that he is to use, not to accumulate. He is to do good with the means and instrumentalities in his

power. This servant, by putting out his means, increased them, so that he, his Master, and the world all receive benefit. (6) *There is a Board of Trade in good works, where capital gains by the investment.* (7) *Not what we win from others, but what we impart to others, counts as our real gain.*

17. Received two . . . gained other two. Here is an encouragement to the Christian whose means are small and whose opportunities are limited. He, too, can double his capital in the service of Christ. The two talents who uses his powers for God will be of far more value than the man of five talents who uses them for himself.

18. He that had received one. Even his own talent was of great value, for it was worth nearly or quite \$2,000. Far more he who is the least in the kingdom of heaven has opportunities and means of usefulness which are priceless. **Went and digged . . . and hid.** Representing those who, while not abusing their gifts to evil, refrain from using them for good. They live in their own small world, regardless of others and careless of God's cause. It may be the man who neglects the Church, with the excuse that he can't afford to dress as well as some others; or the church-member who contents himself with church attendance without taking part in Church work, on the ground that he has no ability. **His lord's money.** Literally, "his lord's silver." The money was not his own, and he had no right to misuse it. (8) *Let us not forget that we own nothing, but are the stewards of God's manifold mercies.*

19. After a long time. The parable steps across the gulf of the unknown centuries between the ascension of Christ and his coming to judge the world. **The lord . . . cometh.** Come he will surely, though none knoweth when. **Reckoneth with them.** Here is meant that every soul on earth must face a day of reckoning with a Judge who cannot be put off or deceived nor appealed from. (9) *How will you face that day of judgment?*

20. He that had received five. We are not to suppose that of those who have received five are not to return much to God. On the contrary, few of the richly endowed recognize the good Giver. **Brought other five.** In souls saved, in forces for good set in motion, in the building up of Christ's kingdom, in the victory over evil powers. (10) *He who will can show good fruit as the result of his life-work!*

21. Well done, thou good and faithful servant. What his lord commended was not the large result of his work, but his earnestness and fidelity. (11) *Men honor results, God honors efforts.* **Thou hast been faithful.** An applause grateful to the ears of those who have wrought for God. **Will make thee ruler.** A larger field of opportunity and usefulness, perhaps in another world, awaits the one who has been faithful here. **The joy of thy lord.** The happiness of the redeemed in the presence of their heavenly Master in endless glory.

22. Two talents . . . two other talents. Then the possession of moderate means, abilities, and opportunities can do some good, and need not be ashamed when he brings the results of his life before the eyes of his Lord. **Well done, good and faithful.**

Notice that the servant of two talents, who has been faithful, receives precisely the same reward as the servant of five talents, because he had put forth the same effort. He enters into the same honor and the same joy.

24. Lord, I knew thee . . . a hard man. It is a stroke of nature in the parable that the unfaithful servant accuses his lord instead of himself. So men who do wrong are very apt to cast the blame on their Maker. They account for their sin on grounds of "heredity," or circumstances, or temptations, or the misconduct of others, or the decree of God, but they rarely confess that the fault is their own. **Reaping where thou hast not sown.** He makes his picture of his lord the reflection of his own selfish heart, just as do many, for those who impute evil are very apt to be evil.

25. I was afraid. Afraid of his master's severe judgment—an excuse which was false. Very few men live wickedly because they are afraid that they cannot please God nor satisfy his demands. That is true, as if to declare that he owed no more than the bare sum which had been intrusted to him. (12. *God will not be content if we give him our lives and nothing more.*)

26. Thou wicked and slothful servant. The householder strikes at his sin at once. He was not honorable and truthful, as he claimed to be. The root of his evil was that he was wicked, wantonly disobedient to a just

command, and slothful, neglectful of his opportunity. Thou knowest. "You know that I was a hard man, did you?" Words of sarcasm and irony, or else a question.

27. Thou oughtest therefore. If you really believed what you say. **Exchangers.** Rev. Ver., "bankers," men who both borrowed and loaned money on interest, which anciently was larger than at present, for capital was not then as abundant for investment. **Mise own with usury.** Rev. Ver., "with interest." Formerly usury and interest meant the same, now the one means exorbitant or unlawful interest.

28. 29. Take therefore the talent. He who neglects to use opportunities for doing good loses them. **Give it unto him that hath ten talents.** Those who make use of opportunities thus enjoy an increase of them. **Hath shall be given.** The word "hath" here must be interpreted to mean "improves or employs what he hath," for this was the case with the one who here received the additional talent. **Hath not . . . taken away.** That is, he that does not use aright that which God gives him shall lose it, in this world or in the next.

30. Into outer darkness. Away from the presence of God and the enjoyments of his kingdom. **Weeping and gnashing.** See note Lesson III, verse 10.

HOME READINGS.

- M. The talents. Matt. 25, 14-30.
 W. Parable of the pounds. Luke 19, 12-27.
 T. Spiritual gifts. 1 Cor. 12, 1-11.
 Th. Variety of talents. Rom. 12, 1-9.
 F. Responsibility. Luke 12, 41-48.
 S. Diligence. 2 Pet. 1, 1-11.
 R. Reward of faithfulness. 2 Tim. 4, 1-8.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. Rev. 2, 10.

LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 89, Dominion Hymnal.
 Work, for the night is coming,
 Work through the morning hours.
 No. 96, Dominion Hymnal
 To the work I to the work I
 We are servants of God.
 No. 150, Dominion Hymnal.
 We praise thee, O God I
 For the Son of thy love.

TIME, PLACE, RULERS, AND CIRCUMSTANCES.—The same as in the last lesson.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The nature of rewards.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

- 1. Faithful.**
 By what different illustrations have we had this subject set forth in our lessons?
 Why should the Saviour so constantly recur to this theme?
 What is the great danger which besets the soul in every relation of life?
 What is meant by "delivered unto them his goods"?
 For what does the gift of talents stand in the case of men to-day?
 Are there any to whom God does not give opportunities?
 Was the picture Christ made of life a true one?
 What was the test to which these servants were at last subjected?
 What was the result to those who had been faithful?
2. Slothful.
 Which of the servants in the parable was slothful?
 Is smallness of natural endowment any excuse for idleness?
 What does the Lord expect of every one of us?
 What was the principle upon which the man gave to his various servants?
 Could the man with one talent have done like his fellow-servants?

Why did the "lord of those servants" remain away a long time?

What two things made the conduct of the slothful servant wicked?

What was his punishment?

Does the parable hint that he was ever to have another opportunity to trade with his one talent?

Practical Teachings.

Notice the extent of the trust here shown: "to every man."
 Notice the meaning of the gift: "according to his ability."

That is, we are responsible for a trust, but it is not beyond our power to meet it.

Notice the length of the trial: "after a long time." Our probation is ample. God gives us all the time we need.

Notice the reward for service; not rest from labor, but increase of care: "ruler over many things."

Notice the recompense for nothingness: strip him of every thing and cast him out.

Here is not a hint of any future probation.

Hints for Home Study.

1. Find out all the things that were done by the man about to travel into a far country.
2. Make in writing a comparison between this man's action and God's treatment of the world.
3. Give two reasons why it was wrong to do like the unprofitable servant.
4. Write out five characteristics of the two servants who doubled their talents.
5. Compare this lesson with each of the two immediately preceding it.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

- 1. Faithful.**
 To what is the Kingdom of heaven here likened?
 What distribution did the man make of his goods?
 What determined how much each should receive?
 How soon did the owner go away?
 What did the man with five talents do?
 What success in trade had he?
 What gain did the man with two talents make?
 When did the lord return and reckon with his servants?
 What report was made concerning the five talents?
 What commendation did the servant hear?
 What reward was given him?
 What was said of the two talents?
 What was this servant's reward?
 How long must one be faithful? (GOLDEN TEXT.)
- 2. Slothful.**
 What was done with the one talent?
 What did this servant say about his master?
 What about his own fears?
 What did he report about the talent?
 What kind of a servant did his lord call him?

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What ought he to have done with the money?
 What order was given about the talent?
 To whom will he be given abundance?
 Who will have nothing?
 Where was the slothful servant sent?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where, in this lesson, are we taught—
 1. That every one has a trust from God?
 2. That every one will be held responsible for his trust?
 3. That misuse of God's gifts is misuse?

Hints for Home Study.

Compare the parable of the pounds (in Luke), and note the points of agreement and contrast.
 Find how many times the "outer darkness" is spoken of in this gospel.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What is the parable of the talents about? A lord and his servants.

Where did the lord wish to go? Away, into a far country.

Why did he call his servants together? To give them charge over his money and property.

How did he divide it among them? To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one.

What did he expect them to do? To take good care of all that he left with them during his absence.

What did the faithful servants do? They worked honestly and doubled the number of their talents.

What did the unfaithful servant do? He buried his talent in the ground and was idle.

What did the lord do when he came home? He called his servants together to account for what he had left with them.

What did he say to the faithful ones? "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things."

How did he punish the unfaithful servant? He took away his one talent and cast him into outer darkness.

Who is our Lord and Master? Jesus Christ.

Why is he our Master? Because he bought us with his precious blood.

Where has he gone? To heaven.

What has he given us? Gifts, great and small.

How does he expect us to use them? For his glory, not our own.

When will he call us to account for all he has left in our care? When he comes on the judgment day.

What will he say to us if we have been faithful? "Well done; enter into the joy of thy Lord."

How will he reward those who have only been faithful in little things? As abundantly as those who have been faithful in great things.

What will become of the unfaithful? They will be cast out of the kingdom of heaven.

Words with Little People.

You are only a little Sunday-school boy or girl, but you have something to do for Jesus. It may be small things now, but if you are faithful it will be great things by and by. Do not complain or find fault with anything he gives you to do. Work cheerfully and unselfishly and thoroughly, so you will be among the faithful when he comes to reward them. "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me."

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. To what does Jesus here liken the kingdom of heaven? To a master and his servants.

2. How did the master show his trust in his servants? By giving them large trusts.

3. What circumstance governed him in making these trusts? The ability of each one.

4. When the master came to reckon, what did he find? Some faithful and one unfaithful.

5. How did he reward the faithful ones? By increasing their trusts.

6. What happened to the unfaithful one? He was stripped and punished.

7. What is the lesson and promise of this parable? "Be thou faithful," etc.

THE CHURCH CATECHISM.

45. Will all men therefore be saved? No; "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Psa. 9. 17.

46. Will those be saved who die in childhood, before they know good and evil? They will; for Jesus said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 19. 14.

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

Elements of the Parable.

I. THE MAN.

A man traveling. v. 14.

"I go away and come again." John 14. 28.

"Whom the heaven must receive." Acts 3. 21.

II. THE SERVANTS.

Called his own servants. v. 14.

"Some apostles.... pastors and teachers." Eph. 4.

11, 12.

"Free from sin.... servants to God." Rom. 6. 22.

III. THE TALENTS.

Unto one... etc.... another one. v. 15.

"Gifts differing according... grace." Rom. 12. 6.

"The self-same Spirit, dividing." 1 Cor. 12. 11.

IV. THE WORKERS.

Went and traded with the same. v. 16.

"His grace... was not in vain." 1 Cor. 15. 10.

"Required in stewards... faithful." 1 Cor. 4. 2.

V. THE IDLER.

Had his lord's money. v. 18.

"Slothful... great waster." Prov. 18. 9.

"Be not slothful." Heb. 6. 12.

VI. THE RECKONING.

The lord... reckoneth with them. v. 19.

"All stand before the judgment-seat." Rom. 14. 10.

"He will judge the world." Acts 17. 31.

VII. THE REWARD.

Well done... good and faithful. v. 21.

"Him will my Father honor." John 12. 26.

"In thy presence is fullness of joy." Psa. 16. 11.

VIII. THE PUNISHMENT.

Take... the talent from him. v. 28.

"Beareth not fruit, he taketh away." John 15. 2.

"Hewn down.... cast into the fire." Matt. 3. 10.

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

The Lessons of the Parable.

1. Though our Saviour is in heaven he has left his servants on the earth to carry on the work of his kingdom: to win souls, to build up each other, to strengthen the good, and to battle against the evil.

2. Every one has some talent, or means of doing good. It may be his voice or his pen, his money or his brains, his social power or his influence.

3. Whatever the talent may be, whether great or small, its possessor is bound to employ it for the interest of his Redeemer's kingdom among men. God gives us nothing for ourselves alone, but all that we may do good.

4. There will come a day when our absent Lord will return, and then he will call every servant to account for the use of his endowments and opportunities.

5. He who tries to use aright God's gifts will receive an abundant reward, and the same reward, if as faithful, as the one to whom a greater trust had been given. "All service ranks the same with God."

6. He who neglects his gift because it is small, or because he despises the Giver, will be compelled to render an account to God, and will have a fearful recompense of reward.

English Teacher's Notes.

"Was it Miss — who won the prize?" asked a young lady of her companion; "how nice it must be to be so clever!" "Ah!" observes one friend to another concerning a mutual acquaintance, "with his talents he is sure to carry every thing

before him." Here we have the ideas which the world in general associates with talents: ease and admiration and success. Very different are the ideas which our Lord teaches us to associate with them. For the "talents" of the parable, though literally they represent sums of money, are the types of just those very things which in modern parlance go by the name of "talents," or, in another word, abilities—the things which make a man able for something.

One day at a house where I was staying, a boy called with some tin-ware for sale. He had a basket full of various articles, and was sent out by the master of a "boys' home" to dispose of them. Several other boys I learned were employed in the same manner. Now what was the idea impressed on their minds in connection with their various basketfuls? Pleaded they were, no doubt, to be trusted; happy they appeared to be in their work; but the main point of the matter was that they were responsible for a right use of the articles carried. These articles were intended and expected to be turned into money for the benefit of the "home," and had been put into their hands for that purpose.

So it was with the servants, or rather slaves, in the parable. It would not have occurred to an on-looker to say of them, "O, how nice to have so much money! They can have every thing easy; they will be admired; and they are sure to get on in life." With the talents intrusted to them they must trade, not for themselves, but for their master.

That is the first thing our Lord would have us learn. All "talented" persons are responsible. But what of those who are not talented? The parable recognizes none such. The master gave to "every man according to his several ability." Some have much, some little, but all have intrusted to them something of real value with which to trade. Therefore all are responsible.

The master who sent out the boys with the tin-ware had a list of all the articles they carried about, so that every one should be accountable for. And when the day was over and all returned home, then came the reckoning. Some might bring home a larger sum than others, but each had to account for the things that had been given him.

So again with the servants in the parable. The fact that they had been intrusted with their master's money for the purpose of carrying on business for him involved the necessity of a day of reckoning.

That is the second thing our Lord would have us learn. To all "talented" persons (and that means to all of us) there will come a reckoning day. We may carelessly forget what he has put into our hands to use. But he will not forget it.

These two things, responsibility and reckoning, are indissolubly connected with every talent, from the greatest to the lowest. But there are two things which may and ought to be so connected, yet are not in every case.

We read of two in the parable who brought in a

good return for the money intrusted to them. During their master's absence they had doubled the amount. But the third brought no return at all. The money he had received (no mean sum, although so much less than the other two) had lain idle during the whole time that the master had been away; and it had been absolutely wasted.

For those who had a return there was a reward—not earned, for they had done no more than their duty, but given by the kindness and grace of their master. The allusion is probably to the custom occasionally followed of granting to a diligent and faithful slave his freedom, and inviting him to sit down at his master's table, and striking though faint image of the "joy of the Lord" into which Christ's faithful ones shall enter. But our Golden Text reminds us at what a cost that return may have to be obtained: "Be thou faithful unto death." It is not always in working that the talent is used and multiplied. Sometimes this is effected by patient endurance and suffering. But what a glorious "return" Christ offers—"a crown of life."

But there is a sad side to the parable. Where the talents have been slothfully neglected or squandered on self, where the responsibility has been ignored and the reckoning forgotten, there must be retribution; a solemn thought for the close.

The Lesson Council.

Question 10. Is the parable identical with, or different from, that of the pounds in Luke 19, 11-27?

The parables of the talents and the pounds were most probably spoken at different times, in different places, and to different hearers.—*M. S. Terry.*

Probably not identical with Luke 19, 11-27.—*Prof. Marcus D. Buell.*

They are essentially the same, but have a few variations in phraseology, such as would naturally occur in repeating an illustration on different occasions. They both teach that responsibility is proportional to endowment or opportunity, and in that respect are equally appropriate to the connection in each passage; but the amount of money intrusted is somewhat different, apparently because in the one lesson original disparity is more particularly referred to, while in the other substantial equality is specially denoted; and in Luke the circumstances that there called forth the parable included an addition (the accession to the throne) containing a more pointed allusion to its temporal fulfillment (as explained under question 7).—*James Strong.*

11. What is the meaning and application of verse 20?

Every talent implies a kind of ability for activity and usefulness, and there is a natural law of increase and growth with use. At the same time inaction is followed by weakness. The lawyer, the physician, who use their talents wisely and well have many who need and desire their services. The old phrase, "There's nothing succeeds like success," is the lazy man's proverb, and is a feeble effort to account for another man's prosperity. The man who lacks the talents of energy, promptness, courage, and diligence forever dwells on "luck" and "good fortune." But the great law in the kingdoms of business, of society, and of grace is that the man who has a will to work finds plenty to do, and his ability to work increases with constant use; and while he has

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much already, yet more comes to him to do, while the other man bemoans his "hard luck" and "poor fortune." We largely bring our own retribution here in this life upon ourselves.—*Rev. A. D. Vail, D.D.*

Cambridge Notes.

Mark (13. 34) has a brief parable with some resemblance to this, and Luke in the parable of the pounds (19. 12-27) frequently agrees verbally. It is strange that Meyer (as in chap. 22. 1-14) should lend countenance to theories which assume that one parable must be a distorted form of the other. The combination of radical differences with verbal coincidences shows conclusively that our Lord was teaching *complementary* lessons. See previous notes. This is so palpably reasonable and profoundly wise that the very objection is enough to make such canons of criticism absurd. Bruce well points out the mutual interdependence of these parables and that of the laborers. Chap. 30. 1-16. Justly to estimate men's works three things must be considered; namely, "the quantity of work done, the ability of the worker, and the motive." The first is taken up by the pounds, and in conjunction with the second in the talents, while the third forms the ground-work of the laborers.

VER. 14. Contrast the circumstances of Luke 19. 12, where the historical journey of Archelaus to Rome is referred to. *It is.* That is the state of things illustrated by the last parable. Women waiting and men working are opposite types succeeding one another. *His own.* As slaves, they were his chattels, and had to obey commands, not become parties to a contract. Most small trading was done by slaves of a better class, who were allowed to retain a portion of the profits. *His goods.* Man has nothing he has not received. As Lucretius strikingly says, "Life is given to none in fee-simple, to all in usufruct." VER. 15. *Talents.* Equal to about \$1,167, while Luke's "pounds" were only \$16 each. Some think the latter stand for opportunities or natural advantages, the larger sums of our parable representing "charisms"—gifts of the spirit and calls to work. Perhaps, however, the "talents" should include more than this. *Ability.* Which is also ultimately a gift of God, bestowed through natural laws. In one sense, then, there is a "genus" for godliness." VER. 16. *Straightway.* He dared not lose an hour, even from that "long time." *Traded.* Obeyed his call, and so grew in grace. VER. 17. With a narrower sphere, he shows the same promptitude and zeal, and wins the same commendation and reward. VER. 18. Thinking his smaller capital not worth trading on. So large a sum as a talent could not safely have been kept in a napkin. Luke 19. 20; comp. chap. 13. 44. VER. 19. *Long time.* Compare similar hints in chap. 24. 6. 14; 25. 5. VER. 20. The foundation of their success was his. VER. 21. *Good.* Because he understood his lord. (Contrast ver. 26.) *Faithful.* Because he obeyed him. *Few.* "If five talents be 'few,' what must the 'many' be!" (Bengel.) *Set over.* Thus the life of the redeemed is not glorified inactivity, but an indefinitely extended sphere of service. *Joy.* At his safe return and the faithfulness of his slaves, which those who worked for him were now to share. For the application compare Heb. 12. 2; John 17. 13; also 3. 29. VER. 24. He comes up last. Comp. ver. 41. But chap. 13. 30 shows us that this is an order of thought, not of time. *Hard.* A stronger word than Luke's "austere." The man thought he was not characterized, and forthwith began to read his lord's character through the medium of his own. Probably Judas's fall began thus.

John 7. 17 describes the essential condition of knowing God. *Scatter.* Probably the same as *scend*; the repetition is that of Hebrew parallelism. Comp. John 4. 38. VER. 25. *Afraid.* Such a master, idly profiting by others' labor, could never be satisfied. And what if the money be lost in trading? The fear is simulated only as the vehicle of a taunt; had it been real he would not have defied his lord's anger. *Thine own.* "I have been honest, have done all thou couldst fairly expect of me." VER. 26. *Sohful.* The real secret. He shatters the excuse by taking him at his word. The grossest misconception of God is no excuse for neglecting his commands. And there must be a certain insincerity in the misconception; men have to persuade themselves into it. VER. 27. He was not honest, for he had robbed his master of the interest. Just so men thinking it is enough not to turn their gifts positively to evil are shown that thus doing they rob God. Without growth, no life. The "bankers" are those who help men to grow in grace. Ver. 38. His risks and temptations had been greatest. The proved capacity of the faithful was enlarged to include the unfaithful's original call. VER. 29. See powerful illustrations of this in Drummond's *Natural Law*. Unused powers must decay. VER. 30. Comp. Luke 17. 10. "Happy they who call themselves 'unprofitable,' and are not so called by him."—*Bengel.*

Boreau Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Perhaps the best way to teach this lesson is first to tell the story of the parable, not in the words of the Gospel, but in a graphic manner, as if it were an event of our own time.... Then by questions and explanations call out each element in the parable, and show its interpretation as, 1. The man. 2. The servants. 3. The talents. 4. The workers. 5. The idler. 6. The reckoning. 7. The reward. 8. The punishment.... In the interpretation see the General Statement and the Scripture references of the Analytical and Biblical Outline.... Let the class state what are some of the "talents" possessed by men, and how they should be used.... What is the principle in "hath and hath not," verse 29? See that this is carefully explained.... A few lines from Browning. "All service ranks the same with God."—*Pippa Passes.* "Tis not what man does which exalts him, but what man would do."—*Saul.* "There shall never be one lost good."—*Abt Vogler.*

References. FREEMAN'S HAND-BOOK. VER. 15: Talents, 140. VER. 18: Hidden treasure, 667.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

23. What other proof is there that the Bible is inspired? Its wonderful and heavenly power over the human heart.

2 Timothy iii. 16. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.
Hebrews iv. 12, 13.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *The Gifts of God.*
INTRODUCTORY. Talk about keeping accounts. Tell story of a boy who had a little book like this [show small account book] given him. His name was Walter. The book was given him on his seventh birthday. His papa showed him how to mark the page "Dr." "Cr." under which to write down all that he received,

and all that he spent. One day Walter heard the minister and his papa talk about sending money to the heathen. The minister said that all our money was just put in our care by the Lord, and he wanted us to use it for him. Walter's papa thought that he ought to use his money to help on his business. Walter thought the minister must be right. He began a new way of keeping accounts. On one page of his book he wrote, "What I get." On the opposite page, "What I give to God." At first he gave one cent in ten, but by and by he thought that too little and gave one cent in five. [Teacher may print specimen page from Walter's book on the board.] One day Walter's papa found the book, and it made him ashamed of his way of keeping all his money for himself, and he, too, began to keep an account with God.

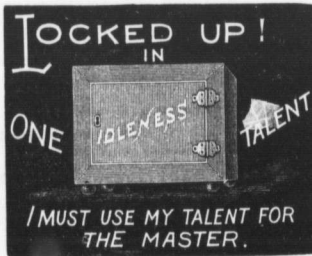
God giving to us. Teach that all we have comes to us from God; not only our money, food, clothes, etc., but health, reason, love of friends, home, happiness, etc. We do not earn these things. God gives them to us. He tells in a story what he expects us to do with them. A man going to travel in a far country gave each of his servants—some of his money to use while he was gone. The money did not belong to the servants; it belonged to the Master. He gave it to them to use for him. Tell how they used it, and what he said to each one on his return.



What we may give to God. Call out from children some of God's gifts to them. Make one or two list on the board; for instance: "Carrie: Eyes to see. Ears to hear. Voice to speak. Hands to work. Mind to think." Show that the sight, the hearing, etc., are all God's gifts to be used for him. What will he say if we use them for ourselves only? He wants us to improve them by using them for him. Show how this may be done by every child—how the voice used for him grows sweeter, the mind stronger, etc. Use symbol to impress the thought of the reward waiting the one who uses faithfully the gifts of the Master.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



The blackboard illustrates the locking up of the one talent—in an iron safe. The word "Idleness," written across the door, shows that the talent is hid in an idle or non-productive place, and the illustration is used as a supplement to the teaching of the lesson, wherein it is shown that any person who so lives that he neither grows in grace nor helps another to do better is an unprofitable servant.

DIRECTIONS FOR COLORS. The safe, draw in outline with blue chalk; "Idleness," in white; "one talent,"

yellow; "locked up," in white or light blue; the sentence in pink.

APPLICATION. Open the door of idleness, take out your talent, and go to work for the Master.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

The camels are loaded for a distant journey. The drivers stand by their side, and impatiently glance at the door-way of their lord.

"Why tarries the Master?" they ask.

He has called the servants into the great court. They stand before him. They wonder what may be his end of them.

"Here, Abraham," he says, "take five talents! Occupy till I come. Isaac, where is Isaac? Ah, here thou art! Take two talents. Occupy till I come. Annanias! Here thou art, and here is a talent for thee. Occupy till I come. I cannot say when I shall come. Be ye faithful over the few things your lord has given you. Occupy till I come."

The master has gone. The file of camels shrinks away to a point on the distant hill-slope and then disappears. Watch the three servants as they take their talents and turn away to dispose of them. Abraham is burdened with a sense of his responsibility.

"So much," he says, "so much to do for my lord, and I must be faithful till he comes when he will."

You see Abraham's trusty face at the city gate, or out in the vineyard, or amid the flocks when the wind sweeps the pasture-lands, or in the highway when the sun beats down.

"Every-where," he says, "I must do the best I can with those five talents. I must spare no effort for my master's sake. I must consecrate myself to the best possible use of the goods with which he has entrusted me. I know not when he may come. What if it be at midnight? What if I suddenly hear the sound of his feet at the door and he say, 'Abraham, where are those five talents?'"

And Isaac, what is he doing? He is not so great a man as Abraham. He has three talents less to take care of. But there is no jealousy. He does not think of any inferiority to Abraham, only of his duty to his master. He takes those two talents, and you may follow him early, follow him late, follow him through the day, and his life is an echo of that injunction, "Occupy till I come." He, too, is saying, "I know not when the master may come. What if he come at the cock-crowing! When I am thinking of going out into the fields or the highway, what if all departure be stopped by the sudden call of my master at the door, 'Isaac, where are those two talents?'"

And here is Annanias.

"Only a talent!" he is saying. "One less than Isaac's and four less than Abraham's! What is the use of trying with a talent to please that grasping lord? He gives so little and exacts so much. I—I will keep it all back. I will not give it out at all, but—but—"

He ceases to mutter and goes off. Where is he going? He takes with him something all wrapped up in a napkin, and he is turning into that solitary, far-off field. Any body looking? He turns and glances over his shoulder. He removes the earth in the farthest corner. Do that Abraham and that Isaac see him? Into the earth he sinks his lord's goods, to gather damp and mildew and canker.

The days go by. Why tarries the master? "Our lord is coming!" says Abraham.

"Our lord is coming!" says Isaac.

"Fool!" cries Annanias. "He will not come so suddenly. Be at ease, O soul of mine!"

He mothers conscience. He tries to forget that he has buried his talent in the earth of self and sin. He would live on, heedless of any accountability, when, without a moment's warning, there is the sound of bustling feet and expectant voices at the door! The camels are back again. They are giving up their burdens. Hurrying through the portal is the master!

"Ho, Abraham! Ho, Isaac! Ho, Annanias! Those talents, five, two, one, where are they?"

Ah, with what a joyful face do the two faithful servants stand before their lord and hand their account to him! Well done, good and faithful servants! You have carried your cross.

"Fear not your crown. Enter ye in into the joy of your lord!"

And Annanias? He has been slinking off into a lonely field, unearthing a napkin, and now stands before the eyes that are swords to penetrate and pierce to the marrow. Alas, alas, for the servant who did not believe the master would suddenly return! That servant must now meet that day, that sudden day, of examination and judgment.

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