

Sabbath-School Lessons on
Mrs. Plummer
The Parables of Jesus

FOR SENIOR CLASSES

No. 26

FOURTH QUARTER, 1901
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The parables of our Saviour, treated by the lessons of this pamphlet, form the subject matter of that splendid volume

Christ's Object Lessons

The student who desires to have a thorough understanding of these studies will find this book indispensable

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SUGGESTIONS FOR FAMILY STUDY

SABBATH

Read carefully the portions of Scripture which form the basis of the next Sabbath's lesson. Study the memory verse, if there be one.

SUNDAY

Repeat the story of the lesson from memory, and then read it. Study the circumstances under which the parable was spoken. Ask yourself what is the lesson or lessons the parable is designed to teach.

MONDAY

Read the comments on the lesson in "Christ's Object Lessons." Review the Scripture lesson.

TUESDAY

Ask the questions on the primary lesson, and on the youth's lesson, and review the memory verse. Study the practical lessons taught by the parable.

WEDNESDAY

Ask the questions on the senior lesson. Read the notes in the "Lesson Quarterly," also the notes in the "Instructor."

THURSDAY

Give an outline of the lesson, connecting with it the helpful thoughts in "Christ's Object Lessons."

FRIDAY

Review all the lessons. Relate personal experiences in which the truths contained in the lesson have been helpful.

SABBATH-SCHOOL LESSONS

ON

The Parables of Jesus

FOR

SENIOR CLASSES

FOURTH QUARTER 1901

NOTE.—In the preparation of these lessons all Scripture references, and the pages of "Christ's Object Lessons," should be thoroughly studied first, then the questions. The questions are not the lessons. They are only for the purpose of finding out what we have observed while studying.

More of the preciousness of these lessons will be obtained if the lesson is studied each day throughout the week. In the parables of Jesus there is salvation from sin for every type of sinner—from the Pharisee to the prodigal.

The notes are wholly selected from such portions of "Christ's Object Lessons" as apply to each lesson.

LESSON I.—TEACHING IN PARABLES.

Lesson Scriptures.—Matt. 13:13-35; 25:1-12.

LESSON HELP.—“Christ’s Object Lessons,” chapter I.

October 5, 1901.

1. In what way did Jesus teach the multitudes? Matt. 13:34.
2. What prediction was thus fulfilled? What did He utter?
Verse 35
3. As a basis of His parables, from what sources did He principally draw?—Nature and scenes from every-day life. Matt. 13:24-32; 25:1-12.
4. Why did Christ speak in parables? Matt. 13:13.
5. What are people supposed to see in the things about them?
Rom. 1:20.
6. In how many things is God revealed? Jer. 23:23, 24.
7. Failing to see Him in each daily scene and event, what happens to the heart? Rom. 1:20, 21.
8. Was this the condition of the people to whom Jesus opened His mouth in parables? Matt. 13:13-15.
9. Then, in showing God in common things, what was revealed? Verse 35, last clause.
10. How do you express your thoughts?—In words and deeds. Does God express His thoughts thus?
11. When were the earth and all its contents an exact expression of God’s thoughts? Gen. 1:31.
12. At that time what do you think the man, created in the image of God, could see and understand in the things about him?
13. Give two reasons showing why the natural man sees so little of God now in His created works. Eph. 4:18; Gen. 3:17, 18.
14. Are these parables needed, then, to-day? Why?

NOTES.

To Adam and Eve in their Eden home nature was full of the knowledge of God, teeming with divine instruction. Wisdom spoke to the eye, and was received into the heart, for they communed with God in His created works. As soon as the holy pair transgressed the law of the Most High, the brightness from the face of God departed from the face of nature. The earth is now marred and defiled by sin. Yet, even in its blighted state, much that is beautiful remains. God's object-lessons are not obliterated; rightly understood, nature speaks of her Creator.

In the days of Christ these lessons had been lost sight of. Men had well-nigh ceased to discern God in His works. The sinfulness of humanity had cast a pall over the fair face of creation; and, instead of manifesting God, His works became a barrier that concealed Him. . . . Not only the things of nature, but the sacrificial service and the Scriptures themselves,—all given to reveal God,—were so perverted that they became the means of concealing Him.

Jesus sought an avenue to every heart. By using a variety of illustrations, He not only presented truth in its different phases, but appealed to the different hearers. Their interest was aroused by figures, drawn from the surroundings of their daily life.

In the Saviour's parable teaching is an indication of what constitutes the true "higher education."

Too often the minds of students are occupied with men's theories and speculations, falsely called science and philosophy. They need to be brought into close contact with nature. Let them learn that creation and Christianity have one God.

Christ's purpose in parable teaching was in direct line with the purpose of the Sabbath. . . . The Sabbath bids us behold in His created works the glory of the Creator. . . . On the holy rest day, above all other days, we should study the messages that God has written for us in nature. We should study the Saviour's parables where He spoke them in the fields and groves, under the open sky, among the grass and flowers. As we come close to the heart of nature, Christ makes His presence real to us, and speaks to our hearts of His peace and love.

LESSON II.—PARABLE OF THE SOWER:

Lesson Scriptures.—Matt. 13:1-9; Luke 8:11.

AID.—“Christ's Object Lessons,” pp. 33-43.

October 12, 1901.

1. When Jesus gave the parable of the sower, what were the surroundings? Matt. 13:1, 2.
2. What did He say? Verse 3.
3. Was a sower in sight when He said this? What is the meaning of the word “behold”? In the application of the parable, who is the sower? Verse 37. What does He sow? What kind of seed? What is the seed? Luke 8:11.
4. What causes growth?—Life. Who quickens, or gives life to, all things? 1 Tim. 6:13.
5. Is that past merely, or present also? By whose life does the Creator make things live and grow?
6. If there were another source of life than God Himself, what would be necessary?—Another god besides the Lord. What, then, is the life of every seed and plant and tree?
7. What is a “fountain”? With whom is the “fountain of life”? Ps. 36:7-9.
8. By what means are people created? Job 33:4.
9. How are they kept alive? Acts 17:25.
10. What relation is there between God's Word and His life? John 6:63.
11. Then, since all things are now caused to be, and made to grow, by the “life” of God, does that mean by the “word” of God?
12. How are men born again? 1 Peter 1:23; John 3:6. *Ans.*—Born again by the “word”; born by the “Spirit.” “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” John 6:63.

13. Are written signs and characters the real word of God? Heb. 4:12.

14. Since it is the same life in what we call "natural" things as that which is found in spiritual things, what ought we to see in all natural objects?

15. In the parable what did the sower sow?

NOTES.

They expected the Messiah to prove His claims by mighty deeds of conquest, to establish His empire on the ruins of earthly kingdoms. This expectation Christ answered in the parable of the sower. Not by force of arms, not by violent interpositions, was the kingdom of God to prevail, but by the implanting of a new principle in the hearts of men.

The word of God is the seed. Every seed has, in itself, a germinating principle. In it the life of the plant is enfolded. So there is life in God's word. . . . In every command and in every promise of the word of God is the power, the very life of God, by which the command may be fulfilled and the promise realized. He who, by faith, received the word, is receiving the very life and character of God.

But the teacher of sacred truth can impart only that which he himself knows by experience. "The sower sowed *his* seed."

LESSON III.—PARABLE OF THE SOWER.**WAYSIDE AND STONY-GROUND HEARERS.**

Lesson Scriptures.—Matt. 13:3-6; 18-21.

AID.—“Christ’s Object Lessons,” pp. 43-50.

October 19, 1901.

1. What is said of a sower? Where did he go? For what purpose? Where did some of the seed fall? What became of it? Other seed fell where? How soon did this grow? Why? What effect had the sun upon this? Why did it wither?

2. What are we asked to hear? Matt. 13:18.

3. In this verse, what corresponds to the fowls by the wayside? Away from whom does he catch the seed?

4. What has made the heart of the wayside hearer hard, like the beaten path? Rom. 1:21; 2 Cor. 4:4; Rom. 11:7, margin; Heb. 3:13.

5. In this condition, how do they treat the word?

6. What gives Satan an opportunity to catch it away?

7. Has Satan any assistants in this work? Matt. 12:30; see note.

8. Who receives the seed into stony places? How does such a one receive the word? What is the meaning of “anon”?

9. What is lacking? How does he become offended? What is understood by the word “offended” in this connection?

10. Does an immediate acceptance of the word when it is presented, necessarily prove one to be a stony-ground hearer? Matt. 4:18-22, etc.; see also note.

11. Does the fact that one is in the condition of the wayside hearer, or that of the stony-ground hearer, show that there is no hope for him? Heb. 7:25; Isa. 1:18.

NOTES.

Satan has many helpers. Many who profess to be Christians are aiding the tempter to catch away the seeds of truth from other hearts. Many who listen to the preaching of the word of God make it the subject of criticism at home. They sit in judgment on the sermon as they would on the words of a lecturer or a political speaker.

It is not because men receive the word immediately, nor because they rejoice in it, that they fall away. As soon as Matthew heard the Saviour's call, immediately he rose up, left all, and followed Him. As soon as the divine word comes to our hearts, God desires us to receive it; and it is right to accept it with joy. "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

LESSON IV.—PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

SEED AMONG THORNS AND ON GOOD GROUND.

Lesson Scriptures.—Matt. 13:7, 8, 22, 23; Mark 4:7, 8, 19, 20; Luke 8:7, 8, 14-18.

AID.—"Christ's Object Lessons," pp. 50-62.

October 26, 1901.

1. Where did other seed fall? What effect had the thorns upon the growing seed? What expression in the text shows that the thorns grew rapidly? Besides hindering the growth of the seed-stalks, what do thorns prevent? Mark 4:7; Luke 8:14.

2. What is the main purpose of sowing seed? What does Matthew say the thorns represent? Mark? Luke?

3. Do any of these things ever absorb our minds, and hinder spiritual growth, or perfect fruit-bearing?

4. In these very days, of what are we warned? Luke 21:34.

5. What class is more apt to be absorbed with the *cares* of this life? What class with the *pleasures*?

6. Into what did other seed fall? What was brought forth? In what proportions? What, then, is the evidence of good ground?

7. What kind of fruit-bearing is equal to none at all? Hosea 10: 1, 2.

8. For whom, then, does good ground bring forth fruit?

9. What is our final test—correctness of theology merely, or fruit-bearing? Matt. 25: 31-46.

NOTES.

Throughout the parable of the sower, Christ represents the different results of the sowing as depending upon the *soil*. In every case the sower and the seed are the same. Thus He teaches that if the word of God fails of accomplishing its work in our hearts and lives, the reason is to be found in ourselves.

The garden of the heart must be cultivated. The soil must be broken up by deep repentance for sin. Poisonous, satanic plants must be uprooted. The soil once overgrown by thorns can be reclaimed only by diligent labor. So the evil tendencies of the natural heart can be overcome only by earnest effort in the name and strength of Jesus.

The "honest and good heart" of which the parable speaks, is not a heart without sin; for the gospel is to be preached to the lost. Christ said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." He has an honest heart who yields to the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

LESSON V.—CHRISTIAN GROWTH.

Lesson Scripture.—Mark 4 :26-29.

AID.—“Christ’s Object Lessons,” pp. 62-69.

November 2, 1901.

1. To what is the kingdom of God here likened?
2. After the seed is sown, what is the man said to be doing?
3. How does the seed grow? Why does the man not know how it is done?
4. Does the fact that “the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself” show that it is within God’s aid, or without man’s knowledge and help?
5. In the process of growth, what first appears? What next? What last of all?
6. How soon after this state of things arrives, is the grain reaped? Verse 29, margin. Why?
7. Before sowing garden seeds, what must be done with the soil? Why do men not plant while the ground is frozen?
8. What is God’s part in the preparation of the earth-soil? What is man’s?
9. Beyond what point can man do nothing?
10. How is the soil of the heart made ready for the gospel seed? John 1:4, 9; Ps. 65:9; Isa. 44:3; Hosea 10:12; Phil. 2:13; Matt. 5:14, 16; 1 Peter 2:1, 2; Matt. 5:6.
11. What is God’s part, and what man’s in this work?
12. When is the best time to sow gospel seed? Eccl. 11:6.
13. Give examples of some whose hearts were all prepared before the gospel seed-sower was sent to sow. Acts 8:26-39; 10:1-48.
14. In these instances, was it necessary for the sower to always remain with the ground on which his seed had been cast? Have we ever tried to do God’s part in this work?

NOTES.

The parable of the seed reveals that God is at work in nature. The seed has in itself a germinating principle, a principle that God Himself has planted: yet if left to itself, the seed would have no power to spring up. Man has his part to act in promoting the growth of grain. He must prepare and enrich the soil and cast in the seed. He must till the fields. But there is a point beyond which he can accomplish nothing.

There is life in the seed, there is power in the soil; but unless an infinite power is exercised day and night, the seed will yield no returns. . . . *The life which the Creator has implanted, He alone can call forth.* Every seed grows, every plant develops, by the power of God.

As the earth bringeth forth her bud, as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth.

The germination of the seed represents the beginning of the spiritual life, and the development of the plant is a beautiful figure of Christian growth. As in nature, so in grace; there can be no life without growth. The plant must either grow or die.

At every stage of development our life may be perfect; yet if God's purpose for us is fulfilled, there will be continual advancement. Sanctification is the work of a lifetime.

There can be no growth or fruitfulness in the life that is centered in self.

Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.

Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain.

LESSON VI.—TARES.

Lesson Scriptures.—Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43.

AID.—“Christ’s Object Lessons,” pp. 70-75.

November 9, 1901.

1. What did our Lord again speak?
2. What was this parable given to illustrate?
3. To what did He compare the kingdom of heaven?
4. What did the enemy do? When?
5. When did the tares appear?
6. Apart from the fruit, then, were the tares readily distinguished?
7. What is the great test as to true or false teachers? Matt. 7:16-21.
8. Who told the house-holder about the tares?
9. What question did they ask?
10. What was the reply?
11. What was the servants’ second question?
12. What answer was given?
13. What reason was given for this answer?
14. How long must both grow together?
15. At that time, what will be said to the reapers?
16. What is done with the tares?
17. What is done with the wheat?
18. Who especially inquired about the parable?
19. Where was Jesus when this inquiry came?
20. Where were the multitude?
21. Who sowed the good seed? What is the field? The good seed are who? Who are the tares? Who sowed them? What is the harvest? Who are the reapers?
22. Of what is the gathering and burning of the tares a simile? Out of what are these offenders gathered? By whom is this done? Where are they cast?

23. What shows the literal character of the fire and the suffering?
24. At that time who will shine forth? Where?

NOTES.

The tares represent a class who are the fruit or embodiment of error, of false principles. "The enemy that sowed them is the devil." Neither God nor His angels ever sowed a seed that would produce a tare. The tares are always sown by Satan, the enemy of God and man.

It is from enmity to Christ that Satan scatters his evil seed among the good grain of the kingdom. The fruit of the sowing he attributes to the Son of God. By bringing into the church those who bear Christ's name while they deny His character, the wicked one causes that God shall be dishonored, the work of salvation misrepresented, and souls imperiled.

Christ has plainly taught that those who persist in open sin must be separated from the church; but He has not committed to us the work of judging character and motive.

The Redeemer does not want to lose one soul; His experience with Judas is recorded to show His long patience with perverse human nature; and He bids us bear with it as He has borne.

The Saviour does not point forward to a time when all the tares become wheat. The wheat and tares grow together until the harvest, the end of the world. Then the tares are bound in bundles to be burned, and the wheat is gathered into the garner of God.

LESSON VII.—THE MUSTARD SEED. OTHER LESSONS.

Lesson Scriptures.—Matt. 13: 31, 32; Mark 4: 30-32; Luke 13: 18, 19.

AID.—“Christ’s Object Lessons,” pp. 76-89.

November 16, 1901.

1. What question did Jesus ask? Mark 4: 30.
2. Who answered it? In this instance what did He say the kingdom is like? How many grains?
3. Does the dry seed represent the kingdom, or is it the seed as it is sown and growing?
4. In size, how does this seed compare with others? How does the plant compare with other plants?
5. What symbols are used in the Bible to represent earthly governments? Dan. 7: 3, 17, 23.
6. How have earthly governments usually been established, maintained, and extended?
7. Then where could Christ find no similitude of the kingdom of heaven?
8. In order that we may be admitted into that kingdom, where must the kingdom be first admitted? Luke 17:20, 21.
9. What is the kingdom that God sets up in man? Rom. 14:17.
10. What will God’s kingdom eventually fill? Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45; 7:17, 18, 27.
11. But according to the parables thus far studied, how will the subjects of this kingdom be made ready?
12. What makes less noise than the growth of a seed?
13. How does this compare with political strife and the contending of armies?
14. Which attracts the more attention in the world? Which is enduring, and which is not? Dan. 2:44; 7:27.

15. Can one have the spirit of both these kingdoms at the same time? Can the methods of both be followed by any one? To which do you and I belong?

NOTES.

The Jews looked for the kingdom of God to be established in the same way as the kingdoms of the world. To promote righteousness they resorted to external measures. They devised methods and plans. But Christ implants a principle. By implanting truth and righteousness He counterworks error and sin.

Not only is the growth of Christ's kingdom illustrated by the parable of the mustard seed, but in every stage of its growth the experience represented in the parable is repeated.

At the outset its advocates are few. By the great men of the world, and by a world-conforming church, they are opposed and despised.

In this last generation the parable of the mustard seed is to reach a signal and triumphant fulfilment. The little seed will become a tree.

Every seed that sends up its green blade to the sunlight declares the wonder-working power of that word uttered by Him who "spake and it was;" who "commanded, and it stood fast."

In everything that tends to the sustenance of man is seen the concurrence of divine and human effort. There can be no reaping unless the human hand acts its part in the sowing of the seed.

LESSON VIII.—THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. VARIOUS COMPARISONS.

Lesson Scriptures.—Matt. 13:33; 44-52.

AID.—"Christ's Object Lessons," pp. 95-134.

November 23, 1901.

1. In this scripturè, how many comparisons are made? What are they? What was hid? Where? Until what resulted? Was the leaven naturally in the meal? What practical lesson do you get from this fact? At the beginning which was the greater in bulk—the leaven or the meal? Finally, what did all become? What does this show of the efficiency of the "hidden life"?

2. What is the second comparison? What will the man do who actually finds it? Does he reluctantly part with his former possessions in order to obtain the "hid treasure"? What are you willing to give up for heaven?

3. What is the third comparison? When we are the "merchantman," who is the "Pearl"? When Christ is the "Merchantman," who is the "pearl"? Mal. 3:17. What price did He pay for us? Give scripture proof. Does the merchantman regret to part with all his former possessions in order to procure the "pearl of great price"?

4. What is the fourth comparison? What is gathered in the net? What is done with the bad? With the good? In reference to the kingdom, when does He say He will "sever the wicked from among the just"? Then how long will bad fish be found in the gospel net? How does this agree with the parable of the tares? In this case, who separates the bad from the good? Where were the tares cast? Where are these cast?

5. To close this series of parables, what question did Jesus ask? What did they answer? Then what further instruction came? If we are among the "scribes instructed unto the kingdom of heaven," what may we do?

NOTES.

The leaven—something wholly from without—must be put into the meal before the desired change can be wrought in it.

As the leaven, when mingled with the meal, works from within outward, so it is by the renewing of the heart that the grace of God works to transform the life.

The leaven hidden in the flour works invisibly to bring the whole mass under its leavening process; so the leaven of truth works secretly, silently, steadily, to transform the soul.

Man is not endowed with new faculties, but the faculties he has are sanctified.

The leaven of truth will not produce the spirit of rivalry, the love of ambition, the desire to be first.

The grace of Christ is to control the temper and the voice.

LESSON IX.—PRAYER.

Lesson Scripture.—Luke 11:1-13.

AID.—“Christ’s Object Lessons,” pp. 139-149.

November 30, 1901.

1. What request did the disciples make of Jesus? Under what circumstances? Why would this circumstance lead one to ask such a favor?

2. Give the reply of the Master.

3. Had He taught this same prayer before? Where?

4. In the prayer, what endearing name are we permitted to use? By the very utterance of the name, what do we admit ourselves to be? How does the beloved John show his appreciation of this relationship with the Holy One? 1 John 3:1, 2. To whom do these words have more than an empty sound?

5. What incident is related to impress the Lord’s prayer? At what hour is the request made for bread? Where is the one

of whom the favor is asked? Why does he at first object? What will persuade him to rise and give the bread? How much will he give?

6. Why are some prayers never granted? James 4:3.

7. In the parable, for whose benefit was the urgent request made?

8. For whom were Jesus' earnest prayers offered? John 17:9-11, 15-26; see note. What practical lesson may we learn from this fact?

9. What deepening of purpose is expressed when we ask, seek, and knock? How many receive? Who finds? To whom will the treasure-house of God be opened?

10. Turning from the sleeping friend to an earthly father, what precious truths are taught in reference to prayer? Why does even this fail to equal our heavenly Father's willingness to give? How only may we preserve the capacity for receiving of God? See note.

11. Does prayer work any change in God? See note.

12. Have God's promises any conditions? What are they? John 14:13-15.

NOTES.

Not for Himself, but for others, He lived and thought and prayed. From hours spent with God He came forth morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men. Daily He received a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Here Christ represents the petitioner as asking that he may give again.

A selfish man will grant an urgent request, in order to rid himself of one who disturbs his rest. But God delights to give.

Our prayers are not to be a selfish asking, merely for our own benefit. We are to ask that we may give.

The capacity for receiving is preserved only by imparting. We can not continue to receive heavenly treasure without communicating to those around us.

Prayer is not to work any change in God; it is to bring us into harmony with God. When we make a request of Him, He

may see that it is necessary for us to search our hearts and repent of sin. Therefore He takes us through test and trial, He brings us through humiliation, that we may see what hinders the working of His Holy Spirit through us.

God does not say, Ask once and you shall receive. He bids us ask, unwearyingly persist in prayer. The persistent asking brings the petitioner into a more earnest attitude, and gives him an increased desire to receive the things for which he asks.

The practise of telling our difficulties to others only makes us weak, and brings no strength to them.

LESSON X.—THE WORSHIPERS.

Lesson Scripture.—Luke 18: 9-14.

AID.—"Christ's Object Lessons," pp. 150-163.

December 7, 1901.

1. To whom was this parable spoken?
2. Who went up into the temple? For what purpose? What was "the one"? "The other"?
3. With whom did the Pharisee pray? For what was he thankful? What were his good deeds?
4. In praying where did the publican stand? What was his attitude? What were his words?
5. Which of the two went home justified? Who says so?
6. How many will be abased? Who will be exalted? By whom will the exalting and the abasing be done?
7. Show where Peter's experience fulfils both the place of the Pharisee and the publican. Mark 14:29-31; Matt. 26:69-75; John 21:15-17.
8. Whom only can Christ save? Luke 19:10; Mark 2:16, 17.
9. How only can a true knowledge of self be obtained? Isa. 6:1-5.

10. What causes men to uplift themselves in self-righteousness? Rom. 10:3.

11. Who can empty himself of self? How can this be done? Rom. 6:6; 2 Cor. 5:14, 15.

12. How often must this experience be repeated? Luke 9:23.

13. Who will loathe themselves most? Job 42:5, 6.

14. To what point will God exalt those who humble themselves here, accepting their Redeemer as their all in all? Rom. 8:16, 17.

NOTES.

Whoever trusts in himself that he is righteous, will despise others.

The sense of need, the recognition of our poverty and sin, is the very first condition of acceptance with God.

Those whom heaven recognizes as holy ones are the last to parade their own goodness.

Great as is the shame and degradation through sin, even greater will be the honor and exaltation through redeeming love. To human beings striving for conformity to the divine image there is imparted an outlay of heaven's treasure, an excellency of power, that will place them higher even than the angels who have never fallen.

LESSON XI.—SHALL NOT GOD AVENGE HIS OWN?

Lesson Scripture.—Luke 18 : 1-8.

AID.—“ Christ’s Object Lessons,” pp. 164-180.

December 14, 1901.

1. To what intent was this parable spoken?
2. What sort of judge is here mentioned? Who came to him? For what reason? For awhile how did he act? Why only did he comply with her request?
3. What are we admonished “ to hear ”? Is God less mindful of the woes of His own elect?
4. Which requires stronger faith—an immediate answer to prayer or a delayed answer? Why?
5. In persevering prayer, what encouragement may we gather from Zech. 3 : 1-3?
6. Who is our common adversary? 1 Peter 5 : 8. Who only can avenge us of him? To whom only, then, should we appeal?
7. Why are trials permitted to come? 1 Peter 4 : 12-14. Note.
8. What encouragement may we gain from the experience of the Syrophenician woman? Mark 7 : 25-30.
9. What admonitions are given further to encourage patience on our part? Heb. 10 : 35-37; James 5 : 7, 8.
10. Why is a crisis sometimes permitted? 2 Chronicles 20; also note.
11. What may we know in this time of prevailing iniquity? 2 Tim. 3 : 1-5; Matt. 24 : 13, 14; see note.
12. Whence will Jesus gather His people? Mark 13 : 27; see note.

NOTES.

The Lord permits trials in order that we may be cleansed from earthliness, from selfishness, from harsh, unchristlike traits of character. He suffers the deep waters of affliction to go over our souls, in order that we may know Him, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, in order that we may have deep heart longings to be cleansed from defilement, and may come forth from the trial purer, holier, happier.

There is no danger that the Lord will neglect the prayers of His people. The danger is that in temptation and trial they will become discouraged, and fail to persevere in prayer.

From age to age the Lord has made known the manner of His working. When a crisis has come, He has revealed Himself and has interposed to hinder the working out of Satan's plans. *With nations, with families, and with individuals, He has often permitted matters to come to a crisis, that His interference might become marked.*

In this time of prevailing iniquity we may know that the last great crisis is at hand.

From garrets, from hovels, from dungeons, from scaffolds, from mountains and deserts, from the caves of the earth and the caverns of the sea, Christ will gather His children to Himself.

LESSON XII.—“THIS MAN RECEIVETH SINNERS.”

Lesson Scripture.—Luke 15: 1-10.

AID.—“Christ’s Object Lessons,” pp. 185-197.

December 21, 1901.

1. What class of people drew near to Jesus? How many came? For what purpose? Who murmured? What did they say?

2. To meet this case, what parables did Jesus give?

3. To whom did He appeal in the parable of the lost sheep? How many were in the flock? How many were lost? Could He have mentioned a smaller number? In His haste to find the lost sheep, where were the ninety-nine left? How long is the search continued?

4. Having found the sheep, how is it brought home? In carrying the sheep homeward, what is the shepherd’s state of mind? What does he first do on reaching home? For what purpose? Is there a parallel to this in the salvation of the sinner?

5. How many pieces of silver are lost? Who searches for the lost one? To whom does it still belong? With what care is the search made? How is her diligence rewarded? Having found it, what does she do?

6. Unto what is this scene of rejoicing likened? In its lost condition, what does the sheep realize?—That it is lost.

7. What does the lost piece of silver *not* realize?

8. How do some of the sheep happen to go astray? Read Eze. 34: 1-31. Who will seek them? Verses 11-16.

9. Let each Christian determine whether his actions place him among those who scatter the flock, or with him who gathers. Let all the wounded, bleeding, lost, and apparently forsaken ones take courage. Our Chief Shepherd is now gathering His flock. He will not omit any.

NOTES.

As the shepherd loves his sheep, and can not rest if one be missing, so, in an infinitely higher degree, does God love every outcast soul. Men may deny the claim of His love, they may wander from Him, may choose another master, yet they are God's, and He longs to recover His own. He says, "As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered, so will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day."

In the parable of the lost sheep, Christ teaches that salvation does not come through our seeking after God, but through God's seeking after us.

Every soul whom Christ has rescued is called to work in His name for the saving of the lost. This work had been neglected in Israel. Is it not neglected to-day by those who profess to be Christ's followers?

In this work all the angels of heaven are ready to cooperate. All the resources of heaven are at the command of those who are seeking to save the lost. Angels will help you to reach the most careless and the most hardened. And when one is brought back to God, all heaven is made glad.

**READ THE SUGGESTIONS FOR FAMILY STUDY ON SECOND PAGE
OF COVER.**

LESSON XIII.—“LOST, AND IS FOUND:”**Lesson Scripture.**—Luke 15: 11-32.

AID.—“Christ’s Object Lessons,” pp. 198-211.

December 28, 1901.

1. What had a certain man?
2. What request did the younger one make? Was it granted?
3. How soon afterward did he take a journey? How much of his patrimony was taken with him?
4. Did he settle in an adjoining town? Where?
5. How was his substance used? When all was expended, what arose? Into what state did this bring him? What did he do to relieve his dire necessity? What employment was given him? To what extremes did his hunger bring him? Did any one supply his need?
6. How did he begin to reason? When was this? What did he desire to do?
7. What did he intend to say when he reached home? Did he do as he had determined?
8. When did his father see him? How was he greeted? Did he say all to his father he had thought to say?
9. What command was immediately given the servants? Why this great demonstration of rejoicing?
10. With what illustrations has the Lord elsewhere shown His joy over the return of the wanderer? Isa. 62: 5; Zeph. 3: 17.
11. Hearing the sound of rejoicing, what question did the elder son ask? Did he share in the joy? How did he act? What did he say to his father? What did he call the returned penitent? What was the father’s kind reply?

NOTES.

In the parable of the prodigal son is presented the Lord's dealing with those who have once known the Father's love, but have allowed the tempter to lead them captive at his will.

Whatever the appearance may be, every life centered in self is squandered.

The love of God still yearns over the one who has chosen to separate from Him, and He sets in operation influences to bring him back to the Father's house.

The prodigal son in his wretchedness "came to himself."

In his restless youth the prodigal looked upon his father as stern and severe. How different his conception of him now! So those who are deceived by Satan look upon God as hard and exacting.

In the parable there is no taunting, no casting up to the prodigal of his evil course; the son feels that the past is forgiven and forgotten, blotted out forever.

Self-righteousness not only leads men to misrepresent God, but makes them cold-hearted and critical toward their brethren. . . . While the soul is making its very first struggles against the flood of temptations, they stand by, stubborn, self-willed, complaining, accusing. They may claim to be children of God, but they are acting out the spirit of Satan. By their attitude toward their brethren these accusers place themselves where God can not give them the light of His countenance.



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