THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

MARCH 4

Jesus Teaching in the Temple, Luke 20: 1-21: 38. Golden Text—Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's—Luke 20: 25.

Lesson Setting—In the interval between the lesson of last week and this lesson, Jesus had made his triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem, amid the rejoicing of the people. This demonstration of public favor only increased the hate and opposition of the Pharisees and scribes. "Ye behold," they said to one another, "that ye are doing no good. See, the whole world hath gone away after him." Jesus faced their opposition with boldness. He refused to check the enthusiasm of his followers at their request. He cleansed the Temple of those dishonoring things which were sanctioned by the priests, and carried on to their enrichment. He taught openly and boldly in the Temple and the people hung on his lips. The enemies of Christ, not daring to lay hold on Jesus, now sought to entrap him in his teaching, into some word that would bring him into direct conflict with the Roman civil authorities.

I. Silencing an Insincere Questioner, 19-26.

V. 19, 20. **The chief priests . . the same hour sought to lay hands.** Jesus had just spoken the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. The priests knew that Jesus, as he described the fate of those who had slain the son of the master of the vineyard, was referring to their opposition to himself, and was describing the result of that opposition. **They feared the people.** They felt that Jesus was undermining their authority among the people, and yet the people were so evidently with Jesus that they dare not interfere openly. Against them. The parables of Jesus had always an object as well as a subject and this parable had reached its mark. **They watched him, and sent . . spies.** These persons, whom they sent, would come pretending to be real enquirers after truth. Mark tells us that among them were supporters of Herod and the Roman party, who would be quick to report any words that would imply treason against the civil authorities. It was this conflict between Jesus and the Roman authorities that the crafty Pharisees sought. They desired to make loyalty to Herod and Rome a cloak for their designs.

Vs. 21-26. **Master . . thou sayest and teachest rightly.** They begin by flattery, and lay special emphasis on his fearlessness and outspokenness. **Tribute unto Caesar.** Jewish patriots denounced the paying of taxes to the Roman Government, especially because they had to be paid in Roman coins which bore on them the image of the Roman emperor, which was an added offence. The image of the emperor seemed a breach of the Second Commandment. The question was skilful. If Jesus said tribute should not be paid, they would report him to Pilate. If he said tribute should be paid, they would proclaim him to the people as a traitor to his land and race. **Why tempt ye me?** Why seek to entrap me by cunning? Jesus sees the trap immediately. **Image;** the head of the emperor, Tiberius. **Subscription;** the device on the other side of the coin, which was a silverling or a shilling. **They . . . said, Caesar's.** Jesus compels them to answer their own question. He simply throws back the question on themselves. Any further discussion on their part would have put them in the dilemma in which they sought to place Jesus. It is they who must play the part of treason to Rome or to Israel. **They marvelled . . and held their peace.** The incident of the tribute money is but one of a series of entangling questions in which Jesus not only escapes the net, but throws it over his questioners.

II. Praising a True Giver, 21: 1-4.

V. 1. **And he looked up.** Mark says that he was sitting down, over against the treasury. This was in the great central court of the Temple into which women were admitted. Under the pillars there were ranged thirteen boxes called trumpets, because of the shape of their mouths. Nine of the chests were for receiving the money gifts which were a substitute for actual sacrifices. Four were for the free-will offerings of the people. **Saw the rich men casting their gifts.** No doubt they came with ostentation. Mark tells that many that were rich cast in much. We are told that there was a rivalry among the rich as to their gifts. So much so, that a law had to be enacted limiting the gift to a certain proportion of one's possession. But it was not cheerful giving, or worshipful giving. It had that element of ostentation which marked all the religious actions of the Pharisees.

Vs. 2-4. **He saw . . a certain poor widow.** Jesus had just been speaking of the scribes who loved long robes, greetings of respect in public places, the chief places in the synagogue and at the banquet, and at the same time oppressed widows and orphans. **Casting in thither two mites;** a sorrowful, lonely, shrinking figure. The Master was always quick to notice such. The mite was the smallest copper coin among the Jews, two of which was the smallest offering allowed to be put into the treasury. Five of these mites would equal one of our cents. **This poor widow hath cast in more than they all.** Jesus lays down a fundamental law of sacrifice. The rich men gave out of their abundance, but they had abundance left. Moreover, the spirit of their gift was not that of love. The poor woman was impelled by the true motive, and this alone made her gifts a great gift. But in addition, she had given all, and had no abundant surplus left over. This widow gave because she felt, and gave until she felt. To give until we feel, is the first mile. To continue giving as we feel, is the second mile.

Application.

It is instructive, as well as interesting, to trace the development of our thought of Christ. Perhaps many begin with that simple prayer written by Charles Wesley, for children, which some of us were taught in childhood:

Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Look upon a little child;
Fain I would to thee be brought,
Gracious Lord, forbid it not.

That sense of the gracious kindness of Jesus grows into the redeeming trust in his pity. That divine pity that wrought our salvation on Calvary. And a true thought of Christ never outgrows either one or the other.

But many other things are added to our thought of Jesus. It comes almost as a shock at first to think of Christ as strong,—a martial defender of truth and right. There is a line of a hymn declaring that this gentle Jesus, "a lion is in fight,"—the lion of the tribe of Judah. This thought of him, who came not to bring peace, but a sword, is equally a part of the gospel picture of Christ. He did not cease from mental fight, nor did his sword sleep in his hand.

Perhaps it is still later that we come to "confess that Jesus is the supreme example of genius in the realm of intellect." Professor Glover says what we are sure is true, when he writes: "We must recognize the power which every one felt in him . . . There is greatness in his language, in his reference of everything to great principles and to God; greatness in his gift for making great men out of petty." Speaking of the characteristics of his thinking, he says: "We note a certain swiftness, a quick realization of a situation, a character, or a word. Men try to trap him with a question, and he instantly 'recognizes their trickery.' It may seem to be descending to a lower plane, but it is worth while to look at the sheer sense which Jesus can bring to bear on a situation."

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Spratt.

In the attic of many farm homes may be found old copies of Mother Goose rhymes. If we turn over a few pages of one of these good books we are sure to find appropriately illustrated, these familiar lines:

Jack Spratt could eat no fat;
His wife could eat no lean;
So betwixt them both, you see,
They licked the platter clean.

We are inclined to the opinion that if Mrs. Spratt had been the manager of a co-operative marketing association, she would have studied carefully her home market, just as she apparently did the feeding of herself and husband. In this study she would have learned the kind of products needed by the people living around her. Then, in a business-like way, this motherly woman would have gone about to supply these wants and have the supply so regulated that there would not be too much of any kind left over to glut the trade. She would want the market platter clean when all had supplied their needs.

Farmers of Ontario can well afford to follow the wisdom of Mrs. Spratt in connection with their marketing business. It is better to see that the folks next to us are proprely cared for, than it is to forget them while endeavoring to ship farm products to the uttermost parts of the earth. We should watch the market platter, and seek to keep upon it products which appeal to our home trade.

Acid Phosphate is Best Manure Preservative.

A recent bulletin from the New York Experiment Station, Geneva, gives results of tests with various materials for preserving manure. The results show, to the satisfaction of the station, at least, that the only material to use is acid phosphate. The materials compared were straw, peat, acid phosphate, rock phosphate and gypsum.

"Most manure preservatives are of little value in checking loss of nitrogen," the station advises. "In the tests the amount of nitrogen lost ranged from 15 per cent., for manure treated with acid phosphate, to fifty-one per cent. for untreated manure."

Immediate application of the preservative is advised, even if the manure is to be hauled to the field as soon as voided. It is suggested that two handfuls of acid phosphate be scattered in each horse stall every day, so that the horses will trample it into the manure.

Wheat straw was found to be detrimental to manure. Where the straw was added to manure applied to growing crops, a dertimental effect was noted, as compared with results from fresh manure alone. The station does not explain why this is true.

So far as the tests have gone, it seems that the best results will be secured where acid phosphate is mixed with the manure as soon as it is voided and the mixture stored in a covered shed or pit until such time as it can be conveniently spread on the field.

A Labor-Saver.

One day last spring an "old-timer" stopped at the shop and watched me making wooden break-pins for the cultivators. Finally he said: "Well, that is a new one on me." I had cut the blocks of hickory into the lengths desired and then split them into squares a little larger than the finished pins would be. After sharpening one end a little, I drove each stick through a hole in a piece of strap iron, and the pins were ready for use. In ten minutes I can make a season's supply. I have the holes in the strap iron drilled the exact size of the holes in the cultivator's shanks and reamed out a little on the underside. I find that this plan beats the old custom of taking a few square pins to the field and shaving the pins out with a knife as needed. —J. L. Randall.

When I argue with a fool there are two of us.

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