Sunday School Lesson

April 24. Lesson IV—Abram's Generosity to Lot—Genesis 13: 5-15. Golden Text—In honor preferring one another.—Romans 12: 10.

ANALYSIS.

I. THE DISPUTE, vs. 5-7.

II. A GENEROUS PROPOSAL, vs. 8, 9.

III. A FATEFUL DECISION, vs. 10-13.

IV. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD, vs. 14, 15.

INTRODUCTION — To-day's lesson forms at once the continuation of the story of the migration of Abram and Lot into Canaan (12: 1-8) and also the introduction to the story of the visit of the three strangers to Abram (chapter 18) and of their visit to Lot (chapter 19). It is a very human account. Abram and Lot were uncle and nephew (12: 5); together they migrated to Canaan and together they wandered through the land. Doubtless Lot was drawn to his uncle by the latter's greatness of soul and audacious faith. Credit should, therefore, be given him for his appreciation of spiritual greatness. The two men had no difficulty in dwelling together until a miserable squabble about property drove them apart.

I. THE DISPUTE, vs. 5-7.

Although he had not come to Canaan for hope of gain, Abram had become wealthy there. Lot, his partner, shared in the prosperity. On the whole, the men of the Old Testament believed that devotion to God leads to prosperity. Abram's conspicuous wealth would serve to illustrate and confirm that conviction. Now, one of the dangers of wealth is that it may sow the seeds of discord. As long as Abram and Lot were not too rich, they got along together amicably. As their means increased, however, their relationships became complicated and precarious. They were nomads, shifting at intervals from place to place, and their possessions consisted chiefly of flocks and herds, ample pasturage and watersupply was all important, but as their flocks and herds multiplied the supply of water and fodder became quite inadequate. "The land was not able to bear them." It frequently happens that the increase of their flocks and herds compels nomadic peoples to separate. Bickerings arose among the herdsmen about the rights to pasture-lands and wells, and the dispute, once kindled, spread to their masters. A significant touch is given to the narrative in the statement that the Canaanite (who lived in walled towns) and the Perizzite (country-folk living in open villages) dwelt then in the land. It was a scandal that Abram and Lot, both committed to the high adventure of faith, should quarrel before their heathen neighbors.

II. A GENEROUS PROPOSAL, vs. 8, 9.

Abram now rose to the full stature of his moral greatness. "His calm, strong figure," says Strachan, "rebuked all petty feelings. In the midst of strife he was tranquil and self-possessed, his speech was gentle and courteous." First, he condemned strife, especially when, as in their case, the sacred ties of kinship should bind them together. Then he proposed that peace should be maintained by separation. The patriarchs were men of peace, although the world around them was continually aflame with strife and war. Their principle was to win peace by isolation. If one cannot live amicably with another, then it is better to separate from him. The Christian principle, we believe, is higher—to turn one's foe into a friend by the way of self-sacrifice. Abram's proposal involved him in a great renunciation. As the older of the two, he could have claimed the right to the first choice of the land, but this right he generously waived aside.

III. A FATEFUL DECISION, vs. 10-13.

In contrast to Abram, Lot was selfish and covetous—a man who had his eye upon worldly success. It never occurred to him forthwith to concede to Abram the choicer portion of the land. From the elevation at Bethel where they stood (v. 3) the two enjoyed a wide outlook over the land; on the west rose the austere highlands of Judah and on the east, below them, lay the fertile valley of the Jordan. To the covetous Lot the plain of the Jordan resembled, in fertility, the Garden of Eden or Egypt, where harvests are uniformly good from the inundation of, or irrigation from, the Nile. So Lot chose the Jordan valley. His decision was made without consideration of the character of the neighbors among whom he would live. For the Jordan valley was known, not alone for the fertility of its soil, but for the great wickedness of its inhabitants—especially the men of Sodom. Lot had, therefore, none but himself to blame when later he became involved in the ruin of Sodom, chapter 19.

IV. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD, vs. 14, 15.

The purpose of God's appearance to Abram was not only to assure him that he had done the right and wise thing, but to remind him that the future possession of the land rested, not alone on human choice, but on the sovereign will of God. The decisions of men are over-ruled by the unfailing purpose of God.

Brazilian Finds Weighty Diamond

Diamantino, Brazil.—A diamond of fabulous size, the largest ever found in Brazil, has been dug up by a prospector near here. The diamond, weighing 574 carats, is one of the largest in the world. A Rio de Janeiro broker offered $80,000 for the stone but the prospector was reported to have rejected the offer.

A diamond of 574 carats is of extraordinary size. The largest ever found in the Kimberley mines of Africa weighed 442 carats, and the largest found in the de Beers mines, 503 carats. The largest diamond ever found was the famous Cullinan, in South Africa, which was of 3024 carats. It was presented to King EdwardVII and was cut up into smaller stones to be added to the crown jewels. No diamond even remotely approaching it in size has been found.

In several instances, however, diamonds weighing more than 500 carats in the rough have been found. They are invariably reduced considerably in cutting.

Soviet Unable to Satisfy Demand for Amusements

Moscow. — Despite intensive construction of theatres, motion picture houses and circuses, the demand for tickets all over the country far exceeds the supply. In the capital long lines of theatre lobbies have become an almost permanent feature. The queues stretch from the box office into the street.

Statistics recently made public indicate the speed with which public interest in theatrical entertainment has developed. Figures for the Russian Federation of Republics (which includes some 90 per cent. of the total population) follow:

Theatre attendance: 1930 — 30,000,000; 1931—70,000,000.

Motion picture attendance: 1930—473,000,000; 1931—817,000,000.

Circus attendance: 1930—5,000,000; 1931—8,000,000.

6,000-Year-Old Relics Are Unearthed in India

Mysore, India.—Relics of a race which lived in the Deccan 6,000 years ago, made pottery with remarkable skill and attained a considerable degree of culture have been discovered in the Chandravalli valley near Chitaldrug.

Six different levels, each making a ground surface on which an ancient people once lived, were revealed by excavations. The most recent strata was 800 years old; the lowest marked the level of 6,000 years ago.

In this lowest strata the pottery and other relics of Stone and Iron Ages were found. The Stone Age relics were ornate, with geometrical, floral and other designs. The discoveries are considered to indicate a degree of culture equal to that of the Campignian of France and Get Ulan of Africa.

Soviet Students Face Pay Cut for Failures

Tashkent,U.S.S.R. — Soviet college students who cut classes and flunk examinations soon may find literally that it does not pay. Setting a course which other institution are expected to follow, the Middle Asia State University here has abolished the system of equal pay for all students in favor of one measured by work they accomplish.

College students in the Soviet Union are paid by the state so that they may defray their living expenses while studying. The salary ranges from $50 monthly for single men and women up to twice that amount for married students.

11-Year-Old Snooker Player

Photo shows Margaret Quinn, the eleven-year-old schoolgirl, who reached the semi-final in the women's snooker championship held in England, recently.

Why Plants Die In Modern Homes

Experiment Proves Tin Cans Used in Grandmother's Day Are Best

Our grandmothers were right. They grew good plants in tin cans, sometimes punching holes in the bottoms of the cans for drainage. A window in a stuffy kitchen or a chilly room was their greenhouse. To-day, with our bettered home conditions, there are very few people who can buy a luxuriantly growing plant from a florist and keep it healthy in well-heated, well-ventilated, well-lighted homes. Such plants as ferns and begonias soon turn yellow and die back to a skeleton framework of stalks and stems. The more resistant plants, such as rubber plants and aspidistra, may appear healthy for a long time, yet they grow but slowly, if at all.

Now we know why our grandmothers could grow good plants. It was because of the non-porous tin can. An investigation, conducted by the department of botany at the Massachusetts State College in Amherst has revealed some interesting facts about plant containers.

Lower Soil Impoverished

The clay pot, kept on a moist soil by the commercial grower of plants, is very satisfactory because it is on a moist surface. In the house the potted plants are on a dry surface, usually a saucer. The pot itself is evaporating moisture into the air, an air which, during the colder months, is probably drier than the atmosphere of Death Valley. Though water is added to the potted plant as a daily chore, it is not sufficient to make up the total amount lost by evaporation from the wall of the pot. This water added to the surface of the soil penetrates through the uper third of the soil and then gradually is drawn to the absorbing wall of the pot.

The lower third of the pot still demands water to make up for that evaporated and continues to draw upon the soil moisture in the lower section of the soil until the moisture is entirely withdrawn. The soil in this section becomes powder dry and the active root system in this region dies. The destruction of an important part of the root system is necessarily felt by the foliage part of the plant, which dies back in proportion to the destroyed feeding roots.

The Non-porous Container

Grandmother, with her tin can plant container, had no such worry about the uneven distribution of moisture in the soil. There was no evaporating wall to dissipate the water intended for the plant. The water added to the surface of the soil was soon evenly distributed throughout the soil mass. And, furthermore, grandmother did not have to water the plants every day, for the soil in such containers dries out very slowly and requires, per week, but about half the amount of water given to the same mass of soil in a clay pot.

The clay pot, as used by the florist on a moist surface such as cinders, soil or sand, draws most of its moisture from the moist surface on which the pot rests and only a fraction from the moisture within the pot. This process keeps the pores of the pot filled with moisture. When water is added to the surface of the soil in pots on a moist bed, the water may be all absorbed by the soil mass and not shared by the clay pot.

If clay pots must be used in the home, they should rest on a moist surface, a practice similar to that of the florist. This condition is easily met by filling the saucer with moist sphagnum moss. This sphagnum moss is the type utilized by florists for holding flowers in wreathes and it is relatively inexpensive compared with the price paid for potted plants.

Painting clay pots, inside and outside, makes this type of pot more practical for home grown plants. The paint, by filling up the pore spaces, destroys the evaporating surface and makes the pot more ornamental as well. A pot may be porous or non-porous without any injury occurring to the plant if cultural practices are adapted to the type of pot. When non-porous containers are used, less frequent watering shoull be the practice —with the added caution that the plant in such containers should never be watered if the soil is wet to the touch. The non-porous pot is adaptable to home and office culture of ornamental plants, particularly so if no one is present to care for the plants over a week-end or holiday.

Plant containers of glass, metal and rubber have been used with considerably more success in homes and offices than the clay flower pot. The better distribution of soil moisture in the non-porous containers is equaled only by the clay pot on moist sphagnum moss. With such containers, attention and care in watering are considerably lessened. The plants will survive the week-end absence from the office, and in the home we may have more luxuriant plants.—Linus H. Jones in N.Y. Herald-Tribune.

Wave Organ Made By Electric Hums

Belleville, Ont.—After seven years of experimenting, Mr. Morse Robb announces he has perfected a small wave organ which he said has the power of the largest pipe organ, but ocupies only about as much room as an ordinary writing desk.

Demonstrating his organ, Mr. Robb, son of Mr. W. D. Robb, vice-president of the Canadian National Railways, explained that this invention is one which produces musical tones from electrically induced vibrations rather than from blowing air through pipes. It will play like an ordinary organ console with manuals, pedals and stops.

One discreet enemy is better than two indiscreet friends.

Fog of Platinum Richest of Mists

New York.—Platinum is caused to evaporate like water by a discovery announced from the California Institute of Technology.

This precious vapor, probably the world's highest-priced mist, condenses into unimaginably thin films upon a wide variety of materials. It coats them virtually permanently.

Smoother than dew it will cover fibres, converting them into pliant, filmy threads that seem made of pure platinum. These threads are prized as wires for various precision instruments. A Midas might even be able to pay for a platinum gown.

The process was developed by Dr. John Strong, national research fellow, who reports it in the Physical Review, a natural scientific journal. Formerly the nearest approach to platinum mist has been the process of "sputtering," in which the molten metal is reduced to minute droplets and sprayed like paint.

Dr. Strong produced evaporation in a vacuum by a slight change of methods which had failed. The heat is supplied by a wire or filament of tungsten, one of the metals with a higher melting point than platinum. The failures occurred when platinum was laid in the glowing tungsten coil. Apparently too much heat was lost in the small space separating the metals.

So Dr. Strong tried electroplating the platinum directly upon the tungsten wire and that worked to perfection.

U.S. Expands Helium Plant To Meet Increasing Needs

Amarillo, Tex.—Since the Federal government has gone into the building of lighter-than-air craft in earnest, the United States helium plant near Amarillo has been remodelled to increase production and improve the quality of gas. The first plant unit, in operation four years, has been rebuilt to increase its capacity 50 per cent. and now embodies improvements made when a second unit was constructed two years ago.

Bureau of Mines officials told Congress in 1928 that the first unit would produce 10,000,000 cubic feet a year.

The purity of helium produced at the plant never falls below 98 per cent., compared with 94 to 96 per cent. at the old Fort Worth plant in 1926—and improvement which means an increase of about two tons in the lifting power of a dirigible like the Akron. More than 9 per cent. of the helium content of the natural gas, which is about 1.75 per cent., is being recovered.

With the Macon, now under construction, and the Akron in operation, the Army and Navy will need about 20,000,000 cubic feet of helium a year, compared with a present capacity of the Amarillo plant of about 36,000,000 feet.

Brazil Trains Athletes For First Olympic Entry

Rio De Janiero.—For the first time Brazil is turning an interested eye toward international sports participation and in particular is evincing a determination to compete in the Olympic games in Los Angeles, Colif., next August.

The Brazilian Sports Federation, representing the fourteen major athletic clubs in Brazil, has appealed to athletes for early training so that a strong delegation may be sent to compete in all Olympic divisions. Spartan rules have been laid down for the selection of athletes. Each athlete must submit to an examination before a special committee. He must prove himself not only physically fit but must show a high psychological rating. He must be in "top form" by June 15, when examinations will be held. Indications are that 3,000 athletes will seek positions on the team.

Penny for Debts

San Salvador, Salvador.—Children in all schools of the Republic of Salvador will contribute one penny each week to aid the Government in wiping out its foreign debt under a plan just announced.

Landlady—"How do you like this room, as a whole, sir?" New Lodger—"As a hole it's all right; as a room not so good."

What New York Is Wearing

BY ANNEBELLE WORTHINGTON.

Illustrated Dressmaking Lesson Furnished With Every Pattern

Just a glance at this new model and you can see how beautifully overweight has been disguised.

It has the long V-slimming bodice arrangement, graceful sleeves and cleverly cut skirt with bias hip seaming.

It is carried out in printed and plain crepe silk.

It's a style that also adapts itself perfectly to the supple woolens, so important in the smart woman's wardrobe. You'll like it especially in black diagonal woolen with vest of beige wool crepe.

Style No. 2644 is designed for sizes 36, 38, 40, 42, 44 and 46 inches bust. Size 36 requires 3½ yards of 39-inch material with ⅜ yard of 35-inch contrasting.

You can also carry out the chic black and white scheme in canton crepe.

HOW TO ORDER PATTERNS.

Write your name and address plainly, giving number and size of such patterns as you want. Enclose 20c in stamps or coin (coin preferred; wrap it carefully) for each number, and address your order to Wilson Pattern Service, 73 West Adelaide St., Toronto.

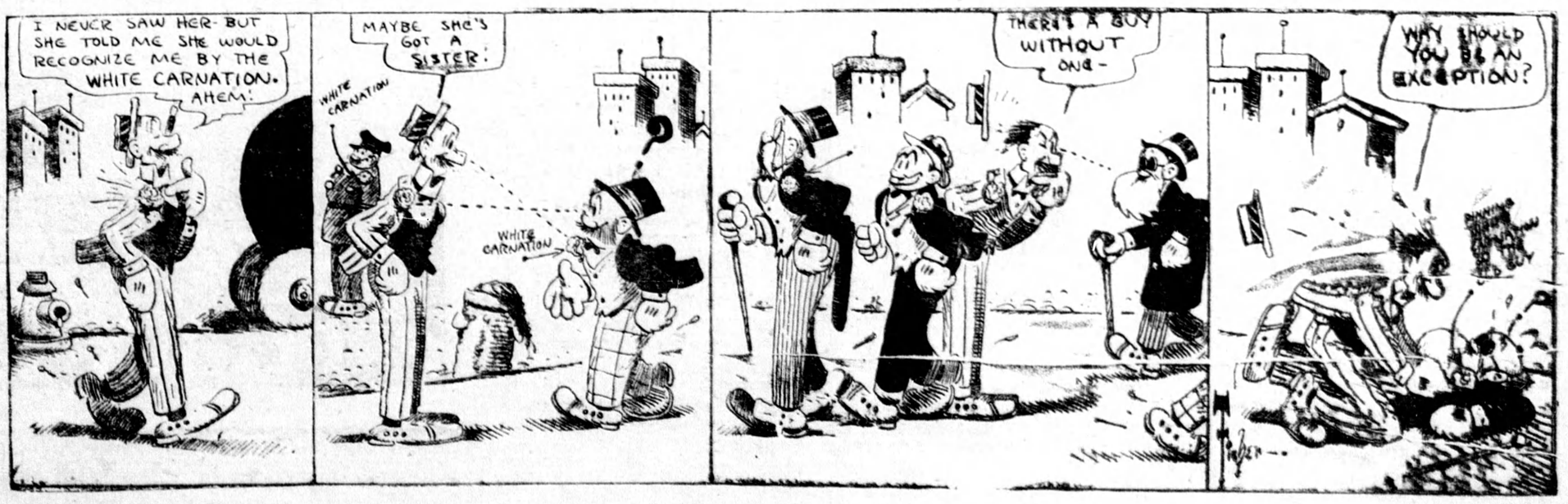
Australia Plans State Radio For Cultural Broadcasting

Sydney, Australia.—A novel plan for the broadcasting of high class educational and entertainment programs is contemplated by J. W. Fenton, Postmaster-General of Australia, when the new brodcasting commission gets into its stride.

A bill authorizing the Commonwealth to take over control of all broadcasting in Australia is now before Parliament and is expected to be passed. Fenton said that when the new commission was formed every effort would be made to establish separate designated stations which would broadcast the most important literary, scientific and other intellectual discussions, along with the highest class of music including selected programs from England for rebroadcasting.

Canada's Art

Toronto.—Canada has truly an art her own, Fred S. Haines, curator of the Toronto Art Gallery, told the Board of Trade Club in an address here on art as a philosophy of life. "Art," he said, "should be an expression of the people and of the times."

MUTT AND JEFF— By BUD FISHER

A Flower a Day Keeps the Date Away.