

THIS WEEK'S SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

"THY KINGDOM COME"
Golden Text.—The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.
Rev. 11:15.

THE LESSON AS A WHOLE
Approach to the Lesson
King Edward VIII abdicated the throne of England in 1936. For "the woman I love" he forfeited a kingdom embracing a quarter of the world's population. Many hailed it as the act of a great lover. It was royal romance par excellence. It was not so regarded in Britain, however. To them it was a betrayal of a great trust for selfish ends. He chose a life of ease with a woman whose domestic record rendered her incapable of becoming queen, rather than the stern duties of the crown. A few years ago Edward (now Duke of Windsor) published his own account of the whole affair in "A King's Story." An answer has just appeared in a book entitled "Gone with the Windsors", in which the author, Iles Brody speaks of the ex-king as "the Duke of Windsor, who gave up everything and let down everyone for the

sake of his own happiness." We cannot be Edward's judge, but we are bound to say this, that he esteemed the love of a woman more highly than the high duties of kingship. We have heard of another king who was willing to give away his kingdom for a means of saving his own life. "My kingdom for a horse!" shouted King Richard III, according to Shakespeare. But there is another King who valued His Kingdom so highly that he laid down His life to secure it. He too, was tempted to go the way of self-gratification and self-preservation but the high trust of kingship was more to Him than all, because it involved the will of the Father and the redemption of the world. It was no matter of worldly ambition, but the sense of calling, of commission, and when the cry goes forth, "The kingdoms of this world are becoming the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ," it will be a blood-bought Kingdom into which He will enter. Our King has not let us down.
Verse by Verse
Matt 6:9 — "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallow-

ed be thy name." This wonderful prayer is for those who know the intimate Father-son relation with God, but it immediately strikes the note of profound reverence.
Verse 10 — "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth . . ." Before the prayer touches our needs, it teaches us to put first things first—Thy name, Thy Kingdom, Thy will.
Chap. 28:16 — ". . . into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them." The departure to Galilee was not immediate. Several appearances took place in Jerusalem and Judah before the appointed meeting in Galilee. See verses 7 and 10. Where it was, we do not know. Perhaps Mt. Tabor.
Verse 17 — ". . . they worshipped him: but some doubted." The "some" could not have been any of the Eleven, who had seen the appearances in Jerusalem. Was this the appearing to the five hundred? (1 Cor. 15:6). It is very possible.
Verse 18 — "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." For "power" read "authority." The risen Christ—the man Christ Jesus—is "Lord of all" (Acts 10:36). He has the right to command.

Verse 19 — "Go . . . teach all nations, baptizing them . . ." The great commission is a command of supreme authority, universal in its scope, specific in its injunctions—make disciples and baptize. Notice the triumphant name.
Verse 20 — "Teaching them to observe all things . . . and lo, I am with you always . . . unto the end of the world." Those who have been made disciples (v. 19) need to be taught and the chief thing to be taught is obedience. The promise of the Lord's presence is co-extensive with the command—to the end of the "age." sent me . . . so have I also
John 17:18 — "As thou hast sent them." The commissioned becomes the commissioner. See how closely this relates our errand to His errand. His obedience as one sent is our pattern of obedience.
Verse 19 — "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified, through the truth." The thought of "sanctify" is to set apart for holy purposes or consecrate. Once again, the consecration of Christ is the pattern and the power of ours. For "through the truth," read "in truth."
Verse 20 — ". . . for them also which shall believe on me

through their word." Our Lord had the whole church in all its generations, in view here, not just the believers of the first generation. Notice the divine sanction of the apostolic message — "through their word."
Verse 1 — "That they all may be one . . . that the world may believe that thou has sent me." Another pattern: the unity of the Godhead is the pattern of the unity of the saints, wrought by the Holy Spirit. Wherever that unity is in evidence, it serves as a testimony to the world.
Acts 1:6 — "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel?" A very natural question in view of their conception of the Messianic work and the triumphant resurrection from the dead but still revealing a faulty understanding of the divine purpose.
Verse 7 — "It is not for you to know the times of the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." He did not deny the restoration of the kingdom of Israel but told the disciples that the program was in the Father's command, and they must trust it there without undue curiosity.
Verse 8 — "But ye shall receive power . . . the Holy



*It is our pleasure
once again to say Merry Christmas
to all our friends and neighbors.*

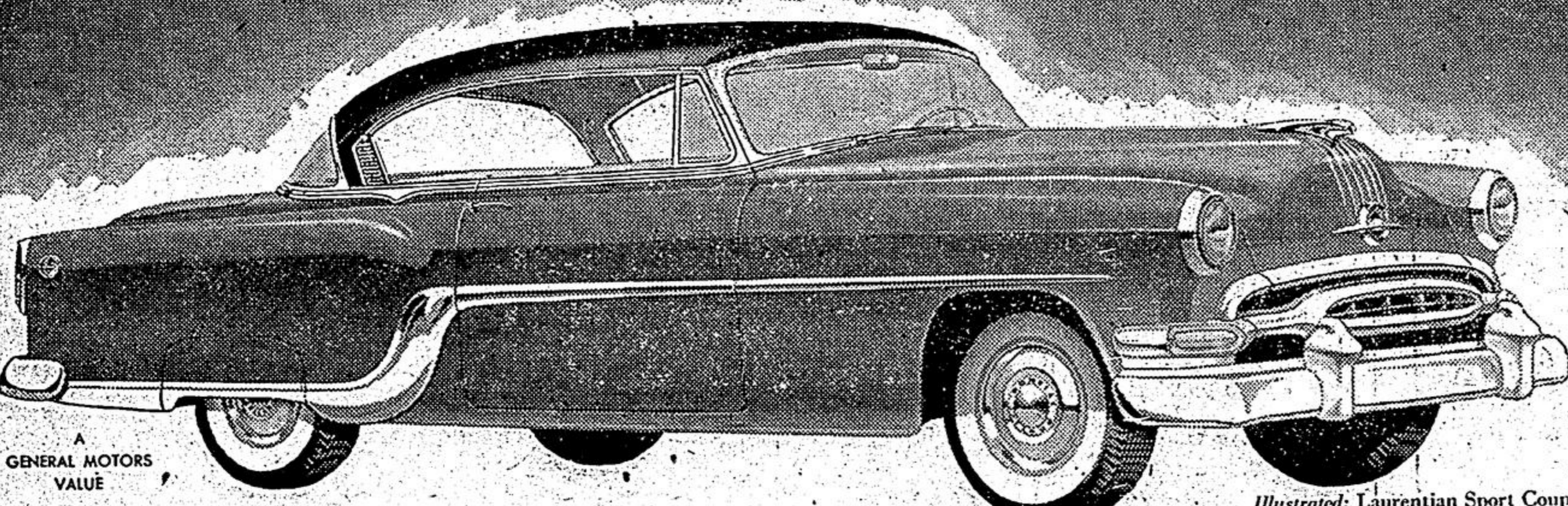
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Ghost . . . ye shall be witnesses . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth." The "power" referred to here is capacity, efficiency, force, adequate to an age-long world-wide task—witnessing. The power commensurate with a person, the Holy Spirit. Witnessing without Him is feeble, ineffective business.
Rev. 11:15b — "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." Not through a gradual enlightenment by the Gospel, but through strong judgments, as the context shows will this great transference take place. The Heart of the Lesson
What are our thoughts when we pray, "Thy Kingdom come?" Doubtless those of us who have been taught in the pre-millennial doctrine think in terms of the millennial Kingdom which will be established at the second coming of Christ; and I have no doubt that in this we are right. Our lesson portions recognize this, for the cry in Revelation (11:15b) is definitely related to those events which introduce "the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Those days will indeed be marked by sore judgments, but what a day it will be for this poor, distressed world when the cry goes forth, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ!"
But there is kingdom work to be done in the meantime. The Kingdom of Christ reaches down and annexes the hearts and lives of men, and we who have been redeemed are agents of this spiritual Kingdom. Our commission in this regard is stated twice in our lesson portion—once in

the Matthew passage. In the Acts passage, in the former we have the great commission as given to the disciples at the time of their meeting with the risen Lord in Galilee, while in the latter passage we have the same commission given in another form immediately before the ascension from the Mount of Olives. In the one our task is expressed in terms of making disciples and teaching them the way of obedience; in the other our task is stated to be one of witness, extending to the "utmost part of earth." In both, special enabling is promised: in the Matthew statement it is the abiding presence of the living Christ, while in the Acts it is the coming of the Holy Spirit. Ultimately the two are the same.
What does all this have to do with the second coming of Christ and the millennial Kingdom? "Much every way." To begin with, this calling out work must be finished before He comes (Acts. 15:14); and then the called-out ones are those who are to reign with Him (Rev. 22:5). So the princes of the blood are being prepared for that great day.
The remaining passage in our lesson has something to say about these called-out ones. We may be called from widely separated areas and from diverse groups of society, but we are brought into a great unity—a unity such as exists within the Godhead. This unity itself is a clarion note in our witness to the world and a testimony that Christ is really the sent-one from God, not just a religious teacher. How we should cherish that unity, and preserve it, and seek to give it expression, so that the witness be not hindered. All this we have in John 17:18-21.

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