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Rev. J. McLeod,

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The Intelligencer.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON.—May 29.

(For Questions see Star Quarterly and Lesson Papers.)

PARABLE OF THE POUNDS.

DAILY READINGS.

M. The pounds. Luke 19: 11-27.

T. The talents. Matt. 25: 14-30.

W. Householder and laborers. Matt. 20: 1-16.

F. The vineyard. Luke 10: 1-13.

S. Judgment. Rom. 2: 1-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."—Rom. 14: 12.

LUKE 19: 11-27.

NOTES AND HINTS.

It seems that quite a large company had attended Jesus on his journey towards Jerusalem, and now as they were coming near that city they began to manifest their strong expectations that he would soon set up a kingdom for himself and free them from bondage to the Romans.

He had wrought many miracles and spoken many remarkable discourses; he had shown himself able to establish a new government, if he chose, and to administer it wisely. Jesus felt, no doubt, that it was time to correct this misapprehension, and for this purpose, in part, he spoke this parable. It is well adapted to impress men with the certainty that the time was remote when the Lord would come to judge of the faithfulness of his followers. "The primary object is to teach that the kingdom of God will not immediately appear; incidentally it teaches how, by diligent fidelity, the servants of God are to prepare for his coming; and what is to be the nature of his reckoning both with them and those who object to his rule."—Abbott.

11. These things. What he had said to Zaccheus. *Nigh to Jerusalem.* About fifteen miles. *The kingdom of God.* The earthly kingdom which they expected the Messiah would establish. "This public journey to Jerusalem, attended by so many miracles and impressive discourses, was regarded as introductory to a Messianic kingdom of temporal splendor."—Schaff.

12. A certain nobleman. He wished to be made, or had been appointed, governor of the province in which he lived, and visited the sovereign to secure the office. He represents Christ himself. *For country.* Represents heaven as in Matt. 21: 33; 25: 14; Mark 12: 1. "This far distance is the emblem of the long time between his going and his return."—Gould. *To return.* Clearly teaching that Christ will come again.

13. Ten pounds. One to each. The Attic mina is probably meant, worth about sixteen dollars. The sums entrusted being the same for all, represent not gifts, which are various, but the grace of salvation common to all believers (pardon and the Holy Spirit).—Gould. *Occupy. Trade with.* *Till I come.* Improve every opportunity through life. "Their part was, with the silent occupation of their talent, to lay the foundations of that kingdom, and so prepare the world for its outbreaking, which outbreaking should yet not actually come to pass, till the King return in his glory."—Trench.

14. His citizens. His fellow-citizens, over whom he would soon be ruler. *Hated him.* No doubt, he was hated, and so Jesus hated, despised for his lowly birth, the simplicity of his life and the holiness of his character.

15. When he was returned. As the nobleman received his kingdom, in spite of the protest, so will Jesus, in due time, come again to take possession of his kingdom in this world. *To be called and him.* Every one will be held to a strict personal account. The exact inquiry is: what business they had carried on. "So our Lord inquires of those servants on whom he has bestowed the same gift, not what success they have had, but how they have used it: faithful, or not."—Gould. "Many a laboring tradesman has been asked, 'What salvation you have in your heart?' and he has answered, 'I have none.' 'But they that trade for Christ shall be gainers.'—Henry.

They found that gained ten. The first had been a diligent servant, awake to every chance for gain for his master. A life of ceaseless industry in God's service takes the first rank. *Calderwood.* Our Saviour gives his idea of the Christian life at its best. *Because thou hast been faithful.* This is all that is asked of any one, and this every one can be. 1 Cor. 4: 2. *Very little.* It is surprising to hear Jesus call this salvation very little! What a chiefly of fortune glory is thus given us!—Gould. "He commends not the acquisition but the fidelity."—Abbott.

18, 19. The second came. The same principle is applied in pronouncing judgment upon the second, who had been devoted to his master's service, but less steadfast and persistent. He lays all at the master's feet, and is commended. There are degrees of glory in heaven. Every vessel shall be alike full, but not all alike large. The glory will be according to the usefulness.

20, 21. *Henry.* This one claims to be honest, to return what he received. No charge of positive wrong-doing is made against him. He has just neglected to use that which he had received. It was his duty "to occupy;" this he had not done. His master had sown, and he had not reaped. He had looked for the harvest. *Austere.* Severe.

22, 23. Nothing more was needed than his own confession. Plainly enough he had not regarded his master's command, had treated it with contemptuous indifference. If not disposed to go into business himself, he might at least, have put the money into the hands of the brokers for investment.

24, 25. *Take it from him.* Failing to use properly what had been entrusted to him, he loses the opportunity to do anything more. The faithful laborer ever poorer, and the faithful ever richer.

26. *Unto every one which hath shall be given.* It is often so here. To the rich costly presents are given. The very poverty of the poor makes it difficult for them to keep the little they have. Of him who has not worked the Lord will ask, *Hast thou at least prayed?*—The holy works which he might have wrought here below, along with the powers by which he might have done them, are committed to the active servant.

—There is a law, in virtue of which every grace actively appropriated increases our receptivity for higher graces. From this law of moral life it follows that gradually all graces must be concentrated in faithful workers, and be withdrawn from negligent servants.—Gould. "Every attainment of honor, wealth, knowledge or spiritual grace help to render further attainment more difficult; while it is spiritually as well as materially true that the destruction of the poor is their poverty."—Abbott.

27. *Slay him.* A severe and hopeless punishment will fall upon those who persist in their opposition to Christ.

28. Having finished the parable, Jesus continued his journey.

Notwithstanding the strong likeness between this parable and that of the talents (Matt. 25: 14-30), there are contrasts quite as marked,

and differences too great to allow us to believe that they were originally the same.

THOUGHTS AND APPLICATIONS.

1. To every servant of God a great gift has been given.

2. Faithfulness to the trust committed to each one is the essential thing required by the Master.

3. God's judgments will be strictly according to what is deserved.

4. They who fail to use the gifts and powers bestowed upon them will lose all they have.

TOPICS FOR THOUGHT AND STUDY.

1. The parable of the pounds and that of the talents.

2. The measure of human responsibility.

3. The divine law of retribution.

TURNING THE CORNER.

"So you must be all ready, Mary, at seven. We shall be punctual; and mind you wrap up warmly. Good-bye; now I must be off."

"But, Henry, stop a minute, said Mary, laying her hand on his arm, as he was leaving the door. 'What evening is the ride to be, did you say?'"

"Wednesday."

"But that is our prayer-meeting night, you know; did you forget?"

"No, Mary, not exactly," said Henry, Westing his cap; but really, Wednesday night, is the only night we can have this week. This evening is the lecture, you know, Thursday evening the social circle, Friday the party at Helen B's, and Saturday—of course we do not go out on Saturday evening, Mary—so you see, for once, we must give up our meeting."

So good-bye, dear, and be sure to be all ready! And he was off before Mary could collect her thoughts or utter a word.

But she could think now that she was alone, and think she did, calmly and prayerfully. She felt that there was an important question to be asked now—how far it is right to omit stated religious duties for mere calls of pleasure. Could it be justifiable under any circumstances? She felt that there might be extreme cases where it would be so; but certainly this was not one of them. Nothing else could be omitted; not the lecture, nor the circle, nor the party,—all these were of importance, it seemed, and must be attended to; but the prayer-meeting—that could be given up for a ride, a surprise party, or anything which happened to come up, was got up, to interfere with it. But was this not special, after all? She must consider it fully before deciding. As Henry had said, this was a last week of the moon for that month, and sleighing might go away before it was full again. The party were to stop at the house of a dear friend, who would be greatly disappointed, she well knew, if her face was missing. Then she felt that Henry had been so constant at the meetings—not one miss since that evening, six months before, when together they went and prayed for mercy and received it. How happy they had been! and have determined to serve the Lord faithfully as long as they lived. Could they not be excused this night? Would not one have occasion to blame them? Would there be any harm in it?

These thoughts were passing through her mind as she sat, her head resting on her hand as she watched Henry running down the street, till he turned the corner and was out of sight. "He has turned the corner," she said aloud; "turned the corner" she repeated slowly, for her words recalled a sentence in her pastor's sermon the previous Sabbath—"It is the straight road, dear friends, which leads to glory; the straight and narrow way; beware then, of turning aside. He who needs in secret reward, and plain, consult your guide book, consult the Guide himself, who has promised to lead you."

Laying aside her sewing, which indeed had fallen from her hands before, Mary left the sitting room, and went up to her own room. Then closing the door, she entered into her closet and prayed. And he who needs in secret reward, and plain, consult your guide book, consult the Guide himself, who has promised to lead you."

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