

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS.

Golden Text—He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord, 1 Cor. 1:31. Lesson Text—Luke 17: 1-10. (1) Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offenses will come, but who unto him, through whom they come? (2) It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. (3) Take heed to yourselves. If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. (4) And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him. (5) And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. (6) And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed,

ye might say unto this sycamore tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you. (7) But which of you, having a servant ploughing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? (8) And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? (9) Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. (10) So likewise ye, when which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do. Time—A. D. 30. Place—On the way to Jerusalem. Exposition—I. The inevitableness

of occasions of stumbling, 1, 2. The world translated "offenses" in the Authorized Version, and "occasions of stumbling" in the Revised Version, means literally "snares" or "traps." "Snares" or "traps" for believers are inevitable. They are from Satan and his representatives, but God takes them into His plan and makes them work out good for His people. (Ps. 76: 10; 2 Cor. 12:7.) God's purpose in permitting these stumbling blocks is our testing and that those who are approved may be made manifest (1 Cor. 11:9.) This does not lessen at all the guilt of the one through whom they come and a solemn woe is pronounced upon him (cf. Matt. 18:7.) We ought to go to any length to avoid becoming an occasion of stumbling to another (1 Cor. 8:9, 13; 10:32; Rom. 14:13.) The one who causes a little one to stumble is especially guilty and a particularly heavy doom awaits him (v. 2.) Any one who is standing between a little child and the definite acceptance and confession of the Saviour would do well to lay these words to heart. He better have a heavy millstone "hanged about his neck" and be drowned in the "depths of the sea than to do what he is do-

ing. Many a father and mother are causing their little ones to stumble by discouraging them from a definite acceptance and confession of Christ. They are also causing them to stumble by their own worldly or sinful example. A terrible woe awaits such parents. Gen. 13:7; 2 Sam 12:14; Rom. 2:23, 24; 14:21; 16:1-3; 1 Cor. 8:9-13 suggest ways in which we may cause others to stumble. The word "these" implies that there were little children following Jesus at this time. He seems to have always attracted the children. II. How often to forgive, 2, 4. Each one of us is primarily responsible for ourselves; therefore it is to ourselves that we should first of all take heed (1 Tim. 4:16.) It is especially when another trespasses against us that we are more likely to be concerned with his duty than our own (cf. Matt. 18: 21, 22.) But then it is that we should especially need to take heed to ourselves. If another sins, even though it is not against us (See R. 7.) we would rebuke him. Love for him and interest in his soul demands this of us (Lev. 19:17.) We should be sure, however, that we do it in a spirit of meekness (2 Tim. 2:25, 26.) It is not enough that we avoid causing others to stumble, we should endeavor to reach those that have come one else has caused to stumble. If the offender needs our rebuke and repents, we have a further duty, viz. to "forgive him." The word translated "forgive" means to dismiss or send away, and the thought is that we are to dismiss his sin from our mind and treat him as if he had never committed it. It is thus God deals with us when He forgives us (cf. Is. 38:17; 43:25; Mic. 7:19; Ps. 103:12.) True forgiving involves forgetting. There should be no limit to our forgiveness, even though one repeats the sin over and over again, we should never be discouraged. Every time he comes saying, "I repent," we should forgive without stopping to ask whether he really means it and is profoundly sincere. We may well rejoice over this command, for if God demands it of us in our dealings with others, we may confidently expect that He will act in the same way in His dealings with us. III. "Lord, increase our faith." 5-10. The apostles were staggered at the thought that they must forgive so often and in consciousness of their own inability to do so they cried, "Lord, increase our faith." There was, though they did not realize it, a recognition of Jesus' deity in their mode of address and the prayer they offered to Him: God alone can increase our faith. The word translated "increase" means to add to, and the apostles did not realize how great a request they were making in asking for an increase of faith and the Lord set forth the mighty power of faith. Nothing is impossible to it (v. 6.) Faith even if it is as small and apparently insignificant as a grain of mustard seed has a tremendous power of growth and accomplishment in it (cf. Matt. 13:21, 32.) because it links us to omnipotence. Real faith can do anything that God can do. In the parable that follows, our Lord does not set forth the way in which God treats His servants, for He does thank and reward them for the smallest services (Matt. 25:21, 23; 10:42.) neither does it set forth the way in which what a servant has a right to expect. The word "servant" means literally "slave," the servant who is his master's property; we are His when we serve, purchased by Him at enormous cost (1 Pet. 1:18, 19; 1 Cor. 6:20.) We have no rights; we have no claims whatever upon God; even though we have ploughed all day, we have done only "that which it was our duty to do." "The one thing on which our Lord wishes to concentrate our attention is not the spirit in which God deals with His servants, but rather the spirit in which we should serve God—not what God thinks of our work but rather how we should regard it ourselves." We have never any merit. This utterly annihilates the Romish doctrine of the merits of the saints. Human pride constantly flatters itself that it has done God a favor by doing well, but we can never do God a favor. This is a tremendous blow to self-righteousness and the natural heart revolts against the teaching of this parable. All that we do is simply the result of His grace freely bestowed upon us (1 Cor. 15:10) and it is only the giving back to God a part of that which belongs to Him. The word "unprofitable" means literally "useless" or "needless," the thought is that God can get along without any of us (Acts 17:25.)

unlimited number of times? 14. What is faith as here mentioned? 15. Verse 6—is faith a natural human quality, or is it the gift of God, and why? 16. It is possible to have faith sufficient to perform a miracle except God specially gives it? Why? 17. If God is the author of all wonder working faith, how much trouble is it for him to uproot a tree or overthrow a mountain? 18. Verses 7-8—Why is it that there is no particular merit to us even if we have mighty faith and do great things? 19. On the merits of the case, what obligation is God under to serve us? 20. What is the nature of our total dependence upon God, and our supreme obligation to serve him? 21. Verses 9-10—Why is it that God makes no profit out of us no matter if we now do all he commands us? (This is one of the questions that may be answered in writing by members of the club.) Lesson for Sunday, May 21, 1914. The Grateful Samaritan. Luke xvii: 11-19.

SHORT WEIGHTS.

(Greensboro Record.) The worm has turned. The only trouble about it is that it did not turn soon enough. This from the Statesville Landmark is good reading: "One thing brings on another, Judge Long, of Statesville, presided at the term of Rowan Superior Court at which the Salisbury Ice & Fuel Co. was convicted of false pretense, having sold 1,750 pounds of coal for a ton. The conviction and the judgment of the lower court was last week affirmed by the Supreme Court. The institution of this suit stirred an investigation of weights and measures in Rowan county and other cases of shortage have been unearthed. The grand jury of Rowan Superior Court, says the Salisbury Post, last week returned five bills against the Landis Mining Co. and George H. Corridor for giving short weights. If similar investigations were made, short weights and measures would probably be found in every community. The losses suffered by buyers, and sometimes by sellers, on account of short weights and measures, would astonish the natives if unearthed." The worst feature about this short weight business is that numbers of men have scales that are imperfect. If these imperfect machines were all in the interest of the merchant or the man using them, it would be plain "how come," but we know of some where the shoe is on the other foot. This goes to show that officials somewhere are not doing their duty. There is supposed to be one man in each county whose duty it is to test weighing machines and keep them right. While some merchants are perhaps getting hurt, nine-tenths of them are making by it. Take the man who is selling you butter, or the woman either. There is no denying the cheating that is systematically going on by the use of the moulds said to hold a pound. Test a hundred of them and perhaps not three will show a pound. The disgusting part of it is that they all know it.

LUMBERTON IN FRONT.

(Lumberton Robesonian.) The Raleigh News and Observer puts Charlotte on the back for removing telegraph and telephone poles from the streets and has raised the slogan "Down with the poles!" for Raleigh. Lumberton is the most progressive town in the state in this matter. It has no idea of waiting until it gets as large as Raleigh or Charlotte to get rid of unsightly poles.

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Unprofitable Servants. Luke xvii: 1-10.

Golden Text—He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord, 1 Cor. 1:31. 1. Verse 1—Why is it impossible that offenses will not come? 2. What scriptural reason is there, if any, to expect that the time will come when there will be no more offenses? 3. What is the gravest offense or injury that one man can do to another? 4. Verse 2—What is the penalty to one who causes another to lose his hope of heaven? 5. Why would it have been better for a man to have been drowned rather than to hurt one of God's little ones? 6. Verse 3—What is the best way to avoid doing another person an injury? 7. In how many ways are we liable to be injured by our fellows? 8. What should our attitude be toward those who injure us? 9. If a person who injures us does not repent, but is glad he did it, what should our attitude be to him? 10. Verse 4—Why should we forgive a person who injures us seven times in a day? 11. If we decide that there is a limit to our times of forgiving others what will be the consequences? 12. How many times a day would you say that an ordinary sinner offends against God? 13. Verse 5—What relation has faith with forgiving those who injure us an

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