

Improved Uniform International SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

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Lesson for December 17

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PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM

LESSON TEXT—Matthew 13:3-4, 31-33, 44-46.

GOLDEN TEXT—Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live.—Isaiah 55:3.

Teaching by parable, a method so often used by our Lord Jesus Christ, has many advantages. A parable (which is a story relating events in common life to teach or illustrate spiritual truth) is useful in stimulating interest and attention, in making the truth clear, in fixing it in the hearer's memory, and in attracting for further instruction those who are interested even as it eliminates those who make no response. Jesus was the master of this art of teaching. Others have learned from Him.

The interpretation of the parables of Jesus has brought forth much difference of opinion. The important point to bear in mind is that the interpretation must be one consistent with other scripture, as well as with our Lord's own revelation of its meaning when given. We have His own interpretation of the parable of the Sower (Matt. 13:18-23), but He did not interpret the other parables of our lesson, leaving it for us to carefully seek their meaning and gladly receive their instruction.

I. Take Heed How You Hear (vv. 3-8).

This parable is rightly called the parable of the Sower for our Lord so named it (v. 18), but as we read it we see that the lesson it teaches relates primarily to the four kinds of hearers of the Word of God.

There are some who hear and their hearts and minds have so long been the common road over which every worldly influence has passed, that it has become so hard the Word of God finds no lodgment, but is quickly carried away by the birds, which are the "vultures of worldliness" and wickedness (see v. 19). Reader, if your heart is like that, ask God to break it up. Let us all shun those hardening influences which destroy our susceptibility to God's Word.

Others there are who hear and the seed takes root, but the soil is so shallow that it has only a quick growth which soon withers. These are those whose life is largely emotional, thrilling to a new experience, but not ready to face trials and the responsibilities of life (v. 21). As long as the Christian life looks attractive such shallow folk want to be counted in, but when they learn that it involves sacrifice, they are gone. Shallow souls, pray God to give your life depth and real meaning and worth.

Others hear and receive the truth, but soon permit the cares of life to choke and destroy it (see v. 22). This pictures modern life so aptly that one could dwell with profit on the vital lessons here taught.

II. Beware of the Power of Evil (vv. 31-33).

Just as the mustard plant was never intended to grow into a tree in which the birds would dwell, so Christianity was never intended to be a nominally Christianized world empire in which ungodly men, the dark birds of the evil one (v. 19), should find comfortable lodgment. Unfortunately, that is what much of professing Christianity has become. Let those of us who love the Lord beware that we are not misled by it.

The parable of the leaven teaches the same lesson. Always in the New Testament leaven stands for evil (see such passages as Matt. 22:16-21, 23, 29; 23:14, 16; 1 Cor. 5:6-8; Gal. 5:9). It is any influence that weakens testimony, encourages hypocrisy, formalism or worldliness. Who can deny that this leaven has spread throughout the Church? The Evil One is powerful. Let us beware of his power and of his leaven.

III. Value Redemption Aright (vv. 44-46).

In interpreting this parable we observe that obviously the sinner had nothing to sell with which to buy salvation, even if it were to be bought, which we know it is not (Eph. 2:8). We do give up some things to follow Christ, but are they not the worthless and degrading things? On the other hand, He gave us His all, even to the shameful death of the cross. This He did for His own people, Israel, and what we are even more interested in, for the Church.

Let us value our redemption highly. We have been purchased with the unspeakable price, the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us then heed the admonition of the apostle Paul, "Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:20).

READ THE ADS—IT PAYS

Farmers Can Get \$30 For Planting 4 Acres Of Trees

The U. S. Government will pay North Carolina farmers to plant forest seedlings on their land and help reforest it, State Forester J. S. Holmes of the Department of Conservation and Development said recently.

Farmers co-operating with the Agricultural Adjustment Administration in carrying on soil building practices and who are participating in benefit payments, may get an additional credit of \$30 each

if they will plant as much as four acres of land to forest trees, according to a new bulletin just issued by the AAA in Washington. "This \$30 will more than pay for the cost of trees and for planting them," said F. H. Claridge, assistant forester in charge of the State Forest Nurseries. "Farmers can buy trees and get them planted for \$4 an acre, planting about 1,000 trees to the acre, so that the entire four acres should not cost more than \$16, leaving \$14 clear profit or to spend in planting several more trees." Approximately 4,000,000 baby forest trees now almost ready for distribution from the two forest nurseries maintained by the fore-

CREDIT ASSOCIATION TO MEET IN JANUARY

Stockholders of the Asheville Production Credit Association will hold their annual meeting in Asheville division of the Department of Conservation and Development. These seedlings may be purchased for \$2 per thousand from the State Forester in Raleigh.

Most of these seedlings are loblolly, slash, shortleaf or longleaf pine, although there are several thousand seedlings of other varieties available including cedar, white pine, black locust and black walnut.

ville at the court house on Monday, January 22nd, at 10:00 o'clock, according to an announcement of John A. Hudgens, president of the association.

At this meeting, complete and detailed reports will be made by the officers of the association on its operations for the past year, directors will be elected and other important business transacted.

The Asheville Production Credit Association, which makes short-term loans to finance all types of farm and livestock operations, serves Buncombe, Burke, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Avery, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Swain, Transylvania, and Yancey

25 Enrolled In Army Day School

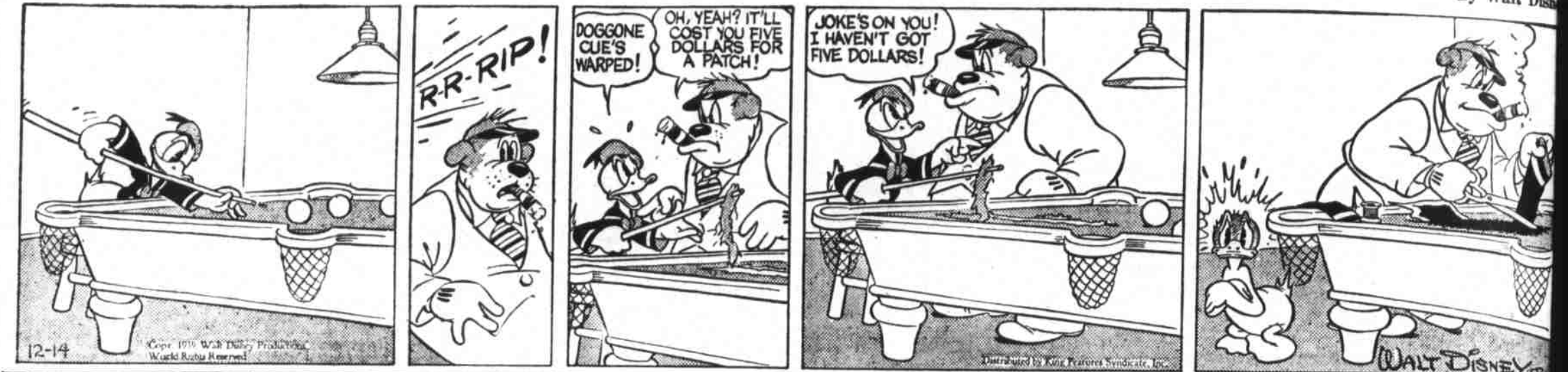
Adjutant Cecil Brown has opened again this year the Day School, which, under the auspices of the Salvation Army is reaching a community otherwise isolated from schooling privileges. This year's enrollment of twenty children is an increase over that of last year, and Lieutenant Colton is teaching the school.

Lattie Henderson, a mountain counties and in 1939 made loans totaling approximately \$112,000.00 to its 500 members.

boy of Haywood county, taught school last year and did a fine job of work; he is at present in Atlanta, taking further training in the Salvation Army College there after which he expects to return here as a Lieutenant, to renew duties. Word received from superior officers says that he is outstanding among all the cadets from fifteen southern states. Adjutant Brown, Lieutenant Colton, and the people of Haywood county, are proud that he is doing good. The Salvation Army Day School is purposing to give other a chance and a start in life.

READ THE ADS—IT PAYS

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MUGGS AND SKEETER



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