

The Sunday School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS

LESSON XVI.

April 18, 1880. } THE WHEAT AND THE TARES. } May 30, 1880. }
1880. } 1880. } 1880. }

GOLDEN TEXT.—"The harvest is the end of the world."—Matt. xiii. 39.

HOME STUDIES.

- M. Matt. xii. 1-13 The Lord of the Sabbath
- F. Matt. xii. 14-37 Blind and Dumb Healed
- W. Matt. xii. 38-59 Pharisees Seek a Sign
- Th. Luke xi. 37-54 Pharisees Denounced.
- S. Matt. iii. 1-23 Parable of the Sower.
- F. Matt. xiii. 24-30, 37-43. Wheat and Tares.
- Sab. Luke viii. 19-31 Christ's Relatives.

HEIPS TO STUDY.

In this lesson our Lord, by means of a parable drawn from some of the most familiar incidents of home life, teaches us the nature and condition of His kingdom on earth.

This parable and its interpretation, given also in the text, furnish the only theory on which the problem of human life can be solved; and he will certainly fail who, without this key, tries to understand the history of the world or its present condition.

To avoid a double division, we take the parable and its explanation together, step by step, under the following heads: (1) *The Source and Development of Good*, (2) *The Source and Development of Evil*, (3) *Their Final and Permanent Separation*.

I. THE SOURCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF GOOD.—Vers. 24, 25; 37, 38. Holiness is not indigenous to the soil of fallen human nature; its seed must be brought from afar.

1. *The Sower—Christ*.—Vers. 24, 37. He sowed good seed, and nothing else. The evil in the world cannot be attributed to Him.

Christ identifies Himself with us, and expresses His sympathy, by almost always calling Himself the Son of Man.

2. *The Field—The World*.—Vers. 24, 38. Jesus claims the world as His Field. The usurper strives hard for the mastery, but

"Jesus yet shall reign victorious,
All the earth shall own His sway."

See Rom. x. 18; Mark xvi. 15, 20.

3. *The Wheat—the Righteous*.—Vers. 25, 38. True Christians will be the means of converting others—the children of the Kingdom are here compared to good seed, and good seed is productive.

II. THE SOURCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF EVIL.—Vers. 26-28; 38, 39. Once fallen, evil is natural to man, and besides that, the enemy that sowed it first in the garden of Eden is still busy at the same work.

1. *The Tares—the Wicked*.—Vers. 26-38. The word translated *tares* does not mean the useful plant sometimes called by that name and otherwise known as "vetches." The plant indicated by the Greek word *zizania* is a noxious weed, abundant in Palestine, and closely resembling wheat in appearance until the good grain is in the ear. Its botanic name is *Lolium temulentum*, and it is known in Britain as the "darnel."

No amount of argument would suffice to persuade the eastern farmer to take this poisonous grass for wheat, once its black heads appeared; and equally vain is the attempt, so frequently made in the present day, to explain away the distinction which God makes in His word, and which actually exists, between the children of the kingdom and the children of the wicked one. Their character reveals their parentage, sooner or later. "See 1 John iii. 8, 10; John viii. 44."

2. *The Enemy—the Devil*.—Vers. 28, 39. Dr. C. S. Robinson, writing in the "S. S. Times," says: "No point in the parable is more remarkable than the clear acknowledgement of this great adversary's existence, personality, and power. Two vast kingdoms, now in close contact and in mortal conflict, divide the world,—Immanuel's and Satan's. The first of these might crush the other in an instant; but the final triumph mysteriously waits. There is among men a keen, bright, fallen angel, with his wits sharpened by six thousand years of strife with all good, on the alert to deceive even the elect of God. Christ for a while is content to meet his foe in a struggle for dominion in the human heart. As He views men, the difference between them lies simply in their allegiance; to which kingdom do they belong?"

III. THEIR FINAL AND PERMANENT SEPARATION.—Vers. 30; 39-43. We are called upon, and it is quite possible for us, under the teaching of God's Word and Spirit, to distinguish between good and evil; to separate the evil from the good in our own character, and get rid of the former; but it is not so easy, neither are we called upon, to point out definitely who are children of the "kingdom," and who are not.

For the accomplishment of His own wise purposes, God allows these two classes to remain together. Ten righteous men would have saved Sodom from destruction. A wicked family of to-day may owe their temporary preservation and prosperity to some righteous descendant who will live in a future century.

1. *The Harvest—the End of the World*.—Vers. 30, 39. In this world persons and things are often found out of their

places. The wicked disguise themselves and take the place of the righteous. The "darnel" stoutly asserts its claim to be regarded as the finest of the wheat. Judas seemed to be a disciple of Christ. But we are told that Judas "went to his place" when he died. This is the great work that death is engaged in—putting people in their own places; and the judgment will complete that work. Disorder in God's universe is only apparent and temporary; order is real and permanent.

In the day of judgment there will be no difficulty whatever in distinguishing the righteous from the wicked. Of all the disguises, not a shred will remain.

2. *The Reapers—the Angels*.—Vers. 30, 39. "Another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle and reap; for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe" (Rev. xiv. 15).

3. *The Tares Burned—the Wicked Punished*.—Vers. 30; 40-42. "It will strike every thoughtful reader," says the writer already quoted, "that no feature of this parable is more suggestive than the account given of the tranquil conversation between the master of the field and his servants: 'Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

These are the words of a husbandman who has so many patches of cultivated ground that he can afford to lose one of them without dismay. These are the words of a Master who has eternity for His patience, and need not worry over one of our wasted seasons. It fairly arrests the imagination just to think of Jesus Christ, to whom this world belongs, coming, possibly at hours unknown to us, and looking over our part of the ruined field. There he sees you and me; and perhaps he murmurs to himself, "Tares, every one of them! but let them alone for a while till the harvest."

4. *The Wheat Gathered—the Righteous Glorified*.—Vers. 30, 43. "He will thoroughly purge His floor, and will gather the wheat into His garner" (Luke iii. 17). "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever" (Dan. xii. 3).

To whom is this solemn warning addressed, and whom does this plain revelation of the future concern? It is addressed to all; it concerns all; it concerns you and me: Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

THE LITERARY SUCCESS OF THE CENTURY.

An eminent English authority recently pronounced "Scribner's Monthly" "The greatest literary success of the century." The "New England Journal of Education" says: "America may well be proud of such a magazine." The "Illustrated London News" considers it "one of the marvels of the day." The "London Illustrated (Penny) Paper" says: "With its minutely finished gems of drawing and engraving, it is the wonder and admiration of the art-world."

The April number just issued ends the NINETEENTH volume, which is exceptionally brilliant. The "New York Evening Post," "Hartford Courant" and other papers, speak of the series by Eugene Schuyler on "Peter the Great," as "the most notable event in modern magazine literature." The style is so simple and yet so graphic that it interests not only men of letters but the young, and is read as a text book in the schools. It is understood that the causes and beginnings of Nihilism in Russia will be traced by Mr. Schuyler in the course of his narrative.

Rev. Dr. Eggleston writes of Mr. George W. Cable and his story, "The Grandisimes," in "Scribner": "If Cable can hold that gait, the rest of us who write American stories must surrender to him. What a superb piece of work it is!"

"Scribner's" is the only American periodical that has as yet established a large circulation abroad; the edition in England being 10,500. It now enters upon its second decade, and the work of winning a second hundred thousand at home. Its readers to-day are estimated at more than half a million.

The publishers of "Scribner" announce that all new subscribers after this date who take the back numbers, beginning November last, will receive instead of the six unbound numbers the bound volume, November, '79, to April, '80 (containing all of "Success with Small Fruits," and the opening chapters of "Peter the Great," "The Grandisimes," and "Louisiana"), without extra charge. The subscription price is \$4 a year.

TWELVE French Catholics, heads of families, have joined the Congregational Church at Centre Falls, R.I., having been brought into the light by reading the Bible.

A GENTLEMAN in England, interested in the Bible work of the world, recently gave £1,000 to the British and Foreign Bible Society, for the extension of its colportage in China.

Births, Marriages and Deaths.

DIED.

Fell asleep in Jesus, March 18th, Esther, relict of the late Jonathan De Wolfe, of Liverpool, Nova Scotia.

The Congregational Church has lost a tried and true Christian worker. A consistent life and triumphant death she has bequeathed to the Church and the world. Such a legacy is invaluable. Such a life will be held in blessed memory.

There is no advice so useful to those who are predisposed to insanity, or to those who have recovered from an attack, as to carefully avoid everything likely to cause loss of sleep, to pass their evenings tranquilly at home, and to retire early to rest. Long continued wakefulness disorders the whole system. The appetite becomes impaired, the secretions diminished or changed, the mind dejected, and soon waking dreams occur, and strange phantoms appear, which at first may be transient, but ultimately take possession of the mind, and madness or death ensues.

We wish we could impress upon all the vast importance of securing sound and abundant sleep. If so, we should feel that we had done an immense good to our fellow-beings, not merely in preventing insanity, but other diseases also.

To procure sleep it is important that the mind should not be disturbed for several hours before retiring to rest. Retire early, and when neither very warm nor cold; sleep on a hair mattress, or on a bed not very soft. The bed-room should be large and well ventilated, and the bed should not be placed near the wall, or near the window, as such an arrangement often exposes the person to currents of cold air. There should be nothing tight about the neck, and the rule of cleaning the teeth before retiring is a good one. Tea or coffee taken late at night is apt to disturb sleep. Strive to banish thought as much as possible, or take up the most dull subject. Study during the evening is improper.

Nervous persons who are troubled with wakefulness and excitability usually have a strong tendency of blood to the brain with cold extremities. The pressure of the blood on the brain keeps it in a stimulated or wakeful state, and the pulsations of the head are often painful. Let such rise and chafe the body and extremities with a brush or towel, or rub smartly with the hands to promote circulation and withdraw the excessive amount of blood from the brain, and they will fall asleep in a few moments.

A sponge bath and rubbing, or a good run, or a rapid walk in the open air, just before retiring, will aid in equalizing circulation and promoting sleep. Some people are able to perform much mental labour, and to study late at night and yet sleep well. Some require but little sleep. But such individuals are very rare.

Sleep seemed to be at the command of Napoleon, as he could sleep and wake apparently at his will.

A writer observes of M. Guizot, former minister of France: "His faculty for going to sleep after extreme excitement and mental exertion is prodigious; after the most boisterous and tumultuous sittings at the Chamber, after being baited by the Opposition in the most savage manner—there is no milder expression for their excessive violence—he arrives at home, throws himself upon a couch and sinks immediately into a profound sleep, from which he is undisturbed till midnight, when proofs of the 'Moniteur' are brought to him for inspection."

"It is an interesting fact," says another writer, "that for many of the latter years of his life Sir Robert Peel was in the invariable habit, at whatever hour he returned from his Cabinet or the House of Commons, of reading for half an hour in some religious book before retiring to rest. It was by this habit he said that he could keep his mind calm and clear after the distractions and irritations of the day."—*The Grand Secret of Success*.

NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT.

If you're told to do a thing
And mean to do it really,
Never let it be by halves;
Do it fully, freely.

Do not make a poor excuse,
Waiting, weak, unsteady;
All obedience worth the name
Must be prompt and ready.

If you're told to learn a task,
And you should begin it,
Do not tell your teacher: "Yes,
I'm coming in a minute."

Waste not moments nor your words
In telling what you could do
Some other time; The present is
For doing what you should do.

Don't do right unwillingly
And stop to plan and measure;
'Tis working with the heart and soul
That makes our duty pleasure.

—Phæbe Cary in *Young England*.

A CONSIDERABLE religious interest exists among the students at Princeton, and an invitation has been sent to Dr. Cuyler to address them.

MR. GLADSTONE has undertaken to write an article for one of the quarterlies on Dr. Chalmers and his influence on religious life and theology in Scotland.

MR. ROBERT ARTHINGTON, of Leeds, the founder of the Tanganyika Mission, has offered the London Missionary Society the sum of \$3,000 for the purpose of completing his scheme by placing on the lake a suitable steamer. With the help of a steamer it is hoped that the best route may be found from the lake to the Nile, and that the population of the region may be brought more directly under Christian influence.