

MISSIONARY INTELLIGENCE.

SOUTH SEAS.

All who have read Williams' "Missionary Enterprises," must remember with special interest his graphic account of the first planting of the Gospel in Rarotonga. That island as well as the whole group to which it belongs has long been entirely Christianized. Perhaps not one of the inhabitants ever saw one of the idols which their fathers worshipped. As will always be the case where Christianity has any measure of living power, these islands have become centres from which the Gospel goes forth to the "regions beyond," as will be seen from the following communication from the Rev. W. Wyatt Gill, B.A., the head of the Missionary Training Institution in Rarotonga:

"There are now twenty-six students in the Institution, all married but one. We have been much pleased with their behaviour during the past year. A great deal of work has been accomplished, both in intellectual and manual (e.g., keeping up the premises). The plantation at Nikao has been regularly cultivated, although the drought in the early months of 1878 sorely tried our faith and patience. The students were very short of food for some time, yet never complained. The abundant rains of late have clothed the island with beauty and fertility. The Normal School has been maintained with efficiency. Several of the elder scholars have been dismissed with a good character, and will, we hope, become centres of usefulness in their own circles. At the end of November we received a letter from Mr. Chalmers, soliciting subscriptions towards the purchase of boats for the teachers labouring on New Guinea. I was very much pleased at the cordial way in which the deacons and churches took up the matter. Within a fortnight they placed in my hands \$235.70 (£47), which I retain for the present, in the hope of receiving something additional from the outlying islands. The whole amount will then be forwarded by first opportunity to the Rev. J. P. Sunderland, for the purchase of boats for the New Guinea Mission. Besides this, about £300 have been collected and expended by themselves upon repairs of two churches and a school-house, re-seating, and shingling, etc. £100 have been remitted by me to the Bible Society, for the Bibles sold in the group during the past year. The great burden upon us just now is that we have to build a row of cottages for the students; the old ones built by Mr. Buzacott, of lath and plaster, at the commencement of the Institution, being utterly decayed. The work will fall exclusively upon the students, superintended by Tamaiti and myself. We move slowly. However, we have begun to burn lime. This itself is an immense work. To cut down gigantic chestnut trees in the valleys, and then to drag the severed trunks and limbs to the appointed place by sheer human strength, is no slight undertaking. As soon as the dry season sets in, we purpose to build. Should we succeed in completing the new row of cottages this year (as I trust we shall), we may think ourselves fortunate." Writing again three months later, Mr. Gill adds: "I have just remitted to Mr. Sunderland £152, a special contribution from the churches of the Hervey Group, for the purchase of boats for the use of the eastern teachers in New Guinea, at the discretion of Mr. Chalmers. A thrilling appeal was made by Mr. Chalmers to our people, who warmly took it up. At this village a collection was made on three successive Sabbaths at their own desire. An energetic deacon said, 'It is not enough; let us off with our ear-rings, and put them in the plate!' Men often wear gold ear-rings in these islands. Mangaia, as usual, gave the largest amount."

THE rules of Buddha interdicted to the Llamas the use of garlic, brandy and tobacco; garlic being prohibited because it is unbecoming to present one's self before the image of Buddha with bad breath, offensive in itself and capable of infecting the perfume of incense; brandy, because the fatal liquor disturbs the reason and excites the passions; and tobacco because it engenders idleness, and absorbs precious hours that ought to be devoted to the study of prayers and of doctrine. These "heathen" notions will bear respecting—not to say exporting.

The Sunday School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XIX.

May 9, 1880. } JESUS AND THE YOUNG } Mat. xix. 13-26.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. xix. 14.

HOME STUDIES.

- M. Matt. xviii. 1-14... The Disciples Rebuked.
- T. Matt. xviii. 15-22... Seventy times Seven.
- W. Matt. xviii. 23-35... The Unmerciful Servant.
- Th. Matt. xix. 13-26... Jesus and the Young.
- F. Mark x. 17-31... The Young Ruler.
- S. Luke xviii. 18-30... "Follow Me."
- Sab. Eccles. xii. 1-14... "Remember thy Creator."

HELPS TO STUDY.

Many events occurred between the transfiguration, which formed the subject of our last lesson, and the incidents with which we have now to deal.

Some of the more important of these events were, the Saviour's visit to Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles, and His subsequent departure to the east side of the Jordan; the mission of the seventy and their report; the raising of Lazarus from the dead; and the delivery of the parables of the lost sheep, the prodigal son, etc.

Matthew and Mark both place the scene of our present lesson in "Judea beyond Jordan," a district of country afterwards known as Perea.

We find the Saviour once more surrounded by great multitudes, "and as was His wont, He taught them," availing Himself of ordinary incidents to explain and illustrate the nature and spirit of His kingdom. We suggest the following division: (1) *The Gospel to the Young*, (2) *The Gospel to the Moral*, (3) *The Gospel to the Rich*.

I. THE GOSPEL TO THE YOUNG.—Vers. 13-15. There is but one Gospel. It is addressed to all—old and young, rich and poor, moral and immoral—and it is the same for all. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." But the classes specified are apt to be neglected. The young are supposed to be far from death; the outwardly moral are not going very fast to destruction; and the rich must not be offended.

1. *Children brought to Jesus*.—Ver. 13. Who brought them? Who but their mothers? Everybody seems to know this without having been told. Perhaps these mothers did not know the Saviour as such; but the tender maternal instincts which God had implanted in their hearts led them to seek for their children the highest good which they knew of as being within their reach.

2. *Parents Rebuked by Disciples*.—Ver. 13. Perhaps the Disciples were only unwilling that the precious teaching of the Master should be interrupted; perhaps, like many in later days, they regarded religion as something that was not for children.

3. *Disciples Rebuked by Christ*.—Ver. 14. The words of Christ to His disciples on this occasion—the words of our Golden Text—are, through them, addressed to all people in all ages.

Children ought to receive religious instruction: (a) because the young, as well as the old, may die; (b) because religion is necessary not only in order to die a happy death, but also in order to live a happy and useful life; (c) because the longer a human being lives in this world without conversion the less likely it becomes that he will ever be converted; (d) because Christ says Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me.

4. *The Children's Kingdom*.—Ver. 14. Another reason why special effort ought to be put forth for the bringing of children to the Saviour seems to be hinted at by Himself in the words for of such is the kingdom of heaven; and that reason is, that children are well fitted to serve as patterns to shew those more advanced in age in what spirit they also must come. He does not say that the kingdom of heaven is composed entirely of those who are children in years; but He says that it is composed of such as little children; that is, of persons who in their spirit have become like little children simple, docile, tractable, trustful, humble; content to receive bounty unearned, and to work, if need be, without wages. This spirit is the direct opposite of that calculating, mercenary, selfish and self-righteous spirit which is brought under our observation in the next division of our lesson.

II. THE GOSPEL TO THE MORAL.—Vers. 16-22. Christ's Gospel to those whose religion consists in the mere outward practice of morality is, not to cast away their morality, but to cast away their dependence upon it; not to throw aside their righteousness, but to find out that they have none; not to quit obeying God's law, but to discover that they have never obeyed it aright, and begin to render a new obedience, springing from love. He requires morality—the highest morality—that is the crop He expects; but He is a wise husbandman, and He plants not blossoms and fruits, but seeds; not leaves and branches, but roots; not morality but faith; not a code but a creed.

1. *A "Good" Young Man*.—Ver. 16. Luke says this young man was a "ruler;" perhaps he was a member of the Sanhedrim, or ruler of a synagogue; at least he was rich and influential, cultured and well-behaved. There is no ground for denouncing his character as that of a gross evildoer. But he was labouring under a very serious mistake; and that mistake must be carefully pointed out, for it is one to which human nature is prone.

Under the teaching of the scribes and pharisees he had been led to suppose that it was quite possible for man in his natural condition to render a meritorious obedience to God's law; and he thought that he had been doing so. Still, he was not quite satisfied; a suspicion lurked in his mind that with all his morality he was not worthy of eternal life, and that in order to attain to this he must do some good thing over and above rendering obedience to the moral law—some "work of supererogation," as the Roman Catholics call it in speaking of the doings of their "saints." The truth is that no mere man—not even the regenerate—can, in this life come up to the demands of God's law, much less go beyond them; there is none good but God.

2. *The Law's Challenge*.—Vers. 17-19. Christ, as one says, "sends the proud to the law, but invites the humble to the Gospel." But the young man, in his blindness to the requirements of the law supposed that he had rendered full satisfaction to it, and answered all these things have I kept from my youth up.

3. *The Test*.—Vers. 21, 22. The demand made by the Saviour upon this young man, to sacrifice his wealth and position for the benefit of others, was well calculated to shew to himself and to others whether or not his mind was in accord with the spirit of the command "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." He went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions—too much to give for eternal life, he thought. It was a sad, sad choice. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Perhaps he reconsidered the matter afterwards—who knows?

III. THE GOSPEL TO THE RICH.—Vers. 21-26. In a few pointed remarks, suggested by the foolish decision of the rich young ruler who had just left, Christ teaches that

1. *The Rich (as such) Cannot be Saved*.—Vers. 23-25. We are told that "the love of money is the root of all evil"—not money itself, but the love of it. We are also told that we "cannot serve God and mammon." The harm is not in having riches but in devoting the heart to them. The person who would enter the "strait gate" and tread the "narrow way" must sever his supreme affection from his riches, be they great or small.

There is no foundation for the explanation which refers the eye of a needle to a gate in Jerusalem. The passage must be taken literally as expressing an utter impossibility; and such is the salvation of the rich man as long as his heart is set on his riches; equally impossible is the salvation of the self-righteous, who suppose themselves to be rich in merit. But to complete the paradox Christ tells us that

2. *God can Save the Rich*.—Ver. 26. "Is anything too hard for the Lord" (Gen. xviii. 14.) "There is nothing too hard for Thee" (Jer. xxxii. 17). With men this is impossible but with God all things are possible. The man who enters the "strait gate" gives up himself, his riches, his merits, and all his possessions to God, the rightful owner, and becomes "poor in spirit."

Items from Abroad.

THE famine in Armenia is increasing. One hundred and fifty have died of starvation at Agbak and one hundred at Van.

THE responsibility of city churches in watching the coming of the young men from the country, and taking them under their fostering care, cannot be over-estimated. Hundreds of young men, well trained at home, ready for active Christian service, come to the city every year. They are strangers to city life; having no conception of its dangers; entirely unfitted to meet its temptations; easily led into its paths of virtue or vice. If they are met at the threshold of their city experience with a warm, earnest Christian welcome, and made to feel that their coming was expected and their services wanted, they will shun the glitter of evil, and at once become active helpers in temperance and religion. But if they are left to find their own way into city society, the chances are that runners of the different agencies of destruction will secure them. The churches should unite more earnestly with the Christian associations to protect the young men, and so keep them unstained, rather than wait until their ruin is well nigh accomplished before holding out the hand of helpfulness.

WITH great research and labour, Sharon Turner has prepared the following statement of the progress of Christianity. At the close of each century the number of believers is given.

Century.	About.
First	500,000
Second	2,000,000
Third	5,000,000
Fourth	10,000,000
Fifth	15,000,000
Sixth	20,000,000
Seventh	24,000,000
Eighth	30,000,000
Ninth	40,000,000
Tenth	50,000,000
Eleventh	70,000,000
Twelfth	80,000,000
Thirteenth	75,000,000
Fourteenth	80,000,000
Fifteenth	100,000,000
Sixteenth	125,000,000
Seventeenth	155,000,000
Eighteenth	200,000,000

During the present century it is estimated that the Church has doubled its communicants.