



LESSON XI. — MARCH 13.

The Wheat and the Tares.

Matt. xiii., 24-30: 36-43. Read whole chapter. Memory verses, 37-39.

Golden Text.

'He that soweth the good seed in the Son of Man.'—Matt. xiii., 37.

Home Readings.

- M. Matt. xiii., 1-23.—'Behold a sower went forth to sow.'
- T. Matt. xiii., 24-43. — The wheat and the tares.
- W. Matt. xiii., 44-58.—Parables of the kingdom of heaven.
- Th. Matt. iii., 1-12.—'Whose fan is in his hand.'
- F. Matt. xxiv., 1-14. — 'Then shall the end come.'
- S. Matt. xxv., 31-46.—'The Son of Man... in his glory.'
- S. Dan. xii., 1-13.—'They that be wise shall shine.'

Lesson Story.

The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but at night, while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat. When the wheat sprang up and began to grow the tares also sprang up and grew fast. Then the servants of the householder were much astonished, and asked him how the tares could have come there. He knew that it was the work of an enemy, but he did not allow his servants to try to pull up the weeds lest they should root up the wheat at the same time. He allowed them to grow together in the field until harvest time, then commanded the reapers to gather first the tares and bind them in bundles to be burned. After that to gather the wheat into his barns.

The disciples came to Jesus to ask what this parable meant. Jesus replied, 'He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that soweth them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.'

As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Lesson Hymn.

All this world is God's own field,
Fruit unto his praise to yield;
Wheat and tares together sown,
Unto joy or sorrow grown;
First the blade and then the ear,
Then the full corn shall appear:
Grant, O Lord of Life, that we,
Holy grain, and pure, may be,

For we know that thou wilt come,
And wilt take thy people home;
From Thy field wilt purge away,
All that doth offend, that day;
And Thine angels charge, at last,
In the fire the tares to cast,
But the fruitful ears to store,
In Thy garner evermore.

Lesson Hints.

Read over chapters xii. and xiii., all these events and teachings took place on the same day, the Sabbath of which we learned in our last lesson. These are the first recorded parables. Great multitudes followed our Lord down to the seaside to hear him. He stepped into a fisherman's boat which was lying near the shore, and sat there teaching the people. He spoke eight parables at this time, and to his disciples he explained two of them that they might comprehend more fully the character of the kingdom of which

they had become citizens. We learn from them to go to Jesus for the explanation of his own word.

'Parable'—a true story with a meaning. An illustration of eternal truths from every day life.

'Good seed'—Christ sows only good seed, that which has life in it. The children of the kingdom must be filled with life, the life and nature of Jesus.

'While men slept'—the devil always works slyly and in the dark, he is sowing temptation and sorrow for us when we are least on our guard.

'Tares'—a bitter, poisonous grass, growing in Palestine.

'Fruit'—by their fruit ye shall know them, (Matt. vii., 20.) What kind of fruit are you bearing? The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, (Gal. v., 22, 23.)

'Then appeared the tares'—the results of evil actions do not always appear at once, but sooner or later they are bound to bear fruit somewhere.

'An enemy hath done this'—enemies of Christ are constantly sowing evil seeds, evil thoughts, words and actions. The devil sows hypocrites and worldlings in amongst the Christians. It is not our place to seek to root them out, we might easily make a mistake and root up some of God's precious wheat. God allows them all to grow together until the harvest time.

'To burn them'—no words can express the awfulness of the fate which awaits those who continually and persistently reject God's love and mercy. (John v., 28, 29; Mark ix., 43-48.)

Primary Lesson.

What would we do without bread? In every part of the world some kind of bread is made. In some countries the bread is brown or black and has not a very pleasant taste, but a great deal of it is eaten.

In our country we have beautiful white bread made of wheat. You who live in the country know how beautiful the fields are, full of the ripe standing wheat. But where do we get this bread that is so useful and nourishing to us?

Early in the spring the farmer ploughs his field, and in the freshly turned earth he plants those tiny grains of wheat which seem so little and useless. But God sends the rain and the sunshine to make those seeds grow, and because they have in them a tiny, tiny germ of life, they sprout up and grow into beautiful plants. Then by and by they begin to bear fruit, and when the fruit or grain is quite ripe, it is gathered in and made ready to be used for bread.

But there is something else that grows well in good ground, and that is weeds. Did you ever see fields full of thistles and briars? They were pretty to look at, but they were not useful. The farmers do not like them because they make such a lot of trouble, they spread so quickly and they take up the room of useful plants, and they are apt to choke the wheat. These weeds could not be made into bread or cakes or anything useful and good to eat.

Which would you rather be, wheat or weeds? Useful and good and sweet, or bitter and useless and always in the way?

Of course it does not take you a moment to decide which you would rather be. Weeds are only fit to be burned.

If you are one of God's dear children who love him and try to obey him always, then you are already a little grain of wheat, something that God can use to bear beautiful fruit of sweetness and love.

You do not want to be an ugly little weed that is no use to anyone and that will bear bitter and poisonous fruit, do you? If you do not belong to Jesus, give him your heart to-day, tell him you love him and will obey him. And he will put his life and nature into you, so that you, too, will bear beautiful fruit, and at last be gathered by the angels into the glorious home where we will be with our loving Saviour, forevermore.

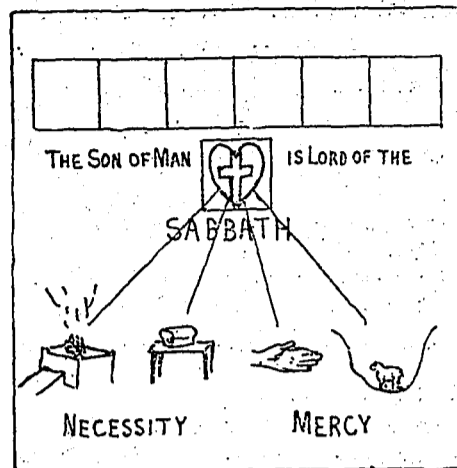
Suggested Hymns.

'What shall the harvest be,' 'Sowing in the morning,' 'Scatter seeds of kindness,' 'Scatter sunshine,' 'O where are the reapers?' 'Go work in my vineyard,' 'Go, labor on,' 'God make my life a little light.'

The Lesson Illustrated.

Jesus and the Sabbath.—Jesus is Lord of the six days, too, but the Sabbath is in especial sense his, to be used in drawing near to him. Yet, this fully understood, does not

narrow the life on that day, but enables the body to take off its armor and rest; the soul to lift up its eyes to the greater things of eternity. Four things are permitted on the Sabbath. The altar, representing labor in the temple to-day, stands for the instructors in pulpit, class and home, who minister to the soul's needs. The table with its bread, representing the showbread, rightly used for



David's hunger, stands to-day for the reasonable ministering to the needs of the body, neither feast nor fast; but for the good of man and the glory of God. These are works of necessity, while the withered hand healed by Jesus, and the lamb in the pit will represent mercy. To a loving heart, mercy and necessity, though, are but two views of the same thing.

'The Sabbath was made for man,' let us rejoice: man for 'the Lord of the Sabbath,' let us rejoice still more, and use the day as one of his chiefest blessings, that in it we may magnify him.

Practical Points.

Mar. 13.—Matt xiii., 24-30, 36-43.

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The Lord doeth all things well, whether it be the sowing of his seed in the heart, or his planting the Church on the earth. Verses 24, 37. The devil works hard while the Christian sleeps. Verses 25, 39. The Christian must be in the world, but not of the world. The wheat can have no fellowship with the tares. Verses 26, 38. It is not profitable to spend much time discussing the origin of evil. The proper study of mankind is God, in whom there is no evil. Verses 27, 28. The servants' inquiry of verse 28 was very much like that of James and John in Luke ix., 54, but God is merciful and longsuffering. Verse 29. God's ways are better than ours, and he alone can separate the wheat from the tares. Verses 30, 40. They who die impenitent cannot escape the clutch of the destroying angels. Verses 41, 42. They who twinkle as stars in the service of Christ, shall hereafter shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their heavenly Father. Verse 43.

Christian Endeavor Topics.

Mar. 13.—How to keep the Christian Endeavor pledge.—Mat. xxv., 14-30.

The Importance of Visiting.

The teacher as a visitor will be astonished at the way in which doors will swing open to his touch. 'He who has his hand on the head of a child has it on the heart of the mother.' Freddie's teacher has a welcome to the home which no one else enjoys, and Freddie's own dignity and sense of importance are wonderfully increased when his teacher calls. One rule about visiting is never to be forgotten. If it is impossible for you to call often at the homes of your scholars, be sure that you go once. You cannot understand the child's blessings or the child's temptations unless you see the child's home, and realize what influences are at work there to help or to hinder you in your efforts to build up the youthful character. Perhaps in calling at the homes of your pupils it may be your happy privilege to invite the parents to attend the church services. Many a little child coming into the Sunday-School has been the means of bringing a whole family to church.—Mrs. A. F. Schaeffer, in Dr. Peloubet's 'Senior Quarterly.'