



LESSON VI.—MAY 6, 1906.

## The Parable of the Tares.

Matthew xiii., 24-30; 36-43.

## Golden Text.

Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.—Gal. vi., 7.

## Home Readings.

Monday, April 30.—Matt. xiii., 24-30; 36-43.

Tuesday, May 1.—Matt. xiii., 44-53.

Wednesday, May 2.—Mark iv., 21-29.

Thursday, May 3.—Mark iv., 30-41.

Friday, May 4.—Gen. iii., 1-8.

Saturday, May 5.—Matt. xxv., 31-46.

Sunday, May 6.—Rev. xx., 11-15.

(By Davis W. Clark).

It is true yet in a sense that without a parable Jesus does not speak to the world. His whole system is a dark saying to the human mind naturally. Open eye, attentive ear, understanding heart, alone apprehend His meaning. There is need of moral earnestness which cries: 'Explain to us the parable.' . . . The parable of the wheat and tares is fundamental. It has been called a 'brief and simple moral history of the world.' It contains 'the ground question of the philosophy of all times relating to the origin of evil.' . . . The parable of the wheat and tares is existence of good or evil in this world apart from personality. Moral qualities have human souls as their only sphere. Virtue and sin root and bring forth fruit in men. Thus Jesus says, 'The good seed are the children of the kingdom, but the tares are the children of the wicked one.' . . . Those who with the docility of children have come to Jesus, to learn of Him and have His kingdom set up within, have become the wheat with which the Lord has sown the earth. So the tares are the children of the wicked one. Evil roots itself in human souls. . . . As we look out and see a thousand million growing together as wheat and tares in this vast field, this age-long antagonism, this dread and poisonous admixture, we exclaim in language of the servants of the householder, 'Didst thou not sow good seed? From when hath it tares?' Jesus dismisses this purely speculative question with the declaration, 'An enemy hath done this.' After a thousand volumes have been written on the origin of evil, we shall just know as much of it as Christ has told us here. Sin is here. Its deadly effects are apparent. The question is not so much, 'How did sin get into the world?' as, 'How may we get it out of the world?' Jesus cautions the disciples against an attempted mechanical and forcible purification of the world. 'Let both grow!' What rivers of blood would have remained unshed had the church always been guided by the teaching of this parable! . . . The present is a probationary period, in which change of character is possible. As St. Augustine suggests, 'Those who are tares to-day may be wheat to-morrow.' Again the opportunity is afforded to prove one's goodness genuine by steadfastness. As Daub affirms, 'The enemy can put into the wheat the tendency to become tares.' Only at the end of one's probation, when full proof of goodness or badness is made, can a final separation be effected. This will be done by the hand of Omnipotence, guided by unerring wisdom. . . . The general judgment is the official announcement, in the court of heaven and to the intelligences of the universe, of the destiny each soul has made for itself in its probationary state. . . . Then shall the righteous shine forth as if up to that time they had been under a cloud in

their present unavoidable association with the evil.

## THE TEACHER'S LANTERN.

The world is Jesus' own field. He has never relinquished or alienated His claim. He holds it by triple tenure—creation, preservation, redemption. . . . Twenty centuries have had reason to be grateful for the earnestness of the apostles which extracted from Jesus the key to this fundamental parable. . . . The demand for a perfect church on earth is unphilosophical. The effort to produce one by hasty and arbitrary means leads to persecution. A relative goodness only can be attained in the present probationary state. . . . Some are offended because of this unavoidable mixture of good and evil in the church. The servants of the householder were not so affected. They did not desert him because his field contained both wheat and tares. . . . The sorting time comes later. But it comes! After sinners have inveterately resisted grace which would have converted them from tares to wheat, they will be removed. . . . After the Christian has resisted temptation, arising from the mixed condition of the world and the proximity of the tares, and proven the intelligence and persistence of his choice, he shall be gathered as wheat into the barn.

## C. E. Topic.

Sunday, May 6.—Topic—Among the wheat or the tares: where am I? Matt. xiii., 24-30. (Consecration meeting.)

## Junior C. E. Topic.

## A BLESSED HOME.

Monday, April 30.—David's lament. II. Sam. i., 17-27.

Tuesday, May 1.—David's prosperity. II. Sam. iii., 1.

Wednesday, May 2.—David crowned king. II. Sam. v., 1-10.

Thursday, May 3.—Bringing back the ark. II. Sam. vi., 1-5.

Friday, May 4.—Uzzah's irreverence. II. Sam. vi., 6-10.

Saturday, May 5.—Blessings to the faithful. Prov. xxviii., 20.

Sunday, May 6.—Topic—A home God blessed, and why. II. Sam. vi., 11. (Consecration meeting.)

## Mr. Marvin's Sunday School Class.

(C. J. Young, in 'Friendly Greetings.')

'We have had a revival in our Sunday school,' said a friend, sitting down by my side during the noon intermission at a recent religious convention, 'and I know you want to hear about it. It took us all by surprise when it broke out in Mr. Marvin's class.'

'And who is Mrs. Marvin?'

'Oh, don't you know? one of our young business men. He has been with us something over a year. He is genial, very agreeable, an active Christian, and did not hesitate to say at first that he loved the Sunday school and would be glad of the privilege of gathering in a class.'

'There is one ready for you,' said the superintendent. 'Mrs. Snow, who has been the teacher for years, is ill, and I have been afraid that no one else could hold them in the school. They are bright, unconverted boys, belonging to good families, who have remained in Sunday school more from habit than because they were really interested. I think you are just the one to make a permanent impression upon them.'

'The boys were all fond of each other, and they liked the new teacher. He made the lesson interesting, and as opportunity offered had some personal talk with each one regarding his soul's salvation, but none of the boys seemed to be particularly impressed.'

'After nearly a year of this kind of work there came a very rainy Sunday, when, aside from this class, there were very few present in the school, and as the talk wandered somewhat from the lesson Mr. Marvin asked the boys why they thought Jesus Christ came into the world. After a little thought they gave various answers: "To bear our sins," "That the prophecies might be fulfilled," "To sym-

pathize with us," "To show us how to live"; and one added, "I have been thinking for some time that I am not living just as Christ would have me live."

"I don't think any of us are," said another.

"Had I been on earth when He was I hope I should have been one of His followers, but I am not now," said still another.

"You may be if you will," said the teacher, very gently. "The rain is pouring so that we cannot go home just yet. Every one else has gone; shall we not make a new departure, and, while we all kneel, ask the Lord to help us all to follow very closely after Him?"

'When the sexton's son, who was about the age of these boys, came up the stairs a few minutes later, after banking the fires for the evening service, what was his surprise to see Mr. Marvin and his boys on their knees.'

"They are praying!" he thought; and so moved was he by the sight that he went softly forward and knelt in a pew very near them. When they arose and went silently away, they did not notice him. That evening in the prayer-meeting, to every one's astonishment, this boy arose and said: "I feel that this day has been born within my heart, and it all came about through my happening to hear Mr. Marvin and his boys very solemnly offering this prayer, one after another: O Jesus, who came to seek and to save lost souls, save me, and help me to walk very closely after Thee. I thought, if that prayer will help them it may help me, for I have been very much dissatisfied with myself lately; so I knelt near them, and after they went out, and it came on to rain so very hard again, I remained there upon my knees. I did not get comfort from saying it once or twice, but the longer I said it the more heart I put into it, and at length a great joy came to my soul, and now I feel myself to be, indeed, one of those to whom the Lord called, Follow thou me."

Mr. Marvin and his boys were sitting together, as was their usual custom at evening meeting; a look of intelligence passed between them, and they all stood up.

'First one testified and then another, all admitting in some way that for a long time they had been secretly dissatisfied with their manner of living.'

'Then Mr. Marvin said: "For some time now I have been feeling that I have not been doing my best by my boys. To-day I made a special effort to draw them out, feeling that their hearts were in such close sympathy that if one would express a desire to lead a Christian life the others would follow. I went home almost discouraged this afternoon; but the Lord blessed my effort through this lad, to whom I now extend a heartfelt though tardy invitation to become one of our number."

'This called out many other confessions and testimonies from teachers and pupils in all grades, and the Holy Spirit came in and stirred all hearts so effectually that every session of the Sunday school service has ended with a short prayer-meeting, and many of the pupils have expressed a wish to unite with the church. It has stirred us all up. Can't you write out the story and send it far and wide? There may be other schools where there is a pent-up longing to come nearer Christ, which is smothered because no one makes a special effort to break the crust of timidity, formality, or coldness that keeps the pupils from coming forward naturally and graduating into the church.'—American Messenger.

## Do not Wait for Some One Else.

A story is told of a king who tested his subjects by placing a large stone in the centre of the street near his place. Various people avoided it or stumbled over it, each complaining of the 'lazy people,' who left it there. When it was clear that no one would remove it voluntarily, the king called those who had avoided the stone to the place, and with his own hands removed the stone while they looked on. Under the stone was a box containing gold and treasures marked 'for him who moves this stone.' The application to your life is plain. Never shunt a duty. Never complain because somebody else has not done what you ought to do. Grapple with difficulties for the sake of the treasures they conceal.—Selected.