

would not risk my brother's life by keeping me. They gave me to an acquaintance at White Pagoda, who had just lost a young child, and she brought me up as the future wife of her youngest son, then five years old. As such very little girls are worth nothing, and as the bargain must be closed by money, she paid my mother one penny for me, and I became hers. She had had twelve children in all, but my husband was the only survivor. Her husband smoked opium, and spent the money his children earned, so that one of his sons had hanged himself in despair.

My mother-in-law always gave me the best she had, but that was not much. I grew strong and large, and when I was eight years old I could cook, spin, plant rice, and help to turn the pump with which the rice-field was watered. When I was fifteen, on a day chosen as lucky, I had the god of the bedstead set up in a room of my own, and lived with my husband. After some years I had two sons. My father-in-law died; and then we found that the land on which our house was built belonged to someone else. The owner tore it down and made a rice-drying place where it stood. We then mortgaged our only field for eight pounds, and with this money built two houses, which fell down soon after in a season of heavy rain.

Three years ago, a man in our village became a Christian; soon after that two Bible-women came to stop at his house. My mother-in-law and I used to take the children in the evening and go to hear them talk. My husband heard too, and we all believed at the same time. My mother-in-law went one Sunday morning five miles to Linden Chapel, and when she came back at night she went straight to the god of the bedstead, and taking it out of doors threw it away. Afterward the Bible woman named Love came to the house, and after engaging in prayer took down the only other idol in the house, the one we had inherited from our ancestors, and put it with its fixtures in a basket, which my mother-in-law carried and threw into the river.

When my own father and mother heard that I had become a Christian, they were very much distressed; my mother cried, and my father could not eat for four days. My aunt came to tell me how displeased they were, and that they wished me to put away this new religion, but I told her to say that anything else they might ask of me I could do, but that this religion was something that could not be put away.

Last year my husband, finding the times hard, and hoping to earn something abroad, went to Manila. Before he went, he did not call a fortune-teller to find a lucky day, and did not go to the temple to get a bag of incense ashes to wear as a charm on his breast, as he would have done had he not been a Christian; but we knelt down, with the children, and asked God to take care of us while he was gone, and bless him while away, and bring him safely back.

Last month my eldest son, eleven years old, was baptized. I did not know it beforehand, though four months previously he had told me he wished to join the church. He did not tell me, because he was afraid the brethren would not receive him. I was surprised, and thanked God, when I saw him at the place of baptism.

My youngest son is five years old, and my mother-in-law takes care of him while I am away from home. We have a house of one room, which is mortgaged for two pounds. My husband lately sent home two pounds; but it was all used in paying my father-in-law's debts.

I have been sorrowful from my childhood up. I have never known a time when I had not reason for great anxiety. But during the past year, though my earthly circumstances remain the same, I have been almost happy. I know that there is a Saviour and a heaven, and that has taken away seven-tenths of the weight of my troubles.

THE RISK.

Every intoxicant has in it this characteristic—it never satisfies the drinker, but awakens a constant demand for more. A small glass whets the appetite for a larger glass; one drink creates a craving for a second. This is not the case with any wholesome beverage or food. Beef and bread do not breed excess. I began to drink milk as soon as I got my eyes open, and I still put my eyes to sleep every night by a good bowl of bread and milk; but I do not

find that one bowl creates a raging appetite for two or three more bowls. A healthful beverage satisfies a healthful appetite; a hurtful beverage like wine or ale or brandy kindles a morbid appetite which tends toward an uncontrollable frenzy. The more alcohol there is in the drink the more fierce is the frenzy.

This quality of alcoholic drinks is no respecter of persons. It will make a fool or a brute of a Christian (if he tampers with it) just as soon as of a reprobate. One of the most eloquent ministers of New Jersey delivered some of his most eloquent discourses under the stimulation of wine. He imagined that "he could preach better" for the stimulant. But before he was aware he staggered in his pulpit and was cited before a church court for drunkenness! In agony of soul he confessed to his brother ministers that nobody was so astonished at the discovery that he had become an inebriate as he was himself. He had been playing with a serpent; he began to do it with a good motive; but the serpent stung him just as soon as if he had been the most graceless black-guard. I venture to assert that there is not a human being on the face of God's earth who can habitually use intoxicating drinks and yet be perfectly safe. There is not a specific promise of God's protection of any Christian who tampers with alcohol—whether in a wine glass or a whiskey bottle. We do not affirm that every wine drinker becomes a sot; but we do affirm that every wine drinker runs a risk of becoming one. —Dr. Theo. Cuyler.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LIBRARY.

A Sunday-school superintendent in *The Quiver* thus writes of the influence of the library and importance of its being properly conducted. "Of necessity, the time during which scholars are under the direct control and influence of their Sunday-school teachers is short, and that time is, or ought to be, devoted to the work of instruction in Bible truths. All the rest of the week, even with those teachers who show the greatest amount of personal interest in them, they are subject to impressions which are often detrimental rather than helpful to their character. Hence, it is most important that some link should be found by means of which the scholars can be kept in unison with their school influences, and by means of which, also, some at least of the corrupting surroundings of the poorer children can be counteracted. The visits of the teacher will provide this link to a limited extent, but to a limited extent only, for it is neither possible nor advisable that teachers should make too constant visits to the homes of their scholars. The objections, however, which would obtain against such continual supervision cannot be urged against a book from the Sunday school. On the other hand it has—apart from its inherent value, whatever that may be—a distinct power and influence by the mere fact that it belongs to the Sunday school. It has that power, too, not only on the mind of the scholar who has brought it, but upon all the family, for every one of them is reminded, every time they see it, of the place whence it came, and by a natural, an inevitable, train of thought, of the work which is carried on there and of the day with which that work is associated. The importance of this is not always realized, and hence we find many schools which have no libraries, or which have them so poorly and carelessly stocked that their shelves offer no temptation to the majority of scholars.

"Looked at in this light the immense importance of care and judgment in the selection and management of the school library becomes patent, as does also the responsibility resting upon those who have the management of it, to see that the facilities they provide are in the cause of good. Much depends upon the man who is to carry on the work. More, far more, depends on ever bearing in mind the fact that the library is the connecting-link between the Sunday school life and the week day life, and on seeing that the contents of the books, while as bright and attractive and joy-giving as the religion of childhood, are in thorough keeping with the memories that the sight of them calls up."

The soul shall have society of its own rank; Be great, be true, and all the Scipios, The Catos, the wise patriots of Rome, Shall flock to you and tarry by your side, And comfort you with their high company. —Emerson.

ACCORDING to the *St. James's Gazette*, "The anti-tobacco people ought to have their attentions called to the fact that 'tobacco-blindness' is becoming quite a common affliction. At present there are several persons being treated for it at one London hospital. It first takes the form of 'color-blindness,' the sufferers who have smoked themselves into this condition being quite unable to distinguish the color of a piece of red cloth held up before them. That is the popular medical test, though there is also a more scientific one. Eventually the victim to 'tobacco blindness' sometimes loses his eyesight altogether. Although smoking is to a large extent the cause of the malady, and so gives it its name, heavy drinking is also partly responsible. Unless the smoking and drinking go together, the 'tobacco-blindness' is not serious. A proof of this is, that if a doctor has a case of it in hand, he always insists on abstinence, when, as a rule, the sufferer gradually regains his sight." —*Alliance News*.

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From *International Question Book*.)

LESSON IX.—NOVEMBER 27.

JESUS AND THE SABBATH.—MATT. 12: 1-14.

COMMIT VERSES 10-13.

GOLDEN TEXT.

It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days.—Matt. 12: 12.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

The Sabbath was made for man, the whole man, and all men.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Matt. 12: 1-14.
T. Mark 2: 23-28; 3: 1-6.
W. Luke 8: 33-39.
Th. Luke 6: 1-11.
F. John 5: 1-19.
Sa. 1 Sam. 21: 1-6.
Su. Isa. 58: 1-14.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Mark 2: 23-28; Luke 6: 1-11.

INTRODUCTION.—This incident took place probably in the order of Luke, but it was during the same summer as our last lesson. It shows that the new religion was gaining ground, since it aroused such bitter opposition.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

1. JESUS WENT ON THE SABBATH DAY—probably to or from the synagogue. THROUGH THE CORN-FIELDS of grain (not Indian corn). The fields were unfenced and the path led through them. PLUCK THE EARS—this was allowable by law. The Pharisees complained only because it was on the Sabbath. 2. NOT LAWFUL—broke their Sabbath traditions, because they said that it was a kind of reaping, and therefore work which was forbidden. 3. WHAT DAVID DID (1 Sam. 21: 1-6)—he was their hero and example. 4. THE PRIESTS IN THE TEMPLE PROFANE THE SABBATH—do what would be Sabbath-breaking, if a higher duty did not compel them to do it. Their work enabled others to keep the Sabbath religiously, and therefore really kept the Sabbath. 5. ONE GREATER THAN THE TEMPLE—for whose worship the temple was built; the Son of God, and therefore with authority over his own temples. Therefore, if it was right for the temple attendants to work on the Sabbath, how much more for him who was greater than the temple. 6. I WILL HAVE MERCY AND NOT SACRIFICE—obedience, kind deeds, are better than any mere forms of religion. 7. A MAN WHICH HAD HIS HAND WITHERED—shrunk up by disease or accident, and incurable. THAT THEY MIGHT ACCUSE HIM—Jesus himself did not pluck the grain, nor did he do anything to the man, but cured him by a word, so that the Pharisees had no accusation they could bring against his conduct.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Where did the events of to-day's lesson occur? At what season of the year?

SUBJECT: THE RIGHT USE OF THE SABBATH.

I. A QUESTION ABOUT KEEPING THE SABBATH (vs. 1, 2).—What took place one Sabbath? What were concerned? Was it right for the disciples to pluck and eat the grain? (Deut. 23: 25.) Did Jesus do this, as well as the disciples? With what did the Pharisees find fault? Did the disciples break the fourth commandment? What can you tell about the Pharisees' way of keeping the Sabbath?

How did this violating of the fourth commandment with so many rules and regulations destroy the very spirit of the Sabbath?

II. JESUS' ANSWER TO THE QUESTION (vs. 3-5).—Point out the three arguments by which Jesus answered the Pharisees' question. Relate the story referred to in vs. 3, 4. (1 Sam. 21: 1-6.) What was Christ's argument? What was his argument in vs. 5? How was Jesus greater than the temple? What is the meaning of "I will have mercy and not sacrifice"? Where is it found? (Hos. 6: 6.) What was Jesus' argument in this quotation? What idea do you get from these verses as to the true principle of keeping the Sabbath? What does he say in Mark 2: 27, 28? Did Jesus abolish the Sabbath, or confirm it? How is the Sabbath good for man's body? For his mind? For his soul? If we make a pleasure-day of the Sabbath, are we using it for the whole man? What keeping of the Sabbath is best for man? Show that the Sabbath was made for all men. (Exod. 20: 10.) Have we a right to so use the Sabbath as to deprive others of its benefit? What things would these two principles—the Sabbath for the whole man, and the Sabbath for all men—prevent us from doing on the Sabbath? What things would they lead us to do?

III. JESUS' EXAMPLE AS TO THE RIGHT WAY TO USE THE SABBATH (vs. 9-13).—What example of his idea of Sabbath-keeping did Jesus give? Who came to the synagogue? What question did the Pharisees ask Jesus? By what illustration did Jesus reply? What does he say it is right to do on the Sabbath? What things is it right for us to do on the Sabbath? How did Jesus prove that he had authority to teach the truth about the Sabbath?

LESSON X.—DECEMBER 4.

PARABLE OF THE SOWER.—MATT. 13: 1-9.

COMMIT VERSES 3-9.

GOLDEN TEXT.

The seed is the word of God.—Luke 8: 11.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

We should receive the good seed of God's Word in honest and good hearts, and bring forth fruit with patience.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Matt. 13: 1-23.
T. Mark 4: 1-20.
W. Luke 8: 4-18.
Th. Ps. 128: 1-6.
F. 1 Tim. 6: 6-21.
Sa. Gal. 5: 1-16.
Su. Gal. 5: 16-26.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Mark 4: 1-9; Luke 8: 4-8.

INTERPRETATION OF THE PARABLE.—Matt. 13: 18-23; Mark 4: 13-20; Luke 8: 9-15.

INTRODUCTION.—Jesus was teaching in a house, in Capernaum probably, and was discussing with the Pharisees when his mother and brethren called for him, thinking he must be out of his mind. That same day Jesus went out to the seashore, where he taught the multitude.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

1. THE SAME DAY—as noted in Introduction. 2. SEA SIDE—Sea of Galilee. 3. GREAT MULTITUDES—literally, the greatest. It was the turning-point in his public teaching. Instruction by parables is now first given by him. A SHIP—a fishing boat. IN PARABLES—as the form best adapted to instruct those who would heed the truth, and to conceal it from those who would misuse it, and who were plotting against his life. WENT FORTH—from the village like those in which the farmers of the East lived. 4. WAY SIDE—in the trodden footpath through the fields. The fields are not fenced or hedged. 5. STONY PLACES—where the rock was barely covered by the earth. 6. AMONG THORNS—among the roots of the thorns, which had been burned down according to Oriental custom, and which grew up quickly, strangling the good seed. 7. SOME A HUNDREDFOLD—not an uncommon return.

THE SOWER was (1) Christ, (2) the Apostles, (3) all who preach or teach the truth. THE GOOD SEED is the Word of God. THE WAYSIDE HEARERS are those whose hearts are hardened by neglect and sin so that the truth makes no impression, and the wicked one, represented by the fowls, plucks away the good seed. THE STONY GROUND HEARERS are those who are easily moved by excitement, by hopes of worldly good, but in whose conscience and deeper choices and character the truth does not take root. THE THORNY GROUND HEARERS are those in whom the good seed is choked by the deceitfulness of riches, by cares and pleasures of the world.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY (vs. 1, 2).—Where was the series of parables in this chapter spoken? At what season of the year? What is said of the hearers? From what place did Jesus speak? Why? What is a parable?

Why did Jesus speak in parables? (Vs. 10-15.) Would this plan gain a better hearing among the people? Whose fault was it that the people would not understand? How did this teaching help the disciples? What was Christ's desire for them all? (Ezek. 18: 30-32; 33: 11; Eph. 5: 14; John 3: 16.)

SUBJECT: VARIOUS WAYS OF TREATING GOD'S WORD.

I. THE SOWER AND THE SEED (v. 3).—Have you read the parallel accounts? Do you suppose Christ could have seen any sower at that season? Describe the fields in which the sowing was done. Why did he go forth? Who is the great Sower of good seed? Who else should be sowers? (Ezek. 18: 6; Ps. 128: 5.) What is the good seed? (Luke 8: 11.) In what respects is it like seed?

II. THE GOOD SEED BY THE WAYSIDE (v. 4).—What is meant by the wayside? How could seed get there? Who are represented as receiving the seed by the wayside? (v. 19.) Who by the birds of the air devouring the good seed? How does Satan take away the good seed from men's hearts? Give some examples of wayside hearers. (Ex. 5: 2; Acts 21: 25; 26: 28.)

III. GOOD SEED ON STONY GROUND (vs. 5, 6).—What is meant by stony ground? Why would the seed here spring up unusually quick? Why would it wither as quickly? Who are represented by such soil? (Vs. 20, 21.) Why do they fall back so soon? How can we tell whether we are real Christians or not? (Rom. 2: 7; Col. 1: 23; Rev. 2: 10, 23.) Give some examples of stony ground hearers. (1 Sam. 19: 23; and 28; Hos. 13: 1-3; Gal. 5: 7.)

IV. GOOD SEED AMONG THORNS (v. 7).—How could good seed fall among thorns? In what ways do thorns choke the good seed? What is represented by the thorns? (Verse 22; Mark 4: 10.) How do these things interfere with our religious growth? Are they wrong in themselves? What should we do with them? (Matt. 6: 33.) Give some examples of thorny ground hearers. (2 Pet. 2: 15; Matt. 27: 3, 4; Acts 5: 1, 2.)

V. THE GOOD SEED IN GOOD SOIL (vs. 8, 9).—What is meant by good ground? (Luke 8: 15.) What was the usual yield of grain in Palestine? What makes the difference in the fruitfulness of Christians? What fruit does Christ want us to bear? How can we bear much fruit? (John, 15: 5.) Are we sure of a good fruit if we sow good seed? (Ps. 128: 5.)