

* The Sunday School *

BIBLE LESSON

Abridged from Peloubets' Notes.

Second Quarter.

PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

Lesson VIII. May 20. Matt. 13:1-8 and 18-23.

Read Matt. 12:22-13:23; Luke 8:1-3.
Commit Verses 22, 23.

GOLDEN TEXT.

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

EXPLANATORY.

A BUSY DAY IN THE LIFE OF JESUS — Vs. 1, 2. Jesus had been making a tour of Galilee, accompanied by the twelve and by certain women who had been healed by him and now aided him in his work (Luke 8:1-3). He returned to Capernaum. There he entered upon the day on which this parable was spoken, one of the most busy and eventful recorded in the life of Jesus. Note his works as recorded in Matt. 12:22-13:53; Mark 3:19-4:41.

1. THE SAME DAY in which the first three events noted above occurred. WENT JESUS . . . AND SAT BY THE SEA SIDE. He seems to have loved the country and the sea.

2. GREAT MULTITUDES WERE GATHERED TOGETHER UNTO HIM. From every city (Luke), including every variety of character represented in the parables spoken. Most of them had heard him and seen his miracles, or heard of him. Great expectations were aroused concerning the Messiah and his kingdom that was at hand, and these needed both encouragement and correction. So THAT HE WENT INTO A SHIP. A fishing boat. Here he sat as in a pulpit, while the multitudes stood upon the circular shores of the bay, which rise up as they recede from the water, thus forming a great amphitheater crowded with people, of which Jesus in the fishing boat was the center.

SPEAKING IN PARABLES.—V. 3. AND HE SPOKE MANY THINGS (taught many truths) IN PARABLES.

The group of eight parables spoken at this time (seven in Matthew and one other in Mark) were concerning the kingdom of heaven in various aspects, and should be read and studied as a group, in order to obtain a view of the drift and burden of Jesus' teaching at this time.

SUBJECT: THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

I. THE SOWER.—V. 3. A SOWER WENT FORTH TO SOW. "Whoever soweth the word of God in the hearts of the people is represented by the sower in the parable." But most especially Jesus Christ, who brought the Word of God from heaven, and by his teaching, his life, and his gospels sowed the good seed in the hearts of men.

II. THE SOWING.—"Went forth to sow." (1) The farmers of Palestine, then as now, lived in villages as a protection against robbers, and went forth to the open fields when they would sow. So Jesus went out from heaven to sow good seed in this world. He went out to the people all over the country. So did the apostles go out all over the world scattering the good seed. We must not expect the field to come to us; we must go to the field to be sown. "Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in."

III. THE SEED (Luke 8:11) is the Word of God. It is living seed. "Good seed has tremendous vitality. It can handle a million times its own weight of matter, transmuting it from death to life. Hence it is a most expressive symbol to convey the unspeakable vitality of God's words."

IV. THE SOIL is the soul of man, including heart, conscience, mind, memory, his whole nature.

V. THE CULTURE. God gives us only the seeds of the truth, the seeds of his kingdom, the seeds of holy joy and heavenly character, the seeds of usefulness and success, together with all the help we need for their growth and culture.

VI. GOOD SEED BY THE WAYSIDE.—Vs. 4, 19. 4. SOME SEEDS FELL BY THE WAYSIDE. "The grain fields are rarely fenced, though the landmarks are definite and plain. There are little paths leading through, hither and thither, some being the highways along which the horsemen ride and asses carry their burdens. AND THE FOWLS (birds) CAME AND DEVOURD THEM, because they were in sight. "Birds in Syria, and especially about the Lake of Tiberias, are extraordinarily numerous. As Syria is the winter feeding ground of many migratory birds from Northern Europe and Asia, this marsh (of the Huleh Lake) is then filled with a greater variety and multitude of waterfowl than I have ever seen elsewhere."

19. HEARETH THE WORD . . . AND UNDERSTANDETH IT NOT. For the heart is unprepared to receive it. A thousand cares, and pleasures, and worldly interests have tramped over the heart; so that the good seed cannot sink into it.

THEN COMETH THE WICKED ONE (the devil [Luke]), AND CATCHETH (snatcheth)

AWAY THAT WHICH WAS SOWN. The great adversary uses various means for this purpose: evil thoughts, selfish interests, doubts, criticisms of the teacher's manner, thoughts of pleasure or of work suggested during prayer or amid the most solemn appeals, neglect to obey the truth heard, which leads to the loss of the truth.

VII. GOOD SEED ON ROCKY PLACES.—Vs. 5, 6, 20, 21. 5. SOME FELL UPON STONY (rocky) PLACES, WHERE THEY HAD NOT MUCH EARTH. Seed on such soil sprang up sooner than the rest, because the dry, underlying rock drew and retained the heat of the sun, and made it, for a time, like a forcing house, or hot-bed, so that FORTHWITH (straightway) THEY SPRUNG UP.

6. WHEN THE SUN WAS UP, THEY WERE SCORCHED. The sun soon dried up the hot surface soil, which could draw up no moisture from the deep earth, and the roots had no depth of soil into which to run and drink in the moisture.

20. THE SAME IS HE THAT HEARETH THE WORD, AND ANON (straightway) WITH JOY RECEIVETH IT. Their emotions are touched, but the word does not reach their moral nature; and their will end character are unchanged. HATH HE NOT ROOT IN HIMSELF. No deep principle. no real change of heart, no fire within, but only warmth from without.

21. WHEN TRIBULATION. This word "tribulation," both the English and the Latin equivalent of the Greek, is derived from the Latin *tribulum*, which was the threshing instrument or roller whereby the Roman husbandman separated the corn from the husks; and *tribulatio* in its primary significance was the act of this separation.

VIII. GOOD SEED AMONG THORNS.—Vs. 7, 22. 7. AND SOME FELL AMONG THORNS. In good soil, but preoccupied with the roots of thorns. "These thorns are not brier bushes or brambles, but an aftergrowth of a variety of thistles, which come up quickly in every wheat field of Palestine, but the natural time for them to appear is after the wheat is ripened."

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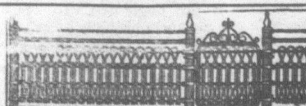
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