

fore amid your troubles. The "early rain" fell about the first November, the seed time. The "latter rain" about the end of April, when the ears were filling.

Vv. 8, 9.—Christ is at hand—to destroy Jerusalem. "Grudge"—*grumble, groan not*, seeing the Lord is at the door.

LESSONS.

1. Life is very short: it is like a vapour a small cloud, bright perhaps for a few moments, but vanishing away. Yet in this brief hour we have to prepare for the great future. Our fate in eternity depends on our use of time. God "remembers" this and like a loving father, keeps us in mind of it too, by changeful seasons, by the events of his Providence and the instructions of his word. See Psalm ciii. 15-18.

2. Seeing that life is so awfully uncertain we should make all our plans and arrangements with a view to this fact, and take God into all our councils.

3. From ver. 17 let us learn to reduce our knowledge to practice. As Scott observes,—"Omitting known duty is as criminal as committing known sin."

4. From the first six verses of chapter v. we learn that so far is wealth from being able to save those who possess it, that if improperly used it will add fearfully to their condemnation. We must take care not to secure riches by dishonesty. The Lord will do justice between man and man.

5. From ver. 7 to ver. 9 let us learn that the Lord is at hand—that Christ is standing at the door, and that we should therefore be patient under all our troubles.

6. Comparing the first six verses with the next three we see that while the coming of the Lord is full of wrath, anguish and terror to the wicked it is most consoling to those who love Him. "The judge standeth before the door," am I ready to meet Him?

DOCTRINE TO BE PROVED:

The danger of false security.—2d. Peter, iii. 10; Mark xiii. 35-37. Let the class find similar passages.

SECOND SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—*The danger of despising spiritual things.* Read Heb. xii. 14—29.

Vv. 14-17.—Let the teacher explain to the class the history of Esau as given in Gen. xxv. 19-34.

V. 14.—*To see God* is to have access to him as a priest or a Son—to enjoy him.

V. 15.—*Root of bitterness*—a poisonous plant: means here a bad man, a false teacher. Unsound doctrines "trouble" the soul just as poison does the body.

V. 16.—Esau's profanity was shown by his selling his birthright for a single mess of pottage. A "profane" person is literally one who must keep far from the tem-

ple. The person who held the "birthright" had—(1) a right to the priesthood; (2) a double portion of his father's goods; (3) authority over his brethren; (4) in the case of Isaac's sons it comprehended the highest spiritual privileges, and especially the descent of the Messiah.

V. 17.—He could once have had without tears what all his tears cannot now secure.

Vv. 18-21.—These four verses give a vivid picture of the sublime and awful scene at Sinai when the Law was delivered. See Exodus xix. and xx.

Vv. 22-24.—Exhibit the superior advantages enjoyed by us who live under the gospel dispensation. *Mount Zion* here means the Christian Church. It is a contrast to *Sinai*. The Church is also meant by "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." The earthly Jerusalem with its many splendours and privileges was but a type of the city of which believers are citizens.

"Angels" ministered to God when he gave the law on Sinai; they are now employed as ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation. "The general assembly and church of the first-born" are those who believe in Christ and are already redeemed. The "first-born" among the Israelites were the Lord's peculiar property; now all believers are partakers of these high privileges; and their names instead of being enrolled in the Jewish genealogies are "written in heaven." "God the Judge of all," is always present, in this "assembly," and Christians are invited to hear his voice as a father reconciled. Even those who have gone to heaven—"the spirits of just men made perfect"—are members of the Church of which Christ is the Head: we are called to partake in their felicity. Moses was the Mediator of the Jewish covenant and he "feared and quaked;" Jesus is the Mediator of the new covenant. The blood of sprinkling. See Exodus xxiv. 8. "Blood of Abel:" the blood of the first murder is put here for all the righteous blood shed on earth and which cried with a loud, heaven-reaching cry for vengeance: the blood of Christ calls for mercy and forgiveness, and secures salvation even to his murderers.

(Some think that this expression refers not to the blood of Abel, but the blood shed by Abel in acceptable sacrifice. Either meaning agrees with the scope of the passage.)

V. 25.—"Him that spake on earth," Moses.—"from heaven," Jesus.

V. 26.—God's voice shook the earth at the giving of the law.

V. 27.—The destruction of the Jewish economy is primarily referred to in the second clause of verse 26, and in verse 27, but we cannot err in referring them also to