

no way weakened the obligation, but rather confirmed and strengthened it by stripping it of the superstitious Pharisaic appendages.

The Sabbath is not only given for rest and worship, but to use in service for the good of others (v. 11). The Pharisees who grumbled at the hungry being fed thought it wrong also to heal the sick on the Sabbath day. They thought their way better than His; and we are no better than they were if we think our way best and do not keep the Sabbath as Jesus did.

The danger to the Sabbath in the Lord's time was from the useless multiplication of rites and ceremonies. The danger to the Sabbath in these slack, twisted times lies in the opposite direction. The Rev. Mark Guy Pearse illustrates this by a parable something after the following fashion: A pine tree grew on the summit of a hill. One day a floating snowflake, light as air, drifting innocently, lit upon the tree. "I hope I don't intrude," said the snowflake. The tree laughed, "as if you could make any difference." "Then may I bring all the rest of us?" it whispered in the softest of voices. "Well, I think you might if the others are no bigger than you are." The great fir tree forgot all about it and went to sleep. Then slowly and softly the snowflakes fell, at first a few, so gently, that nothing could be disturbed; then more and more, until at last the fir tree groaned beneath the weight, and still they came. Then, with a crash, the tree had fallen, and still the snowflakes came and buried it as in a grave.

Just so lightly come the thoughts that grow into wishes, and the wishes grow into habits, and character is formed that makes God's holy day a day of carnal pleasures and delights.



#### LESSON 11.—MARCH 13, 1898.

### The Wheat and the Tares.

(Lesson Text: Matt. 13: 24-30, 36-43. Memory Verses: 37-39.)  
(Read the whole chapter.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—"He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man."—Matt. 13: 37.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday: Matt. 13: 24-33. Tuesday: Matt. 13: 34-43. Wednesday: Matt. 13: 44-52. Thursday: Matt. 25: 31-40. Friday: Matt. 25: 41-46. Saturday: Rev. 20: 6-15. Sunday: Rev. 21: 1-8.

#### The Heart of the Lesson.

"The field is the world;" the veritable, literal earth on which we live. It is God's world; He created it; He was the original proprietor. No one ever had such love for His own as had the owner for this field (John 3: 16).

"He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man,"—Jesus Christ, the source of all that is good in our humanity. Even where men work for Christ, it is the "Son of Man" Himself that sows the seed. "Paul may plant;" but he confesses, "It is no longer I that do it but Christ that dwelleth in me." So the Sower has sown through this dispensation by a Luther, a Knox, a Wesley, and others.

"The good seed are the children of the Kingdom." There are many points of analogy between saints and seed. (1) *The seed has life.* There is in it a vital principle which possesses a potentiality, not to be measured, that can transform it into a thing of loveliness and beauty. What can excel the beauty of the wheat plant in the green and emerald rows, or when bending, golden ripe, and full waving in the autumn sun? There is in every one the soul, the spirit, which we call life; but the "good seed" has a higher life that brings forth the "fruit of the Spirit" and the "beauty of holiness." (2) *The seed has*

*power to increase.* Put duly and fitly in right conditions, the wheat cannot continue in one stay: development is the law of its life. "First the blade ... full corn in the ear." The end of this growth tends to fill the earth with itself (Psa. 72: 16). And life, eternal life, breathed into the saint by the Holy Ghost, is governed by the same law of development. (3) *The seed is gregarious and companionable.* The grain is one of a family, one of a congregation; when they wave, it waves; when they bend, it bends, and they grow together. Yet each has its own place in the ranks. It never seeks to fill another's place; it is one with them, out and out, and all the time, and yet it has its own life and its own share of the common duties of its kind. (4) *It reaches its best service by bruising and its noblest life by dying.* Before it can win the high and noble office of becoming food for man it must be ground in the mill, sifted, drilled, and tested. And its full glory can never be reached unless first it die. The field where it is sown becomes a graveyard. After that comes the autumnal crown of plenty and rejoicing; and through suffering, testing, and pain, comes value, service, worth, and power. Through the death of self comes the endowment of all the life of God.

"The tares are the children of the wicked one." "Corruptible seed." "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." Such are all the servants of sin following the course of the world.

"The enemy that sowed them is the devil." It is useless to talk about language meaning anything if this language does not teach the personality of Satan. The second sower is no more a myth, a fancy, or a creation of the imagination, than the first. He is a person, a spirit, with the powers and attributes of a spirit.

Harvests come from sowing, and there are seed principles, good and bad, that have been cast into the soil, and from them come the results that bless or curse us. The good seed was sown first. The sower was early at work, in the dawn and in the light. It was so in Eden and in the early church. The sowing of tares follows in the wake of every good beginning, every holy work. In the place where the gospel is preached the enemy sows false standards and sentiments, and the evil grows up oftentimes unsuspected amongst the good. They are found together in families—Cain and Abel in the same home. They mingle in every place of general concourse. In the visible church the good are with the bad. Ham was in the ark with Noah. Judas was "one of the twelve." Ananias and Barnabas were of the first group in the new dispensation; and at no time were they all Israel that were of Israel. The notoriously wicked, and the deeply pious, proclaim themselves by their fruits. The teaching of this parable is, however, that the line of demarcation dividing the two characters lies out of human sight. "The children of the Kingdom" are often so defective, and the "children of the wicked one" so plausible that an exact discrimination cannot be made by human discernment. In the days of persecution the spirit of this parable was grossly violated, as evidenced in the sufferings of the Lollards, Puritans, the Covenanters, and others.

When "the enemy" had done his work "he went his way." He left Adam and Eve discovering their nakedness. He left Saul in despair with his back to God, fleeing to a witch for help. He left Judas under the lash of an outraged conscience, crying (Matt. 27: 4). But "the Son of Man" is with His own always.

The harvest, the completion, the climax of this