

The Sabbath School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

THE INVITATION OF CHRIST.

APRIL II.

MATT. XI : 20-30.

JESUS had at this time made Capernaum His headquarters, hence called in ch. 9 : 1, "His own city." Compare Luke 10 : 12-22. Vs. 20, 21. *Then began he*—a continuation of reflections in the same strain as immediately preceded. *To Upbraid*—to reprove and warn. *The cities*—of Galilee. *Mighty works*—miracles, Acts 2 : 22. *They repented not*—The object of his teaching and miracles was to produce repentance, Mark 1 : 15. *Woe unto thee!*—a prophetic denunciation long since literally fulfilled. *Chorazin*—a town on the seashore about two miles from Capernaum. *Bethsaida*—house of fish; in the same neighbourhood, birthplace of Peter, Andrew, and Philip. That no mention is made in the Gospels of miracles wrought at either of these places is easily explained, John 21 : 25. *Tyre and Sidon*—cities on the Mediterranean, north of Palestine, noted for wealth, luxury and irreligion—repeatedly overthrown, but at this time rebuilt and flourishing. *Would have repented*—were less criminal because their opportunities were fewer. Christ had never preached in them. *Sackcloth and ashes*—symbols of mourning and repentance, see Jonah 3 : 5-9. Vs. 22-24. *Tolerable*—endurable. *At the day of judgment*—even their material judgments were less severe, for these cities still exist : others are wholly destroyed. But the judgment of which our Lord speaks relates to their responsible inhabitants. *Thou Capernaum!*—most highly favoured of all, by the residence and works of Jesus. *Shalt be brought down*—So literally fulfilled that even the site of it is uncertain. *Sodom*—now covered by the waters of the Dead Sea, see Gen. ch. 19. *In the day of judgment*—the judgment on the place had been fulfilled, that of its people was still in the future. Vs. 25, 26. *At that time*—continuing His discourse, Jesus answered—as though some one had asked why God should treat places so differently? *I thank thee*—denoting acquiescence in the law of Divine procedure to be mentioned. *Had these things*—the knowledge of saving truth by which proud sinners are condemned and humble believers justified. *The wise*—who plume themselves on their learning. *The prudent*—on their shrewdness, see 1 Cor. 14 : 20. *Even so Father*—expressing concurrence in the dealing of God, to be imitated by us when matters difficult of explanation arise. Vs. 27-30. *All things*—the whole administration of the Kingdom of grace, John 3 : 35, and 17 : 20, Ephes. 1 : 22. *No man knoweth, &c.*—Christ, claiming equality with the Father, invests His invitation with a special meaning. Come unto ME. *All ye that labour*—are burdened with sin and sorrow. *Take my yoke*—enter my service.

LEARN the certainty of a judgment. That punishment will be proportioned to neglected privileges. The Rest which Christ gives makes all yokes easy and burdens light. No one need hesitate to come to Him, John 6 : 37.

The Wheat and the Tares.

APRIL 18.

MATTHEW XIII : 24-30, 37-43.

SEVERAL parables in this chapter were all delivered on the same occasion, when Christ commenced his second tour through Galilee, see lesson for 4th April. So large was the multitude, Jesus entered a fishing boat by the shore from which he narrated four of these parables. He then retired into a house where, having explained the meaning of the parable of the sower to the disciples, he gave them the other three, vs. 44-50. The parable of the Tares accounts for the existence of evil in the world and declares that it is not from God; assuring us of His desire that the whole world shall be saved, for "the field is the world." Also of the continuance of the Church visible unto the end; of the everlasting reward of virtue, and the eternal punishment of sin. Vs. 24-28. *Another parable*—literally, a comparison; a favourite mode of illustration used by the prophets, e. g., by Nathan, 2 Sam. 12 : 1-4, and which our Saviour now adopted, v. 34. *The Kingdom of heaven*—the new order of things which He came to establish. *Good seed*—the children of the Kingdom, v. 38—born of the Spirit, 1 Pet. 1 : 2, 3. *In his field*—the world, v. 38. *While men slept*—The devil chooses his opportunity, when people are off their guard. *His enemy*—the enemy of Christ and of souls. *Tares*—a poisonous and troublesome weed, resembling wheat while growing. The tares in this parable are the children of the wicked one, v. 38. *Went his way*—Error and sin need no tending : once sown in men's hearts they grow easily and rapidly. *The servants*—the husbandmen—ministers and teachers. This well expresses their surprise and anxiety at finding false brethren in the Church. *An enemy*—Christ does not blame the servants. Let us be careful whom we censure. Vs. 29, 30. *But he said nay*—Do not judge too hastily. "Ye shall know them by their fruits," ch. 7 : 16. *Let both grow*—there will always be hypocrites in the Church. *I will say*—the householder—representing the Son of Man, vs. 37 : for, see John 5 : 22. *Gather the tares*—He himself will see to the separation of the false from the true, ch. 25 : 46. *Bind them*—Associates in sin shall be companions in punishment. *My barn*—granary—Take special note of Christ's interpretation, see ch. 3 : 12. Vs. 37-40. *He that soweth*—Christ is the source of all good in regenerate men, John 14 : 6. Minister's are his instruments, 1 Cor. 3 : 6-7. *The world*—all mankind. *Children of the Kingdom*—true believers. *The enemy*—the devil, who tempts and ruins men. *The reapers*—angels are represented as accompanying Christ to judgment, Matt. 16 : 27. *In the end*—when Christ shall come. Vs. 41 : 42. *That offend*—put stumbling blocks in the way of others. *Furnace of fire*—intolerable suffering. *Wailing and gnashing*—expressive of rage, impatience and despair, Acts 7 : 54. *Shall the righteous shine*—with a glory hitherto obscured. *Who hath ears*—This parable is addressed to every one, as much as to these disciples.

GOLDEN TEXT—*The harvest is the end of the world.* Matt. 13 : 39.