

his picture Mount Vesuvius and the Bay of Naples, with both of which he was so familiar. Now, at first sight, we might feel like condemning as absurd the work of an artist who painted the Christ Child as if He has been born, not in Palestine, but in Italy; not in Bethlehem, but in Naples. And yet as we think of it a little more, we shall see that the artist was not so absurd after all. He was expressing one of the greatest truths of Christianity—Christ is at home in all lands, His gospel belongs everywhere.

*The good seed*, v. 38. After St. Augustine had read an account of the early martyrs who had sealed their testimony to Christ with their very lives, he cried out, "Shall we not follow?" John Howard, the English philanthropist, who did so much to awaken a sentiment for the reform of prisons in the eighteenth century, was aroused to undertake this Christian service by the mere sight of the face of John Wesley. Let us never forget the power which our life ought to possess of inspiring others to follow Christ.

*As the sun*, v. 43. When Andrew Melville, who became the virtual successor of John Knox, was a student at St. Andrew's, John Douglas, who was rector of the University, used to take the puny orphan youth between his knees, question him on his studies, and say, "My silly, fatherless and motherless boy, it's

hard to know what God may make of thee yet." The most of us are very far removed from what Christ expects us one day to become, and sometimes we feel as if the ideal set before us is too high. But we are to remember that God is not finished with us yet. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."

*Let him hear*, v. 43. A well known English essayist tells us that the readiness to receive, lies at the root of the Christian life. That fact is well illustrated by the manner in which Christ always chooses His disciples. He does not choose them by any mere whim or chance. In the days of His flesh there were multitudes of men who *might* have been His disciples. They crowded about Him at Capernaum. They crowded about Him when He preached the Sermon on the Mount, and when He taught those parables of His. Any of these *might* have been His disciples. As a matter of fact, only a handful of them so became. Men and women like Nathanael and Philip and Peter, like Mary and Martha, were chosen as His disciples, because they alone were willing to welcome His words and to receive Him as Lord and Master. And it is just as true to-day, that it is to those who receive Him that He gives "power to become sons of God."

### THE LESSON GRADED

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the school.

#### For Teachers of Bible Classes

Get the proper view point of this parable. Jesus had been speaking parables which dealt with the growth of the kingdom, showing why it was variable, secret, aggressive and all pervading. This parable sets forth the contemporaneous growth of evil, explains whence it comes and why it must be endured. The parable shows the mingling of good and evil on earth, and their future outcome. For purposes of teaching, take the parable and the interpretation together. Bring out the four main thoughts:

1. *The kingdom is planted by Jesus in God's*

*world.* Discuss the point, that only good has been planted by God. The earth, and His spiritual kingdom in the hearts of the disciple are "all very good", and the disciple is the seed of the world. Teach man's co-operation with God.

2. *The origin and nature of evil.* Get the class to discuss: (a) The origin of evil is in an enemy, the devil, who appears in wicked men as their master. Bring out the malice and zeal of the enemy as especially emphasized in the parable. (b) The nature of evil. Explain the nature of the tares,—the darnel, a noxious weed closely resembling wheat in its earlier stages of growth. This is the seductive power of evil: it looks so much like the good.

The Reproduction of the Good

Who are to be Disciples?

Not Finished With Us Yet