

wheat will sometimes come up darnel. The explanation is, that a wet season drowns the wheat, but is favorable to the weed, the seed of which is in the ground already. Sowing

diverse seed in a neighbor's field is very uncommon in the East, and its rarity made its malignity appear all the more execrable. It is not altogether unknown in Canada.

APPLICATION

While men slept, v. 25. Is it not mostly when we are off our guard that evil finds lodgment within us?

“And yet it never was in my soul
To play so ill a part,
But evil is wrought by want of thought
As well as want of heart.”

are true words. The devil is master of meanness, and so he poisons sleeping souls. Especially does he gloat in contaminating the young soul, which is only half awake to the evil that is in the world. His slyness needs double wakefulness to match it

His enemy came, v. 25. There is a large painting by the artist Vedder, which is called, *The Devil Sowing Tares*. The atmosphere of the picture is dark and mysterious. The ground rises toward a slope upon which can be seen the foot of the cross of Christ, the centre of the redeeming influence for the world. But in the foreground of the picture, the spectator sees Satan with a pot of gold under one arm, from which he sows with the other hand coin after coin, flinging them, as a farmer flings the seed, up toward the very foot of the cross. In our day one of the devil's favorite methods for interfering with the work of Christ is by spreading amongst men, men who stand close to the very cross, the ambition for money. How greatly we all need to have within our hearts such a loyalty to Christ as shall keep the first place for Him, leaving no room for the appeal of unworthy ambition!

Go and gather them up? v. 28. The servants were eager to set wrong right; and their motive was a good one. If the tares were rooted out there would be more room for the wheat to grow. They forgot one most important point—what if, in rooting up the tares, the wheat should be rooted up also? The lesson is plain—our clumsy hands are not fit to

separate the evil from the good without damage; that is something which God alone can do. It is God's way that the good and the bad should live together in the world. As one rather smartly says, “If the good people were removed out of a great city, it would leave hell; if the bad were removed, the result would be heaven.” We must be patient and charitable.

“There is so much good in the worst of us,
And so much bad in the best of us,
That it hardly behoves any of us
To talk about the rest of us.”

His disciples came unto him, v. 36. In reading the life of Napoleon one cannot but be impressed by the difference which his personal presence made in the outcome of a battle. More than once we see his best marshals quite outwitted by the enemy, and then we read, “But the Emperor now arrived”,—and victory was grasped from defeat. Wellington was once telling of how, at one point in the Peninsular War, he expected Napoleon to be present in person, “Him by himself I should have regarded at least as an accession of forty thousand men.” In the Christian life it is the presence of our Leader, Christ, which makes all the difference between defeat and victory, perplexity and peace. And His followers can always count upon that Presence with them, so long as they truly deserve it. The apostles had learned that lesson well. “To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.”

The field is the world, v. 38. Our Christian religion is not the peculiar property of any nation. It has an appeal for men everywhere. There is a painting by an artist of Naples representing Mary and the Christ Child. The Italian artist had never been in Palestine, and so he painted for a background to

Modern
“Tares”

The Presence
of Our Leader

Gather
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