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The Teacher's Monthly.

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No. 3

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TEACHER TRAINING.

(Continued from last issue.)

Principles of Teaching. (Chapter V.)

Definition of Principles. Principles are fundamental truths from which other truths are derived that can be applied as guides to human conduct.

Principle I. In Teaching we must always begin with the known and proceed to what is unknown; that is, instruction must always be based upon some idea already in the mind of the pupil.—This principle is of vital importance, and is of universal application in education, both sacred and secular. It is an established fact that when the mind receives an impression it refers it to a previous received impression that happens to resemble it. Thus every new impression is interpreted by means of old ones, and nothing can be really known or recognized until reference and comparison have been made to something previously known. Besides, the mind has a liking for what it knows, and this liking extends itself to all that can be connected with the object. This principle was employed by the Apostles in addressing the Jews. See Acts 2: 14-36; Acts 13: 17-41; Acts 14: 15-17; Rom. 1: 18-32.

Principle II. The Teacher should understand the order in which the faculties of children are unfolded, because the wisest teaching will be directed to those powers that are conspicuously active at the time. The teacher must adapt his teaching to the age and capacity of the pupil.—This principle may be illustrated from the teaching of Our Lord. "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." John 16: 12. See also Matt. 4: 33. The mind of the child consists at first of few active faculties. In young children the memory and the imagination are the controlling powers. Comparing, judging, and reasoning, come at a later period.

Principle III. In communicating knowledge, whether religious or secular, we should start from the concrete and end with the abstract.—This was the method of the Great Teacher. The mind of the child can only grasp the abstract through the concrete.

Principle IV. The acquisition of Religious Knowledge by the child should accord in mode and arrangement with the way in which mankind has acquired religious ideas.—God has dealt with the world as a judicious teacher deals with his pupils. A careful study of the way in which truth was revealed during Old Testament time will greatly aid the teacher in helping his pupils to acquire the same truths.

Principle V. Our Teaching should be such as to foster the principles of self-development, self-instruction, and self-activity, to the fullest extent. The pupil must co-operate with the teacher.—The following corollaries naturally follow from this principle:—

(1) Tell the pupil as little as possible and lead him to discover as much as possible. The connection between *doing* and *knowing* is deep and far-reaching. We learn to *do* by knowing and to *know* by doing.

(2) Never do for the pupil what you can lead him to do for himself.

(3) The less the teacher talks to the pupil,

and the more the pupil talks to the teacher the better will be the teaching.

Principle VI. Instruction should always excite the interest of the pupils, and therefore be pleasurable to them.—If the pupil is not interested there is something wrong, either in the method of teaching, or in the subject not being suited to the age and capacity of the pupil. Experience has abundantly shown there is always a method to be found productive of interest—even of delight—and for this method the Sabbath School Teacher must diligently seek.

Principle VII. In teaching, definitions and general statements we should first carefully teach the meaning of all the terms used, and then the individual truths on which the definitions and statements are founded. That is, definitions and general statements should be taught inductively. The inductive should lead up to the definition and general statement. By induction we mean the process of drawing a general conclusion from a sufficient number of particulars.

While this Principle is of general application in all teaching, in Sabbath School teaching it especially applies to teaching the Shorter Catechism. The usual method is to commit the question, then give the Scripture proofs. The reverse of this is the correct method. The proofs on which the question is founded should be first studied, and then the pupil should be helped to formulate the statements contained in the question from the proofs. The beauty and appropriateness of the language of the Catechism should then be pointed out, and not till then should the question be committed.

Principles of Memorizing.

Amongst the Principles of Teaching, Dr. Morrison includes the principle of Association. This is a principle of memorizing, rather than a principle of teaching, and it is one of the most important principles, for no piece of mental or spiritual experience is isolated. Every thought and action in our life is associated with some other thought or action.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF ASSOCIATION.

(1) *Contiguity of Place*, by which the locality is associated with the events that happened there. Ex.—Patmos with John; Jacob's Well with Jesus, etc. Give other examples.

(2) *Association by Similarity*.—When two objects that resemble each other have been contemplated together, the one cannot be recalled without recalling the other. Give examples.

(3) *Association by Contrast*.—By this is meant that one impression, object, or event, tends to call up the image of its opposite or contrast. Ex.—The house on the rock suggests the house on the sand; Peter boasting suggests Peter denying.

(4) *Cause and effect*.—This is the most important principle of association. The cause should suggest the effect, and the effect should lead us to look for the cause. See Judg. 3 : 28 What is the Association here? Give other instances.

The following is a brief summary of the principles of memorizing :—

I. *A complete and accurate knowledge of the thing to be memorized.*

(1) Close association with something else that is well-known and frequently recalled. Always point out the relation between the different parts and the whole, and in this way bring association into play.

(2) Undivided attention. The art of memory is the art of attention, says Dr. Johnson; and this eminent thinker has declared that genius itself is nothing but the power of continuous attention.

(3) Close and accurate observation.

(4) Make the subject to be committed as attractive as possible. Excite pleasurable feelings at the time in connection with the object of acquisition.

(5) Point out the need, present or prospective, to the learner.

(6) Keep the thought before the mind as long as possible. Put the subject before the mind again and again, so that a deepening impression may be made.

II. *Ability to Retain*. This requires all of the foregoing in learning, and besides—

(1) Frequent repetition. Every impression seems to lose its effect after a time, and in order that the second impression may produce an effect, it must occur before the first impression has vanished.

(2) Present the same view of the subject in early repetitions, and vary the view in later

repetitions. Ex.—Matt. 6: 25-31; Acts 10: 11-16. Give other examples.

(3) Recall purposely after intervals of several weeks.

III. *Ability to Recall.*—Depends upon—

(1) Frequent practice in recalling what we have learned.

(2) Great accuracy in what we do recall.

(3) Persistency in recalling whatever we attempt to recall.

(4) Great concentration of mind and great will-power in the matter.

ENRICHED BY TEACHING.

While I was a scholar in the Sunday-school, I never questioned but that it was an institution maintained solely for the benefit of the young people. Considering all that is done to secure, hold, and instruct, the young, this view was hardly surprising.

But, since I have been teaching, I have often wondered whether, after all, we teachers are not the ones most benefitted. Many of us could testify that we have given our best thought, best work, best selves, to a Sunday-school class, only to find that in all these things we have been enriched,—enriched by teaching.

Perhaps even the tact necessary to secure scholars may not be ours by nature; but, when it is cultivated and developed for such a cause as this, we acquire power which may be of service in a larger sphere than the average Sunday-school.

To hold these scholars from Sunday to Sunday, to make Bible study attractive, to make them Bible students, to bring them to Christ, necessitates our putting into exercise many graces of mind and heart. Patience, love, knowledge, have here abundant opportunity for exercise, and one cannot exercise them without gaining thereby.

If we are wise teachers, we will not slight the power of attractiveness, whether it be of person or dress; because of this, one's general appearance will improve,—a thing not to be despised by those of us who are past the day of youthful grace and vigor.

A Sunday-school teacher's privileges are not confined to one day in seven. There should be a profitable week-day companionship between

teacher and scholars. It is to this week-day relation that the teacher is indebted for many brightening, quickening influences, resulting from contact with the optimism of youth. Our sympathies are also broadened and deepened by these everyday glimpses into the helps and hindrances that surround our scholars in their home, social, and business circles.

But even better than all this is the result of the faithful teacher's purpose to become just what her scholars think she is; not that there is any effort on her part to deceive them as to her true worth, but they have a way of placing her on heights in mental and spiritual spheres,—heights on which we ought to be, but perhaps have not yet scaled. The restraining influence of the class is upon us in matters of opinion and decision, and we are thus spared some faltering and stumbling. Their faith in us, their expectancy of the best in us and by us, leads us on "from character to character," the possession of which gives satisfaction of the highest and purest.

The study of the Word for the purpose of presenting its truths to a class, is another, doubtless the greatest, source of benefit to a teacher. We cannot spend several hours weekly in a prayerful research of the Bible without coming into closer fellowship with the Great Teacher, without whose leadings we are failures, indeed, in this great work of teaching in the Sunday-school. I doubt if many of us would be like the Bereans of old, were it not that the responsibility of teaching others were laid upon us; then our loss would be as great as is our present gain.

Not to be overlooked is the goodly company into which this Bible study for the work in the Sunday-school brings us,—a company whose knowledge and experience in ways mental and spiritual makes clear to us many things we might not otherwise comprehend or enjoy. We may never see McLaren, Miller, Hurlburt, Schaffner, and a host of other lesson-writers, but they are not strangers to us; they are giving us much valuable help in character building.

These are only some of the benefits resulting from teaching a Sunday-school class, but perhaps enough have been advanced in support of the statement that we are enriched by teaching.—*M. D. Schaeffer, in S. S. Times.*

1. At that season Jesus went on the sabbath day through the cornfields; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck ears of corn, and to eat.

2. But the Pharisees, when they saw it, said unto him, Behold thy disciples do that which it is not lawful to do upon the sabbath.

3. But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shew-bread, which it was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them that were with him, but only for the priests?

5. Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath day the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are guiltless?

6. But I say unto you, that one greater than the temple is here.

7. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

8. For the Son of man is lord of the sabbath.
9. And he departed thence, and went into their synagogue,

10. And behold a man having a withered hand. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? that they might accuse him.

11. And he said unto them, What man shall there be of you, that shall have one sheep, and if this fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? 12. How much then is a man of more value than a sheep! Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the sabbath day.

13. Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole as the other.

GOLDEN TEXT.

“The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath day.”—Matt. 12: 8.

PROVE THAT

Jesus shows us how to keep the Sabbath. Isa. 58: 13-14.

DAILY READINGS.

- M. Jesus and the Sabbath, Matt. 12: 1-13.
- T. The great Healer, Matt. 12: 14-23.
- W. The Sabbath a delight, Isa. 58: 8-14.
- T. A day of rest, Jer. 17: 19-27.
- F. Sabbath teaching, Acts 13: 42-52.
- S. Teaching and healing, Luke 13: 10-17.
- S. The Sabbath for man, Mark 2: 23-35.

CATECHISM.

- Q. 12. What special act of Providence did God exercise towards man in the estate wherein he was created?
- A. When God had created man He entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.

LESSON HYMNS.

Nos. 573, 383, 381, 574.

LESSON PLAN. { I. Works of Necessity. vs. 1-8.
II. Works of Mercy. vs. 9-13.

EXPOSITORY NOTES.

BY REV. T. F. FOTHERINGHAM.

INTRODUCTORY. The events of this lesson took place before the Sermon on the Mount, and are narrated here as further illustrating the growing opposition of the Scribes and Pharisees. The lessons taught are very important. Our Saviour's words have often been quoted in defence of opinions and practices which he would utterly condemn. The time was early harvest (May—June) A.D. 28, and the place, probably Capernaum. (Compare Mark 3 : 1.)

1.—The incident recorded in our lesson followed closely the upbraiding which we studied last Sabbath. According to Luke it occurred on the “second-first” Sabbath. This, many understand as denoting the first Sabbath after the second day of the Passover feast, the day from which seven weeks were counted to the

day of Pentecost. Others think that it means the second Sabbath of the Jewish year.

In any case it was in the spring of the year, or early summer. The road was a mere pathway between, or even across, the cultivated fields, so that by simply reaching out their hands the disciples could pluck the ears of standing grain. The word is literally, “the sown lands,” or grain fields.

In the old country, wheat and barley are called “corn” (R. V. cornfields.) The limitation of this term to Indian corn, or maize, is peculiar to this continent. This latter was not known in Palestine, although the Egyptians seem to have been acquainted with it. Barley and wheat were the principal cereals grown in the Holy land and the finest of these came from the Plain of Gennesaret.

The disciples were doubtless on their way home from the Synagogue morning service. The rabbinical law allowed no eating on the Sabbath until this service was over. Mark tells us that they "began to make their way plucking the ears of corn" (R. V. Marg.) This has led some to suppose that they were clearing a way for themselves by tearing off the heads of grain (Meyer) while Christ simply pushed the stalks aside. Others suggest that the grain overhung the narrow pathway, and the disciples opened a passage for themselves. (Lindsay.) As they did so they plucked the grain.

But there seems to have been quite a crowd along with Christ and his disciples. The road must have been something more than a narrow foot path obliterated by luxuriant grain. There is no necessity for these strained explanations. The phrase "to mark their way" means simply, as with us, "to pursue their journey."

It was lawful to pluck standing grain to satisfy hunger (Deut. 23 : 25.) Dr. Thomson says "I have often seen my muleteers, as we passed along the wheat-fields pluck off the ears, rub them in their hands, and eat the grain, unroasted, just as the apostles are said to have done."

2.—The Pharisees now followed Christ more as spies than as learners. They were on the watch to catch him in his speech, or conduct. The disciples had violated no law of the Bible, but the precepts of the Mosaic institutions had been extended by the addition of minute regulations designed to guard against the possibility of transgression. These "traditions of the elders" often "made void the law," by over straining its terms and so destroying its spirit and frustrating its intention.

In the present case they regarded the plucking and eating of grain as equivalent to reaping and threshing. Or it may be that it appeared to be the preparation of food, which was unlawful, on the ground that manna did not fall on the Sabbath (Ex. 16: 22.) The Pharisees thought it better for the disciples to remain hungry for a few hours than to violate a rabbinical precept.

Some of these precepts may be given, as illustrations of the spirit of Sabbatism rebuked by our Lord. "In walking outside of a

walled town not even a handkerchief could be carried in the pocket, for that would be a burden. Shoes must be worn without nails, since these were not necessary, and would require some additional exertion. No flower could be plucked or fruit picked; not even those that fall to the ground could be used." Yet for all these, trivial and puerile as they seem to us, the Sabbath is to the devout Jew a day of holy joy.

3.—From the narrative in 1 Sam. 21: 6, we learn that hot bread had been placed on the table the day that David arrived, which must, therefore, have been Sabbath (Lev. 24: 8.) The example is thus doubly appropriate.

Bengel supposes that this was the synogogue lesson for that day, and so it stands in modern Hebrew lectionaries, but this arrangement of Scripture readings cannot be proved to have been followed in our Saviour's time. Christ lays the stress of his argument upon the hunger which compelled David to take the shew-bread. "All laws of positive institution, deriving their obligation solely from the fact that they are commanded, and not from their own essential moral character, must be accommodated to circumstances from their very nature, and must yield to the necessity of obeying higher laws." The higher law is that of self preservation.

4.—The tabernacle was then at Nob, an eminence not far from Jerusalem. In Luke it is said that this took place "in the days of Abiathar the high priest." But it was Abimelech, the father of Abiathar, who gave David the shew bread.

No explanation of this difficulty is entirely satisfactory, but the most reasonable seems to be that Abiathar was associated with his father, as afterwards with Zadok, and as high-priest in the reign of David, was a more famous man than he, and so the period is marked by his name.

The "shew bread" was twelve loaves of unleavened bread, one for each tribe, which stood on a table in the Holy Place. The name literally means "Bread of the Presence" because it was placed before the Lord as the emblem of all that sustained life, and a token of the covenant between God and his people (Lev. 24: 3; John 6: 32-35, 48-51.) It was renewed every Sabbath day, and the stale bread was to be eaten by the priest only, and in

the Holy Place (Ex. 25 : 30 ; Lev. 24 : 5-7, 9.)

The reply of Christ is substantially this :

"There are occasions on which it is not wrong to do work on the Sabbath day. My disciples were hungry and they are right to do whatever is necessary to satisfy their hunger. David ate the shew-bread, when no other could be procured, because he and his men were famished, and the high-priest himself gave it to him." To get this bread David told a lie, which our Lord, of course, does not commend. The point that he makes is: "The strictest Pharisee would not venture to condemn either David or the High Priest under the circumstances. If hunger justified them, I and my disciples are justified."

5.—The Sabbath was the priest's busiest day. The labor connected with preparing and offering sacrifices was very great. Yet it was clearly excusable. (1) It was commanded in the law ; (2) The higher law of temple services set aside the law of Sabbath rest ; (3) their labor was necessary to the proper Sabbath keeping of others ; and (4) while working, they were, in the spirit of the day, engaged in sacred duties.

6.—Jesus is conscious of the fact that he is God and does not hesitate to place his ministering disciples above the priests, as engaged in his service. Yet he speaks mysteriously as if he could only hint at his own greatness before such men.

7.—This passage was quoted on another occasion (See Lesson VII.) "What God longs for on the part of men is not the outward observance, the sacrifice in the letter, but the inward outpouring of love—that which the sacrifice symbolized, the giving up of self in the self-devotion of love. This must underlie every outward sacrifice and service to give it value ; and when the question arises between the form and the spirit, then the form must yield to the life, as the meaner to the more precious" (Trench.)

8.—Mark inserts here "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath." That is, man was not created for the purpose of honoring the Sabbath, but, as soon as created, the Sabbath was made to promote the best welfare of man, and therefore, to his best welfare it must ever be held subordinate (Stoue.)

God instituted the Sabbath that man might have rest to his toiling body and careworn mind. That he might have leisure to draw near to Him in worship, and refresh his spiritual nature. That he might, at least one day in seven, try to do good and get good.

The Sabbath was meant to be man's servant, not his master. It is a blessing, not a burden, to every one who "sanctifies" it. "Let each of us lay this well to heart, that our Sabbaths are a gift from our kind Father of quite unspeakable value. Used in the best way, they deserve all the eloquent eulogiums which piety has pronounced upon them.

They do make stepping stones for our feet to walk to heaven by. They open to us by the wayside, so many oratories and Bethel-like retreats where we may refresh our jaded spiritual nature, cultivate closer acquaintance with Christ, offer to God a less hurried praise, clear ourselves from the dust of time, re-examine the foundations of our confidence, scrutinize our motives, repair our faults, and revive our drooping ardor in the task of self-discipline for eternal bliss.

To make the best of such costly possibilities—fifty-two of them in the year's round—how infinitely is that to be desired for such Christians as we are, far behind in grace, and battling with conditions adverse to holiness ! To lose our Sabbaths and all that they might bring to us. Can any thing replace a loss like that? (Dale.)

Yet many quote our Saviour's words as if he intended to sanction a "Continental Sunday."

Because the Sabbath was made for man; the Son of Man, the representative of normal humanity is its God. He interprets and administers its law. He does not claim a right to set aside the fourth commandment. As the Son of God, he might have done so by right of Supreme Law giver. But as Son of man he was the authorized interpreter and administrator of it, as well as the dispenser of all the other blessings bestowed upon mankind. He frankly asserts his right as Messiah to speak with authority on the subject.

9.—Luke says that this was upon another Sabbath. Jesus was not discouraged from church-going by the remarks his fellow-workshippers made about him.

10.—Luke tells us that his right hand was

paralyzed. It was a case incurable by medical skill. The question raised was much disputed amongst the Jews. The stricter sects held that it was not lawful to heal on the Sabbath day. (Luke 13 : 14.) Mark and Luke tell us that "they watched him," and that "he knew their thoughts."

The question may not have been uttered audibly. They came to the synagogue not to worship, but to watch Him; and, while so particular about Jesus keeping the Fourth Commandment, they broke it themselves by their malice and treachery. (Lindsay.)

They did not wish to see what rabbinical school he belonged to, but to see whether he would not do something which some of them could make the basis of a charge against him. The accusation would lie before the rulers of the synagogue, or, perhaps, the Sanhedrim. It would discredit him with the people and stop his preaching at least, so they hoped.

11.—Mark and Luke tell us that Jesus first bade the man "stand forth in the midst" and then asked, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm; to save a life or to destroy it?" He put a counter question covering a self-evident principle and to which there could be but one answer. One of their own maxims was, "He who neglects to preserve life when it is in his power, is a murderer." (Lindsay.) By this novel way of putting his case, our Lord teaches the great ethical principle, that to neglect any opportunity of doing good is to incur the guilt of doing evil, and by this law he bound his own spirit. (Brown.) Some think that he had a covert reference to their murderous plots against himself.

To this question they did not venture a reply but maintained an insolent silence. Then Jesus "looked round about on them with anger (indignation) being grieved at the hardening of their hearts." If they had been honest they would not have shrunk from answering these questions. Their silence showed their determination not to listen to reason. He was justly incensed at their obstinate self will.

The word implies that his anger was mingled with compassion. They were blinded by sin and hardened by pride. They had set themselves to prove Christ guilty at all hazards, and the result was a gradual harden-

ing of the heart, so that in the midst of wonders of grace no impression could be made upon them. There is no more sorrowful sight than the gradual hardening of the heart and searing of the conscience. (Lindsay.)

The question regarding the sheep is not given in the other versions of the miracle, but a similar one is found in Luke 14 : 5 in another connection. The R. V. reads, "shall have one sheep," it would therefore be the dearer to him. The question carries its own answer.

12.—This verse implies the questions given by the other evangelists. The answer to them is "It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days." Every work of mercy, to body or soul, is a necessary work, always and everywhere, seven days in the week. The best of days should be filled with the best of deeds.

13.—The man believed "that Christ can give strength to execute the command. It is in that faith he acts; and, paradoxical as it may seem, let us say that, if in that faith he had not made the effort, he never would have got the strength; and yet if he had not got the strength, he never could have made the effort. Stretch forth thy withered heart to love—thy withered hand to serve—such is still his command. Fixing an eye of faith on him who has already fixed his eye of love on us, let us make the effort, and in the very making of the effort we shall get the strength." (Hanna.)

"Virtue goes out of Christ. The shrunken hand instantly acquires a healthful color, and swells into its right proportions. In his joy the man shuts and opens it; moves the pliant fingers; and holds the miracle aloft to the gaze of a crowd, dumb with astonishment. Give him a harp, and with that hand he would sweep its sounding strings to the praise of Jesus.

"What a pattern to men who have souls to be saved, and hearts to cure. He did what he could—using all means within his power to obtain the blessing; and, did people, with equal eagerness, repair to the church on Sabbath, as he to the synagogue, to meet Jesus Christ; and, with the same earnestness and the same faith, lay out their sins and their soul's sorrows before him, our Sabbaths would witness greater works than this—he who healed that withered hand healing withered hearts, and, whether they required to be saved or

sanctified, giving power to them that have no might." (Guthrie.)

"As the cure is wrought only by a word,

the Pharisees have no ground of accusation; there has been no infraction of the letter of even their own regulations." (Abbott).

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY.

1.—What is meant by "corn"? What were the disciples doing? Why? Was it lawful to do this? (Deut. 23: 25.) What did the Pharisees consider unlawful? (Ex. 31: 15.) Note the criticisms of the disciples for neglect of customs regarding eating—ch. 9: 4; 15: 2. How far might a Jew travel on the Sabbath? (Acts 1: 12. 2,000 cubits or $\frac{3}{4}$ mile.)

3, 4.—Read the narrative referred to (1 Sam. 2.) What did David do? Who gave him the shew-bread? (Ex. 25: 30; Lev. 24: 5-9.) Where is it called the "Lord's Table"? (Mal. 1: 7, 12.) When were the priests to eat the shew-bread? (Ex. 29: 32, 33; Lev. 8: 3) (John 7: 22, 23.)

5.—How did the priests profane the Sabbath without sin? What sacrifices were offered on the Sabbath day? (Num. 28: 9, 10.) What religious rite was always performed on the eighth day, whether it was a Sabbath or not?

6.—In what sense was Jesus greater than the temple? (Matt. 23: 17-21.) What did the prophet say of him? (Hag. 2: 7-9; Mal. 3:

1) Solomon's prayer was answered in a new manner—2 Chr. 6: 18.

7.—No offering is acceptable if the spirit of true service is wanting—Hos. 6: 6; Mic. 6: 8. On what other occasion did Christ quote this passage? (ch. 9: 13.) The obstinacy of the Jews, attributed to spiritual ignorance—Luke 19: 42; John 16: 3; 1 Cor. 2: 8, also 1 Tim. 1: 13. Are we responsible for such ignorance?

8.—Did the Pharisees ask this question for information? How did Jesus know their real motive? (Luke 6: 8.) What did he say to the man? Where does the name "Son of Man" first occur? (Dan. 7: 13.) Where last? (Rev. 14: 14.) What does the name "Son of God" imply? (John 5: 17, 18.)

10.—On what other occasion was the same question asked? (Luke 14: 1-6.) How did he reply to it?

11, 12.—This was the spirit of the law—Ex. 23: 4; Deut. 22: 4. The value of man in comparison with inferior animals—ch. 6: 26; 10: 31.

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

In our lesson to-day one of the most practical questions of the present day is dealt with. Broad principles are laid down and practical illustrations are presented. We shall include in our summary the parallel narratives in Mark and Luke.

Take for the topic of this lesson "How is the Sabbath to be sanctified?"

The Pharisees said "By a minute and painstaking observance of the law of cessation from labor." Jesus said "By filling the day with good deeds." They made an end of the means. Rest is only in order to service. The day is mainly for worship, and spiritual or benevolent work.

The first duty is towards God. The synagogue must be attended and the Law reverently listened to. So our first Sabbath duty is "the public and private exercises of God's worship." Every one should go up to the House of God who is not prevented by infirm-

ity or sickness. The flimsy excuses often made for non-attendance deceive no one. It should be a delight to attend church and Sabbath school. How should we spend the rest of the day? Our lesson helps us to answer this question.

I. Works of necessity.

Our Savior defended the action of his disciples on the ground that it was necessary to the satisfaction of hunger.

1. *The higher law of nature's demands sets aside the lower law of rest.*

This point has been referred to in the *Expository Notes*. In obeying any law we must have regard more to its spirit and object than to its letter. Any positive enactment, that is one that has no other reason than that it has been so commanded, must give way to the requirements of another which carries its reason with it. The law of the Sabbath is one of the former class. That we keep holy every seventh-day instead of every tenth, or that we

keep holy any day, rests solely upon the divine command to do so. Our reason or conscience would never have suggested such a law.

But we need no positive divine command to tell us that we ought to respond to nature's necessities as regards hunger and thirst; that we should do good to all men as we have opportunity; that truth-speaking is a virtue, and many such like. If keeping the Sabbath compels us to do violence to these higher and specifically moral laws, then we really pervert the right use of the Sabbath and in spirit dishonor it.

So in regard to shew-bread. There was no reason why anybody might not eat it, except that it had been forbidden to any but the priests. So when the claim of starving men came in conflict with this Levitical restriction, the latter rightly was set aside. The law of clean and unclean meats was another positive enactment. It was wholly abrogated when it stood in the way of the spread of the gospel.

2. God is best served by doing good.

No amount of formal service can atone for neglect of the claims of human suffering. The church which manifests its religious life by caring for the sick, the orphans, and the widows, feeding the hungry and clothing the naked, has the best claim to be the Church of Christ. The self-righteous formalist who scrupulously attends to the outward observances of religion, but gives little of his money and none of his personal service for religious or benevolent objects, is in great danger of hearing the Master say "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me." "Depart ye cursed."

3. Religious work is Sabbath employment.

Opponents of "Sabbath observance" often urge that if the law is to be strictly enforced, ministers must cease to preach, and all work necessary to the carrying on of religious or philanthropic enterprises must stop. But "the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are guiltless."

Whatever is necessary in order that the Sabbath may be properly observed by Christian people is itself an observance of the day. The spirit in which we labor gives its moral character to all our activity. Building the fires and lighting the lamps in the Church or mission hall, may be as truly a means of grace as preaching a sermon or kneeling in prayer.

The Sabbath is a day of worship and service, cessation from secular duties and recreations is only a means to this end.

4. Whatever promotes our spiritual welfare is suited to the Sabbath.

This will be a practical test easily applicable to all doubtful matters. Whatever secularizes the day, and drags us back into the business and worry of week-day life, antagonizes Sabbath rest. Whatever dissipates serious impressions and fills the mind with frivolity, unfits us for communion with God or meditation upon sacred subjects. No one may lay down an arbitrary law now any more than in the time of Christ. Every conscience must decide for itself. But let each one consider the object of the day and use his best efforts to improve the inestimable privileges it affords.

2.—Works of Mercy.

The second incident occurred on another Sabbath, but is placed here so as to group together our Lord's teachings on the Sabbath questions of his day and illustrate the growing opposition of the religious leaders to his teaching. From it we learn:

1. Those who go to church to meet Jesus will receive a blessing from him.

This afflicted man came to the synagogue, not to criticize, but to profit by, the teaching of Jesus. His prompt obedience shows that he had "faith to be healed." He doubtless received the spiritual good he came for, and, over and above, he was healed of his infirmity.

The reason why going to church does some people so little good is because they do not go there to commune with God. They go from the force of custom, conscience, or sense of respectability. They are attracted by the music, or the preacher, not by the Divine Presence which should give all its glory to the house. "Verily they have their reward" is a far reaching principle. We get what we come for. Prepare the mind and heart by prayer and fitting meditation, realize the sacred character of the service; with open mind and tender conscience receive the grace exhibited and conferred, and you cannot fail to be abundantly blessed in your own soul. "He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away," expresses God's method of bestowing his gifts.

2. We get strength to bear our trials by waiting upon God in his appointed means of grace.

A helpless right hand was a sore trial. The man was unfitted for most of the active duties of life, and must have been more or less dependent upon the benevolence of others. Much grace would be needed to keep him from murmuring, and preserve a cheerfulness of mind under his affliction. He came to the house of God that he might receive the fulfilment of the promise. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength."

Our reason why many professed christians are so careless about attendance upon public worship, or content themselves with but one service on Sabbath, is that they have no very great sense of need. They do not consciously appreciate and appropriate the supernatural grace infused into the true worshipper by the operation of the Holy Spirit. To them, the service is intellectual or aesthetic merely; informing the mind, brightening up the moral sense, or stirring pure and elevated emotions.

It is, or ought to be, all this, but there is also the communication to the Christian, through Word and Sacrament, of spiritual nourishment and life which may not be gauged by its sensible effects upon mind, or emotions, but which fortifies the soul against the trials, or sustains it amid the duties of life. Hence the supreme importance of regular attendance upon the service of the church. No wonder if those who neglect this duty grow carnal and worldly.

3. The scornful silence of the Pharisees and the grieved look of Jesus reminds us of the *hardening effect of obstinate resistance to the Gospel*. This is a thought suggested by the narratives of the other evangelists. There seems to have been a time at the beginning of his ministry when the Pharisees and Scribes were not unfriendly to Christ. They perceived something of the truth of his teaching, but were gradually repelled from him by the force of their own prejudice and pride. If we resist the gracious impressions made upon our hearts we gradually render ourselves insensible to them altogether.

Very few of our young people do not some-

times experience a real stirring of their spiritual natures, a reaching out of their desires to God. But the impression is allowed to vanish, and thoughtless indifference resumes its sway over them. We should warn them of the danger of allowing such moments to pass unimproved. They will come less and less frequently.

Try, by prayer and devout meditation; by avoidance of everything that would divert the mind and dissipate serious thoughts; by holding the heart from time close to God and holy influences; to wrest, with Jacob-like perseverance, the blessing which the soul seeks, of conscious acceptance with God. How many obstinate, embittered Pharisees might have become happy disciples of Jesus if they had only yielded to their just and better feelings.

4. *In trying to obey Christ we get strength.*

Had the man waited until he was conscious of ability to move his arm he would never have been healed. Our duty is to "come," "to repent," "to believe," "to love," "to do." The effort to obey brings with it the ability to exercise the grace or perform the duty.

ADDED POINTS.

1. Sabbath walks should be with suitable companions, and conversation becoming the day.
2. We should not lie in wait to detect the faults of others.
3. Those who judge uncharitably are often greater offenders themselves.
4. Christ does not approve of the lie that David told.
5. Christ claims to be greater than the temple, for he was the one worshipped there. It was his Father's house.
6. The Sabbath belongs to Christ. It is the Lord's Day.
7. Jesus knows our thoughts.
8. We should be kind to the dumb creatures.
9. Fill the Sabbath with good deeds and thoughts.
10. The Christian Sabbath commemorates a risen Saviour and completed redemption.

LESSON ILLUSTRATIONS.

Meanness of Sabbath breaking.

A group of young men were assembled one Sunday in a grove to hear the preacher, when one of them said: "See here John, why didn't ye bring up my rifle when ye come to

preaching?" "Well, Sam, I 'lowed 'twan't right to bring it upon Sabbath. I mought see a varmint on the road and get a shooting, and forget it was Sabbath." "Huh! There's no use being so particular as all that. I think it

is all right to do little turns of a Sabbath. Even a little shootin' won't hurt, if ye happen to see game."

The discussion was joined in on either side by those around, and it was finally decided to leave the question to the preacher. He was called, and the case stated.

"Look yer, boys," said he; "s'posin' a man comes along here with seven handsome gray horses, a-ridin' one, and the others a-follerin'. You all like a pretty beast, and you look 'em all over. You can't see that one is better than another. They are all as pretty critters as ever were seen among these mountains, tho' there will be differences in horses, boys. When you come to know 'em, no two is alike. Well, that man says, 'Here, boys, I'll jest give ye six of these beasts for your own, and he gets on the other and rides off. I s'pose, now, you'd mount your horses and ride after him, and make him give ye the other horse, or at least let ye keep it till yer craps was all in."

"No, we aint so ornery mean as all that, preacher." "Well, then, can't ye let the Lord's day alone."? A blank look at the preacher and at each other; then Sam spoke out: "You've treed us, preacher. John, I'm right glad you didn't bring that gun"—(Cut Gems.)

Religion In Business.

The late William H. Smith began his business career by folding newspapers and addressing bundles. When he died he was the head of the house of W. H. Smith & Son, the largest news agents in Great Britain, and had been member of Parliament, Financial Secretary of the Treasury, first Lord of the Admiralty, and the conservative leader of the House of Commons. He was a religious man, not only at church and in the family, but in his business. It was a rule with him that no work should be done on Sunday. Only once in their record was an exception made to this rule.

In September 1854, shortly after the battle of Alma, the despatches containing the names of the killed and wounded arrived late on Saturday night. To put a speedy end to the doubts, fears, and hopes, of hundreds of distracted families, the employees were called upon to sacrifice their Sunday rest in order

that the "extras" might be distributed in London and the provinces.

Several years later W. H. Smith & Son received a "command" to supply a member of the royal family with newspapers. Among other journals on the list was the *Observer*, published on Sunday morning. The command was obeyed, but it was explained that as Sunday work was contrary to the rules of the firm the *Observer* could not be supplied. An indignant official visited the firm, and expressed himself as being unable to understand how the regulation of a firm of "news-agents" could stand in the way of a royal command. On being told that the rule could not be changed, he threatened to withdraw the whole order. The threat did not avail and it was not executed.

To this day, though there are many popular Sunday papers published in London, those who desire them have to obtain them elsewhere than from W. H. Smith & Son's agents. (Youth's Companion.)

Sabbath-Keeping as a Fence.—

Some time ago I passed a garden full of vegetables. It was neatly kept and very fruitful. A neat picket fence surrounded it. I counted the upright palings, and found there were 520 round the full circuit of the garden. Every one was in its place and in perfect order.

Some time later I passed that way again and was pleased to think that I should see the neat garden so carefully tended; but what a change! There was a new tenant, and he was as careless and thriftless as the former had been thrifty and vigilant. The fence was broken down; not more than ten of the palings stood in their places, and the garden, once so neat and fruitful, was waste and desolate. Dogs and pigs roamed over it. It was a playground and rubbish heap in one. The soil was hard, and, in many places, matted with weeds. All because the fence was broken down.

The thought struck me that the garden, with its former fence of 520 palings, was like ten years of a man's life with their 520 Sabbath days. Sabbaths are a fence to a man's life. When they are well kept and honored, the life can be cultivated and much evil kept out. But take a man who in ten years, has spent all

but ten Sabbaths on himself, 510 of his 520 palings are down. The life is open to all evil, no good can grow in his heart. It lies waste, it is trodden underfoot by evil and passion and sin, by unholy thoughts and wicked deeds. His heart is hard. His life is barren and wasted and desolate, because the fence is broken down.

How is the Sabbath to be Sanctified ?

BY RESTING FROM ATTENDANCE UPON GETTING DOING WORK. WORSHIP. GOOD.

LESSON XI.—March 13th, 1898.

THE WHEAT AND THE TARES. MATT. 13 : 24-30, 36-43.

Commit vs. 37-39.

24. Another parable set he before them, saying, The kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a man that sowed good seed in his field:

25. But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away.

26. But when the blade sprang up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27. And the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? whence then hath it tares? 28. And he said unto them, An enemy hath done this.

And the servants say unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29. But he saith, Nay; lest haply while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat with them.

30. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the tares, and bind them into bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

31. Then he left the multitudes, and went into the

house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Explain unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

37. And he answered and said, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; 38. and the field is the world; and the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; 39. and the enemy that sowed them is the devil; and the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are angels.

40. As therefore the tares are gathered up and burned with fire; so shall it be in the end of the world.

41. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, 42. and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

43. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears, let him hear.

GOLDEN TEXT.

“He that soweth the good seed, is the Son of Man.”—Matt. 13: 37.

PROVE THAT

Jesus will Judge the world, Acts 10: 42.

DAILY READINGS.

- M. The wheat and the tares, Matt. 13: 24-33.
- T. The wheat and the tares, Matt. 13: 34-43.
- W. The separation, Matt. 13: 44-52.
- T. Come I Matt. 25: 31-40.
- F. Depart! Matt. 25: 41-46.
- S. The Book of Life, Rev. 20: 6-15.
- S. Home of the righteous Rev. 21: 1-8.

CATECHISM.

Q. 13. Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?
A. Our first parents being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.

LESSON HYMNS.

Nos. 455, 454, 324, 486.

LESSON PLAN. { I. The Parable. vs. 24-30.
II. Its Explanation. vs. 36-43.

EXPOSITORY NOTES.

INTRODUCTORY.—Our Lord did not teach by parables at the beginning of His ministry, but when he saw how little effect such discourses as the Sermon on the Mount had, He adopted a style more adapted to interest the people, and stimulate them to thought, while at the same time it concealed the truth from the careless and spiritually blind. The seven

parables in this chapter, and an eighth in Mark, describe Christ's kingdom in its various relations to the disciple and to the world. Time, autumn A.D. 23. Place, the sea shore near Capernaum.

24.—A parable has been defined as “a fictitious narrative, true to nature, yet undeceptive, veiling a moral, or spiritual truth under

a symbol, for the purpose of conveying it to minds reluctant or indifferent." In adopting the parabolic method of teaching our Lord followed the favorite method of Oriental teachers.

But there were special reasons besides :

1. The minds of the people were pre-occupied with the expectation of a very different "kingdom of heaven." It was necessary to sow germina! thoughts regarding the true mission of the Messiah on which their imagination might be exercised until the false view was gradually supplanted.

2. Had Jesus spoken plainly he would inevitably have been misunderstood and misrepresented. Few would have comprehended him, or believed in the sincerity of his aims, if he had proclaimed a kingdom, even although, he added "not of this world." The Jews would have risen in arms to their destruction and the Romans would have been forever prejudiced against the Christian religion.

3. The spiritual apprehensions of the people were dull and needed the stimulus which the parable afforded in its covert significance provoking thought.

4. It was equally helpful to the disciples who were "babes in knowledge," although willing to learn. The kingdom of heaven here means the entire system of God's redemptive dealings with men. The verb "is likened" is in the past tense ("was likened," or "made like") indicating that such was the character of the kingdom in the divine plan, which is finding its realization in Jesus and his mission.

Comparing this parable with that of the Sower, we notice that in that the seed was good, but the soils differed ; while here the soil is alike good, but there are two kinds of seed and two sowers. The seed in the former parable is the Word, but here it stands for persons ; there the planting of the seed and its reception by different classes is described, here its struggle with evil as it grows in the field of good soil.

The Sower of the good seed is Christ himself. He taught the saving truths of the Gospel which transform believers into children of God. The Field is the world, but only as the sphere of the Church's being, for in one verse of it is said that He will gather "out of his kingdom" the tares and all other hurtful

things. The parable has reference not to the world of humanity, but to the church and its mixed composition.

25.—No blame is to be attached to the husbandman and his servants for sleeping. Satan works secretly, evil deeds are done in the darkness.

"Tares" are probably the English "darnel." The grass resembles rye but the grain is poisonous. In the earlier stages of growth it cannot be distinguished from wheat. Its effect is narcotic and emetic and the utmost care is taken to winnow the noxious grains out of the wheat before it is made into flour.

Eastern farmers believe that it is a kind of degenerate wheat. Our Lord gives no sanction to this idea of a transmission of species. Some one sowed the tares. A similar notion prevails amongst our own growers in regard to "chess."

Dr. Thomson says that while such a malicious act as is described in the parable must have been known in our Saviour's time, yet he had not found a single person in Palestine to-day who had either known or heard of such dastardly conduct. The parable fitly attributes such a mode of revenge to the arch-enemy of God and man.

26.—When the ears shot out the true character of the evil seed was manifest. "As I once heard it remarked in that country, 'the ears which God has blessed bow their heads, but these accursed tares stick their's above the whole field.' For the tare there carries a light head of small dark grains which in every respect contrasts with the weighty golden ear of the good seed." (Thomson.)

27.—The servants well represent those who are officially responsible for the Church's welfare ; its ministry and office bearers.

28.—The over zealous guardians of the Church have often adopted persecution as the best means of extirpating heresy, but they only succeeded in destroying the good grain and leaving the tares to flourish.

29.—This does not forbid the exercise of Church discipline and the casting out of manifestly unworthy members ; but it does inculcate patience with those who seem to be insincere, and charitable judgment of the most imperfect Christians. Extra severity of discipline will injure more than it will purify the Church.

30.—The servants might make mistakes but the angel-reapers will make none. Meantime, unlike the case of the natural grain, the influence of good people may be the means of turning the "tares" into "wheat." What is impossible in the realm of nature is possible in the sphere of action of divine grace.

36.—The public discourse was ended and Jesus had retired to his accustomed abode when the disciples gathered around him for further instruction. They had been particularly struck with this parable and had perceived somewhat of its meaning. They wished to understand it more perfectly.

37, 38.—Men become what they are by the principles which they adopt. They are the children of God or evil according as they follow the one, or the other. There is a higher sense in which believers are children of God by adoption.

39.—Our Lord recognizes a personal devil, the chief of spiritual forces at enmity with God and all good. His power, however, is limited and will be ultimately destroyed. The word for "world" in this verse is not the same as in verse 38. It does not refer to the physical world, but to the present era, or

age. This will close with the day of judgment.

The world harvest will be a time of rejoicing to all those who are gathered into God's garner. The ministering angels who have had charge over us during our earthly life will carry us safely home at last.

40, 41.—Those that "cause stumbling" are the same persons as those that "do iniquity." The two aspects of their guilt are distinguished. Their presence in the Church was a source of evil and scandal, and their personal character was bad.

42.—To say that this language is figurative will not mitigate its fearful significance. The doom of the wicked is unutterably sad.

43.—The expression "shine forth" is striking. The light of the true life, which is within their souls shall burst forth, as the sunlight comes out from the cloud which has obscured it; and this light shall be the joy and blessedness in which they shall abide in the kingdom of their Father. (Dwight.)

God has given us faculties by which we may know his will—let us then use them to know and obey him. We do not hear, not because we are deaf, but because our attention is absorbed with something else.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY.

What other parables are found in this chapter? What do they illustrate? Why does Christ give so many upon our subject? (Isa. 58: 10-13.)

24.—What is the "kingdom of heaven"? Who is meant by the sower? What is the seed which he sows? (1 Peter 1: 23; Jas. 1: 18; John 1: 13.) Where does he sow it? Who sows it for him? Where does it flourish best?

25.—Who is the enemy? (Luke 10: 19; 1 Peter 5: 8.) What are the tares? (2 Cor. 11: 13-15; verse 19.) How does Satan sow his evil-seed in our hearts? (1 ch. 21: 1; Job 1: 9; Ezek. 3: 1; John 13: 2; Acts 5: 3; 2 Cor. 4: 4; Rev. 12: 10.) How may we destroy the weeds? What help must we have?

26-29.—Why did not the servants discover the tares sooner? (Hos. 8: 7; 10: 13; Gal. 6: 8; Gen. 3: 11.) God is not the author of evil—Jas. 1: 13; 1 John 1: 5. Why are we not allowed to persecute? Examples of God's patience with the wicked—Gen. 18: 26; Luke 13: 8; 2 Peter 3: 9; Rev 6: 10.

30.—When is the harvest? (Joel 3: 13; Rev. 14: 15-19.) Why does God spare the wicked so long? (2 Peter 3: 9.) How will God punish the wicked? (2 Thess. 1: 9.) What shall be said to the righteous? (Matt. 25: 34.)

41.—The certainty of a final separation—Matt. 13: 49; 25: 31-33, 46; Dan. 12: 2. The sin of causing others to stumble—Matt. 18: 7; 2 Peter 2: 1, 2.

42.—Similar illustrations of the doom of the wicked—ch. 3: 12; Rev. 19: 20; 20: 10. Their anguish—ch. 8: 12; verse 50.

43.—Who will shine as stars in the kingdom? (Dan. 12: 3; 1 Cor. 15: 42, 43, 58.) Do some have ears and yet not hear? The gospel is designed for all the world—Matt 24: 14; 23: 19; Luke 24: 47; Rom. 10: 18; Col. 1: 6. Who are sprung from the good seed? (1 Peter 1: 23.) From whom are the evil seed sprung? (Gen. 3: 15; John 8: 44; 1 John 3: 8; Acts 13: 10.)

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

The relation of our lesson to two others found in the same chapter, must be considered if we would ascertain the precise point of its teaching. The parable of the sower illustrates the condition of heart necessary to the profitable reception of the word; the parables of the tares, and the net, the mixed nature of society amidst which it must grow. The former of these points out that the presence of evil is due to the deliberate act of a malicious agent, and that the separation is not desirable; while the latter indicates that the presence of evil is inevitable under the circumstances and a separation impossible. We take up the lessons suggested by the narrative, as they present themselves in succession.

1. The full explanation of this parable was given in response to the enquiry of men who understood it imperfectly and were not content with the superficial meaning that satisfied the multitudes. In this the disciples admonish us *not to rest in a half-understanding of God's word.*

When you have read over a portion return and peruse it more carefully. By the help of marginal references throw the light of other Scriptures upon it. Ponder and pray over its richer sentences. Consult commentaries and lesson helps, and spare no pains to ferret out its deeper meaning and varied applications. Without the press and the fire we cannot extract the sweet juices of the sugar cane.

2. *Christ claims the whole world as "His field."* In the true spirit of his Master, John wisely took for his motto "The world is my parish." Christians are to sow the seed in every part of the field. All is to be cultivated for the Son of Man.

The servants, the Church of Christ, is responsible for the waste places as yet unreclaimed from heathenism. Weeds and forest fully occupy, as yet, the greater portion of the field. Commendable as the missionary enterprise of the Church is, it is putting forth but a fraction of the power which it has at command. The Lord is opening up the way; He is calling laborers who are responding with alacrity; but the Church withholds her gifts—the laborers cannot go because of that dreadful deficit in the Foreign Mission Funds.

3. The field may be regarded from another point of view. *Everyone has a field to cultivate.*

It lies in his own bosom and the sphere of his influence. The good seed consists of the virtues and graces of the Christian character and their manifestation, with the influence thereby exerted for good upon all whom we come in contact. The tares are the evil impulses of our unrenewed nature, the allurements of sin to which we yield and the baneful results upon others of our bad example and inconsistency.

4. The tares were sown "while men slept." *Satan labors with unresting assiduity.* Rest and sleep are necessary to men. No blame is to be attached to the servants for not watching their master's field during the night. But let us learn a lesson here of warning that our love of ease and comfort does not cause us to relax our vigilance in watching against the wiles of the devil."

If we close our churches and Sabbath-schools in summer, Satan takes good care to provide open means of recreation for the public, and follows our ministers and congregations to summer resorts tempting them to throw off the responsibility they should feel for the faithful discharge of Sabbath duties.

The weather may be cold and the roads bad in winter, but Satan gets around just the same, and is all the better pleased to observe that the Sabbath School is, like the maple trees, deciduous, and has gone into a wintry condition of suspended animation, alarmingly like death.

When we think ourselves most secure Satan is most likely to be preparing some snare for our souls. Both in our Christian work and in our individual life we have need of unceasing activity and watchfulness.

5. As soon as Satan had sowed the tares he "went his way." The good grain would receive the constant care of the husbandman but *the tares would need no cultivation.* They would feed for themselves.

There is a wonderful vitality in evil. Thorns and thistles seem native to the soil everywhere. A patriotic Scotchman who planted his national emblem before his door, has cursed California with an ineradicable weed. The Mennonite emigrants to the Northwest have brought with them a thistle far more troublesome than our most persistent native species.

Mr. Geo. U. Hay, an eminent New Brunswick botanist, informs the writer that he has found between 100 and 120 new species of plants which have been introduced into the country with the ballast discharged from vessels in St. John. Bad habits need no fostering. Wickedness only asks to be let alone.

6. For a time the tares and wheat were not distinguishable from each other, so *evil does not disclose itself at once*. Consequences are sometimes the first intimation of the true character of their cause.

Every reform has been followed after a time by abuses which at first were not perceived to be concealed amongst the beneficent rules adopted. In every breast there are mingled motives and the subtle sophistry of selfishness often leads us to mistake less worthy for altogether commendable aims.

If we are thus deceived by ourselves it is not to be wondered at if others deceive us. Conduct, not profession, should determine our estimate of character. By their fruits we know men.

7. We do not understand this parable as affording any instructions of a definite character regarding the exercise of church discipline. It rather points out the *spirit of wisdom and patience which should govern our conduct towards unworthy brethren*,

The servants were not permitted to root out the tares at once, lest they should, in doing so, injure the good grain. There is certainly danger lest we should in our unwise zeal mistake the wheat for tares, as when so upright and Christian a man as Sir Matthew Hale imprisoned John Bunyan; but the parable does not contemplate this danger.

The servants were well able to distinguish the two, as their words indicate. But the roots were so intertwined that the one could not be pulled up without seriously injuring the other. The harsh and imprudent exercise of church discipline, of a public and official character, may, instead of reclaiming the offender, which is the primary end of all discipline, create such excitement, misunderstanding, discord, and recriminations, as to greatly injure the spiritual interests it was meant to conserve.

If Jesus could bear with a Judas amongst the disciples may not we in a spirit of charity

and long suffering show patience and good will to the unworthy, seeking to influence their better feelings, and, by the help of divine grace to effect in them a transmutation impossible in the realm of nature, by turning the "tares" into "wheat." Some weeds are now cultivated. The parsnip is one of the most wholesome vegetables, but the wild variety is still a deadly poison.

The best way to eradicate the tares is to cultivate the field thoroughly. A wheat field yellow with mustard is an evidence of bad farming.

8. *There is no church perfect*. The duty of each is to stand by the one in which God's providence has placed him, and try to raise its spiritual tone. Those who leave one church for another because there are inconsistent members in it, will find human nature all around them wherever they go. The spirit which prompts to such a course is not that of the Son of man.

9. *There will be a final separation of the wheat and the tares*.

For the Lord our God shall come,
And shall take his harvest home;
From his field shall in that day
All offences purge away;
Give his angels charge at last
In the fire the tares to cast:
But the fruitful ears to store
In his garner evermore.

10. *We are responsible for the way in which we receive such solemn warnings*.

God gave us ears, it is our own fault if we will not hearken. He has placed us in Christian homes; received us by baptism into his gracious covenant favor; supplied the teaching of the Sabbath school and the church; invited us to avail ourselves of the sacraments and means of grace; has watched over us and blessed us; if then we bring forth evil fruit the blame must rest upon our own wilful perversity. Our gracious God willeth not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Tho' in the outward church below,
The wheat and tares together grow,
Jesus ere long will weed the crop,
And pluck the tares in anger up.

Will it relieve their horrors there,
To recollect their stations here?
How much they heard, how much they knew,
How long amongst the wheat they grew.

Oh ! this will aggravate their case !
 They perished under means of Grace
 To them the word of life and faith
 Became an instrument of death.

We seem alike when thus we meet ;
 Strangers might think we all are wheat ;
 But to the Lord's all searching eyes
 Each heart appears without disguise.

The tares are spared for various ends,
 Some for the sake of praying friends ;
 Others, the Lord, against their will,
 Employs his counsels to fulfil.

But tho' they grow so tall and strong ;
 His plan will not require them long ;
 In harvest, when he saves his own,
 The tares shall into hell be thrown.

John Newton.

ADDED POINTS.

1. God sows no seed that is not good. He cannot be the author of sin.
2. Only living seed can grow. Have life in yourself.
3. Each kind of seed bears its own kind of fruit.
4. We are planted where God means us to grow.
5. Malice and revenge are wicked and hateful.

6. Satan is sowing tares as soon as the sermon is over.

7. We have evil seed in our hearts.

8. We should try and keep the unconverted under good influences.

9. Contrast God's patience with man's rash zeal.

10. The presence of evil men is a stimulus to courage, patience, zeal, and good works.

11. We have no right to anticipate God's infallible judgment of any man.

12. Jesus would never have spoken of hell if no such thing existed.

" To love my sins, a saint to appear,
 To grow with wheat, yet be a tare,
 May serve me while I live below,
 Where tares and wheat together grow :
 But soon the reaping time will come,
 And angels shout the harvest home."

THE BLACKBOARD.

OUR FIELD

TWO Sowers,
 Kind of Grain,
 Destinies at Last.

LESSON ILLUSTRATIONS.

1. *Tares among wheat.*—Turn westward here along the base of the mountain and in half an hour we shall enter the great chasm of Wady el Hawar. Let me call your attention to the "tares" growing amongst the barley. Both are just in the proper stage of development to illustrate the parable of Christ. In those parts where the grain has headed out, the tares have done the same, and there a child could not mistake them for wheat or barley, but where both are less developed, the closest scrutiny will often fail to detect them.

Even the farmers, who in this country generally weed their fields, do not pretend to distinguish the one from the other until both are well grown. They would not only mistake good grain for tares, but very commonly the roots of the two are so intertwined that it is impossible to separate them without plucking up both. Both, therefore, must be left to "grow together until the harvest." *Thomson* "Cent. Pal. and Phœnicia."

2. *Sowing tares maliciously.*—The favorable opinion of Arab human nature expressed by

Dr. Thomson is not shared by some others. Archbishop Trench for example gives the following extract from the narrative of a traveller in Palestine. "See that lurking villain watching for the time when his neighbor shall plough his field. He carefully marks the period when the work has been finished, and goes the night following, and casts in what natives call *pandinelli*, i. e. "pig paddy." This being of rapid growth, springs up before the good seed, and scatters itself before the other can be reaped, so that the poor owner of the field will be for years before he can get rid of the troublesome weed.

But there is another noxious plant which these wretches cast into the ground of those they hate, called *perum-pandi*, which is more destructive to vegetation than any other plant. Has a man purchased a field out of the hands of another, the offended person says. 'I will plant the *perum-pandi* in his grounds.' " And Dr. Trench adds: "a friend, who has occupied a judicial station in India, confirms this account."

We are not without this form of malice nearer home. Thus, in Ireland I have known an outgoing tenant, in spite of his eviction, to sow wild oats in the fields which he was leaving. These, like the tares of the parable, ripening and seeding themselves before the crops in which they were mingled, it became next to impossible to extirpate."

In his note upon this passage in his Greek Testament, Dean Alford says: "The practice is not unknown even in England at the present. Since the publication of the first edition of this commentary, a field belonging to the editor, at Gaddesby, in Leicestershire, was maliciously sown with charlock over the wheat. An action at law was brought by the tenant, and heavy damages obtained against the offender." Charlock is known to Canadian farmers as "wild mustard." The plant is not a native but an adventitious importation from Europe.

3. *The Chestnut Oaks.*—A Western farmer pointed out to a friend from the East a grove of trees and asked him what they were. "Chestnuts," was the confident reply. "Come and see," the farmer said. The ground was strewn with acorns. Greatly surprised the traveller looked up. The leaves surely were chestnut leaves, but the boughs hung full of acorns. It was the chestnut oak of the West. Not the leaf, but the fruit, decided the species. We often detect the chestnut oaks. The Manitoba maple is another illustration. A stranger would readily mistake it for an ash, judging by the leaf and general appearance, but the winged seeds declare its true relationship.

4. *The Reasonableness of Sin's Punishment.*—A rebel who hath stabbed an earthly prince but once, and deeply repents of his crime, is mercifully dealt with if he be imprisoned for life, were he to live a thousand years. An impenitent sinner hath risen against the Majesty of heaven a million of times, and "crucified the Prince of Life afresh," for, it may be ten, twenty, forty years. What is more, he goes on still in his rebellion, and his task of repenting to-morrow is only a contrivance to sin with more cheerfulness to-day. Now, if he die in this state, shall God be unjust in condemning him for life to his own choice, and punishing with infinite woes sins committed against an infinite Majesty—sins from which he should have been deterred by

considerations of infinite force; in short, sins in which he would have lived forever had not death interposed?—*John Fletcher.*

5. The following quaint poem by Bishop Kerr, will be found interesting:

Lord, 'tis not in thy church alone,
That tares among good corn are sown;
Satan our hearts does discompose,
His tares there sows.

Soon as the amiable Dove
Sheds in our hearts celestial love;
And our cleared heaven-erected eyes
This world despise.

Soon as our powers begin to feel
The suavities of heavenly zeal,
And stand propending to obey
Love's gentle sway.

Satan his force and wiles collects,
Loose thoughts into our souls injects;
Which our imaginations lure
To loves impure.

Thy word, Lord, in this life declares
That corn will mingled be with tares,
Thou separation dost delay
Till judgment day.

My God, let neither tares nor weeds
Choke in my soul Thy heavenly seeds,
Keep, Lord, what Thou Thyself dost sow
From the cursed foe.

From the cursed foe, for in my heart
'Tis he would fain usurp a part,
But I to Thee my heart resign,
Keep what is thine.

My love shall Satan's spite oppose,
And if in me his tares he sows
May he at judgment bear the blame
I them disclaim.

Tares in the hearts of saints remain,
Foins to the true and beauteous grain,
For love thy trials are designed
In souls refined.

Our birth propension sensual sows
To wilful sin, which cherished grows;
We all our life must God invoke
That growth to choke.

LESSON XII.—March 20th, 1898.

JOHN THE BAPTIST BEHEADED. MATT. 14: 1-12.

Comm: vs. 6-10.

1. At that season Herod the tetrarch heard the report concerning Jesus, 2. and said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore do these powers work in him.
 3. For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. 4. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her.
 5. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.
 6. But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced in the midst, and pleased Herod.
 7. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her

whatsoever she should ask.
 8. And she, being put forward by her mother, saith, Give me here in a charger the head of John the Baptist.
 9. And the king was grieved; but for the sake of his oaths, and of them which sat at meat with him, he commanded it to be given;
 10. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison.
 11. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother. 12. And his disciples came, and took up the corpse, and buried him, and they went and told Jesus.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."—Prov. 4: 23.

PROVE THAT

Jesus condemns drunkenness, Luke 21: 84.

DAILY READINGS.

M. John the Baptist beheaded, Matt. 14: 1-12.
 T. Herod mocks Christ, Luke 23: 1-12.
 W. Angry with the truth, Jer. 26: 9-10.
 T. The searching word, Acts 24: 22-27.
 F. Boldness for truth, Luke 3: 7-20.
 S. Christ's testimony, Luke 7: 19-23.
 S. The martyr's reward, Rev. 20: 1-6.

CATECHISM.

Q. 14. What is sin?
 A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.

LESSON HYMNS.

Nos. 7 (Ps.), 246, 456, 530.

LESSON PLAN. { I. The Fearless Preacher. vs. 1-5.
 II. The Birthday Banquet. vs. 6-9.
 III. The Martyred Prophet. vs. 10-12.

EXPOSITORY NOTES.

This lesson and those which follow in the Gospel of Matthew are in the order of time. The events recorded in the first half of the Gospel are grouped together with reference to the connecting thought and hence could not be run together in a continuous narrative. The martyrdom of John the Baptist probably occurred about the time that the Apostles were sent out on their preaching tour (Lesson VIII.) Time, March or April A.D. 29. Place, the fortress of Machaerus, 9 miles east of the north end of the Dead Sea.

1.—The Herod here referred to was Herod Antipas, the Son of Herod the Great. He was "tetrarch" of Galilee and Peræa. To him Pilate sent our Lord; but he and his "men of war" "set him at naught" and mocked him. The title of king was given to him by courtesy only (Mark 6:14.) The word "Tetrarchy" means literally the government of "a fourth part."

Archelaus received one half of his father's Kingdom, Antipas and Philip each one fourth.

The title "tetrarch" was often given by the Romans to petty subject princes who were not deemed worthy of the royal rank. It was originally the name of a subordinate governor amongst the Macedonians. Everyone was speaking about Jesus and surmising who he was.

2.—Luke tells us that Herod "was much perplexed, because that it was said by some, that John was risen from the dead," and that he said "John I beheaded: but who is this, about whom I hear such things." He probably fell in with the view mentioned.

Some have supposed that Herod was a Sadducee and did not believe in a future life because where Christ speaks in Mark 8:15 of the "leaven of Herod," Matthew reports his words (16:6) as "the leaven of the Sadducees." He would not be the first, or the last, instance of a superstitious infidel. For other views concerning Christ, see ch. 16:14.

There is a "story that when Herod celebrated

another of his birthdays in Rome in A. D. '39, he was terrified by a Banquo-like appearance of the murdered prophet. The superstition that already suggested to Herod the resurrection of John might well act more strongly on the anniversary of the murder; and after he had connived at the death of the One who, by his miracles, showed that he possessed greater power than John." (Williams) John, when living, wrought no miracle (John 10: 41) but having returned from the spirit world it was natural to expect new manifestations of power, literally "works of power are active in him."

3.—Herod had arrested John about a year before (Matt. 4: 12; Mark 1: 14.) The prison in which he was confined was the fortress of Machærus on the borders of Arabia, about 9 miles east of the north end of the Dead Sea.

Herod was probably at this time engaged in war with his father-in-law, Aretas, whose daughter he had driven away when he took Herodias to wife.

The war proved disastrous for Herod. Josephus informs us that it was the general opinion amongst the Jews that in this way God showed his displeasure at the treatment John received from him.

Herodias was a grand-daughter of Herod the Great and married her uncle Philip, a half brother of Antipas, the Herod of this Lesson. This Philip, the father of Salome, who danced before Herod, must be distinguished from Philip the Tetrarch, his half brother and subsequently the husband of Salome. He had fallen under the displeasure of his father and was excluded from the succession. He was living in retirement at Jerusalem.

4.—His union with Herodias was unlawful for three reasons; (1) Philip her husband was still living; (2) Herod had a wife; (3) she was within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity (Lev. 18: 14; 20: 19) and of affinity (Lev. 18: 16; 20: 21.)

The emphasis is to be laid on the last reason. It was an aggravation of the crime of adultery. Josephus says, that John's bold rebuke was only a pretext, so far as Herod was concerned. He was shameless enough not to feel hurt by it. His real reason was lest John should stir up an insurrection.

The tense used in Mark 6: 18, implies that John had reproved Herod more than once. It

was the burden of his exhortations to him (Alford.) He had rebuked Herod's profligacy besides, (Luke 3: 19.) Compare Nathan and David (2 Sam. 12: 7,) and note the different spirit in which a true child of God takes a faithful rebuke.

John was a true prophet, (Ezek. 2: 5-7.) He risked his life when he rebuked Herod, but he feared God rather than man. We become responsible for sin that we do not denounce when a fitting opportunity occurs.

5.—From the parallel narratives we learn that Herodias was more bitter against John than Herod. She "set herself against him" (Mark 6: 19,) lit. "cherished inward wrath against him," watching for her opportunity of revenge. She "desired to kill him," she had a settled and persistent determination on the subject.

Besides his fear that any violence to John would arouse the indignation of the nation, Herod had a secret respect for the brave reprover of his sins.

As Queen Mary feared Knox, or Abab Elijah, so Herod felt that there were unseen spiritual powers behind John who would reckon with his slayer.

Mark tells us that he "kept him safe" from the malice of Herodias and tried to quiet his conscience by many good deeds. The R. V. reads "he was much perplexed," he would not give up his sinful course of life and his sense of duty was at war with his passions. He even "heard him gladly," as Felix heard Paul (Acts 24: 24-26.

"This guilty man, disquieted by the reproaches of memory and the demands of conscience, found it a relief to hear stern truth, or to see from afar the beauteous light of righteousness." (Chalwick.)

6.—Mark tells us that Herodias was on the watch for "a convenient day" and had her scheme ready to spring upon Herod at a moment's notice. She seized upon this birthday festival as a good opportunity to extort compliance with her wishes. John had stung her to the quick, and her woman nature felt his rebuke more keenly than the coarser soul of Herod.

Besides there was danger that hearing John gladly, and "doing many things," might end in his doing the one thing that would be ruin to her.

The celebration of birthdays was a pagan custom, abhorrent to the Jews because connected with idolatrous worship. It was common amongst the Egyptians (Gen. 40: 20,) Persians, Greeks, and Romans. The Herods celebrated their birthdays with such magnificence that they passed into a proverb. "A Herod's day." (*Herodis dies.*)

Mark tells us that a splendid company was assembled consisting of the civic and military dignitaries of Galilee, together with the most influential personages in the province who were not in the service of the Tetrarch.

Mark says that the dancer was "the daughter of Herodias herself" *i.e.* Herodias' own daughter. The emphasis expresses the scorn of the writer. She degraded her own daughter into a common dancing girl, in order to play upon the worst passions of Herod, and by them gain her purpose.

Her name was Salome. "Her dance was doubtless of a mimetic and wanton character" (Meyer,) a statement which is amply warranted by what we know of the customs of that day and the morals of the court of Herod.

To engage in such a dance with a circle of men all around "was to forget even the decency and decorum of a Jewish maid." (Lange.) Contrast the modesty of the heathen queen in Esther 1: 10-12. (But see what Dr. Merrill says in "Lesson Illustrations.")

6.—The conduct of Herod is a weak imitation of grand monarchs. He was nothing, and held his tetrarchy by grace of Cæsar (Compare Esther 5: 3-6; 7: 2.) Perhaps Salome had been "before instructed of her mother" to secure any promise in this way, in case that when sobered, Herod should refuse to perform it.

8.—"Before instructed" (R.V. "put forward.") Herodias suggested the hideous request. "The girl flew to her mother, and said 'what shall I ask'?"

It was exactly what Herodias expected, and she might have asked for robes, or jewels, or palaces, or whatever such a woman loves; but to a mind like her's revenge was sweeter than wealth or pride, and we can imagine with what fierce malice she hissed out the unhesitating answer, "The head of John the Baptizer." (Farrar.)

A "charger" is a large platter for which

other dishes are replenished or "charged." The Greek word means "a wooden trencher," such dishes having been made of wood in primitive times.

9.—Herod was sorry for several reasons:

1. He shrank from the deed, especially in the midst of jovial feasting. It was an ill-omened ending to a birthday banquet.

2. He had a superstitious, if not a conscientious fear of the consequences.

3. It was a dangerous thing to do, for all the people held John to be a prophet, and they might rise in rebellion to avenge him.

4. He did not feel his rebukes so keenly as Herodias did, and so did not cherish such vindictive designs against him.

5. He felt annoyed at being outwitted by Herodias, whom he had been holding back from slaying John.

But he felt compelled by a false sense of honor. R.V. "For the sake of his oaths." He had reiterated his promise again and again. Such an oath ought not to have been kept (Lev. 5: 4-6, 10.) He had promised "even to the half of his kingdom" but this was risking the whole. A true sense of honor would have cast the shame upon the damsel for taking a mean advantage.

When one has begun wrong, repentance is more honorable than persistence. But Herod was sensitive to the sneers of the sycophants around him.

10, 11.—It is worth noting that Mark, who wrote his gospel for the Romans gives here the name of the official who acted as executioner. It is a Latin word meaning "a watcher," one of the body guard. The narrative conveys the impression that the banquet was held at Machærus, where John was imprisoned, and that all was over in a few moments.

Had the feast been held at Tiberias, as some suppose, two days must have elapsed before the head could have been brought. Horrible as such a scene appears it was not strange in those days. Jerome says that Herodias treated the poor head with savage indignity.

12.—Tradition tells us that Herodias ordered the headless trunk to be flung over the battlements for dogs and vultures to devour. (Farrar.) John's disciples henceforth attached themselves to Jesus.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY.

1, 2.—What time is referred to? (ch. 10 : 1-5) Compare verses 12 and 13 with Mark 6 : 29-32. What other opinions were held about Jesus? (Luke 9 : 7, 8 ; ch. 16 : 14.) Did John work miracles? (John 10 : 41.) Who was Herod? Of what countries was he Tetrarch? What had he heard about Jesus?

3, 4.—Why had Herod imprisoned John? Who was Herodias? Why was it unlawful for Herod to have her as his wife? Did John reprove Herod for anything else? (Luke 3 : 19.) Of what Old Testament prophet does John here remind you? (2 Sam. 12 : 7.) Contrast the spirit in which David received the rebuke. John was a true prophet. (Ezek. 2 : 5-7.)

5.—Why did Herod fear to put John to death? (Mark 6 : 20.) Had he any other reasons? From whom did he protect him? Had he any struggles of conscience over the matter? (Mark 6 : 20. R. V.) What other evidence of the peoples' faith in John? (Matt. 21 : 26.)

6.—What other birthday celebration do we read of in the Bible? (Gen. 40 : 20.) What is the difference between the dancing of Salome and that of Miriam? (Gen. 15 : 20, 21.)

7.—A similar royal promise. (Esther 5 : 3-6; 7 : 2.) Was it wise to make such a promise?

(Ecc. 5 : 2.) Was it meant to be taken literally?

8.—Was Salome a willing accomplice of her mother? (Mark 6 : 25.) How does she show this? Who was the most guilty of the three?

9.—Why was the king sorry? Ought Herod to have broken his oath? (Lev. 5 : 4-6, 10.) Why did he keep it? Instances of similar foolish vows—Judges 11 : 31-35; 21 : 1; 1 Sam. 14 : 24-46; Dan. 6 : 14-16. Read Ecc. 5 : 2.

12.—A similar burial (Acts 8 : 2.) Why did they go and tell Jesus? What did Jesus do?

To be answered in writing.

Senior.—How did Herod explain the miracles of Jesus? (5) 2. Why had he cast John into prison? (5) 3. Why did he promise to give Salome whatever she should ask for? (5) Why did Herod keep his promise? (6) 5. What did John's disciples do? (4)

Intermediate.—1. Whom did Herod think Jesus to be? (4) For what had John reproved Herod? (5) 3. Why did not Herod slay John? (5) 4. By what foolish promise was he at last made to do it? (5) 5. Was Herod free to refuse the request in spite of his oath? (6)

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

Our lesson to-day contains the story of the martyrdom of John the Baptist and gives us a glimpse of the low-born tyrants who filled the ancient throne of Israel. "The sceptre had departed from Judah," and her true king ministered to the people on the shores of Galilee.

The fame of this Successor of the Elijah-like prophet of the wilderness reached even to the palace of the Herod. It has been suggested that the bearer of the news to Herod may have been his "foster-brother" Manæn (Acts 13 : 1) or Chuza, his steward, whose wife was healed by our Lord, and because one of the women who ministered to him. (Luke 8 : 3; 24 : 10.)

The teachings of the narrative are numerous and touch a great variety of topics. We take them in the order in which they present themselves.

I. The Fearless Preacher.

1. A life such as Herod led would scarcely

come in sight of Jesus. John forced himself upon the royal conscience by his fearless denunciation of sin, but the "meek and lowly" One, who did not "strive nor cry," nor permit "his voice to be heard in the streets" had little about him to command even a passing glance from one so far removed from his sphere of action.

Jesus himself knew how little an interview would accomplish, for when told that Herod would kill him he replied "Go ye, and tell that fox," the only word of pure contempt that ever fell from his gentle and loving lips.

When at last the "prophet" and the "king" of Galilee did meet, through Pilate's intervention, Herod and his men of war "set him at naught."

Those who are absorbed in the world will not seriously consider the claims of Christ. The pleasure-seeker, the worldling, the man of ambition, those in haste to be rich are as little wil-

ling to pause and consider what Christ offers, as ever Herod was. The indifference with which religion is regarded by so many is essentially due to the "cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches and the lusts of other things" entering in and absorbing all the interest the soul is capable of entertaining.

2. There was much discussion amongst the people as to the person of Jesus, but none seem to have been bold enough to assert his true nature as the Messiah, the Christ of God. Herod accepted the most absurd view of all because his conscience was awakened, but, with the rest he was willing to believe in Christ as a wonder-worker but not as a Saviour from sin.

Some of the most eloquent tributes to the character of Christ have come from the lips and pens of those who denied altogether his divine mission to redeem mankind. There are multitudes of nominal Christians whose attitude towards him is virtually the same. No admiration for Christ will take the place of humble acceptance of Him as Saviour, and earnest striving to forsake sin and grow to holiness of heart.

3. To imprison John the Baptist was as cruel as to cage an eagle. No wonder he grew despondent and longed for a word from Jesus to confirm his weak faith. So brief a ministry—was this all God had for him to do in the world?

Yet his death was not "premature." He justly received the eulogium pronounced upon him by the Master of greatest among men. In him the old Economy came to a fitting close. The preacher of righteousness introduced "The Lord, our righteousness." *Those who suffer for righteousness' sake are not forgotten of God.*

Doubtless John found the gloomy fortress of Machærus as hallowed a trying place with God as Rutherford did his dungeon at Aberdeen. The latter used to date his letters, "Christ's Palace, Aberdeen" and thus wrote to a friend:

"The Lord is with me; I care not what man can do. I burden no man. I want nothing. Nothing is better provided than I am. Sweet, sweet and easy is the Cross of my Lord. All men I look in the face, of whatsoever rank, nobles or poor. Acquaintances and strangers are friendly to me. My Well Beloved is kinder and more warm than ordinary, and cometh and visiteth my soul. My chains are overgilded with gold. No pen, no words, can

express to you the loveliness of my only Lord, Jesus. Thus, in haste, I make for my palace at Aberdeen."

4. John's reproof was stern. "It is not lawful"—Who forbids? John? If that had been all Herod could have smiled. But in John spake the oracle of God, and deep in the libertine's breast, conscience said "Amen." Herod was not accustomed to regard conduct from this point of view. To him, whatever suited his pleasure, his pride, or his ambition, was lawful so long as it did not entail disagreeable consequences. But *no question of expediency or personal preference should come before that of duty.* "Is it right before God"? is the first point to be settled, and when this is answered, all others are mere matters of detail.

5. Herod did not take his rebuke meekly. He not only imprisoned John but would have liked to have put him to death. But political reasons forbade. He did not know how hotly the people might resent such violence to one whom they deemed God's prophet. It would be decidedly unpleasant to rouse the fanatical zeal of the Jews and might lead to a very undesirable investigation of his methods of government.

Public censure is a wholesome deterrent from open wickedness. It rests with Christian people to keep the public conscience true to the Bible standard of righteousness. We have no right to stand aside and let unprincipled men govern the country, the province, or the municipality, when by voice and vote we can secure a higher degree of honesty and efficiency amongst our rulers. It is our sacred duty to denounce and antagonize all wrong-doing even when we feel ourselves powerless to prevent it. Even Herod feared the multitude when right was on their side.

II. The Birthday Banquet.

1. We suppose that there is no difference of opinion now about the propriety of celebrating one's birthday in a becoming manner, but we cannot wonder at the prejudice against such festivals amongst the Jews when they were accompanied with such heathenish orgies as disgraced the anniversary of a Herod's natal day. A comparison of the narratives shows us that the occasion was one of great splendor, and from what we know of the court of Herod, doubtless characterized by much excess both in eating and drinking.

Dr. Merrill cautions us against judging the conduct of Salome too severely, yet there is no precedent on record for a Jewish maiden of noble rank entertaining a company of the opposite sex by dancing before them. We cannot imagine a time, or nation, in which such conduct would not have been deemed highly improper, unless it was an index of a lower tone of morality in all concerned.

Maidenly modesty and reserve cannot be too carefully guarded. We do not advocate a Spanish *duenna* system, by any means, but when one observes the freedom which is permitted to young girls, especially in our cities, in promenading the streets in the late evening and appearing in places of public resort without an escort, we must acknowledge that a stricter code of propriety would be more conducive to the welfare of our young people of both sexes.

2. We do not suppose that Herod meant his promise to be taken literally. He would have laughed at the girl if she had asked for Perea as her *targesse*. He was simply imitating the bombastic style of greater men. He had no kingdom to give away. He was but a *parvenu*, dependent upon the good will of the Roman Emperor and the strength of his influence at the corrupt court of Rome.

He backs up his promise, too, with a royal oath, as if to bind himself past repentance to the performance of a maiden's wish. An oath was doubtless necessary to obtain credence for any promise made by Herod, but to a Christian, or any honorable man, his *oath* is not more sacred than his word.

We remember once asking an eminent lawyer, now a titled ornament of the bench, whether it would not be possible to abolish judicial oaths and attach to falsehood the penalties of perjury. His reply in effect was that whilst this might be done for the great mass of God-fearing and truth-loving men, it would fail in getting at the truth in the case of many of those with whom courts of justice have to deal, defective in moral character, yet of a superstitious cast of mind. Often he had heard a witness ask "Did you not say so and so to certain persons, yet now testify to the contrary?" and the answer was "I was'n't on my oath then."

The Christian's code says "Let your conversation be 'yea yea: nay, nay.'"

3. The extravagant promise of Herod

suggests also to us that *men are willing to give more for mere personal gratification than for worthy objects.*

We have seen a circus come to the village, and gather in the whole country side at fifty cents a head, while the collection plate at the missionary meeting just a week previous was loaded down with copper coins.

We see illustrations of the same self-pleasing disposition on every hand. Christian liberality and beneficence is a grace for which we should pray, for it is not native in the human heart, and like all other graces we must cultivate it if we wish to grow in it.

But how few really wish this. It is easier to plume oneself on his attainments than to lament his shortcomings. What astonishment would seize upon a prayer meeting if some brother would express his regret that he could not bring himself to be more liberal—not that he could not afford it, but that he didn't care to give as he ought. Yet such a confession in regard to lack of any other christian grace would be deemed beautiful humility and eminently praiseworthy.

4. At once Salome hastened to her mother and said "What shall I ask?" *Is this not the question that our children are putting to us every day, and we are answering it.*

"What is this wondrous life into which I have come? What has it for me that is worthy of striving after? How should I regard it? What should I long for? How turn my ambitions, my affections, my growing energies? And our influence in every way is a reply. Alas when parental influence is prostituted to ends of wickedness and revenge. It is not so much the cruelty of Herodias, as her horrible outrage upon motherhood's sacred responsibility that strikes us. Yet she is only a representative of many, who, while they shudder at her depravity, fail to discharge their own duty towards those whom God has placed in filial relationship to them.

5. The "King" had sworn and could not retract. Had he been asked to do something offensive to the company, or constructively treasonable to Cæsar he would have promptly declined to be bound by any oath. But such a trifling thing as the head of a fanatical preacher might not be denied in the presence of men who disliked and feared John's denunciation of hypocrisy and sin as much as Herodias did.

His "conscientious" scruples would have been laughed to scorn. They would have reminded him that the man who is accepted before God is the one who sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not (Ps. 15 : 4 ;) and that no one is released from a vow simply because the keeping of it involves greater sacrifice than was intended (Lev. 19 : 12 ; Num. 30 : 2.) When one's word has been passed, nothing short of physical impossibility should prevent its fulfilment to the very letter.

But a promise that is afterwards found to involve the committal of sin is overruled by the higher obligation of obedience to God. If the promise of a minor may be disallowed by his guardian, much more is that of a creature by his Creator. Such promises are "to be repented of, not kept." Yet the consequences of failing to keep them should be borne as the penalty of rashness in making them.

III. The Martyred Prophet.

1. Thus perished the last of the prophets. A dweller in the twilight, but herald of the dawn. Of all the foolish things that Herod did, this murder was the most insane. It was as if one should smash the looking glass because it shows the wrinkles and grey hairs. *John was silenced but God still lived.* Swift retribution overtook Herod, and the agony of remorse which embittered, according to tradition, each succeeding birthday feast, was a presage of the coming penalty awaiting him at the hands of a just and holy God.

It is folly to hide our sins from conscience by sophistical excuses ; it is childishness to get angry with those who denounce them to us. In speaking with another regarding a personal friend of each, a most worthy Christian man and a prominent worker in the church, the writer was told :—"I saw some years ago, that there was something wrong with our friend, and after some inquiry I guessed at the cause, and said to him, "Mr. — I hope you will not be offended at my freedom, for I am speaking in strictest confidence as one Christian brother to another—have you not been drinking too much privately lately ? "

He colored up and seemed very indignant at the charge, but not very long afterwards he came to me and said : " My dear friend, I owe much to your kind warning. You were right. I did not suspect it myself, but I was rapidly becoming a drunkard. You have saved me,

and with God's help I intend never to keep liquor in my house again." He kept his resolve. Both these men have been transferred from the eldership on earth, to the company of the elders in heaven. This is the way in which a Christian takes reproof. John meant to rescue even Herod, and the warning rejected became a " savor of death unto death " to him.

2. They went and told Jesus. What else could they do ? It would be useless to appeal to Cæsar for justice, or to the people for revenge. They went to the wisest and tenderest of consolers and left the matter in his hands. Let us when in trouble imitate their example.

It will do us good to tell somebody, and to whom can we better go than to One who knows all about it already. He is sure to sympathize with us and give us all the help we need. " In that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted."

ADDED POINTS.

1. Those who are unwilling to yield to revival influences, depreciate the agents, or ascribe all the results to emotional excitement.

2. Conscience is a fact not always reckoned on by evil doers.

3. It is easy to rebuke sin when there is no danger in doing so.

4. Murder in the heart is blood-guiltiness before God.

5. It is well to remember thankfully the beginning of each new year of one's life.

6. A man may be bold enough to stand a sneer.

7. We cannot effectively reprove sin in the cottage if we connive at it in the castle.

8. In reproving, tact is necessary as courage.

9. The hatefulness of revenge.

10. Distinguish between Herod's sorrow and true repentance.

11. Sins are gregarious. One sin is accompanied and followed by many others.

12. Compare Herod, Herodias, and John, with Abab, Jezebel, and Elijah.

THE BLACKBOARD.

The **D**ESPOTIC HEROD
DEPRAVED HERODIAS
DANCING SALOME
HEAD JOHN

Which is the Happiest Now ?

LESSON ILLUSTRATIONS.

1. *A King Rebuked.*—Bishop Latimer once displeased Henry VIII by a sermon he preached at court, and the king commanded him to recant next Sunday. But when he rose to preach, he prefaced his sermon thus: "Hugh Latimer, dost thou know to whom thou art this day to speak? To the high and mighty monarch, who can take away thy life if thou offend. Therefore take heed how thou speak a word that may displease." But, as if recalling himself, "Hugh, Hugh, dost thou know from whence thou comest, upon what message thou art sent, and who it is that is present with thee? Even the great and mighty God, who is able to cast both body and soul into hell forever. Therefore be sure that thou deliver thy message faithfully." He then confirmed and urged with more earnestness the offending truths he had spoken the week before. Instead of punishing him, the king expressed his thankfulness that he had a religious adviser who could deal so faithfully with him.

2. *Oriental Dancers.*—Dr. Selah Merrill, than whom no one is more competent to speak on Oriental manners, says, "The attempt to illustrate New Testament Jewish customs by the practices of Mahomedans living in Palestine now, may not always be satisfactory, or just. Women are now secluded entirely, and one could not now appear before men as a

dancer without incurring reproach. But if we take Jewish history as a background for Salome's action, no rule of propriety was violated by her dancing on this occasion. The dancing of women in public was an ancient custom of which many noted examples might be given. (Ex. 15: 20; Sam. 18: 6.) It was not done for lewdness, but to celebrate some particular event. There was no indecent exposure of the person, and there were no improper attitudes.'

4. *An oath evaded.* Such rash and pompous promises are very common with Eastern potentates. Even Arab Sheiks indulge in them. They are considered irrevocable. Analogous to this is the decree granted by Ahasuerus to Haman against the Jews. When the fulfillment of the oath turns out against the interest or inclinations of the tyrant, he soon manages to nullify it, without seeming to break his word. Such was the case according to Arab tradition, of the Sheik who repented of his solemn promise to give his daughter's hand for a certain service. The bridal party hardly left his tent when he sent forth his bandits to waylay them, and bring back his daughter, together with the groom's head. Had the damsel asked for something truly dear to Herod's heart, the record of his craftiness justifies us in thinking that he would not have hesitated to overthrow the plot. (Ezra Isaac.)



REVIEW.



GOLDEN TEXT.

“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”—Matt. 16: 16.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Jesus tempted, Matt. 4: 1-11.
 T. Beginning of the ministry of Jesus, Matt. 4: 17-25.
 W. The Beatitudes, Matt. 5: 1-12.
 T. How to pray, Matt. 6, 5-15.
 F. Our Father's care, Matt. 24-34.
 S. Warning and invitation, Matt. 11: 20-30.
 Jesus and the Sabbath, Matt. 12: 1,13.

CATECHISM.

Review Questions 1 14.

LESSON HYMNS.

Nos. 2 (Ps.), 383, 514, 521.

REVIEW CHART—FIRST QUARTER.

LESSON.	TITLE.	GOLDEN TEXT.	TEACHINGS.
I. Matt. 3: 7-17	Jesus and John.....	This is my	Jesus was divine.
II. " 4: 1-11	Jesus Tempted.....	For in that	Jesus was human.
III. " 4: 17-25	Beginning of the Ministry of Jesus.....	The People.....	Jesus enlightens men.
IV. " 5: 1-12	The Beatitudes.....	Ye are the	Jesus blesses men.
V. " 6: 5-15	How to Pray.....	Pray to thy.....	Jesus hears prayer.
VI. " 6: 24-34	Our Father's Care.....	He Careth.....	Jesus teaches faith in God.
VII. " 9: 9-17	The Call of Matthew.....	Follow me	Jesus saves sinners.
VIII. " 10: 2-15	The Twelve sent forth.....	Freely ye have	Jesus bids us tell others about Him.
IX. " 11: 20-30	Warning and Invitation....	Come unto	Jesus invites us to come to Him.
X. " 12: 1-13	Jesus and the Sabbath.	The Son of	Jesus shews us how to keep the Sabbath.
XI. " 13: 24-30 35-43	The Wheat and the Tares.	He that soweth....	Jesus will judge the world.
XII. " 14: 1-12	John the Baptist Beheaded.	Keep thy heart....	Jesus condemns drunkenness.

Persons. Who is the writer of this Gospel? What was his employment when called to follow Jesus? What other name did he bear? Who was Christ's forerunner? What surname is given him? Why? What classes of people flocked to hear him? What disciples were called when fishing? Name the Twelve Apostles? What miracle of healing is narrated in our lessons? What prophet was beheaded? At whose request? At whose instigation? At whose orders?

Places. Where was John baptizing? Where was Jesus tempted? What sea is made famous by His ministry? Where were the Beatitudes spoken? In what city did Jesus have His usual abode? What cities did He upbraid? With what heathen cities did He compare them? Where was John beheaded?

Events. Whose coming did John predict? Where was John when Jesus came to him? Why did John hesitate to baptize Him? What were seen and heard at Christ's baptism? What happened to Jesus immediately after His baptism? How long was He in the wilderness? How many temptations are narrated? Where did the call of the first disciples take place? What did Jesus promise that they should become? What mighty works did Jesus perform? What questions did the Pharisees ask at Levi's feast? To whom were the disciples sent? Where were they forbidden to go? What powers did they receive? What dissension took place while passing through the corn fields? Why was John imprisoned?

Teachings. What was the great theme of John's preaching? What did his baptism mean? How did he compare it with that of Jesus? Why did he consent to baptize Jesus? What doctrines are proved by the occurrences at Christ's baptism? Why was Jesus tempted? Who tempted Him? Describe each temptation and point out its meaning? Repeat the Beatitudes? What instructions did Christ give in regard to prayer? Why cannot we serve two masters? Why should we not be over careful about the things of this life? What should be the first object of our anxiety? Why did the Pharisees object to the company Jesus sometimes kept? What was His reply? What reason did Christ give for His disciples not fasting? Why were the disciples told to go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel? Why were they to go unprovided for their journey? Why were Chorazin, etc., more guilty than Tyre and Sidon? Give the beautiful invitation with which the ninth lesson closes? Why did the Pharisees think that plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath day was wrong? How did Jesus defend His disciples? What examples did He refer to? What did He claim for Himself? Against what are we warned in the parable of the Tares? Was John foolish to speak so plainly to Herod? Who was the most guilty in regard to John's death? Who was the most shameless? Who was the most cowardly? Who were the most loving? Who was the most sympathetic?

Primary Department.

HELPS FOR TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS, BY MR. & MRS. GEORGE H. ARCHIBALD,
MONTREAL.

LESSON X.—March 6th, 1898.

JESUS AND THE SABBATH. MATT. 12: 1-13.

I. GOLDEN TEXT: "The Son of Man is Lord, even of the Sabbath day." Matt. 12: 8.

II. PREVIEW THOUGHT FOR THE QUARTER: Jesus Christ, God's Son, is our Saviour.

III. PREVIEW THOUGHT FOR TO-DAY'S LESSON: How to keep the Sabbath.

REVIEW:

1. What was last Sunday's Golden Text?
2. To whom did the Saviour speak, when He said these words?
3. Who would not come to Him?
4. What did he promise to give them, if they came to Him?

V. SYNOPSIS: This lesson probably occurred after our Lord's visit to Jerusalem when He healed the man at the Pool of Bethesda. Returning on the way back to Galilee his disciples being an hungered, plucked the ears of corn and did eat them.

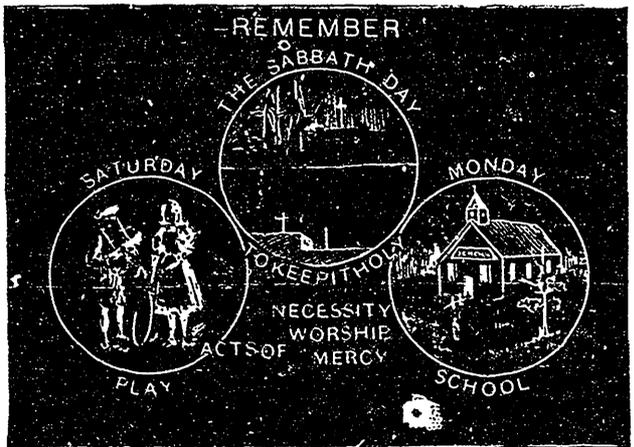
The Pharisees were always on the watch for something in which to catch the Great Teacher, seeking some way so that they could bring Him into disfavour

with the people with whom He was becoming so popular. They charged Him with breaking the Sabbath. But He answered them. Going into one of the synagogues He saw a man having a withered hand. They watched Him. He commanded the man to stand forth. Jesus wanted them all to see what He did. "Stretch forth thine hand," and he stretched it forth and it became whole as the other.

These two events gave the Saviour the opportunity he desired to teach that the Sabbath was made for the good of man, and not man for the good of the Sabbath.

VI. SUGGESTIVE STEPS IN TEACHING THE LESSON:

Note. It will be impossible to teach the children the philosophy of the teaching of the Saviour as we have it in the lesson to-day. Instead of laying down principles as here given, which are too broad and too deep for the child to grasp, let us teach as nearly as we can so as to enable him to see how to properly use the Sabbath, which God gave to man for his good and benefit. We fear our little



verse taught in our Sunday School,

"I must not work, I must not play,
Upon God's holy Sabbath day,"

gives to our children a dread of, rather than a joy in, the Lord's day. Only in one sense is it the Lord's day. It is our day given by our Father, for our benefit.

On the other hand we should endeavor, while making it the brightest and best day in all the week, to show the true use of it.

1. Which is the best day in all the week? Sabbath. Why? Because it is God's day. How is it God's day? He made it specially

for us to enjoy rest. Make this thought prominent in the beginning.

2. How should we spend it?

Here are three circles. The teacher should have these drawn with lines of chalk $\frac{1}{2}$ of an inch in width and about twelve inches in diameter. Let us name them First: Saturday. Second: The Sabbath Day. Third: Monday.

3. Now what do we do on Saturday? Yes, our play day. Write Play. What is Monday? Yes, school. Now what shall we do on the Sabbath? Only go to church and Sunday school? No, not only that. What did Jesus do? His disciples plucked ears of corn and then went to church. While in church He healed a man's withered hand.

Tell the story and teach that we should do both works of worship, necessity and mercy. Make this clear. As the teaching proceeds put a picture of a boy with some toy, and a girl with another, in the Saturday circle. Put a picture of a school in the Monday circle, and draw in the Sunday circle, ever so

roughly, the corn field and the synagogue. A few strokes or dots will do.

4. I want to tell you a story. One Saturday brother Jack, who was the oldest, played with his bat and ball all day, and sister Kittie played with her ball as well. When the Sabbath day came instead of finding other ways of being happy, and showing Jesus that he wanted to please Him, he took his bat and went out to play again the same as on Saturday. Here transfer picture of Jack to Sunday circle. When sister Kittie saw her older brother Jack doing so, she took her hoop and played with it. They both forgot to keep Sabbath holy.

5. How shall we make the Sabbath the brightest and best day in all the week. Get suggestions from the children. Church, Sunday School, Bible Books, Bible Stories, Bible Blocks, visiting the sick, etc., etc. Do as Jesus would do, as he would have us do, for the Son of Man, Jesus, is Lord, Master of the Sabbath.

LESSON XI.—March 13th, 1898.

THE WHEAT AND THE TARES. MATT. 13 : 24-30, 36-43.

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

II. PREVIEW FOR THE QUARTER: Jesus Christ, God's Son, is our Saviour.

III. PREVIEW THOUGHT FOR TO-DAY'S LESSON: How to be good seed-sowers.

IV. REVIEW :

1. Where did Jesus and His disciples go on the Sabbath Day?

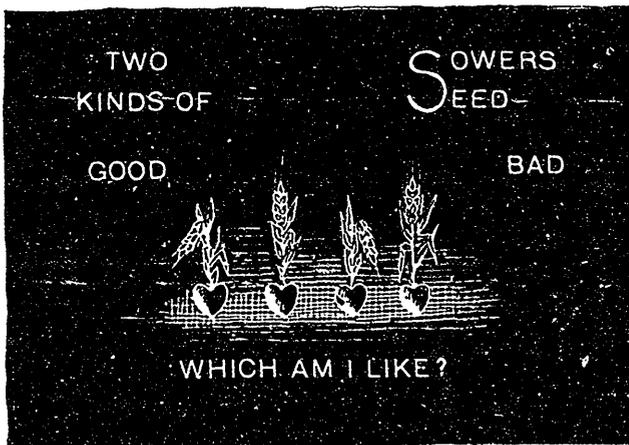
2. What did His disciples do?

3. What happened in the synagogue?

4. What kind of work is it right to do on Sabbath?

V. SYNOPSIS: Our lesson forms one of a number of parables concerning the Kingdom of Heaven. Sitting in a boat, by the seashore, Jesus teaches the people the mysteries of the

kingdom, and while the multitude are discussing by themselves the marvellous sayings, He withdraws to a house, and is interviewed by His disciples. To them, He makes known the interpretation of the parable. Verses 36-43. The lesson consists of the parable of the



wheat and the tares, and the subsequent explanation by the Saviour Himself.

VI. SUGGESTIVE STEPS IN TEACHING THE LESSON.

Note.—The lesson is one that must be clearly understood by the teacher. We must first fix in mind the significance and meaning of the terms used in the construction of the parable.

Field.—World.

Good Seed.—Children of the Kingdom.

Tares.—Children of the wicked one.

Sower of the good seed.—The Son of Man.

Sower of the bad.—The Devil.

Harvest.—The end of the age.

Reapers.—Angels.

There is much discussion as to the true interpretation of the parable, but for the purposes of Primary teachers, we need not enter into it.

A beautiful lesson can be taught from the central thought. Keep in mind the influence of the christian's life upon others. This is the teaching of the parable. We are the good seed, the children of the kingdom, and the Saviour sends us out into the world to bear fruit for Him.

1. Boys and girls I want to tell you four stories.

Story No. 1.

Once upon a time, the fable says, there was a girl who, as she went about through the town in which she lived, used to scatter flowers along the way. Each one of them would take root, and form a border to the path she trod.

All the people could tell wherever she went, for beautiful flowers, spreading fragrance in the air, were to be found all along the way.

Story No. 2.

Tell the story of the parable. Write on board "there are two kinds of sowers." Who are they? There are two kinds of seed. What kinds are they? As this is told draw on the blackboard a picture of the field. This can be done by a stroke or two, of the flat side of the green chalk.

Then using two colors of chalk, show the wheat coming up, and then afterwards the tares. By using the board, and then colored chalk, the story may be made very graphic, and the attention of the children easily held.

Story No. 3.

Tell a story of the influence of one child upon another. Something that has come under your own observation. The thought is illustrated, by the miller coming out of the mill, all covered with white flour. As he goes through the crowd, he leaves his mark upon every one he touches.

Story No. 4.

Tell of the life of Jesus, whose life was perfect, and beautiful. How He lived for others, and made their lives happier and holier.

He would have us like Himself, and send us out into the world like good seed, to make the world better.

2. Now with these illustrations before the class, use them again and again, to teach the lesson of the parable.

Make four seeds out of pieces of paper. Cut them out the shape of a heart, but have them rolled up into the shape of a ball like a seed, before the children see them. Say, "here is a boy, here is a girl. Each is a seed. Some are the children of Jesus, and some are the children of the devil. Which are we? Good seed or bad? How can we tell? Let us plant them." Pin them to the board, as suggested in the cut. Let us watch them grow. Now draw a shoot, and then a flower, or fruit, and call it *love*. Another and call it *hate*. Now we see that the fruit is like the seed. If it is good seed, wheat, the fruit will be good, but if it is bad, the fruit will be bad. Unfold the paper until it shows the heart, and show that out of the heart the actions come.

3. Close with the thought, that we must allow Jesus to make our hearts right, so that we will bear good fruit, and make the world better and not worse because we live in it.

JOHN THE BAPTIST BEHEADED.—MATT. 14: 1-12.

I. GOLDEN TEXT: "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." Prov. 4: 23.

II. PREVIEW THOUGHT FOR THE QUARTER: Jesus Christ, God's Son, is our Saviour.

III. PREVIEW THOUGHT FOR TO-DAY'S LESSON: How to be Self-controlled.

IV. REVIEW:

1. What kind of seed did the man sow?
2. What kind did the enemy sow?
3. Who are the good seed?
4. Who are the bad seed?

V. SYNOPSIS: Herod the Tetrarch had John the Baptist imprisoned because of his boldness in confronting him with the sin of living with his brother Philip's wife. The Baptist was kept in the dungeon at the palace and prison at Machaceus, East of the Dead Sea. Here it was that the feast recorded in our lesson was given. The daughter of Herodias

danced before the company and so pleased the king and those who sat with him that in an impulsive moment he promised her anything she would ask, limiting her request only to one half of the kingdom. The wicked Herodias quickly seized upon the opportunity of revenging herself upon the brave John and he was taken from his prison and beheaded. John's disciples came and took up the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

VI. NOTES ON THE LESSON TEACHING.—Few lessons are found more helpful than those where

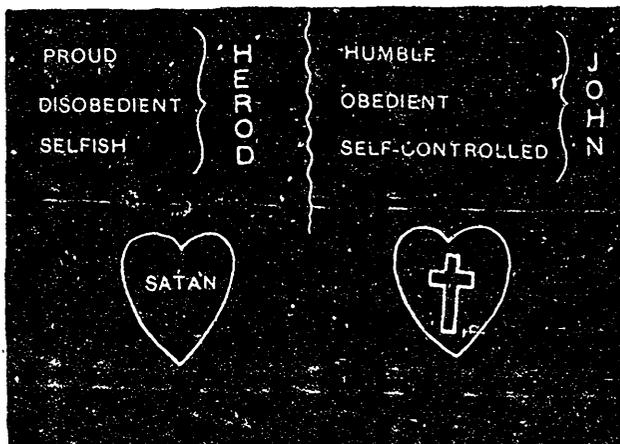
two characters can be held up before the class and conclusions drawn, and lessons deduced from their lives. Such is the lesson we have to-day. Herod and John are the two chief characters and their characteristics will make a good study, which study will be admirably suited to the Golden Text.

VII. SUGGESTIVE STEPS.

1. Who was John the Baptist? By ques-

tioning bring it out from the class. (Question it in and question it out again.)

- (a) Son of Zacharias.
 - (b) Forerunner of Christ. (Explain this)
 - (c) Was six months older than Jesus.
 - (d) Lived in the desert and was clothed in camel's hair and preached to the people and baptized many.
 - (e) Pointed to Jesus and said "Behold the Lamb of God."
 - (f) Baptized Jesus.
 - (g) Was put in prison by wicked Herod.
 - (h) Was put to death by wicked Herod.
2. What kind of a man was he?
 - (a) Humble.
 - (b) Obedient.
 - (c) Self-controlled.
 - (a) In eating and drinking.
 - (b) Boldly speaking the truth, though he was put in prison.



Dwell specially on self-control. It is not more parental control we need those days, it is self-control, on the part of the children. One ounce of self-control is worth more than a pound of parental control. Here is the teacher's chance. John was a self-controlled man. Here give one or two illustrations of self-control.

- (a) A boy who controls his temper.
- (b) Daniel who would not take the king's wine, etc., etc.

3. What kind of a man was Herod?

Bring out the opposites of the virtues as found in John. If more convenient do so as the lesson proceeds. Humble John. Proud Herod, etc., etc.

4. Now turn to the Golden Text, and press home the truth. First, of course, explain that the heart means the will, the life, and out of the heart or the will come the thoughts that guide our lives.

John the Baptist kept his heart.

Herod the king did not keep his heart.

One was self-controlled.

One was not.

Which am I like? Point out in some childish ways, suitable to your class, some ways of watching. How many will watch their hearts this week?

FOR PRIMARY REVIEW

SEE PAGE 58, IN THE TEACHER'S MONTHLY,
FOR FEBRUARY.

