

The Sabbath School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Second Quarter Lesson 9, May 27, 1900

PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM.—Matthew 13: 24-33.

Read Matthew 13: 24-33; Mark 4: 21-29.

Commit Verses 31, 33.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The field is the world.—Matt. 13: 38

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time.—Autumn, A. D. 28. Place.—On the shore of the Sea of Galilee, near Capernaum. Jesus nearly 32 years old. John the Baptist in prison at Castle Macherus.

Each one of these parables illustrates some aspect of the kingdom of heaven. Last week we studied about the formation of the kingdom, and the things that hindered men from receiving the truth. To-day we see good and bad growing together and what to do about it. We see also two methods by which the kingdom grows. We see in other parables duties, privileges, development, dangers hopes.

THE WHEAT AND THE TARES.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.—Vs. 24, 37. The kingdom of heaven is the kingdom which has its origin in heaven, and which Jesus came to establish on earth, in which the laws of heaven are obeyed on earth. It is not a separate enclosure, like the kingdoms of men; but a pervasive spirit embodied in men everywhere, just as Englishmen, in whatever country they live, still belong to the kingdom of Great Britain. The members of God's kingdom are represented by the good seed which Jesus sowed in the world.

THE SOWER OF GOOD SEED.—Vs. 24, 37. Likened unto a man which sowed good seed. The man represents the Son of man. Jesus Christ is the medium through which the sowing is done.

THE GOOD SEED.—Vs. 25, 38. The good seed are "the children of the kingdom," those who in heart belong to the kingdom, are filled with its spirit, and living to its principles.

1. God's children are seed; they are the means of increasing the disciples; through them the whole world is to be filled with the fruits of the Spirit and the children of the kingdom. A dead church does not grow.

2. Seed produces fruit after its kind. Imperfect Christians tend to multiply imperfect Christians. Every error or fault of ours is doubly evil; it injures ourselves, and it injures others.

THE FIELD SOWN.—Vs. 24, 38. The field is the world. This world is Christ's world, and the sowing of tares is a usurpation.

THE TARES AMONG THE WHEAT.—Vs. 25, 26, 38, 39. But while men slept, i. e., at night, in secret. His enemy. The wicked one, the devil. He was the original source of evil among men. He seeks to implant and cultivate his character in them, in order to make them as bad as himself and thus destroy the kingdom of God. It is a part of the great conflict between good and evil. Sowed tares among the wheat.

The interpretation. The tares are "the children of the wicked one," who are filled with his spirit, live according to his principles, and are under his control. They often resemble the good till the fruit begins to appear, but they are as different as wheat and tares, as thistles and roses. We must expect to find bad men in the church, in every reform, in every good cause. We distinguish tares from wheat by the fruit. Some of the worst things pose as virtues at the beginning, but results will tell. Brought forth fruit then appeared the tares also. When the grain is headed out; there can be no mistake then. But all through their existence there was a difference in the inner life; and the difference in the harvest is the result of this difference in nature.

Satan uses various means for sowing his tares. Often good men unintentionally help him.

THE TARES AND WHEAT GROWING TOGETHER.—Vs. 28, 29. Will thou then that we... gather them up? The tares ought not to be there. They are an evil. Let us root them out. Nay. This plan was forbidden. Let while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat. Because there was danger of mistaking the wheat for tares.

THE HARVEST TIME.—Vs. 30, 39-43. Until the harvest (v. 39), or age. It refers to the present era, or age, which ends at the day of judgment and the coming of the Son of man. Say to the reapers. The reapers are the angels (v. 39). (Matt. 16: 27; 24: 31; 2 Thes. 1: 7.) Gather ye together first the tares. These were gathered out as far as possible in stalks bearing their heads of seed. To burn them. (See vs. 41, 42) All that offend, cau-

others to sin, and that do iniquity themselves shall be cast in a furnace of fire, showing the terrible result of being tares. This is all they are fit for. No other end is possible. Evil must be destroyed. It is a just punishment. It is intended to keep wickedness from spreading, and destroying all the good; just as weeds are burned to keep them from multiplying and destroying the good grain. Gather the wheat into my barn, where it will be preserved, and accomplish the end for which it was sown. Then (v. 43), when separated from evil, the righteous shall shine forth as the sun, the symbol of gladness, of truth, of life in themselves, and of giving light, and life, and cheer to all around.

(1) Hope and cheer and times of opposition and the flourishing of evil. (2) Make the evil help the good. Overcome the evil by cherishing and strengthening the good. (3) Only at harvest time, and only by God's angels, can there be a complete separation of all evil from all good.

THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED.

Vs. 31-32. Another parable. To show another side of the kingdom of God. Like to a grain of mustard seed, which is indeed the least of all seeds. Not the least of all seeds which botanists know, but the smallest that men sow in their fields; and the smallest of these in contrast with the plant that grows from it. Greatest among herbs. And become a tree, an herb so large that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. It became the greatest of the kind that grew from such seeds.

Application. 1. The emphasis is on the smallness of the beginnings of Christianity.

2. The seed though small was alive with a persistent life.

3. The plant represents the outward organized kingdom of God, which is to day the greatest and most powerful kingdom in the world, and has not yet attained its growth.

4. It grows not only from its inner life, but absorbs its elements from the air, and earth and water. So grows the kingdom of God from within, but it absorbs into it all the forces of education, science, wealth, organization, commerce, discoveries.

5. The branches may represent the various divisions and portions of his kingdom in different countries and in different methods of work, all filled with his creature life; and in the soul, the various faculties it controls, the various directions of religious development, in thought, feeling, work.

6. The birds of the air may refer to the fact that Christianity gives shelter to the weary, the wandering, and the oppressed.

7. The individual application points to the small beginnings of divine grace; a word, a thought may prove to be the little seed which eventually fills and shadows the whole heart and being.

8. This parable is full of hope for all Christian teachers and workers who are apt to be discouraged at the smallness of the seed they plant and its often unnoticed growth.

THE PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN.

Spake he unto them. To the people on the seashore. The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven. Leaven among the Jews generally consisted of a lump of old dough. Like our yeast, its object was to ferment the bread. Which a woman took. The three measures of meal, equal to one ephah, was equivalent to a little over a bushel, more nearly four peck and a half. This was a large quantity to be transformed by a very small quantity of leaven.

Applications. 1. This parable relates, not to the outward, visible increase which the kingdom is destined to undergo, but to the inward transformation it will effect. It operates silently, but with constantly increasing pervasiveness till the whole mass of mankind, all hearts, all nations, all business, social life, and political institutions, shall be transformed.

2. It is continually working upon that which is next to it; it works from particle to particle, from individual to individual. Each true Christian leavened with Christianity, operates as leaven upon his neighbor.

3. It transforms into its own nature that with which it comes in contact. Hence it is of the utmost importance that the leaven should be pure, that the Christian character should be as perfect as possible in doctrine and in life.

4. Christianity extends its influence far beyond its actual disciples and modifies almost everything in Christian lands.

5. All this applies to Christianity in the individual soul.

A severe cold settled on my throat and lungs so that I could hardly speak. After other remedies failed I tried Dr. Wood's Norway Pine Syrup and one bottle of it completely cured me.

Mrs. THOS. CARTER, Northport, Ont.

Teaching the Children to Pray.

Every parent who faithfully discharges his duty as a teacher of prayer. The responsibility this obligation involves cannot be over-estimated. The child's future conceptions of God, duty, prayer and other spiritual things will be shaped in a large measure by what he is taught concerning prayer and by the spirit in which he is taught to pray; and his character in youth and maturity will depend upon the conception thus formed.

But before the child can be well taught the parent himself must have correct ideas. Too often with parents the highest notion of prayer is that it is asking God for blessings. This notion is the one commonly transmitted to children. Such a narrow view is hurtful. Every Christian ought to know that the root of true prayer is unselfishness, that prayer is not so much a key to God's storehouse of material blessings as it is a ladder by which one may climb a little closer to his heavenly Father.

From the very beginning the child should be caused to know that God will not give his children everything asked for. The habit of teaching, with out qualifications, that we have only to ask him believingly for anything whatsoever in order to receive it is pernicious. Better tell the little one the plain truth—that so many of our prayers God will say no. The seed of truth sown in the little heart may grow slowly but it will bring forth righteousness of life. The seed of error will spring up more quickly perhaps, but its fruitage will be confusion and disbelief.

It is easy enough in ordinary cases to teach a child to say a prayer, but to teach him to pray is a different task. It is easy to cause him to ask God for what he wants, but it is hard to lead him to want what God wants him to have. But childhood is the period in which conformity to God's will can most easily be established. After years of willfulness and wickedness it is more difficult to lead the true inwardness of prayer which is a willingness to do God's will.

Teach the children to pray, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.—D. M. Presbyterian.

A Life Saved by Self-Control.

The dinner was just finished, and several officers were sitting round the table. The conversation had not been animated, and there came a lull, as the night was too hot for small talk. The major of the regiment, a man of fifty-five, turned towards his next neighbor at the table, a young subaltern, who was leaning back in his chair with his hands clasped behind his head. The major was slowly looking the man over, from his handsome face down, when, with sudden alertness, and in a quiet, steady voice, he said:

Don't move, please, Mr. Carruthers, I want to try an experiment with you. Don't move a muscle.

All right, major, replied the subaltern, without even turning his eyes; hadn't the least idea of moving. I assure you. What's the game?

By this time all the others were listening in a lazily expectant way. Do you think, continued the major, and his voice now trembled a little, that you can keep absolutely still for say, two minutes, to save your life?

Are you joking? Quite the contrary, was the quiet reply, move a muscle and you are a dead man. Can you stand the strain?

The subaltern whispered Yes, and his face paled slightly.

Burke, said the major, addressing an officer, pour some of that milk into a saucer, and set it on the floor here just behind me. Gently, man! Quiet!

Not a word was spoken as the officer quietly filled the saucer, walked with it around the table, and set it down where the major had indicated. Like a marble statue sat the young subaltern, in his white linen clothes, while a cobra de capello, which had been crawling up the leg of his trousers, slowly raised its head, turned descended to the floor, and glided to the milk. Suddenly the silence was broken by the report of the major's revolver, and the snake lay dead on the floor.

Thank you, major, said the subaltern, as the two men shook hands warmly, you have saved my life!

You're welcome, my boy, replied the senior, but you did your share, —Young People's Paper.

SOMETHING MORE THAN A PURGATIVE.—To purge is the only effect of many pills now on the market. Parmentier's Vegetable Pills are more than a purgative. They strengthen the stomach, where other pills weaken it. They cleanse the blood by regulating the liver and kidneys, and they stimulate where other pill compounds depress. Nothing of an injurious nature, used for merely purgative powers, enters into their compositions.

Two Stories.

One little girl came forward in the meeting here. Her mother was a church member.

When she went home and said, I have been converted; I have given my heart to Jesus to-day, her mother said, You are too young; you don't know what it means.

Then the little girl went off crying with a broken heart.

When church members degenerate and backslide that way, what wonder that we accomplish nothing! What wonder it is charged upon us that we are but dead forms, that we are but sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal? It is even so, and I cannot deny it when I talk with a skeptic many a time.

I knew a little child who went home out of one of our meetings whose father was a great big swearing man, a wicked man. She approached him timidly, almost afraid to tell him about it. He noticed it, and said, What is it, daughter? What do you want to tell me? Speak it out!

So she said, Papa, I don't know what you will think, but I went forward in the meeting to-day, and have been converted. I have given my heart to God, and I am going to pray for you.

The great swearing man looked at his little girl, who was only nine or ten years old and said, Do you mean it?

Yes papa, I mean it, said the little one.

Putting his arms around her he drew her head down on his breast, and the tears began to fill his eyes as he said, You were afraid of wicked old papa, weren't you? But papa's glad if you mean it; he wouldn't do a thing to keep you back.

The infidelity of the church breeds more skepticism and agnosticism than all the Ingersols and Putnams in America.—Baptist Argus.

NO SWEARING ALLOWED.—The young man told of in the following story for the Lutheran World was made of the right kind of stuff for a soldier. Would that we had more such fearless men:

The above notice was written in a good plain hand, and stuck up on the wall of the barrack room by the corporal in charge. He had been converted shortly before. At first the men laughed. He had been a rough character, he would not keep it a week, etc. But the Lord kept him, and among other results the notice was stuck up. The men respected him, he was consistent, he was brave, and the order was obeyed.

There was to be an official inspection. A great general was coming. There was washing, scrubbing, polishing. Many paintings, pictures and papers were taken off the walls, as likely to meet with disapproval.

No Swearing Allowed. Corporal, you'd better stow that thing away. No, it is there to stay, and I'll take the consequences.

I caught the general's eye. Who is the corporal in charge here?

I am, sir, stepping forward and saluting.

Did you put that placard there? Yes, sir.

Do you enforce it? I do, sir.

The general stretched forth his hand—to tear it down? No, but to shake hands with the corporal. I wish all our corporals were like you, and that the same rule was enforced everywhere.

THE TEACHER'S REWARD.—What do the Sunday school teachers get as a reward for their labors? They get a knowledge of the Word of God that they could have obtained in no other manner; they acquire a strength of character and a beauty of soul that they would not have had without teaching the little children the Gospel; they are rewarded by the love of their scholars, and the love of a child is the purest, sweetest thing on earth; and they will have that best reward of all when they can say, Here am I, O Lord, and those that thou hast given me.—Rev. J. L. Hurlburt.

AN EXCELLENT RULE.—John Wesley's mother once wrote to him when he was in college: Would you judge of the lawfulness or the unlawfulness of a pleasure, take this rule: Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, or obscures your senses spiritual things; whatever is over the authority of your heart, is sin, your mind, that thing, to be avoided.

SUCCESS FOR SIXTY YEARS.—This is the record of Perry Davis' Pain Killer. A sure cure for diarrhea, dysentery and all bowel complaints. Avoid substitutes, there is but one Pain-Killer, Perry Davis'. 25c. and 50c.

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