

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1880.

SECOND QUARTER.

Lesson III.—APRIL 18.

THE WHEAT AND THE TARES.

Matt. xiii. 24-30, 37-43.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 40-43.

Matthew gives a series of parables illustrative of the Kingdom of heaven. The words of our lesson were spoken just after the stilling of the tempest. He spoke from the deck of a boat in the Sea of Galilee, giving the explanation in a house upon the shore. No parallel.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"The harvest is the end of the world."—Matt. xiii. 39.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Wheat and the Tares, Matt. xiii. 24-30, 37-43.
 T. Work of the Enemy, Genesis iii. 1-13.
 W. Evil among the Good, Acts viii. 5-24.
 T. Evil-Doers Doomed, Psalm xxxvii. 1-20.
 F. The Good Preserved, Psalm xxvii. 1-14.
 S. The Day of Wrath, Rev. vi. 12-17.
 S. Shining as the Sun, Rev. xix. 1-19.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

- With vs. 24: Isa. xxxiii. 13; 1 Peter i. 23.
 With vs. 25: Isa. lvi. 10; 2 Cor. xi. 13-15; Gal. ii. 4; Heb. xii. 15, 16; 1 Pet. v. 8.
 With vs. 29: John xviii. 36.
 With vs. 30: 1 Tim. v. 24; Mal. iii. 18; Mal. iv. 1; Matt. xxv. 41; John xv. 6; Matt. iii. 12.
 With vs. 37: Dan. vii. 13; Matt. xvi. 13.
 With vs. 38: Matt. xx. 12; Mark xvi. 15; Rom. x. 18; Rom. viii. 17; John viii. 44; Acts xiii. 10; 1 John iii. 8.
 With vs. 39: Eph. ii. 2; Joel iii. 13; Rev. xiv. 15, 16.
 With vs. 40: Matt. xiii. 49, 50; Gal. vi. 7, 8.
 With vs. 41: Matt. xviii. 7; 2 Peter ii. 1; Luke xii. 27; Rev. xii. 27.
 With vs. 42: Matt. iii. 12; Rev. xix. 20; Rev. xx. 10.
 With vs. 43: Dan. xii. 3; Prov. iv. 18.

INIQUITY IN THE KINGDOM.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. The Source, Vss. 24, 25, 37-39. II. The Progress, Vss. 26, 31. III. The Treatment, Vss. 27-30, 40-43.

QUESTIONS.—What is a parable? What parable immediately precedes this? Where was Jesus when he spoke that parable?

I. Vss. 24, 25, 37-39.—To what is the kingdom of heaven here likened? Who is he that sowed the good seed? (V. 37.) What is the field in which he sowed? (V. 38.) What is the good seed? (V. 38.) Who is the enemy? (V. 39.) What did he sow? For what do tares here stand? (V. 38.) What is "the wicked one"?

II. Vss. 26.—When did the tares appear? How do tares illustrate the secret progress of evil? Read Luke xii. 2, 3.

III. Vss. 27-30, 40-43.—What was proposed by the servants? Why did the master prohibit this? What was his order? When is the harvest? (V. 39.) Who are the reapers? (V. 39.) What shall be gathered out of the kingdom? (V. 41.) What shall be their end? (V. 42.) What shall then be the state of the righteous? (V. 43.) Who are represented by the wheat? Who by the tares? On what field do these classes of men appear? From whom comes the wheat? From whom comes the tares?

EXPLANATORY NOTES.—Verse 24.—A parable is a narrative of incidents occurring in one sphere of things, told to illustrate truths subsisting in another sphere of things. This parable is one of a series designed to set forth the nature, and the destined historical progress, of the Kingdom of Heaven. The kingdom of heaven is likened. The likeness is not to a man, and not to a man that sowed good seed. Our Lord's language is not precise, but free and conversational. What he means is, that incidents will occur in the course of the development of the Kingdom of God which may fairly be illustrated by a case in husbandry that he now proceeds to relate. The likeness subsists between the history on one side, and the history on the other.

Verses 25, 26.—While men slept. "In the night." Men in general are referred to—not the hired laborers of the husbandman. The malicious act described is one not very uncommon in the East. Tares. Probably darnel, or bastard wheat, not distinguishable from true

grain, till harvest-time. This would explain vs. 26.

Verses 27, 28.—These verses seem to have no significance beyond continuing in lively, dramatic form, the narrative of the parable.

Verse 30.—The process of harvesting in the East. The reapers have the responsibility of separating the noxious seed from the true grain.

Verse 37.—Two additional parables have intervened. Jesus has dismissed the multitude of promiscuous hearers, and withdrawn in-doors. Here his disciples follow him, and seek an explanation of the parable of the tares of the field. Is "means." By whatever agencies the children of the kingdom are multiplied, it is yet the Son of man that multiplies them. He works with many hands, of different individuals; but the hands are all his own.

Verse 38.—The field is the world. This parable has always been much appealed to on both sides, in every controversy that has arisen in the course of church history, on the subject of church discipline. The Lord teaches to let the bad and the good remain together—but remain where? In the church? No, in the world; for the "field" is the world, not the church. Still, nothing seems to be taught in this parable, either in one way or in the other, about the duty of purifying the church by discipline. The idea is, rather, to explain the principle on which the Lord proceeds in his providence. He suffers bad men and good men to live for the present together in the world, but it is always for the sake of the good men.

If the bad were at once destroyed, then of those bad, some would be destroyed that would eventually have become good. The good seed are the children of the kingdom. The "seed" here is spoken of, not as in that undeveloped stage of its existence in which it is cast into the ground, but as in that germinated and growing stage in which it has become the visible plant. The plant is still the seed, but now the seed unfolded, rooted in the soil, and expanded to the air. So of the tares, or darnel it should not be

taught from the present parable that the classes of the good and bad do not impart change, the one into the other. Children of the evil one. Not his children by unchangeable nature, but by present-moral resemblance.

Verse 39.—The enemy. Verse 25 says his enemy; so that we may understand that Jesus here recognizes Satan in the character of enemy especially to himself. The end of the world. The Greek for "world" is not here the same as in v. 38. There, the "world" means the period during which the present order of things will continue. The angels. Omit "the" reading "angels" simply. Verse 41.—The Son of man. It is in his character as Son of man, not Son of God, that Jesus represents himself executing this final act of selection and award. In John v. 27, Jesus says that the Father "hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." Out of his kingdom. At the end of the age, the "kingdom" has become co-extensive with the "world." All things that offend. All the causes of "offense."

Verse 42.—A furnace of fire. "The furnace of fire," it should read—a much more significant and threatening expression. The definite article implies a well-defined conception. Is it figure? Perhaps, but perhaps not. Whichever is true, the sense is equally dreadful. Weeping and gnashing of teeth. The first action denotes sorrow; the second, rage. The fire is not a punishment for purification, with a view to ultimate restoration. It incites to rebellious hatred, expressed by gnashing of teeth. A horrible picture, and drawn by Jesus himself.

Verse 43.—Then. Not now is it the case, but it will be then. Who will so shine forth? The righteous means its own proper sense—the just—those who are good, and who do good. As the sun. Nothing could be stronger. When the sun shines there is no mistaking the fact. When the kingdom of God, here touchingly and beautifully called the kingdom of their Father, is fully established, then will be the time for the righteous. There will be no cloud, no mist, no haze, to dim the firmament in the midst of which they will blaze like suns. Perhaps the figure is that of a court at which the righteous, as favored guests, magnificently arrayed, will dazzle

beholders with their splendor. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. A solemn admonitory refrain, implying that not every one has the gift to hear, and that not he who has the gift now, will keep it always.

Parables like this, being virtual prophecies, and stimulating, by concealing while revealing, constitute a method of teaching truth which provides for perpetual development and cumulation of evidence on behalf of the truth taught.

Christ's angels will be to you his ministers of love, or his ministers of wrath according as you choose to have them.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Draw five word-pictures by telling the story which belongs to each: 1. The Sower sowing good seed. 2. The enemy sowing tares. 3. The surprise of the workmen on finding the tares. 4. The talk with the farmer. 5. The burning of the tares, and the harvesting of the grain. Have the class tell you the story back again.

If a young blade of wheat and also a weed closely resembling it could be procured. Show how easily the weed could be passed unnoticed in that early stage of their growth; but afterwards show some true grains of wheat; the weeds bear no such fruit.

By-and-by Jesus will separate them and call some names of those who will stand on his right hand and live with him forever; to others he will say: "Depart into everlasting punishment." One will be like the sun, shining brightly; the other burned with fire.

Urge the need of watching and prayer; the enemy sowed tares while men slept; that is, while they were not watching, not thinking, not being careful.

The Field,	The World.
The Seed,	The Word of God. [etc.]
Sower,	Jesus, Spirit, Teachers,
Wheat,	Children of Jesus.
Enemy,	Devil.
Tares,	Wicked People.
Harvest,	End of World; Judgment.
Reapers,	Angels.
Tares	Burned.
Wheat	Gathered in.
Wicked People	Destroyed.
Good People	Shine as the Sun.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Bouths' Department.

Bible Enigma.

No. 67.

Find in the initials and finals of the following described words the city where the first Christians dwelt, and a city in the Dominion of Canada having one of the finest harbor in the world:

1. A prophet in the days of Jeroboam.
2. A country of Northern Africa.
3. The fifth son of Japheth.
4. A town in Sardinia.
5. A preposition.
6. The place of Christ's first miracle.
7. A city of Yorkshire.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

No. 41.

What did the Jews mean by casting dust into the air. Find one instance of it being done in the Old Testament, and another in the New Testament.

Answer to Bible Enigma.

No. 66.

1. Water.
2. A hab.
3. L ud.
4. K orah.

5. I saac.
6. N athaniel.

7. L ot.
8. O g.
9. V ashti.
10. E lam.

WALK IN LOVE.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

No. 40.

The Spider. Because "she taketh hold with her hands." Prov. xxx. 24, 28.

The "15" Puzzle.

One of the officers of the cable steamer *Minia* has kindly sent us a communication on this famous puzzle, with the numbers placed in the order by which the puzzle of getting 13, 15, 14 into their proper places—13, 14, 15,—which has been found so difficult and by some supposed to be impossible. As however the *N. Y. Journal of Commerce* has the

same thing in much smaller compass, we prefer to give it in that form.

The box of sixteen squares and fifteen cubes of wood is unnecessary. Any person can get a small piece of paper say about 6 inches square and divide it into 16 small squares. Then get fifteen pieces of card and number them from 1 to 15. The puzzle of putting them in order can easily solved as far as 12. Then supposing the last line stands 13, 15, 14 they may be brought to their proper places by fourteen moves, as follows:

Turn the box (or diagram, if on paper) so that the left hand side is at the bottom. Then move 4 to the right, 1 up, 13 to the left, 12 down, 3 to the right, 1 up, 14 to the left, 8 down, 2 to the right, 5 up, 13 to the left, 11 down, 6 to the right, 9 up and 15 to the left. Very simple, is it not?

Select Serial.

Florence Walton,

OR,

A Question of Duty.

BY MAY F. MCKEAN.

CHAPTER VII.—CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE.

"Oh, Miss Walton, didn't you think that strange gentleman spoke beautifully last night in prayer-meeting?" cried one of Florence's pupils the next morning before school.

"I don't know dear; what about?" asked Florence, somewhat confused.

"Oh, weren't you there? Why, Miss Walton, is your mother worse?" asked the young girl in the greatest concern.

"No—no worse, only I went last evening to—that is, I—I had another engagement." Florence finished with burning cheeks. She could not tell her she had been to the theatre.

Ida White looked at her one moment in surprise, but recovering herself immediately, she said,

"You asked me what he spoke about. It was our influence as Christians over those around us. He took for a sort of text—only he didn't preach—the verse about 'Let your light so shine before men, that they seeing your good works may glorify God;' and he said all of us, even real young folks, could exert an influence for good if we would only try. Now isn't that sweet? Miss Walton, what is the matter? Are you sick?"

"No dear, only a headache," Florence answered quickly. "But what were you saying? Oh yes—we should be very, very careful that our influence is exerted in the right direction."

Florence leaned her head upon her hand, while Ida looked at her a little curiously.

"Miss Walton, would you like some water?" she asked a few moments later as she brought a dripping glass. The teacher took it thanking her for her thoughtfulness; then a moment later Professor Dalton called the school to order, and Florence was left to the solitude of her classroom until the opening exercises were completed.

It is not as easy teaching, or, in fact doing any other work, with a heavy conscience as with a free one; the truth of which Florence proved to her perfect satisfaction that afternoon.

Whether it was that the lessons were more poorly learned or the teacher harder to please than usual, certain it was that when the hands of the school-room clock once more pointed to four, and Florence was preparing to leave the scene of her day's duties, she felt more tired and discouraged than ever before.

But listen. A group of girls had gathered in the cloak-room, whose partly closed door concealed their teacher from their view, and were talking, no doubt thinking she had already retired.

"I wonder what is the matter with Miss Walton? Did you ever see her so irritable before?" cried one.

"No, but I believe she was sick; we should have tried more to please her," answered another.

"Well! I did just try." "And I," "And I," cried half a dozen.

"Well, I'd just like to know where she spent last evening," said a familiar voice.

"Why, Ida White! What business is that of yours?" said Emily Matthews scornfully.

"I don't suppose it is any of my business; only that when I asked her something about the meeting last night she

said she wasn't there; and then I asked if her mother was worse, and she said 'No,' but that she was to— Then she stopped and flushed and became so confused, and said she had another engagement," answered Ida.

"Now, girls, if you are very anxious to know where that 'other engagement' was, I can tell you," said Carrie Glennings, Maud's younger sister.

"Where?" "Where?" was asked.

"Why, she went with Maud and Charlie Davidson and Ethel Markwell and Clifford Walraven and Dr. Ronselle to the theatre in the city," she answered in her school-girl fashion.

"To the theatre? and when there is so much interest in the church and meetings and all!" cried Ida White, while most of the rest looked their astonishment from very blank faces.

"What is the matter? You don't think she has committed the unpardonable sin in going to the theatre?" said Carrie with a disdainful laugh.

"Oh no. I think I quite understand her motives. She went to the theatre last night to pray for me," said Emily Matthews in an icy tone.

"Oh, Emily, how can you?" "What do you mean?" "To think you would speak so of our dear teacher!" burst forth in a chorus.

"I mean," returned the young girl, her face and voice growing hard together—"I mean that Miss Walton talked to me so beautifully—no, I mean so hypocritically—as any person last evening after school, and she told me she would pray for me; now, don't you suppose she

went there to fulfil her promise? Or perhaps she forgot all about it as soon as I was out of her sight. Yes, I dare say she did. Girls, I tell you it is all a farce; and I hate it—hate the whole of it. I'll never believe another word anybody tells me about religion as long as I live. Yes," she continued scornfully as the girls stood round her in mute dismay, "they talk of the joys of religion—talk of happiness, the benefit we would receive if we but became Christians. But who is going to believe it, so long as they can't find happiness enough in it to satisfy them—so long as they have to come back to the world for their enjoyment? No; Miss Walton and Maud Glennings and Ethel Markwell and a whole army more—every church-member in Westtown—may talk to me now until they have worn out their voices and are dumb, but I wouldn't believe them."

Florence had not intended to play the part of an eavesdropper, but somehow she had seemed chained to the spot where she was sitting, looking blankly toward the door, beyond which it seemed as if her fate was being read by those thoughtless schoolgirls.

But when this last indignant burst from Emily Matthews—her own Sunday school scholar too—sounded out so clear upon the otherwise still air, she could not bear another word.

Poor unhappy Florence! Had she found enjoyment by "going back to the world?" She felt that never in all the nineteen years of her life had she been so utterly miserable as at this moment; for what had she done? Had she not brought dishonour upon the name and cause of Christ? Had she not lost all the Christian influence she might otherwise have exerted over her pupils? Had she not grieved her Saviour?

She groped her way blindly to the front door, for tears were in her eyes, while a great aching pain was in her heart and head. Once in the open air, she hurried forward with downcast eyes, until at the school-yard gate she found herself directly confronted by Dr. Ronselle.

The shadow which rested upon his handsome features deepened into actual pain as he glanced at that sorrowful face.

"Miss Florence," he said respectfully "I wanted to ask you something, and as the walking is so slippery I thought perhaps you would let me take you home in the sleigh."

"Oh, I am so miserable!" was the only answer she made as she allowed herself to be lifted almost as a child in to the sleigh.

The doctor sprang in by her side, gathered up the reins, and touched his horse with out a word. You know there are times when sympathy is better expressed by silence than in the choicest language.

"If I only hadn't gone!" she cried as she dropped her head in her hands and burst into tears.