

Youths' Department.

Lessons for 1871.

THE WORDS OF JESUS.

SUNDAY, MAY 14TH, 1871.

Growth of the Kingdom.—Mark iv. 26-32.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"It groweth up."—vs. 32. SCRIPTURE SELECTIONS.—Dad. ii. 31-45, John xiv; John xvi; 1 Cor. xv. 1-25.

What is a parable? How many parables are contained in our lesson? What verses contain each of these? By what names are these parables known? Where else in the gospels is either of them found?

What does Jesus aim to explain by these parables? vs. 26, 30. What is meant by "the kingdom of God"? To what is this likened in the first parable? vs. 26-29. What do we call that work of the man which vs. 26 describes? What was meant by "seed," in our lesson on The Sower? What, in that on The Tares? What does Jesus mean by "seed," in this lesson? Who sows this seed? Have you ever sowed such seed?

About what are we taught in vs. 27, 28? What fact about growth is taught in vs. 27? What in vs. 28? How then does God's kingdom grow? How should the children of this kingdom feel? Are you one of them? Of what does vs. 29 tell us? What is meant by "the harvest," in the last lesson? What is this? What will become of you in that harvest?

To what is the kingdom likened in the second parable? vs. 30-32. What does Jesus say about the mustard seed? vs. 31. What about it when grown? vs. 32. What does this teach about the beginning of the kingdom? What about the end? How may we enter this kingdom? John iii. 3, 5. Shall each of us enter it?

SUMMARY.—The growth of the kingdom of God in a man's heart, or in the world, depends not upon the man, but upon God. The beginning may be small, but the end will be great.

ANALYSIS.—I. Dependent upon God. vs. 26-29. 1. Sowing, the work of man. vs. 26. 2. Growing, the work of God. vs. 27, 28. 3. Reaping, the work of God. vs. 29.

II. Destined to Greatness. vs. 30-32. 1. A comparison sought. vs. 30. 2. Smallness stated. vs. 31. 3. Greatness anticipated. vs. 32.

EXPOSITION.—Two parables.—vs. 26-29 contain the parable called The Growth of the Seed and is in Mark only. vs. 30-32 contain the parable known as the Grain of Mustard seed. Found also in Matt. xiii. 31, 32.

Jesus here aims to explain "the kingdom of God." Review last lesson.

First parable.—Let scholars state the particulars from memory. Cluster the facts about 1. The sowing; 2. The growing; 3. The reaping.

Casting seed into the ground.—The sower walked over the field with his bag of grain, and cast it handful after handful upon the ground.

Seed.—In Matt. xiii. 24-30, the seed meant "the children of the kingdom," or Christian people; but what is meant by "seed" in this lesson? Compare Matt. xiii. and Mark iv. The seed idea is similar in all these parables. 1. The word is the seed; 2. Those who have received the word are the seed; 3. The seed, in either case, grows by the inevitable laws of the spiritual kingdom: that is, the word in the soul grows, expands, etc., and God's children increase in number and in power.

The sower.—In the sense of making men Christians, Jesus only is the sower. In the sense of preaching or teaching God's word, we may say all the prophets had been sowing this seed. 2 Tim. iii. 16. The apostles, preachers, Sunday-school teachers, etc., from that day to this sow the word, if indeed they teach God's truth.

The growth.—Described in vs. 27, 28. The sower is about his ordinary pursuits, his personal work being for the time ended. The husbandman does know that unless the seed be in the earth, and unless that earth be prepared, and especially, unless the rain and the sun from above are refreshing and warming it, that the seed cannot grow. Obviously then, the words mean simply this, beyond this, another agency must see to it. John xvi. 7 illustrates the bearing of this sentiment upon Jesus; and 1 Cor. iii. 6, the bearing upon human sowers. See Analysis.

Isa. lv. 10, 11 make a similar declaration concerning God's moral field, which is the world. The growth of the kingdom, therefore, is not a result of human power, but of the power of God. John i. 12. The elements of comparison between the seed and the kingdom, are growth from within, regularity, gradualness, progressiveness, security, and ultimate perfection. Results.—God's people should be humble

before him, prayerful to him, and yet strong in his power. Rom. viii. 32.

The reaping.—vs. 29. Here the allusion is to Jesus only, not to men. His reapers are the angels; see last lesson. The harvest, as there shown, is the end of the world. This parable teaches patience, as that of the tares, forbearance.

The second parable.—Stated in vs. 30-32. The mustard of Palestine attains a considerable size. Dr. Hackett, in his Illustrations of Scripture, mentions a plant he examined on the plain of Akka, which was nine feet high, having a stalk over an inch in diameter. The branches were so strong that birds actually rested among them as he observed it. And yet this plant grew from the smallest of domestic seeds.

The Lessons.—A great end may come from a small beginning, in spiritual as well as in material things. The seed has in its tiny boundaries an element of life and expansion, and so has truth. Under God's blessing, both become very great. Growth in personal experience may be illustrated by James i. 18; 1 Cor. i. 21; Eph. iv. 13; which show the germ, the growth, the end. Growth in the world at large may be illustrated by comparing Jesus the babe, or the boy of twelve years, with Jesus as set forth, John xii. 32; Phil. ii. 9-11.

ILLUSTRATIONS.—A few grasses, or other plants raised from seed, may be shown and explained. Then show the seed from which such plants grow. The larger the plant, and the smaller the seed, the better the illustration.

Men cannot, but God does make plants from these seeds, and very little seeds, can make very great plants, acorns and oaks, for example. Apply the seeds to God's words, and the plants to great and godly lives. Commend the study and the love of God's words as the true way to great and good lives. Psal. cxix. 9; Tim. iii. 15.

The world is full of illustrations of great growth from little beginnings, especially so in vegetation at this season.

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Recite.—Scripture Catechism, 203, 204.

SCRIPTURE BIOGRAPHY.

ANSWER TO NO. II.

The "Good Man" who was pictured out last week in a number of his acts was BARNABAS. Acts xi. 24. For the account of those acts see Acts iv. 36, 37; ix. 26, 27; xi. 19-26; xi. 27-30; xiii. 14; xv. 1-35; 36, 40; Galatians ii. 11-14.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

NO. LV.

What gates did Samson hear with ease away? Whose debt did Paul take on himself to pay? What god before the ark fell flatly down? Whose father died beneath God's angry frown? Whose servant bore an open letter forth? What Syrian's flocks were blest'd for Jacob's worth? Who by his bravery won his cousin's hand? Who boldly disobey'd her lord's command? What country nourish'd Israel's chosen race, Till friendly kings to cruel ones gave place? Take now the letter that begins each name. A very precious text you'll find the same.

BIBLE QUESTIONS.

1. Which of the prophets was a herdsman, and where did he live? 2. Is there any other individual of that name mentioned in the Bible?

THE LIMERICK BELLS.

In the cathedral of Limerick there hangs a chime of bells that was cast in Italy by an enthusiast in his trade, who fixed his home near the monastery where they were first hung, that he might daily enjoy their sweet and solemn music. In some political revolution the bells were taken away to a distant land, and their maker himself became a refugee and exile. His wanderings brought him, after many years, to Ireland. "On a calm and beautiful evening, as the vessel which bore him floated on the placid bosom of the Shannon, suddenly the evening chimes pealed from the Cathedral towers. His practised ear caught the sweet sound, and he knew that his lost treasures were found. His early home, his old friends, his beloved native land, all the best associations of his life were in those sounds. It is said, he laid himself back in the boat, crossed his arms upon his breast, and listened to the music. The

boat reached the wharf, but still he lay there, silent and motionless. They spoke to him, but he did not answer. They went to him, but his spirit had fled. The tide of memories that came vibrating through his heart at that well-known chime, had snapped its strings!

And so, sometimes, in after-life, when the feet of some wayward man have strayed far away from the home of his youth, and his heart has wandered far off from his father's God, some memory of the past, like the sweet, sad melody of the evening chime, may wake long-slumbering echoes and stir long-sealed fountains; and a father's counsels and a mother's prayers will come up again from the sacred burial places of the past with wondrous power to melt and win the wayward heart.

Yes, a family ought to be a little church of Jesus Christ. The father should be its pastor, conducting its daily worship and leading the dear circle in the way of truth and duty. Christ should be acknowledged as the Saviour, the Friend, the Ruler of the entire group. Every affection should be consecrated by faith in Jesus and love to Him. Every tie which binds one living heart to another, should be made strong and more tender by the influence of a common tie to Jesus. Such a household will have a happy home. Their circumstances may be humble and their lot may be lowly, but if they have Christ in the family, there will always be sunshine and peace. The house cannot secure the highest domestic joy, which, like the inn at Bethlehem, has no room for Jesus.—N. Y. Evangelist.

TO WHOM SHALL WE GIVE THANKS!

A little boy had sought the pump From whence the sparkling water burst, And drank with eager joy the draught That kindly quenched his raging thirst; Then gracefully he touched his cap— I thank you, Mr. Pump, he said, For this nice drink you've given me! (This little boy had been well bred.)

Then said the pump: My little man, You're welcome to what I have done; But I am not the one to thank— I only help the water run. Oh, then, the little fellow said, (Polite he always meant to be,) Cold Water, please accept my thanks, You have been very kind to me.

Ah! said Cold Water, don't thank me; Far up the hillside lives the Spring That sends me forth with generous hand To gladden every living thing. I'll thank the Spring, then, said the boy, And gracefully he bowed his head. Oh, don't thank me, my little man, The Spring with silvery accents said.

Oh, don't thank me—for what am I Without the dew and summer rain? Without their aid I ne'er could quench Your thirst, my little boy, again. Oh, well, then said the little boy, I'll gladly thank the Rain and Dew Pray, don't thank us—without the Sun We could not fill one cup for you.

Then, Mr. Sun, ten thousand thanks For all that you have done for me. Stop! said the Sun, with blushing face, My little fellow, don't thank me; 'Twas from the Ocean's mighty stores I drew the draught I gave to thee. O, Ocean, thanks! then said the boy— It echoed back, Not unto me.

Not unto me, but unto Him Who formed the depths in which I lie, Go, give thy thanks, my little boy, To Him who will thy wants supply. The boy took off his cap, and said, In tones so gentle and subdued, O God, I thank Thee for this gift, Thou art the Giver of all good. —Christian Radical.

TAKING IT COOLLY.

Henry Ward Beecher once hearing one of his own published sermons delivered in an obscure village, accused the preacher on his way out, and said, "That was a very good discourse; how long did it take you to write it?" "Oh, I tossed it off one evening, when I had leisure," was the reply. "Indeed!" said Mr. Beecher; "it took me longer than that to think out the very frame-work of that very sermon." "Are you Henry Ward Beecher?" exclaimed the clergyman. "I am," was the reply. "Well, then," said the unabashed preacher, "all that I have to say is, that I ain't ashamed to preach one of your sermons anywhere!"

It is only a coincidence, of course, but the same thing is said to have happened to the celebrated Dr. South, a hundred and fifty years ago, or so.

THE GLORY OF THE SKY.

Sometimes it shall happen, probably only once or twice in a lifetime, that at sunset the sky from horizon to zenith is flecked with minute cloudlets, thick as falling flakes of snow. Provided the light catches these at the right angle, we have a scenic display compared with which all earthly pageantry is poor indeed. It becomes as though the heavens were strewn with the blazing wings of seraphim. Awed into reverence, we gaze entranced, when thus sun and cloud combine to show us a little of what may be done in the way of color. So lifts our hearts that beatific vision into contemplation and awe, that we long to pass the portals of the bright city of which it is told us "there is no night there."—Living Age.

THE ECHO AT PISA, ITALY.

I once heard a traveller speak of a visit to the Baptistery at Pisa, at whose font there is so remarkable an echo. The baptistry, it is known, is a rotunda of most magnificent proportions, with a dome almost sublime in its expanse and elevation. The guide stood near the font and sang a few notes. His voice was not remarkably melodious; but lo! upward it rises, and from the dome comes back to us in tones of inexpressible sweetness. A pause—and again, farther upward are heard the notes; finer, fainter, sweeter; transfixing one to the spot, and making it easy to imagine some angel had caught these imperfect notes of human utterance, and imparted to them his own celestial sweetness and pathos, causing us to hear a melody which never belonged to them while in this lower region.

Does not this afford a faint illustration of what may be, when through the Divine Mediator, our imperfect praises are made acceptable to the ear of Him who is worshipped by angels? Borne upward by our Intercessor, they lose the imperfections which belong to earth; for he imparteth to them his own unutterable sweetness, and they become identical with heavenly harmonies.—Am. Messenger.

SUNSHINE.

As welcome as sunshine In every place, Is the beaming approach Of a good-natured face. As genial as sunshine, Like warmth to impart, Is a good-natured word From a good-natured heart.

CURE FOR STAMMERING.—The effectual cure for stammering mainly depends upon the determination of the sufferer to carry out the following rule: Keep the teeth close together, and before attempting to speak inspire deeply; then give time for quiet utterance, and after very slight practice the hesitation will be relieved. No spasmodic action of the lower jaw must be permitted to separate the teeth when speaking.

A remarkable instance of fidelity to his calling is that of Rev. Joseph Emerson, who graduated at Harvard College in 1717, at the age of seventeen years, and at the time "began to preach to general acceptance." He was ordained in Malden in 1721, at the age of twenty-two years. There he preached for forty-six years, and during the entire period was absent from his pulpit but two Sabbaths.

ONE of the miseries of life is to be beaten in an argument and immediately afterward to think of some expression which would have totally annihilated your opponent.

"Fancy," said Sidney Smith to some ladies, when he was told that one of the giraffes at the Zoological Garden had caught cold: "a giraffe with two yards of sore throat."

"THE FIVE GREAT POWERS."—Love, money, ambition, revenge, and a good dinner.

D'Aubigne is now eighty years of age, and is as bright, vigorous, and industrious as ever.

He who has not forgiven an enemy has never yet tasted one of the most sublime enjoyments of life.—Lavater.

The Sabbath School.

PROSPERITY vs. SUCCESS.

A distinction ought to be made between a prosperous and a successful Sunday-school. Many things may be regarded as tokens of prosperity. A comfortable and inviting room, a godly and intelligent superintendent, a devoted and efficient band of officers and teachers, a large attendance, a valuable library, liberal collections for the school or for benevolent purposes, a creditable concert now and then, these are signs of prosperity but they are by no means proofs of success. In speaking upon this point, Mr. Spurgeon, in substance, said to us: "Many of my brethren here enjoy good-natured criticisms upon our Sunday-school; and the truth is, it is not as well ordered at it ought to be, and, in some respects, is justly the subject of disparaging remark; but statistics show, that in proportion to our numbers, very many more from our school unite with the church than from any other school in the city, and so I contend that we have the most successful school." Who will dispute the correctness of his position? The Sunday school is the church working in a given direction, generally for the salvation of the young and their instruction in righteousness. The object of the Sunday-school is identical with that of the church. There can be no doubt but that the great duty of the church is to teach: "Go ye and teach all nations;" neither can there be any question but that the great success of the church is in making believers: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." So we do not,—or at least we ought not to,—judge of the success of a church by the magnificence of its house of worship or the elegance of the furniture, by the artistic rendering of its music or the eloquence of its preacher, or even by the greatness of the congregations that may wait upon its services. The measure of a church's success is the number of lives reformed through its influence, the number of souls saved. What is true concerning the church in this particular, is true also concerning the Sunday school. Would you learn the success with which a school is attended. Do not inquire concerning either the dimensions or convenience of the room in which its sessions are held, the system of study adopted, the character of the music, the value of the library, the amount of money collected or even the number of scholars enrolled upon its register. The answers to those questions would give you some idea of the prosperity of the school and of the thrift and enterprise of those to whom its management is entrusted. If you would know its success, ask how many souls have been led to Jesus through its agency.—Rev. L. P. Hornbeger.

TO SUNDAY-SCHOOL TALKERS.

For the multitude of enterprising persons who consider it their special vocation to speak on all possible occasions in Sunday-schools, we offer a word of gratuitous advice: Have the grace and common sense sometimes to decline. When you do speak, be sure you have something to say, and say it briefly,—especially if you have a large audience of tired, restive children.—Western Recorder.

HOW TO PROCURE TEACHERS.

1. So manage your school, as to make it a privilege to be a teacher in it. 2. Keep the teachers you have; if they don't suit, try to bring them up to your standard. 3. Sitting and waiting will not procure teachers. Work as well as pray. Go for them. Get your eye on persons suitable for teachers, long before you want them.—W. H. Sutton.

HOUSE-BUILDING.—Every man builds his own house; builds it many-chambered, fresh-ventilated, picture-hung, vine-wreathed, guest-lull; or low-pont, bare-wall, flowerless, inhospitable—just in accordance with his inner nature. Precisely as the internal force of affinity in the mollusk lays hold of and aggregates round itself the fine lime particles in the sea-water, so does the internal force in the human soul lay hold of and aggregate round itself what it wants. The surrounding ocean holds in solution knowledge, pleasure, meat, drink, wit, wisdom, friends, flowers, God; and out of this wealth we secrete our shells—clam shells or nautilus-shells, as we are clams or nautilus. We find what we crave—fun, if we have a zest for the funny; friends, if we long for friends; beauty, if we love beauty; thought, if we tend to thought. Slowly we build up our house. Small or large, if we are refined, it is refined; if we are roomy, it is roomy.