

tism commanded by Christ, Mr. McDonald had to make an affirmation.

(1.) Proposition.—He affirmed that "Immersion in water was the only act of baptism commanded by Christ."

(2.) Proposition.—Dr. Murray affirmed that "Infant children of believing parents, one or both are scriptural subjects for baptism."

The propositions to be discussed having been agreed upon, Mr. McDonald suggested to Dr. Murray that, "Inasmuch as baptism is a New Testament ordinance, the discussion be confined to the New Testament." The Dr. would not assent to this. He then suggested that "Inasmuch as baptism is an ordinance of divine appointment, the discussion be confined to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. The Dr. would not agree to this. There was only one other course open to them, and that was to give the widest range to the discussion.

The fact that the Dr. would not confine himself to the word of God is suggestive. It was agreed that the discussion should last seven evenings of three hours each. It was to be held alternately, in the Baptist and Presbyterian churches. An umpire was chosen, and two chairmen, one to represent each side.

The first meeting was held in the Baptist Church, Saturday evening Dec. 3rd, with good attendance for the short notice. The opening speeches were to be each one hour long, to be followed by half-hour speeches. As Mr. McDonald took the affirmative of the first proposition, he had to open the debate.

Mr. McDonald shewed that the act of baptism performed by John was immersion. The record proves it. John baptized in Jordan. Jesus was baptized in Jordan. In the account of the baptism of Jesus given by Mark i. 9, the new version gives in the margin "into," instead of "in," as the literal Greek. Jesus was baptized into Jordan. All the attending circumstances connected with John's baptism point to immersion. The act commanded by Christ, and that performed by John were the same. The Holy Spirit has used the same word in every case where baptism is mentioned. Philip and the Eunuch went down into, and came up out of the water. Philip understood baptism to be an immersion.

The symbolic meaning of baptism demands immersion. No other act can symbolize the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. This baptism of suffering points to immersion.

Dr. Murray denied that baptism required any definite act. He claimed there were many acts by which one may be baptized. The choice is left with man. He referred to the account given, 1 Kings i. 32, of the anointing of Solomon, represented him as going down to Gihon, the pool Gihon, he said, and going into the water to be anointed. The same Greek preposition is used here as took Philip and the Eunuch into the water. He said ancient customs could not be explained by modern practices; and implied there was a custom in ancient times of anointing kings standing in the water. He said when Mr. McDonald would tell him why Solomon went down into the water to be anointed, and came up out of the water, he would explain why Philip and the Eunuch went down into the water, and came up out of the water.

Mr. McDonald proved that Gihon was the name of a place, from Smith's Bible Dictionary, and shewed that there was nothing about water in the record. He challenged the Dr. to prove that the custom ever existed of anointing kings standing in water, or to give an example of a king going down into water to be anointed. The Dr. was confounded, did not know what to say. He read the record, but that did not help him. He did not even attempt to answer Mr. McDonald's challenge; neither did he keep his promise, to give the reason why Philip took the Eunuch down into the water to baptize him.

J. W. BANCROFT.

The New Moon is the appropriate name of a paper published in England, whose contributors are patients in lunatic asylums. The articles in the first number, says the Christian Advocate, were so sensible that the subscribers complained that there was nothing crazy in it. And in the next issue the writers were allowed free swing, and it was mad as Bedlam.

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1882.

FIRST QUARTER.

Lesson VIII.—FEBRUARY 19, 1882.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

Mark iv. 1-20.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vss. 3-8.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."—Revelation ii. 29.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Lesson, Mark iv. 1-20.
T. The Parable in Matthew, Matt. xiii. 1-23.
W. The Imperishable Seed, 1 Peter i. 13-25.
T. Blindness of Natural Men, 1 Cor. chap. ii.
F. Transient and Permanent, John vi. 60-71.
S. Bringing forth Much Fruit, John xv. 1-14.
S. The Grand Harvest, Matt. xiii. 24-43.

THE SAVIOUR TEACHES THE METHOD OF HIS WORK.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Parable of the Sower, Vss. 1-9. II. Reasons for Using Parables, Vss. 10-13. III. Parable of the Sower Explained, Vss. 14-20.

QUESTIONS.—Vss. 1-9.—State what became of each class of seed, and why. Is there a case of reaping a hundred-fold in the Bible?

Vss. 10-13.—What two classes composed most of Christ's hearers? How must men be fitted for the kingdom? Why was the best way of teaching, at that time, by parables?

Vss. 14-20.—Who is the sower? What the seed? How long must the gospel be preached? (Matt. xxiv. 14). What then? How does Satan take away truth? What is meant by the seed on rocky ground? Why did it so quickly spring up and wither?

Special Subjects.—Oriental farming. The gospel and the kingdom. Apostasy and "perseverance of the saints." Such "revival methods" as tend to excite, and to drive people to hastily "commit themselves."

We have now come to the latter part of Christ's ministry in Galilee, and hear him expounding the nature of his Kingdom and the principles on which it would be established, in a series of parables, of which Mark gives us three. No house was large enough to hold his audiences. He therefore repaired to the sea-side, and, with a little boat for his pulpit, spoke to the vast company gathered on the shore. Our lesson is the first of a group of seven parables (as recorded by Matthew), with the interpretation of it subsequently given to his disciples.

NOTES.—I. The Parable, (vs. 1-9).

Verse 2.—Parables. Parable is from a Greek word, meaning to place beside; hence, a comparison. The parables of Jesus were brief narratives, founded on fact, true to nature, and carrying in them veiled spiritual truths, which the hearers might not be able or ready to receive in a more open form. They generally rested on the common, familiar doings of every-day life. Doctrine. Teaching.

Verses 3, 4.—Hearken. The parable is worthy of special attention. A sower. Some have supposed that Jesus used his illustration because of the casual appearance of a sower in a field within sight. Way-side. The fields were not fenced or hedged, and path ways ran directly through them, where, of course, the ground was not ploughed and prepared for seed, but made hard by travel. Luke says (viii. 5), that the seed "by the way-side was trodden down." Afterward, it was picked up and devoured by the fowls of the air, or birds.

Verses 5, 6.—Stony ground. New Version, rocky ground. Thin soil upon a layer of concealed rock, through which the roots could not pass. Immediately. The seed "sprang up" all the quicker, because it had no depth of earth. Having no depth of root to secure stability and moisture, when the sun was up it was scorched, or burnt. What little vital sap it had was soon evaporated by the heat, and it had no source underneath to draw from. Withered. It had no root to sustain it.

Verse 7.—Thorns. Thorny weeds, which were indigenous to the soil, as sin is to the heart. Choked. Stifled. These weeds had a ranker growth than the grain. They also shaded the grain, keeping from it the needed light and air, so that it never ripened. Although it started well, it produced nothing. The difficulty here was not a hard nor a shallow soil. The ground was prepared, and had depth; but was unpurged of thistles and thorns. Each of these three classes of soils was fruitless, but for different reasons. In the first, the seed did not spring up at all. In the second, it germinated, but was short-lived and "withered away." In the

third, it grew up, but never ripened, and yielded only stalk and chaff.

Verses 8, 9.—Good ground. Soil properly prepared, enriched, and cared for. Thirty . . . sixty . . . an hundred. Thirty, sixty, or a hundred grains for each one sowed,—an increase not uncommon. Some of our Western harvest-fields exceed this. Even in good soil, there is a diversity in the amount of increase. He that hath ears, etc. A phrase frequently used by the Saviour to emphasize special teachings.

II. Christ's Use of Parables, (vss. 10-12).

Verse 10.—Alone. The great crowd had gone, but the twelve, and other friendly adherents, (they that were about him) remained. These asked him of the parable; that is, for the interpretation of this parable, and why he made use of parables, in speaking to them (Matt. xiii. 10), which was now done for the first time.

Verses 11, 12.—First, he explains why he used parables. His preaching had drawn the line between two classes,—those knowing the mystery of the Kingdom of God, and those lacking this spiritual enlightenment. The difference was one of grace. Is given. That is, granted as a favor. Unto you. The offer was to all who heard him. Myseries, etc. Something not made plain before, but only dimly revealed; but now receiving a fuller revelation,—the glorious truths of the gospel. See 2 Cor. ii. 7, 8, 10. Them that are without. The unenlightened, and unbelieving. All these things. Omit these. Seeing they may see, and not perceive, etc. A paradox, implying an external sensuous perception, without moral or spiritual conviction. They saw with their eyes and heard with their ears, but did not see and hear with the heart. Be converted. The thought is, not that Christ spoke to them obscurely in parables for fear that they might be converted. But the phrase expresses a lack of desire on their part to relinquish sin, which held them as a disease; an unwillingness to be healed through repentance and reformation.

III. The Parable Explained, (vss. 13-20).

Verse 13.—Having stated why he used parables, he proceeds to unfold the Parable of the Sower. Know ye not this parable? Even the disciples needed his interpretation, in order to have a right understanding of it. By expounding two of his parables, (the Sower and the Tares), Jesus gives a model for interpreting such as he has not explained.

Verse 14.—Sower. The chief sower is Christ; but every gospel teacher and preacher is a sower also. The word. Luke says (viii. 11): "The seed is the word of God"; that is, the written revelation (Mark vii. 13), or the spoken word (Luke v. 1), or Christ himself (John i. 1). Words are seed only as they are full of Christ. "Christ is the live seed, and the Bible is the husk that holds it."—Arnot. Christ the Sower sows himself, just as Christ the High Priest offers up Christ the Sacrifice.

Verse 15.—These are they, etc. There is no fault in the seed, or in the sowing; but hard and unbroken hearts are not fit soil for saving truth. They "understand it not," (Matt. xiii. 19). It does not penetrate, or make an impression, but lies loosely on the surface of the heart, ready to be snatched away. They hear with the ear, but not with the soul; and Satan (Luke, the devil; Mark, the evil one) ever on the watch, cometh immediately. In the parable, it is the birds who catch up the seed thus exposed. Here it is Satan, who sends wandering, or evil thoughts, to rob the mind of the truth, "lest they should believe and be saved," (Luke viii. 12).

Verse 16, 17.—The second class of fruitless hearers. On stony ground. On the rock. See New Version. Here, the heart's hardness is not broken up, but covered with a thin coat of sentiment, into which the word drops. But it never reaches the conscience. There is a shallow experience of "feeling bad and then feeling better," but no deep, genuine work. The emotions, or sympathies, or esthetic feelings, are easily excited, and the word is immediately received with gladness; but there is no root. Stony ground hearers endure but for a time. The first slough, as in the case of Phileas, cools their ardor, and sends them away offended. New Version, "straightway they stumble."

Verses 18, 19.—The heart not thoroughly purged in the beginning, and not carefully cultivated afterwards, represents the third class of unprofitable hearers. The cares of this world. Those anxieties rebuked by Jesus in Matt. vi. 31-34, and which especially oppress the poor. This is the snare of those who have little. The deceitfulness of riches is the snare of those who have much. The lust of other things includes all other worldly distractions. Choked the word. By withdrawing the thoughts

from it, and absorbing them in worldly things; and by coming in between the soul and the vital warmth of the Sun of Righteousness. Becometh unfruitful. The tender plants of piety need careful cultivation, in order to bear fruit. For, as Dr. Arnot says: "The thorns are at home, the wheat is an exotic; the thorns are robust and can hold their own, the wheat is delicate and needs a protector."

Verse 20.—Good ground. "The goodness of this last soil consists in its qualities being precisely the reverse of the other three soils, giving its whole vigor and sap to the plant."

SUGGESTED LESSONS.

The seed of the Word is adapted to every soil, to the nature and condition of man; but the soil needs to be prepared to receive it.

We see the reason why so much gospel preaching seems thrown away. It is sown upon the way-side, and upon rocky ground. The history of many a church-goer is written here.

The sun sustains the healthy plant, but withers the rootless one. Afflictions have the same effect upon true and false piety.

The test of good soil is its fruit. The one great business of the Christian is, to bear "much fruit." John xv. 8.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Procure a handful of wheat or other seeds, and shew the class. Explain sowing and growing.

Jesus told the people about the sower while he was sitting out in the little ship near the shore. Jesus' stories are called parables. This is the parable of the sower. Read verses 3-8. What was the first word? Why did he say "Hearken"? What is the wayside? The little seeds could not sink into the earth, and so hide away from the sparrows.

What does the root do for the plant? It takes in food; it cannot get food from stones.

Verse 7. What are thorns or "weeds"? Which grow faster, weeds or wheat?

From one little seed a plant could grow; when it is ripe, we might find at the top thirty little seeds just like the one we planted, or perhaps we might find sixty or even a hundred, all grown from just one little seed.

In what kind of ground must the seeds be planted to bring forth so much fruit as that?

Application.—Every lesson you learn out of God's Word is like a seed planted in your heart. Satan does not want you to remember God's words. If a child doesn't care very much and doesn't listen very well when he is taught, then God's Word only goes a little way into the heart, and Satan can easily take it out. Which ground is such a child's heart like? When a little child cares very much and tries very hard to remember and obey God's Word, then what kind of ground is his heart like? Then God's Word goes down very deep, and Satan cannot get it away. —Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Behold the Lamb of God.

Now you shall see the full weight of sin pressing upon "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Every morning and every evening there had been a lamb sacrificed in the tabernacle as the type and emblem of this Lamb of God who was yet to come. A pretty little innocent lamb that a child might fondle was brought up to the priest, and its warm blood was made to flow in pain, and it was offered as a sacrifice upon the altar. But now He comes,—the last of all lambs, the first, too,—the real lamb, the Lamb of God, of which the others were but types. Him they took, silent, passive, submissive, and nailed him to the cross. There He hung in the glare of the sun till the torture of tender nerves in his hands and feet produced such fever in his flesh that he said, "My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws, and thou hast brought me into the dust of death." Such was the dissolution of his entire frame it seemed as if he had no longer a solid body; it was melted with bitter pain. There he hung, men jeering him, till at last the sun could bear the sight no longer, and veiled his face; the earth could no more endure to be the stage for such a tragedy, and began to rock and reel; the very dead were stirred as though they could not slumber in their graves while such a deed was done, so tombs were opened and many arose. Oh, it was a wondrous spectacle. Those that saw it smote upon their breasts, and went upon their way. It was the Son of God "bearing, that we might never bear, His Father's righteous ire." Say, then, beloved,

have you ever seen this sight? Have you eversen it as to sing with our poet,—

"My soul looks back to see The burdens thou didst bear. When hanging on the cursed tree, And knows her guilt was there."

Do you trust Him? Are you believing Him? His cry from the cross is, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." Have you so looked? If so, then you have had the preliminary sight; and I pray God so to strengthen the eyes of your understanding that you may gaze more intently on this vision of the Apocalypse,—"The throne of God and of the Lamb."—Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.

Educational.

Forty-seven young ladies pursued collegiate studies at Harvard during the past year. Of this number all but eight were from Massachusetts. A correspondent of the Christian Intelligencer, in a reference to the "Annex," says: "Greek and Latin received the largest share of attention from the Harvard women, twenty one grubbing among Greek roots, and seventeen among the Latin. Mathematics fascinated eleven, history twelve, philosophy nine, physics five, botany two, astronomy four. Although there there is so much woman suffrage 'in the air,' yet only one student took up political economy. Many fine courses were not taken. While eleven went to the German instructor, only two were here instructed in French, and two in Italian; while nobody passed through the open door that welcomed them to knowledge of Spanish and Sanskrit. Prof. Pierce waited in vain for a lady student desirous of introduction to the easy mysteries of cosmical physics; and in like manner the instructor in experimental physics was passed by. There was not even one student in music, though Mr. Paine had three courses to charm the willing."

"The girls," says the London Spectator, "have taken a remarkable place in the London University honors list of the B. A. examination. Of the six in the English honors list, the first and two others were girls. In mathematics, the first of the three in the honor class was a girl. In the examination for Bachelor of Medicine, the first of the three honors in anatomy went to a girl; and one of the three honors for the medical and pharmaceutical chemistry went to a woman."

Cultivate the physical exclusively, and you have an athlete or a savage; the moral only, and you have an enthusiast or a maniac; the intellectual only, and you have a disease oddity—it may be a monster. It is only by wisely training all of them together that the complete man can be found.—Samuel Smiles.

Queen Victoria has authorized the publication of the musical works of the Prince Consort: In the dressing-room of the Prince Consort at Balmoral all remains as though he were alive. His hats and gloves are on tables and on the bed there is an effigy of him. (?)

An exchange has this "educational" item: "John Clark yesterday entered the Freshman class at the Industrial School. He had qualified himself for admission by the theft of a purse."

Temperance.

A style of argument often heard. Look it in the face and it says: "Let us license sin; then when it is organized and shows itself a crime and a curse, let us convert blood-money into charity for the accursed criminals and the innocent but greatest sufferers." Beautiful theory! Behold it in practice; Jonathan Beckwith, a young lawyer in a western state, drank a pint of whiskey, and late at night started for home. It was mid-winter; he lay out all night, and was so frozen as to lose his reason. Sent to the Insane Asylum, he lingered thirty-one years, at an expense to the State of \$8,000. Horrible practice; for when would charity make a profit of \$8,000 on one pint of whiskey? The dram-seller gets the profits, the dram drinker bears the pains, the poor innocent mothers, wives, and children suffer the torments, and sober people pay the bills. Beautiful theory! Where we cannot do better, we will tax the rum traffic in dollars and cents, through Civil Damage Laws or otherwise, for every penny of damage done. But we will not call it charity when they are forced to clothe the naked and bury the dead whom they have stripped and killed. Where we can do more, we will blot away every iniquitous license law, and make God's woo upon dealer and drinker a social and legal fact.

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