

THE CHURCH AND THE LABORER.

SIR.—In *Grip* of the 15th inst., there is a piece of poetry respecting the "Knights of Labor," wherein the Church is referred to as though she were the enemy of the toiling masses. It is by Mr. Alexander McLachlan. Let the following be a reply:

I.

Who in the ages long since past,
When men were bound—not free,
Proclaimed alone from east to west,
That there was liberty?

—The Church.

II.

Who in the times of Druid Priests,
Entered the groves of oak,
And snatched from superstition's grasp,
Those ground beneath its yoke.

—The Church.

III.

Who, when the Saxon slaves were seen,
In Rome—fair mistress of the sea,
Who sent the great Augustine,
To be a missionary?

—The Church.

IV.

Who was it wrote the charter,
Which gives so much e'en now
To those who labor at the loom,
Or drive the farmer's plough.

—The Church.

V.

Who cured the body in dark days,
Where doctors were unknown,
And shed a light in middle age,
When learning there was none?

—The Church.

VI.

Who built for weak and sickly men,
In years long past and gone,
The only poor-house in the land,
The monastery home?

—The Church.

VII.

Who gave the Bible to the poor,
And to a woman soul,
Who taught our fathers to be men,
When kings by wrong did rule?

—The Church.

VIII.

Who now to prison sends a gleam
Of sunshine day by day,
Who keeps the hospital close by,
Where many sufferers stay?

—The Church.

IX.

Who goes to slum and alley dark,
Where few would care to go,
Who lifts the dying in her arms,
When they are smit with woe?

—The Church.

X.

Who for three hundred years or more,
Has trained the infant minds,
When School Board was a thing of nought,
And governments unkind?

—The Church.

XI.

Who asks each man to favor man,
Who would the slave make free,
Who fights for man against the drink,
His greatest enemy?

—The Church.

XII.

Who takes the child within her arms,
And seeks to do it good,
Who teaches what is right from wrong,
Who gives us wholesome food?

—The Church.

XIII.

Who tells us what our duty is,
Who offers help to all,
Who warns the oppressors,
Lest he by wrong should fall?

—The Church.

XIV.

Who made the white man brave and bold,
Who makes the negro glad,
Who binds up broken hearts and cheers
The orphan sore and sad?

—The Church.

XV.

Who has been, is and e'er shall be
The poor man's greatest friend,
Who travels o'er both land and sea,
God's goodness to extend?

—The Church.

NOTE.—Mr. McLachlan threatens us by saying that the masses are about to revolt, and to cast aside the Bible, turning to "Shakespeare and Burns," as to a sure and certain refuge. That these poets, (such in his order), take high rank in the literature of the world, no one for one moment doubts, but that dead men are to be the justices in the case of capital and labor, even Henry George would hardly allow. The Church never dies.
C. A. FRENCH.

Notes on the Bible Lessons

FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS, ON
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BIBLE LESSON.

"The Growth of the Kingdom."—St. Matthew xiii. 31, 33.

Our Lord has just been teaching his disciples by two parables, that of the sower, and that of the tares, that in the work which they had undertaken they must expect difficulties and disappointments; all would not be plain sailing for them. Much of their work would apparently be useless, just as a large proportion of the seed failed to come to perfection. So, too, though in the visible church there would always be good and bad mixed, so that the eye of man no division is possible, yet that the Lord "Knoweth them that are His," and that no mistake will take place at the final separation. And now in our present lesson we have two more parables spoken by our Lord, for the encouragement of His disciples, the parable of the mustard seed, verses 31 and 32, from which though such a small seed, a tree grows large enough for birds to perch on, and shelter in. And the parable of the leaven, verse 33, where in the familiar process of making bread, He shows how, if a small piece of yeast or rising be placed in the dough, it works silently, and after a while, on being kneaded, the whole is leavened, and made light and wholesome. Now let us see what these teach us about the Kingdom of Heaven, or the Church of God.

1. *Its Outward Increase.* The comparison of a tree is often used in the Bible to show the rise of a kingdom, see Dan. iv. 10, 12; Ezek. xxi. 8, 9; Psalm lxxx. 8, 11. The seed of most trees is very small, and in this represents the small and weak beginning of the Church, at first only Christ Himself and a few humble disciples, even after the ascension we are told the number was about 120, see Acts i. 15. Who could have imagined that these, for the most part illiterate men, would have turned the world upside down by their preaching, Christ crucified yet how rapidly it spread, just as a tree sends out branches in all directions, offsets from these, too, so the church spread, and has gone on ever since, spreading from one country to another until one day it shall over-spread the earth. See what God says in Heb. ii. 14. It is reckoned that there are in the world now, more than three hundred of millions of professing Christians; men of every nation, race, and language belong to it. Just as the birds of the air of different kinds found shelter in the branches of the mustard tree, so the Church of Christ is gathering in people of various races. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the soul's medicine, and the soul's food. It is a shelter for man's great need. Thus we see how the parable of the mustard seed speaks of the outward growth of the Church. Now see how that of the leaven speaks of

(2) *Its Inward Growth.* It is necessary that we examine to see what effect the Church of Christ has on the world, in its reforming influence. It might have increased in size and numbers only, and yet not be of much good. Does it make men and women better? Notice how silently the leaven works in the dough, yet affects the whole, 1 Cor. v. 6. So silently God works in the Church, St. Luke xvii. 20, by His Holy Spirit, St. John iii. 8. The effect of its leavening influence may be seen in the altered condition of the world. As we have seen in former lessons, Christianity has been the means of bringing about better treatment for the poor, the sick, has elevated woman to her proper sphere, and raised the whole moral tone of society.

But there are two practical questions which we should ask, when we read this parable. (a) Is the leaven of Christ's kingdom working in my heart and changing its corrupt nature? Where there is true religion in the heart, the whole inner man is influenced by it, the life is altered by it. As St. Paul says in 2 Cor. v. 17, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new

creature." (b) Am I doing what I can to leaven those around me with the same holy leaven? Let our prayer be, "Lord, give me that grace, which can make me a new creature, which can fit me for Thy service, and fill me with love, and joy, and peace."

Family Reading.

BY MORE AND MORE.

I brushed the floweret at my feet,
Inhaled its breath, then passed it by;
Next day its beauty caught my eye,
In scent and beauty doubly sweet.

I picked a pebble from the mould.
Its lustre marked it for my prize;
But when 'twas seen by wiser eyes,
My pebble proved the purest gold.

A bird bemoaned its prison wire,
Its coat was dull, it could not sing,
I set it free; it spread its wing,
And lo! it flashed a flame of fire.

Even thus the world is in our eyes;
We look, we think we've looked it through;
We look again with broader view,
New beauties everywhere arise.

And so it is with Love divine;
With downcast eyes we feel its light;
But wiser grown, with higher sight
We turn our eyes whence Love doth shine.

Ah, then what joy our being thrills!
Love's radiance growing more and more:
A beacon on the eternal shore,
It lights us up the heavenward hills.

—ARTHUR K. GRIFFIN.

THE COMPLAINT OF THE WARDENS.

My wardens have entered a complaint. They say that they have a most painful duty to discharge on Sundays, and other days of divine service. They both smiled sadly and went on. They say to carry the alms basin around has a deleterious effect on their religion. They come to have a dreadfully poor opinion of some of the congregation and that interferes with the cultivation of charity and good will. They notice the persons who generally give, and those who do not; even how much this and that attendant usually puts in. They know almost to a certainty how many deadheads a pew has in it, and so they attribute much of their lack of growth in grace to carrying the basin. Year in and year out, this deteriorating process goes on, until in a short time they fear they will have but little piety left. They have both seriously thought of resigning, if only to save themselves from becoming spiritually wrecked. At the same time, they see that the matter would be no better for their successors than it had been for themselves. No one can have an idea, they insist, of the alms-basin on the spiritual condition, until he carries it for a few months. A ten-button kid glove will lay a ten cent piece in the basin with complacency, and a gold-headed cane will deposit a nickel with evident satisfaction. If fifteen dollar bonnets contribute a quarter, they do well; while a sixty-dollar shawl satisfies its conscience with half that sum, throwing off the fraction. In fine, the position of warden is unmistakably trying, made worse by the secrecy which the office enjoins upon those who hold it. I asked them if there could be no remedy found for this distressing condition of affairs. The junior warden suggested that there be no more secret balloting; but that every one attach his card to his contribution.

The senior suggested that he be allowed to act as usher for six months, and to seat people in Church, not according to their dress, but according to their past record at offertory time. I told my wardens that my congregations were small enough now, and on the whole that their office was not so trying as mine, having to offer the alms on the altar. They never seemed to have thought of that, and agreed to continue in office the rest of the year.
—Country Parsons.