

of the sages to study. They are either like a sponge, or a funnel, or a strainer, or a sieve. The sponge sucketh in everything without discrimination, the funnel receiveth at one end and poureth out at the other, not retaining anything, the strainer letteth the wine pass, and retaineth the lees (that is, that which is worthless), and the sieve separates the common flour from the true flour, each for proper use in its proper line."

"No parable teaches everything. Path, rocks and thorns cannot change. But men can plough up the trodden ways, and blast away the rock, and root out the thorns, and with God's help, can open the doors, that the sower and his seed may enter in. We

are responsible for the soil, else His warning were vain. "Take heed therefore, how ye hear." (Luke 8: 18.)

"The power to hear is a power to receive life from God through the ministry of man, the infection of life in one, infecting with life another. To come into contact with one who is alive to God through Jesus Christ, is to come to the gates of a great opportunity, yet from which we may go away without entering and receiving the blessing there is for us."

George Herbert said that the worst sermon has a text in its forefront, and that from the worst we may learn patience.

#### TEACHING HINTS AND HELPS

Here are seven parables of the Kingdom, one to be taken up this Sabbath, three next Sabbath, and three passed by for the present.

For an advanced class Arnot's classification is interesting. The Kingdom of heaven. I. RELATIONS. (1) *The Sower*, relation of the Kingdom to different classes of men; (2) *The Tares*, to the wicked one. II. PROGRESS. (1) *The Mustard Seed*, progress under the idea of a living growth; (2) *The Leaven*, under the idea of a contagious outspread. III. PRECIOUSNESS. (1) *The Hid Treasure*, preciousness under the idea of discovering what was hid; (2) *The Goodly Pearl*, of closing with what is offered. IV. SEPARATION. *The Draw-Net*, separation between good and evil in the great day.

To-day we study the parable of the Sower.

Be sure, first of all, that the class understands the meaning of the word parable. (To throw or cast side by side, to compare; a revelation of things heavenly by comparison with things earthly.) Ask the scholars to make out for next Sabbath a list of all the parables of our Lord.

It will be well to take this parable and its interpretation together. Children's minds are very agile. They will easily leap backwards and forwards from the one to the other.

Three dangers:—(1) Of dwelling too min-

utely on the details of the parables. Have the class understand clearly, of course, about the sower and the seed, and the way the seed is scattered, and the different sorts of soil, and the reasons why, in some cases, there is a yield and in other cases none. But do not let the lesson run off into a mere drill in natural history. (2) Of expatiating too abundantly on the teachings of the parable. Follow our Lord's method. He was very brief in the interpretation. He would probably have been briefer still had He been speaking to children. Make the points clear, but not with wearisome elaboration. Rather leave the parable itself as a seed bed in the minds of the scholars. (3) Do not follow out each little stem and twig of the parable. Our Lord never did. He struck out the great central truths which a parable was intended to illustrate and passed on.

Questions for Announcements—13. What events between this Lesson and last? Where is Jesus now? What new way of teaching? What is a parable? How many in this chapter? For whom does the sower stand? What did he sow? In what four places sown?

4-8. What happened to seed by wayside? On stony ground? Among thorns? In good ground?

18, 19. What was the subject of Christ's