

Lesson III.

THE GROWTH OF THE KINGDOM

July 21, 1912

Mark 4 : 26-32 ; Matthew 13 : 33—Memory Verses, 26-28.

Golden Text—Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.—Matthew 6 : 10.



26 And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground ;

27 And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

28 For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself ; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

29 But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

30 And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God ? or with what comparison shall we compare it ?

31 *It is* like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth :

32 But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches ; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.

Matt. 13 : 33 Another parable spake he unto them ; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

THE LESSON RETOLD

The people of Israel did not understand much of what their leaders and teachers, the scribes and Pharisees, tried to teach them. But when Jesus came, His teaching was so simple that even the smallest child could understand. One of the ways, as we have said before, in which Jesus taught them many things about the kingdom of God, was to tell them parables and stories about everyday happenings and then explain in what way the kingdom of God was like these.

So He told them one day about a tiny seed of wheat which a man planted in the ground. He watered it and cared for it, and because he did this it grew larger and larger. Then the leaves opened and the ears of wheat grew and grew until they were ripe. Then the man brought his sickle and cut down the stalk of grain, and throwing away anything that was useless carried the good ears into his barn.

By this Jesus meant that in every man, God planted good seed. He gave him life, food, clothes, home and a loving law to guide him, and God expected the man to grow up kind

and good and to bring forth fruit, or good deeds, for Him, because God had done so much for him. Those who did this were gathered into God's house at harvest time,—which meant the end of the world,—and those who did not were thrown out as useless, because they had borne no fruit for God.

Jesus told another story, too, which was much like this. The kingdom of God, or the love of God, He said, was like a mustard seed, which is one of the smallest of seeds, yet when it is sown in the ground, it grows until it becomes such a great plant that birds can build their nests in its branches. So it is with our love to God. At first it seems only small, but if we are truly His children, it will go on growing stronger and greater until we love Him more than any one else, and try in all that we do, to please Him.

Jesus told still another story about a woman who was making bread. She took a little leaven, or yeast, and put it into flour, and it spread and spread, until it had reached every part of the flour and made light and good bread. This meant that whenever the