

Junior Topics

AUGUST 23.—THE MESSAGE OF THE TREE. Gen. 2: 9; Psalm 1: 3; Matt. 3: 10; 7: 16-20.

There are very many lessons taught by the trees and we cannot hope to even mention half of them. The kinds of trees are so various, their number is so innumerable, they are put to so very many uses, that when one tries to make a list of what they teach, he is quite lost. So let us just try to-day to learn something about the way the trees grow. In this manner we may see something that will suggest to us how boys and girls should grow into noble men and beautiful women. For, this we must never forget, the trees as we see them in the forest or orchard are not made by articles; they have *grown*, not been made. And it is that way with a real man or woman. When God wants them he grows them, and when he wants men and women he grows them, too.

As we look at a tree standing so stout and strong against the wind, or with spreading branches all loaded with delicious fruit, we must not forget that we see only *half* the tree. The other half cannot be seen. It is away down in the earth. Picture what a whole tree looks like with roots spread out in every direction below the surface, trunk rising up into the air, and branches spreading out on all sides. Then, remember that the most important growth that a tree makes is *downward* into the soil and away still farther down into the subsoil until it gets such a mighty and firm grip on the earth that the storms cannot uproot it. If it does not grow downwards in this way it will not be straight and sturdy and strong. That is the first lesson.

Think, too, that this downward growth is necessary for the very life of the tree. The roots are all alive and active in helping to feed the tree. There is a wonderful process that no wise man can fully describe whereby the nourishment for the growing tree is extracted from the soil and the air, so that it shall have just what food it needs to make the leaves grow, the blossoms expand, and the fruits mature. If this nourishment is not supplied the tree dies.

We are all something like trees in this matter. No boy can become a strong man able to stand against storm and struggle in life, no girl can become a beautiful and useful Christian woman, without first growing downward into the soil of God's Word and everything is found for the developing and maturing of character. Like the trees, we must take God's *way* of growth if we would be well grown. Then, like the trees, we shall have a source of strength that though unseen by others will support us always. The most important hold for a tree is on the soil, and the most important hold for a boy or girl is on God's Truth, the only real and sufficient food for the soul.

Then see how the tree grows *upward*. As it reaches down so it grows up. And as it grows, all through the trunk those wonderful vessels run that like our veins and blood-vessels carry life through all the system. We like to see a beautiful maple or a sturdy old pine; there are decorative trees without number that bring pleasure to all who look upon them; but none of them can grow up unless they first grow down. Remember that, and seek not for something showy but for something strong in character. Beauty that goes with strength will last, but beauty that is weak and superficial cannot last or be of value in life.

Then, last of all, notice how the trees grow *outward*. It is on the branches that the fruit is borne. But the branches would be of little use without the trunk, and the trunk could not stand without the roots. So, up from the deepest rootlet and out to the smallest twig, the sap is carried and the tree becomes fruitful. It is just so with the Christian. We are to make an outward growth for the world. That is our real and final test. "Herein is my Father glorified that we bear much fruit." So said Jesus, our Master and Lord, and every boy and girl should aim at such a useful life by and by as shall be like His. But we must not hurry to see the fruit. The young tree must grow first. It needs care. It must be protected and fed. The fruit will come by and by. So with our Juniors. Let them *GROW*.

Suggestion.—It may add interest to your meeting if you can arrange with a number of the Juniors to prepare a list of trees mentioned in the Bible, and compile these on the blackboard, e.g.:—

Apple—Song of Solomon 2: 5 (first part).

Almond—Ecc. 12: 5.

Cedar—Psa. 92: 12.

Chestnut—Ezek. 31: 8.

Mulberry—2 Sam. 5: 24.

Poplar—Gen. 30: 37.

Palm—Psa. 32: 12.

Pine—Isa. 41: 19.

Oak—1 Sam. 24: 26.

Olive—Judges 9: 8, 9.

Willow—Isa. 44: 24.

AUGUST 20.—JAMES EVANS. THE MAN WHO GAVE THE INDIANS THEIR WRITTEN LANGUAGE. Psa. 23.

"The Apostle of the North," as James Evans has been called, will be forever remembered for the great gift he gave in the invention of the Cree Syllabic characters, which enable the Indians to read in a very short time. As a boy James Evans had thought of being a sea captain like his father, but a few water trips soon changed his mind. He was born in 1801 at Kingston-on-Hull, England. When about twenty-two years of age he sailed for Canada and taught school in Quebec, where he was married. About this time the Methodist Church had undertaken a great work in the education of the Indians of Ontario. Rev. William Case was the missionary in charge. When he appealed to the young man who was teaching the white settlers' children to take up the task of instructing the Indians, Mr. Evans gladly assented. In 1828 he began as a teacher at Rice Lake, near Cobourg, among the Ojibwa tribe. These Indians had no Bible, some hymns, and other literature in their own language. Three years later he was sent to Credit Mission, and in 1834 to Sarnia. He found the books which the Indian children were using difficult for them, and he longed to give them a simple language. He carefully studied the sounds of their language, which were few and simple, and succeeded in arranging a sign alphabet, which, however, was not acceptable to the Bible Society. Being the happy possessor of a strong faith in God and an arduous worker for the people whom he was seeking to lead into a fuller light, he labored on patiently and energetically. At length he arranged a spelling book and an interpreter's book. His fame had spread so that the Indians of the north wanted to go down to hear the teaching of the great white man who was telling such wonderful stories from God's Book.

The Hudson Bay Company became alarmed at this and feared loss to their trade. They asked that missionaries be sent up to the North. In 1840, therefore, accompanied by Henry Steinhauser and Peter Jacobs, two Indian preachers,

James Evans went to Norway House. Other workers from England joined them. Evans found these Indians without a written language. He began the study of the Cree sounds. His knowledge of shorthand proved valuable. Finally, to his great joy he succeeded in giving them the Cree Syllabic, which the Indians called "birds' bark talking," because it was first written on birds' bark. Soon they could read. He taught them also many gospel hymns which they delighted to sing around their camp fires.

Evans in his printing made "type from tea leaf, used sturgeon oil and soot for ink, and the white birch bark for paper." Some of the results of this invention were, "The Bible was translated by Henry Steinhauser and John Sinclair. Printing presses were taken to Norway House. The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in England sent type. Christian hymns were sung everywhere, as far west as the Rocky Mountains. The Bible Society began and continues to publish the Bible and other Christian literature in the Cree Syllabic. The Cree Syllabic is used by all missionary societies. Our missionaries down through the years have helped in translations.

His field was from Norway House to the Rocky Mountains, and he visited as far west as Athabasca Landing and Dunvegan, in the Peace River district. He hoped to establish missions at all the Hudson's Bay trading posts. The company at this time paid a great part of the expenses of the missionaries.

One of the conditions upon which the Hudson's Bay Company helped the missionaries was that the missionaries would not interfere with the business interests of the company. James Evans insisted upon keeping the Sabbath holy and keeping the liquor away from the Indians. The company said he had broken his promise. James Evans said what he was doing was for the best interests of the company.

He was taken to England to answer charges against him. False reports had been circulated that he had broken his promise. He had done nothing wrong. After reaching home from a meeting at which he had given an address on his work, he died—some say from a broken heart. Evans' life motto was "Forward," and although he was then only forty-six years of age he still lives in his wonderful gift of a written language which has brought blessing to thousands of Indians and which will continue to carry the message of God's love to the Indians of our great north land.

(Read the leaflet adapted from the book "The Apostle from the North," as issued by the Forward Movement Office.)

C.G.W.

SEPT. 6.—THE BIBLE FOR ALL THE WORLD. Psalm 119: 105: 1-5.

Look at the picture on the next page and it will tell you a story. Of course it is only a fancy, but it is after all a very real one. There is the big round earth and all about it are boys and girls of all sorts. They live everywhere and every one of them needs the Bible as they need food. Not all of them eat just the same kind of food, but without nourishment they can never become able men and women. Now the Bible is food. It says it is "meat," "milk," "honey,"—look up such references,—and like "bread," everybody needs it. That is why we should send the Bible into all the world. Of course there are other reasons, for the Bible brings light, wisdom, guidance, and lots of other very important blessings; but, if we think of it as *food* that will be enough. It is food for the mind, the soul must have it for nourishment, and no one can be as strong as God would like to have him who does not eat Bible food. So everyone everywhere needs the Bible.