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Jan. 19.]

SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER.

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transformation was so complete and so genuine—no mere "profession," but real possession—that they had favor with all the people. These facts are surprising chiefly because so many persons experienced this change on the same day. Day by day, every year, in all lands where Jesus is preached in the power of the Spirit as Peter preached, or where anyone receives the word gladly as these persons received it, the same transformation is wrought. It is an experience to which thousands give definite testimony. It is the experience which has inspired the hymns which thrill the hearts of men wherever sung; the experience which sends men and women into distant lands braving danger and suffering to make the name of Jesus known. It is the experience of passing from death unto life, and is as different from a cold belief in God and an intellectual acceptance of the truth of his word as the close-shut bud is different from the open, fragrant flower.

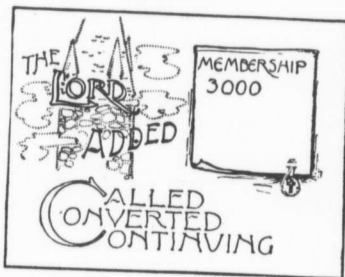
I think as a rule the time of this new birth can be definitely told; most persons who have the experience recall a day, a moment, a circumstance, when they entered into the new life. The approach to it may be gradual; education, thought, association, sorrow, discipline, may prepare the soul for that moment of surrender to the work of the Spirit; but the moment is definite, and the work is known in the soul's consciousness. It is a new birth. I have watched the opening of some beautiful flowers—very slowly they unfold, until suddenly they break out in perfect bloom. Mushrooms grow under the ground unseen, and after a rain they spring up in perfection, as we say, "in a night." So the truth may be growing in the heart, and under the rain of the blessed Spirit it will spring into the beautiful bloom of a changed heart, a new nature, a happy experience of knowing God in a new relationship. A birth is a beginning. We begin to live when we are born of the Spirit, and, living, we grow. Jesus said the Spirit would be our guide, and our teacher. To what rich and high experiences, to what broad and inspiring knowledge, he will guide, who can say? "The path of the just is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

Do not grieve this heavenly teacher and guide. Listen when he speaks in your heart. It is his voice that says, "Give me thine heart." It is his voice that tells you when you do wrong. Just open your heart to him, let him have his own way in you; then you will live and grow in goodness as flowers live and grow in the rain and the sun.

The Teachers' Meeting.

The Means, Fruits, and Source of Grace:
1. The Means: Convicting souls, repentance, baptism, the remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and separation from the world.
2. The Fruits: Accepting instruction, submitting to baptism, steadfastly working for God, keeping close together, manifesting mutual love, rejoicing in God, influence with the people.
3. The Source: God....1. The Effects of the Sermon, verses 37-42; 2. The Characteristics of the Early Church, verses 43-47....How to Be Christians; How Christians Should Be.... The Lesson Homily of our *Illustrative Notes* presents this lesson as a study of the Church: It was composed of believers; it was an organized body; an organization with government; a preaching church; it had the sacraments; it was a united church, sincere, spiritual, devout, courageous, steadfast; it was mutually helpful, happy, active, influential; hence it was successful. Each of these thoughts elaborated in the Homily spring naturally from the verses of our lesson.

Blackboard.



To the small congregation who formed the early Church of Christ, the Lord himself added such as should be eternally saved. Their number grew by divine addition, the reckoning being not of man, but of God. Then each true convert was one whom the Spirit called, and therefore in fellowship with others he "continued." The number of those who thus allied themselves with the Church in heart and life has constantly multiplied, until to-day the "real" Christians number ???,???,??? souls.

Coloring.—Building, brown; words, white; scroll, pale blue; seal, red; lettering, yellow; lower words, blue lined in yellow.