

The Sunday School Banner

TORONTO, APRIL, 1874.

"LET IT GROW!"

LET what grow? The scandal against a fellow teacher's orthodoxy? The ill-feeling against a fellow teacher? The disposition to leave the preparation of the lesson till Saturday night? No,—not that.

Then, what is to grow? Our patience? Our love one to another? Our forbearance with our scholars' neglect? These should grow most certainly, but it is not of these things that we desire to speak.

Let the lesson grow. The best prepared lessons are the ones which are not *made*, but which *grow*. Shall we further explain our meaning? There are two teachers in a school. The one begins the preparation of the lesson on Sunday night, before retiring to rest. The beginning is simple. Possibly it is all included in reading the lesson over once, and in lifting the heart in prayer for the Divine lesson. That does not amount to very much, perhaps; but let us have that teacher's course through the week. On Monday it is read again, and parallel passages searched. He goes to his business. Some one makes a casual remark. The teacher at once thinks of his lesson. "Why," he says, "that illustrates a point in the subject for next Sunday." He sees something on the street. He is a wide-awake teacher, and, lo! he has another thought on the lesson.

The day's work is done. He comes home, and picks up the paper. He reads a paragraph. Nothing very extraordinary about it, one would think, but out comes the note-book and pencil, and his lesson is enriched by one new thought. Each day's experience is much the same. No illustration escapes his attention. Incidents,

facts, snatches of conversation, that, at other times, would receive no attention, all help; and when, toward the close of the week, he comes to devote an evening to the arrangement of his lesson, he finds that by the aid of his note-book he has more material than he can use. Perhaps he thinks he only gave one or two hours to the preparation of the subject—he gave a week.

There is another teacher. He is quite as able as the other. When Friday comes he can't tell you what the lesson for Sunday is about. But he is too honest to go to his class unprepared, and he has too much self-respect to stop away from Church on Sunday morning to prepare it. So Saturday night finds him with BANNER, and LEAF, and Clarke's Commentary, and Foster's Wonderful book of grand illustrations. He reads, and studies, and arranges, and goes to his class with what he esteems, and what perhaps is, a very well prepared lesson. But it lacks something. The illustrations are good. The exposition is capital, but the scholars would like teacher No. 1 better. Why? The first grew all the week in the atmosphere of human experience and human study. The first was like the plant that remaining out doors catches every shower, every ray of sunshine, and even the rough weather, but which is declared *healthy*. The other to some extent, resembles the hot-house plant. It is very beautiful, but its growth was forced. This is very nice for special occasions; but wouldn't you prefer a flower from the garden, with all nature's fragrance, to a flower from the hot-house, when the very maturity is a sign of unhealthy forcing? Both are good. Both are beautiful. But the flower that grew naturally is the best. So with our lessons. Bear the exhortation, therefore, dear fellow teachers,

LET THEM GROW!