

way, a very mustard-seed. But the growth is without limit. The mustard-seed in time becomes a huge plant, a tree in comparison with the weeds around it.

Christ's kingdom began with the dozen fishermen that followed Him in Palestine. The dozen increased to the 500 brethren that saw Him in Galilee after His resurrection and the few that worshiped in an upper chamber at Jerusalem. At Pentecost the number was increased to 3,000. Then multitudes were added. Then a great company of priests believed. Then God's people were scattered abroad by persecution and went everywhere preaching the Word. Presently Roman writers were declaring that this new sect filled the whole earth. Since then the work has gone steadily forward. Modern missions are searching the far corners of the earth. The handful of corn in the top of the mountains already shakes like the cedars of Lebanon.

And one of the marvels of the age is that as birds rest in the branches of the mustard-tree, so innumerable people who do not accept Christ are yet enjoying the civilization which He brings. Heathen Japanese to-day are welcoming a Christian civilization. The godless of America seek homes within the sound of the church-bell. There they find better laws, good order, education, better society, in fact greater privileges of every kind.

The parable of the Leaven brings out the *principle* of growth in the kingdom. There is in Christianity a living power, a mysterious, germinant principle that is ever at work. It is life within. Modern science gives a force to Christ's parable that those of His time knew nothing about. Leaven is a minute plant that rapidly grows and permeates the dough. It is placed in till the whole mass is filled with it. Christianity extends itself by a similar development. There is in it literally a holy contagion. Every soul influenced by the new life is bound to convey the same life to his neighbor. Contact is a guarantee of growth in Christ's kingdom. If the leaven of the Gospel has power and works as it should, every Christian will win his neighbor, till a church be formed; every church will influence its vicinage till the community is Christian; every converted community will extend its circuit till all touch and the nation is brought to God; every Christian nation will seek to bless the world till the millenium dawns and the kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. Thus the problem of missions is exceedingly simple. Contact and contagion are its solution.

Two parables are devoted to setting forth

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

The kingdom offers a great treasure to all who become its citizens. King George of England desired subjects in his newly acquired Acadian lands and he offered free a large tract to every one who would settle there. So our King encourages us to acknowledge allegiance to Him by a promise of treasure. What is the treasure? The unspeakable privilege of citizenship in the kingdom. We may call it salvation or we may call it the possession of Christ as our best friend.

Experiences vary in discovering this treasure. The conjunction of the parable of the Hid Treasure and of the Pearl of Great Price plainly indicate this. Some find treasure only after a painful search. Others come upon it unexpectedly. It is folly to hope to enter the kingdom with identical experiences. Here is one born in the slums of a great city, brought up in the midst of vice. He is besotted and vile. To him a new heart means a terrible wrench from the past. Another is the child of Christian parents. He never knew the time when he did not pray and did not love his Saviour. He cannot tell when he passed into the new life. He only knows that in him Christ is all and in all. The heathen-born and the one born in a Christian land, the learned sceptic and the simple student of the Bible, necessarily come up by different avenues to the gate of heaven.

We are all alike, however, in this—the treasure of Christ's kingdom can only be obtained by giving up all else. "Whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple." The ancient church in Gainsborough, England, was the mother of innumerable churches that now dot this continent from ocean to ocean. In the movement of that church the members pledge themselves to hold everything subject to the will of Christ, "whatsoever it may cost." The pledge was essential. It lies at the foundation of the Christian life. There is no Christianity and no salvation otherwise.

CANADIAN PULPIT.

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The Ministry—Christ's Gift to the Church.

(Eph. iv. 7-16.)

Concluded from last issue.

Provision was made for a twofold estate or condition of the Church which He had appointed there should be. The first—the period of its election and founding, the second—the longer period of its building and edification, and different officers and gifts were necessary unto these different states.

Two things are extraordinary in the first erection of the Church after Pentecost. An extraordinary aggression was to be made upon the kingdom of Satan in this world as upheld by all the potentates of the earth, the concurrent suffrage of mankind, with the interest of laws and prejudices in them. Then there was the casting of men into a new order, under a new rule and law for the worship of God, this was involved in the planting and erecting of churches the world over. With regard to these conditions therefore, extraordinary officers, with extraordinary authority and abilities were requisite. "Was then for this end," He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists." It was necessary that these officers should have their immediate call and authority from Christ, antecedent to all order and power in the Church, for the very being of the Church depended on their power and office. And what was originally done by these persons, is now done by their word and doctrine. It is thus the Church is said in Eph. ii. 20, to be "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets."

Then when the Church has been established, follows the longer period of its building and edification, which is to be carried on according to the rules and laws given by Christ, in the ordinary administration of all the ordinances and institutions of the Gospel. To this end Christ gives ordinary officers—"pastors and teachers," who, by His direction, or which is the same thing in this important subject—by the authority of the Holy Spirit, were ordained in every Church, Acts xiv. 23, 24. And these are all the teaching officers that He hath given unto His Church.

Here it is important to notice the practical questions; how doth it appear that Christ gives to the Church now her ordinary officers and ministers? I answer, He did it originally and continues to do it.

1. By the law and rule of the Gospel wherein He hath appointed the office of the ministry in His Church, and so always to be continued.

Were there not such a standing order and institution of His, it were not in the power of all the Churches in the world to appoint any such among them whatever appearance of necessity there might be thereof, and if any had attempted any such thing, no blessing from God would have accompanied what they did.

Hereon we lay the continuance as to authority, of the ministry in the Church.

If there be not an ordinance and institution of Christ to this effect; or, if such having been granted, the force of it is now expired, then we readily admit that the whole office and rank of the ministry is a mere usurpation. But, if He has given "pastors and teachers" unto His Church to continue until His saints in all ages come unto a perfect man unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, as vs. 11-13 clearly show, and hath promised to be with them as such unto the consummation of all things, Matt. xxviii. 18-20.

If the apostles, by His authority, ordained elders in every Church and city, Acts xiv. 23; Titus i. 5, and who therein were made "overseers of the flock" by the Holy Ghost, Acts xx. 28; having charge of feeding and overseeing the flock that is among them always until the Chief Shepherd shall appear, as in 1 Peter v. 1-5.

If believers are required by Him always to yield obedience unto them, Heb. xiii. 7, 17, with other such plain declarations of the will of Christ in the constitution and continuance of this office, if these things are so clearly taught us in the Word of God, then this foundation standeth firm and unshaken as the ordinance of Heaven which shall not be changed.

2. The Lord Christ giveth and continueth the ministry by bestowing spiritual gifts and abilities on men to discharge the duties and perform the work of it.

This opens up a vast and most important field of thought and matter, which it is not our purpose to enter at this time; only to say that spiritual gifts of themselves make no man actually a minister, yet no man can be made a minister according to the mind of Christ who is not a partaker of them. To make a ministry simply by virtue of outward order, rites and ceremonies, without