



## Junior Department.

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### Weekly Topics.

#### FEBRUARY TOPIC: "GROWTH."

February 9th.—"The message of the Bible for me."—Psalm 119, 105: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and light unto my path."

The message of the Bible is one of "light," and "life" are combined. (See John 1: 4-5.) Without light even a plant will soon die. What the sun is to the soil Jesus Christ is to the soul. Light also stands for "knowledge." Darkness represents ignorance. The heathen are said to be in darkness and the shadow of death because they know not Jesus, who is "light and life." And the Bible gives us the best and highest knowledge. It teaches us about God, sin, salvation, duty, destiny, and informs us of all we need to know so as to live right and die happy. "Light" also means "growth." No dead thing can grow, but a small plant into the light, and you know how it will grow. So with our hearts. They grow in goodness, as we live in the light of God. And light means "holiness." It is an emblem of purity. The darkness represents sin. "Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil." To walk in the light calls us to pure words, good thoughts, noble actions, holy motives—to follow Christ who is Life. Light also represents "truth." How clear, how transparent it is. How the sublimities glisten and sparkle. Emblems of truth are they all. A lie is a dark and evil thing. Let us hate and shun it for ever. And truth means safety. They who walk in truth are in a safe way. Lying means danger and death—so the message of the Bible to us is one of—

Life. Intelligence. Growth. Holiness. Truth. } And not only are these blessings "for me," but for all. Let us send the Bible everywhere, that all people may be blessed by its "light."

February 16th.—"The way I may find that message."—John 5: 39: "Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me." (R. V.)

Jesus Christ is our life. The Scriptures testify him. They do not take his place. So we may find the message of light and life leading us up to Christ. Mere Bible reading is not by itself enough. If it does not reveal Jesus to us, it will not do all God means it to do, for the whole message of the Bible centres in and leads up to Christ. The Jews studied the Scriptures very earnestly; but they would not see Jesus in them (John 5: 40). So they did not have "life" as he wanted them to. All our Bible reading should show us Jesus more clearly, or it will not be a great blessing to us. So the only sure way to find the message of the Bible is to ask for Jesus. He is in the whole Book. Whatever it teaches centres in him. Salvation runs like a golden thread from Genesis to Revelation, and he is our Saviour unto

life eternal. So, as Evangelist Moull outlines it, God's Word is a

Blessed  
Inheritance,  
Bringing  
Life  
Everlasting.

But the "Life Everlasting" is in Jesus Christ alone. The Bible "bears witness" of him—of his power and grace, of his words and works, of his life and death, and, above all, of his mercy and love. So it calls us to him, and is a

Beautiful  
Invention,  
Bearing  
Love  
Eternal

to us, and all who read or hear it. Let us "search" and send it. Searching ourselves and sending to all who have it not.

February 23rd.—"Memorizing the Bible."—Psalm 119, 11: "Thy word have I laid up in my heart, that I might not sin against thee." (R. V.)

It is a striking fact that old people remember much more clearly what they learned many years ago than what happened a week or a month ago. This is because the memory of the young is more retentive. Hence, youth is the best time to learn the truths of God's Word. We cannot know too much about it; but to know it for its own sake is the most precious knowledge of all. The "heart" was used as the seat of affection or love. Not only with our intellects are we to know God's Word, but in our loving sympathy for it we are to enjoy it while we obey its precepts. Bible truths "laid up" in the heart are valuable possessions—they provide an arsenal full of ammunition for us to use against our enemy, Satan. Jesus found it so. He used the Word of God against the tempter, and overcame temptation by the strength of the truth, which he quoted when he repeatedly said, "It is written." Look at the subject well, and then see if the heart in which God's Word is "laid up" is not a

Holy  
Earnest  
Affectionate  
Reverent  
Thankful

These qualities are much needed. Boys and girls who do not consent to Satan, who are full of earnestness for God, who love him and one another, who reverence everything sacred, and who are grateful for God's many mercies, are needed everywhere. The only way to obtain such is to fill minds and hearts in infancy and childhood with the precious and powerful truths of God's Word.

#### MARCH TOPIC: "STRENGTH."

This is what we all would like—strength! "A strong boy!" How he prides himself! How his companions admire and perhaps envy him. The glory of young men is their strength. It is as true now as in Solomon's day. Physical muscle is admirable, but often put to a bad use. It cannot of itself make a man. Many abuse it, and in place of being strong men in the Bible sense, they are the agents of the devil in wrong-doing, and poor, puny, miserable weaklings before God. Moral muscle is better than physical. It may not be the lot of every boy to be a strong man physically; but all may be strong morally. And if both physical and moral strength are united, so much the better. The topic for this month tells us one way in which we may become really and truly

strong—by prayer. God's strong men have all been prayerful men. Samuel the child began to be strong when he learned to say, "Thy servant heareth." He talked with God, and so we read of him that he "grew" and that "God was with him and did let none of his words fall to the ground." By that it is meant that Samuel the boy grew into Samuel the powerful prophet—a man of great influence among the people of his country. Such men are still in demand. Our country, our church, our homes, all need such. From our present Junior ranks they may come. Therefore, as God said to Joshua, let us say to our growing youth, "Be strong and very courageous; for that thou mayest have good success." Strength is essential to success, and true, honorable, abiding success is impossible without a measure of moral stability. How is this to be obtained? The next weekly topic tells us.

March 2nd.—"The secret of strength."—Isa. 40, 31: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength."

David, in praising God, said, "The Lord is my strength and my salvation." He acknowledged his weakness apart from God. Christ taught his disciples the same great fact. "Without me ye can do nothing." "Strengthen thou me," has been the prayer of many thousands of God's servants. To "wait upon the Lord" means to come to him in prayer by faith and realize the help of his presence.

Find.  
Ask.  
Incline.  
Take.  
Hold.

These are emphatic words embodied in the faith that draws upon the infinite power of God, and then uses that power for victory over sin. We are to be strong; not to "show off" but to serve. Serving God and our fellows is the one covet and seek strength. No one who failed to use his strength for God's glory possessed it long. From the time of Samson to the present this has been true. And vice versa. From the time of Peter it has been true that the exercise of the strength of faith in witness for Christ has increased moral heroism. The disciples at Pentecost waited upon the Lord, they received power, they used it, it remained with them, and renewed them gloriously. Our Juniors must pray it they would grow and continue strong. Without prayer, none can retain power to do God's will; but by prayer daily offered, all may overcome sin and live to do the will of the Lord. In times of weakness, therefore, pray, and as truly as in the days long gone by, even now God will give "power to the faint" and increase strength to them that have no might in themselves.

March 9th.—"True prayer."—Matt. 6: 6; Mark 1, 26, 27.

As a Bible reading, dealing with this subject, study the following outline with your Juniors. True prayer involves—

1. Sense of want, i.e., hunger is a condition and prophecy of supply. All Scripture recognizes this.
2. Sincerity.—Ps. 78, 36, 37; Jer. 29, 11, 12, 13; Job 16, 17.
3. Humility.—Gen. 18, 27; 32, 10; Jonah 2, 7; Luke 18, 13.
4. Obedience.—Isa. 38, 3; Jno. 15, 7; 1 Jno. 3, 22; 1 Pet. 3, 15.
5. Purity.—Ps. 15; Prov. 15, 8, 29; 28, 9; Isa. 1, 15; Jas. 4, 3.
6. Faith.—Matt. 21, 22; Mark 11, 24; Jas. 1, 6, 7.
7. Definiteness.—Acts 12, 5; Jas. 5, 16.