

TIME.—27 A.D.

PLACE.—Capernaum.

RULERS.—Same as in Lesson I

CONNECTING LINKS.—These parables probably follow in immediate connection with those of Lessons XI and XII.

EXPLANATIONS.—*Put he forth.*—He uttered or spoke. *Mustard seed.*—The seed of a shrub which grew wild, and which the Jews also planted in their gardens. *The least of all seeds.*—Not true botanically; but true as compared with the various kinds of seed familiar to Jewish husbandry. *It cometh a tree.*—Under the hot climate of the valleys of Palestine this shrub grew large and with such vigour as to make it equal to a small tree. *Lodys in the branches.*—Build nests there, and dwell there as their home. *Like unto leaven.*—Leaven, or yeast, was the common material for fermentation necessary to make what is known as leavened, or raised bread. *Three measures of meal.*—Some comparatively large quantity as measured by the small quantity of leaven. *Treasure hid in a holt.*—Treasure lost, and its position unknown to any one, and accidentally found. *Gathered of every kind.*—Not only fishes, but other sea creatures and *birds.*—*Cast the bad away.*—That is, every thing that was not marketable fish.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. Parables of Growth.

In all these parables, what is meant by the Kingdom of God?

What is the thing emphasized by the parable of the mustard seed?

Was this parable at all in the nature of a prophecy?

With what classes of people did the Church begin?

To what growth had it reached early in the fourth century?

What is the principle which controls the action of leaven?

In what respect is Christianity similar in its action?

2. Parables of Treasure.

In what respect is the Kingdom of Heaven like treasure hid?

How are spiritual truths discovered?

How was the hid treasure discovered?

How was the pearl of great price found?

What two classes of converts are represented by these two men?

What is the demand which Christianity makes of every soul?

In each of these cases, how was the valuable possession obtained?

What price do we have to pay for an entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven?

3. A Parable of Judgment.

How does the parable of the net differ from the preceding ones?

Who are gathered into the kingdom by the net of Christianity?

What will surely follow if unworthy and wicked men do enter the Church?

Of what is the landing of the net and the examination of its contents a picture?

In all that Christ teaches of the judgment, what one thing is always taught concerning the sinner's destiny?

What hint concerning the relations of the Old Testament to this Gospel is found in the last verse of our lesson?

What was the great purpose of the Old Testament?

What is the individual Christian's duty as a member of the Kingdom of God?

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

The Kingdom of God grows: in us and with us, if we will; without us, if we will not; but it grows.

What a very mustard seed in the time of Tiberius. One crucified Galilean, eleven peasants, one suicidal traitor.

What a great tree under Constantine?

"All that he had." A man can be a member of the kingdom in no other way. Christ gave himself for us, and he will have us give ourselves for him. Perfect consecration.

"And after that the judgment."

When the wicked and the just are once separated, what will unite them again?

HINTS FOR HOME STUDY.

This lesson closes the year. In studying it you ought to prepare for the review work of the next Sunday.

1. Look up the places in which Jesus had been in these six months of study.

2. Find how many men he had come into personal relations with.

3. His teaching and preaching tours.

4. Compare the teaching of our last two or three lessons with the early teaching, and see how they differ.

5. Make an outline of these seven parables, comparing each one with all the rest.

6. Write two practical thoughts as suggested by each parable.

7. Write two questions on each parable for your teacher to answer.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The Kingdom of Heaven.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

12. What do you understand by the Lord's sitting at the right hand of God?

His having all authority given to him in heaven and earth.

Psalm cx. 1; Ephesians i. 20, 21; Acts x. 42; xvii. 31.

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