

# Our Young People

## GROW.

Topic for May 6.—“**How Christians Grow.**”—Mark 4 : 26-29.

“Grow in grace and the knowledge of the heart.”

### A Seed Sermon.

BY REV. CHARLES E. JEFFERSON, D.D.

The New Testament says that Christians grow slowly. It does not say this in order to encourage indifference or sloth, but to guard against impatience and discouragement. Our age needs this parable of the growing seed. We are probably the most feverish and impatient generation that ever stormed across the earth.

This parable is given by Mark alone. Mark, evidently, did not like parables so well as miracles. He gives us but four parables and these four are compressed and clipped, as though he begrudged them room. But he thought this parable of the growing seed too good to be omitted.

The parable as told by Jesus had for its primary object the encouragement of Christian teachers and preachers, but it is good for everybody. The seed is the gospel and the field is the world, but we may properly narrow down the field to the individual heart. The growth of the kingdom is conditioned on the growth of the individual.

“So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed upon the earth.” The kingdom of God is like unto many things; a growing crop is one of them. Jesus liked growing things. They suggested spiritual lessons. He found sermons in wheat, and tares, and mustard-seeds, and lilies, and fig-trees. Created by the same God who is creator of the soul, these growing things give revelations of the unchanging laws of growth. The man in the parable is a farmer. This parable says, “Go to the farmer, thou fretful, anxious busybody; consider his ways and be wise!” A farmer, although a worker, knows that there are limits to human care and toil. He plants his seed, and gives it time to grow. He sleeps through the nights, and gets up mornings and goes about his work and keeps doing this through the weeks, paying no attention to the mysterious movements which are going on in the field.

“The earth beareth fruit of herself.” Man is not the only worker. The earth works. The sun works, and so do the clouds. The universe is alive. It is a bundle of forces, and they are all in action. A seed is industrious and ambitious. When dropped into the soil it goes to work. It and the earth and the heavens work together. They do not wait for human interference, but go right on and bring forth fruit. But the fruit is not the product of a moment or a day or a week. Life advances by growth. Growth is gradual. There are stages of

development and each stage must be completed before another is entered on.

“First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.” The movement is progressive. Each stage surpasses its predecessor. A seed will do wonders if you plant it and give it time. So will a noble ambition or a righteous choice, or any one of God’s thoughts. Let a man, therefore, keep his hands off. Away with morbid introspection and meddlesome haste. There is time to work and there is also a time to keep still.

“But when the fruit is ripe, straightway he putteth forth the sickle, because the harvest is come.”

This is the sum of the whole matter. Do not fuss and fret, but wait. Do not try to leap, but be content to grow. Do not be discouraged because most of your virtues and graces are nothing but a blade. Do not force your advancement. Souls, like acorns, cannot be forced. Cultivate the time sense. Ponder the wise words of the psalmist. “Wait on the Lord.”—C. E. World.

### For Daily Reading.

Mon., Apr. 30.—First the seed. Matt. 13: 31, 32  
Tues., May 1.—Growth expected. 2 Pet. 3: 13-18  
Wed., May 2.—Growth awaited. Mark 11: 12-14  
Thurs., May 3.—Fruit bearing. Col. 1: 1-10  
Fri., May 4.—With fulness. Eph. 4: 1-15  
Sat., May 5.—Have I grown? Matt. 7: 16-18  
Sun., May 6.—Topic **How Christians grow**  
Mark 4: 26-29

### Self-Cremation of Buddhist Monks.

It is known that the Buddhist monks or bonzes, in order to move the hearts of their co-religionists, will inflict the severest bodily chastisement upon themselves, and even mutilate their members. Their fanatical zeal and their desire to enter into the bliss of the Nirvana at times drives them even to suicide. On the island of Patu is found a high cliff from which those priests and monks who are ambitious to attain the holiness of Buddha hurl themselves into death. This place is called the “abyss of the goddess of mercy.” Others seek to attain the same end by ascending a funeral pyre which they set on fire with their own hands. The coolness and utter contempt of suffering and death which often accompany self-cremation almost surpass belief. Several years ago announcement was made that on a certain day a young priest from the cloister of “the Mount of Spirits” would burn himself alive. The faithful of both sexes who desired to attend the ceremony were urged to be present in good time, and were asked not to forget to bring something along as a gift to the zealous ecclesiast. When the multitude

arrived at the cloister, another bonze, jealous of the attention and gifts secured by his colleague, declared that he too would burn himself alive, and hastened to make his preparations. The piles of wood were erected, one on each side of the temple, so that those who could not get a good view of the one ceremony could do so of the second. During the hours preceding the ceremony, the candidates were surrounded by their relatives and friends and a curious crowd of outsiders who had come to ask of them their influence in the world above. Magnanimously both promised to aid all in their power, permitted themselves to be venerated as true Buddhas, and thereby increased the finances of the cloister materially. Finally, the hour had come. Slowly they passed between kneeling crowds, and then chanting and singing, took their positions. The first of the two ascended the pile, erected in the shape of a tent, and lighted it with his own hands, using an ordinary match. The multitude could, through the door and the openings of the tent, watch every stage in the cremation. Until the flames and smoke made it impossible any longer to behold the monk, he could be seen in the flame singing a sacred hymn and beating the time with a skull carved out of wood. An hour later the second candidate for death made his debut. He had closely watched his predecessor and coolly entered his own tent of death, and passed through the ordeal as the other. The ashes and bones of the two were carefully gathered and deposited in the cloister of Wen-Chiao, where they are preserved as sacred relics. Women, too, in their religious devotion, cremate themselves, although their favorite way of seeking death for the cause is to hurl themselves into some sea or river and drown. No other type of religion on earth produces such exhibitions of fanaticism as are produced by Buddhism.

For Dominion Presbyterian.

### Psalm V.

A New Version by W. M. M.

Give ear unto my words, O Lord;  
Hear my imploring cry;  
My morning prayer to Thee I'll frame,  
And watch for a reply.

For thou art not a God that hath  
In wickedness delight;  
The evil and the boastful man  
Thou'lt banish from Thy sight.

All workers of iniquity,  
And them who lies employ,  
And men of bloodshed and deceit  
Thou hat'st and wilt destroy.

But in Thy loving kindness I  
Will in Thy house appear;  
I toward Thy holy temple, Lord,  
Will worship in Thy fear.

O, lead me in Thy righteousness,  
Because of them that fair  
Would fall upon me, and Thy way  
Before my face make plain.

No steadfastness is in their mouth;  
Their heart doth ruin seek;  
Their throat's an open sepulchre;  
They flatter when they speak.

Hold Thou them guilty; let them fall,  
By their own counsels quelled;  
In their transgressions cast them out,  
For 'gainst Thee they've rebelled.

That those who trust Thee may be glad  
That those whom Thou dost guard  
May joy, and they that love Thy name  
Exult in Thee, O Lord.

For Thou wilt bless the righteous, Lord;  
In life's great battle-field  
With favor Thou wilt compass him  
As with a goodly shield.