

The Sunday School Banner.

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UNCONSCIOUS SOWING.

ST. MARK records a beautiful parable from the lips of our blessed Saviour, which, like all other of His teachings, is full of the sublimest, grandest lessons,—“And He said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how: for the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself,—first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.” Mark iv. 26-28.

To all engaged in the work of sowing the seed of the kingdom these words must bring comfort and joy. The faithful sower is encouraged to still further patience and faith. It is not for him to fret concerning the growing,—this is the Master's care. But this parable has suggested the thought, that much of the seed-sowing is done when, perhaps, we are least conscious of the fact. Apply this to the work in which the Sabbath School teacher is engaged. For an hour and a half the scholars are under our care; for only a part of the time are we consciously and designedly sowing the seed. But perchance the word spoken thoughtlessly, or the action never intended to be observed, may set influences in motion that shall not rest this side of eternity.

Dr. Bushnell, in a late edition of some of his discourses, advances the idea with peculiar forcefulness and pertinence, that the *direct* influence which we exert bears but a small proportion to that of which no account is taken. And is it not true that

a single act, or a single word, may do more to influence another, than the studied eloquence of the most polished of earth's orators? Who has not recognized and felt the influence of a consistent and holy life? And how powerless are the most earnest pleadings, when the lips which utter them speak both good and ill?

A traveller to the far east tells of the destruction of a magnificent temple by an apparently insignificant cause. A single seed from a spreading vine was borne by the wind till it lodged in the ivy towers of the stately edifice. The seed took root and spread its branches, and these, working their way among the pillars and surrounding them, finally, by a strange power, so gathered themselves together as to accomplish a ruin which would have baffled the tramp of “old king time” for many a year.

And so, all unconscious of the act, we may drop seeds where they shall by and by bring forth fruit, either fit to be gathered by the reapers with the golden harvest, or to be burnt with the chaff as worthless and dangerous.

Then how consistent our lives should be! Ancient story tells of one whose husband by long absence at the wars—no account of his whereabouts having been heard—was thought to be dead. Many suitors offered themselves to her; but, hoping against hope for her husband's return, she refused all offers till a certain piece of work she was doing should be completed. But strange to say, though she toiled hard all day apparently little or no progress was made. The secret transpired at last,—each night she undid all her hands had done during the day.

Not a few to-day, from far different motives, are, by acts and deeds—much more powerful than words—undoing what might otherwise accomplish great good.