

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Lesson VIII. February 24, 1918. Jesus Teaching by Parables—The Growth of the Kingdom.—

Mark 4: 21-34. Commentary.—1. Personal responsibility (vs. 21-25). 21. candle.—The lamp was a vessel containing olive oil in which a wick was placed. This was a familiar household article, under a bushel—it would be unreasonable to light a lamp and put it under a measure, where it would be hidden and not used in lighting the room. Its natural and proper place was on a stand, where its light could reach every part of the room. The parables of Jesus were intended to give forth spiritual light and not to obscure it. The "bushel" was a measure holding about a peck. 22. there is nothing hid, etc.—What Jesus had made known to his disciples regarding the kingdom, whether by parable or otherwise, was to be made known to the world. Jesus said on one occasion, "In secret have I nothing" (John 18: 20). This is in opposition to the workings of those associations guard their so-called good things from the eyes of those outside their respective orders. 23. let him hear.—The sentiment of this verse was often repeated by our Lord. Man is endowed with intelligence and a spiritual nature. He has the power of choice, hence he can receive the truth or reject it. The responsibility of securing his soul's welfare rests upon himself. 24. take heed what ye hear.—Jesus exhorts his hearers to consider well what he was saying to them to make good use of it, with what measure ye mete, etc.—You shall be treated according to the use you make of your opportunities of learning. If you consider it well, and make good improvement of what you hear, you shall be rewarded. If not, your reward shall be small. This is a proverbial expression.—Barnes. 25. he that hath, to him shall be given—He who receives the truth and obediently and trustfully practice it, shall be enriched spiritually. 26. The mystery of growth (vs. 26-28). 26. so is the kingdom.—The phase of the kingdom of God which is here explained and illustrated is the growth of the word in the heart. a man.—The sower is not made prominent in this parable, but Christ is primarily the sower. seed.—In the parable of the sower the soil was made prominent, showing personal human responsibility for the reception and germination of the seed, while in this the seed is prominent, showing the inherent principle of life and growth. The seed is the word of God and is sown by the means of preaching, exhortation, personal testimony and the godly living of Christians. God designs that it should germinate and produce a harvest. into the ground.—The sower sows while there is soil, and soil that is capable of affording the conditions essential to growth. The ground represents the human heart. The seed of the gospel falls into the hearts of those who hear it in sincerity. 27. night and day.—When the seed is once entrusted to the soil, the work of sowing is completed, and the sower may pursue his regular course of life. His remaining on the watch night and day would not hasten the germination of the seed, nor would his sleeping at night and going about his accustomed occupation by day retard it. The seed should spring and grow up.—As the seeds has the germ, the principle of life, in it, and when placed in the soil under proper conditions will germinate, develop and yield a harvest, so the truths of the gospel have in them an energy that, when they reach the soil of a receptive heart, will produce a fruitage of righteousness, peace and joy. 28. The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself.—The earth exercises of its own accord its function in the growth of the seed. The farmer can not cause the seed to sprout and grow, but he can leave it undisturbed in the soil and protect it so that nature can do her part. In the natural world the laws that are in operation were established by God Himself, and the soil, the rain and the sunshine have each a part in the production of the harvest from the seed. God also has set in operation laws in the spiritual realm, and the seed of truth placed in receptive soil will bring forth fruit. The blade... the full corn in the ear.—The beginnings of the kingdom in the soul are small, but the nature of the soul is apparent in the blade that springs from it. If this growth is not interrupted by unbelief and other sins, there will result strength and maturity. "The faith and love" of the believing soul increase abundantly. It is justified freely through redemption that is in Christ. It has the ear which is shortly to be filled with ripe grain. The outlines of the whole image of the soul are the full corn. The soul is purified from all unrighteousness, and having escaped the corruption that is in the world, it is made a partaker of the divine nature, and is filled with all the fulness of God."—Clarke. 29. When the fruit is brought forth, etc.—The farmer harvests the grain when it is ripe, and appropriates it to his own use. It is the harvest that he has in view when he sows the seed, and he is not slow in entering upon the fruits of his labors. III. Manifestations of growth (vs. 30-34). 30. Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God.—Having considered this aspect of the gospel system, as revealed to the world and operating in the hearts of men, he passes to explain another phase of the kingdom. It is like a grain of mustard seed.—The comparison is appropriate because the kingdom of heaven was apparently insignificant in its beginnings. As men looked at him, Jesus was an obscure resident of an unimportant village of Galilee, who had gained a few followers from the ranks of the common people. The multitudes were not becoming his followers, and the prospects of a kingdom, worthy of the name, were by no means flattering. It was like a grain of mustard seed in its smallness, but

we must not forget that it was compared to something that had a germ of life in it. Sown in the earth—Again the familiar things of life are employed to convey the lesson to the people. The mustard plant was well known in the East and was raised by the Jews. Less than all the seeds.—The mustard seed was the smallest that the farmer or gardener was accustomed to sow. Jesus did not hesitate to admit that His kingdom was small in its beginning. 32. Becometh greater than all herbs.—Matthew says it "becometh a tree" (13: 32). The mustard of Palestine grows to an enormous size, sometimes reaching a height of fifteen feet. It is an herb in nature, but a tree in size. The comparison between the size of the seed and the full-grown plant was striking and well known to those whom Jesus was addressing. This truth was a revelation to them. They could see simply the sprouting seed, and that not clearly, while the magnificent growth which he pictured to them was far in the future. Fowls of the air.—Under the shadow—Travelers in the East tell us of the spreading branches of the mustard plant, and of the birds flocking to it in great numbers, when the seeds are ripe, of which the birds are exceedingly fond. The kingdom of heaven has inherent energy. It has never halted, never faltered from the beginning. It is destined to move forward until "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ" (Rev. 11: 15). 33. As they were able to hear.—Jesus adapted His teaching to the capacity of His hearers. 34. Parable... expounded.—He placed the truth before the people in simple, parable form, and to His disciples He explained more fully the things He had thus spoken. Questions.—What parables are included in this lesson? What is meant by the phrase, "kingdom of heaven"? What is the main teaching in the parable of the seed cast into the ground? What is said about the manner of the growth of the seed? What is to be harvested? What does the parable of the mustard seed teach? What scriptural statements are there which express the mighty spread of the gospel?

PRACTICAL SURVEY. Topic.—Christ's Kingdom. I. Its spiritual interpretation. II. Its extensive blessedness. I. Its spiritual interpretation. The kingdom of heaven is a kingdom of truth, illustrating this we have two parables, the one representing the hidden operation of truth applied to the souls of men as an unseen influence, the other its visible manifestation before the world. The first lesson taught us here is that progress in personal piety is vital and not mechanical. The union of human fidelity with divine grace constitutes the co-operation with which the mysterious work goes on. The law of development is hidden though real. God advances the new life according to its own laws. It is not a life of uncertain promise which may never be fulfilled, but of reality and substance. It is not a matter of outward form, but one of intrinsic value. The ear is full of corn. The parable shows us a life having answered its highest end. The seed once sown grows according to its own nature. It has life in itself, and when once fairly deposited in congenial soil and subjected to the quickening influences of heavenly sunshine and shower, it silently and mysteriously develops the life that is in it according to the ordinary principles of growth. It comes up to the expectation of the sower. The law of life is progress toward its own possible completeness such as its nature admits of. The seed contains in itself the germ of all the future growth. Hence all expectation must actually begin and end with the grain which is sown. The lot of the seed describes the lot of him who receives it. God permits man to cooperate with him, but the great work of grace is his. Human effort is founded on confidence in divine laws. II. Its extensive blessedness. In the parable of the mustard seed the kingdom appears as an organic whole, a source of blessing for all who come under its sway. The former parable pointed to the history of the growth of the seed, this to the inherent vitality of the seed. The former laid emphasis on the field; this on the seed. It was not without a purpose that the contrast between the first beginnings of Christ's kingdom and its expected future should have been put before the apostles in such a striking form. Christ designed evidently to impress upon them that there never had been so mighty a consummation on so inconsiderable a beginning, that never had there been so vast a disproportion between a thing at its beginning and that same thing at its conclusion as was to be exhibited in the case of that kingdom, the setting up of which was his work on earth. Such was the declaration for the future of his kingdom. The apostles were witnesses to its beginning. The small beginnings, the silent growth and the final victory of the grace of God in the individual soul when extended to multitudes, would present a force not to be ignored. The religion of Jesus Christ holds sway over intellect, heart and will. Its subjects form a strong representation of embodied truth. The world cannot determine the blessedness of the kingdom of Christ in its midst. This kingdom has its rule over the individual soul, its sway over human society, its invisible work within and its manifest and mighty achievements without. It transforms character and renews the world all by the reception of living truth. T. R. A.

New Spring Hats. Mushroom brims are seen in a few. Brims that are short behind must be long in front. A black satin poke is one of the new shapes. Tricornees are seen made of satin and straw. Turbans are worn also, are short in back and tilt-over the eyes. "Does your husband ever refer to your honeymoon?" "Yes, he often wishes he had the money he spent during it."—Judge.

About the Crops and Live Stock

Timely Items and Practical Information to Be Put Into Effect

Sows are sometimes wintered in outdoor houses, and where this is done it is particularly necessary that there be time to see that the houses are dry and that plenty of bedding is supplied. When the ration of the brood sow is increased, a little more grain should be fed, but it is likely that it will be necessary to reduce somewhat the amount of roughage fed. At this time, too, care should be taken to decrease such heavy feeds as barley, corn, etc., and substitute some such grain as oat chow. A boar ordinarily requires warmer quarters in winter than a sow. This is true particularly if the season is a heavy one. If the boar is not working he can stand as much cold as the sow without injury. If skim milk is limited in amount for swine, limited quantity of tankage may be fed to good advantage. In general practice it is the custom to begin feeding young pigs from 2 to 3 pounds of tankage for every 100 pounds of grain fed, gradually increasing this amount to 10 per cent. of the grain ration. Do not let the pigs lie on the cement floor. Paralysis, stiffening of the joints or crippling in some form may result. If there is a cement floor in the piggery it is better to provide planking over the top or raised sleeping quarters. Remember that as a general thing pigs should weigh about 200 pounds before being marketed. There are certain animals, such as the shorter, earlier maturing animals, which can be marketed more economically at about 180 pounds, while others, longer and with bigger frames, can be profitably fed to about 220 pounds. Breeding ewes require exercise and plenty of it. It means stronger lambs and less trouble at lambing time. Get your hands on each member of the flock at least once a month, since wool is very deceiving in determining the condition of the ewes. It may be necessary to divide the flock into two parts, keeping the thinner ewes separate from the rest and feeding a little heavier with grain in order to bring them into proper condition for the lambing season. Where the main flock is in good condition now, alfalfa hay or good quality red clover, together with two or three pounds of roots daily, will be sufficient until two or three weeks before lambing. Water and salt are essential for the health and comfort of the sheep. Salt should be before them continuously. If plenty of water is provided, ewes will drink surprisingly large quantities of it. If roots are not available, two pounds of silage daily will provide plenty of succulent food. The silage must be of good quality, however, because poor silage will upset the digestive system of the sheep more quickly than of dairy cattle. Have the pen doors wide open enough to prevent crowding the sheep as they pass in and out. Narrow doors and consequently crowding may result in injury to the young lambs born later, or even abortion. Feed racks should be built so that chaff and other dirt will not get into the wool. Dirty wool from careless feeding or improperly constructed racks may mean a loss of from ten to twenty cents per pound on the wool sold next summer.

Sheep should be provided with cool, well ventilated quarters, where there is no draft. One good idea for providing plenty of ventilation is to have the doors to the pen divided into upper and lower parts, so that at night the lower part can be shut, while the upper part remains open whenever weather conditions permit. Exercise is of the greatest importance for pregnant mares. This can be provided by allowing them to run in the yard or working them carefully. Pregnant mares are better for a little work, but they should be carefully handled and not allowed to flounder through deep snow. All horses not being worked should be given plenty of exercise. This is one of the important points in the winter care of live stock, which is most often neglected. Well saved oat straw will often take the place of valuable hay, providing it is accompanied with a small amount of grain. Turnips and mangels or, better still, carrots, if available, are valuable horse feed, as they tend to keep the bowels in good condition. The growing colt's feet should be looked after frequently and trimmed about twice during the winter. Start early and get your colt halter broken. The older colts, which are to be put in harness this year, should be broken to carry the harness and to drive singly or in a team. This will save much unnecessary trouble when the spring rush starts and every horse is needed on the land. Keep lice out of the manes and tails of horses. Lice are indicated if the animals rub against the stalls or stable. Use any good coal-tar dip or insecticide. Digestive troubles in horses at this time of year frequently come from bad teeth. The teeth of both young and old horses should be examined for any unevenness. Where a fairly even surface is not found in the teeth of any animal, they should be filed by some competent person. Thrush is caused by standing in dirty places and lack of attention to the hoofs of horses. The feet should be well cleaned out occasionally and the stable should be kept as clean as possible. Young colts should be kept growing, but not too fat. Oats, bran, roots and good quality clover or alfalfa hay makes good feed for young colts. The nursing calf will need some water when two or three months old. Milk is more of a food than a drink, and the young calf should not be denied what water it needs. Give the calf access to clover or alfalfa hay when a few weeks old. It will easily learn to eat hay if allowed to run with older calves. Two parts bran, two parts oat chow and one part olicake make a good grain mixture for young calves. They can be given all they will eat until they are about three months of age. The young beef bull should be forced into rapid growth steadily. The calf bloom must not be lost. Probably no fat that is put on animals of any kind is more valuable than that put on a young bull of the beef breeds.

It is sometimes said that flesh is bred on animals and fat is fed on. This is certainly true in the case of beef and dairy animals, since beef animals are born with a greater quantity of flesh and muscle than dairy calves. The problem of feeding fattening steers is very serious this year. Ordinarily steers which are to be marketed before the grass, would now be receiving about three-quarters of a pound of meal per hundred pounds of weight. Whether feeders can find it profitable to do this in 1918 is questionable. It may be wise to do as suggested by Professor George E. Day and modify somewhat our feeding methods, by marketing animals in somewhat unfinished condition, but thereby conserving grains which may be used, and are constantly needed for human consumption. The amount of grain fed to fattening animals will depend somewhat on the type and breeding of the animal. It is probable that animals of highest type and breeding will make the feeding of high priced grains profitable, even in 1918. On the other hand it is quite likely that animals of poor type any conformation will prove more profitable if fed on less grain and a higher percentage of roughage and coarse feeds. It is well to remember that bloating is often caused by feeding frozen roots to calves. Frozen silage fed to older cattle may also cause bloating, and it is well to thaw out the silage before giving the animals access to it. Dairy cattle and, in fact, all kinds of live stock, relish a variety of feed. It is better to feed two or three kinds of meal or other food in one meal than to feed one kind in the morning, another at noon and still another at night. The latter procedure is apt to disarrange the digestive system of the animal. Remember that succulency is an important thing in the ration of a dairy cow. Roots and silage, or both, provide this better than any other feed. Grass conditions should be taken as the ideal in feeding dairy cows. Summing up, these conditions are best imitated in winter by providing plenty of fresh air, sunlight, and plenty of succulent, easily digested food. Watch out for lice on dairy cattle. The animals should be washed thoroughly with some coal tar dip and, in bad cases, another washing should be given in about two weeks. Have the cows in as good condition as possible at calving time. It may not be wise in view of the scarcity and high prices of feed to have them in as good condition this year as at other years, but no animal should be expected to do her best work and yield large quantities of milk if she is in poor condition at calving time. It is a good idea to save some of the silage for later in the season. Roots will not keep as long as the silage and consequently they should be fed rather plentifully and silage lightly, so that succulent foods may be available until the cattle can be turned out on grass. Plan now to keep dairy records. You cannot afford to have any boarders in your dairy and every cow must make good returns for the feed she gets. The Department of Agriculture at Ottawa will send you, free of charge, blanks for keeping records of what your cows are doing. —Canadian Countryman.

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SUNDAY AT HOME

A PRAYER.

Teach me, Father, how to be Sotly as the grasses go; Hush my soul to meet the shock Of the wild world as a rock; But my spirit, prompt with power, Make as simple as a flower; Let the dry heart fill its cup, Like a poppy looking up; Let life lightly wear her crown Like the poppy looking down, When his heart is filled with dew, And its life begins anew.

Teach me, Father, how to be Kind and patient as a tree. Joyfully the crickets croom Under shady oak at noon; Be like his mission beat Tarries in that cooling tent; Let me, also, cheer a spot, Hidden field or garden grove, Place where passing souls can rest On the way to do their best. —Edwin Markham

WALK IN NECESSITY OF LIFE. As ye here yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.—I beseech ye, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.—In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy.—This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk in the vanity of

their mind.—Ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus.—Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. MORE. From more to more is the law of Christ; pound problems do not end in a penny; the complex does not end in the simple, but in greater complexity. A great man came one night to the Master to ask "how"; the tender lungs of the infant must experience the shock of the vital air; it makes it cry; the great man asks again, "he gets more, he gets the whole cream of the atmosphere." "The wind bloweth where it listeth." He answered mysteriously by mysteries! "This is the law of heaven; it is the law of grace in the human heart. The seventy returned full of victory, "Lord, the devils are subject unto us by Thy power." That was great, but He led them to a greater. "Rejoice not that the devils are subject to you, but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven"; that was a leap into the infinite. It is a law that we can do nothing without God; it is also a law that He can do very little without us. It was a supreme moment when He said: "I saw Satan fall as lightning from heaven." He tarried on earth for a while. He only "began" to do great works. He said to His disciples: "Greater work than these shall ye do, because I go unto my Father." I confess to a staggering surprise as I read these words. He who did works as no other man did, seems to retire to let His followers do "greater." Is not this going from mystery to mysteries, from the human to the divine? It is always so. Doubting Thomas said: "Let me put my fingers." etc.; it was good to have evidence, it is better for the soul to trust. So he leads us on from greater to greatest. "Touch Me not," said he to many, the time of leisurely embrace and ecstatic repose is not yet. He led many on from grace to grace, for now we see through a glass darkly. When He gives us a smile, He pro-

mises more. He asked a drink at the well, and suggested more. "If thou knewest the gift of God and who it is"; but He did not keep her honest heart waiting long. "I that speak unto thee am He." In the days of time and, in the days of the world how this great law is reversed! Benaparte, the terror of Europe, finds himself still a young man, on each side of a rock. At twenty-nine he said: "There is nothing but to become a supreme egoist." We turn royal palaces into homes for aged where reduced greatness may shelter for the storms of poverty. "Call me not Naomi but call me Mara, for the Lord hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full and the Lord hath brought me home again empty." H. T. Miller. Eye and Temper Savers. "Those who do fine needlework of any kind," says a writer in the Woman's Home Companion, "will find it advantageous to observe these rules closely: "Do not sit too long at the task. If you wish to spend a day or a half day at it, keep at it steadily for fifty minutes and drop the work for the next ten minutes, occupying your time with something else through which the mind may be relaxed. At the end of ten minutes go back to the needlework, again applying yourself to it for fifty minutes, and so continue throughout the entire day. "Always observe closely the rule regarding light direction. Sit with your back almost facing the light, with the latter coming over your left shoulder. "When working with a net or fine lace that are white or light colored wear a black apron that is without gloss, and never wear a dress or apron that has a figure or stripe of any sort in it. Use plain colors as a background for your work and use colors that are receding, like blue, dark brown or green. "We're going to have a housewarming up at our new home." "Won't that be lovely!" "Fine. Every guest is going to bring a lamp of coal."—Judge.