

Our Young People

A MEETING TO SPUR US ON AND UP.

Topic for June 25: "Spiritual Growth."—Mark 4: 26-32.

"GROW IN GRACE."

God's Part and Ours.

By Rev. Ira D. Landrith.

Not the least of the Maker's mercies is this; that we were neither physically nor spiritually born full-grown. Life would be dismally sombre and solemn if there were in it no infancy, no childhood, no youth. A man's strength would be a dangerous companion and servant of a babe's intelligence or a child's unreasoning whims and impulses. A wise Providence hath ordained that power shall not be born until judgment and experience are old enough to control their own child.

Spiritual growth is not so different from physical growth as to be wholly dissimilar. The babe in Christ is pure enough for heaven; but until there is some knowledge of Christ, some feeding upon His word, and some exercise in prayer, there is not enough strength to walk forth and discover how much of heaven there is upon earth, nor yet in adding to the bliss of this earth-bound paradise. The babe in arms never learns to walk. It is only when required to stand alone and then to step that it gains strength and courage enough to go forward. It is better to walk hand in hand with Jesus than to be carried like a baby in His arms—better for us, better for His cause.

All this is not designed to depreciate the need of reliance upon God; but, like the wise Father He is, He helps us when we help ourselves, and then He merely helps us to help ourselves. Without His aid we could do nothing; but He offers this aid only when we try to do something and be something. He will not, therefore, make us grow, but He will surely help us grow. We must breathe and eat; He makes the air and food nourishing. We must work; He renders the exercise healthful and enables it to develop us. In the whole range of religion there is a lamentable disposition to leave everything for the Lord to do. The almost universal need is more muscularity and vigorous industry in our piety, more level-best living and labor on the part of the Christian, who can then afford to trust God for the rest because he has himself done his best.

Do you, then, desire to grow strong spiritually? Heed a few simple rules, all of which, you will observe, call upon you for something:—

1. Read the Bible and pray, not "every day" merely, but much and earnestly, for these are food and air for your spiritual life.

2. Listen. God has much to say to you, much that will make you wiser; and wisdom should precede power. Be still much when God is near. There would be more mighty men of God if more of us observed the Quiet Hour.

3. Do much trimming and pruning. It is hard and heroic, but the knife is sometimes as necessary to growth as is nourishment. Evil habits, vile thoughts and imaginings, companionship that weakens—God's command is, Cut them off!

4. Finally, help other people grow, and you will be amazed and delighted to see how much larger and more robust you have yourself become. Every time you lead a wanderer along the Godward path, your own feet become more familiar with the way and stronger to walk therein. Every time your arm steadies a stumbling one or lifts a fallen, it becomes more sinewy for the bearing of its own burdens and for warding off the attacks of evil. Only idle hands and heads and hearts are dwarfed and weak.—Christian Endeavor World.

For Daily Reading.

Monday, June 19.—The standard of growth.—Eph. 4: 11-16.
Tuesday, June 20.—Rooted in Christ.—Col. 2: 1-7.
Wednesday, June 21.—Growing by the word.—1 Pet. 2: 1-10.
Thursday, June 22.—Growing in faith.—2 Thess. 1: 1-12.
Friday, June 23.—Growing in grace.—2 Pet. 3: 11-18.
Saturday, June 24.—Growing in righteousness.—Heb. 12: 1-11.
Sunday, June 25.—Topic. Spiritual growth.—Mark 4: 26-32.

The present life of the Christian is often like the climbing of a steep and narrow stairway, with little outlook on either side to righten or enliven the ascent. But toil patiently, hopefully on; that stairway leads to a glorious palace.

Humility, the fairest and loveliest flower that grew in paradise, and the first that died—has rarely flourished since on mortal soil. It is so frail and delicate a thing that it is gone if it but looks upon itself, and they who venture to believe it theirs prove by that single thought they have it not.

Ambition.

There is a justifiable ambition which, if kept within proper limits, stimulates the mind and quickens action, ennobles the nature and develops character.

Ambition needs careful watching lest it prove a snare rather than a blessing. If that is ambitious to be wise and good has a laudable motive and manifests the highest wisdom, while he who, regardless of wisdom or goodness, determines to gain a point at the cost of both, is guilty of the greatest folly.—Philadelphia Methodist.

Spiritual Growth.

Growth is the only proof of life.—Thomas Scott.

We must not only grow toward God, but into God—further and further into intimacy with Him, and therefore into likeness to Him, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.—Theodore Monod.

No large growth in holiness was ever gained by one who did not take time to be often and long alone with God.—Austin Phelps.

Some men, says Dr. Bushnell, are like flag-staffs—they grow; other men are like trees—they grow. If we stop growing, our work is done.—Sunday-school Times.

What we call the potency of life, its germ, may be conferred by a divine act; but if the life is to be more than a potency, more than a germ, we must live it.—R. W. Dale, D.D.

As the union of the branch with the vine is one of growth, never-ceasing growth and increase, so our abiding in Christ is a life process in which the divine life ever takes fuller and more complete possession of us.—Rev. Andrew Murray.

A Fair Test.

John Wesley's mother once wrote to him when he was in college, "Would you judge of the lawfulness or the unlawfulness of pleasure, take this rule:

"Whatever weakens your reason
Impairs the tenderness of your conscience,
Obscures your sense of God, or takes off the
relish of spiritual things,
Whatever increases the authority of your
body over your mind,
That thing, to you, is sin."

All that you and I are responsible for is doing our duty. Ours is the seeding, and God alone beholds the end of what is sown. How do we know how much good we accomplish when we do any good thing or utter any truth in love? Eternity will be full of surprises to us. Wait and see.—Theo. L. Cuyler.

"Learn to do one thing better than anybody else," was the advice given to a college graduate.