

**SUNDAY-SCHOOL BANNER**  
 FOR  
**TEACHERS**  
 AND  
**YOUNG PEOPLE.**

Vol. 15.]

FEBRUARY, 1882.

[No. 2.

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**THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL BANNER**

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# SUNDAY SCHOOL BARRER

for  
TEACHERS  
AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE.

VOLUME XVI.]

FEBRUARY, 1882.

[No. 2.

## Is Your Lamp Burning?

SAY, is your lamp burning, my brother?  
I pray you look quickly and see;  
For if it were burning, then surely  
Some beams would fall brightly on me.

Straight, straight is the road, but I falter  
And often fall out by the way;  
Then lift your lamp higher, my brother,  
Lest I should make fatal delay.

There are many and many around you  
Who follow wherever you go;  
If you thought that they walked in a shadow,  
Your lamp would burn higher, I know.

Upon the dark mountains they stumble;  
They are bruised on the rocks, and they lie,  
With their white pleading faces turned upward  
To the clouds of the pitiful sky.

There is many a lamp that is lighted:  
We behold them anear and afar;  
But not many of them, my brother,  
Shine steadily on like a star.

I think, were they trimmed night and morning,  
They would never burn down or go out,  
Though from the four quarters of heaven  
The winds were all blowing about.

If once all the lamps that are lighted;  
Should steadily blaze in a line,  
Wide over the land and the ocean,  
What a girdle of glory would shine!

How all the dark places would brighten;  
How the mists would roll up and away!  
How the earth would laugh out in her gladness  
To hail the millennial day!

## Follow Thou Me.

HAVE ye looked for sheep in the desert,  
For those who have missed their way?  
Have ye been in the wild waste places,  
Where the lost and wandering stray?  
Have ye trodden the lonely highway,  
The foul and darksome street?  
It may be ye'd see in the gloaming  
The print of my wounded feet.

Have ye folded home to your bosom  
The trembling, neglected lamb,  
And taught to the little lost one  
The sound of the Shepherd's name?  
Have ye searched for the poor and needy,  
With no clothing, no home, no bread?  
The Son of Man was among them,  
He had nowhere to lay His head!

Have ye carried the living water  
To the parched and thirsty soul?  
Have ye said to the sick and wounded,  
"Christ Jesus make thee whole?"  
Have ye told my fainting children  
Of the strength of the Father's hand?  
Have ye guided the tottering footsteps  
To the shores of the "Golden Land?"

Have ye stood by the sad and weary,  
To smooth the pillow of death,  
To comfort the sorrow-stricken,  
And strengthen the feeble faith?  
And have ye felt, when the glory  
Has streamed through the open door  
And flitted across the shadows,  
That I had been there before!

—N. Y. Observer.

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## The Sunday School Banner.

REV. W. H. WITHROW, M.A., EDITOR.

TORONTO, FEBRUARY, 1882.

### The Sunday-School and Christian Missions.

THE intimate relation of Sunday-school and Christian Missions cannot be too often or too strongly urged. These have no better ally, no more hopeful auxiliary than the Sunday-school. We are glad to know that the contributions to the Missionary operations of our Church during the last year have exhibited a very considerable increase over the previous year. The Missionary Secretary, the Rev. Dr. Sutherland, attributes this largely to the adoption of the "Blake System"—one of systematic collection by the scholars, which in many places has been adopted. We hope that many more schools will adopt it. Full particulars about the plan of operation can be obtained by writing to the Mission Rooms, Toronto. In this connection we might call attention to the following notes from the January number

of the *Missionary Outlook*, a paper which ought to have the patronage of every sympathizer with missionary work:

"What are the Sunday-schools going to do this year? The system recommended by the officers of the Society two years ago is working wonders where it has been tried. Why should not this system be adopted by all our schools, especially those in towns and cities? There are not a few circuits in the Connexion where the Sunday-schools do nothing for the Missionary cause. Why is this? Who is responsible?"

"It is of the greatest importance that the youth of the Church should be brought into intelligent sympathy with the great Missionary movement of the day. To do this, two things at least are necessary: 1. They must be supplied with information from Mission fields, and 2. They must be encouraged to give freely of their own for the support of Mission work. Wherever a Sunday-school Missionary Society can be formed (and it can be done wherever there is a school, no matter how small), we will be glad to send collecting books, missionary boxes, &c., free of charge."

WE are happy to say that the subscriptions for our Sunday-school periodicals and *Methodist Magazine* are coming in in larger numbers than they ever did before. We anticipate a large increase in the circulation of each one of them. We confidently ask our friends to help us to put our own Sunday-school literature into all the schools of our Church. It will for them, be better than anything they can get elsewhere. We beg to call attention in this connection, to the quotation below from the *Sunday-School Journal*, edited by Dr. Vincent, under the heading

"A Question for Pastors," which will apply quite as appropriately to our own Churches and Sunday-schools. In regard to cheapness, it is but justice and truth to say that our own Church literature is, we believe, the cheapest in the world, quality being taken into account:—

#### A QUESTION FOR PASTORS.

"If an undenominational 'Bureau of Pulpit Supply' were to be organized, and to offer preachers to churches by the year at from ten to twenty per cent. lower salary than the bishops and annual conferences could supply them, would such churches be warranted in ignoring the appointee of the bishop and taking instead the cheaper man of their own selection? There is only one answer.

"If an undenominational publisher of Sunday-school helps were to offer Bible lessons at a lower price than the Book Concern could supply them, would our Sunday-schools be warranted in ignoring the appointed standard of the Church, and taking instead, the cheaper publications of the irresponsible house? There is only one answer.

"But since our own publications are really cheaper and vastly better than the obtrusive imitations which dishonourably crowd themselves into our schools, and since ours are the original, from which their plans have been taken, is it not wise and proper to rebuke the intruder and supply our teachers and scholars with the best help in the market—published by their own house under the doctrine and authority of their own Church?"

If any of our schools are poor let them apply to the "Sunday-school Board," through the Rev. S. Andrews or the Editor of the BANNER, for aid and they will cheerfully grant all the aid they can. But let Methodists stand by their own publications.

SOME of our most efficient Sunday-school workers have asked to have the explanations of the lessons substituted for

the Questions on the Lessons in the *S. S. Quarterly* and *Berean Leaves*. Others have written that they want the questions. Some, too, attach much importance to the three Lesson Hymns, and wish always to have them. Now we will endeavour to meet the wishes of all. In the *Scholar's Quarterly* we will give the Lesson Hymns in full, and also the Explanation of the Lessons, and, if possible, the Questions too. But we think that, if these have to be omitted, it will be a good exercise for the teachers to frame their own questions.

In the *Berean Leaves* we will give the Questions in full and as much of the Explanation and Hymns as there is room for. Those who wish the Questions will order the *Leaves*, which will be adapted to the primary classes. Those who wish the Explanations and Hymns will order the *Quarterly*. It is a little dearer, eight cents a year instead of five and a-half,—but it is larger and better, and will be found more advantageous for advanced classes. We will, also, where space is available in the BANNER, give the Lesson Commentary, the continuance of which has been requested.

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## Communications.

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### HELPS IN SCHOOL.

I BEG to be allowed the privilege of referring to a paragraph in your December number of the BANNER, credited to the *S. S. Times* anent the use of Question Books or printed questions in the school.

Now, the *Times* ought to know if he is "much of a teacher," that there are two sides to this matter. There can be no harm in using those helps, if one does not depend too much upon them. They are gotten up for use, and to be used to the best advantage, whether in the study or in the school.

It should be remembered that the teachers are generally selected from the industrious portion of the community, who have something else to do besides studying Sunday-school lessons; and they are not always so

well prepared with their lessons as they themselves wish ; and hence should not be deprived the use of such facilities as are so considerably furnished in these days. And I now would say, rather than to fail before the class, I would pardon the Teacher for looking into even the S. S. Times.

St. Thomas.

E. A. DUNHAM.

## Book Notices.

### GOOD BOOKS FOR S. S. LIBRARIES.

#### BOUND VOLUMES OF CANADIAN METHODIST MAGAZINE.

A few sets for 1881 have been handsomely bound in two volumes, blue cloth covers, full gilt, with elegant stamped design on side. They will be sent, post free, for \$1.50 per volume, or \$3 for the whole year.

These volumes contain Rev. Dr. Sutherland's "Jottings in the East," illustrated ; W. H. Withrow's "Story of the Catacombs," illustrated ; "Men Worth Knowing," twelve sketches ; "Ocean Grove," "Sunshine and Storm in the East," "Footprints of Luther," "Niagara Falls," "The Yellow Tiber," and many other illustrated articles.

Also valuable papers by Dr. Ryerson, Principal Grant, President Nelles, Dr. Stewart, Dr. Carroll, Dr. Punshon, Prof. Blaikie, Prof. Shaw, Revs. Wm. Arthur, W. Williams, J. Lathern, D. Savage, J. C. Seymour, S. P. Rose, Mrs. Lauder, John Macdonald, Esq., and others.

THE FEBRUARY NUMBER FOR 1882, will contain Part I. of "The Stately Homes of England," and Part II. of Dr. Nelles' "Christianity—Ideal and Actual." All who read Part I. of this paper, which attracted much attention, and was highly commended by Dr. Summers in the *Southern Methodist Quarterly Review*, should not fail to read Part II., which grandly vindicates our Arminian theology against the corrupt theological systems which have largely dominated Christendom.

Early Numbers will contain "The Footprints of Bunyan," "I. Rhineland," by C. S. Eby, "Bible Lands," and other illustrated articles. Also, papers by Dr. Sutherland, F. H. Torrington (on Music), and other important articles, including one or more from Dean Stanley's last work, "Christian Institutions."

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### TWO POPULAR MAGAZINES !

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The *Illustrated Floral Guide*, from James Vick, Rochester, N.Y., is one of the best things of the kind published. Few are so beautiful or so instructive as this elegant catalogue with its two colored plates and numerous other illustrations. No lover of flowers who will send ten cents for it to the publisher will be disappointed.

To indite well and to write well are valuable accomplishments, but a good pen is helpful to the one, and indispensable to the other. Those of the Esterbrook make are well known and widely appreciated.

## The Lesson Commentary.

LESSON VI.]

[FEB. 5, 1882.

### CHRIST AND HIS DISCIPLES.

Mark iii. 6-19.

THESE words declare the turning-point in the Gospel dispensation. The churchmen and rulers of the day were already plotting Christ's death. Multitudes of the people of all nations were thronging to him. From near and far the sick and infirm were brought to him for healing. The fame of Jesus knew no limits. Even the "unclean spirits," when they saw him, fell down and cried, saying, "Thou art the son of God."

Plainly we understand that a superhuman worker will have his own superhuman methods ; and just as truly a superhuman work must of necessity be

the result of superhuman methods. Thus at the outset we are disarmed of criticism while considering our theme. We observe,

I. *Christ's Methods.* Unlike all human plans these methods shall find no counterpart; no man would have begun in such a way.

Firstly: He wrote nothing. The world likes autographs; but no careless eye has ever seen any of the Christ. There is a magic in the letters traced by the hand of the great; but the world's great Saviour is recorded to have written once only; and then the pen was his sacred finger, and the page was the shifting sand.

Secondly: He chose unlettered men. The representative men expounding the Old Testament Scriptures were the rabbis; but when one of such a class confessed, "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest," even the ardent rabbi was sent home; and among the chosen Twelve no one of such a class found a place. The Saviour of mankind, the Son of the Highest committed himself, his power, his teachings, to twelve plain and hitherto unhonoured men, all of them common people and all of them unlearned.

Thirdly: Observe the character of the Twelve. Judged from a human point of view they were certainly unpromising men. There was Simon, the cursing and profane fisherman, known the whole coast over. There was John, impulsive and strong-willed, who, even after the scene of the transfiguration, begged the Master to call down fire from heaven upon a whole Samaritan town that would not receive them. Philip, it is said, was the driver of a chariot. Bartholomew is reported to have been a gardener or a shepherd. There was Matthew, shrewd and self-willed, Levite by birth, but an extortioner of his race to enrich Rome. And passing all the rest, there was Judas, whose name is so synonymous with his unparalleled character that no child in all Christendom is baptized with his hated name. But more than this, "Christ knew all men and needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man." The time would come when all of these would forsake him. He knew from the beginning that Judas would

betray him, and that Peter in the hour of judgment would refuse to own his acquaintance. But even Judas was as truly chosen as was John and James.

The supernatural worker and teacher make a superhuman choice. Like blocks of marble, at first rough and ill-shaped, they at length became, under his moulding power, forms of beauty, hated by men, they were so Christ-like. Fickle men these, afraid of the armed mob; each and all, save the seer of Patmos, gave in their unflinching testimony to the Master's glory in their martyr's death; but the halo of beauty that encircles their foreheads, is only the flashing of the light which came from him. Upon men such as these he stamped his greatness.

II. *The plan involved in Christ's methods.* Nothing divine is ever done by chance. Now, if Christ had ever acted or spoken without a plan, we could call His divine nature in question. God manifest in the flesh is infinite reason, and his plans never miscarry.

To the Twelve no power was given to be transmitted to others. These were the witnesses of his life; and when their work was over, there were none to take it up. Upon this principle of being a witness, Paul was chosen, albeit his view had been only of the glorified Christ. These witnesses wrote the life of him who left no written precepts. They stood before the Sanhedrim, one and another, and heard the word of condemnation. They walked with the headman whose token of office was the gleaming battle-axe. Some of them were nailed to the cross. Only one among them all died a natural death. The seer of Patmos, last survivor of them all, left the earth alone again; but the life they witnessed lives on; the truths they heard are always new; the words they recorded, shall never pass away.

For two years the Master and his chosen Twelve dwelt together. They were serving unconsciously the plan of his choice. Like dunces they were slow to understand. The simplest parables he must explain. They passed among the homes of sorrow and despair, bewildered by his power. They saw his glory on Hermon, and almost remembered it as a

dream. They saw his anguish in Gethsemane; and that very night forsook him and fled; yet they were serving him in darkest ways by their own free choice. The boasting Peter blasphemously denied him; and Judas, treacherous and cunning dipped his bread into the dish with the Master, and held in an hour's time the price of the betrayal in the same hand. They saw him crucified, but no one came near.

Dunces yet, fearful and timid, they waited; but a greater work was to begin. For more than a year he had told them of his death and resurrection, yet still they thought the body fit only to be embalmed. Strange distrust! eyes to be blinded again, never. From the light of a brighter morning no cloud should arise. His chosen Twelve had doubted him, and denied him, and betrayed him; but their doubts and denials all were overcome in the morning of the resurrection.

The saints have all been weak; no one but a disciple could betray the Lord. Some of the richest truths were recorded in answer to the disciples' doubts. It is now as then true, that all the Church has to fear are the misgivings and betrayals of its own professed adherents.

## LESSON. VII.]

[FEB. 12.

## CHRIST'S FOES AND FRIENDS.

MARK iii: 20-35.

INDIVIDUALS appear in the world from time to time with qualities so positive that they force others to take sides for or against them. Most true was this of Christ. This is the central thought of to-day's lesson. We notice,

1. *The fact.* All men are the friends or the foes of Christ. His reception by the world seems a contradiction to this assertion. We recall the startling words: "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." What! The souls he created, the race he came to save, knew him not? Nature knew him. He bid the jars be filled at Cana, and "the conscious water saw its God and blushed." He would cross the angry lake, and its black, foam-flecked waves were like a marble pavement beneath his feet. He died, and the

solid earth shuddered. Evil spirits knew, and fought or fled his presence. Angels knew the Lord. They announced his coming, and were on hand at Bethlehem with radiant light and jubilant song; they administered strength in his struggles, looked amazed upon Calvary, watched the tomb, and exulted at the Ascension. The Divine Spirit touched human tongues and human flesh to prepare for his entrance into humanity; came upon him at the baptism, and abode through all his life. The Eternal Father, from dazzling clouds, with mighty voice, declared, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." All the universe knew its Lord, save those he came to redeem.

At every step of our Lord's progress, fresh love and hatred were aroused. And at the last, even the scornful Roman judge, the criminals hanging on either side, the soldiers who did the horrid work, must be either kind or unjust toward the divine victim. Ever since that day, wherever the name of Jesus has come, it has had power to separate the nations and divide households. Christendom and heathendom are the two sections of the world. Belief or unbelief describes the attitude of each individual. The force radiating from the character and claims of Jesus is too intense and too searching to leave undecided any spirit that it touches. All men are either friends or foes of Christ.

II. *The test.* What is the selective force which thus makes all love or hate the Son of man? What line divides them? The world has had varying standards for awarding his praise or blame. At one time it asks how strong is the man, or how brave, how well-born, how learned, how rich? But neither breeding, brains, brawn, nor bullion has ever been the divine test. This is righteousness. It ignores all other tests; crosses and re-crosses other lines. It cares nothing for majorities, puts Elijah against a thousand heathen prophets, the hidden seven thousand against the mass of Israel and its rulers. It is regardless of nationality, rejects from the chosen race and calls from a people that has not known God. Mark the absolute excellence of this test. It strips off externals and looks upon the



real man. It views and estimates the working of good and ill chance of birth, disposition, and training, and from the confusion of influence and circumstances, sifts out personal responsibility. God can have no other rule. He demands, not what hast thou, what knowest thou; but what art thou?

The character of each man is determined by his personal relation to Jesus. Being thus close to men, the relation so intimate, they must meet and hear him; they must choose or reject. And this covered the whole. As they stood toward Jesus, they stood toward God. His presence was their judgment while he walked in Galilee, as it will be when he cometh with angels.

"What think ye of Christ?" includes all questions of casuistry, all virtue, all salvation. In Palestine then, or in Canada to-day, the good are his friends, the bad are his foes.

III. *The result.* The necessities of human character requires men to take sides for or against Christ; they also compel final completeness of friendship or enmity.

The Pharisees at first received Jesus with favour, watching whether they could safely recognize him as the Messiah. By this time it was evident that he was not the leader they desired. But the multitude thought differently, and their enthusiasm forced an authoritative decision from the council. Here, at Capernaum, they listen and watch. The miracles they cannot deny; but neither can they accept the teachings. For Jesus has exposed their hypocrisy, denounced their system, and set himself defiantly against their traditions. One terrible alternative is left; and they boldly declare that this power is supernatural, indeed, yet not divine, but devilish; from Beelzebub, not God. The clear logic of Christ's reply quickly disposes of this charge, but does not change their spirit. Step by step they have been urged on by the necessity of decision, until they stand within reach of that awful and final sin, blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Within reach; for Christ's words may be a warning, not a sentence. A gloom of mystery and terror hangs about this subject, part of which may justly be dispelled. The new ro-

vision, with a most important correction, reads here, "eternal sin," instead of "eternal damnation." The act and state of the soul are spoken of, not the judgment of God: Its supreme guilt appears from the circumstances of its commission.

We gladly turn to the opposite picture, the result of friendship to Christ. "And he looked round about on them which sat about him and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! for whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother." The tenderest human ties were used by the Son of God, as an illustration of our divine relationship. To be Christ's disciple is to belong to his family.

Especial emphasis may be put upon three teachings of this lesson.

1. *The danger of sins of the spirit.* Wickedness is commonly associated with gross crimes and vices. But the bodily passions which prompt these partly disguise their nature and stupefy the conscience. Sins of the spirit are hidden by a thinner veil, and rise more dangerously near the source of character. Christians, like their Master, find the proud, jealous, ambitious, or hypocritical, hardest to be brought to repentance. These are respectable sins, easily concealed and lightly excused, and these led the Pharisees to the verge of hopeless guilt and caused the crucifixion.

2. *The limitations of free will.* The human will is free, but not omnipotent. Consciousness of moral distinctions is not a matter of choice; the spirit must discern between right and wrong; it must be right or wrong. The will cannot decide what alternatives shall be put before it; it cannot refuse to act on these alternatives; it cannot determine the results of its action. Freedom is but power to exercise an ordained responsibility.

3. *The solemnity of existence.* The meanest human destiny is in close relation to the Infinite God. Good or evil, it is to become intense, unmingled, final. Eternal sin is possible,—sin for which there is no prayer, and from which there is no rescue. Eternal fellowship with God is possible,—complete, entrancing, ever expanding toward the infinite.

LESSON. VIII.] [FEB. 19.  
THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

MARK IV: 1-20.

WHEN our Lord had uttered this first of all his recorded parables, his disciples raised the question, when they were alone, why he used this form of teaching at all. They saw something in the faces of the great multitude by the sea-shore, that heard and failed to comprehend the sayings, which led them to doubt the wisdom of such a form of discourse. The Master was preaching what the people did not receive. His answer to their inquiry could not have met their wants, as it cannot meet ours to-day. It is at once solemn and mysterious. It leaves the problem unsolved, why the very Light should purposely adopt a method of teaching which should conceal the truth as well as reveal it. He declared that he chose to speak in parables to the multitude, because they did not know the mystery of the kingdom of God, and could not know it so long as their hearts were so hard.

But our Lord went further than this in his answer to the disciples when they were alone and sought the key to his words; for he said that his parables were a sort of judgment upon the generation that was about to reject him. He spoke in such a way, that, seeing, they might see and not perceive, and hearing they might hear and not understand; lest happily they should turn again and it should be forgiven them. He had come to be a King and Life-Giver and Judge. The three offices were inseparable, and in almost every act of his life we may see the exercise of these three functions. Even in sowing the good seed of the kingdom he must needs be a judge over his audience, separating the evil from the good by the effect of his words, bringing out into noon-day clearness the incorrigible wickedness of those whose hearts were so hard that they could no longer understand what the pure should see at a glance; and verifying his later sayings, "Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father, it is your will to do." "He that is of God, heareth the words of God: for this

cause ye hear them not because ye are not of God." "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me."

The whole drift of the parable is to show the effect of divine truth as conditioned by the state of men's hearts. God's word has all the hidden life of a seed. Take up a grain of wheat in your hand and ask yourself where its life lies. Not, surely, upon the surface; not in its compartments as a distinct thing. Within that little mass of matter there lies a force which sun, rain, and soil shall call forth with voices it will hear and obey. God hath given it a body, and to every seed his own body. The hidden life and unwearyed force of the wheat-grain furnish analogies to the word of God. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the word of Christ shall not pass away.

But the word of God is only a seed. Its end is not in itself, but in a growth and reproduction of itself, in which there is death and life in endless succession. Who could tell what should come from an acorn? What resemblance does it bear to the oak sending its roots into the foundations of the hills and its branches high toward the sun? There, in the acorn, lie all these possibilities of growth and strength and beauty, of which it gives no outward sign. So the Bible is a book of reserved and exhaustless power, capable of producing endless modifications of thought and life. It is the seed of mighty social regenerations and of the very kingdom of God.

Without certain conditions, the good seed of the kingdom will never become, in human hearts, more than a seed—a mere undeveloped force. The varied fortunes of the scattered word are most impressively set forth in our parable. Hearers are assorted into four kinds, with each of which we are familiar. As the sower swings his hand, walking on the borders of the plowed land, he cannot stop to prevent some seed from dropping on the hard path, trodden down by many feet. The birds swoop down on the path, as soon as the sower has gone his way, and catch up his seed, so that it has no chance.

The next class described show their unreceptiveness of the truth at a later

stage of its operation. They are awakened by it and feel its charms and its immense importance. Eagerly, under the pressure of special religious interest, they press forward to the kingdom, saying "Lord, we will follow thee, whithersoever thou goest." They show outward signs of piety that no human eye can distinguish from the genuine. Indeed, so far as the good seed has had a chance in them, it has borne its genuine and inevitable fruits. If it had greater depth of earth it would only show the same fruits continuously; but the hearer received the word only into the surface of his thinking and willing capacities. The whole man, the central forces of his being—that which really determines character for eternity—all this was never aroused and changed. Regeneration was not accomplished. When the excitement of a wide religious interest had passed away, or when slight or grave persecutions came—and the slight persecutions are often more effective than the severe ones that challenge the whole soul—then the half-aroused hearer succumbs and falls from the measure of grace he had gained. Such are not deluded, nor intentional deceivers. Their experience was genuine but shallow.

"And others are they that are sown among the thorns; these are they that have heard the word, and the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word and it becometh unfruitful." Wonderful are these explanations of the phenomena witnessed in every Church of Christ since his day. There are those who soon fall back into the world. There are others who, far later in life, are kept in the outward forms of religion by an external pressure,—by habits, by family pride, by secret hopes of a return of the happy hours when first they saw the Lord; but over their souls the thick cares of the world have grown rankly, cares of poverty or cares of wealth—they alike bring desolation—and no fruit is ever gathered from them. In the Church, yet not of it; irremovable by the common standard of morals; often active in externals of religion, they are only obstructions, to be removed in their time.

But not all the sower's work is in vain. Blessed be the Lord of the harvest, there is good soil, into which the seed drops, is nourished into vital activities, rises in beauty and strength, and bears fruit unto life eternal. There are souls that from their childhood seem pre-occupied by the Holy Spirit. They show an aptitude for truth. They obey it. The soil of their hearts is deep, soft, receptive; and they bear much fruit.

## LESSON IX.]

[FEB. 26.

## THE GROWTH OF THE KINGDOM.

MARK IV: 21-34.

THE expectation of the universal reign of Christ by drawing all men to himself no longer awakens wonder. The most active elements in the civilization of the world are derived from the revealed idea of that kingdom: such as the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of men, the reign of love and justice displacing the reign of force. Love to Christ as a ruling motive is now an actual fact, with illustrations in every part of the world.

But there was a time when the idea of this kingdom was utterly strange. Its king was a humble peasant. Its subjects were a handful of ignorant Jews. Its principles were, to most men, repellant and intrusive. The kingdom, as it appeared in its beginning, is like the little grains of wheat cast into the damp soil in the chilly days of spring. To the mature Christian of to-day it is like the city which John saw, filling all his vision, let down out of heaven from God, glowing with strange opaline light, so that neither sun nor moon were longer needed, with jasper walls and pavements of transparent gold, and great gates, each a single pearl, and at each gate a glorious angel.

We are now to consider the agencies employed in its growth, and the result.

I. *Man's work in the kingdom* (v. 21-26).

1. To make known its character and the conditions of entrance into it (verses 21, 22). As no one lights a lamp in order to hide it under the bushel or the bed, so the truths most important to men were never brought into the world and given to any living soul by the Son of

God to be concealed or withheld. Even the smallest taper is lighted in order that it may give light. The youngest disciple is to shine for the guidance of others. The rays of one little lamp, piercing through miles of gloom, have saved noble ships from destruction, with all their precious living freight.

Every true disciple will, by the nature of his discipleship, advertise the kingdom. The purpose of a lamp is evident in itself. It will shine. Any sensible man who brings it puts it where it will shine to the best advantage. When Christ is received into any life, that life is kindled by a light brought down from heaven. No disciple need complain that sickness, or poverty, or want of talent, or obscurity, makes him necessarily useless. God would never light that lamp to put it under the bed. But for him to put it on the bed may be to put it "on the stand"

2. To give his mind and heart to increase his knowledge and experience of the truth by which the kingdom grows (verses 24-26). The lighted lamp must have oil to feed upon. We cannot be making known the character of the kingdom unless our knowledge of it is growing. That truth is from God.

As Christians, we shine with a light divinely kindled to reveal the truth. The more brightly we shine, the more eagerly we seek and the more fully we receive that which keeps the light burning. The more generously we give to others what we know of the Gospel, the more clearly it will be revealed to us. We must be quick to realize its spiritual meanings, warm and eager by a living sympathy with it, and with him who gives it, till we measure out the truth with the very wealth of tenderness which it had when spoken by his voice. Then it will come to us in richness, sweetness, strength, proportioned to our giving it out.

II. *God's work in the kingdom* (v. 26-29).

1. In its beginnings In the only parable peculiar to Mark, we are told that the seed sown in the hearts of others germinates by divine power. God permits us to co-operate with him. But the great work is his. We learn the truth by prayer and study and obedience. We make it known. He gives it life. As the farmer can only sow the seed he has

obtained, and must depend on the life within it, and the earth which brings forth fruit of herself, so we can only make known the truth we have received, and must trust entirely to God to make it effective.

2. In its growth. God advances this new life according to its own laws. That development is going on all the time: when we sleep and when we wake, when the work seems to be retarded, as well as when we see its progress. We need not be impatient. We must leave to God the work that belongs to him. As the farmer sows his seed and leaves it in the earth, so the Christian gives the word, and trusts it to God.

3. In its perfection. There is a harvest-time. When the fruit is ripe it spontaneously yields itself to the harvester. God completes the work he has begun in each soul. But he has made us so interdependent, that its completion calls for our watchful activity. We are not responsible for the laws of spiritual growth. But we are commanded to be at hand to watch the blade as it appears, to welcome the ear and the full fruit.

III. *God's promise for the kingdom* (verses 30-32).

The mustard seed was not really the least of all seeds. But there was a current proverb which ranked it as the smallest. Jesus made use of the common expression to illustrate the extreme insignificance of the beginnings of the kingdom of God in contrast with its maturity. Those beginnings were facts before their eyes. They were to become yet more plain and discouraging. The king was to be despised and rejected. The doctrines of the kingdom were to be preached by a few obscure and ignorant men. The message they were to bring was that their leader had been crucified as a malefactor, yet that he would give life eternal to all who believed on him. To the Jews this message was a stumbling-block. To the Greeks it was foolishness. But the promise of the Son of God was that as from the insignificant seed grows the tree which furnishes shelter and shadow, so from these despised beginnings, by His indwelling power, the kingdom was to grow till it should include and bless all nations.

# INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

## FIRST QUARTER—STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK.

### FEBRUARY, 1882.

*Notes*—The Scripture verses to be committed to memory are indicated by an index [227] at the side.

A. D. 27.

#### LESSON VI.—CHRIST AND HIS DISCIPLES.

February 5.

Mark 3. 6-19.

6 And *a* the Pharisees went forth, and straight-way took counsel with *b* the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

*a* Matt. 12, 11.—*b* Matt. 12, 16.

7 But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, *c* and from Judea,

*c* Luke 6, 17.

8 And from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

9 And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him:

10 For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues.

11 And *d* unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, *e* Thou art the Son of God.

*d* Chap. 1, 23; Luke 4, 41.—*e* Acts 16, 17; Matt. 14, 33; Chap. 1, 1.

12 And *f* he straightly charged them that they should not make him known.

Chap. 1, 25, 34; Matt. 12, 16.

13 And *g* he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him.

*g* Matt. 10, 1; Luke 6, 12; 9, 1.

14 And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,

15 And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils.

16 And *h* Simon he surnamed Peter;

*h* John 1, 42.

17 And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; (and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder:

*i* Isaiah 48, 1.

18 And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and *j* Thaddeus, and Simon the Canaanite,

*j* Jude 1.

19 And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went into an house.

#### GENERAL STATEMENT.

From the synagogue the enemies of Jesus go forth to form their plots, and in the common hatred against the innocent Saviour the antagonism of Pharisee and Herodian is forgotten. Before the rising danger Jesus retires from the city to the sea-shore, not from fear of his foes, but, for the interests of the Gospel, dearer to him than his own life. The masses do not share in the enmity of their leaders, and larger crowds than

ever before flock to the sea-side, eager to receive his healing touch, and to hear his precious words. After a night in prayer upon the mountain, Jesus summons from the multitude of his followers those whom he deems most fit to become his messengers, and the Twelve are organized as companions of the Lord, soon to be his Apostles to the people, and the builders of his Church. In the company we find the impulsive fisherman, the two fervent sons of Zebedee, the tax-gatherer, and others, whose names, unknown to earth, yet shine on the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem above. Rev. 21, 14.

#### EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

**Verse 6** The Pharisees went forth. After the events related in the last lesson showed that there was nothing in common between them and Jesus. **The Herodians.** The party which favoured the rule of Herod, with the friendship of the Roman power, and the introduction of Gentile customs. They were political rather than religious, and had ever been the bitterest opponents of the Pharisees. Thus there was an alliance of religious fanaticism and worldly policy against Jesus. **Destroy him.** The purpose of slaying Jesus now began to appear for the first time. 1. Thus would the world destroy its best Friend.

**7, 8. Jesus withdrew himself.** Not from fear of his enemies, but to gain time before the death which he well knew awaited him, for proclaiming his Gospel through the land, and for the training of his disciples for their work. **To the sea.** The Sea of Galilee. **A great multitude . . . followed.** It would appear that the hatred of the leaders was not shared by the people, neither at this nor at any time during the life of Jesus. His ministry was now at the height of its popularity. **From Judea.** Though Jesus had taught but little in Judea, the news of his works and words had been borne thither by the pilgrims from every part of the land to the great annual feasts. **Idumea.** The country of Edom, south of Palestine. **Beyond Jordan.** The province known as Perea. **About Tyre and Sidon.** The Jews living on the western borders of Palestine, near these two cities, which were great marts of commerce for the ancient world.

**9, 10. A small ship.** "A little boat." [Revised Version.] It was probably propelled by oars. **Wait on him.** To carry him from point to point on the lake shore for preaching; and to enable him to escape from the crowd when needing rest. "All rich ships from the Indies were not to be compared with this."—*Leighton.* **He**

had healed many. Another of Mark's incidental allusions to miracles of which we have no detailed report. **Pressed . . . to touch him.** They possessed faith sufficient to believe that Jesus could heal them by a touch, but not sufficient to seek for healing without the actual contact. 2. How narrow, at best, is the range of human faith! **As many as had plagues.** Literally, "scourges."

11, 12. **Unclean spirits.** That is, persons possessed by evil spirits or demons. **Thou art the Son of God.** Thus showing that their trouble was not mere derangement of mind, for this would not give them power to recognize his divine nature. **Straitly charged them.** "Charged them much." [Rev. Ver.] 3. Christ will have saved men, not lost demons, for his messengers.

13. **He goeth up into a mountain.** This may have been Kurn Hattin, "the horns of Hattin," a double-peaked mountain west of the Sea of Galilee; but it is not certainly known. He went there for prayer, according to Luke 6. 12, who oftener than the other evangelists mentions Jesus' prayers. 4. The greater a purpose, the greater need of beginning it with prayer. **Callest unto him.** Out of the great body of his professed followers. **Whom he would.** "Whom he himself would," [Rev. Ver.] an expression showing that the choice was thoroughly his own. **They came unto him.** Showing in their prompt and steadfast obedience the wisdom of his choice. 5. Let us be as quick to come at our Master's call.

14, 15. **He ordained.** "Appointed." [Rev. Ver.] It was an appointment, not an ordination in any form. **Should be with him.** For companionship, for protection, for service, for training, and instruction in the Gospel. 6. While enemies combine against Jesus, he prepares preachers to perpetuate his kingdom. 7. There is no school of theology so good as personal dwelling with and learning from Jesus. **Might send them forth.** After sufficient training. **Power to heal.** 8. Those whom Christ calls to his work he endows for it. Concerning the call of the Apostles note: (1) He chose men of the people; (2) He chose saved men; (3) He chose from among his professed followers.

16, 17. **Simon he surnamed Peter.** That is, "Rock," referring to his strength, boldness, and force of character, rather than to firmness or steadfastness. **James** The disciple who was first of the apostles to die. Acts 12. **John the brother of James** The beloved disciple, and writer of the fourth Gospel. Most faithful of all, he remained with Jesus during his trial, and received the Virgin Mother into his family after the crucifixion. **Boanerges.** Perhaps referring to the fervent temperament of the brothers, perhaps to the earnestness of their preaching.

18, 19. **Andrew.** The first of the disciples to become acquainted with Jesus. See John 1. 40. **Philip** His early acquaintance with Jesus is related in John 1. 43. **Bartholomew.** Probably the same with Nathaniel, in the first and last chapters of John. **James the son of Alphaeus.** Sometimes called James the Less.

**Thomas.** The disciple whose fidelity was strong, but whose faith was slow. Compare John 10. 16, and 20. 24, 25. **Thaddeus.** Called in Luke 6. 14, Judas, and in Matt. 10. 3, Lebbeus. It is uncertain whether he was identical with Jude, who wrote the epistle. **Simon the Canaanite.** This should probably be "the Zealot," a member of a sect fanatically adhering to Jewish institutions, and opposing all compromise with heathenism. **Judas Iscariot.** "Judas of Kerioth," a town in Judah. He may have been at this time a sincere believer and a devoted follower, though after the betrayer of his Lord. **Into an house.** Means simply "they came home." This clause belongs properly to the next paragraph and the next lesson.

## GOLDEN TEXT.

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit. John 15, 16.

## OUTLINE.

1. The Multitude, v. 6-9
2. The Miracles, v. 10-12.
3. The Messengers, v. 13-19.

## LESSON HYMN.

No. 228, S. S. Hymnal.

C.M.

Let him to whom we now belong  
His sovereign right assert,  
And take up every thankful song,  
And every loving heart.

He justly claims us for his own,  
Who bought us with a price;  
The Christian lives to Christ alone,  
To Christ alone he dies.

Jesus, thine own at last receive,  
Fulfill our hearts' desire,  
And let us to thy glory live,  
And in thy cause expire.

No. 223, S. S. Hymnal.

7s.

Jesus, all-atoning Lamb,  
Thine, and only thine, I am;  
Take my body, spirit, soul;  
Only thou possess the whole.

Thou my one thing needful be;  
Let me ever cleave to thee;  
Let me choose the better part;  
Let me give thee all my heart.

Whom have I on earth below?  
Thee, and only thee, I know;  
Whom have I in heaven but thee;  
Thou art all in all to me.

No. 224, S. S. Hymnal.

7s.

Take my life and let it be  
Consecrated, Lord, to thee:  
Take my moments and my days,  
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands and let them move  
At the impulse of thy love;  
Take my feet and let them be  
Swift and beautiful for thee.

Take my voice and let me sing  
Always, only, for my King;  
Take my lips and let them be  
Filled with messages from thee.

Time.—A.D. 27, soon after the events of the last lesson.

Place.—Near the Sea of Galilee.

**Parallel Passages.**— With verses 6-12. Matt. 12. 14-21. With verses 13-19. Matt. 10. 2-4; Luke 6. 12-19.

**HOME READINGS.**

- M. Christ and his disciples. Mark 3. 6-19.
- Tu. The favoured disciples. Luke 9. 18-36.
- W. The ambitious disciples. Matt. 20. 17-28.
- X. The beloved disciple. John 13. 12-26.
- F. The traitorous disciple. Matt. 26. 6-16, 47-50.
- S. The denying disciple. Matt. 26. 31-35, 69-75.
- S. The doubting disciple. John 20. 19-31.

**QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON.**

1. **The Multitude**, v. 6-9.
  - What enemies of Christ are here named?
  - What did they try to do?
  - What spirit did their conduct show?
  - Where did Jesus go?
  - What sea was this?
  - From what places did the people follow him?
  - What led them to follow Jesus?
  - How did Jesus avoid the crowds of people?

2. **The Miracles**, v. 10-12.
  - What miracles had Jesus wrought?
  - What followed from touching Christ? See Luke 8. 43, 44.
  - How did the people show earnest desire for Christ?

- What is meant by "unclean spirits"?
- How did these spirits act toward Jesus?
- Why would not Christ let them speak?
- Who should make Christ known?

3. **The Messengers**, v. 13-19.
  - To what place did Jesus go alone?
  - For what purpose did he go thither? Luke 6. 12.

- Whom did he call, and for what purpose?
- What power did he give to them?
- What did he call the twelve disciples? Luke 6. 13.

Name among these disciples the one that Jesus loved, the one that denied him, and the one that betrayed him.

**PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.**

Where may we learn in this lesson—

1. That Christ's cause needs workers?
2. That Christ calls his workers?
3. That Christ's workers have power.

**The Lesson Catechism.**—(For the entire school.) Whom did Jesus call to be with him? *Twelve disciples.* 2. What were the twelve disciples called? *Apostles, or those sent.* 3. For what were they sent forth? *To preach his Gospel.* 4. What power did he give them? *Power to work miracles.* 5. Who were the three leading ones among them? *Peter, James, and John.* 6. Which was the disciple that betrayed him? *Judas Iscariot.*

**DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The visible Church. **ANALYTICAL & BIBLICAL OUTLINE.** *The Spirit of Christ.*

**I. SPIRIT OF PEACE.**

Jesus withdrew himself. v. 7.  
"Servant of the Lord must not strive."  
2 Tim. 2. 24.

**II. A SPIRIT OF ATTRACTIVENESS.**

A great multitude... come unto him.  
v. 8.

"Ye shine as lights in the world." Phil. 2. 15.

**III. A SPIRIT OF HELPFULNESS.**

For he had healed many. v. 10.  
"Do good unto all men." Gal. 6. 10.

**IV. A SPIRIT OF DIVINITY.**

"Thou art the Son of God." v. 11.  
"Spoken unto us by his son." Heb. 1. 2.

**V. A SPIRIT OF DECISION.**

Callesth unto him whom he would. v. 11.  
"I have chosen you." John 15. 16.

**VI. A SPIRIT OF ENDOWMENT.**

To have power to heal. v. 15.  
"Ye shall receive power." Acts. 1. 12.

**ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.**  
**Workers for Christ.**

1. Workers for Christ are needed because there are those who work against him. v. 6.
2. Workers for Christ should count it a privilege to assist him with substance as well as labor. v. 9.
3. Workers for Christ are called by the Master to their work. v. 13.
4. Workers for Christ hear his call and obey it promptly. v. 13.
5. Workers for Christ are called to companionship and training with Christ before going forth to preach to others. v. 14.
6. Workers for Christ are endowed with power according to their need. v. 15.
7. Workers for Christ may include in their number some that are unworthy and prove recreant. v. 19.

**CATECHISM QUESTIONS.**

21. *What is written concerning Jacob?* Jacob obtained his father's blessing by deceit; as well as his brother's birthright by craft.
22. *Why was his name called Israel?* The name of Jacob was changed to Israel, because, after he had deceived his father and brother, he became a very good man, and prevailed in obtaining a blessing from God, for which he had prayed.

**ENGLISH TEACHER'S NOTES.**

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

I HEARD A PRETTY SONG the other day, of which the first lines ran thus:

"We heard thy name, O Mina,  
For through the woods it rang."

On inquiry I found that "Mina" was the name of a Neapolitan chieftain, around whom those bold spirits who were ready to risk their lives for the cause of freedom had been wont to gather in past years. The song went on to describe how men of all kinds were attracted by that name, how the peasant left his cottage, and the shepherd his flock, to place himself at the disposal of the famous leader. This is but a simple instance of the readiness with which men have, in all ages and climes, responded to the call of one who summoned them to some noble or daring enterprise. The present age is, indeed, in

many respects a hard and prosaic one, but the qualities of enthusiasm and self-devotion are not lost, and in the young they are certainly worth appealing to.

It seems to me that the subject for to-day's lesson is one which does appeal to these qualities. We have here set before us a Leader, but of what we might call a "forlorn hope," for its difficulty, and small prospect, speaking ordinarily, of success. But the difficulty of the task does but enhance its grandeur, and the person of the Leader has already called forth an unbounded confidence on the part of some who have drawn near to him. The work he has undertaken is more comprehensive, more stupendous than they imagine. Their conception of it goes, probably, no further than the regeneration of the Jewish people. His aim is to evangelize the world, and to lay the foundation of "a kingdom that shall never be destroyed." The passage first shows us a little picture of this work at its very outset, and then gives us the roll-call of the first laborers.

And the interest of the matter really lies in this: that the work then begun is going on all over the world at the present day; and that the great Leader is still calling for followers who will give themselves up, as the apostles did, to his service.

Eager multitudes were thronging around our Lord, some to hear his words, others to obtain bodily healing; and this to such a degree, that, in order to escape the press, he was obliged to speak to them from a little boat, while the crowd lined the shore. And these were but a small portion of the numbers in the country round, who needed the healing touch for their bodies, and the words of life for their souls. Could not Jesus have supplied this need without calling for laborers to carry out his gracious purposes? As the Son of God he could have done so, but his will was to work as man with man, and through man's instrumentality. And so, as the multitudes increased, his call went forth to "whom he would" among the little company that already followed him, and the twelve apostles were chosen, that they might go forth in his name.

We are not now to consider their position as the "pillars" of the early Church. They are presented to us in the passage as the first men whom the Lord Jesus called to work for him and with him. This fact alone would give them pre-eminence in later times. With their pre-eminence teachers and scholars may have nothing in common. But their call and their commission touches us all. The great Leader is now seeking for followers and laborers, and in that early summons we may hear his present call.

Let us ask:

1 To whom did the summons come?

It came to men of different callings. One publican and four fishermen were among them—hardly the classes from which we might have expected our Lord's laborers to be chosen. The other seven may have filled some higher position, but if so we are not told of it. It was a matter of indifference what their occupation had been. Whether high or lowly, it did not unfit them for the service of Christ. Neither did it give them any special fitness. And so it is now. Christ chooses his servants from all grades and occupations. He wants the boy who is working at a shop as much as the boy who is studying for the learned profession. He wants the poor servant-girl as well as the refined and educated young lady. He entrusts his work to tailors and shoemakers and washerwomen. He calls even those who are too young as yet to be engaged in any fixed occupation. They are not too young to be his servants.

It came to men of different characters. There was Peter with his frankness and impetuosity, and yet with an instability which might, but for divine grace, have been his ruin. There was James and John, the "Sons of Thunder," by nature fiery and ambitious. There was Matthew, the practical man of business; Philip, the confidant of the Greeks, and his probably like-minded friend Andrew, (John 12. 20-22); Simon Zelotes, (Luke 6. 15), the strict and zealous upholder of the Jewish law; Thomas, the man of deep feeling and desponding temperament, John (11. 16; 14. 5; 21. 25, 28); Bartholomew, the man (if we are right in identifying him with Nathaniel) of contemplative disposition and unsullied uprightness; James and Jude the two sons of Alphaeus, of whom the one became the foremost man of the Church at Jerusalem; and finally Judas Iscariot, who must have possessed some qualities that inspired confidence, seeing he acted as purse-keeper, or steward to the little company. John 12. 6; 13. 29.

And so the Lord Jesus calls now every variety of character—the open and the reserved boy; the forward and the timid girl; that child with a hot temper and the other with a sullen one; the quick and bright, the slow and dull, those who are popular among their companions, and those who are neglected or shunned. He wants them all. He can make use of them all. He cannot only bless them, but make them, each one, a blessing.

2. What did the call involve?

It involved complete surrender of the life. Christ chose the twelve "that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach." They were to be dependent upon him, and to be at his disposal. Some of them may have read this already in his first call: "Follow me." And this is what he requires now. He calls no one simply to be saved. He calls us to be his. Many do not



understand this at first. They know they are called to repentance, faith, and salvation, but they see no further. And the call comes again to them. 1 Cor. 6. 20. But there can be no surrender of the life without the surrender of the heart. None can fight under his standard unless they are really on his side.

3. How was the call received ?

When he called those whom he wanted, they came unto him. They placed themselves joyfully at his feet to learn his work and to do his bidding. And did they regret the step ? Not even in the darkest hour—not when they thought they had lost him ? Not when he went away from them into heaven, not when they began “to suffer shame for his name,” (Acts 5, 41) not when death and eternity were in view. 2 Pet. 1. 14 ; 1 John 3 2, 3.

Yet one of them proved false ! Yes, a solemn warning that there may be the semblance without the reality. May each one who hears the call obey it in humble sincerity, and hear, when his work is done, the “Well done” of the Master.

**BEREAN METHODS.**

*Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.*

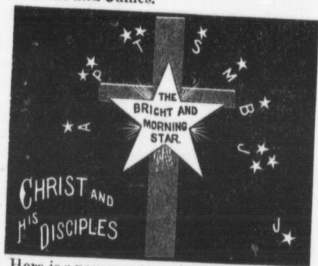
The period in Christ's life to which this lesson belongs... Various elements in the multitude around Jesus : (1) Foes ; (2) Inquirers ; (3) Believers ; (4) Disciples ; (5) Workers... The choice of the twelve: (1) Its purpose ; (2) Time and circumstances ; (3) Who were chosen... The call : (1) A divine call ; (2) A call to companionship ; (3) A call to training ; (4) A call to work ; (5) An accepted call... The spirit of Christ as shown in this lesson. (See Analytical and Biblical Outline)... ILLUSTRATIONS. Gratitude, ver. 10. A hospital nurse, “Sister Dora,” saved a man's arm when the surgeons were about to amputate it. He recovered and afterward walked ten miles just to leave the word, “Her arm rung the bell.”... The soldier fresh from battle can tell its story ; the sailor from shipwreck can give account of the storm: so Christ sends saved men as messengers to save men... Judas as an apostle, like a cold, dead statue holding a lamp ; like a lens made of ice, through which sun kindles a fire: the light may shine, but it does not warm the statue or melt the ice.

**Blackboard.**

BY J. N. PHIPPS, B.S.Q.

**EXPLANATION.** This diagram is intended to aid in committing to memory the names of the disciples. Jesus the great light, or morning star, has assembled around him twelve lights. Arrange the stars same as in diagram. Ask if they all proved true ? [Ans : All but Judas.] Write J for that name beside the falling star. Then the memory help is this:

“All proved true shining marks but Judas.” Write the first letter of each word against the stars as in the diagram. The first star and letter is for Andrew. The next is Peter and Philip, Then comes Thomas and Thaddeus, and Simon, Matthew, and Bartholomew, and the last three stars and letters are for James and John and James.



Here is a new way to write the Golden Text: **Ye have not chosen me ; but I have chosen you, AND ordained YOU that ye SHOULD GO AND BRING FORTH FRUIT.**

Are we his true disciples ?

**References.** FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA OF ILLUSTRATIONS : Verse 14, Prose, 169, 9162. Ver. 15, Poetical, 135, 136. Ver. 17, Prose, 8327. Ver. 10, Poetical, 2311, 4065... FREEMAN'S HAND-BOOK : Pharisee, 693 ; Herodians, 694 : Use of the term “sons,” 650.

**Primary and Intermediate.**

BY M. V. M.

**LESSON THOUGHT.** Chosen to bear fruit.

The choosing, the sending forth, the fruit-bearing, are leading truths which this lesson may stamp upon the minds of the children. An introduction about the hatred of the Pharisee, and the withdrawal of the Saviour, may lead to the story of the night of prayer and the morning which followed.

1. Recall some of the works that Jesus had been doing. Were these the works of a man ? What did the devils themselves own him to be ? Teach that his great power and goodness made the Pharisees hate him. They thought themselves very good, and could not bear that others should be wiser or holier than they. It was the sinful passion of Envy which moved them. Show how envy can live in a child's heart, and how we all need to know Jesus to keep us from these evil passions.

2. Jesus had been teaching on the shores of the sea of Galilee. One night he went up into a mountain alone, and all night long he prayed to God. Then in the morning he called his disciples to him. Do you think he had been talking to God about them ? Yes, no doubt he had. Jesus knows each one of

us by name, and he lives in heaven now to intercede for us, that is, to speak to God in our behalf. God told him what to do, and he will tell us when we are earnest in asking.

3. Jesus chose twelve from his disciples, who were to be sent out to preach his word. They were called "APOSTLES," which means sent out. Make a wheel with twelve spokes, and print the names of the apostles in the spokes, leaving a circle in the centre for the name of Jesus. Who sent these apostles out? What for? Did Jesus want them to talk about

themselves? No, he wanted them to get acquainted with him, so that they could go and tell other folks about him. How do we get acquainted with folks? We have to be with them. So Jesus kept these men with him until they knew him well enough to tell others about him.

Now, this same Jesus wants us all to be with him, so that he can send us out to talk about him, and to get people to love him. It is being with Jesus to obey him, and we cannot obey him unless we are with him.

A. C. 27.

## LESSON VII.—CHRIST'S FOES AND FRIENDS.

February 19.

Mark 3, 20-35.

20 And the multitude cometh together again, *a* so that they could not do so much as eat bread.

*a* Chap. 6, 31.

21 And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, he is beside himself.

22 And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, *b* He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.

*b* Matt. 9, 34; 10, 25; Luke 11, 15; John 7, 20; 8, 48, 52.

23 And *c* he called them unto him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?

*c* Matt. 12, 25.

24 And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

25 And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

26 And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided he cannot stand, but hath an end.

27 No *d* man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.

*d* Isa. 49, 24; Matt. 12, 29.

28 Verily *e* I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme;

*e* Matt. 12, 31; Luke 12, 10; 1 John 5, 16.

29 But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath *f* never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:

*f* Acts 7, 51; 2 Thess. 1, 9; Heb. 6, 4.

30 Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

31 There *g* came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him.

*g* Matt. 12, 46; Luke 8, 19.

32 And the multitude sat about him; and they say unto him, Behold, *h* thy mother and thy brethren without him, *h* thy mother and thy brethren without him.

*h* Matt. 13, 55; Chap. 6, 3; John 7, 3.

33 And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren?

34 And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, *i* Behold my mother and my brethren!

*i* Deut. 33, 9; Rom. 8, 29; Heb. 2, 11.

35 For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and my sister, and my mother.

## GENERAL STATEMENT.

Jesus is now at work in his second tour of preaching in Galilee. He has delivered to the twelve and an immense throng of listeners the Sermon on the Mount; has healed the centurion's servant at Capernaum, and raised to life the widow's son at Nain. Everywhere the deepest interest has been awakened, and the crowds that follow Jesus as he teaches by the sea, in the syn-gogue, or on the hillside, were never before so great as now. The secret dislike of the Pharisees and scribes has at last broken out into open opposition; they have taken their position, and now openly assert that his mighty works are wrought by Satan's power, and for an evil purpose. Jesus shows how absurd is their charge from the very character of the miracles, which show Satan's overthrow, and the expulsion of his demons from their human dwelling-places. Then with deep solemnity Jesus declares that the deepest of all sins is to impute to the Evil One the work of the Holy Spirit, and that for this crime there is no forgiveness, because it hardens the heart against all good influences. The reports of Jesus' work, perverted by their channels, come to the immediate family of Mary, his mother. His half-brothers have not as yet believed in his divine nature, and the heart of the mother must have been sorely tried by contrary opinions. Thinking that perhaps her son's mind has been overwrought by his labors, she comes to the place of his teaching with her family, and sends a message of her desire to see him. The word is borne through the crowd to the house where Jesus sits surrounded by his disciples. He answers the summons by declaring that the ties of grace are closer than those of nature, and his nearest friends are those who listen to God's word, and keep it with loving obedience.

## EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

Verses 20, 21. Cometh together. This was the culmination of the popular interest in the ministry of Jesus. 1. The attendance of a crowd is not the sure token of success. Could not... eat bread. The regularity of meals was broken up, by the numbers of people coming and going. His friends. This may mean either friends or kindred. Probably it was the latter, and the reference is to the event in verses

31-35, the intervening verses being inserted to show the cause of his relatives' interference. **Lay hold on him.** The immediate relatives of Jesus, excepting his mother, did not then believe on him, (John 7. 5,) and, receiving their reports through enemies, formed mistaken opinions, and thought it necessary to exercise some constraint upon him. **Beside himself.** They imagined that over-exertion and the constant crowd had affected his mind. 2. How often even the best of men are misunderstood and misrepresented!

22. **Scribes.... from Jerusalem.** Leading members of the order who had come for the express purpose of passing judgment upon the claims of Jesus. From their position, their utterances would possess great weight with the people. Thus far the attitude of the rulers, though unfriendly, had not been determined against Jesus. 3. Every man must make his own decision concerning Jesus. **He hath Beelzebub.** According to the Jewish view, the evil spirits were of different ranks, under the control of Beelzebub or Satan. The name was originally that of an idol among the Philistines. 2 Kings 1. 2. The scribes asserted that Jesus, who cast out demons, was himself possessed by the prince of the demons. No baser nor more abominable perversion of good into evil could possibly be made; and such a charge, in such an age, could not fail to prejudice the minds of the people against Jesus. **Casteth he out devils.** Not even the worst enemies of Jesus undertook to deny the fact of his miracles.

23. **He called them.** Desiring to meet his slanderers face to face, he sent for them to come to the house where he was abiding. 4. The gospel never shrinks from an open contest with its foes. **In parables.** That is, not in set parables, such as in the succeeding chapter, but teaching by illustration. **Satan cast out Satan.** Was it possible to suppose that one inspired by the spirit of evil would go about setting men free from evil spirits, and breaking Satan's chain? Could any one preach a gospel so pure and uplifting, and yet be the agent of the wicked one? 5. The true origin of Christianity may be shown still by its influence over men.

24, 25, 26. **Kingdom be divided.** The nation which spends its strength in civil war must finally lose its power; so if Satan's kingdom is fighting itself and working against its own interests, it must fall before the kingdom of God. 6. Notice that Christ, to whom the invisible worlds are open, recognizes the reality of Satan's kingdom. 7. Notice also the traits of Satan's kingdom. (1) Unity. (2) Subordination. (3) Opposition to God. **Hath an end.** Satan's power may be great, but his defeat and doom are certain. 8. Let us rejoice in this assurance of victory.

27. **A strong man's house.** The strong man is Satan: his house is the human heart. **Spoil his goods.** Take possession of and control his property. **Except he will first bind.** In other words, Christ's power to expel Satan and his demons from men's hearts is a convincing proof that he is mightier than Satan, and utterly

disproves the charge that he is Satan's subordinate. The statement is more full in Luke 11. 21, 22. 9. No man unaided by divine power can transform himself from a sinner into a saint.

28, 29, 30. **All sins shall be forgiven.** That is, all sins except the one sin named in the succeeding verse. **Blasphemies.** Insults to God, whether in irreverence, profanity, or unbelieving sneer and jest. **Blaspheme against the Holy Ghost.** From the connection it is shown that this means a wilful and wanton attributing to Satan's power the work of the Holy Spirit by those who may know, and ought to know, the truth, or "treason by professed members of the kingdom of God against the Spirit of God."—L. Abbott. This is something more than mere obduracy of heart against the Gospel; more than mere careless and heated utterances against God, however presumptuous or even blasphemous. God's word purposely leaves the awful crime undefined, that men may not venture near its borders. **Hath never forgiveness.** Because by the very terms of his guilt he can never meet with conviction, for he considers the Spirit's work as no better than Satan's. **Eternal damnation.** "Is guilty of an eternal sin." [Revised Version.] Eternal sin, because it can never be blotted out by forgiveness.

31, 32. **There came then.** "There come." [Rev. Ver.] Mark's gospel has a characteristic—the use of the present tense, as if to illustrate the activity of Christ's life. **His mother.** Though believing that her Son was divinely endowed, Mary doubtless was perplexed by the reports concerning Jesus, by the evidences that he was disappointing the popular expectation as Messiah, and by the high authority of the scribes who were opposed to him. Perhaps at this moment she was a mere tool in the hands of Christ's enemies. **His brethren.** Probably the younger half-brothers of Jesus, children of Joseph and Mary. Their names are given in Mark 6. 3. Some of them afterward became his followers, (Acts 1. 14,) and one of them an apostle. Gal. 1. 19. **Standing without.** Unable to come near on account of the crowd. **They said.** Perhaps the words were spoken by enemies, who, through the family, hoped to obtain control of Jesus.

33, 34. **Who is my mother.** Jesus sees the entire purpose at a glance, and meets it openly with words which are surprising, yet clearly proclaim his relation not only to the family of Nazareth, but to all mankind. **Looking round.** Matthew adds, "He stretched forth his hand upon his disciples." **Behold my mother and my brethren.** Not that Jesus ignored his human relationship; but that he came to be more than the "son of Mary," even the "Son of man." The tie that binds Christ and his disciple, in every age, is stronger than that between Jesus and his mother according to the flesh. 10. Hence, we have no need of the virgin's intercession with our Saviour. 11. We may be as near to Christ as the disciples who on that day sat around him.

35. **Whosoever shall do.** Attachment to Christ will be shown by doing the will of his

Father. The will of God. God's law as set forth in Holy Scripture is the utterance of his will. Brother . . . sister . . . mother. All mankind stand in the same relation to Jesus Christ. Even Mary is saved, not because she was his mother, but because she became his disciple.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**

He that is not with me is against me.  
Matt. 12, 30.

**OUTLINE.**

1. Christ's foes, v. 28-30.
2. Christ's Friends, v. 31-35.

**LESSON HYMN.**

No. 425, *New Hymn Book.*

C. M.

Servant of all, to toil for man  
Thou didst not, Lord, refuse;  
Thy majesty did not disdain  
To be employed for us.

Thy bright example I pursue,  
To thee in all things rise;  
And all I think, or speak, or do,  
Is one great sacrifice.

Careless through outward cares I go,  
From all distraction free;  
My hands are but engaged below,  
My heart is still with thee.

No. 98, *S. S. Hymnal.*

Ss. &amp; 7s.

Hark, the voice of Jesus calling,  
"Who will go and work to-day?  
Fields are white, and harvests waiting,  
Who will bear the sheaves away!"  
Loud and long the Master calleth,  
Rich reward he offers free;  
Who will answer, gladly saying,  
"Here am I, O Lord, send me."

Let none hear you idly saying,  
"There is nothing I can do,"  
While the souls of men are dying,  
And the Master calls for you;  
Take the task he gives you gladly;  
Let his work your pleasure be;  
Answer quickly when he calleth,  
"Here am I, O Lord, send me."

No. 431, *New Hymn Book.*

7s.

Holy Lamb, who thee confess,  
Followers of thy holiness,  
Thee they ever keep in view,  
Ever ask, "What shall we do?"  
Governed by thy only will,  
All thy words we would fulfil;  
Would in all thy footsteps go,  
Walk as Jesus walked below.

While thou didst on earth appear,  
Servant to thy servants here,  
Mindful of thy place above,  
All thy life was prayer and love,  
Such our whole employment be,  
Works of faith and charity;  
Works of love on man bestowed,  
Secret intercourse with God.

**Time.**—A. D. 27, while Jesus was on his second circuit of Galilee.

**Place.**—Capernaum.

**Connecting Links.**—1. The Sermon on the Mount. Matt. 5-7. 2. Healing the centurion's servant. Luke 7. 1-10. The miracle at Nain. Luke 7. 11-17. 3. Messengers from John

the Baptist. Matt. 11. 2-24. 4. Anointing the feet of Jesus. Luke 7. 36-50. 5. Christ's second tour of Galilee. Luke 8. 1-3.

**Parallel Passages.**—Matt. 12. 22-50; Luke 11. 14-23; 8. 19-21.

**HOME READINGS.**

- M. Christ's foes and friends, Mark 3. 20-35.  
Tu. The decision of Joshua. Josh. 24. 14-28.  
W. The decision of Carmel. 1 Kings 18. 21-40.  
Th. Renouncing all for Christ. Luke 14. 25-35.  
F. Separation from evil. 2 Cor. 5. 12-21.  
S. Reward of fidelity. Matt. 10. 24-42.  
S. The faithful Church. Rev. 3. 7-13.

**QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON.****1. Christ's foes, v. 20-30.**

What was the result of great crowds following after Jesus?

What did the friends of Jesus do and say? Did they believe on him at this time? See John 7. 5.

Were these, then, really his friends or his foes?

How did Christ's foes account for his miracles? What is meant by "Beelzebub" and "Satan"? [Ans. The evil spirit.]

What spirit did these scribes show toward Christ?

How did Jesus answer his enemies?

What did the works which Jesus wrought show?

What is meant by "the strong man"? [Ans. Satan.]

Who alone can cast Satan out of the heart?

What sin did Jesus say could never be forgiven? How may we avoid that sin? [Ans. By believing in Jesus Christ.]

**2. Christ's Friends, v. 31-35.**

Who came to see Jesus?

For what purpose did they call for Jesus?

Why could they not come directly to him? Luke 8. 19.

What did Jesus say when he heard of their coming?

What did Jesus mean by these words?

How may we become the brothers and sisters of Christ?

To which of the two classes in the GOLDEN TEXT would you belong?

**PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.**

Where may we see in this lesson—

1. How bitter is the hate of Christ's enemies?
2. How mighty is the power of Christ?
3. How strong is the love of Christ for his followers.

**The Lesson Catechism.**—(For the entire school).—1. By what power did Christ's enemies say that he cast out evil spirits? By the power of Satan. 2. What did Jesus say in answer to them? "How can Satan cast out Satan?" 3. What did Christ's miracles show? That he was stronger than Satan? 4. What did Christ say about the forgiveness of sins? That sins could be forgiven. 5. What one sin did he say could not be forgiven? Speaking evil of the Holy Spirit. 6. Who did Jesus say is dearer to him than even his mother and his brothers? Whoever does God's will.

**DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The existence of evil spirits.

**ANALYTICAL & BIBLICAL OUTLINE.**  
**The Two Kingdoms.**

**I. SATAN'S KINGDOM.**

1. **Hypocrisy.** "The scribes which came." v. 22.  
 "Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites." Matt. 23. 13.
2. **Falsehood.** "He hath Beelzebub." v. 22.  
 "Ye are of your father the devil." John 9. 44.
3. **Failure.** "He cannot stand." v. 26.  
 "I beheld Satan.....fall from heaven." Luke 10. 18.
4. **Destruction.** "Eternal damnation." v. 29.  
 "Prepared for the devil and his angels." Matt. 25. 41.

**II. CHRIST'S KINGDOM.**

1. **Power.** "Bind the strong man." v. 27.  
 "Power over all flesh." John 17. 2.
2. **Conquest.** "Spoil his house." v. 27.  
 "Spoiled principalities and powers." Col. 2. 15.
3. **Privilege.** "My mother...brethren." v. 34.  
 "Now are we sons of God." 1. John 3. 2.
4. **Godliness.** "Will of God." v. 35.  
 "Know him.....keep his commandments." 1 John 2. 3.

**ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.**  
**Hindrances to Christ's Cause.**

1. Christ's cause is sometimes hindered by the applause and favour of the multitude. v. 20.
2. Christ's cause is hindered by the mistakes of sincere, but mistaken friends. v. 21.
3. Christ's cause is hindered by the opposition and unbelief of the world's leaders of thought. v. 22.
4. Christ's cause is hindered by the existence of an evil spirit who holds power over men. v. 23.
5. Christ's cause is hindered by errors, falsehoods, and misrepresentations of its enemies. v. 22.
6. Christ's cause is hindered by the hatred of the natural man to the work of the Spirit. v. 29.

**CATECHIST QUESTIONS.**

23. *How many sons had Jacob, or Israel?*  
 Jacob, or Israel, had twelve sons; who were called the twelve Patriarchs, or fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel.
24. *Who was the most famous of Israel's sons?*  
 The most famous of Israel's sons was Joseph; whom his brethren sold into Egypt, and he afterwards became the ruler of the land, under Pharaoh the king.

**ENGLISH TEACHER'S NOTES.**

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

WHEN France and Germany were at war together there was no occasion for England, or any other country, to enter into the con-

test. Whatever might have been the interest taken by other nations in the struggle, they were able to, and they did, observe an entire neutrality. But when the strife lies between two parties in the same country the matter is different. When, a few years previously, Prussia and Austria were contending for the mastery, the smaller German States had to choose between them. No neutrality was allowed. Whoever did not declare himself friend was reckoned foe. And so it was in the great American struggle between north and south. Men were either loyal or disloyal to the Union. They could not possibly be neutral. To one side or other they must belong.

Last Sunday we were considering the first followers of the Lord Jesus Christ—followers not merely in the sense of being attracted to his teaching, but in the higher sense of being called to be labourers together with him, to do his work and to fight under his banner. But following "in their train," as Heber's noble hymn has it, came others:

"A noble army, men and boys,  
 The matron and the maid."

And still, as year after year rolls by, others are flocking to the same banner, and the call goes forth: "Who is on the Lord's side?" "Who follows in his train?" For every man, woman, and child, must either be friend or foe of the Lord Jesus. As soon as the call is heard, there is some kind of choice made. As the Golden text tells us, "He that is not with me [having heard the call] is against me."

In the passage for to-day a scene is shown us from the conflict upon which the Lord Jesus had entered. And we have to notice three classes of people who appear on this scene.

1. The Scribes and Pharisees.

What is their attitude? They have heard our Lord's words. They have listened to his teaching. They have seen his mighty works. And they have set themselves deliberately to oppose him. They have tried to throw discredit on his teaching and upon his practice, as we saw two Sundays ago. They have watched to find something of which they might accuse him. But in spite of their efforts the people are thronging round him more than ever. The casting out of an evil spirit from a blind man and dumb, so that sight and speech are restored to the sufferer, has aroused the crowd to a high pitch of enthusiasm, and the words, "Is not this the Son of David," are in every mouth, Matt. 12. 22-24. And now the Pharisees send forth their most venomous arrow against him whom they wish to silence: "Through the prince of the devils casteth he out devils." There is no doubt which side they have chosen. They

are foes, open, pronounced, and active foes of the Lord Jesus.

Why this fierce enmity—this bitter opposition? They fear that Jesus may win the conflict in which he is engaged. They rightly recognize that his way is not their way, and that as he prospers and succeeds, they must fail and lose. So they do not scruple to employ against him the weapons of deceit, lying, and blasphemy.

2. The "friends" or "kinsmen" of Jesus. What position have they taken up? They, also, know something of his words and works. And they also are trying to stop him, though after another fashion, and from another motive. As long as all things went smoothly, and men spoke well of their kinsman, the new Teacher, they were probably satisfied. But they find that he has aroused the displeasure of the great men of the nation. A conflict has really arisen between him and the Scribes and Pharisees. They will not support him. They will not even let it be supposed that they concur with him in what he is doing. Whether their anxiety arises from natural affection for their kinsman, or from care for their own credit or safety, we do not know, but they are determined to compel him forcibly to desist. It is strange that they should have been able to persuade Mary his mother to accompany them. Probably she followed them with reluctance. But anyhow she is for the time assuming their ideas and their attitude. And they, whatever their professions of friendship, are acting the part of foes. They cannot be reckoned on his side.

What is their motive! They are afraid that Jesus will not win. In his conflict with the Pharisees, in the work he is carrying on among the people, they anticipate failure. Surely it is madness to oppose the heads of the nation. Surely he will only bring ruin upon himself and upon his adherents. And it, therefore, behoves them to put a friendly restraint upon him.

Does he recognize them as friends? By no means. He cannot do so while they are thus acting. And so to the announcement that his "mother and brethren stand without," he replies, "Who is my mother and who are my brethren?"

3. The disciples of Jesus.

What is their standing-ground? They are with their Master, sitting "about him," probably at his feet, willing to let all the world—yes, and his enemies too—see that they are his disciples. They are neither afraid nor ashamed of their relationship to him. The plots and the railing of the Pharisees do not move them. They are not at present actively fighting for the Master, but they are close to him—unmistakably on his side.

Why is this? They are sure Jesus will win. And their faith is correct, though it is as yet uninstructed. They do not know what they must undergo. They only know that, come what will, he must triumph. And they know that in that triumph they shall share.

And the Lord Jesus recognizes these as his friends indeed—nay, as his true kinsmen. "Behold," he says of them, "my mother and my brethren." For they are doing the will of God, in believing "on him whom he hath sent." John 6. 29.

Which are we, Christ's foes or Christ's friends? For which would he recognize us? We cannot be neutral. Every boy and girl who has heard his word must either be loyal or disloyal to Christ. Some are disloyal with intent. They do not like his ways nor his service. They fear he may win—at any rate, that he may win their companions, or even themselves, over to his side. So they mock, and rail, and do all in their power to stop any one who works for him. Others are disloyal without well understanding the issue. They only want to be quiet and comfortable, to get on, and enjoy themselves. And they fear Christ will not win—they shall really lose if they follow him—they shall be inconvenienced if others follow him. They would like to put a stop to the solemn inquiry, the earnest appeal, the "out and out" witness for Christ: all that is going too far.

But the loyal ones know assuredly that Christ will win. The boy who will bear persecution, the girl who will take a taunt, know that they are on the winning side. They cannot see the whole way, but they see the end—He shall "put all enemies under his feet;" and his loyal followers shall "sit down with him on his throne."

#### BEREAN METHODS.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Briefly recount the connecting links with the last lesson. . . . . The characteristics of Christ's ministry at this period: (1) Popularity; (2) Opposition; (3) Power; (4) Fidelity to truth. . . . Explain, Scribes from Jerusalem; Beelzebub; Satan; parables; house divided; blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; damnation; brethren, etc. . . . . Avoid wasting time over doubtful or mysterious subjects; make the lesson practical. . . . Aspects of Satan's kingdom: (1) Falsehood; (2) Subtlety; (3) Opposition to God; (4) Unity in itself; (5) Subordination to its head; (6) Defeat; (7) Destruction. . . . Aspects of Christ's kingdom. (See Analytical and Biblical Outline.) . . . . What hindrances to Christ's cause are here shown? (See Additional Practical Lessons.) . . . . What duties here implied: (1) Loyalty to Christ; (2) Faith in Christ; (3) Reverence

for Christ ; (4) Love for Christ ; (5) Obedience to Christ. . . . ILLUSTRATIONS. In *Paradise Lost*, Satan appeared as a toad whispering in the ear of Eve. An angel touched it with his spear, and Satan stood revealed. . . . King Canute promised that whoever would kill his rival he would make "the highest man in England." When an assassin did the deed, he kept his word by hanging him on the highest tower in the land. Such are Satan's promises. . . . Ulysses could only pass the islands of the Sirens, whose songs lured voyagers on the rocks, by filling the ears of the sailors with wax, and causing himself to be tied to the mast. But Orpheus sailing by overcame even the Sirens by the magic of his sweeter music. Such is Christ's victory over Satan.

**References.** FOSTER'S PROSE ILLUSTRATION. Ver. 24—8112. Ver. 26—1595. Ver. 27—5868. Ver. 29—3006, 7805, 9560. Ver. 34—6943. Ver. 35—6946. . . . FREEMAN : Beelzebub, 324.

**Primary and Intermediate.**  
BY M. V. M.

**LESSON THOUGHT.** Who are Christ's Friends ?

1. Ask some questions about Jesus, as, whose son was he ? Where did he come from ? Had he riches ? Had he power ? etc., thus turning the thoughts of the children to the real person—Jesus. Whatever helps to make him real is great gain. Talk about Jesus as a king. Where was his kingdom ? Yes, in heaven. Do kings have many friends ? But what if a king takes off his crown, and wears mean robes, and has no throne—not even a home. Will not many of his friends turn away from him ? Teach that Jesus had done this, and though he did great works, yet his friends were ashamed of him because he went among sinners, and lived such a common kind of life. Tell how he was preaching to great crowds, and some who called themselves his friends came to take him away, saying that he had lost his mind. Some of his enemies said that Satan gave him power to do the great works which he did.

2. What kind of a spirit is it that makes Johnny strike Willie ? An evil spirit. Yes, it is the spirit of ill-will, of hatred, which comes from Satan. Now, if Johnny gets angry at Eddie, too, and strikes him, will that drive the bad spirit out of his heart ? No, it will only make it stronger. Some such simple

A. D. 27

**LESSON VIII.—PARABLE OF THE SOWER.**

Mark 4. 1-20.

1 And he began again to teach by the sea-side ; and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea ; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.

• Matt. 13. 1 ; Luke 8. 4.

2 And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine,

Chap. 12. 38.

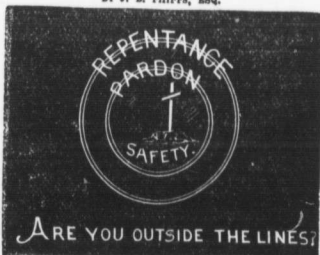
illustration will show how foolish was this charge. The children will be able to tell what spirit can drive out evil, and that will show plainly who and what Jesus was.

3. Picture the scene—Jesus in the crowd, his mother and brothers calling to him, because unable to reach him. They wanted to take him away. They were afraid that he would be killed for speaking the truth. Teach that danger is only to be feared in not doing God's will. Apply by showing from Jesus' own words, that any one belongs to his family who is doing the will of God. Show that we are Christ's foes if we are not doing his Father's will, and that those only are his friends who are doing God's work. Print on the board.

"GOD'S WORK FIRST.

**Blackboard.**

BY J. E. PHIPPS, ESQ.



**EXPLANATION.** Make the inside circle with white chalk, and the outside one with red. [Though you repent of sins that are like scarlet, the line of pardon will make them white as snow.] These circles are intended to show the position of the foes and friends of Christ. The true friend of Christ is within the line of pardon, close to the cross, ready at all times to do the will of God. See ver. 35. His foes are all without the line of pardon, but are not all outside the line of repentance. Those within that line may turn to the cross and receive pardon, (ver. 28,) but some there are who have placed themselves beyond repentance, (ver. 29,) where there is never forgiveness. One risks everything outside the line of pardon. Remember the Golden Text. Let each one ask himself or herself the question, Where do I stand ? Am I a friend or foe ?

February 19.

3 Hearken ; Behold, there went out a sower to sow :

4 And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way-side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.

5 And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth ; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth :

**6.** But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

**7** And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

**8** And other fell on good ground, and c did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred. c John 15. 5 Col. 1. 6.

**9** And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

**10** And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve d asked of him the parable.

d Prov. 2: 1; 4: 7; 13: 20; Matt. 13: 10; Luke 8, 9.  
**11** And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the e mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto f them that are without, all these things are done in parables:

e 1 Cor. 2: 10.—f 1 Cor. 1: 18; 5: 12; Col. 4: 5; 1 Thess. 4: 12; 1 Tim. 3: 7.

**12** That g seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

g Isa. 6: 9; 44: 18; Jer. 5: 21; Matt. 13: 14; Luke 8: 10; John 12: 40; Acts 28: 26; Rom. 11: 8.

**13** And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable f and how then will ye know all parables?

**14** The h sower soweth the word

h Matt. 13: 19; Eph. 3: 8; 1 Pet. 1: 23, 25.

**15** And these are they by the way-side, where the word is sown; but, when they have heard, i Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.

i 2 Cor. 2: 11; 4: 4; 1 Pet. 5: 8.  
**16** And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness;

**17** And have j no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.

j Job. 27: 10.  
**18** And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word,

**19** And the cares of this world, and k the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

k Ps. 82: 7; Prov. 23: 5; Eccl. 5: 13; Luke 18: 24; Acts 5: 1; 1 Tim. 6: 9, 17; Tit. 1: 11.

**20** And these are they which are sown on good l ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirty-fold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

l Rom. 7: 4; 2 Cor. 5: 17; 2 Pet. 1: 4.

#### GENERAL STATEMENT.

Jesus is now about to present the deeper truths of his Gospel, truths which, if openly taught, would expose him to accusation from his ever-watchful foes. He, therefore, adopts a new method of teaching, in which the attention of the hearers is fascinated by the interest of the story, while the truth is veiled from the understanding of the thoughtless, but revealed to the search of the earnest inquirer. We behold the Master, sitting in the prow of Simon's fishing-boat, which rocks in the ripple, while the smooth waters stretch away behind; the green slope

of the shore is covered with a dense mass of people before, and over all arches the deep blue of the Galilean sky. Every face of the thousands is fixed upon the Great Teacher, and every ear is attentive to his lips. All day long he teaches in a series of parables, with illustrations of the Gospel from the plowman on the hill-side, the fisher's net upon the shore, the mustard-plant growing in the garden, the housewife kneading her dough. The larger number of these parables have been recorded by Matthew, but Mark selects a few of the most prominent, as characteristic of the Saviour's teaching at this period. The one before us represents the sower scattering his seed on the beaten path, in the thicket, where the thin soil hides the rock beneath, and in the mellow, fertile earth, an image of the Gospel teacher, who drops his message into all hearts, and waits for the divine influence to bring the harvest.

#### EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

**Verses 1, 2.** Began again. Perhaps on the same day, after the call of his mother and his brothers. **By the sea-side.** An evidence that the preaching was informal, and without ritual accompaniments. **1.** Our Master went everywhere with his message, and so should we. **A great multitude.** The discourse which Jesus gave showed that he fully realized how small a proportion of this multitude were earnest and fruitful hearers of the word. **Into a ship.** A small boat, which was pushed out a little from the shore where stood his hearers. **Many things.** Of which even Matthew gives but a few, and Mark selects a single specimen. **2.** We are not to suppose that the preaching is lost which remains unrecorded. **By parables.** A form of teaching especially adapted to meet the rising opposition of the scribes; in which the truth is veiled under a story, giving to all some instruction, but its full meaning only to those who search below the surface. **Doctrine.** "Teaching." [Revised Version.]

**3, 4. Behold.** Perhaps emphasizing his words by pointing to a farmer at work on the terraced hillside. **There went out.** The farmers in Oriental countries generally live in the cities for protection, and go out, often several miles, to their work in the fields. **A sower.** The primary reference of the parable is to Christ as the great sower of the word-seed, and then to all those, whether preachers or lay-workers, who labour in his cause. **By the way-side.** There are no fences in the east, but the path lies directly through the cultivated fields, so that the farmer is liable to scatter some of his seed upon it in passing. **Fowls of the air** "Birds." [Rev. Ver.] Luke adds, "It was trodden down."

**5, 6. Stony ground.** Not places where stones and soil intermingle, but where the rock beneath is thinly covered with earth; as is frequently seen on the mountain sides of Palestine. **Immediately.** Having no room for the root to strike below, all its growth must be upward. **Scorched.** During the long drought of summer, when the surface becomes dry, and only those plants live whose roots reach down to moisture below.



**7, 8. Among thorns.** Which are very abundant in Palestine. **Choked it.** Not utterly killing the plant, but preventing it from bringing forth fruit. See Luke 8. 14. **Good ground.** Soil naturally fertile, free from weeds and thorns, and prepared to receive the seed. **Some thirty, some sixty.** A single kernel of wheat has been known to produce 1,200 grains; but in the east the usual proportion is from 20 to 60 times the amount sown. Notice four stages: in the first, the seed never penetrates the surface; in the second, it begins to grow but soon dies; in the third, it lives and grows, but remains unfruitful; in the fourth, it lives, grows, and produces fruit.

**9, 10. Ears to hear.** A reminder that there was a meaning in the parable below the surface, that it must be read "between the lines" if its truths were to be perceived. 3. God gives us power of thought that we may gain by exercising it. **When he was alone.** After this and other parables had been given, and the congregation had been dismissed. **About him with the twelve.** The body of believers, whose relation to Christ was between that of the multitude of listeners. **Asked of him.** Thus the parable accomplished its purpose of eliciting inquiry and prompting thought. 4. Truth is always best understood and most profitable when it is sought after. [Teacher, try to lead your scholars to find out the truths of the lesson for themselves.]

**11. Unto you it is given.** Given not by an arbitrary allotment, but given to them alone because they alone sought after the understanding of the truth. **The mysteries.** The word "mystery" in the New Testament generally means a truth which man, unaided, can never discover, but which is learned only by revelation of God. **Them that are without.** The careless listeners, who seek not to know the deeper truths of the Gospel. 5. Whether men are without or within the circle of Gospel knowledge depends upon their own choice. **Done in parables.** They listen to the story, but fail to comprehend its spiritual import.

**12, 13. Seeing . . . not perceive.** They saw the form, but not the spirit; they heard the words, but not the underlying truth. **Lest . . . converted.** "Lest haply they should turn again." The fault is not with the truth itself, nor with God who gave it, but with those who will not seek to hear it lest they may be led to heed it. **Know ye not this parable?** Christ lays stress on the understanding of this parable, because it contained the key to the other parables.

**14, 15. Soweth the word.** God's word is like a seed, (1) It was given by God to men. (2) If it were lost men would perish. (3) It has power of reproduction in human hearts. (4) It must be used if it is to prove a benefit. **Satan cometh immediately.** 6. Satan is always at hand when the word of God is preached. **Take them away the word.** By wandering thoughts, and frivolous, dissipating conversation, the influence of the truth is often lost before it is fairly felt.

**16, 17. Stony ground.** The soil of a

superficial character, in which emotion is mistaken for principle. **Receive it with gladness.** Their error is not in the joyous reception of truth, but in the lack of steadfastness. **No root in themselves.** No stability of character, giving resistance to outward influences, and power to overcome obstacles. **Affliction or persecution.** The trials of life are like sunshine, which withers the rootless, but develops the well-rooted plant. 7. Let every follower of Jesus expect hindrance and opposition to his growth in grace. **Immediately they are offended.** "Straightway they stumble." [Rev. Ver.] A much more accurate rendering, for it refers not to a state of feeling, but to a defect in character. These are what an old commentator calls "Holy-day servants, politic professors, neuter-passive Christians." 8. God's cause needs the firm and persevering character.

**18, 19. Sown among thorns.** A picture of the heart divided between God and mammon, where worldly influences surround and check the development of the spiritual life. 9. Thorns grow of themselves, but grain must be planted. **Cares of this world.** Worldly interests, household details, petty duties of life, claims of society. **Deceitfulness of riches.** Not only riches possessed, but riches sought after. **Choke the word.** So crowd the spiritual nature that it fails in its growth. **Becometh unfruitful.** It is not always killed, but kept unfruitful. Luke says, "Bring no fruit to perfection." 10. How many are made poor in the world to come, by becoming rich in this world! **20. Good ground.** Hearts mellowed and enriched by the Holy Spirit. **Bring forth fruit.** The good ground is shown by the good fruit: in character, life, and influence. **Some thirty fold.** 11. Not all true Christians produce equal results, but all do produce some.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. Rev. 2. 20.

#### OUTLINE.

1. The Teacher. v. 1, 2.
2. The Lesson. v. 3-9.
3. The Application. v. 10-20.

#### LESSON HYMN.

No. 429, New Hymn Book. S. M.

Sow in the morn thy seed,  
At eve hold not thy hand;  
To doubt and fear give thou no heed,  
Broadcast it o'er the land.

Thou canst not toil in vain;  
Cold, heat, and moist, and dry,  
Shall foster and mature the grain  
For garners in the sky.

Thence, when the glorious end,  
The day of God is come,  
The angel-reapers shall descend,  
And heaven shout "Harvest-ho ne!"

No. 99, S. S. Hymnal.

Sowing the seed by the daylight fair,  
Sowing the seed by the noonday glare,  
Sowing the seed by the fading light,  
Sowing the seed in the solemn night;  
Oh! what shall the harvest be?  
Oh! what shall the harvest be!

## CHORUS.

Sown in the darkness or sown in the light,  
Sown in our weakness or sown in our might;  
Gathered in time or eternity,  
Sure, ah, sure will the harvest be.  
Sowing the seed by the wayside high,  
Sowing the seed on the rocks to die,  
Sowing the seed where the thorns will spoil,  
Sowing the seed in the fertile soil;  
Oh! what shall the harvest be!  
Oh! what shall the harvest be!

No. 102, S. S. Hymnal. 8s. & 7s.

There is work to do for Jesus,  
Yes, a glorious work to do,  
For a harvest fully ripened,  
Rich and golden lies in view;  
With a prayer to God, our Father,  
Let us all the work pursue,  
For our risen God is calling,  
And the harvesters are few.

## CHORUS.

Yes, there is work to do for Jesus, and the harvest is in view,  
There's a great work everywhere to do;  
There is a work to do for Jesus, and the harvesters are few,  
There's enough work for all to do.

Yes, there's work to do for Jesus;  
Who will answer to the call?  
See! the vintage is abundant,  
There is work to do for all;  
God commands that we should labour,  
Though the task our hearts appal;  
For he claimeth our life service,  
Till the shades of death shall fall.

## HOME READINGS.

- M. Parable of the sower, Mark 4. 1-20.  
Tu. The field. Rom. 10. 1-18.  
W. The seed. John 1. 1-18.  
Th. The way-side hearers. John 7. 11-30.  
F. The stony-ground hearers. Gal. 4. 1-16.  
S. The seed among thorns. Mark 10. 17-27.  
S. The fruitful ground. Phil. 1. 1-11.

Time.—A. D. 27, soon after the events of the last lesson.

Place.—The shore of the Sea of Galilee, near Capernaum.

Parallel Passages.—Matt. 13. 1-23. Luke 8. 4-18.

## QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON.

- The Teacher, v. 1, 2.  
Where was Christ teaching?  
In what position?  
Where were his hearers?  
What is a parable?  
Why did Jesus use parables in teaching?
- The Lesson, v. 3-9.  
What was the parable about?  
In how many places did the seed fall?  
What became of that by the wayside?  
What became of that in the stony places?  
What happened to the seed among thorns?  
What was the result of sowing the seed in good ground?

With what words did Jesus finish the parable?  
What is it to hear, in the true sense?

- The Application, v. 10-20.  
What did Jesus say was the privilege of the disciples?

Why were they taught more fully than the multitude?

How could the people see, yet not perceive?

What is meant by the seed in the parable?

Who are the wayside hearers?

What kind of hearers are represented by the stony ground?

In whose hearts is the seed among thorns?

Who are the fruitful hearers of the word?

Which of these hearers would you choose to be, and why?

## PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Where in this lesson do we learn—

- That we should hear the word of God!
- That we should keep the word, as well as hear it!
- That we should make the word fruitful in our lives!

**The Lesson Catechism.**—(For the entire school.) 1. How did Jesus teach the people by the sea? In parables. 2. What is shown by the parable of the sower? How men hear God's word. 3. What are those by the way-side? Those who neglect and lose the truth. 4. Who are those in the stony ground? Those having no root in themselves. 5. Who are those among thorns? Those full of worldly cares. 6. Who are those on the good ground? Those who keep the word.

ANALYTICAL & BIBLICAL OUTLINE.  
The True Hearer of the Word.

## I. ATTENTIVENESS.

He that hath ears... let him hear. v. 9.  
"Take heed... how ye hear." Luke 8. 18.

## II. INQUIRY.

Asked of him the parable. v. 9.  
"Seek, and ye shall find." Matt. 7. 7.

## III. THOUGHTFULNESS.

These are they by the way-side. v. 15.  
"He being not a forgetful hearer."  
James 1. 25.

## IV. STEADFASTNESS.

Have no root in themselves. v. 17.  
"Endureth to the end... shall be saved."  
Matt. 10. 22.

## V. SINGLEHEARTEDNESS.

Cares of this world... choke the word.  
v. 19.  
"Eye... single... body... full of light."  
Matt. 6. 22.

## VI. FRUITFULNESS.

Hear the word... bring forth fruit. v. 20.  
"Good tree bringeth forth good fruit."  
Matt. 8. 17.

ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.  
The Needs of the Word.

- The word of God requires for its success the living preacher. v. 1.
- The word requires the willing hearer. v. 1.

3. The word requires hearts free from outward evil influences. v. 5.

4. The word requires hearts open and gentle, and ready to receive the truth. v. 5.

5. The word requires hearts free from undue cares of earth. v. 7, 18.

6. The word requires the spirit of candid, earnest inquiry into its meaning and truth. v. 11.

7. The word requires that those who hear it should reduce their knowledge to practice. v. 12.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The value of opportunities.

#### CATECHISM QUESTION.

25. Did not he then revenge himself upon his brethren?

When Joseph became ruler of the land of Egypt, under Pharaoh the king, he did not revenge himself upon his brethren for selling him into Egypt; but he sent for them and their families, together with his father, in the time of famine, and fed them all in the land of Egypt.

#### ENGLISH TEACHER'S NOTES.

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

I WAS reading one day a pretty story about some school-girls. One girl had lured another into a quiet corner under pretext of wishing to tell her a story. The recital soon aroused the listener's interest, but before the tale came to an end she discovered that it partially concerned herself—that she played a not unimportant part in it. Conscience was now stirred, and a certain course of action in which she had been persisting was from that moment reversed. The story had, in fact, not been told for its own sake, but for the effect it might produce, and that effect amply rewarded the narrator, and benefitted the listener.

To-day's lesson brings us to the first of the stories, or parables narrated by our Lord to the multitude. The teacher may take the opportunity to explain why Christ's mode of teaching was now altered, and what was his design in presenting truth in this form. Or he may consider the parable of the sower chiefly in its historical significance, as presenting a picture of the reception the word of God meets with wherever it is preached. But I prefer rather to notice its bearing upon the individual responsibility of those who hear the word, which is pressed upon us in the counsel and command: "Take heed how ye hear."

The story to which the multitude listened as they stood on the beach, in front of the little boat into which Jesus had entered, was a simple narrative of every-day life, which they could all understand, and into which they could all enter. They could picture to themselves the sower going forth with his

seed; the speedy disappearance of some of it; the withering of the young shoots where the root was lacking; the failure of fruit where the thorns had sprung up; and the bounteous harvest which sprang from good ground. But they had probably no thought of the story applying to themselves, unless our Lord's concluding words, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," may have stirred up some to inquire into the meaning. And yet he was speaking of them as well as to them. The story was one in which they were concerned, and in which they actually played their part.

With Sunday-scholars the case is perhaps a little different. They are not all familiar with the labours of the sower, and some amount of explanation and picturing is, therefore, necessary. But many of them will perfectly understand that the story is meant as a picture of themselves, and that they are likened to one or other of the different kinds of soil. What they may not clearly see is how their course of action should be affected by it, and this is what we must endeavour to show them.

There are three stages in the story.

1. The going forth of the sower.

There is a great purpose in it. He goes forth to sow his seed that he may reap a harvest. He carries with him something that has in itself life and power. It looks a small thing, but it is capable of large results. So with the Word of God. Why do teachers, preachers, and pastors, devote so much time to the sowing of this seed? It is in order that they may reap a harvest they go forth bearing that which is full of life and power, that which has in itself the elements of a new creation. And they are sowing, not for themselves, but for another. The Lord Jesus himself is the great Sower. The word which falls, hardly heeded, on the thoughtless ear, the appeal which many would gladly forget, is not just simply the teacher's: it comes in reality from the Lord himself. Therefore, "take heed how ye hear."

2. The reception of the seed by the soil.

The field where the seed is sown is not alike throughout. There is the beaten path where the seed merely strikes the surface; there is the place where the hard rock below is but thinly covered with earth, so that the seed cannot strike root; there is the patch of ground where the thorn-bushes are springing-up, leaving insufficient space for the growth of the seed; and there is the good ground where the seed can sink in, and duly develop. What do these different kinds of soil represent? They are noted in connection with the sowing of the seed, or hearing of the word, and represent, not

different characters in themselves unalterable, but different conditions of heart at the time of hearing, and therefore different ways of receiving the word. And because some of these will utterly disappoint the purpose of the sower, "take heed how ye hear."

### 3. The portion of the seed sown.

One portion of it has disappeared, leaving no trace behind. It lay a few moments on the surface of the ground, and it was then caught up by the birds. Another has sent up a few green shoots, but the warm sun which should favour its growth only scorches and withers it, because it has never taken root. A third portion has indeed struck root, and is feebly struggling to make the way, but little fruit is to be looked for, for the thorns choke it and deprive it of its proper nourishment. But the fourth portion has prospered, and bears ample fruit.

To whom did the failure of the three portions matter? It mattered to the sower, or to the owner of the land, although the harvest from the good ground well rewarded his labour. But when the seed of the word is sown, to whom does the failure of that matter? The sower is reimbursed for his disappointment by the abundant produce of that which has prospered. The actual loss is that of him in whose heart the word was sown. It was sown in order to bring him a blessing. The harvest would have been his gain. See Rom. 6, 21, 22. Therefore, "take heed how ye hear," for whosoever hath to him shall be given, and whosoever hath not from him shall be taken away even that which he thinketh he hath."

A woman has heard the Bible read and the Gospel preached for years, and yet is ignorant even of the way of salvation. Why? Because she has never given any heed. The word has gone "in at one ear and out at the other." It found her heart like the beaten path. But whose fault is that? Certainly her own. And it is her loss.

A boy has felt anxious about his soul, has gladly heard the message of pardon through Christ. The seed seems to be springing up. But no; a little while, and it has withered away. He would not let it sink deep into his heart, to change his whole life. It took no root. With the first inconvenience it brought upon him he gave it up. It had found his heart like the stony ground. But whose is the fault? Is it not his? And it is his loss.

But how can any one have an "honest and good heart," (Luke 8), in which the seed may grow and prosper? Wherever the word is spoken the Spirit of God is there, ready to make a place in your heart for its reception. That word can re-fashion your

whole life and make it eternally blessed and glorious. But you can hinder it from bearing fruit. "Take heed how ye hear."

### BEREAN METHODS.

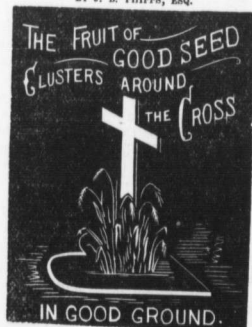
#### Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

A good lesson for word-picturing: Scene; lake; boat; shore; sower at work, etc. . . . The definition and aim of parables. . . . Get scholars to describe the four kinds of soil. . . . Illustrations of different varieties from Scripture: (1.) Way-side—Pharisees, Felix; (2.) Stony—the rich young ruler; (3.) Thorns—Judas, Lot in Sodom; (4.) Good ground—Ethiopian treasurer, Saul of Tarsus, Lydia, etc. . . . What the word of God requires of men. (See Analytical and Biblical Outline.) . . . What is here warned against: (1.) Carelessness; (2.) Instability; (3.) Worldliness. . . . ILLUSTRATIONS. An Indian planting corn dropped six seeds in the hill, saying, "One kernel for the worms, another for the crows, another for the thief, and two more for Indian next winter." . . . At a camp-meeting one man only was converted, but he afterward became one of the most useful ministers of the Church, and the founder of two theological institutions: so the seed was not lost. . . . Seed that does not grow rots and dies. In Brooklyn Navy Yard stand some large ships of war, left unfinished and useless because dry rot was developed in their timbers.

References. FOSTER'S ILLUSTRATIONS. Ver. 2, Prose, 4280, 10870. Ver. 5, Prose, 9159. Ver. 9, Prose, 2808, 9367. Ver. 12, Prose, 9748. Ver. 14, Poetical, 2800. Ver. 20, Prose, 2813, 11626. . . . FREEMAN: Fishing-boats, 662; Going forth to sow, 663; The way-side, 664.

#### Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



EXPLANATION. The fruit of the seed that falls in good ground of the heart is shown in life, character, and good works,

and these must necessarily cluster around the cross that symbolizes our Saviour. The following may be used as an illustration for the unfruitful ground:—

**SEED THE HEART**  
 BY THE WAY-SIDE. | IN THE WAY OF TEMPTATION. OF EVIL. OF BAD COMPANY.  
 CARELESS. SHALLOW. MAN-FEARING.  
 AMONG STONES. |  
 AMONG THORNS. | **NO ROOM FOR CHRIST.**

Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

LESSON THOUGHT.—The Seed, God's Word.

1. A seed to show to the class, and a plant in a pot upon the teacher's table, will help to teach this lesson. Say that the story you are going to tell is one that Jesus told his disciples. Tell the story of the sower, showing picture of one if possible, and then tell the children that all the stories that Jesus told were meant to teach some heart-truth. Talk a little about the seed in the ground. What is it doing there in the dark? Does the earth make it grow? Show that there must first be life in the seed. But will the seed grow if laid away on a shelf? No, it needs the earth, the rain, the sun.

2. Have class repeat lesson-thought, and

A. D. 27.

LESSON IX.—THE GROWTH OF THE KINGDOM.

February 26.

Mark 4, 21-34.

21 And *a* he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?

*a* Matt. 5, 15; Luke 8, 16; 11, 33.

22 For *b* there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad.

*b* Matt. 10, 26; Luke 12, 2; Acts 14, 20; 1 John 1, 2.

23 If *c* any man hath ears to hear, let him hear.

*c* Matt. 11, 15.

24 And he said unto them, *d* Take heed what ye hear: *e* with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you; and unto you that hear shall more be given.

*d* 1 John 4, 1.—*e* Matt. 7, 2; Luke 6, 38; 2 Cor. 9, 6.

25 For *e* he that hath to him shall be given; and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.

*e* Matt. 13, 12; 25, 29; Luke 8, 18; 19, 26.

26 And he said, *f* So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground;

*f* Matt. 13, 34.

27 And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

28 For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

29 But when the fruit is brought forth, im-

mediately *g* he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.  
*g* Rev. 14, 15.  
 30 And he said, *h* Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?  
*h* Matt. 13, 31; Luke 13, 18 Acts 2, 41; 4, 4; 5, 14; 19, 20.  
 31 It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth:  
 32 But when it is sown, it *i* groweth up and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.  
*i* Mal. 1, 11; Rev. 11, 15.  
 33 And *j* with many such parables spake he unto them, as they were able to hear it.  
*j* Matt. 13, 34; John 16, 12.  
 34 But without a parable spake he not unto them; and when they were alone he expounded all things to his disciples.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

We have in these verses the application of the parables, as given by the Teacher himself. He tells for what purpose the Gospel is given, not merely as a treasure to be kept in safety, but as a light to be lifted up on high. And though by the parable the truth may seem to be concealed, it is only that it may become the more clear and the more widely shed abroad. They who heard the message were to ponder it, search into its

mysteries, apprehend its meaning, and then impart it to others; and the thoroughness of their understanding and the zeal of their ministry would measure the blessing which the word should bring home to themselves. He who makes use of the truth will obtain growth, he who neglects it will lose its power. In our lesson are given three illustrations of the Gospel. In the first is presented the purpose of the Gospel, to give light to men. In the second, peculiar to Mark, is shown the life-principle of the Gospel, the process of its growth, a mystery which may be witnessed but may not be comprehended. In the third is taught the progress of the Gospel, both on the individual, and the world, a small seed growing up to a tree, under whose shade the traveller finds refreshment, and on whose boughs the birds of the air may rest.

#### EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

**Verse 21. He said unto them.** To the disciples and the people, with especial reference to the parables, in which the truth was seemingly concealed, but really illustrated. **Is a candle, Rather, "a lamp,"** as in the Revised Version. The ancient lamps were generally of earthenware, shaped somewhat like a modern gravy-bowl, with a wick at one end and the handle at the other. **Under a bushel.** The ordinary household measure, containing about a peck. **Or under the bed.** Either the couch at the meal or the bed for sleeping may be intended. **Set on a candlestick.** "On the stand." [Rev. Ver.] Christ's purpose was to show his disciples that the truth was given to them, not for themselves alone, but through them to enlighten the world.

**22, 23. Nothing hid.** For many centuries indeed, God withheld the revelation of the Gospel until the world was fitted to receive it, and then gave the knowledge of it to but a few disciples, who were to impart it to others. Thus it was hid, but only that it might be **manifested.** The parable hid its lesson from the unthinking, but by its very form caused that lesson to come **abroad** all the more widely. **Ears to hear.** An expression often used by Jesus when weighty truths are announced; bidding men exercise their powers of thought, and apprehend the lesson to be conveyed. 1. There is danger lest souls may be lost if men will not hear and heed.

**24, 25. Take heed what ye hear.** In the parallel passage, Luke 8. 18, "*how ye hear.*" "See that what you hear is divine truth, and that you so hear as to believe and profit by it."—*Binney.* 2. How much our hearing and thinking depend upon our own will! **With what measure . . . it shall be measured.** As men give attention, they will receive knowledge. The right use of the truth will result in increase of it. **Unto you . . . shall more be given.** The words "that hear" are omitted in the Revised Version. **Hath . . . shall be given.** A principle of broad application, but often misinterpreted. It does not here refer to worldly possessions, but to the truth. He who possesses spiritual knowledge, and makes a right use of it, gains increase, broader views and strengthening character. **He that hath not.** Every man has the capacity for

knowledge, and the opportunity of obtaining it. But he does not have either knowledge of the truth, or the character which results from that knowledge, unless he strives after it. And not striving, he loses even the susceptibility to it. 3. Every lost opportunity means a lowering of the nature which loses it. 4. How completely every man holds the key to his own destiny!

**26, 27. So is the kingdom of God.** This parable is given by Mark alone; and it lays stress, not on the manner of sowing, nor on the soil, but on the secret power of the seed to germinate and grow. **As if a man should cast seed.** The seed must be sown if the harvest is to be reached, and God has appointed men as his sowers of the truth. 5. How highly God honours men by making them his partners in the work of salvation! **Sleep and rise.** He is not to neglect either the seed or the field, but on the other hand is not to be impatient if the harvest is not immediate. **Seed should spring.** Here is the mystery of growth, a mystery that no science can penetrate. 6. Ever let us remember that God is in his word, and can give it power.

**28, 29. Fruit of herself.** Here is the spontaneity of growth, the self-acting power of the seed. We can do much to help the seed, but its life-principle is its own. **Blade . . . ear.** Here is the law of orderly development, the gradual progress of the word in the heart. **The full corn.** Rather, "the full kernel or grain." The mature, complete development of the Gospel character. **Fruit is put forth.** "When the fruit is ripe," [Rev. Ver.] **Putteth in the sickle.** "The reapers are the human ministers of the word," (*Arnot*), and the harvest is the gathering into the visible Church. The parable has two applications, one to the salvation of the individual, the other to the progress and triumphs of the Church in the world. (7) How great the joy of the teacher, pastor, and parent, as they reap the results of their own seed-sowing!

**30, 31. With what comparison?** Rather, as the Rev. Ver., "In what parable shall we set it forth?" As if inviting his hearers to consider the subject with him. **Like a grain of mustard seed.** The mustard with its half-dozen seeds in a little pod, growing in every Jewish garden, was the standing type of the smallest thing. **Less than all the seeds.** There are smaller seeds known to science, but none familiar to the people whom Jesus was addressing. Here is drawn the picture of the Church of God in its beginnings—Abraham going out from his people as its founder; the apostles starting forth to conquer the world; Luther beginning the Reformation; Wesley and his fellow-students at Oxford, etc. 8. It is no matter how small the seed may be if it be a living seed.

**32. It groweth up.** 9. That which has God on its side will have power to overcome the forces against it, however small it may be. **Greater than all herbs.** In the Jordan valley the mustard plant has been found ten feet in height. So the Gospel, so small in its origin as to be ignored by the world, has now become the mightiest of all religions. **Great branches.** Perhaps referring to the various divisions of the

Christian Church, which though many, like the branches, are one in their stock and root. **Fowls of the air.** "Birds of the heaven." [Rev. Ver.] Perhaps a reference to the institutions, the civilization, the systems of thought, which grow out of the Gospel in the world. 10. Take away the support of our Christianity, and how long would the British Empire hold together!

**33, 34. Many such parables.** An evidence that the Gospel writers selected a few out of many instances of the Saviour's teaching. (On the parable see notes to Lesson VIII.) **As they were able.** The interest of the story held their attention and led them to think, and thus the parables increased their store of knowledge. **Without a parable.** Not that he never spoke in any other way, but that at this period of his ministry he employed this method in dealing with the masses, as best suited to the needs of the truth and of his hearers. **When they were alone.** Apart from the careless crowd who would not understand his teachings, and the captious scribes who would pervert them. **To his disciples.** Not only the twelve Apostles, but the larger body of believing inquirers, from whom afterward "the seventy" were chosen.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon. Psa. 72. 16.

#### OUTLINE.

1. A Kingdom of Truth, v. 21-25.
2. A Kingdom of Growth, v. 26-34.

#### LESSON HYMNS.

No. 740, *New Hymn Book.*

7s.

Earth, rejoice, our Lord is King!  
Sons of men, his praises sing!  
Sing ye in triumphant strains,  
Jesus the Messiah reigns!  
Power is all to Jesus given,  
Lord of hell, and earth, and heaven,  
Every knee to him shall bow;  
Satan, hear, and tremble now!  
Angels and archangels join  
All triumphantly combine,  
All in Jesus' name agree,  
Carrying on his victory.

No. 721, *New Hymn Book.*

7s & 6s.

Hail to the Lord's Anointed;  
Great David's greater Son!  
Hail, in the time appointed,  
His reign on earth begun!  
He comes to break oppression,  
To set the captive free,  
To take away transgression,  
And rule in equity.  
O'er every foe victorious,  
He on his throne shall rest;  
From age to age more glorious,  
All-blessing and all-blest.  
The tide of time shall never  
His covenant remove;  
His name shall stand for ever,  
His changeless name of Love.

No. 739, *New Hymn Book*

7s.

When he first the work begun,  
Small and feeble was his day;  
Now the word doth quickly run,  
Now it wins its widening way:  
More and more it spreads and grows,  
Ever mighty to prevail,  
Sin's strongholds it now o'erthrows,  
Shakes the trembling gates of hell.  
Jesus, mighty to redeem,  
He the work alone hath wrought;  
Worthy is the work of him,  
Him who spake a world from nought.

**Time.**—A. D. 27, immediately following the last lesson.

**Place.**—The shore of the Sea of Galilee, near Capernaum.

**Parallel Passages.**—Matt. 5. 15, 16; Matt. 13. 31, 32; Luke 13. 18-19.

#### HOME READINGS.

M. The growth of the kingdom. Mark 4. 21-34.

Tu. The elements of the kingdom. Matt. 13. 24-43.

W. The beginning of the kingdom. Acts 2. 37-47.

Th. The vision of the kingdom. Dan. 2. 31-45.

F. The progress of the kingdom. Ezek. 47. 1-12.

S. The prosperity of the kingdom. Isa. 35. 1-10.

S. The glory of the kingdom. Psa. 72. 1-20.

#### QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON.

1. A Kingdom of Truth, v. 21-25.

What did Jesus say was the use of a candle?  
How may we set Christ's light on a candlestick?  
To what hidden things did Christ refer?  
How are these hidden things to be shown abroad?

What was Christ's warning about hearing?  
What reward shall be given to those that hear aright?

Who is meant by "him that hath?"

How shall he "receive more?"

Who is the one that "hath not?"

How can he lose what he hath?

2. A Kingdom of Growth, v. 26-34.

Why is the Gospel like a seed?

What part in spreading the Gospel may we have?

By whose power does the seed grow? 1 Cor. 3. 7.

What kind of growth is shown in verse 28?

What is done when the fruit is ripe?

When is the harvest, and who are the reapers?  
Matt. 13. 39.

To what kind of seed did Christ liken his kingdom?

What is said of this seed when first sown?

How does this represent Christ's kingdom in its beginning?

What is said of its growth and greatness?

How is this shown in the Golden Text?

#### PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Where in this lesson do we learn—

1. That Christ's coming brings light to men!
2. That Christ's word may be heeded as well as heard!

3. That Christ's kingdom is one of quiet growth?

**The Lesson Catechism.**—(For the entire school.) 1. To what did Christ liken the kingdom of God? *To seed cast into the ground.* 2. What becomes of the seed of God's kingdom? *It grows by its own power.* 3. What are the stages of its growth? *The blade, the ear, and the fruit.* 4. Wherein is God's kingdom like the mustard seed? *In great growth from small beginning.*

**DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The spiritual kingdom of God.

**ANALYTICAL & BIBLICAL OUTLINE.**  
**The Gospel in Varied Aspects.**

I. THE GOSPEL A LIGHT.

A candle. . . . on a candlestick. v. 21.  
"Entrance of thy words giveth light."  
Psa. 119, 130.

II. THE GOSPEL A TRUST.

With what measure ye mete. v. 24.  
"Give and it shall be given." Luke 6, 38.

III. THE GOSPEL A SEED.

As if a man should cast seed. ver. 26.  
"Good seed. . . children of the kingdom."  
Matt. 13, 38.

IV. THE GOSPEL A LIVING FORCE.

The seed should spring and grow. v. 28.  
"Our Gospel came. . . in power." 1 Thess.  
1, 5.

V. THE GOSPEL A HARVEST.

Putting in the sickle. . . harvest. . . come.  
v. 29.  
"Harvest is the end of the world." Matt.  
13, 39.

VI. THE GOSPEL A GROWTH.

Growth up. . . . becometh greater. v. 32.  
"My name. . . . great among the Gentiles."  
Mal. 1, 11.

VII. THE GOSPEL A REFUGE.

Lodge under the shadow. v. 32.  
"Shadow of a great rock. . . . weary land."  
Isa. 32, 2.

**ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.**  
**The Growth of the Kingdom.**

1. It grows, not for itself, but to bring light and blessing to men. v. 31.
2. It grows by those who receive it imparting its truths to others. v. 24.
3. It grows by its own force, and according to a divine law. v. 27, 28.
4. It grows gradually, and in regular stages of progress. v. 28.
5. It grows to fullness and fruition, both in the individual and the world. v. 29.
6. It grows from small beginnings, forgotten and despised of men. v. 31.
7. It grows to power as the refuge of the world. v. 32.

**CATECHISM QUESTION.**

26. Did the families of Israel continue to dwell in Egypt?

The families of Israel continued to dwell in Egypt, till another Pharaoh, king of Egypt, made slaves of them, and drowned their male children; and then God delivered them by the hand of Moses.

**ENGLISH TEACHER'S NOTES.**

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

WHEN David was first crowned king in Hebron the fortunes of his people were at a low ebb. The kingdom was divided, part of the kingdom recognizing as their ruler the man whom God had chosen, and part cleaving to Ishbosheth, the son of Saul. The strong fortress of the Jebusites stood untouched in the midst of Judah, (2 Sam 5, 6,) and the Philistine oppressors had just defeated the host of Israel. 1 Sam. 31. But though David's kingdom appeared small and weak in the beginning, its growth was steady and striking. Israel at length owned him; the strong city, hereafter the "City of David," fell before him; the Philistines were subdued; Moab, Syria, Ammon, Edom, alike became subject to him; and it could be said of Israel in his day that "she sent out her boughs into the sea, and her branches unto the river." Psa. 80, 11.

Now, when we speak of the growth of David's kingdom, what do we mean? We mean the increase of his power as king. This was first established in the hearts of his people, and then his power was felt and submitted to by other nations. His kingdom thus grew in two directions—in inward strength and in outward extent.

And so, when we read of the "kingdom of God," or as it is termed in St. Matthew's Gospel, the "kingdom of heaven," we understand it to mean the power and dominion of the King, that is, of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the growth of the kingdom is the growth of his power.

In the two parables which form the subject of our lesson to-day we get two pictures of the growth of Christ's power. We are shown, first, its progress in the heart, and second, its progress in the world.

1. The kingdom of God will grow in the heart.

We need not find any particular meaning in the sower, in the earth, nor even in the seed sown, though we can hardly help associating the latter with the "word" in the previous parable. The point of likeness brought out is the natural and sure development of the thing sown, where at least its growth is not checked by any special hindrance, and its perfect fruition at the end.

When the life-giving "word" really penetrates the heart it introduces there what Chalmers has called "the expulsive power of a new affection." The power of Christ, that is, his love, is felt, and the heart yields to thi



power and loves in return. But how are we to be sure that the power will grow, and the kingdom in the heart eventually obtain its perfect completion? Are not young converts sometimes troubled by the fear that they may fall back again—that they shall never be able to stand their ground openly and avowedly as God's servants?

The parable provides us with an answer. While in the parable of the sower we learn man's responsibility in respect to the seed sown in the heart, in this one we learn God's sovereign care over that which has really taken root. The farmer who desires to reap a harvest must exercise faith about the seed he has sown. He may lie down and sleep at night, and rise as usual in the morning. He must, of course, watch over his fields, so that no adverse influences retard the coming up of the seed; but if he watched and laboured all night as well as day he could not make it grow. Compare Psalm 127. 2. For that he must trust in God. It is God alone who gives the rain and the sunshine, who has imbued the seed with life and power, and endowed the earth with the requisite nourishment, so that it brings forth "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

So with the young Christian. If he honestly yield himself to the love of God, he may trust God to preserve and to increase the new power that has begun to work in his heart. While he feels his insufficiency, he may be "confident in this very thing, that he who began a good work in [him] will also perfect it until the day of Christ." Phil. 1. 6. He will find that the power of Christ does increase within him, and he will long more and more to have every thought and every motion brought into subjection to this gracious King.

But what does the putting in of the sickle mean? It is a beautiful picture of the death of the Christian, but I doubt whether that is its primary meaning. Does it not rather stand for the perfect satisfaction God takes in the full development of that which is his own work? The reaping shows that it is truly acceptable to him.

Do we wish that the kingdom of God should thus grow in our hearts? It grows without our working, but it will not grow against our will. But whether it grows in this individual heart or in that,

2. The kingdom of God will grow in the world.

The seed of the mustard plant, commonly aduced by the Jews as the type of anything exceedingly small, stands for the "kingdom" in its visible beginning. The full-grown herb, which has been known to attain to the height of a man on horse-back, and on which the small birds love to settle, represents the "kingdom" in its visible develop-

ment. David began by reigning over one tribe of Israel only. His son Solomon reigned over "all the kings from the river [Euphrates] even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt." The kingdom of Christ had a smaller beginning. Before his ascension not more than five hundred persons gathered together to receive his last command. Matt. 28. 18; 1 Cor. 15. 6. Those few hundreds have swelled to thousands and millions, and the power of the King is felt and owned even by those who refuse to yield their hearts to it.

And so, whether we will own it or not, the "kingdom of God" will go on increasing. Perhaps some may hesitate to accept Christ for their Lord and King, because they fear they will be alone in their profession of obedience—the only ones, it may be, in the shop, the work-room, the yard, or the factory. But whether they yield or not, the kingdom will go on spreading. "I found," said a young Hindu, who had been hesitating whether he should confess Christ by baptism, "that others of my former companions had gone on before me." How much better to endure the loneliness for awhile, and be like a seed, the beginning of the visible kingdom in that place where your lot is cast. A young woman in a shop was induced to attend a Bible-class. She was the only one who would consent at first. But by and by every one of her companions was brought, not only to the class, but to Christ.

God will care for the growth of his kingdom. It will spread abroad in the world. The day is coming when the kingdoms of the world shall have become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. Rev. 11. 15. And it will grow in your heart if you are willing to receive and to yield yourself to it. And then in that day you shall be among the "saints of the Most High," who "take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even for ever and ever." Dan. 7. 18.

#### BEREAN METHODS.

**Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.**

Explain candle (lamp); bushel; "hath and hath not;" mustard seed, etc.... If the teacher can exhibit an ancient lamp, a handful of mustard-seed, an acorn, or a sheaf of wheat, etc., it will present a good object illustration of the lesson.... The various aspects of God's kingdom. (See Analytical and Biblical Outline)... The principles of spiritual growth. (See Additional Practical Lessons)... The demands of God's word. (1) Opportunity, ver. 21; (2) Thought, ver. 24, 25; (3) Sowing, ver. 26, 27; (4) Reaping, ver. 28.... The blessings which God's truth brings. (1) Enlightenment; (2) Enrichment; (3) Growth

of character; (4) Fruition, completeness of character; (5) Power . . . ILLUSTRATIONS. Light under a bushel. A lighthouse window having broken, the light-keeper inserted a sheet of tin in its place for a single night. On that night a ship was lost, because the light was obscured. . . Hidden things manifested. The builder of the Pharos, or lighthouse at Alexandria, engraved his own name on a marble tablet, then covered it with plaster, on which he wrote the name of his king. The plaster crumbled away, and the king's name was erased, but the architect's name remained visible while the tower was standing. . . Growth of the kingdom. Contrast the little cone and the gigantic pine of the Mariposa, in California. . . Patient waiting for results. Story of a man who leased a field for a single crop, then planted acorns, and held possession until they grew up oaks and brought their fruit.

**References.** FOSTER'S ILLUSTRATIONS. Verse 21, Poetical, 2944; Prose, 5936. Ver. 23, Prose, 9369. Ver. 24, Prose, 9810. Ver. 26, Prose, 5241. Vers. 31, 32, Poetical, 3810. . . FREEMAN: Lamp, Bushel, Lampstand, 638.

#### Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

**LESSON THOUGHT.** Growth toward God.

1. Give the familiar illustration about light hidden away. Jesus did not want his words to be hidden. Show that we hide the light of God's word when we do not let it shine in our lives. Ask if any child has learned Bible truths, and what he is going to do with them. A lighted taper, set up where it may give out its light, and then shut from sight, though still burning on, will make this more impressive to the children.

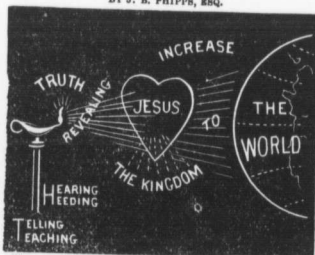
2. What does the sower do with the seed? Recall last lesson, and see if the children think he has power to make it grow. No, he can only sow it, and God watches it and makes it grow. It is so with the seed which falls into our hearts. God will make it grow unless we hinder him. Talk about ways in which we may hinder. A little child may stop the growth of an oak tree by pulling it up when little. So a child can pull up the plants of God's truth by refusing to obey. Talk about the corn. What comes first—the blade or the ear of corn? Use this to show that the kingdom of God in the heart has to grow—first the seed, then the plant, then the corn, or fruit. Would there have been any fruit without the seed? No, and so it is very necessary that we have the seed sown in our hearts in early life.

3. If the thought seems incomplete, use the remaining illustration of the mustard-seed which grows into a great tree giving shade and shelter. But if the children seem

to comprehend, it may be better to use the time in making the thought practical. Little ones especially need to have the truth brought before them in concrete forms. A simple blackboard lesson may be a heart with a single white dot in it for a seed. Tell that this, maybe, a Bible verse, may be the verse of a hymn, and show how it grows up out of the heart, becoming a plant of love and faith. Let the children tell as much as they can about the growth, and teach, solemnly, that this is the growth of God's kingdom within us, without which none can enter into his heavenly kingdom.

#### Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



**EXPLANATION.** The lamp is a symbol of the truth of the Gospel, which is a light to men. It is taught in the lesson that we should not hide the truth, but hold it up, and teach others; so the words hearing and heeding, telling and teaching, are placed beneath the light to hold it up. The light then shines into the heart, revealing JESUS; then the kingdom of God, which is the Gospel in the heart, illuminates the life, and by the telling and teaching it shines on and through from the heart of each disciple to all the world. This is the increase. Application—Are you holding up the light? What are you doing to increase the kingdom of truth?

#### A WRITTEN EXERCISE.

The Light—Gospel Truth.

The Kingdom—Gospel in the heart.

Sowing the Seed—Telling and teaching the Gospel.

The Increase—Others receiving the light.

#### LESSONS FOR MARCH, 1882.

MARCH 5. Christ stilling the Tempest. Mark 4. 35-41.

MARCH 12. Power over Evil Spirits. Mark 5. 1-20.

MARCH 19. Power over Disease and Death. Mark 5. 21-43.

MARCH 26. First Quarterly Review.

# INDIVIDUAL OPINION

—ON—

## A QUESTION OF UNIVERSAL INTEREST

HOW best to conserve the forces of nature and so utilize them as to perform the purposes and meet the requirements of life, is just now a question of most intense interest to the thinking classes of the community, and a great many potent energies are being harnessed into service, which a few years ago were considered as only the toys of philosophers. Foremost of these forces stand the various forms of electricity, which are now being applied to an almost infinite variety of purposes, and doing them all with a degree of perfection which has never been approached by any other means. Of more general interest than any other of its uses, is its value as a therapeutic agent, restoring and sustaining the vital functions of the human system. Fully nine-tenths of the pain and weakness we suffer may be traced almost directly to a deficiency of magnetic force, which, with some persons, is due to constitutional defects, and with others, to circumstances of life. In either case, any system of treatment which will conserve and supply this force *must* act beneficially upon both body and mind. That the

### 'MAGNETICON'

appliances do supply this force, and do produce the desired results is demonstrated by the testimony of thousands who have thoroughly tested them during the past twelve years, a few extracts from which testimony are subjoined:—

"After wearing your Knee Cap a few days the pain (severe and of long standing) had entirely left, and in about one week the lameness also had disappeared."—*Robt. McKay, 82 Caroline St., Hamilton, Ont.*

"I can freely recommend your 'Magneticon' appliances, as, after using them, I believe them to be fully equal to what they are represented."—*Thos. Van Iderstine, London, Ont.*

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him, in Bethlehem of Judæa: for thus it is written by the prophet,

6 And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah, art in no wise least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come forth a governor, which shall be shepherd of my people Israel.

7 Then Herod privily called the wise men, and learned of them carefully what time the star appeared.

8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search out carefully concerning the young child, and when ye have found him, bring me word, that I also may come and worship him.

9 And they, having heard the king, went their way; and the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

10 And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11 And they came into the house and saw the young child with Mary his mother; and they fell down and worshipped him; and opening their treasures they offered unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

13 Now when they were departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I tell thee: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

14 And he arose and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt;

15 and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt did I call my son.

16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the male children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had carefully learned of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying,

D Omit 8, and so elsewhere.

C Substitute "through,"

9 Mic. 5: 9. Hath not the scripture said that the Christ cometh of Bethlehem, John 7: 42.

4 Uti ut a child is born, into a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called... The Prince of Peace, Is. 9: 6. Of the Son as said, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; and the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of thy kingdom, Heb. 1: 8.

9 See Matt. 2: 2, note 4.

4 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, Is. 40: 11. I am the good shepherd, Is. 40: 31.

35 were going astray (sheep) but are now returned unto the shepherd and Bishop of your souls... when the chief shepherd shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away, 1 Tim. 2: 15; 5: 4.

11 He that hateth dishonour, Prov. 25: 13. Kings... against Is. 60: 1.

4 Thy word is... a light unto my path, Ps. 119: 105.

4 A little child shall lead them, Is. 40: 6.

35 O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth, Ps. 67: 4.

13 In the Kings... shall bring presents, Ps. 72: 10. They shall bring gold and incense, etc. Is. 60: 6. Mary therefore took a pound of ointment of spikenard, very precious, and anointed the feet of Jesus, John 12: 3.

12 He saw a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, This poor widow cast in more than they all: for all these did of their superfluity cast in unto the gift; but she of her want did cast in all the living that she had, Luk. 21: 4.

15 Mat. 1: 23. I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision, Acts 26: 19. I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again, Gen. 41: 4.

4 When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt, Hos. 11: 1.

C Substitute "through,"

9 Jer. 31: 15. We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear, Gen. 49: 31. And Pharaoh charged all his

people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive, Ex. 1: 22.

7 The Lord and unto Moses in Midian, Gen. returns into Egypt; for all the men are dead, which sought thy life, Ex. 4: 19.

2 These cometh Jesus from Galilee, Mat. 2: 23. Their own city Nazareth, Luc. 2: 39.

4 Ca. any good thing comes out of Nazareth, John 1: 46.

9 Nazarene (not a Nazarene) a despised or rejected branch. There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his root, Is. 11: 1.

11 I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, Jer. 23: 5. In those days, and that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David, Jer. 23: 15; Zech. 3: 8; Zech. 6: 12; Acts. 24: 5.

12 Ch. 2. A. D. 25.

4 Lu. 2: 2. Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me, Mat. 3: 7. There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John, John 1: 6.

A Substitute "through,"

4 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, Dan. 2: 44. As ye preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand, Mat. 10: 7.

4 Is. 61: 3.

4 Lu. 1: 76.

4 Mic. 5: 6.

4 Ch. 11: 8. He (Elijah) was a hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins, 2 Ki. 1: 8.

4 Even these of them ye may cast: the locust after his kind, Lev. 11: 22.

4 And all they of the land came to a wood, and there was honey upon the ground, 1 Sam. 14: 25.

4 Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on after him, that is, Jesus, etc. Acts 13: 24.

4 See Acts 2: 23.

4 Ch. 12: 24; 23: 23; Luke 2: 7.

4 Put into the foot-locks, Or, for baptism, & John, which deliv-ereth us from the wrath to come, 1 Thes. 1: 10.

4 They answered unto him, We have Abraham's seed, and have never yet been in bondage to any man, John 8: 33.

4 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned, John 15: 6.

C Substitute "the axe lieth at."

A voice was heard in Ramah,

Weeping and great mourning,

Rachel weeping for her children;

And she would not be comforted, because they are not.

But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead that sought the young child's life.

And Herod said, I took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judæa in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither; and being warned of God in a dream, he withdrew into the parts of Galilee, and came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, that he should be called a Nazarene.

And in those days cometh John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judæa, saying, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, saying,

The voice of one crying in the wilderness,

Make ye ready the way of the Lord,

Make his paths straight.

Now John himself had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said unto them, Ye offspring of vipers, who warn- ed you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth there- fore fruit worthy of repentance; and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And even now is the axe laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore that

1 Or, through. 2 Gr. magi. 3 Or, the time of the star that appeared. 4 Or, your repentance.

The margin is rich in wealthy things, and the whole work is worthy of its comprehensive design. I nominate it to a grand success.—J. O. PECK, D.D., Brooklyn, N.Y.

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