



LESSON.—SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1908.

Jesus at the Pool of Bethesda.

John v., 1-9. Memory verses 8, 9. Read John v., 1-18.

Golden Text.

Himself took our infirmities and bare our sickness. Matt viii., 17.

Home Readings.

- Monday, February 17.—John v., 1-16.
- Tuesday, February 18.—John v., 17-31.
- Wednesday, February 19.—John v., 32-47.
- Thursday, February 20.—Matt xii., 1-13.
- Friday, February 21.—Luke xiii., 10-22.
- Saturday, February 22.—Isa. lviii., 1-14.
- Sunday, February 23.—Ezek. xx., 12-26.

FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.

Last Sunday we learnt about a little boy who was ill and about how his father who loved him so much hurried away to find Jesus. Did Jesus make the little fellow well again? Yes, indeed, he did and without waiting until he got there to him, for he just said the words that satisfied the anxious father, and far away though the little boy was he got well at once. In our lesson to-day it is not a little boy who was ill, but a man, and the Bible says that he had been ill for thirty-eight years. There was no loving friend to hurry away and find Jesus for him but Jesus found him himself. He was lying all alone very weak and tired, when Jesus passed along that way and stopped to speak to him. Jesus was always sorry for sick people, and he knows how hard it is for us to be good when we are ill or in pain. You know there is a part of the Bible that says, 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.' So Jesus was very sorry for the poor man and asked him if he would like to be made well.

After telling the story pass on to the fourteenth verse and show them that Jesus was just as anxious about the soul's welfare as the body's.

FOR THE SENIORS.

Of all the miracles that John witnessed during his three years of life with Christ, he has only chosen to deal in detail with seven, four performed in the north, and three in Judea. With the exception of the feeding of the five thousand and the subsequent walking on the water, they are all recorded by John alone. The two previously considered in this course of study have been the changing of the water into wine and, last Sunday's lesson, the healing of the nobleman's son, both occurring at Cana in Galilee. To-day Christ has returned to Judea, and it is just outside of the walls of Jerusalem that the miracle of healing the impotent man was performed. It has been asked why did not Christ at a word heal all the sick gathered at this remarkable spring, but that leaves out of consideration the factor of faith which was necessary in the performance of any miracle. The others were confident and their hopes were set elsewhere. This man whose power of faith, in what by popular superstition was regarded as a direct act of God, was as strong as ever, had well-nigh lost hope of ever receiving its benefits. His heart would be ready to welcome any way of reaching the desired end. One point that should be noticed is seen in the narrowness of those who set a law against the good of a human being. 'The Sabbath was made for man,' said the Master, and the highest good of his creatures is the object in all God's

law and creation. Not law but its effect is the object. 'The latter killeth, but the spirit giveth life' (11. Cor. iii., 6; Rom. vii., 6). Another point is Christ's purpose to reach the root of the matter (verse 14). His mission was to 'save his people from their sin,' and while he stayed on the way to remove its consequences, the removal of sin itself was his main desire (Mark ii., 5). The text of to-day's lesson contains one or two difficulties. Verse 2 contains the word 'market' in italics, which always denotes that this was not in the original, but supplied by the translators. The word supplied should rather have been 'gate' (Neh. iii., 1). The last clause of verse 3 and whole of verse 4 are not found in the main text of the most reliable originals, but were rather added as a commentary, recording a popular belief of the time to explain the phrase in verse 7. The spring, which is now dry, seems to have been a mineral spring bubbling up periodically, examples of such being known in the East to-day.

(SELECTIONS FROM TARBELL'S 'GUIDE.')

Let us praise God that we have no such Bethsadas in these days. You go to any of our hospitals and mark the cleanliness there. See the physician with his skill, and the nurses in their white aprons, with soft words, soft steps, and gentle touch: that is the Bethesda of Christendom to-day. O, there is an infinite gulf between Bethesda in Old Jerusalem and our hospitals! What makes it? Jesus has been walking in the porches all through the ages, and the hospital, which is peculiar to the charmed circle that we call 'Christendom' is a fruit of the philanthropy of the historic Christ. He is the divine pattern of all the beneficence which distinguishes our modern civilization.—David James Burrell.

Wilt thou be made whole? There is a way where there is a will; and nowhere else so much as in religion. If you have a yearning desire for something higher and nobler and better, this very desire is the call of God in your soul. It is the voice of Christ, saying to you 'Wilt thou be made whole? Wilt thou be set free from thy sins?'—Henry Ward Beecher.

Every Christian congregation is a pool of Bethesda. All that gather here are somehow lame and halt and blind and diseased, and those most of all lame or halt or blind or diseased who know it not.—Lyman Abbott.

The spirit of practical sympathy is a fruit of Christianity.—C. M. Alford.

I testify to what the good and strong have done for deprivation and infirmity.—Heien Keller.

Major General Gordon, who at all times, everywhere, gave his strength to the weak, his substance to the poor, his sympathy to the suffering, his heart to God.—Inscription on General Gordon's tomb.

(FROM PELOUBET'S 'NOTES.')

'Mineral springs impregnated with minerals to such a degree as to possess medicinal properties are found in many parts of the world. The ancients ascribed supernatural properties to mineral springs, and their priests, especially those of Aesculapius, placed their sanctuaries near them, as the Alkaline Springs of Naupha, and the Gas Springs of Dodona.'—'American Encyclopaedia.'

In Fulleylove and Kelman's fine work on the Holy Land, the author writes, 'Next to its heartless toil the uncured sickness of the land contributes to the deep sadness of its spirit. Disease seems to stare you everywhere in the face. . . . When any serious accident has happened, or any dangerous disease infected them, they are utterly helpless, and things take their course.'

The medicinal springs form an exception to this rule, and seem to be one real healing agency in the country. The bluish waters bubble with sulphuretted hydrogen, and smell abominably, but they cure sicknesses of some kinds. For other diseases there is no native cure.'

'There is a spring of this kind at Kissingen, which, after a rushing sound, about the same time every day, commences to bubble, and is most efficacious at the very time the gas is making its escape.'

'All the experience of modern missionaries in the East goes to show the wisdom of the method employed by Jesus Christ and his apostles in giving attention to diseased bodies as a means of access to diseased souls.'—Isabella Bird Bishop.

BIBLE REFERENCES.

Luke iv., 18, 19; Rom. vii., 24, 25; Phil. iv., 13; Acts x., 38; xx., 35; Isa. xl., 29.

Junior C. E. Topic.

Sunday, February 23.—Topic—The foreign mission work of our denomination: a survey. Rom. x., 8-15.

C. E. Topic.

Monday, February 17.—God's great goodness. Ps. xxxi., 19.

Tuesday, February 18.—God's loving-kindness. Ps. xlii., 8.

Wednesday, February 19.—God's great love. Jer. xxxi., 3.

Thursday, February 20.—The earth is the Lord's. Ps. xxiv., 1.

Friday, February 21.—Thy God in the midst. Zeph. iii., 17.

Saturday, February 22.—The God of all nations. II. Kings xix., 15.

Sunday, February 23.—Topic—Children in India. John iii., 16.

Don't Forget the Adult Classes

While you are working for the children and young people don't forget the adult classes. Get rid of the idea that the Sunday-school is only an institution for children. Set apart some place for these adult classes and give them the most tactful teachers you can get. 'Now, children!' That tells the story. The secret is out. No wonder you failed to hold the young men and women for your school. Your own language told them that it was a children's school. They took the hint and left. They are no longer children, and they know it, and we should appreciate this and address them accordingly.—S. S. Teacher.

The Teachers' Meeting.

One prime necessity to good Sunday School work is a teachers' meeting. So important is this meeting that if only fairly well conducted it should by all means be sustained. A poor teachers' meeting is better than none at all. Without this gathering together of the teaching force the best of work is weak and lame.—Selected.

Be Prompt.

'There never was and never will be a very good Sunday School, any appreciable proportion of whose members come straggling in all through the hour. Tardiness is absolutely intolerable in an officer or teacher, and is reprehensible in the pulpit. It is demoralizing from every point of view, and the superintendent must reduce it to an inconsiderable item, or the work of the school will suffer materially in consequence. It is not an incurable leprosy, but will yield to treatment.'—Selected.

Help Them to Help Themselves.

Teach the children to overcome difficulties themselves, not to be dependent upon their teacher to meet every question of the Bible, or daily experience. The first time as a boy I crossed a stream near home with my father, he took me upon his shoulders; the second time he took me by the hand as I waded; the third time he stood upon the bank and told me where to step. Afterwards he went on and expected me to follow.—S. S. Teacher.