

The Sunday School

BIBLE LESSON

Abridged from Peloubets' Notes.

First Quarter.

CHRIST'S FIRST MIRACLE.

Lesson III. January 15, 1899.—John 2: 1-11.

Commit Verse 11.

GOLDEN TEXT.

And his disciples believed on him, John 2: 11.

EXPLANATORY.

SUBJECT: JESUS AND THE HOME. I. JESUS AT A WEDDING IN ONE HOME, AND AT THE FOUNDING OF ANOTHER HOME.—Vs. 1, 2, 3. THE THIRD DAY, from the calling of Philip and Nathanael (1: 43). THERE WAS A MARRIAGE. Including the marriage feast, which was frequently celebrated for several days (Gen. 29: 22 ff.; Judges 14: 12; Samson's wedding feast). CANA OF GALILEE. (See "Place.")

2. JESUS WAS CALLED. Invited with his disciples. His mother was already there from Nazareth, so that probably it was the wedding of a relative or dear friend of the family.

II. JESUS SUPPLYING COMMON WANTS IN THE HOME.—Vs. 3-10. 3. WHEN THEY WANTED, not desired, but lacked, were wanting in WINE. The family were poor, the supply was limited, and extra guests had come. THE MOTHER OF JESUS SAITH UNTO HIM. Probably by himself aside from the others. Jesus had wrought no miracle, so that she probably did not expect any such thing, but thirty years' experience with him in her home had proved his wisdom and clear judgment in emergencies. THEY HAVE NO WINE. "None but those who know how sacred in the East is the duty of lavish hospitality, and how passionately the obligation to exercise it to the utmost is felt, can realize the gloom which this incident would have thrown over the occasion, or the misery and mortification which it would have caused to the wedded pair."

4. JESUS SAITH UNTO HER, WOMAN. This address at first thought conveys to us a hint of disrespect. But it was not so according to Greek custom, but rather an honor to womanhood.

WHAT HAVE I TO DO WITH THEE? Lit., "What to me and thee?" "What is there in common between us now?" He cannot work longer in her way. She does not understand the influences directing his present life, for he is beginning a new life and mode of work as he enters upon his ministry. It is not a refusal, but another plan, as the words following show.—MINE HOUR IS NOT YET COME, i. e., the time when he can best begin to exert his miraculous power, and thus declare who he is.

5. HIS MOTHER SAITH. This shows how Mary understood Jesus.

6. SIX WATER-POTS OF STONE. These were not made by the potter out of clay, but were hewn by the carver out of the compact limestone of which the rocks in the neighborhood were formed. CONTAINING TWO OR THREE FIRKINS APIECE.—Firk is an almost exact equivalent of the Greek metretres, which was about nine gallons.

7. FILL THE WATER-POTS WITH WATER. They were not necessarily empty, but whatever had been drawn out was replaced.

8. DRAW OUT NOW. The word for draw does not mean to draw as from a faucet, but rather to bale out, dip out, draw as from a well. THE GOVERNOR OF THE FEAST. He was himself one of the guests, who by general consent or the selection of the host was set to preside over the banquet.

9. THE RULER . . . KNEW NOT WHEN IT WAS, (BUT THE SERVANTS . . . KNEW). The independent witness to the two parts of the miracle establishes its reality. The ruler of the feast declares what the element is, the servants knew what it was. CALLED THE BRIDEGROOM at whose house the feast was, and who was accustomed to furnish the wine.

10. AT THE BEGINNING . . . GOOD WINE. While the sense of taste is acute. WHEN MEN HAVE WELL DRUNK. R. V., have drunk freely. The word is generally used of intoxication. When applied to watering it means drenched or soaked with water. The allusion is not to the condition of the guests at this feast, but is an illusion to a common practice, and, in so doing, notices its cause; namely, that men's palates after a while are blunted, and their power of discerning between good and bad lost. THAT WHICH IS WORSE. Lit., "smaller." Implying both worse and weaker. Small appears in the same sense in English, as small beer. KEPT THE GOOD WINE UNTIL NOW. This was so much better than what had been used before that the ruler of the feast was astonished. Good wine, compared with the other, means that of a more delicious flavor, richer, more fragrant. Dr. H. C. Fish and his son both informed me that the best wine they found in Palestine was at Hebron. The wine was about seven months old, very rich and fragrant, and so mellow and mild

that a large quantity could be drunk without intoxication."

While no one can prove that the wine Christ made was wholly unfermented, it is equally certain that no one can prove that it had any intoxicating qualities. It may well have been the ideal wine, the delicious and healthful juice of the grape fresh from the vines, just as God is making it new every autumn. It is interesting in this connection to notice that in all references to the Lord's Supper, the word wine is not once used in the New Testament, but always the cup or fruit of the vine, so that that divine institution never lays a feather's weight in favor of intoxicating wine.

III. SIGNS GLORY FAITH. THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF MIRACLES. This was the first miracle Jesus wrought. Miracles, signs. There are several names used for miracles, according to the point of view, as wonders, powers, works, signs.

AND MANIFESTED FORTH HIS GLORY. It was the shining forth of what was in him, it revealed his true nature, power and character, as the flame reveals the glory of the candle, as the inner light reveals the marvelous beauty of the picture of a widow. HIS DISCIPLES BELIEVED ON HIM. Their faith was renewed, confirmed.

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