

The Lesson Council.

Question 2. For what purpose did Jesus work miracles?

Canon Liddon well says that, "according to the gospel narrative, Jesus enters this world by one miracle and he leaves it by another." He also says, "the miraculous is inextricably interwoven with the whole life of Christ." By miracles Jesus placed his Church upon a foundation of supernatural facts. By miracles he revealed his nature and office as Immanuel—God with us. By miracles he showed himself to be the friend and Saviour of humanity, for most of the wonders he wrought were for human relief. "His object in multiplying the loaves," says Gode, "was to reveal himself to their perishing souls as the bread that can give life eternal through the holy agency of the eating by faith."—*John Atkinson, D.D.*

Jesus wrought miracles to substantiate his claim as the Messiah; to manifest forth his glory (John 2, 11); to inspire and reward faith (Matt. 9, 23; John 4, 48); to teach the disciples the true nature of their work (Luke 5, 10); to exhibit his power over devils (Mark 5, 1-20); to prove his power over death (John 11, 25); to fulfill prophecy (Isa. 35, 5); to prove his power to forgive sin (Matt. 9, 6); to relieve human suffering and want, and show his sympathy with men; and to give a pledge of our resurrection. His miracles were all wrought in the interests of humanity. He did not use his miracle-working power to relieve his own distresses or gratify pride or ambition or idle curiosity.—*O. A. Houghton, D.D.*

Jesus worked miracles because, being what he was, he could not refrain from ministering to needy humanity. But his ulterior purpose was to attest his divine mission. He came to reveal the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. He came to give eternal life. He showed by his words and works that he spoke with divine wisdom and authority. His marvelous character was the greatest miracle of all, but only the spiritually minded could appreciate that. He wrought wonderful works to arrest the attention of the careless and indifferent, and direct them to himself.—*Rev. W. M. Brundage, Ph.D.*

To the people among whom Jesus taught miracles were the credentials of divine authority. Nicodemus declared, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him." When Christ said to one sick of the palsy, "thy sins are forgiven," the scribes muttered, "this man blasphemeth." But as the paralytic, at the Master's word, raised his bed and departed, the scribes were silenced, the multitude were convinced and glorified God. Christ's chief aim was to prove to men his divine authority.—*H. Lummis.*

Natural religion has been unable to purify any people; revealed religion alone can. But revealed religion must substantiate its claims. This must be done by works of the nature of proof such as no merely human power can give. Hence all true miracles; notably those of Christ, in whom was revealed the fullness of truth. Christ's miracles were not exhibitions of power for its own sake; neither were they wrought to gratify the sense of wonder. They are the signs of the divinely authenticated message of God to a world lost in ignorance and sin.—*John E. Earp, D.D.*

Lesson Word-Picture.

Poor old mother! How you pity her! She just doted on her son, an only son, too, and she a widow. How she leaned on him, this staff for her daily walk! And now

death's cruel hand has wrested away this staff and is about to hide it in the grave. Death not only takes it, Death will bury it. Every body liked her son, her darling boy; and so, as the funeral train winds on toward the city gate, what wonder if it lengthens, people falling in to swell this column testifying to the love felt for her only son!

Hark! Hear the wailing!

How loud, how bitter, how prolonged!

The mourners have gone through the gate, they are passing out into the open space before it, when, who is it, what is it, coming toward them? It is another throng, and, is it another funeral train—death meeting death? O, no; it is Life meeting death. For, who stands at the head of this advancing throng?

It is Jesus.

People whisper, "How he must pity her!" Yes, he tenderly cries, "Weep not!" As if she could cease those hot tears trickling down through her hands.

He has gone to the bier. He has laid his hand on it. He did not need to touch it; but the touch is significant. It is sympathizing meeting sorrow. It is life coming in contact with death. Will it be of any avail, though? Can life change, conquer, all that affect death?

The bearers of the dead have halted. Did Jesus mean that they should halt? It will rest them. It was kind if he meant that. He has sympathized, too, with the mother.

There is one other—the son; what will he do for him?

"He can do nothing for the dead son," a bystander is whispering. The poor, bowed mother is confusedly looking on.

This sympathizing Prophet, Teacher, Friend, can do nothing for her son, people think. He can bind up the wounds of the living, he cannot bring back to life the dead.

What? Jesus commanding the young man to arise?

What rapt, eager attention on the part of the spectators!

How they crowd closer up to Jesus!

The bearers of the dead stare at him. The bowed mother looks up in wonder and stares through her tears. There is an awful hush stilling the crowd.

But, suddenly, there is a stirring of the grave-clothes. It was not the wind that stirred them, or the bearers that jostled them. It was Life meeting death, and bidding death yield its victim! The body moves more perceptibly. It turns. It rises. The grave-clothes fall away. The eyes open. The lips part. The young man speaks. Jesus reaches forward and gives him to the mother, as if laying her only son again in her arms.

O, how thrilled, overwhelmed is her soul, one great throb of exultation bounding through and almost breaking her heart for very joy! Hers again, in her very arms, her only, darling son!

The procession turns now and goes back through the city gate. The bier is empty. The bearers throw it over their shoulders, and walk off smiling. People begin to sing psalms. It is one long, fervent, jubilant tumult. "Glory to God!" they cry. Greater is the psalm-singing than was ever the wailing of the mourners.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT.—Jesus Cares for Us.

Print in large letters "A Journey." What do people take journeys for? Tell that some go for pleasure, some for money-making, some for rest. Would Jesus take a journey for any of these? No. See what children think would lead Jesus to take a journey. Some one