

Notes on the S. S. Lessons.

The First Miracle.

John 2 1: 11.

WE are introduced to a company at a wedding feast, at Cana, not far from Nazareth. Apparently it is not a company composed of the rich and great, since Mary, the wife of Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth, occupies a prominent place in the party. The wine runs short, and the hosts are threatened with serious annoyance. A wedding in those times lasted a week, so it is no wonder the wine gave out. It may be, too, that Jesus and His party made that many more guests than were expected. His mother said to Jesus, "They have no wine." Although Jesus had never yet worked any miracles, yet His mother believed that He could, and perhaps would work one. Jesus said, "My hour is not yet come." But His mother saw that He might help them, and she said to the servants, "Whatever He bids you do, do it." There were standing by six large stone jars in which was kept water for washing. Jesus said, "Fill up the jars with water"; and the servants filled them up to the brim. Then Jesus said, "Draw out now, and carry to the ruler of the feast." They did so, and they found that the water had been turned into wine. The ruler of the feast did not know where it had come from, and said, "Everybody gives his best wine at the beginning of the feast, but you have kept the good wine until now." Instead of poverty there is now plenty; instead of want there is a full supply; instead of shame and annoyance there is wonder and praise.

It was Jesus who did this. The superiority of His gift was admitted as soon as the gift was tasted, but it was not till the guests ceased to take man's provision that they obtained the Lord's provision. Thus our Lord manifested His way of blessing. He "satisfieth the longing soul with goodness." Psa. 107. 9.

Dear children when Mary heard of the failure in the supply of wine she "went and told Jesus." That is what we should do in all our little troubles and trials. I like to think this first miracle was meant, not only to help people then to believe Jesus came from God, but to teach us how truly Jesus is interested in all our pleasures and pain.

Jesus and Nicodemus.

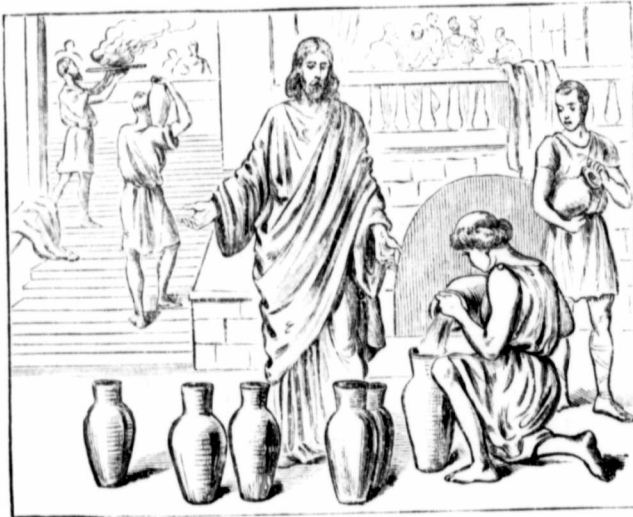
John 3: 1-18.

AFTER the wedding at Cana, Jesus and His mother's family went to *Ca-per-na-um*, on the Sea of Galilee. He did not stay there very long, for it was nearly time for the Passover Feast, and He and His disciples went to Jerusalem. For the first thing He did there, see chap. 2: 14-16. He also taught the people, and did a number of miracles.

But one man wanted to learn more, so he came to Jesus to have a quiet talk. He was a *Pharisee*, very strict about all outward parts of religion; yet Jesus said to him, "Ye must be born again," that is, you must begin all over, and lead a new life.

How surprised Nicodemus was when Jesus said "he must be born again." Of course he believed all the

wicked Gentiles ought to be baptized and join the Jewish church. But Jesus meant more than that. He meant we must have a new heart, a new life within. But how can this be? asked Nicodemus. Ah! he could not, and neither can we, understand *how*, any more than we can tell "whence the wind *cometh*." But we know all who *want* a new heart can have it. Have you read the story of the Brazen Serpent? Nicodemus had; and I dare say he thought



THE WATER CHANGED INTO WINE.

it very strange that all who were bitten did not look right up and be cured. But how many, in his day and in ours, refuse to "look to Jesus" and be saved from their sins.

In this lesson we have the verse which has been called the Golden Text of the Bible. It is the 16th verse. Read it carefully. Note what it says:—God *loved* and *gave*. We *believe* and are *saved*. Read again:—God *SO* loved. The greatest of all wonders presented in the smallest of words.

Have you believed? If not, you are included in the "Whosoever," for it means "You, me, or anybody else." Believe now

'OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.'

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