

V. 43.—Philip belonged to Bethsaida in Galilee. He was a man of family, so tradition says. It is also said that he was the disciple mentioned in Matt. 8: 21, 22.

V. 45.—Nathanael was also called Bartholomew. Philip early begins to preach. See where Moses foretells of Christ: Deut. 18: 18, &c. The Prophets foretell of Him, Isa. 53: 1. Jeremiah 23: 5; Dan. 9: 24, &c., &c.

THIRD SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—*Jesus at the Marriage, John 2: 1-11.*

Cana, a small town in Asher, Galilee. See Josh. 19: 28. There was another Cana in the territory of Ephraim (Samaria) A marriage feast of the Jews used to last seven days. The third day here mentioned may mean the *third of the feast*.

V. 2.—This was the first Christian marriage. Look at the company, Jesus, His Mother, and His disciples. Jesus ought to be invited to all our feasts, our weddings in particular. Marriage is a divine institution, Christ's presence sanctifies it.

V. 3.—Wine was largely used among the people of the Holy Land, and is to the present day. The want is made known to Jesus; we should lay all our wants, temporal and spiritual, before Him.

V. 4.—The Lord here indicates to His mother that the time for His working miracles is not yet fully come. "Woman"—by no means disrespectful; the term as then used was equivalent to our "Madam." "My time"—the divine supply comes when the need is felt, and the help can come from no other quarter.

V. 5.—This is a direction that may well be given to all, *everywhere*. Whatever Jesus saith, do it!

V. 6.—The vessels were there with water for washing the hands of the company before they would sit down to their meat. We cannot tell the size of the vessels.

V. 7.—The order given by our Lord is at once obeyed—an example to be followed by us. In the East they take their meals reclining on low couches. The "Governor of the Feast"—the one presiding at the tables.

"Did our Lord turn all the water here into wine? It may have been turned into wine as it was drawn and borne to the company—as it was needed. Did our Lord minister to a degrading vice? By no means. The company was select and holy, and no excess was permitted."

V. 10.—It is shewn that the wine was good, and the Governor of the Feast praised it highly. He intimated what was the usual custom at such feasts—the worst wine was kept till men were nearly intoxicated, and then it was given to them. But in this case the best wine was kept till the last. No doubt but the wine made by our Lord was pure and nutritive. All He does is right and good.

This was His first miracle after His baptism.

LESSONS.

1. Jesus should be with us in our joys as well as sorrows.

2. He can supply all our wants.

3. He keeps the "good wine" till the last. He gives the best portion after all the world's pleasures have vanished forever.

4. We should render implicit obedience to our Lord.

FOURTH SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—*The new Birth, John 3: 7-17. Golden Text, John 1: 12.*

In His conversation with Nicodemus, Christ touches upon several important truths—but on the one which forms the subject of our present lesson He dwells at considerable length. The doctrine of regeneration or the new birth is taught in many passages of Scripture, but more fully and clearly and emphatically here than anywhere else. Early in his public ministry (for this is among His first discourses, if not His very first) Christ insists upon the doctrine of regeneration. He emphasises the truth that man must be made a new creature. In this He differs altogether from all the teachers of His time. They thought it was enough that man should be *reformed*; he says man must be *renewed*. You can't reform the old, for the old is bad; you must have a new creation.

This truth is fundamental and vital. Ignorance or misconception of it will vitiate our whole belief. Hence the prominence it receives at the outset of Christ's public ministry.

On the necessity of regeneration, our Lord's words are very plain and emphatic. There is no mistaking their meaning. Over and over again he says, "Ye must be born again." Educated though Nicodemus was, and moral and upright in his life, respected and honoured as a man of position and influence, one of the very best men of his time doubtless, yet he, even he, needed regeneration, before he was fit for the Kingdom of Heaven. Born of the flesh, he was flesh, and "flesh and blood," we are assured, "cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

Corruption cannot inherit incorruption. And born of the flesh, man is corrupt. In the nature of things then he must either be born again or remain for ever without the incorruptible kingdom.

The passage also teaches us concerning the NATURE of the new birth. Regeneration is a *radical* change. It is no mere amendment of the old, it is out and out renewal. New life is produced in the soul. Weak at first, but though weak, real; and it grows stronger and stronger with age. Regeneration is an *instantaneous* change; it occurs at some point or moment of time, but that point or moment may not be known to those who are the subjects of the change.

The agent producing or accomplishing the change is the Spirit of God, and He works when and where and how He will. He is sovereign in His workings. He may work in the heart of an unconscious child, as well as in the heart of an adult. He is not confined to