

SUNDAY SCHOOL	The Quiet Hour	YOUNG PEOPLE
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THE FACTS OF THE QUARTER.*

By Prof. M. B. Riddle, D.D., LL.D.

This Gospel gives, not a continuous history, but such facts as reveal the Person of our Lord. It puts in sharp contrast the unbelief of the Jews and the new life granted to believers. The lessons cover a period of nearly three years, from the witness of John the Baptist to the feast of dedication, a little more than three months before the crucifixion.

The dates given assume that Jesus was baptized by John in January, A.D. 27; that the public ministry covered a little more than three years; that three of the four passovers during the ministry are coincident in time with Lessons 4, 3 and 9.

Lesson 1: The Word Made Flesh.—This Prologue indicates the leading thoughts of the entire book.

Lesson 2: Jesus and John the Baptist.—This lesson follows the return of Jesus from the temptation, though the previous baptism is referred to. The place was "Bethany beyond the Jordan," probably not at the traditional site of the baptism of Jesus, near Jericho, but farther north, on the east side of the Jordan, about fifteen miles southeast of the Sea of Galilee. John the Baptist may have baptized Jesus at the former place, and moved northward during the forty days' interval. This date was early in March, A.D. 27.

Lesson 3: Jesus and His First Disciples.—On the two days succeeding those of the last lesson, and at the same place: Bethany beyond the Jordan, March, A.D. 27. Probably these first disciples were six, including James the brother of John.

Lesson 4: Jesus Cleanses the Temple.—After a brief interval, spent at Capernaum, our Lord visits Jerusalem at the passover, the first during His public ministry. He drove the traders out of the temple area. This may have been immediately before the feast, early in April, A.D. 27. The temple market was in the Court of the Gentiles.

Lesson 5: Jesus the Saviour of the World.—The interview with Nicodemus probably occurred at Jerusalem, shortly after the first passover, April, A.D. 27. As Nicodemus was a man of high position, "the teacher of Israel," the truths presented to him were unusually exalted. Some hold that verses 16-21 are the comments of the evangelist John.

Lesson 6: Jesus and the Woman of Samaria.—After a ministry in Judea, narrated by John only, the hostility of the Pharisees led to the withdrawal of Jesus through Samaria to Galilee. His disciples were with Him, and on the journey the incidents of this lesson occurred. The scene was "Jacob's well," near Nablus (ancient Shechem), and northeast of Mount Gerizim, the sacred mountain of the Samaritans. "Four months" before "the harvest," if taken literally, makes the date December, A.D. 27, eight months after the last lesson.

Lesson 7: Jesus Heals the Nobleman's Son.—After two days, Jesus goes to Cana of Galilee, where he is met by a king's officer, who had come from his home at Capernaum. The sick son of the officer was healed at the hour when Jesus said to the father: "thy son liveth." The distance between the two places, if located at the farthest points, was about twenty-five miles. The date was December, A.D. 27.

*S. S. Lesson, March 22. First Quarterly Review. Golden Text: In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.—John 1:4.

Lesson 8: Jesus at the Pool of Bethesda.—It is here held that the feast referred to in this lesson was a passover (the second), since this gives a place for the harvest-time implied in the Sabbath controversy in Galilee. The date, then, is April, A.D. 28. The site of the pool of Bethesda is placed by recent explorers north of the temple, under the church of St. Anne. The traditional site is Birket Israil, just beyond the northeast corner of the temple enclosure. Robinson places it at the Fountain of the Virgin, south of the temple. Notice the omission in verses 3, 4.

Lesson 9: Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand.—Nearly an entire year, the events of which are fully detailed in the Synoptic Gospels, is to be placed between this lesson and the last. The date is the latter part of March or early in April, A.D. 29. The place was an uninhabited spot on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee, near Bethsaida Julias (Luke). The miracle is the only one narrated by all four evangelists.

Lesson 10: Jesus the Bread of Life.—The long discourse in Capernaum was uttered the day after the feeding of the five thousand. It awakened hostility and defection in Galilee, making the turn in the tide of popularity there.

Lesson 11: Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind.—This healing occurred either immediately after the feast of tabernacles or (more probably) at the feast of dedication. The earlier date would be the first Sabbath after October 18, and the later, near the close of December, A.D. 30; either six or eight months after the last lesson.—The pool of Siloam, now called Birket Silwan, is in the lower Tyropean valley, southeast of Mount Zion.—Sunday School Times.

HEIGHTS.

Thank God for heights. All men may tread the plain.

Only the earnest unto heights attain.

God made them, meant them for his pilgrim's feet.

Their soil is rugged, but the air is sweet.

The path is long, but from the summits high

The traveller sees new lands and clearer sky.

But seek them not alone. He never meant

That man should be with his own weak content.

Those peaks are lonely, if thou have no friend

Spurred by the voice the upward way to wend.

His is the eminence who strives to be

Great that his toiling neighbors may be free.

PRAYER.

O, Almighty Maker of heaven and earth, grant that our hearts this day may be wholly turned towards Thee. As children commune with a loving father so may we commune with Thee. May Thy Word console us to-day for the vexations and trials of the week; may Thy Spirit comfort us for its troubles and bruising; and this we ask, O Father, in the name of Thy Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Thinking about spiritual things makes a man spiritual, while thinking about worldly things makes a man worldly; for both the Spirit and the world are ever seeking to transfuse themselves into the essence of our humanity.

REJECTED PRAYERS.

Prayers are rejected every hour by the ton, because they are wicked. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord. "When they pray I will not hear them." Why? Because they are selfish. "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me." Selfishness is iniquity, and hearts are often deceived.

It is amazing how grace, when it enters the heart, will set about hunting down selfishness. Who does not pity the poor demoniac, when he pleaded to be permitted to remain? "I will clean out the boat. I will watch when you are away. I will do any work only let me be with Thee." "No! Go home to thy friends and tell them how the Lord has been gracious to thee."

I can appeal to the oldest worker in the inquiry room to confirm this instinct of the awakened soul. "How can I frame my speech to bring this good news to those at home?" Unselfishness comes in with the first breath of the Divine Spirit.

Is there not great need to reconstruct the theory of prayer? Here are two ships at sea, one bound north, the other south; both masters are Christians, both want a fair wind. How can they be served? One man is better than the other. One is anxious, eager, fretful; he prays for a fair wind. The other is the better man; he calmly waits.

I can only spread the sail

Thou must breathe the auspicious gale.

In one sense he does not pray at all. He simply rests in the Lord, and leaves the whole disposing of events to the will of the Most High. This is really the perfection of prayer. "Not my will but Thine be done."

Why encumber the soul with a load of words; doth He not know? To tell the Lord in what way we want Him to help us is little short of presumption. The Holy Spirit is never given to minister to our selfishness, but to plant in our minds the mind of Christ, who ever loved Himself last.

We can reduce our stock of patience, we may clear away much confusion, we can save enormous waste of energy by cultivating the attitude "Not mine but Thine." Alone before God and in range of his own private affairs, the brightest crown the child of God can wear in the light of time is acquiescence.—The Rev. H. T. Miller, in New York Observer.

Canadian Baptist: When pastors begin to preach in behalf of recruits for the ministry, and to make it a part of their pastoral privileges and duties by introducing the subject for earnest conversation in their visitation; when Christian parents in their home life and religion give the place they should in their thoughts and words and prayers to the Christian ministry; and when all who bow the knee at the throne of grace burden their prayers with requests that laborers may be thrust out into the harvest-field, we may expect that recruits will be forthcoming in numbers sufficient to bring confidence and enthusiasm to the hearts of those who are praying and working for the kingdom of heaven to come.

A man's attitude toward God may be told by the restfulness of his inner spirit, his ability to rest. And more, a man's attitude toward God's rest-day tells to men his attitude toward God.—S. D. Gordon.