



LESSON V.—JAN. 29.

Christ at Jacob's Well.

John iv., 5-15. Memory verses, 13-15. Study chapter iv., 1-42.

Golden Text.*'Whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst.'*—John iv., 14.**Home Readings**

M. John iv., 5-15.—Christ at Jacob's Well.
 T. John iv., 16-26.—True worship.
 W. John iv., 17-33.—Christ the Revealer.
 T. John iv., 39-42.—Samaritans believing.
 F. Rev. xxii., 1-7.—The Water of Life.
 S. Isa. iv., 17.—Without price.
 S. Isaiah xii.—Well of Salvation.

Lesson Story.

After the wonderful conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, our Lord did not stay very long in Jerusalem. He took his disciples into Judea, and when the Pharisees tried to stir up trouble between his followers and those of John the Baptist, Jesus left the country altogether.

Their way to Galilee led through the country of Samaria, and they came to Sychar, a city little less than half-way between Jerusalem and Cana of Galilee, in an almost straight line north. It was the very piece of ground upon which Jacob had dug a well over seventeen hundred years before, and which had been the heritage of the children of his son Joseph. The well still remained, and held very good water. It was quite a little distance from the city, and our Saviour sat down beside it to rest while his disciples went into the town to buy food. As he was sitting there a Samaritan woman came to the well to draw water; and Jesus asked her to give him a drink of water. This was a very common request in that land; nevertheless, the woman was filled with astonishment that this Man should speak to her at all, for he was evidently a Jew. She asked him how it was, reminding him that the Jews, as a rule, had no friendly dealings with the Samaritans.

Jesus replied, 'If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.' The woman probably pondered this statement for some time before she replied. Evidently understanding that Jesus was no ordinary man, and seeking for further explanation, she asked whence he had the living water, seeing that he had nothing wherewith to draw it from the deep well beside him, and whether he were greater than the patriarch Jacob, from whom the Samaritans claimed descent.

Jesus did not stop to argue with her about his greatness, he proved it. 'Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again'—that which is earthly cannot satisfy—'But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.'

And the woman, dimly comprehending that this Man was indeed greater than Jacob, yet missing the real meaning of this great spiritual truth, said, 'Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.'

Then Jesus explained to her about God the Father, and how he himself was the Gift of God, the Messiah. The woman not only herself believed, but left her waterpot and hastening to the city, brought out a great crowd of men to see and hear Jesus, and many believed on him because of her testimony, and many more believed because of his own word—'for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.'

The Bible Class

'To drink (water).—Gen. xxi., 19; xxiv., 12-20; Matt. xxv., 35, 37, 42; Rom. xii., 20; John vii., 37; I. Cor. x., 4.
 'Samaritans.—Luke x., 30-37; xvii., 15-17; Acts i., 8; viii., 25.

'The gift of God.'—Eph. ii., 8; iii., 7; iv., 7; II. Cor. ix., 15; Jas. I., 17; Acts ii., 38; viii., 20; x., 44-48.

Suggestions.

These New Testament stories have exceedingly interesting Old Testament connections which should be studied with the lesson in order to bring out the points more clearly. The references under the heading 'Bible Class' are prepared as an aid in this direction. And not only those who ordinarily belong in the 'Bible Class' of a school, but even the most restless of the small boys often enjoy looking up references and being shown their connection with the lesson. The 'parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph' is an interesting reference to the ancient history of the Jews. (Gen. xxxiii., 18-20; Joshua xxiv., 32.)

Both this lesson and our last brought out very clearly the importance of careful work for single souls. Truly Nicodemus was a very important man and a teacher, and effort spent on him, if it bore fruit, could not be wasted. But here was a humble, sinful woman of the despised Samaritan people, what good could be accomplished by speaking to her? Jesus was tired and hungry, and needed a rest and quiet time, but he saw here a chance for his Father's work, which was to him food and sustenance, and he lost not a minute in setting to work. With rare and exquisite tact, he first asks a favor of the woman. The drinking of water is like the eating of bread in the East, a covenant of friendship for the time being. Such tactful condescension from a Jew could not but please the proud Samaritan, and make her ready to listen to anything this kindly Man should say.

From this incident we learn that a tactful beginning is half the battle in winning souls; such tact only comes from the Spirit of God. We learn also that an audience of one is worth our choicest thought and best efforts. A godly teacher may do more with an unruly scholar in half an hour's quiet personal conversation than he can do in a year with that same scholar in the midst of a large and thoughtless class.

Cultivate opportunities. Our Saviour was tired, the woman seemed unpromising as a listener, yet he did not let this opportunity pass. As a result, not only was that woman converted, but the whole city was moved and a great number were brought to believe on Jesus through her efforts.

Show your love to souls. Kindness is kingly, and loving kindness shows that you belong to the Royalty of the kingdom of heaven, a son of the God who is love.

Questions.

1. Why did Jesus go through Samaria?
2. How did the Jews treat the Samaritans?
3. Where did Jesus sit down to rest?
4. Who came to draw water?
5. What did Jesus ask for?
6. What is the gift of God?
7. What did Jesus say about 'living water'?
8. What was the result of this conversation?

Practical Points.

(By A. H. Cameron.)

Christ at Jacob's Well.—John iv., 5-15.

Christ had a special interest in Jacob; centuries before he rested at his well. Yet he who loved the renowned patriarch did not despise the poor harlot (ver. 5-7). The Samaritan was surprised at the humility and humanity of Jesus (ver. 9). So much happiness and peace and power is often marred by that little word 'if' (ver. 10). The natural eye cannot behold the beauties of redeeming grace, nor can the natural heart partake of the water of life (verses 11, 12). The water of life is clear as crystal, pure as the mountain dew, sweeter than honey, and free as the air we breathe (verses 13, 14). When the woman asked to have her bodily wants supplied, she had not reached the higher plane of life where Christ is all.

Tiverton, Ont.

C. E. Topic.

Jan. 29.—God's army.—Ps. xx., 1-9. (Christian Endeavor Day.)

Junior C. E.

Jan. 29.—How shall we work for God?—Ecc. iii., 1; iv., 9, 10; v., 4; ix., 10; x., 18; xi., 1, 6; xii., 13, 14.

One Visitor's Experience.

While canvassing for members of the home department in a small country village, a visitor called at a home where lived a busy and almost discouraged mother with seven small children, and a very scanty income from the father, who worked as a section hand on the railway near by.

After explaining the object of her call and the duties of a member of the home department, the visitor asked Mrs. C. to join. The reply was, 'I should like to, for I used to attend Sabbath-school and study these lessons, and I cannot tell you how much I miss them; but I cannot go now. All I can do is to send five of my little ones, each with a penny, every Sabbath.'

'Well,' the visitor replied, 'this home department was started for people situated just as you are. Won't you join?'

'My husband is an ungodly man,' replied Mrs. C., 'and I fear he would not be willing to see me spending time studying these lessons, nor to have me contribute as this envelope suggests. He always spends his Sabbaths working in the garden, or some such labor.'

The visitor explained that a contribution was not necessary under the circumstances, and urged Mrs. C. to become a member, which she did.

At the end of three months the visitor called again and was met by Mrs. C. wearing a much happier face, and anxious to tell the good news. 'My husband saw me studying my lesson quarterly,' she said, 'and asked what it was. I passed it to him, and now he is as much interested as I am, and he no longer works on Sunday. He, too, wishes to become a member of the home department. This has made a great change in our home.'

A lady who had not, for many years, attended Sabbath-school, was induced to join the home department. After studying the lessons for a short time, she one day appeared in Sabbath-school with her baby in her arms and said, 'I just wanted to come and hear to-day's lesson explained. I don't feel that I get as much out of it at home as I ought.' After this she came regularly, and the baby is now a member of the primary department.

The home department pays financially, in Camden County, a small school in the country, which was in debt and had an empty treasury, adopted the home department, and the first year, after paying all expenses for quarterlies, etc., twelve dollars was passed over to the Sabbath-school treasury of the Home Department.—'Onward.'

The Ideal Teacher.

She possesseth that subtle and mysterious gift called sympathy. She knoweth the names and conditions of her scholars, and in all she taketh a tender interest. She understandeth their dispositions; she hath no contempt for any. Therefore she draweth all towards her, and all place their confidence in her.

She is slow to wrath. She remembereth that she is also human, and therefore liable to err.

She is gentle and gracious in her bearing, for she forgetteth herself in her endeavors to set at ease them that come to her.

Her voice thrilleth as the tones of a sweet instrument—now persuasive, now high, now low, yet ever gentle and firm.

To dwell in her company is an inspiration, for she unconsciously demandeth from her scholars their best.

She is humble because she knoweth no more.

She hath an infinite patience with the dullard and the backslider. She is a mother confessor to every anxious heart. From her confessional box the downcast go away cheered, the indolent inspired, the rebellious subdued.

She is a born ruler, for she is of them who have learned to obey in their youth.

She loveth little children.

No duty to her is trivial or beneath her to do well. She loveth her work, since not for what she getteth, but for what she giveth, doth she toil.

Yet is she cheerful of spirit. The sound of laughter often issueth from her lips and calleth forth that of her scholars. That which she doeth she doeth with zest; under her teaching the burden of learning groweth lighter.

She liveth ever, for in the years to come her memory will be green, and emit a sweet fragrance in the hearts of those she taught and loved.—'Light and Leading.'