

LESSON NOTES.

SECOND QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE WRITINGS OF JOHN

A.D. 27.] LESSON III. [April 18.

THE FIRST MIRACLE.

John 2, 1-11. Commit vs. 1, 6.

GOLDEN TEXT.

This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.—John 2, 11.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Jesus sanctifies and blesses our daily life.

DAILY READINGS.

M. John 2, 1-11. T. John 2, 13-25 W. Eccl. 11, 6-10. Th. Rom. 12, 1-15. F. Isa. 55, 1; Ps. 104, 15; Prov. 3, 9, 10. Sa. Prov. 23, 29-32; Rev. 14, 10. Su. John 1, 9-14.

TIME.—The latter part of February, or early March, A.D. 27. Three days after our last lesson.

PLACE.—Cana of Galilee, 6 or 8 miles north-west of Nazareth.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—In our last lesson we left Jesus just starting from Bethany (Bethabara), on his way to his home in Galilee. He had five or six disciples, and on the third day reached Cana, the home of Nathanael (Bartholomew), where doubtless he stopped till he was invited to the wedding, where we find him to-day.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—1. *The third day*—After leaving Bethabara (1, 43). *The mother of Jesus was there*—From her familiar actions it is supposed she was a relative. 2. *Jesus was called or invited*—Since his mother was there, and he himself would be a prominent guest in a village Jesus went to the wedding feast, and thus sanctified the home, the wedding, and innocent social joys. *And his disciples*—Andrew, Peter, John, Philip, Nathanael, and probably James (see last lesson). 3. *When they wanted wine*—When the wine failed, perhaps on account of his increase in the number of guests. 4. *Woman*—Greek, *lady*, a term of respect. *What have I done with thee*—i.e., I am no longer subject to your control as heretofore, but to my heavenly Father who henceforth tells me what to do. *Min' hour is not yet come*—The hour to show his divine nature, or the hour of his public manifestation as the Messiah. 5. *His mother saith*—Implying that she had confidence that he would come to their help in some way. He did not refuse her request, but put it on the right basis of divine and not human commandments. 6. *Six waterpots*—Stone jars in the court or outer room. *Purifying*—As the Jews then ate not with spoons, or knives and forks, but with their fingers, these frequent washings were very necessary. *Firkins*—The Hebrew bath—about nine gallons. 8. *Governor of the feast*—The friend who had general charge. 10. *When men have well drunk*—or drunk freely, and their taste is dulled. It does not imply that any of this company were intoxicated, but is a proverbial statement. *Good wine*—Of the best flavour, of peculiarly delicious aroma and taste. 11. *Beginning of miracles*—The first that Jesus ever did. *Miracles*—Here, signs; wonders done as a sign of Christ's nature and truth. *His glory*—His true nature as the Son of God, his loving, helpful character, his goodness and power. *His disciples believed*—Their faith began a few days before was now confirmed and settled.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Cana of Galilee.—Weddings among the Jews.—Lessons from Jesus' presence at the wedding (v. 4).—The stone water-jars.—Lessons from this transformation.—Jesus, example as to wine.—His glory.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Where did we leave Jesus in our last lesson? Where was he going? Who were with him? What year was this? At what time of the year? Trace the journey on the map.

SUBJECT: JESUS IN DAILY LIFE.

I. JESUS AT A WEDDING (v. 1).—How long was Jesus in reaching Cana? What disciple lived there? What social event was taking place at this time? Why was Jesus invited? Who went with him? Did Jesus by this sanction social pleasures? Is his religion opposed to innocent enjoyments? Does his presence with us increase the joy? Is any pleasure right in which we would not like his presence?

II. JESUS SUPPLYING COMMON NEEDS (vs. 3-10).—What can you tell about Jewish customs at their weddings? What part of the entertainment failed? Why? What did the mother of Jesus suggest to him? What was his reply? Was this a reproof? What did he mean? What hour had not come? Did his mother take this reply as a refusal? Was all this said in public or private? What was the purpose of the six water jars? How much would they all hold? What was done with them? Into what was all this water changed? How was it proved? What kind of wine was it?

III. THE GLORY OF JESUS (v. 11).—Had Jesus done any miracles before this? What was Jesus' glory? How did this miracle manifest it? In what respects does Jesus transform our lives? (John 3, 3, 5; Rom. 12, 2; Phil. 3, 21; Isa. 55, 12, 13; 60, 17-20.) Had Jesus' disciples believed on him before? (John 1, 41, 45.) How was their faith now confirmed?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Jesus exalts our daily life by his presence.
2. Any place of enjoyment where Jesus can go with us is safe for us.
3. Jesus confirms, blesses, and ennobles the home.
4. We should go to Jesus in our every need.
5. We should do not only the right thing, but at the right time.
6. Jesus sympathizes with us in our joys as well as in our sorrows.
7. Jesus has come to transform our hearts, our lives, the world.
8. Jesus by his wondrous works is ever confirming our faith.

REVIEW EXERCISE.

1. *Where did Jesus go from Bethabara?* ANS. To Cana of Galilee. 2. *To what was he invited there?* ANS. To a wedding feast. 3. *What did he do at this feast?* ANS. He changed water into wine. 4. *Of what was this a type?* ANS. His transforming work in the world. 5. *What was the effect?* ANS. His disciples saw his real glory, and their faith in him was strengthened.

A.D. 27.] LESSON IV. [April 25.

JESUS AND NICODEMUS.

John 3, 1-18. Commit vs. 14-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Ye must be born again.—John 3, 7.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

A new heart and life, the way unto the kingdom of God.

DAILY READINGS.

M. John 3, 1-18. Th. Ezek. 18, 20-32. W. 1, John 3, 1-24. Th. Num. 21, 1-9. F. Rom. 8, 1-17. Sa. Rom. 8, 28-39. Su. 1, John 5, 1-20.

TIME.—April 9, 16, A.D. 27. Five or six weeks after the last lesson.

PLACE.—Jerusalem, The guest-chamber in a private house, perhaps John's.

RULERS.—Tiberius Caesar, emperor of Rome. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea. Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee.

INTERVENING HISTORY.—Soon after the wedding at Cana, Jesus and his mother's family went to Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee. After remaining here a short time he went up to Jerusalem to the Passover (April 9). Here he drove the cattle-dealers and money-changers from the temple, and, by his teaching and miracles, won a large number of believers. Among them was Nicodemus, the teachings of Jesus to whom form the subject of our lesson.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—1. *Nicodemus*—A Pharisee, a member of the Sanhedrim, a learned man, a teacher of the law. We hear nothing more of him, except a defence of Jesus (John 7, 50), till the time of Jesus' death, three years later, when he seems to have become a true convert (John 19, 39). 2. *Came by night*—Not from fear, but because he would converse more quietly then. And it was prudent not to commit himself till he had learned more. *Rabbi*—i.e., an honorary title, teacher, master. 3. *Jesus answered*—His implied question. *Born*

again—Or anew, or from above. He needed a new life of holiness, a new principle, a life like God's. 5. *Born of water and of the Spirit*—Born of water refers back to John's baptism of repentance, saying that he must be cleansed from his past sins, and confess publicly his renunciation of his past life. Born of the Spirit refers to a new spiritual life. Without public confessions he cannot enter the visible kingdom; without a new heart he cannot become a real member of the kingdom of God. 11. *We speak*—Jesus and all who have experienced the new birth. 12. *If I have*—Here Jesus returns to the singular number because he alone knew about heaven. 13. *Which is in heaven*—Is ever in communion with heaven. It was ever plain and open before him. As God he was always there. 14. *As Moses, etc.*—See Num. 21, 4-9. 16. *Only begotten Son*—God's son in a close and peculiar sense, different from that in which we are all God's children. 18. *Condemned*—Judged. *Condemned already*—He is judged for his sins, and they have not been forsaken or forgiven; he remains in condemnation. His choice of sin itself judges and condemns him.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—The intervening history.—Nicodemus.—Why he came by night.—The kingdom of God.—Born of the water and the Spirit.—The Spirit's work compared to the wind.—Christ's knowledge of heavenly things.—The serpents in the wilderness.—God's love.—Eternal life.—The condition of receiving it.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Where did Jesus go after the miracle of Cana? How long after did he go to Jerusalem? Why? How old was he? How long was it since entering upon his mission at his baptism? What did he do at this Passover? Did he make any disciples?

SUBJECT: HOW TO BELONG TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

I. THE INQUIRER (vs. 1, 2).—Who was Nicodemus? What hints as to his after history? (John 7, 50, 51; 19, 39.) Why did he go to Jesus by night? Of what was he convinced? How was he convinced?

II. INSTRUCTION AS TO THE NECESSARY CONDITION OF ENTERING THE KINGDOM OF GOD (vs. 3-8).—What is the kingdom of God? On what condition only can any one enter, or even see this kingdom? What is meant by "born of the water?" What by "born of the Spirit?" Why cannot one enter God's kingdom without this new birth? What illustration does Jesus give of the method of conversion? (v. 8.)

III. THE AUTHORITY OF THE INSTRUCTOR (vs. 9-13).—How did Jesus know all about heaven and heavenly things? Is that good authority?

IV. FOW TO OBTAIN ETERNAL LIFE (vs. 14-18).—What comparison does Jesus use? Relate the story from Num. 21, 4-9. Why is sin like the bite of these serpents? How was Christ lifted up like the brazen serpent? Was faith required in both cases in order to be saved? What is saving faith? How has God shown his love? What will become of those who refuse to believe? What will be given to those who do believe?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Let us ever go to Jesus for light and help.
2. The Gospel is proved by the marvellous thing it does for men.
3. The great need of men is new life, new hearts.
4. Without this no one can enter God's kingdom.
5. Jesus is the true teacher about heaven because no has been there, and as the Son of God knows all about it.
6. Jesus has to bring us eternal life.
7. We can obtain it by believing on him with all our heart.
8. God has shown his infinite love by what he has done for men.

REVIEW EXERCISE.

6. Who came to Jesus by night? ANS. Nicodemus a ruler of the Jews. 7. What did Jesus say to him? (Repeat v. 5.) 8. How did he show him that he was able to teach him about God's kingdom? Repeat v. 13.) How did he illustrate his salvation? Repeat vs 14, 15.) 9. What did he say of the love of God? (Repeat v. 16, f. c.) 10. How may we obtain eternal life. (Repeat v. 16, l. c.)

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