

claimed to be the Saviour of men, Luke 19: 10; John 4: 42. This salvation He won by giving Himself a ransom for many, Mark 10: 45. A character so perfect in all its parts—dutiful towards God His Father, filled with love to men—soon made the multitudes ask whether He was not the Son of God. To the unprejudiced heart Jesus Himself should have been proof that God was in their midst in a peculiar degree, John 5: 36, 37.

THE MIRACLES OF JESUS—Not only did Jesus heal the sick and drive out demons; He could control nature in her more impressive phases also. (a) He had power over death, Mark 5: 21-43; Luke 7: 11-17; John 11: 11-44. From these cases His disciples learned that He was the Resurrection and the Life, John 5: 25, 26; 11: 25, 26. (b) He showed His mastery over the sea by stilling the storm (Mark 4: 35-41), and walking upon the waves, Mark 6: 47-51. (c) Other laws of nature were subject to Him, Mark 6: 31-44; 8: 1-9.

In John "sign" is the word which is usually translated "miracle." It implies that in these marvellous works some meaning was wrapped up. They taught the disciples something about God, which they could have learned in no other way. The words, the character and the miracles of Jesus all spoke of God. Not only was Jesus full of sympathy towards them but He could make His love effective, for He was the Son of God, who rules the world.

THE PHARISEES DEMAND SIGNS (Matt. 12: 38-45)—Jesus did not yield to the demand, for they had not the right spirit. They craved striking displays of power in order to satisfy their curiosity, or to prove that Jesus would fulfil their worldly ambitions by the use of His gifts. But they had no desire to obey the truths which these signs conveyed; nor would they follow the Lord, whose character was to be read in the works of mercy which He did.

LESSON XI.

THE CLOSE OF THE GALILEAN MINISTRY

VISIT TO JERUSALEM (John ch. 5)—Mentioned only in this Gospel; and the feast cannot be precisely determined. One result of it was that the healing of the man on the

Sabbath occasioned a hostile demonstration of the Pharisees.

THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE—Jesus was unable to overtake the work that opened up before Him in Galilee (Luke 10: 2; compare John 4: 35-38), so He sent out the Twelve on preparatory missions to preach in haste that the kingdom of God was near. This would arouse the receptive and give them their opportunity, Matt. ch. 10.

DISAPPOINTMENT AND DEATH OF THE BAPTIST (Matt. 11: 2-19; Mark 6: 14-29)—Partly because he was confined in prison, partly because he still held to the popular expectation of the Messiah, John was much disappointed by the accounts of the work of Jesus which reached him. In John, the last and greatest prophet of the Old Dispensation sinks nobly, but with tragic sadness, below the horizon. Since even the greatest of Israel's sons did not understand Jesus, we need not wonder that the disciples took long to grasp His spiritual conception of the Messiah and the kingdom of God.

THE INCREASING HATRED OF THE PHARISEES (Mark 7: 1-23)—Jesus swept away their system, built on a false idea of cleanliness. He taught that ritual observance is of no value unless the heart is pure. This was a far-reaching principle, which afterwards made it possible for the Gentiles to come into the Christian church. The Jew regarded all such as unclean.

THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND (Mark 6: 30-46; John 6: 1-15)—It was again spring, and apparently a year since Jesus began His public ministry in Galilee. The common people had heard Him gladly, and were hoping that He would prove to be the Messiah. In accordance with this, after the feeding of the 5000 they wish to make Jesus a king, but He escapes, for He sees that they have no spiritual discernment of the real nature of His work, John 6: 26, 27.

RESULTS (John 6: 22-71)—Jesus disappointed the people by His refusal to be a King, and further, by His mystical discourse as to Himself being the Bread of Life. Few could understand His deepest teaching, or were willing to make sacrifices for the kingdom, which was too spiritual for them. So He now turns to His chosen circle, in order to