

Lesson VIII.

JESUS AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA

February 23, 1908

BETWEEN THE LESSONS—Jesus at Jacob's Well had spoken (ch. 4 : 35) of its being then four months before the harvest season, which began in the middle of April. It was therefore about the middle of December when He came into Galilee and wrought the miracle of healing the nobleman's son (see last Lesson). The feast spoken of in to-day's Lesson was probably the Feast of Purim, held in March, to commemorate the deliverance of the Jews by Queen Esther from the wicked plot of Haman, Esth. 9 : 21, 22, 26. The interval between last Lesson and to-day's was, therefore, about three months. We are not told how Jesus was occupied during this time.

GOLDEN TEXT—Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.—Matthew 8 : 17.

Memorize vs. 8, 9.

THE LESSON PASSAGE—John 5 : 1-9.

Study John 5 : 1-18.

1 After ¹ this there was a feast of the Jews ; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

2 Now there is ² at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called ³ in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

3 In these lay a ⁴ great multitude of ⁵ impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, ⁷ waiting for the moving of the water.

4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water : whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

5 And a certain man was there, which had ⁸ an

Revised Version—these things : ² in ; ³ gate ; ⁴ in Hebrew ; ⁵ Omitt great ; ⁶ them that were sick ; ⁷ Omitt from waiting, to end of v. 4 ; ⁸ been thirty and eight years in his infirmity ; ⁹ lying ; ¹⁰ Wouldst ; ¹¹ sick ; ¹² Arise ; ¹³ straightway.

Daily Readings—(Courtesy, I.B.R.A.)—M.—Jesus at the Pool of Bethesda, John 5 : 1-18. T.—Christ's authority, John 5 : 19-30. W.—Testimony to Christ, John 5 : 31-47. Th.—Helper of the helpless, Luke 5 : 17-26. F.—A question unanswered, Mk. 3 : 1-8. S.—Objectors silenced, Luke 13 : 10-17. S.—Thanksgiving, Psalm 107 : 1-15.

THE LESSON EXPLAINED

I. A DESPERATE CASE.—

1-5. After this ; that is, the healing of the nobleman's son—how long after is told in, Between the Lessons, which also explains which feast of the Jews is likely meant. Jesus went up to Jerusalem. It was not required that the Jews should go to Jerusalem to keep the feast of Purim, but many went, and the presence of the crowds would afford Jesus a good opportunity for teaching and preaching. By the sheep gate (Rev. Ver.) ; a gate near the temple, to the east of the city (Neh. 3 : 1, 32 ; 12 : 39), probably so named from its leading to a sheep market. Pool . . Bethesda, meaning, "House of Mercy". For further information, see Geography Lesson. Impotent folk ; helpless through disease. Three classes are named. Halt ; lame. Withered ; having some limb wasted away. The Rev. Ver. omits the last part of v. 3 and the whole of v. 4. A certain man . . there ; who attracted the notice and excited the sympathy of Jesus. An infirmity thirty and eight years. The great Physician selected the very worst case.

II. A MIGHTY HEALER.—6. Jesus saw him lie. With Jesus, to see need is always to help it. Knew . . long time. He knew the past of this sick man, as He had known that of the Samaritan



"WILT THOU BE MADE WHOLE?"

infirmity thirty and eight years.

6 When Jesus saw him ⁹ lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that ¹⁰ case, he saith unto him, ¹⁰ Wilt thou be made whole ?

7 The ¹¹ impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool : but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

8 Jesus saith unto him, ¹² Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

9 And ¹³ immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked : and on the same day was the sabbath.

woman, ch. 4 : 18. Saith unto him ; without any request from the sufferer. Wilt thou be made whole ? A question to rouse the man to hope and expectation.

7. Sir, I have no man. It was not a question of a choice, but of a chance. Water is troubled. In the pool there was probably an intermittent spring, which bubbled up at intervals, and for a brief period after this happened, the water had curative powers. (See Geography Lesson.) No one could tell just when the "troubling" might happen. It must be waited and watched for, and taken advantage of without delay. To put me into the pool ; literally "throw me into" : there was no time for quiet carrying. While I am com-

ing ; without help, and therefore slowly. Another . . before me. The entrance to the pool seems to have been narrow, so that only one could enter at a time.

III. A COMPLETE CURE.—8, 9. Jesus saith ; following up His offer (v. 6), as He always follows His offers, by an actual gift. Rise ; fling off the weakness of thirty and eight years. Take up thy bed ; a mat or rug which could be rolled up. Such beds are still commonly used in the East. Immediately . . made whole. With the bidding of