



LESSON VII—FEB. 12.

Christ's Divine Authority.

John v., 17-27. Study the chapter. Memory verses, 24-27.

Home Readings.

- M. John v., 1-9.—Healing at Bethesda.
 T. John v., 28-35.—John's testimony.
 W. John v., 17-27.—Christ's Divine Authority.
 T. John v., 10-16.—Enmity and persecution.
 F. John v., 36-47.—Testimony of the Scriptures.
 S. II. Peter i., 10-18.—The Father's Testimony.
 S. Heb. i., 1-9.—Glory of Christ.

Golden Text.

'This is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.'—John iv., 42.

Lesson Story.

In the beginning of the following year Jesus again went up to Jerusalem to a feast, probably the Passover. On the Sabbath day he went to a pool called Bethesda, where lay a great number of sick people and cripples of all sorts waiting to be healed by the rising waters. There was a poor man who had been there for thirty-eight years waiting for his chance. Jesus at once noticed him, and knowing how long he had been there, asked if he would like to be healed, and commanded him to take up his bed and walk.

Without a moment's hesitation the man rose, and finding himself well and strong, took up his bed or mat and carried it away. The Jews, seeking for some reason to accuse Jesus, forbade the man to carry his bed on the Sabbath, and furiously denounced our Lord as breaking the Sabbath by his works of healing.

But Jesus answered, 'My Father worketh even until now, and I work.' (Revised version.) Then the Jews tried to kill him, because they said he had not only broken the Sabbath, but had made himself equal to God, which would be blasphemy in an ordinary man. But Jesus is God. The Father and Son are so united that they work together in all things. But God the Father has given to his Son the right of judging the whole world, and those who judge the Son not equal to the Father and reject him are judged and rejected by Christ. 'He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father.'

The Bible Class

Jesus 'making himself equal with God.'—John x., 30; xii., 44, 45; xiv., 9; xvii., 1-5, 10, 11, 21-26; Phil. ii., 6; Matt. xxvi., 63, 64; Rom. x., 9-13; Rev. i., 5-8, 13-18; xxii., 1, 16, 20; I. John i., 3, 7; iii., 16; v., 5-13.

'Work.'—Ex. xx., 9-11; xxxvi., 2-5; I. Chron. xxix., 5; Psa. xix., 1; civ., 24; cxlv., 9; 10; Eccl. xii., 13, 14; John iv., 34; II. Cor. vi., 1; I. Cor. iii., 13-15.

'Quickeneth whom he will.'—Col. ii., 13, 14; Eph. ii., 4-9; Rom. viii., 11; I. Cor. xv., 45-47; Psa. cxlix., 93, 159.

'Honor.'—I. Chron. xvi., 27-31; I. Sam. ii., 30; Psa. xv., 4; Prov. iii., 9; Heb. ii., 9; Rev. v., 12, 13.

Suggestions.

Teachers should study thoroughly and teach their scholars carefully the perfect unity of Christ with God. The authority of Christ as the living Saviour, Mediator and Judge. (Acts iv., 10-12; Heb. vii., 25-28; Matt. x., 32, 33; xxv., 31-33; II. Cor. v., 10; Rom. xiv., 8-10.) 'He who makes the Son only a good man, a great teacher, a wonderful prophet, fails to honor the Father. The Emperor Theodosius was at one time petitioned to restrain the Arians from preaching in Constantinople that the Son was not co-equal or co-eternal with the Father.' The petition was refused. One day, Amphiloehius, Bishop of Iconium, entering the emperor's presence, found beside him his son, Arcadius, whom he had made joint-emperor. The bishop bowed low to the father, but not to the son. Pre-

sently he went to the son, stroked his head and said, "God save you, child." The emperor, enraged at this affront, bade his officers put the man out. As they dragged him away, he said, "O emperor, even thus is the heavenly Father displeased with those who do not honor the Son equally with the Father." The artifice was successful. The emperor called the bishop back, asked forgiveness, and made a law against Arianism. He was taught by his tenderness for the honor of his own son to be tender for the honor of the Son of God.'

While Jesus is perfect God, he is also perfect man, a Son of Man, or 'the Son of humanity.' And because he is a Man and can sympathize with human weakness, God has given to him the judging of all men. He judges with mercy and love but with perfect justice.

The judgment of a man is not always reserved to the last great day; there comes an hour in young life when a question arises, and the man must decide what course of life he will take. That is the judgment day of that life, though the soul may be judged differently at the final Judgment. If the man chooses God's plan for his life, and follows it, he makes the most of himself and his soul expands and grows more beautiful as years pass on. The man who chooses his own plan of life, regardless of God's claims, is bound to be a failure, no matter what the world may call him.

Questions.

1. What did Jesus promise to the woman at the well in Samaria?
2. What was the result of his talk to her?
3. What two miracles were wrought in Cana of Galilee?
4. What did Jesus do that made the Jews angry on the Sabbath?
5. Has Jesus the same authority as God?
6. Through whom alone can we be saved?

Lesson Hymn.

Beside Bethesda's open gate,
 A helpless throng is lying;
 The sick, the blind, the desolate,
 The suffering and the dying.
 There through long years a sinner lay,
 In helplessness and sadness;
 Till Christ the Saviour passed that way
 With life, and health and gladness.

Said Jesus, 'Wilt thou be made whole?'
 His answer told his longing;
 Then came the word that thrilled his soul
 And stirred the people, thronging.
 'Arise, and bear thy bed away!
 The spell of sin was broken,
 The bonds of pain were burst that day
 The gates of life were open.

O Lord, who camest from on high,
 The Father's love revealing;
 Still multitudes of sinners lie,
 Waiting for life and healing.
 Once more in mercy pass this way,
 O grant some saving token;
 Speak Thou the gracious word to-day,—
 So shall death's bands be broken.

—H. L. Hastings.

Practical Points.

(A. H. Cameron.)

The greatest among men was the greatest of workers (verse 17, Acts x., 38).

None are so blind as they who will not see Jesus (verse 18).

If our faith in Christ depend upon our comprehension of the mysteries of the Godhead, we shall never believe (verses 19-23).

There is no more wonderful period in the life of a soul than the passage from the darkness of sin into the light of God (verse 24).

He who formed the ear can make the dead hear his voice (verse 25).

Jesus and his Father were two persons and one God. The mystery of the Trinity is as unsearchable as the dual nature of Christ (verses 26, 27).

Tiverton, Ont.

C. E. Topic.

Feb. 12.—The joy of finding the lost.—Luke xv., 1-10.

Junior C. E.

Feb. 12.—How is Christ the light of the world?—John i., 1-9. (A missionary meeting. Africa.)

A Little Lesson For a Stormy Day.

(Ella M. Brain in 'Sunday-School Times.')

Have you ever made a special effort for your Sunday-school class, studying and praying over the lesson all the week, trying to make its teachings fit the needs of each individual scholar under your care, and locking forward to the lesson hour with high hope and eager expectancy, only to wake up Sunday morning to find it raining? If so, you know just how great is the temptation to fret and worry and scold about the bad weather interfering with your plans.

But there is a better way to meet a stormy day, taught us by a company of little children who were perfectly unconscious of the impressions they were stamping indelibly on human hearts. Saturday afternoon of Christian Endeavor Convention week at Boston, in 1895, was set apart for children, and a rally was held in the immense audience hall of Mechanics' Building. The various Junior Christian Endeavor Societies, under the care of their superintendents, came, not only from all parts of Boston proper, but from every town within a radius of many miles. The children had been planning eagerly for it many months.

The long-looked-for Saturday afternoon came at last, and with it rain—not an ordinary rain, by any means, but a heavy, steady downpour that showed no signs of abating. Disappointment reigned supreme. Early that afternoon Old Colony Depot presented an unusually busy scene. In addition to the regular passenger traffic, which is always heavy, trains were arriving every few minutes bringing great numbers of children.

The building could not accommodate them all, and groups of children were obliged to stand outside in the rain, waiting for street cars to carry them to their destination. It was a pitiful sight. All signs of starch had disappeared from the smart holiday frocks, and eager enthusiasm had died out in disappointed hearts. The Sunday hats, with their gay ribbons and bright flowers, were in a sorry plight, and the sweet young faces under them had lost their sunny smiles.

Just then one of the superintendents noticed two of her bright little girls holding a whispered conference. 'All right,' she heard one say; 'I'll start it, it you'll follow.' What were they going to do? She soon discovered, for, without delay, they began to sing, 'There shall be showers of blessing.' One after another joined the little leaders, until the whole crowd, both inside and outside, were singing the wonderfully beautiful and appropriate hymn. Scarcely had the last notes died away, when the sweet voice of a sunny-faced lad began, 'There is sunshine in my soul to-day.' Once more the old depot rang with the music of a hymn, and echoed and re-echoed with the glad, sweet words.

The effect produced upon the crowd was indescribable. Men passing on the street reverently raised their hats, and some stopped and listened with uncovered heads until the hymns were ended. A great wave—like an electric shock—passed over the whole company. Faces brightened, hearts grew light and buoyant with hope, and enthusiasm reigned once more. Conditions had not changed, the rain still kept its steady downpour, but the clouds of discouragement had lifted, showers of blessing were descending and God's own sunshine was flooding every soul and filling it with gladness.

The next time we wake up to find it raining on Sunday morning, instead of fretting about it, let us go to the throne of grace, and plead that showers of spiritual blessing may be poured out upon us and our dear scholars. And then let us leave it all with God knowing that he rules the weather, as he does all else, and go to our duties as officers and teachers with bright faces, hearts full of faith, and souls full of sunshine. Perhaps the blessing on the rainy day will be 'exceedingly, abundant above' all that we should have thought of asking had it been a sunshiny day. God is able to make it so.

Michigan holds an annual Sunday-school rally day in the summer. The city of Grand Rapids observed it in July by a procession of about six thousand scholars through the principal streets, accompanied by bands playing Sunday-school music, and the scholars bearing banners, flags, mottoes and devices. The streets were profusely decorated and the people turned out in large numbers.