



LESSON VI.—FEB. 5.

The Nobleman's Son Healed.

John iv., 43-54. Memory verses, 49-51.

Home Readings

- M. John iv., 43-54.—The nobleman's son healed.
- T. John ii., 13-25.—Doings at the feast.
- W. Matt. viii., 5-13.—A believing centurion.
- T. Matt. ix., 18-26.—A ruler's faith.
- F. Heb. iv., 9-16.—Boldness in prayer.
- S. Heb. xi., 1-6.—Necessity of Faith.
- S. I. John v., 10-15.—Faith and Life.

Golden Text.

'Jesus said unto him, thy son liveth; and himself believed, and his whole house.'—John iv., 53.

Lesson Story.

Our Lord stayed with the Samaritans two days, teaching them about his Father and himself. Then Jesus and his disciples went on to Galilee and the people of Galilee received him with great interest, for they had been at the Passover feast at Jerusalem when Jesus was there, and they had seen his wonderful works there.

So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he had wrought his first miracle, turning the common water into pure sweet grape-juice, and hallowing the wedding feast by his presence there. A certain nobleman or ruler of Galilee had left his son very ill at his home in Capernaum, and hastened to Jesus to ask if he would not come down and heal the sufferer, who was at the point of death. Jesus saw that the man had little real faith, but was looking for some great miracle, so he gently reproved him. But the man in his anxiety forgot all his doubts, and besought the Saviour to come to his child before he should die.

Then Jesus, seeing that the nobleman really believed he would grant his request, sent him home saying, 'Go thy way; thy son liveth!' The man took Jesus at his word, and started at once for home. The next day, as he neared Capernaum, his servants came to meet him with the glad news of his son's recovery.

With joy he enquired of them the hour that the fever left him, and when the servants said 'Yesterday, at the seventh hour,' he told them that that was the very moment at which Jesus had given him the assurance of his son's life and health.

The nobleman and his family and servants all believed then on Jesus as the Saviour of the world; thus out of our deepest afflictions Jesus can bring us the greatest joy.

The Bible Class

Nobleman, or ruler.—Matt. ix., 18-26; Luke xviii., 18-23; John vii., 48; xii., 42, 43; Matt. viii., 5-13; Acts x., 30-48.

Sick.—Matt. xxv., 34-39, 40; Matt. viii., 14-17; John xi., 1-6, 21-26, 41-46; Luke v., 31; Jas. v., 14-16.

Believed.—Gen. xv., 6; Psa. xxvii., 13; Jonah iii., 5-10; Matt. xviii., 6; xxi., 22; Mark xvi., 16-20; John ix., 35-38; xii., 46-48; I. John v., 10-13.

Suggestions.

(From Arnold's Practical Commentary.)

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE.

G alilean Believers,  
R eceiving Jesus,  
O wning his power,  
W atching for signs,  
I gnorant,  
N eeding true faith,  
G athering instruction,

F ather in affliction,  
A sks help of Jesus.  
I s rebuked and taught.  
T riumphs in faith,  
H is household saved.

Make the lesson a continuous story, spell down each column of blackboard outline, and so spell out the central thought. The

lesson first tells about Galilean believers. The first miracle Jesus wrought was in Galilee, nine months before, but that was not all that they had seen of his power. They were at the Passover in Jerusalem when Jesus drove out the buyers and sellers from the temple, and they also witnessed his miracles there. They had some faith then. When Jesus returned to their country they were glad, and they welcomed him, received him kindly. At once they recalled the scenes at Jerusalem, and confessed that they believed Jesus was a teacher sent from God.

They owned his power, and no doubt they were filled with high expectations, thinking he would work more miracles and wonders. It is right to expect great things when Jesus dwells with us, but we must love him, and not just watch for signs and wonders merely to enjoy them. Sometimes people go to church, during a revival season, just to see what is done. Jesus wanted to raise the faith of those Galilean people above the low standard. He saw they were ignorant, and must be taught. They were needing true faith to make them steady and honest. Jesus went there to give them help. He was glad to be received. Weak faith, or bewildered faith, is better than none; so Jesus gave them instruction. Nothing comes by chance with the Lord. He knew the child at Capernaum was sick, and he knew the father would come to see him. He did not stop working wonders, but did them in such a way as to lead their minds to take hold in a higher sense of his divine power. Then came the opportunity—a father in affliction. His heart was anxious for his sick child. He had heard of the power of Jesus, and he believed he could heal his son, and he was willing to have him do it. He was right as far as he had gone in faith, but see how weak it was—at least, how it limited Jesus' power. He thought Jesus must go where his boy was. His faith did not go beyond what he had heard. Everyone must know the Lord for himself. Though a man of wealth and position, he humbly entreats Jesus to do something for his child. He was rebuked kindly for his wrong opinions, and taught a better way. He must learn more about Jesus, and learn it from Jesus. At the same time he was teaching the nobleman the way of faith, the Galileans at Cana were learning also. Seeing that Jesus need not go to Capernaum to heal the child, but declared he should live, was a new wonder. The true faith of the nobleman was seen when he believed Jesus' words and went home. He did not fear then that his child would die. He triumphed over doubt and unbelief. He trusted and obeyed. He expected to find his son alive. But he did not understand all the lesson until he learned the time of his recovery. The better we understand the ways of the Lord the more we will see what he has done for us. When the family was again united, the wonderful miracle which was a blessing to them all won the entire family to Jesus as his disciples.

Practical Points.

(By A. H. Cameron.)

Jesus was never idle during the three years of his public ministry (verse 43; also Acts x., 38).

'Familiarity breeds contempt' is a worldly maxim, but familiarity with Christ and his word always increases the esteem of the consecrated Christian (verses 44, 45).

Past favors encourage the Christian to hope for future blessings (verse 46).

'Faith comes by hearing.' The genuine article will stand all the testing that the Divine Goldsmith gives in love (verses 47, 48). Faith, like certain flowers, when crushed, sends forth a sweet perfume (verse 49).

Jesus loves to answer prayer when the seeker asks in faith (verses 50, 51). God's gracious dealings with his praying people are as wonderful as they are kind (verses 52, 53).

This is called the second miracle, but afterwards the writer leaves off counting them, for they are numberless as the sands of the seashore (verse 54).—Psalm lxxi., 15.

Tiverton, Ont.

C. E. Topic.

Feb. 5.—Idle in the market-place.—Matt. xx., 1-16.

Junior C. E.

Feb. 5.—What kind of a place is heaven?—John xiv., 1-4; I. Cor. ii., 9.

The Infant Class.

(Mrs. Elizabeth McL. Rowland in 'The Congregationalist'.)

Mine is literally an infant class. I take them early, often at three or less, and send them out at seven, or six even if they can read a little, because I find that I succeed better so than if I keep them longer and have classes and teachers under me. My children are thus so nearly of one grade, that if I reach one mind I reach nearly all. I have never visited a primary class with children of nine and ten in it where the attention of all was held. Usually the little ones are neglected while the older ones get the teaching and answer the questions. I must own, however, that the singing of a strictly infant class will be confined to a few tunes poorly sung, and its teachers must learn to sing on in spite of discords and mistakes. I have an assistant, who marks for the secretary, distributes papers and receives the money. She also takes away fans and parasols, finds pennies in deep pockets and intricate purses, confiscates marbles, holds the irrepressible baby a while, separates pugilists and wipes the tears, while I teach the lesson.

I long ago decided that I could not tell all the Bible stories, teach its history and geography, to children between the ages of three and seven during half an hour on pleasant Sundays. So I said, 'I will plant a seed, I will cultivate a habit.' I took for my motto, 'The seed is the Word,' therefore, my children shall learn Bible verses, and they shall also be trained to give.

After staying with the main school through the devotional exercises, we go into the parlors for forty minutes, call the roll, giving a second credit to those who can say present, church, which averages one-half of the number in the class, and then we take the collection before the money gets lost. Two children pass the hats, while we all repeat (not sing) the verses beginning, 'Hear the pennies dropping.' We add up the sums in the hats, change the pennies into dimes and let the children, in turn, push the dimes into a gem bank for some special object, such as a window in a home missionary church—all trivial exercises, but they keep the object of the gift in view, and no child makes the mistake of thinking the teacher wants his money for peanuts. I hear from parents that their children insist on a penny for Sunday-school just as they do for the monkey with the hand-organ. My aim is to cultivate the habit—the principle is a later growth. Next comes our prayer, beginning,

'I thank Thee, God, for giving me  
Another happy night.'

Then the children tell me what they believe. One raises her hand and says she believes 'in God above,' and another says 'in Jesus' love.' By this time the shyness wears off, and two or three more are ready to respond. By that time we are ready to repeat the child's creed in unison. We use no question-book or quarterly, but give each child at the close of school a colored picture paper, which has in it, not only the lesson of the day for home review, but the Golden Text for next Sunday. It is on this verse that I lay the most stress. Every child who can repeat it is praised heartily, and if she has not learned it at home she must repeat it after me, every child, every Sunday, till the dullards and laggards can repeat them in unison as we review the texts for the quarter every Sunday. We also have a handful of selected verses that we tell off on our fingers, and in this way I hope that even the child who leaves Sunday-school early will take with him enough of God's Word to find his Saviour and direct his life.

In one Sunday-school at Eastbourne there is a custom which may well be widely imitated. Each week the children of one class choose some subject in connection with missionary work as a matter concerning which the whole school may pray. The superintendent announces the topic at the close of the school, and presumably adds a few words of explanation. The next week another class chooses the subject, and so on, each class in rotation having the privilege.