

## The River of Wine.

Do you know that stream—that siren stream—  
That flows from the lands of the sun?—  
It gathers its food from the vine's rich blood,  
But the stream is a bitter one,  
For beneath its gleam—its lurking gleam,  
The waters of Marah run.

Perchance you have seen adown its tide  
Gay vessels and barks drifting by:  
You have watched from the brink, earth's fair ones drink  
With the light of youth in their eye;  
You saw but joy at the river's side,  
As the tide rose clear and high.

But wait till the one you love so well,  
Bows down to the glittering stream,  
And sees in the shine of the crimson wine,  
A burdening, maddening dream—  
Then you will know what lip cannot tell—  
The curse of that river's gleam!

For not to the eye of the passer-by  
Does this stream its horrors show,  
But all those whose dear ones have lingered here,  
Its terrible secrets know;  
And there is no name their lips can try,  
Which can fitly tell its woe.

O river of wine, for each drop of thine,  
Some sad eye has shed a tear!  
But thy crimson tide must one day subside.  
When the Lord of the earth draws near.  
For naught that maketh heart to repine,  
Can enter his kingdom here.

## The Old Woman Who Set Her House on Fire.

HUSUM is a town on the west coast of Slesing, on the North Sea. Any one who is fond of oysters should go to Husum. It is always very cold in winter, and plenty of ice is there. But once it froze so hard that the inner harbour was covered with beautiful smooth ice. The Husum folk rejoiced at this. All who had legs to carry them hastened to the ice. The little oyster town was quite deserted.

The people had a grand fete; tents were built, and there were much pleasure and amusement; they played, laughed, danced, ate, and drank, and glided over the smooth ice. They did not notice the white cloud in the sky, and they forgot the poor sick old woman in her cottage on the dike. But she did not forget them as she looked from her sick bed and saw the cloud, and she knew that it meant danger, for in her younger days she had had many a fishing and oyster-catching trip with her husband. She saw that one little cloud followed by others, and that they formed themselves into one great black cloud. She knew that if a storm arose all those people on the ice would be drowned. In half an hour it would be high tide. The old woman cried as loud as she could, but the merry folk on the ice neither heard nor saw her. Only a few minutes and perhaps the rising sea would bury hundreds in its waves.

Then the old woman put forth all her strength. She struck a light and put a firebrand to her bed, and with difficulty escaped from the burning house. In a moment the bright flames darted upward; they were seen on the ice. All rushed to the land to the rescue.

The last foot had scarcely left the ice when, with a terrible crash, the rising waves broke the ice; but all were safe. The people wished to save the little old woman, but she, in her wisdom, had been the means of saving them.

It is needless to tell how grateful the people of Husum were to the little old woman, and how they provided her with a dwelling, with food, and with clothing.

## A Great Nation.

CHINA is great in many respects. She is great in her antiquity. Founded before Egypt or Nineveh, she exists and flourishes still. Before Romulus built the walls of Rome, before Samuel anointed Saul king over Israel, she was a strong, well-organized, mighty empire. Her records date back four thousand years. For twenty centuries the great wall which encircles her, covered with granite, has been built. When we Americans were barbarians, and our English ancestors were savages, the common people of China were clothed in silks and satins. In the year 1250, Marco Polo visited China. He was the first European traveller to do so; and when, upon his return, he told his story concerning that land and its people, and the wonderful things he had seen there, he was by some adjudged insane, and by others pronounced the supreme liar of his day. But what we know to-day corroborates the truthfulness of his marvellous tales.

China is great also in her inventions. It probably is not commonly known that for printing, gunpowder, the mariners' compass, the making of paper, porcelain, and India ink, the world is indebted to China. Printing was invented in Europe in the fifteenth century. In the second century of the Christian era, printing on wooden blocks was known to China. With the exception of the electric telegraph and the steam-engine—comparatively new discoveries with us—it may be said there is no great invention which did not originate in China.

Moreover, China is great in her public works. The roads over the Himalaya Mountains will compare very favourably with the great highways over the Alpine passes. China also boasts of two thousand canals, which afford free and easy intercourse throughout all the empire. One of these canals is twelve hundred miles in length, and was completed before Columbus was born.

Again, the Chinese agriculture is not surpassed by that of any other nation. For many centuries the soil has been taxed to support the immense population dependent upon its products, and yet it is said to be richer than ever to-day.

We have heard much in these days of the breaking down of bridges, by which not a few human lives have been sacrificed. Such a thing may be said to be unknown in China, for, should an accident happen, the builder, if yet alive, would be bastinadoed. Consequently, Chinese bridges do not break down.

Once more, China is great in her educational character. The diffusion of knowledge is more universal and more firmly established than in any other nation. No matter how much wealth or influence a man may have, it is impossible for him to hold any public office in China unless he has received the prescribed education. There is but one passport to political station among the Chinese, viz., intelligence. Even the Emperor himself, powerful as he is, cannot override this law of the realm.

We all know something of the power of monopolies. In China they have no tolls, either upon their canals or upon their bridges—all are free. We know, also, something of national and municipal debts, and of the taxation which necessarily results therefrom. In China, notwithstanding the expensive wars they have had, both international and civil, there exists no public debt.—*Rev. Geo. D. Baker, D.D.*

If you can only read one book, let it be the Bible; it will give the best return for your time. The Bible is the only book that we will care to have on our death-bed.

## LESSON NOTES.

## FIRST QUARTER.

## STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

A.D. 27]

## LESSON III.

[Jan. 20

## HEALING OF THE LEPER.

Mark 1. 35-45.

Commit to memory verses, 40, 41

## GOLDEN TEXT.

As soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. Mark 1. 42.

## OUTLINE.

1. Praying, v. 35.
2. Teaching, v. 36-39.
3. Healing, 40-45.

TIME.—27 A.D.

PLACES.—Galilee and the towns about Capernaum.

CONNECTING LINKS.—The lesson follows immediately, in Mark's story, the last lesson, with nothing intervening.

EXPLANATIONS.—*A solitary place*—Some place adjacent, and among the hills; this was his frequent custom. *The next towns*—The adjacent towns of Galilee. *Came I forth*—Both out of Capernaum, and out from God to preach the Gospel to all. *A leper*—A man sick with the disease called leprosy, very common, very loathsome, and very deadly. *He was cleansed*—Was cured. *Offer for thy cleansing*—The ceremony for the cleansing of the leper is described in Lev. 14.

## QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. *Praying.*  
What great lesson is taught to Christians in ver. 35? Was Jesus in the habit of going alone to pray? Find two instances where he went alone at night for this purpose? What was his teaching in the Sermon on the Mount concerning prayer? How was his solitude disturbed?
2. *Teaching.*  
Why did Simon and the rest follow him? What was the lesson he taught them concerning his mission? Is there any evidence here that they understood his true character? What was the real reason of the throng seeking him? What was the character of the preaching which he did through their towns? Matt. 4. 17 and 23.
3. *Healing.*  
When was it that this incident of healing happened? Matt. 8. 1-2.  
What was the nature of this disease? If Christ could heal by a word, what would it prove? Was it a case well enough marked not to allow of doubt as to whether it was leprosy or not? Luke 5. 12.  
What was the effect of the cure? For what did Jesus feel the need after this miracle? Luke 5. 16.  
Why do you suppose he prayed so much in these days?

## PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Jesus went early alone to pray. If he needed to pray, how we must need it? All men sought him, but not to believe. They sought to gaze, and wonder. How men now crowd our churches to see or hear a great preacher! Here was a man who prayed for cure, believed, received, and then disobeyed. His desire moved Christ's great heart to heal, but Christ's desire did not move his heart to obey. He acted like many a man to-day. He sought, he took, he gave back nothing. How is it with you?

## HINTS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. Find all the instances you can that speak of Jesus as praying.
2. Find on a map of Palestine ten towns in Galilee to which Jesus may have gone on this preaching tour. B., C., S., M., T., N., S., I., M., J., A.
3. Read the accounts given by Matthew and by Luke of these events.
4. Where were the desert places to which he could go? Would boats at Capernaum help him any?
5. Read the directions for cleansing leprosy in Lev. 14.

## THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. Where did Jesus go on the morning after the Sabbath? To a solitary place to pray. 2. Who found him in his solitude? Simon, Andrew, James, and John. 3. How did he answer their wish that he would return to Capernaum. Let us go into the next towns. 4. What peculiar prayer did a leper make to him on this tour? If thou wilt thou canst make me clean. 5. When Jesus answered, "I will," what happened? "As soon as he had spoken," etc.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The God-man.

## CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

4. What do you call his religion? Christianity.
5. Are there any other religions in the world? There is only one Divine Teacher, and only one true religion: but there have been many false teachers and there are many false religions.