

SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for
TEACHERS
and
YOUNG PEOPLE.

VOL. 8.]

JULY, 1875.

[No. 7.

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THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL BANNER

IS designed to afford aid to Sunday-School Teachers and Heads of Families in the religious training of the young, and to excite throughout the country a deeper interest in Sunday-School work.

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SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

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AND
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VOLUME VIII.]

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The Lord's Prayer.

BY S. J. W.

"Our Father which art in heaven,"
Through all the years of childhood's mirth and
glee,
An earthly father's love to me was given—
I never thought of Thee.

"Thy name be hallowed," every morn I said;
Yet spoke it often in a careless tone,
And started not, nor felt a guilty dread
Of Thee the Holy One.

"Thy kingdom come" I prayed, yet better loved
The rule of Satan and of sin than Thine.
"Thy will be done." Ah, Lord, I never moved
Except the will was mine.

"Give us our daily bread, our sins forgive,
As we to others act the pard'ning part."
My Lord, I marvel Thou didst let me live,
With malice in my heart.

"Save us from evil and temptation's power"
I said, "for, Lord, the power and glory's
Thine."

Yet, was sin vanquished for a single hour?
I called the glory *mine*.

Soon sorrow came, a heavy weight of woe,
From which I vainly struggled to be free:
No earthly hope was left me, Lord, and so
I cried for help to Thee.

I asked that Thou wouldst take the cloud away,
The cloud that would not let me see the sun;
But still 'twas dark, for still I could not say
"Thy will on earth be done."

"Let it be done on earth, as angel bands
In heaven fulfil it." Through long weary years
I wrestled on, with failing heart and hands,
With sighs and bitter tears.

In agony of soul I wept and prayed,
Yet never could I pray "Thy will be done,"
Until I willed, my Saviour, to be made
In every thing Thine own.

I laid my all at Thy dear bleeding feet,
And never wished to take the gift again.
Now I can rest and say with trust complete,
Amen! Amen!

I thank Thee, Lord, that now the words I say
Come from the fulness of a loving heart.
Help me through all my life to watch and pray,
And from Thee never part.

HAMILTON, ONT.

The Lotos-Eaters.

BY JAMES COMPER GRAY.

ONCE upon a time there lived, so Homer
tells us, an easy-going, good-natured peo-
ple along a part of the north coast of
Africa, in a district called Cyrenaica.
Subsisting, as they did, on the fruit of
the lotos-tree, the Greeks—in after times
identifying the old poet's plant—called
these dreaming folk, *Lotophagi*, or lotos-
eaters. The fruit they so much affected
grew on a small prickly shrub some two
or three feet high, and was about the size
of a wild plum, of a saffron colour and a
sweetish taste. So sweet and pleasant

was the flavour, that a certain sweetmeat, well known to most young people, is called a *jujube*—the name given to such shrubs, and evidently derived from the *Zizyphus* (lotos) itself.

At this 'goodly land, and pleasant,' Ulysses and his companions, in the course of their long wanderings arrived.

'A land where all things always seem'd the same!

And round about the keel, with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed, melancholy lotos-eaters came.
Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit.' . . .

The sweetness of the lotos-fruit exercised such an influence over them that they ceased, except in their dreams, to care about their native country.

'And sweet it was to dream of fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore
Most weary-seeming the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, "We will return no more."'

Putting the old Homeric story into modern verse, Mr. Tennyson describes this pleasing land of drowsy-heads, and yoking his wondrous fancy to the bald and simple legend, makes the wanderers break out in choric song, commencing,—

'There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass.'

And still between the stanzas, clearing their voices with the insidiously-sweet jujube, they sing,—

Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labour be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.
Let us alone.

Such was the idle expostulation, so the poet Laureate seems to suggest, with which the sterner-minded Ulysses was greeted, when he urged his companions to depart. Poor robe-making Penelope was not quite forgotten, and though the way-weary men sang—

'Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,

In the hollow lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills, like gods together, careless of mankind—

they were forced at length, however re-

luctantly, to obey their chieftain and embark once more.

It seems to us that just at this time there is a considerable amount of lotos-eating in the Christian world. The pleasant, rather than the practically profitable, appears to be, in many quarters, the thing most sought; or—if seeking be too stern a word for the lotos-eaters' vocabulary—most cheerfully accepted. Of this we have been recently reminded by a pile of books and magazines written for the especial delectation of the young people among us. Glancing, first of all, at the tables of contents, we are much struck by the circumstance that the larger portion of the heap referred to is made up of fiction—of novelettes in fact. Almost every magazine, whose *tales* are not completed within the covers of the current number has a serial story—such as 'Villaggon the traitor' (by the author of 'The Pirate of the Mediterranean,') for instance—running on through consecutive parts. The books for the young are, with very few exceptions, of the same kind—story-books, mere jujubes. In short, the literature provided for our Christian youth, even by those whose province it is to cater especially for Sunday-schools, is just another Cyrenaica, a land of sweet fruit.

'The lotos blooms below the barren peak:

The lotos blows by every winding creek:
All day the wind breathes low with mellow tone
Through every hollow cave and alley lone,
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow lotos-dust is blown.'

We are not of those who, by wholesale, would condemn what is termed *light literature*. It has many, and some of them, powerful advocates. 'We gild,' says one, 'our medicines with sweets: why not clothe truth and morals as well?' Query, however: Are not the unreflecting, indiscriminating young, more apt to be taken up with the 'pleasant garments' than with the 'morals;' and with the spangled robe of fiction, than with the 'truth' that, in the latest mode, may be thus meretriciously attired? 'Fiction,' says Madame Necker, 'is a potent agent for good.' But query again, Might not the 'good' sometimes play a nobler part than that of a tiring-maid tricking out her mistress with 'pleasant garments?' Would not the

lesson of the plain unvarnished fact of history and biography, or of that science which reveals 'God's deep wisdom in the natural world,' stand out more palpable to the young mind if less disguised by spangles and rosy wreaths?

Again we say, lest we should be misunderstood, that we do not pronounce a wholesale condemnation of all literature of this class. Yet we think we may very pertinently ask whether we have not, for the present, enough of this kind of thing, and to spare? It was all very well for Addison—who had a great affection for the lotos style of life, by the way, and who was in his day a great cultivator of the dream-inspiring shrub—to say 'Fiction lures him [man] to the severe task by a gayer preface.' But does it? A far more thoughtful writer on education, who had narrowly watched and closely considered educational influences—Hannah More—observes that 'the habitual indulgence in such reading is a silent mining mischief.' The truth of this remark, multitudes can attest from their own experience. Another writer of our own times has well said: 'The novel, as a mode of presenting truth or exhibiting human nature, cannot, upon religious grounds, be condemned. But the *habit* of novel-reading is, of course, another thing. The surrender of the mind and of the life to this, is what every moralist and Christian must condemn. There is an infallible softening of the brain and ossification of the heart attendant on novel-reading. There is but little attention demanded, and the mind is dwarfed. There is a perpetual appeal to emotion, which, as it expends itself in luxurious tears, produces no virtuous action. Is there no higher end for which to live? Is there no more remunerative employment for mind or time? Are self-respect, self-government, and self-improvement growing with the habit? When 'the Master' demands an account, what shall be the response for such an use of immortal energies and opportunities? It fits not for life. If life be a vigorous pulling up the stream against wind and current and toil, then other bone and nerve and flesh-producing pabulum must be provided; but if it be unconscious floating on the river, and

along the odorous banks of sentimentalism, then, of course, let us eat our lotos-fruit, and dreamily, lazily glide on, until startled by the rapids of approaching death, or fully aroused by the swift and arrowy plunge beyond the Niagara of the grave.

We very greatly fear that if this kind of literature continues to inundate our Sunday-schools, and the shelves of our juvenile libraries are too greatly flooded by these lotos-books, our young people will imbibe an unhealthy and ineradicable taste for fiction in early life, which will inevitably develop into a *habit* of novel-reading in after days, and show the 'silent mining mischief' it has wrought in a fearful sentimentality among our daughters, and an 'infallible softening of the brain' among our sons.

Those who have the management of our school libraries should see to this betimes. Our teachers should take care that the books that they recommend to their scholars,—and they can easily guide the scholars in this matter—shall not be always 'pretty stories,' however evangelical the truth or irreproachable the morals dressed up in the 'pleasant garments' of fiction. But the other day we had an illustration of the tendency of our too exclusive reading in this direction. A scholar—a bright intelligent youth of some twelve summers—who had run through a short lotos-course—took home from his school library the life of Bernard Palissy, the potter. Pronounced 'stale, flat and unprofitable,' by one who had so recently banqueted off *jujubes*, it was returned unread. It was 'dry,' and not by any means of the 'pretty story' kind of which he had had so large a taste. It happened, on the Sunday afternoon that witnessed the unread return of the famous Frenchman's life, we passed, on our way to the school, a young man, who carried under his arm several newspapers and a three-volume novel. Shamelessly carried through the streets on a Sunday afternoon, and in a few minutes to be followed by the request of our little scholar for something of the lotos-order from the school library, the thought was forced upon us whether the youth we had seen might not have imbibed his taste for fiction from the

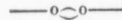
sweet fruit of some Sunday-school library; and the picture rose before our mind of our own dear little scholars grown into men and women, and, possibly, deep in the plots of some future Mrs. Wood or Miss Braddon, echoing the lotos-eater's lullaby, and sighing, when urged to wholesome Sabbath work,—

— 'Ah, why
Should life all labour be?
Let us alone!'

Just as an extended course of religious (!) fiction may prepare for this after dreaming away of life, so another feature of this lotos literature may pave the way to something else, and worse. On the pages of one of the magazines to which we made allusion just now, we noted what is called a 'Prize Acting Charade.' If this had appeared in the pages of a secular journal—such as the 'Family Herald' or the 'London Miscellany,'—we should have nothing to say about it in these columns; but appearing as it does in a serial entitled 'Kind Words: a Magazine for Young People,' published under the auspices of the London S. S. Union, we solemnly protest against what some, not knowing the Union, might term an insidious attempt to introduce private theatricals into the homes of our people. Let any one read the article in question—it may be found in 'Kind Words' for January of this year—and no discriminating reader will pronounce our epithet, 'private theatricals,' too strong. It is to all intents and purposes, 'a farce, in three scenes.' We have 'rules for arrangement of room and dress,' 'characters,' usual stage directions; and, at the close of the whole, are told what should be the 'position of characters' when the 'curtain falls.' If such charades (the word is a mere euphuism) were 'acted' in a Christian home (a most unlikely thing, we admit), there would be occasions of scandal in the Church; and no one would be greatly surprised if the young members of such a household became 'distinguished amateurs;' or, found in after life with theatre-going proclivities, and earnestly expostulated with by anxious friends, and solicited to devote themselves to usefulness in the service of Christ, should declare—

'Let us alone! . . .
We will return no more.'

—The Hive.



How to Improve the Average Attendance.

THE attendance at a Sunday-school is quite as likely to be affected by a public exhibit of its fluctuations, as are the contributions. When teachers and scholars find that commendatory notice is taken of their punctuality, and that tardiness or absence on their part is counted an injury to the school, they are more willing to make an effort at regularity and promptness than while they can come early or late, or not at all, without seeming to affect others.

The "Central Baptist Bible School," of Norwich, Conn., printed, at the opening of the present year, an attractive four-page circular, giving an abstract of the secretary's annual report in the department of attendance. The first page is occupied with the title; on the second page is shown the entire active membership of the school; the number of school sessions held; the average attendance; the ratio of average attendance to active membership; the number of teachers, and the ratio of their attendance; the largest and the smallest attendance, and their relative dates; also the names of such officers, teachers and scholars as were present every Sabbath during the year. The third page exhibits the names of all members of the school present forty Sabbaths during the year. On the fourth page are given, with a statement of the seasons of highest and lowest average, these timely admonitions:

"Remember! That a low percentage of attendance is brought about by the neglect or absence of the few, and not of the many.

"Remember! That by punctual and regular attendance, you reward your teacher, encourage your superintendent, and build up the school.

"Remember! When the weather is cold and stormy, and to stay at home seems natural, that your absence for a single

Sabbath will lower the average attendance of the whole school for the entire year."

Who can doubt that the average attendance of a Sunday-school will be improved through such attention given to its details?—*S. S. World.*

—o—o—
My Flowers.

" Oh, mother, see this flower, this lovely
lit le flower,
I found it in your garden, growing beside
the bower.
I picked it for you, mother, I knew you'd
love it so,
For there is no other like it, not one, I've
looked, you know."

My heart was sad, that flower so frail I'd
watched with tenderest care,
And now to see it plucked was almost more
than I could bear;
From distant lands I'd brought it, this rare
and lovely flower,
And placed it where none dare intrude, near
my own little bower.

But now my child, my only one, in innocence
and gl-e,
Had found my precious earthly flower, and
brought it in to me.
My wrath was stirred, I thought my child to
punish; then was just,
When a sweet voice whispered in my ear,
" Which flower lovest thou the most ?

" This earthly plant so frail, tho' fair, which
blossoms but for a day,
Thou hast tended with such loving care, or
thine own little ' May ;'
Not thine, but lent thee for a while, in thy
garden here to bloom
Till by my hand transplanted to blossom near
the Throne ?"

My little " May," with flower in hand, still
stood in mute surprise,
Not my happy, joyous darling, but with tear-
bedewed eyes,
" What is it, mother ? was it wrong to pick
this pretty flower ?
I found it when I went to play, just near your
little bower."

I stood rebuked in presence of that little sin-
less child,

I saw the shadow from my brow in her eyes
so blue and mild ;
I clasped her to my bosom, for fear the
Heavenly Gard'ner's hand
Shou'd transplant my little flower to his own
sunnier land.

And then I prayed that God would teach me
how aright to tend
This little flower of his love, lent by my
Heavenly Friend,
That I might prune and nurture it, that it in
time might be
A blessing to me, and might bloom thro' all
eternity.

Toronto. MARY.

—o—o—
Helps to Systematic Giving.

GIVING into the Lord's treasury, is not only to be frequently enjoined on young and old as a duty ; it is a habit into which the young should be faithfully trained. No Sunday-school in even the poorest community should be without its regular weekly offerings for purposes of Christian beneficence, apart from any contributions for school expenses. Unless a record is kept of what is given week by week, and a comparison made year by year, there is small probability that the giving in any school will be more and more liberal. There should be systematic giving, and to secure this a systematic record of the giving is important.

The following is the form of a card issued at the opening of this year, to the several classes in the Sunday-school of the Pearl Street Congregational Church, Hartford, for the purpose of exhibiting the progress of the school in giving, and the part borne in it by each class :

The Lord loveth a cheerful giver.

MIRROR	
IN WHICH	
CLASS NO.	
MAY SEE ITSELF AND THE SCHOOL,	
CONTRIBUTIONS.	
School,	{ 1872 - \$236.26.
	{ 1873 - 433.49.
	{ 1874 - 509.12.
Class No.	{ 1873 -
	{ 1874 -
INCREASE IT THIS YEAR.	

If freely ye have received, freely give.

" Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said
It is more blessed to give than to receive."

The Olivet Chapel Sunday-school, New York, in adopting this form, printed on the reverse of the card an exhibit of the giving of the class in proportion to its membership, month by month, as follows :

☞ Giving cure us of selfishness. ☞

YOUR CLASS	
CONTRIBUTED IN 1874.	
JANUARY.....	\$
FEBRUARY.....	
MARCH.....	
APRIL.....	
MAY.....	
JUNE.....	
JULY.....	
AUGUST.....	
SEPTEMBER.....	
OCTOBER.....	
NOVEMBER.....	
DECEMBER.....	
TOTAL.....	\$

☞ Increases our lat. rest in Missions. ☞

☞ Lays up treasures in heaven. ☞

☞ Makes us partners with God. ☞

—S. S. World.



The Infant Class.

BY REV. C. H. FOOTE, D. D.

THERE are two questions pressing upon every infant class teacher: How to control in the way of order and deportment? and, How to teach?

What to teach is not under discussion,—truth in its relations to the soul and God.

Children obedient at home, who see politeness exemplified in daily life, are easily managed; but a boy taken from the curbstone, drawn from the alley, or coaxed from the dock, fearing nothing, except a blow, requires different treatment to keep him in order.

The teaching which would do well enough for the first class would be a sad failure for the second.

We must have order, or teaching will fail, but to have order you must have bodily comfort.

If you ever got on a bench so high that your feet could not touch the floor, you realized how difficult it was to be quiet.

You may tell a child to keep still while you are scraping the warm flesh. You may scold a boy for restlessness when a pin is pricking, but he cannot keep still, and your scolding is in vain.

If a child has an uncomfortable seat he

will not be orderly. Give a child a comfortable seat, comfortable for a child and not for an adult, just high enough for the feet to rest on the floor, and just broad enough for the body to rest against the back.

A wash room, in which the little ones could be made tidy before going to the class, would lessen the teacher's worry and promote the good of all. It would require the attention of some one to see that the washing and tidying was properly done—not always an agreeable task: it would demand money and patience, but results would abundantly compensate for these.

Room is essential. Too many seats in a given space, too many on a seat, will double a teacher's anxiety and increase his work.

Make the room attractive. Can you blame a boy for putting his feet on a rough bench? Can you chide a child for making a noise on a hard, uneven floor? Can you wonder that eyes will look at the trees and flowers outside the windows, when everything is dingy within? Can you wonder that ears will be open to the song of the bird, or the bark of a dog, when there is little to charm in the room?

If a nice comfortable seat is given a child, it will not be marred.

If pleasant pictures are on the walls, the attention will not be diverted by things outside the school.

See to it that order or system is observed in entering and leaving the room.

It is not so essential what is done, only do something. If only a bow is made in coming in and a smile is given on leaving, see to it that something is done.

Never wait for order, have it at once, by being orderly yourself, having yourself so thoroughly prepared with stories, illustrations, incidents and expedients, that you will never be at fault, and never without something to do, filling up the whole time, but never any more.

Have variety—now talking, now telling a story, now singing, now standing, now sitting.

When you have told a story or shown a picture, question the class as to the facts and impressions.

Speak distinctly, talk plainly in telling what you desire, and then go on to some-

thing else. If your tale thus told is not remembered, the trouble must be with your story.

If you can sing well, sing: if only indifferently, get somebody to help you. Don't run the risk of forming bad habits in this respect.

Be earnest, never childish; simple, never silly.—*S. S. World.*

Unification.

A rough word to describe a very important element in Sunday-school work. Some classes become a unit, and some never are anything but units. That is, a common spirit includes teachers and scholars in the unified class; and in the composite class every one remains for himself. This said a superintendent, pointing to a group near by: This is a class; it has all the elements of class life; it includes that sweet-souled teacher and eleven girls; I could not remove one of them to another class without injury to the whole class. It would be like taking a limb from a tree. Such classes are rare.

But here are five girls and a teacher. She is faithful, and loving, and tries hard to do her whole duty, but the class is not a unit. I could move those girls about to other classes without trouble or opposition. The difference is hard to explain, but I generally find, sooner or later, that a prayerful spirit is at the bottom of it, in the one case; and some kind of selfishness the trouble in the other. Possibly the teacher is a little ambitious, or irritable, or too precise or formal, instead of just quietly slipping into her place and doing her best naturally.

But the worst possible thing to occur is for a class to establish a unity without including the teacher. You cannot break up the class, or modify it, without driving its members away, but its unity is in the nature of a clique or secret society. There are few teachers that have skill to master such a class and thoroughly reorganize it. A school may better have ten classes than twenty collections of scholars. Shall the school be a collection of fragments or a harmonious one? There are hundreds of the former kind to one of the latter!—*S. S. World.*

Normal Work in the Teachers' Meeting.

To do good normal class work in a Sunday-school, it is by no means necessary to have a normal class apart from the teachers' meeting. The true work of the normal class is in training actual or intending teachers to teach. Its chief work is not in teaching about the Bible, nor in showing *how* to teach the Bible. Many a normal class meeting by itself on Sunday or during the week, does little of normal class work; while many a teachers' meeting is so conducted as to do good normal class work in the best way. The superintendent of a small Union Sunday-school, organized at Aubrey, Kansas, by a missionary of the American Sunday-school Union, a few months ago, reports, that his school has a regular weekly teachers' meeting and normal class combined; that he makes a normal class of this meeting, conducting it at times as a class of one grade, and again as a class of another; showing how the next Sunday's lesson may be taught to younger and older scholars respectively. As this school has an average attendance of only forty-five, and is in a widely scattered farming community, where was never a Sunday-school before, the fact of such a meeting illustrates the practicability of normal work in small country schools as well as in larger ones, in or out of the cities.

This method of combining teachers' training work with the weekly study of the lessons was the plan pursued in the earlier operations of the American Sunday-school Union, forty years ago. It is still approved by those most experienced in methods of Sunday-school normal work. Dr. Vincent says in his "Helpful Hints for the Sunday-school Teachers," "The weekly teachers' meeting may combine all the advantages of the institute and normal class. Where this is practicable, it is certainly preferable."—*S. S. World.*

THE Bible is better than a lesson paper or a question book in the hands of every scholar. Reference to different portions of the Bible should be frequent in all Bible study. Each scholar should be ready for a part in this study.

The Sunday School Banner.

TORONTO, JULY, 1875.

The International Sunday School Convention.

IN view of the very great interest with which the first International Sunday School Convention at Baltimore is invested, we think we cannot do better than reproduce our personal impressions, written upon the spot, of that memorable gathering:—

The Convention opened on Tuesday morning, May 11th, in the large Masonic Hall, one of the most commodious audience rooms in the city. The floor was studded with poles bearing shields, inscribed with the names of the several States and Territories of the Union, and those of Canada and England; and beneath their respective banners gathered the representatives of the great Sunday School army, from Nova Scotia to Texas, from Maine to Nebraska. Alaska and California did not respond to the roll call, although their places were reserved. It was an inspiring sight. There were the white-haired veteran teacher of over half a century's toil, and the smooth-cheeked boy in the glow of his young enthusiasm, the fervid Georgian, the alert New Englander, the Kansas pioneers—from counting-house and prairie, from village and farm, gathered from a broad continent to promote one common work. The platform was draped with festoons of evergreen. On either side hung the red cross flag of England and the starry banner of the Republic, and between, linking them both in the bonds of a common faith, a large cross of evergreen starred with white camellias. Above was the word "welcome," with the appropriate reference to Phil. i. 2, and 1 Cor. iii. 9. Canada

was awarded a position of honour in the front rank, and was represented by about twenty delegates, among whom was Revs. Dr. McVicar, of Montreal; Septimus Jones, Wm. Millard, J. Cameron, W. S. Blackstock, A. Andrews, J. Shepherd, W. H. Withrow, Mr. McLean, and others from Ontario, as well as by ministers and laymen from Quebec and Nova Scotia. Dr. Douglas is also expected. Over four hundred delegates were present, and probably nearly as many more visitors, many of whom were ladies. The address of welcome was given by Dr. Grammer, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and was very cordial, especially in its reference to their Canadian brethren, which cordial references were emphasized by the hearty applause of the American delegates. Rev. W. S. Blackstock responded eloquently on behalf of Canada.

The South is more largely represented than at any previous Convention. The reciprocal influence of this exchange of loving Christian sympathy cannot fail to be largely salutary to both North and South. It seems hardly credible that where only a few years ago Northern blood was shed by Southern hands, such perfect cordiality should exist, as was manifested by the characteristic Southern hospitality with which Baltimore opened its homes and hearts for the reception of the Northern delegates.

In the lower part of the building is a Sunday School Bazaar, in which the different publishers exhibit an ample assortment of Sunday School material, maps, pictures, illuminated cards, Sunday School Furniture, and everything conceivable for the most efficient carrying on of Sunday School work. Nelson & Phillips, of the New York Methodist Book concern, have unquestionably the largest and finest collection. They also present each delegate with a blank book for taking notes, and

distribute illuminated cards *ad libitum*, and elegant scent sachets, not quite so freely, but on a liberal scale. Other houses generously donate specimen copies of their Sunday School papers and the like to all comers.

The evening session was addressed by Dr. John Hall, of New York, a man whose noble presence, catholic sentiments and eloquent utterances, mark him as a king among men. B. F. Jacobs, of Illinois, the originator of the International Lesson Scheme, delivered a fervid address on the topic which was so near his heart. The large hall was densely crowded and the utmost enthusiasm prevailed. Translations of the Berean Leaf into Chinese and Hindoostanee were exhibited.

On Wednesday the topic of discussion was, "How to secure pupils from the unevangelized masses," opened by Rev. W. T. Wylie, of Pennsylvania. Our friend Andrews, of Tilsonburg, gave an eloquent address, as also did Mr. Millard on a previous occasion, in reporting the state of the work in Canada. The blended humour and pathos of the Western men was very striking, moving the immense audience to laughter and tears. No time may be wasted in exordia or perorations, as most of the speeches are confined to five minutes each. The singing is a marked feature of the Convention. A beautiful selection of over eighty hymns has been printed, and an effective leader makes this one of the most interesting and profitable parts of the services.

It is extraordinary what a hold this Sunday School work has taken upon the public mind of Christendom. The amount of time and talent, and thought and money that are devoted to it are producing most remarkable practical results. Many of the ablest men, clerical and lay, of the United States, devote themselves with a

passionate enthusiasm to Sunday School endeavour. All classes and ranks of society are represented on the floor of the Convention. Ex-Generals, Ex-Colonels, Judges, Legislators, Merchants, Planters, Farmers, Doctors of Divinity, of Medicine, and of Law, all engage in loving zeal in this great work. Where so many and such varied excellences are manifested, it seems almost invidious to mention any; but certainly no one commands the attention of the audience, or is listened to with more rapt interest than Dr. Vincent, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Editor of the admirable Lesson Notes, adopted in our own *Sunday School Banner*. The topic which, more than anything else, has occupied the time and thought of the Convention has been, "How shall we improve the teaching power of Sunday School workers?" On this subject Dr. Vincent is enthusiastic. He has established a special magazine, called the *Normal Class*, and he delivered an exhaustive address on the importance and necessity of having Sunday School teachers as thoroughly equipped for their work as secular teachers are. In many Theological Institutions, Ladies' Seminaries, and other Institutions of learning, classes are formed for training in the work of Sunday School teaching. A course of study in Biblical Evidences and Exegesis is gone through, and Diplomas are awarded to those who successfully complete the course. In New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and other large cities, classes of hundreds of teachers assemble under the instruction of the ablest biblical scholars to be found, and many persons travel weekly as much as eighty miles to avail themselves of these instructions. The effects of such organized effort, accompanied by fervent prayer and faith in God, will simply be incalculable. Thus shall the rising generation be fitted to encounter the skeptical tendencies of

the age forearmed with the panoply of Divine truth, that will better enable them to resist all the attacks of plausible and sophistical error.

Among the other prominent Sunday School workers present were Ralph Wells, of New York, feeble in health but glowing with unquenchable zeal; Mr. Peltz, of Baltimore; J. B. Jacobs, of Illinois; and a host of others upon whom God has poured the spirit of consecration to this glorious work.

The closing meeting on Thursday evening was the flower and consummation of the whole. The parting words were full of power and pathos. The perfect fusion of sectional feelings in the glow of Christian love was beautiful. It seemed as if God was saying to the North, "Give up," and to the South, "Keep not back," and as if this great country was to be led into the paths of lasting peace by the hand of a little child. Mr. Guard was sufficiently recovered to be present, and made a telling speech. Mr. Munro, of Toronto, spoke on behalf of Canada. Our old friend Dr. Sargent was present, and took part in the meeting. One interesting feature was the presentation of several veteran Sunday School workers, some of whom had been nearly sixty years in the service.

Reports of the Delegates.

"On Monday evening, May 31st, in the school-room of the Carlton Street Primitive Methodist church, Toronto, some of the delegates to the recent International School Convention, held at Baltimore, gave their impressions of the great gathering. The chair was occupied by Hon. J. C. Aikins. After devotional exercises

"The CHAIRMAN referred briefly to the progress made of late years in Sabbath School work, and instanced the time within his recollection when Conventions for

discussing the work were unknown. He paid a high tribute to Rev. W. Millard, who had done more, perhaps, than any one to educate the Sabbath School workers in Canada up to their present high standard of efficiency. He referred to the position the Sabbath School should occupy, and expressed the hope that it would never be the means of doing away with parental training, which was necessary, no matter how efficient the school might be.

"Rev. W. MILLARD, Secretary of the Canadian Sunday School Association, then gave a sketch of the International Convention, which met in the Masonic Hall, in Baltimore, a building in which were gathered, at one stage of the proceedings, no less than three thousand persons. The ground floor was used as a museum for school furniture, publications, &c.—from the largest maps published on Bible geography down to flowers from Emmanus, and mosses and grass from the River Jordan. The speaker described the decorations of the immense stage in the speaking hall, prominent among which were the flags of the British and American nations. In the centre arch was a banner, on which was pictured the globe, with the words 'My Parish' on it. Various other appropriate mottoes were placed in different parts of the room. There were four hundred and three officially deputed delegates present. Three Canadian Provinces and twenty-nine States of the Union were represented. There were seventy Southern delegates in attendance, and it was thought that that Convention would do very much towards a real union between the North and South. There were sixty-four delegates from New York State, fifty-eight from Pennsylvania, forty-four from Ohio, thirty-one from Illinois, twenty-one from Indiana, and twenty from Canada. The other States had less than these. The statistics reported were:—From the United States, 740,979 teachers and officers, and 5,637,367 scholars; from Canada, 35,745 teachers and officers, and 271,381 scholars. The report of the Lesson Committee showed that the International series had been adopted not only in the United States, Canada and Great Britain, but were now extensively used in France, Germany, Norway, Denmark,

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the Netherlands, Switzerland, Turkey, Italy, Greece, Syria, Hindostan, India, Burnah, China, Old Mexico, Australia, the Sandwich Islands, and even under the shadow of St. Peter's in Rome.

"Rev. W. H. WITHROW gave a brief outline of the speakers at the Convention. He referred to the character of the gathering as peculiarly an international one, where social and religious differences were all forgotten. Almost every evangelical denomination and every class of persons had a representative. It seemed peculiarly appropriate that in that beautiful city where more than one marble monument marked the spot where the ancestors of those present met in battle, their children should meet to vie in loving emulation in devising the best means of instructing their children in the Gospel of peace. It was specially gratifying to Canadians to receive a hearty reception. In the opening address of Dr. Grammer, any kindly allusion to our Queen was emphasized by the hearty applause of the Americans. A telegram came from the Sunday School Convention, in session in Exeter Hall, London, with kindly greetings and best wishes, and a very kind reply was sent, after which the national air of Great Britain was sung to the national words of America—"God Save our Native Land." The speaker then sketched the style of the addresses of P. G. Gillett, Rev. Dr. Grammer, Rev. Dr. Hall, of New York; R. F. Jacobs, Rev. Dr. Vincent, and Rev. Duncan McGregor—a co-worker with Moody and Sankey—Rev. Messrs. Peltz, De Witt, and Ralph Wells, drawing instructive lessons therefrom.

"Rev. A. H. MUNRO referred to the topics suggested by the Convention. His remarks had special reference to an address by Rev. Dr. Vincent, on the way to increase the teaching power of the Sunday School. The points of the doctor's paper may be briefly stated as follows:—The true Sunday School teacher is a teacher of Christian truth, the whole Bible being the source. He should have Christian faith, experience, character, and reputation—he needs spiritual as well as intellectual discernment. He should be full of the truth he has to teach, so as to win the confidence of his scholars and retain their attention;

he should have at least ten times the knowledge the class has. He needs to thoroughly understand the best methods of teaching. He should teach first the fundamental truths of the Bible and then the books of the Church. A proper training should be had for teachers by means of what Dr. Vincent called a Normal Class, the objections to which he had completely answered. The speaker then went on to give his impressions of the Convention—the importance of the work—the catholicity of the gathering, and considered the question of a normal class most important. The study of the Bible simultaneously by the whole Church, and co-operation with the school must receive attention. It might be necessary also to originate, within a short time, institutes, where parents will have brought before them such truths and such theories as will best enable them to co-operate in their home training with the teachers in the Sabbath School. He concluded by observing that the Holy Spirit must guide in the future.

"Rev. SEPTIMUS JONES, M.A., spoke briefly on some mistakes in the recent Convention. One of the greatest was the gathering of so many in the large meetings instead of having small rooms set apart for different subjects and speakers. The difficulty of hearing in the large hall was an argument in favour of such an arrangement. The practice some speakers have of "boring" the audiences received a well-deserved but humorous rebuke. All matters of business should be left to special committees. Persons should not be allowed to introduce all sorts of resolutions. A committee should be appointed to see that persons who had 'hobbies' to ride had them regularly entered, provided they were decided by the committee to be proper horses to ride. A business committee should be appointed to "sit on" all persons who were in the habit of continually rising to explain. The speaker concluded by commenting on what appeared to him a want of reverence in speaking of sacred things among our brethren across the lines.

"After votes of thanks to the delegates for their addresses, the meeting separated."—*The Liberator.*

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

THIRD YEAR—1875—JULY.

THIRD QUARTER: TWELVE LESSONS IN JOHN.

SUNDAY, JULY 4, 1875.

LESSON I.—THE WORD MADE FLESH. John
1. 1-14.

Berean Notes.

L. 1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

S. 2. The same was in the beginning with God.

L. 3. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made.

S. 4. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.

L. 5. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

S. 6. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

L. 7. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

S. 8. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

L. 9. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

S. 10. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

L. 11. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

S. 12. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

L. 13. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

S. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

HOME READINGS.

M. John 1. 1-14. Th. Isa. 53.
T. Prov. 8. 22-31. F. Eph. 1. 3-14.
W. John 5. 17-36. S. Heb. 1.
Sabbath. Psa. 23.

TOPIC: Commencement of the Christian Doctrine.

GOLDEN TEXT: God was manifest in the flesh. 1. Tim. 3-16.

OUTLINE—1. *The Word in the beginning*, v. 1-4; Gen. 1. 1; Col. 1. 17.

2. *The Word in the Darkness*, v. 5; John 3. 19.

3. *The Word and His Witness*, v. 6-8; Mal. 3. 1; Acts 19. 4.

4. *The Word and His Work*, v. 9-14; Acts 3. 26.

HINTS AND SAYINGS ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

Scheff.—"The Gospel of Gospels," "The most important literary work ever composed by man." "A marvel even in the marvellous Book of books."

Origen.—"The main Gospel."

Chrysostom.—"It is a voice of thunder reverberating through the whole earth."

Jerome.—"John excels in these depths of divine mysteries."

Calvin.—"The key that opens the way to a right understanding of the other three gospels."

Earnesti.—"The heart of Jesus."

Herder.—"Written by the hand of an angel."

Lange.—"The diamond among the gospels."

"In the beginning was the Unbegun—

Articulate Eternity, Almighty Word,
Melodious Utterance of the Three in One,

That, in the solitudes of Godhead heard,
Makes these society."—*Coles.*

2. GENERAL STATEMENT.

The Commencement of Christian Doctrine, as indicated in the Topic, takes us back to that "beginning, long before the beginning of this world, and brings us down to the wonderful

event recorded in the GOLDEN TEXT: *God was manifest in the flesh.* We have a beautiful OUTLINE:

THE **WORD** IN THE BEGINNING,
IN THE DARKNESS,
AND HIS WITNESS,
AND HIS WORK.

We find the DOCTRINE; *The twofold nature of Christ.*

LESSON HYMN.—Tune "Fulton."—7's.

God with us! O glorious name!
Let it shine in endless fame;
God and man in Christ unite,
O mysterious depth and height!

God with us! the eternal Son,
Took our soul, our flesh, our bone;
Now ye saints his grace admire,
Swell the song with holy fire.

QUESTIONS, etc.

Recite TITLE, TOPIC, GOLDEN TEXT and OUTLINE.

- The Word in the beginning*, v. 1-4.
What do you understand by "the Word" and "the beginning?"
In v. 1-4 what distinct things are stated of the Word?
- The Word in the Darkness*, v. 5.
What is meant here by "darkness?" [See Rom. 1. 21.]
Why is Jesus like a light shining? [Mal. 4. 2. John 12. 46.]
What is meant by "comprehended it not?"
Why was this light not comprehended? [See John 3. 19.]
What terrible results come to those who comprehend not the Saviour? [See Prov. 4. 19; John 3. 3.]
- The Word and his witness*, v. 6-8.
From these verses and previous lessons let pupils give some account of this witness.
What gracious purpose of God is stated in v. 7?
- The Word and his work*, v. 9-14.
What has been Christ's work as a LIGHT? v. 9.
What does he do for those who receive him? v. 12, 13.
How do you understand v. 10, 11?
What is meant by "made flesh," "dwelt among us," and "full of grace and truth?" v. 14.
What did John and others then behold? v. 14.

Where does this lesson teach—

- 1. The humanity of Christ?**
- 2. The Divinity of Christ?**
- 3. The need of regeneration?**

QUESTION AND ANSWER.

4. *Ought we not often to think upon what we have heard and read?*

We ought often to think upon what we have heard and read: and so lay up the word of God in our hearts, and meditate therein day and night.

Psalm cxix. 11. Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.

3. OUTLINE.

(1.) The PRE-EXISTENT Word, v. 1. (2.) The DIVINE Word, v. 1, (3.) The CREATIVE Word, v. 3, (4.) The VIVIFYING Word, v. 4. (5.) The ILLUMINATING Word, vers. 4, 5, 9. (6.) The UNAPPRECIATED Word, verse 5, 10, 11. (7.) The REGENERATING Word, vers. 12, 13. (8.) The INCARNATED Word, v. 14. (9.) The WITNESS of the Word, vers. 12, 13.

EXPOSITORY NOTES.

BEGINNING, ver. 1, of all things, In Gen. 1. 1, we have "beginning" of mundane things. WORD. Greek, *Logos*. As men reveal their thoughts and purposes by words, so does God by THE WORD—Jesus Christ.

.....A scoffer once said, "Why is Jesus Christ called the Word? What is meant by the Word?" A Mr. Greenfield replied, "As words are the means by which man communicates with man, I suppose that this name is used to show that He is the only medium between God and man. I know no other reason." The scoffer was silenced.

"WAS GOD." An emphatic and distinct assertion of the divine character of Him who was finally "made flesh and dwelt among us." Col 2. 9, asserts that "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." This word "fulness" is rendered in Matt. 9. 16, by the phrase "that which is put in to fill it up." Substituting this for "fulness," we learn that all that which fills up, or composes the divine nature, or Godhead, dwells in our Lord. Could his Divinity be more plainly taught?

ALL THINGS. A most positive statement of his creatorship. See 1 Cor. 8. 6; Col. 1. 16, 17. No wonder he could command the winds and the waves and they would obey. How confident the Christian may be of safety in Christ's

arms. IN HIM WAS LIFE, ver. 4. As in a great fountain. None other had it, nor could any independent process form it. Each stage of creation needed the Word to give its effect. In 1 John 1. 1, Christ is called "the Word of life." THE LIGHT OF MEN. Whatever of light men have in knowledge, holiness, and love, comes from this "life" which is originally in the "Word." Psa. 36. 9; 1 John 1. 5-7. *Light*, 1, in man; 2, for men; 3, respecting man. Life is light, but light is not life. Many have much light and not life, but none can have life without also having light. DARKNESS. Man sits in the darkness and shadow of death, but Christ gives light. Matt. 4. 16. Luke 2. 32. All the moral light which shines into this darkness comes from the Revealer, the Word. There is no light of nature as apart from him. Darkness of ignorance, error, hatred, death. COMPREHENDED IT NOT. See 1 Cor. 1. 21. The reason for this inability is given, 1 Cor. 2. 14. The darkness of the human soul is the only darkness which light cannot remove. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4.

.....*Dr. Schaff* makes the following beautiful analysis of these verses: I. The Logos and God, vers. 1, 2. II. The Logos and the world, ver. 3. III. The Logos and mankind, ver. 4. IV. The Logos and sin, ver. 5.*Beugel* says vers. 1 and 2 refer to eternity; ver. 3 to creation; ver. 4 to the state of innocence; and ver. 5 to the fall.

.....*Nyle* says: "Not a single word could be altered in the first five verses of John without opening the door to some heresy."

A MAN SENT FROM GOD, ver. 6. Mal. 3. 1; Matt. 3. 1; Luke 3. 2. "A man sent"—literally a man "arose;" or "came into being." The Logos "was," John "came into being" JOHN meaning "Jehovah is merciful." Given by divine direction. Luke 1. 13.

A WITNESS, ver. 7. Literally, "for witness," or "for testimony." He preached repentance among the people. He prophesied of the Messiah just about to come, and after the sign at the baptism he bore witness that Jesus is the Messiah.

THAT LIGHT, ver. 8. better "the light," "the" being emphatic, and referring back to ver. 4. John 5. 35, is true—he was a burning and a shining light—but in comparison with the *Light* he was but as a glow-worm to the Son at noonday. John 3. 30. How grandly John must have shone to need such an explanation. None of us would be supposed to be "that Light," "and the sun of the soul." We have

in ver. 9 a further definition as to who the true light was, namely, not one who may, as John did, enlighten a few, but one who alone enlightens all who live. As the sole Revealer, no revelation ever was made except by him. Much revealed truth is claimed as a dictate of reason, whereas unaided reason never would have discovered it.

.....Illustration—when Christopher Columbus would illustrate to his friends how so many persons claimed the discovery of America after he had first done it, he proposed that they should make an egg stand on its end. After many fruitless efforts he cracked the end slightly and the egg stood. All immediately did the same, he remarking, it was quite easy to do when one showed the way. John 3. 19; 12. 46.

KNEW HIM NOT, ver. 10. He became an inhabitant of the world he had created. He dwelt among the creatures he had made, but they recognized not their master, and knew not him who made them. Note three things about the world: He is in it. He made it. It ignored him. True of each man's little world of self, except as changed by grace. The world *might* have known him, and it *should* have known him. Rom. 1. 19.

HIS OWN, ver. 11, in the first instance, is neuter, referring to his own world, land, temple, and rights; in the second instance masculine, meaning his own subjects who recognized him only to slay. Luke 20. 14. This is true of the *nation*.

.....When Ulysses returned to Ithaca, his family did not recognize him, so changed was he by twenty years' absence and many hardships. In his difficulty he called for his bow, which none but himself could draw to the ear. The strong wood yielded, and Penelope throws herself into the arms of her husband. The bow which Jesus bent was nature, whose laws were made to yield to his divine power.

SONS OF GOD. He was ever such, but men become so through power given of Christ to those who believe. "Received him," equivalent to "believed on his name." John 3. 3; 1 John 3. 9; Sol. 3. 26; 1 Pet. 1. 23.

NOT OF BLOOD, ver. 13. Natural generation, or human determinations, are incompetent to make men sons of God. The state of nature is not the state of grace. One needed birth not of blood, flesh, man, but of God.

MADE FLESH, ver. 14. All the precious things already said of the Word must now be gathered up and compressed into this one

phrase "Made flesh." How wonderful this condescension! Phil. 2. 5-8; Gal. 4. 4. The term here rendered flesh is "the strongest expression for becoming veritable man."—*Schaff*. See 1 John 4. 2; 1 Tim. 3. 16; Rom. 1. 2; 8. 3; Phil. 2. 7; Heb. 2. 14.

FLESH means human nature in all its weakness and mortality. Equivalent to "mortal." Sinfulness, however, must be excluded in Christ's case, as Scripture claims so clearly. Christ a full man. John 8. 40. Hence called "Son of man." Christ is like me.

DWELT AMONG US. "Tabernacled" among us—"pitched his tent" among us. Used in *permanent* sense, became wedded to our nature. "His glory," "seen of men, as of the only begotten, etc., full of grace and truth." A glory full of love, tenderness, purity, spirituality, etc. Such as belongs to the only-begotten. Worthy of such a one as he. Such as was *befitting* him.

English Teacher's Notes.

BY EUGENE STOCK, ESQ.

BIOGRAPHIES usually begin either with the birth of the man whose life is to be recorded, and its attendant circumstances, or else with his ancestry. Now of the four evangelists, Luke begins with the birth of Christ, or at least with the incidents of the few months preceding it; Matthew gives a list of his forefathers from Abraham downward; Mark is not concerned with his infancy, but starts at once with his public ministry. But John is different from all these. He goes back far beyond the most distant of Christ's earthly ancestors, and shows him to us "in the beginning with God." Not that there is any contradiction between the fourth Gospel and the others. Matthew (1. 23) introduces Jesus as "Emmanuel, God with us." Mark, in his very first verse, proclaims him "Son of God." Luke (1. 35) records the angel Gabriel's testimony to his being so. Still John throws our thoughts back, as the others do not, to that mysterious "beginning" before the creation. "All things were made by him"—therefore he was before all things.

Why does St. John call Christ "the Word?" It is by words that a man communicates and reveals his thoughts; and it is Christ who is the *Revealer* of God. The Evangelist himself explains this in ver. 18: "No man hath seen

(or known) God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." It is interesting to notice that even this deep truth is not found in the fourth Gospel only; see Matt. 11. 27—"Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." Although the term "Word" is only applied to the Son by St. John, and although probably it was so applied with a tacit reference to its use in the philosophical writings of that age, yet the *idea* is no new one, but may be found in the Old Testament. See Ps. 33. 6; 107. 20; 119. 89; Job 28. 12. etc. Prov. 8, especially vers. 22-31.

In this lesson the teacher will have a three-fold object, namely, to show 1. Christ's God-head; 2. His manhood; 3. The relation of this God-man to us. Great pains are of course required to put these solemn truths before the children in the simplest form, and to use the simplest language; but still it is well to remember that they *cannot* fully understand it. And it is a very good lesson for them to learn, that we must none of us expect to understand all about the great God. Some such illustration as this may be used: You have seen a great engine puffing and snorting as it drags the train along. Perhaps you have learned how all those strange wheels and bars of iron move so beautifully. But does the little insect that jumps on the wheel know all that? Could it be taught? And when we try to understand the great God, we are like the fly trying to understand the engine.

But see what our passage says of the three topics above suggested.

1. *Christ was truly God.* Of course there are many proofs of this great doctrine; but we have only to do with what we find here. (a) It is directly affirmed, "The Word was God." And ver. 14 shows that by "The Word" is meant Christ. (b) Creation, a divine act, is ascribed to him, vers. 3, 10. (c) He is stated to be the source of life, ver. 4; compare chap. 5. 26. (d) He is called the True Light, ver. 9; compare 1 John 1. 5.

2. *Christ was truly man.* "The Word was made flesh." It is important to observe that this word "flesh" here means *human mortal nature* generally, as in Isa. 40. 6; 1 Pet. 1. 24. In explaining the true manhood of Christ, the teacher must be careful to guard against the very common notion that he was *God with a*

man's body; that is, that the soul united to the human body of Jesus of Nazareth was itself the Divinity. Christ was truly man. He had a man's soul as well as a man's body, and the Godhead was united with both. To prove the reality of his human body: He was really born, and had a real mother, Gal. 4. 4; his body grew, Luke 2. 52; he was hungry, Matt. 4. 2; thirsty, John 4. 7; 19. 28; tired, John 4. 6; he really died, Mark 15. 44, 45. To prove the reality of his human soul: He thought and felt, had a human will, Luke 22. 42; was glad, Luke 10. 21; sorry, Mark 3. 5; Luke 19. 41; John 11. 35; surprised, Matt. 8. 10; Mark 6. 6; like other men, only without sin, 2 Cor. 5. 21; Heb. 4. 15; 1 John 3. 5.

3. What has all this to do with us? This, too, St. John tells us in our passage, ver. 12—"Received him." Did not *all* receive the Prince of heaven when he laid aside his glory and "dwelt among us?" Ah, no! ver. 11. But to those who did—and who *do*—"power to become the sons of God." He has come down and taken our nature—become the Son of man—why? In order that *we* might have his nature and become sons of God. See Gal. 4. 4-6. Let us try and be like him here, and we shall be made perfectly like him hereafter, 1 John 3. 2; and see also ver. 3.

For Senior Scholars.

I. SEED THOUGHTS.

BY L. D. BARROWS, D. D.

1. *When and what was this beginning?*
2. Was this Word, *Logos*—Christ, in existence at that time, or *created* then?
3. If Christ *was with God* when all created things began, could he have had any *beginning*?
4. What is comprehended in *all things*? (v. 3.)
5. If he *made* these, could he have been made *at all*?
6. What is meant by *in him was Life*?
7. *How* is that life the light of men?
8. What is that *darkness*?
9. If, as Moses says, Gen. 1, *God created*, what must be the meaning of *Word* here?
10. To whom alone do the Scriptures attribute *creative power*?
11. Could Christ be *with God*, and not be distinct from him?
12. *How* does Christ *enlighten every man*?

2. DOCTRINE.

"The twofold nature of Christ." Matt. 1. 23; John 1. 14; Rom. 1. 3, 4; Matt. 8. 24-27; Mark 15. 37; 16. 19.

The Primary Class.

BY LUCY J. RIDER.

1. We come now to the wonderful story of God "manifest in the flesh." Let every teacher strive to realize the wonderful truth that is entrusted to her teaching, and how deeply the day's presentation of the truth may affect the eternal well-being of the children committed to her care. No class in the school feels more quickly the earnestness—or lack of earnestness—of its teacher than the infant-class.

"Thou must be true thyself
If thou the truth would teach.
Thy heart must overflow, if thou
Another's heart would reach."

2. The GREAT TRUTH of the lesson is that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

3. INCIDENTALLY, the time and place of his coming should be taught, as well as the mission of John, and the "darkness," to which Christ, "the Light," came.

4. Lines of approach to the lesson: 1. Have you any brothers or sisters away from home? Would you like to see them? You would watch to see them coming—run out to meet them, perhaps—and when you saw them you'd cry out, "He's coming?" so all the rest would know. Once, instead of a little boy, a *man* had news that some one was coming, and he went about crying, "He's coming! Prepare ye!" Who was it? Jesus—coming to help and save the people—make them fit to go to heaven. Were they glad to receive him? "Received him not"—did not love him—would not serve him. What would *you* have done? But are you living and serving him now? 2. Who would be willing, on a cold winter night, to leave the pleasant fire and go out in the dark? But suppose you looked out and saw some poor man freezing and dying outside? Jesus, up in bright, beautiful heaven—his home—looked down to the dark earth, saw man, wicked, wretched, dying, and came to save him. 3. How many have a little baby brother or sister at home? Once a wonderful babe was born, and angels in heaven sang for

joy. Who was it? Why did God come to earth and become a little child? *How* can he help us? Knows how children feel. *From what* does he save us? Save us from sinning—from being shut out of heaven. What must we do to be saved?

Direct the attention of the school to a light-house. Tell how it shines in the darkness to guide all men. It is to prevent shipwreck. It is to guide the mariner home. It shows the way to a safe port. It is for the saving of men. *Who is the true light?* Does this light shine for all men? It is better than the light-house light. It shines always. It is never invisible. It is never neglected. It saves life for an eternity. Read v. 6, 7. We must bear witness of the true light. Compare the body of the light-house to the body of the Christian Church bearing aloft the name of Jesus, that it may shine through all the world. Who is the Word, the Creator, the Life, the Light?

WHISPER-SONG.

What has Jesus done for me?
Came from heaven a child to be,
Gave his precious life, so free,
All for me.
This my saviour did for me—
Lord what can I do for thee?

SUNDAY, JULY 11, 1875.

LESSON II.—FOLLOWING THE LAMB. John 1. 35-46.

Berean Notes.

Lender. 35. Again the next day after, John stood, and two of his disciples;

School. 36. And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he said, Behold the Lamb of God!

L. 37. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

S. 38. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

L. 39. He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day; for it was about the tenth hour.

S. 40. One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

L. 41. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

S. 42. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

L. 43. The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

S. 44. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

L. 45. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

S. 46. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

HOME READINGS.

M. John 1. 35-51. *Th.* John 21. 15-25.

T. John 1. 26-34. *F.* Psa. 119. 5-16.

W. Deut. 18. 15-22. *S.* Heb. 13. 8-21.

Sabbath, Rev. 5. 1-14.

TOPIC: Commencement of the Christian Church.

GOLDEN TEXT: These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. *Rev.* 14. 4.

OUTLINE: 1. Looking upon Jesus, v. 35, 36; Heb. 12. 1, 2.

2. Following Jesus, v. 37, 38; Matt 8. 19; John 10. 4.

3. Abiding with Jesus, v. 39; John 15. 4.

4. Bringing others to Jesus, v. 40-46; Matt. 19. 13.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

"The Word made flesh" organized a centre of spiritual power at the commencement of his earthly career, and in the disciples (TITLE) *Following the Lamb*, we see the (TOPIC) *Commencement of the Christian Church*, while the GOLDEN TEXT gives us an after testimony: "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." *Rev.* 14. 4. In the OUTLINE see JESUS.

1. LOOKING UPON
2. FOLLOWING AFTER
3. ABIDING WITH
4. BRINGING OTHERS TO

JESUS.

Find the DOCTRINE: *Jesus, the Head of the Church.*

LESSON HYMN.—Tune "Aletta." 7's.

Jesus, all-atoning Lamb,
Thine, and only Thine, I am;
Take my body, spirit, soul;
Only Thou possess the whole.

Thou my one thing needful be;
Let me ever cleave to Thee;
Let me choose the better part;
Let me give Thee all my heart.

QUESTIONS, etc.

Recite TITLE, TOPIC, GOLDEN TEXT and OUTLINE.

1. *Looking upon Jesus*, v. 35, 36.
 - Who were the two disciples who stood with John?
 - Why did John call Jesus a "Lamb?"
 - Why "the Lamb of God?"
 - What more had he said upon the previous day? v. 29.
 - Read what Peter said many years later in 1 Pet. 1, 18, 19.
2. *Following Jesus*, v. 37, 38.
 - When the two heard John, what did they do?
 - Why do you suppose they did this?
 - Why did Jesus ask them "What seek ye?"
 - Why did they ask "Where dwellest thou?"
 - Who, in this lesson, is commanded to follow Jesus?
 - Who are commanded by the Scriptures to follow him?
3. *Abiding with Jesus*, v. 39.
 - What four pleasant things are told in v. 39?
 - How may we now abide with Jesus? [See an answer in John 14, 23; Rev. 3, 20.]
 - About what do you suppose they talked that day? [Read Luke 24, 27-32.]
4. *Bringing others to Jesus*, v. 40-46.
 - The lesson tells of five persons becoming Christians. By whom was each led to Jesus?
 - What words were used in each case?
 - What do these facts teach us about the way to bring others to Jesus?
 - In what sense was this the "commencement of the Christian Church?"

What lessons may we here learn upon—

1. How to follow Jesus?
2. How to work for Jesus?

QUESTION AND ANSWER.

5. *What is prayer?*

Prayer is an offering up of our desires to God for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

Psalms lxii. 8. Trust in him at all times: ye people, pour out your heart before him. God is a refuge for us.

English Teacher's Notes.

* The title of this lesson is admirably chosen. It points out the connection between the Baptist's testimony, "Behold the Lamb of God," and all that follows. It at once suggests the reason why Andrew and John the Evangelist (unnamed, but undoubtedly John the Evangelist) "followed Jesus."

To appreciate this connection we must bear in mind the expectations concerning the Messiah then current among the Jews. They were eagerly looking for a deliverer who should call the nation to arms, drive out the Romans, and restore the splendor of David's throne. It was a king of the Jews they thought was coming, not a Saviour of the world. Now to correct this view was one of the purposes of John the Baptist's preparatory work. His call was, "The kingdom is at hand: therefore"—not, make you ready for battle, but "repent of your sins." "Think not to say, We have Abraham to our father—that is not the point. The question is, Are you bringing forth good fruit?" Messiah will burn up his foes with unquenchable fire, yes—but who are they? The chaff, and you, if you are worthless, are the chaff. In short, John's work was to create a sense of sin, so that the people might feel their need of a Saviour; and having done this to a great extent—multitudes being baptized "confessing their sins"—he then pointed to "the Lamb of God which taketh away sin"—not only the sin of the Jewish nation, but "the sin of the world."

This idea, however, evidently did not take. The popular mind had not applied to the expected Messiah either the type of the Paschal Lamb, or that of the lamb daily sacrificed in the temple, or the prophecy of the lamb led to the slaughter in Isa. 5, 3; and we do not find any subsequent trace of the Baptist's words being generally remembered.

But the words did sink into the minds of Andrew and John (the Evangelist.) Their

confession of sin had been no mere form, gone through because others went through it, and no mere result of passing emotion. It was the effect of a deep and thorough change of heart. And when they heard of One who was, like the sacrificed lamb, to take away sin, it was just what they wanted, and they "followed Jesus." And it is interesting to notice that forty years afterward, when the aged John sits down to write the story of his first coming to Christ, he does not forget to record the very words of the Baptist which led him and Andrew to follow the plain and unpretending Nazarene.

A lesson of essential importance is here taught, and the teacher must on no account miss it. Boys and girls sing "I want to be like Jesus," and the "Imitation of Christ" is a common subject—a rightly common subject—in Sunday-schools. Why is it that we see so little that can really be called "following Jesus?" Just because he is not followed as the Lamb. Let one burdened with sin come to him as the Lamb of God, and lay that burden upon him, and then following, that is, walking in his steps, loses half its difficulties. Suppose a little boy walking with his elder brother. The little boy is carrying something heavy, and (after the manner of boys) insists on carrying it himself. He staggers under it, and finds it a hopeless task to keep up with his brother's firm step and rapid pace. But let him hand over the burden to that brother, whose strength is equal to it, and he can then run on after him with ease and pleasure. May we not attribute John's peculiar relationship to Christ, his nearness to him, the degree in which he was imbued with his spirit, to the simplicity with which, at the first, he recognized Jesus as the Lamb of God and laid his sins upon him? Certainly it is remarkable that those words should be John's writing, which perhaps more than any others have brought peace to the souls of men—"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin."

The passage before us is rich in topics of practical application. Each of the incidents here grouped together would make a good Sunday-school lesson by itself. In this and similar cases the teacher must resist the temptation to take up the smaller points as they arise verse after verse, and strive to give unity to the lesson by making its teachings converge on one point, or two or three—not more. The one suggested by our title we have already considered. Here is another:—

We see here *the first members of the Christian Church*. What a small beginning! (Illustrate by source of a river and its full stream—or by acorn and oak—or by building, rising stone by stone.) Then—

1. See the variety of ways in which men are brought to Christ:—John and Andrew by the words of a preacher, Peter by a brother's influence, Nathanael by that of a friend, Philip by Christ's direct call. Four out of the five by direct human instrumentality. What a call to us to be like the Baptist, pointing to the Lamb of God—like Andrew, telling of the Saviour we have found—like Philip, meeting arguments with a "Come and see."

2. Are we true members of Christ's Church? Remember *Christ knows us*, just as he knew Simon's name and character, and Nathanael's private habits. Can we say, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee?"

For Senior Scholars.

1. SEED-THOUGHTS.

1. Why was John *looking* upon Jesus?
2. How was he *affected* by looking?
3. What caused him to *speak*?
4. How did his speech affect his two disciples?
5. Was John willing to have his disciples leave him to follow Jesus?
6. Why did Jesus ask them a question, rather than instruct them?
7. What great cardinal doctrine is taught in, *Come and see*?
8. What did Andrew do first, after finding Jesus?
9. Finding Jesus always produces what *effect* and *action*?
10. What, if any, object had Christ in calling Peter a *stone*?
11. What was Philip's advantage in having Moses and the prophets?
12. If Christ is *the chief corner-stone*, the *living* stone, can Peter be also?
13. What disciple of John was the first apostle called?

2. DOCTRINE.

"*Jesus, the Head of the Church.*" 1 Cor. 11. 3; Eph. 1. 22; 4. 15; 5. 23; Col. 1. 18; 2. 10.

The application for the above lesson should touch briefly on the following points: Looking

toward, and speaking for, Jesus, ver. 36.....
 Hearing of Jesus and following him, ver. 37.....
 The Master turns at once toward his followers,
 ver. 38..... Dwelling with the Master, ver.
 39..... Having found Jesus, my duty is at once
 to seek others and guide them to him, ver. 40
 Who did Andrew and Philip seek?
 What is my mission? We must be the light
 of the world. Read Matt. 5, 15, 16.

The Primary Class.

[Let the teacher have a picture or some other representation of a lamb to refer to at different times during the lesson.] Can you tell me the names of all the persons mentioned in this lesson? [Write them on the blackboard as they are called out by the class until all are down.] What places are mentioned? [Put their names on the board, and show them on the map—show, as near as may be, the location of "Bethabara beyond Jordan," the scene of the lesson. Any point east of Jordan, and nearly opposite Jericho, will be near enough.] John, who is mentioned in the first verse of this lesson, was a cousin to Jesus. Before Jesus began to preach John went through the country telling the people about him. One day, while walking along with some of his friends, John saw Jesus and pointed him out to these friends, calling him the Lamb of God. Do you know why Jesus was thus called the Lamb of God? What is there about a lamb that is like Jesus? A lamb is gentle, kind and loving, and so was Jesus. But there is a greater reason than this. Many years ago the Israelites went out of Egypt and traveled through the wilderness. [See if the class have any knowledge of this from former lessons. If not, give them a brief account of it.] Just before they started from Egypt death came among the children of the Egyptians, but the children of the Israelites were saved by having the blood of a lamb sprinkled on the door posts. [Give a brief account of the Passover.] Then, after this, they were commanded to offer lambs in sacrifice to God on the altar. [Explain this.] It was by means of these offerings that the people came near to God. We now come through Jesus, and are saved by Jesus, just as the Israelites came through a lamb slain; and therefore Jesus is called the Lamb of God.

When John's two friends heard him speak about Jesus and saw him point to him, they

followed Jesus. They were glad to find him and to become his friends. So we are to go to Jesus in prayer and to become his friends and followers. [Here repeat the "Golden Text."] Everybody that found Jesus told somebody else about him, and thus the number of his followers became larger every day. So ought we to tell others about this blessed Saviour. Are there no little boys or girls to whom you can speak about Jesus? Tell them how Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and how he loves little children. Then there are many people in distant lands who have never heard about Christ. We cannot go to them ourselves to tell them about him, but we can send some one to do it. This is the reason why missionary societies are formed. [The skilful teacher can readily turn this to account if the day should happen to be the "Missionary Sunday." If not, a reference may be made to the work of the missionary society.]

Whisper Song.

What will Jesus do for me?
 Hear him saying "Come and see."
 Life and Joy he offers free,
 "Come and see."
 This will Jesus give to me—
 Help me, Lord, to follow thee.

SUNDAY, JULY 18, 1875.

LESSON III. — JESUS AT THE MARRIAGE.
 John 2. 1-11.

Berean Notes.

Leader. 1. And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:

School. 2. And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

L. 3. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

S. 4. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.

L. 5. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

S. 6. And there were set there six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

L. 7. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the water-pots with water.

S. And they filled them up to the brim.

L. 8. And he saith unto them, Draw out now and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.

S. 9. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was, (but the servants which drew the water knew,) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

L. 10. And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now.

S. 11. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

HOME READINGS.

M. John 2. 1-11. *Th.* Isa. 55.
Tu. 1 Kings 17. 1-16. *F.* John 4. 46-51.
W. Matt. 6. 24-34. *S.* Isa. 25. 1-18.
Sabbath Rev. 19. 5-10.

TOPIC: *Commencement of the Christian Miracles.*

GOLDEN TEXT: *This beginning of Miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him. John 2. 11.*

OUTLINE: 1. *The Wedding*, v. 1, 2; Matt. 22. 2; Rev. 19. 9.

2. *The Want*, v. 3, 4; Mark 6. 37; Matt. 5. 6.

3. *The Wine*, v. 5-11; Isa. 55. 1; Matt. 26. 29.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

The wonderful One at the commencement of his Church begins a series of wonderful works.

In this lesson we have the first of his miracles—

TOPIC: *Commencement of the Christian Miracles.*

GOLDEN TEXT: *“This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his Glory; and his disciples believed on him.”*

John 2. 11. The whole story is in the **OUTLINE:**

THE

WEDDING
WANT
WINE

The **DOCTRINE** leads us to examine into *The use of miracles.*

LESSON HYMN.—Rockingham. L.M.

When Jesus dwelt in mortal clay,
What were his works from day to day
But miracles of power and grace,
That spread salvation through our race?

Teach us, O Lord, to keep in view
Thy pattern and thy steps pursue;
Let alms bestowed, let kindness done,
Be witnessed by each rolling sun.

Questions, etc.

Recite the **TITLE** and **TOPIC**. What is a “Miracle?” What is meant in the Topic by “Christian miracles?” [ANS.—Those miracles which Christ and his apostles did to prove the truth of the Christian religion.] Recite the **GOLDEN TEXT** and **OUTLINE**.

1. *The Wedding*, v. 1, 2.

Where was Cana of Galilee?

Tell how weddings were conducted in Christ's day. [The scholar will find some hints on this in Matt. 22. 1-10, and Matt. 25. 1-12.]

2. *The Want*, v. 3, 4.

What was mentioned in v. 3?

When Jesus' mother told him of this want, why did he speak to her so strangely?

What *hour* does he mean in v. 4?

What wants do we all have?

3. *The Wine*, v. 5-11.

What did his mother tell the servants?

Why did she tell them this?

What two commands did Jesus give the servants?

What good points do you see in the obedience of the servants?

Who was the “governor of the feast?”

What did he do, and what did he say, when he had tasted “the water that was made wine?”

How did this miracle “manifest forth” Christ's glory?

How did it affect his disciples?

What is meant by the “wine” offered in Isa. 55. 1?

How did Jesus get this wine for us?

Where in this lesson may we learn—

1. **Where to visit?**

2. **Whom to obey?**

QUESTION AND ANSWER.

6. *Where are we required to offer up our prayers and thankgivings?*

We are required to offer up our prayers and thanksgivings publicly, in the house of God; and privately, in our closets.

Psalms c. 4. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him and bless his name.

Matthew vi. 6. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly,

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

MIRACLES. Jesus, when here in the world, did many wonderful acts, which are called "miracles," "signs," and "wonderful works." They were such works as made people who saw them wonder, for they never before saw such doings. They were such works as pointed to a divine power in him who did them, and so they are called "signs." Signs on a store tell what business is done inside, or who does business there, and so these wonderful works of Jesus told that he who dwelt in that body was the Son of God. So Nicodemus felt. *John* 3. 1, 2. See *Acts* 2. 22. Miracles are acts which are wonderful, and which point out the character of him who does them.

THE PLACE. Cana of Galilee, a small village about nine miles north of Nazareth, according to Dr. Robinson's researches, at the now deserted village known as *Kana-el-Jelil*. The place is named in Scripture in our lesson, and in *John* 4. 46, and 21. 2.

THE THIRD DAY, ver. 1. Most likely from the last named date, that of Nathanael's call. *John* 1. 45. To journey from Judea to Galilee would occupy about two days. A **MARRIAGE.** The term covers the ceremony and the subsequent feast, which, according to the means and the disposition of those concerned, consumed from three to fifteen consecutive days of feasting and enjoyment. **THE MOTHER OF JESUS.** She seems to have been at home in the place, which has led to the inference that the feast was at some kinsman's house.

JESUS WAS CALLED, ver. 2. The five whom he had called in Judea followed him to his home in Galilee. Whether Mary had gone to the wedding, or was about starting, is not stated; but Jesus and his followers were called and went along. John was, therefore, an eye-witness of the scene. Jesus approved of the marriage relation, and he approved of joyousness and festivity at proper times hence he and

his disciples went to this feast. But he was the holy Jesus even here. We must not act unlike Christians even when in our merriest moods.

THEY WANTED WINE, ver. 3. How the supply happened to be so short we are not told, nor need we attempt to guess. The fact is stated, that is enough. Some infer from this scarcity that the family was poor, which does not follow, however, as even the rich sometimes are unexpectedly stinted. Dr. Schaff suggests, with considerable point, "It also reveals the temperance of the family."

WOMAN, ver. 4. This title, given by a son to his mother seems rough to us; but if Jesus ever could speak roughly surely he could not on the cross, yet there he uses the very same term to his mother. *John* 19. 26. So to Mary Magdalene. *John* 20. 15. The word had, as used by Jesus, more the noble sense which we associate with it when we say "be a woman;" that is, exercise the highest and no less traits of womanhood. **WHAT HAVE I TO DO WITH THEE?** The Roman Catholic worship of Mary finds no favour, but rather the clearest condemnation in this phrase. If even Jesus' mother could not properly interfere with Jesus' work, much less dare we divert it from his chosen ways. Submit to Jesus, attempt not to control him. **MINE HOUR IS NOT YET COME.** Implying that at the proper time he would do what he deemed wise and good, but that as yet his moment for working miracles and manifesting his glory had not arrived. Jesus had a clear conception of how his life was to be used to highest advantage. He saw "his course," and so ran that it was perfectly finished.

DO IT, ver. 5. The only recorded saying of Mary about her wonderful son. She had unbounded faith in her son, and she understood his last remark as a pledge that he would do something when the right moment arrived. These words of her's form a splendid motto for all true believers in Jesus. " whatsoever . . . he saith . . . to you . . . do it." The whole of submission to Jesus is in these four little phrases.

SIX WATER-POTS OF STONE, ver. 6. Immense stone jars for the water needed in the washings. *Mark* 7. 4. The capacity of each jar was about twenty gallons of our measure. *Six* indicates accuracy in the reporter, who was an eye-witness and had the facts. The *firkin* was

about nine gallons. **THE PURIFYING.** Matt 15. 2; Mark 7. 3, 4. Verse 7 shows these water-pots were replenished perfectly, much, doubtless, having been used already. The process of filling with water turned attention continuously and unequivocally to the fact that water was put into the jars, just as was usual for the purifying work. **DRAW OUT,** ver. 8. No intermediate manipulation, or command even. "Fill," and "draw," are the commands of Jesus. They who obediently fill with truth, with work, or with holy thought and feeling, shall surely draw the richer products which the grace of Jesus makes. Gal 6. 9; Isa. 55. 1. Let us obey Jesus whether in filling up or in drawing out. Jesus did not touch the vessels, lest a trick might be suggested.

THE GOVERNOR OF THE FEAST, ver. 8. One chosen as a sort of presiding officer, a chairman, or head of the table, as in set dinners with speeches, as our custom now is.

HAD TASTED, ver. 9. Not knowing whence it came, but as the head of the table accepting the first glass, as the custom then required. His call to the bridegroom was a complimentary act. He would praise what he regarded as a fine matter of providing. So men now praise the viands spread by kind friends.

THE GOOD TILL NOW, ver. 10. Contrary to custom. The wine was good in this man's judgment. It was no poor imitation, or tasteless compound, but what he understood as good wine. Nor had he become "well drunk" in the sense of having become intoxicated, nor yet satiated, so that he cared not for delicacy of flavour, for he was capable of discriminating, and of appreciating the good. He was in no state to be imposed upon. The custom was probably more in a proverbial sense than in an actual, but it did not apply to this company.

DISCIPLES BELIEVED. The more we know of Jesus the higher is our faith. The "come and see" of our last lesson finds enlarged fulfilment. They did go with Jesus; as they went they saw more and more.

GENERAL THOUGHTS.—Moses' first miracle in Egypt turned water into blood—the type of a ministry of death. Jesus' first miracle turned water into wine, the type of cheer and of joy... Jesus led his disciples to a marriage feast, thus giving an early type of the marriage feast above to which all his saints are finally to be led. Rev. 19. 9. . . . The water of the ceremonial

purifying transformed into the wine of the gospel feast. . . . Human destitution easily remedied by Christ's abundance. . . . Our emergencies Christ's opportunities. 2 Cor. 12. 10. . . . Under Christ's lead the best things come last. . . . Jesus was worthy of himself in the midst of festivity and of social joy—so let his people ever be.

. . . **DR. COLES,** in "The Evangel," says: "Christ forbade nothing. Not but that ten thousand things are forbidden—everything hurtful is so. Nature forbids, and nature is final. Why re-enact nature? Christ left nature as he found it, inviolate, unrepaled. Fact was fact the same as before—arsenic was arsenic; alcohol was alcohol. So far as nature forbade these they were forbidden. So far as nature permitted them, they were permitted." Dr. Coles argues the case from a medical standpoint, and reaches the conclusion that alcohol is against nature, and therefore Christ could not have legislated it into use. What Jesus did make was the juice of the grape—an act of creation worthy of him, and proving that he stood the *Creator*, not the "compounder of spirits."

How to put the lesson: **THE SCENE,** a wedding feast with its guests and its enjoyments, which particularize. **THE SURPRISE.** Wine out—ashore in refreshments. In a small village with few chances to "stock-up." **THE SUPPLY.** Hinted at by Mary. Prepared for and provided in best quality and ample quantity by Jesus. Human arrangements for securing joy are apt to fail. Divine arrangements for securing joy never fail.

WHERE TO VISIT: where Jesus can go, be recognized, and work.

WHOM TO OBEY: those who direct us to submit to Jesus—Jesus himself:—

"Whence this delicious nectar, heavenly wine?
What sun-matured it, and where grew the vine?
Not grapes of Eschold hold so rich a blood,
Which cheers, but not inebriates, like food."

—Coles.

English Teacher's Notes.

Our Lord's first miracle was of peculiar importance, as giving some indication of the nature of the religion he came to found. Unlike John the Baptist, "the Son of man came eating and drinking," to show that Christianity was not for the cloister, but for every-day life.

Now it is most likely that both the presence of Jesus at the marriage feast, and his conduct when there, caused his new followers great surprise. They had, some of them at all events, been disciples of the Baptist—the hermit pro-

phet whose clothing was camel's hair and his food locusts and wild honey—who never tasted wine, (Luke 1. 15.) and taught his followers to "fast often." (Luke 5. 33) He, the stern denouncer of sin, who pointed them to Jesus as the Lamb of God to take away sin. That Lamb of God they had followed, and within a week he takes them to a feast! and not only that, but there for the first time displays his miraculous power by creating quantities of wine!

We could not be surprised if we read that they took offence at conduct so contrary to their natural expectations. But it is pleasant to see their simplicity and teachableness. The result was that "his disciples believed on him." Their faith was not shaken but strengthened.

Is this the case with *our* faith? It is certain that this passage often causes perplexity to the young reader, and that his questionings are anything but set at rest by the somewhat apologetic tone which teachers are apt to adopt in explaining it.

But we are distinctly told that by this "beginning of miracles" Jesus "manifested forth his glory." How was this? First notice that the words are not "manifested forth his power," but "his glory." Now, among men "power" and "glory" are too often the same thing. The "glory" of a conqueror, or a despot, or an athlete, is his *power*—his strength—his might. *That* is his title to admiration. But, although "all power" belongs to Christ, (Matt. 28. 18.) this is not his glory. The glory of Christ is seen in the way in which his power is exercised—in the use he makes of it. In the miracle before us we see Omnipotence at work; but to *what purpose?*

1. To make people happier. Christ did not frown on the innocent gayety of the wedding-feast. He joined in it, "rejoicing with those that rejoiced," (as St. Paul tells us to do, Rom. 12. 15.) Nay, he worked a miracle to increase it.

2. To give a vivid picture of the contrast between the Law and the Gospel. It has often been noticed that the first miracles of Moses and Christ respectively typify the character of the old and the new dispensations—Moses turning water into blood, Christ turning it into wine. But the lesson is taught more plainly in another way. In ver. 6, "the purifying of the Jews" means their customary ceremonial ablutions. These were strict enough under the law

itself; and they had been made tenfold stricter by the formalism of the Pharisees. See Mark 7. 2, 3; Luke 11. 39. It was for their due observance that the great jars stood ready to hand; and when Jesus ordered them to be filled with water, it was no doubt expected that the new prophet was going to enjoin some fresh form of ablution, some new baptism more obligatory than John's. But (a) He was providing *not* for *washing*, but for *drinking*—not what would cleanse the *outside* of the body, but what would *enter into it*, and give it refreshment and strength; and (b) He was providing, not water, the symbol of repentance, but wine, the symbol of joy. (Compare Psa. 104. 15—"wine that maketh glad the heart of man.") Nothing could more significantly point the contrast between the law as the "ministration of condemnation," and the Gospel as the "glad tidings of great joy."

The application may be something like this—*Do you wish to be made happier? You can be—how? By having Christ with you.*

1. Where will Christ be with us? Not only in church, but in the home, school, play-ground, streets, workshop, kitchen; at work-time, school-time, meal-time, play-time. Not only when we are praying—even when laughing; in company as well as alone.

2. But will His being with us make us happier? Boys and girls think it would make them gloomy. Did it at Cana? Did Jesus stop the pleasure there? One thing he will stop, certainly—sin. Would you keep him away for the sake of some sin?

3. *How* will His being with us make us happier? Just as at Cana.

(a) He will turn for us "water" into "wine." Take an illustration to show what this means. A school-boy sets about a long-division sum in a grumbling spirit, and throws it aside when done with a gasp of relief. But a Christian boy sees in it something his father has given him to do, and can take a pleasure in it as, for the time, his "Father's business."

(b) He will give, as he gave the wine, without stint, "exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think." (Ephes. 3. 20.)

(c) He will give his best things—the "good wine"—at the last. See Luke 18. 30; 1 John 3. 2; 1 Cor. 2. 9; Psa. 31. 19. First the cross, then the crown. "*Not as the world giveth, give I unto you.*" (John 14. 27.)

For Senior Scholars.

1. THEMES FOR BIBLE READINGS.

1. MARRIAGE AS AN INSTITUTION. Gen. 2. 18 ; Prov. 18. 22 ; Eph. 5. 31 ; 1 Tim. 5. 14 ; Heb. 13. 4.
2. MARRIAGE AS A TYPE. Isa. 54. 5 ; Jer. 3. 14 ; Hosea 2. 19, 20 ; Eph. 5. 23, 24, 32 ; Rev. 19. 7.
3. WINE AS A SYMBOL OF BLESSING. Prov. 9. 2, 5 ; Isa. 25. 6 ; 55. 1 ; Matt. 26. 27-29.
4. JESUS IN SOCIAL LIFE. John 2. 2 ; Matt. 9. 10 ; Luke 7. 36 ; 24. 30 ; John 1. 39.
5. THE CHRISTIAN IN SOCIAL LIFE. Acts. 2. 46, 47 ; 5. 42 ; 12. 12 ; 20. 20. Phil. 1. 27.
6. THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE GOSPEL. Jer. 3. 14 ; Matt. 22. 2-4 ; Luke 12. 36 ; 2 Cor. 11. 2.
7. THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB. Rev. 19. 7, 9 ; Matt. 25. 10 ; Eph. 5. 25-27 ; Rev. 21. 2, 9.

2. SEED-THOUGHTS.

1. Why was Jesus present at this wedding?
2. How did the personal and social habits of John and Jesus differ?
3. How many, and what, remarkable circumstances attended this first *Christian* wedding?
4. Was Jesus present without *invitation*?
5. Did Jesus intend to rebuke his mother?
6. How was the term, or word, *woman* then used in good society?
7. What did he mean by *my hour has not yet come*? The hour in which they need wine? the hour of his working miracles? or the hour to establish his kingdom?
8. Why did his mother *then* suppose he could work miracles?
9. Was she *officious*?
10. Could it be wrong for her to *suggest* it, and yet right for him to *do* it?
11. If, as history shows, both intoxicating and unintoxicating wines were in use in those days, is it at all probable that Christ created what the Scriptures then (as now) *condemned*?
12. Was *leaven*, or anything *fermented*, allowed about the temple service?

3. DOCTRINE.

"The use of miracles." Exo. 4. 5-9 ; Num. 16. 28-30 ; 1 Kings 18. 23, 24 ; Mark 16. 20 ; Acts 14. 3.

The lesson having been thoroughly gone over by the teachers, the application should be

brief. This one thought can be impressed. The things of this world last but for a moment; the wine of the feast failed, and the wine of worldly pleasure will always fail. The blessings of God grow better day by day, and, at the last, we will have the best; the blessings of heaven, life everlasting, where we may feast with Jesus evermore. Jesus, who changed the water into wine, can change a sinful heart to a pure one. Will you ask him?

The Primary Class.

BY L. J. R.

1. REVIEW. Teacher, did you ever see a workman, after driving a nail, turn and, with an iron pressed against its head, flatten the point and clench it? The wood itself must give way before such a nail can draw out of place. Such is the Review in our Sunday-school teaching; especially with the primary class. If we would be workmen who need not "to be ashamed," let us not forget the review.

2. ELEMENTS OF PICTORIAL POWER. The marriage feast. . . . water-pots (show picture, or sketch on board) . . . the strange command . . . the prompt obedience, ("What would *you* have done?") . . . the astonishment of the servants, and satisfaction of the "ruler of the feast."

3. THE ONE GREAT TRUTH to be left with the class is the power of Christ, as showing his divinity.

4. Lines of approach to the lesson. (1.) "Were you ever at a wedding?—a feast? . . . What did they have to eat and drink? When Jesus was on earth people drank wine sometimes. . . . Why not now? . . . Dangerous . . . it makes people drunkards . . . wine of this story may have been different from ours . . . Could you turn water into wine? Could any *man*? Who could?" etc. (2.) "Did you ever see any wine? What colour is it?" Have a pitcher of water and glass at hand. "Suppose I turn the water out into the glass, so, will that make it wine? No; it always takes *men* a long time to make wine—months or years, but once it was made in a minute!" etc.

5. Be careful not to allow this beautiful lesson to *seem* to sanction the use of wine, under the circumstances of the present day; yet, beware of seeming to *excuse* the action of Christ. Leaving out of view the much-discussed possibility that the wine of the miracle was no: in-

toxicating, an appeal to the reason of the children (as hinted under 1, above) will correct any wrong impression.

Whisper Song.

What could Jesus do for me?
He could shake the earth and sea,
Changing nature's firm decree—
All for me.
Lord, all power is given thee,
May I ever trust in thee.

SUNDAY, JULY 25, 1875.

LESSON IV.—THE NEW BIRTH. John 3. 7-17.

Berean Notes.

Reader. 7. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

School. 8. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

L. 9. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

M. 10. Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

L. 11. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

S. 12. If I have told you of earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

L. 13. And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

S. 14. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.

L. 15. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

S. 16. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

L. 17. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world;

S. But that the world through Him might be saved.

HOME READINGS.

M. John 3. 7-17. *Th.* Psa. 51.
T. Acts 2 21-47. *F.* Acts 22. 1-16.
W. Eph. 2. 1-10. *S.* 1 John 5.
Sabbath 1 Pet. 1. 3-25.

TOPIC: Commencement of the Christian Life.

GOLDEN TEXT: As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God. John 1. 12.

OUTLINE: 1. *The Necessity of the New Birth*, v. 7; Gal. 6. 15; Luke 13. 3-5.

2. *The Mystery of the New Birth*, v. 8-10; John 6. 52-56; 1 Cor. 2. 11.

3. *The Testimony of the New Birth*, v. 11-13; Matt. 11-27; John 1. 18.

4. *The Medium of the New Birth*, v. 14-17; Titus 3. 5; 1 Pet. 1. 23;

GENERAL STATEMENT.

The TOPIC and the TITLE go hand in hand. The commencement of the Christian Life is The New Birth. To TOPIC and TITLE add the teaching of the GOLDEN TEXT: "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." John 1. 12. Then in the lesson find the points of the OUTLINE.

1. *The Necessity of the*
2. *The Mystery of the*
3. *The Testimony of the*
4. *The Medium of the*

NEW BIRTH.

All of which is included in the DOCTRINE of Regeneration.

LESSON HYMN.—Tune "Antioch."—C.M.

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let ear'h receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the world, the Saviour reigns;
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains,
Repeat the sounding joy.

QUESTIONS, etc.

Recite TITLE, TOPIC, GOLDEN TEXT and OUTLINE.

1. *The necessity of the new birth*, v. 7. What is meant by the new birth? How had Jesus shown its necessity? v. 3-5. Why is the new birth necessary?
2. *The mystery of the new birth*, v. 7-10. What is meant in v. 7 by "marvel not?" Why did Nicodemus marvel at what Jesus said?

How is the wind like those born of the Spirit?

3. *The testimony of the new birth*, v. 11-13.

What is "testimony"?

Whose testimony about the new birth have we in v. 11-13?

Why is Jesus specially able to tell about these things?

How can man testify to the new birth?

4. *The medium of the new birth*, v. 14-17.

What is a "medium"?

What medium of the new birth can you find in v. 14-17?

What mediums of the new birth are named in v. 5?

Our Topic gives another name to the new birth—recite it.

How may we become children of God?

[Recite Golden Text.]

Where in this lesson do we learn—

1. **That we may stand high in the world, and yet know little of religion?**

2. **That we may have many good things, and yet be without the necessary thing?**

QUESTION AND ANSWER.

7. *What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer?*

The whole word of God is of use to direct us in prayer; but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called the Lord's Prayer.

8. *Repeat that prayer.*

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

NOTES, ILLUSTRATIONS, AND LESSONS.

UNTO THEE, ver. 7. Nicodemus, ver. 1. He was, (1) a "ruler," (2) a "Pharisee," (3) a "man." Jesus taught him not as a "ruler," or "Pharisee," but as a "man." See ver. 3. *Nicodemus*. This name was common in Christ's day. This man was one of those believers mentioned in John 2. 23, 24. He was sincere though timid, and hence he came to Jesus craving more light. His cautiousness is conspicuous in all this interview. He is afraid of going too far. He had to contend against the Pharisaic

training, his proud associations, fear of his fellow-officials, an over-cautious disposition, and an evil heart. And yet he was honest in purpose, and true to his better impulses. The evidence of development in his faith appear in John 7. 50; 19. 39.

... The Lord "searches him with a glance, and knows that his whole conception concerning the kingdom of God now approaching is sensuous and worldly, and no more corresponds to the truth of things, than that of the babe before birth corresponds to the world of light and colors. A new range of senses must be touched and opened; he must be born into a new world before he can know what the kingdom of God is."—*Scorn*.

MARVEL NOT, ver. 7. In a world of surprises, freighted with mysteries, why should one marvel at unfoldings of realities concerning another world? The beginnings of this life are marvellous. Why should not the beginnings of a new life be equally marvellous?

YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN. Here is summed up the requirement already pressed twice upon his hearer, vers. 3, 5. And not to him only does this requirement come, but it applies wherever "a man" is found. It is broad as humanity. To "be born again" is not to patch up, and stimulate, and rectify an old life, but it is to begin a new life. It is to have a new beginning in relation to God, and spiritual things. Without this neither in its earthly manifestations, nor in its heavenly, can the kingdom of God be seen. 2 Cor. 5. 17; Eph. 4. 24. This is a second birth, as distinct from the first. (1.) It is from above, as distinct from that which is purely of the world. (2.) It is of God, as distinct from that which is of man. (3.) It introduces to spiritual life, as distinct from that which introduces to physical life. (4.) It is to those who received Jesus, as distinct from all the world besides. John 1. 12. 13.

... "The communication of a new principle of life. It is hard, perhaps impossible, to define what life is. Yet every man is familiar with its manifestations. He sees and knows the difference between death and life, between a dead and living plant or animal. And, therefore, when the Bible tells us that in regeneration God imparts a new form of life to the soul, the language is as intelligible as human language can be in relation to such a subject."—*Dr. Hodges*.

THE WIND BLOWETH, ver. 8. This illustration was very likely suggested by the sound of the night wind without. Jesus specifies three points in which the Holy Spirit's work in regeneration is like the wind: (1.) *Independence*

of movement, "where it listeth." (2.) *Distinctness of effect*, "thou hearest the sound." (3.) *Its surpassing our comprehension* as to its origin and its destiny, thou "canst not tell," etc. A fourth analogy is certainly worthy of mention, though not in point with Nicodemus, namely, the *ear-vellets* in the power. Sometimes gentle as a zephyr, again raging as a tornado. Nicodemus admitted all this. Why, then, should he wonder at the Spirit's work, or stumble because he could not comprehend it?

... "We cannot see the dew fall during the summer night, but we see the drops next morning. We cannot see the magnetic needle of the compass, but we see the little piece of steel ever pointing to the north. Gazing on the face of a watch you cannot see the mainspring, but you know that it is there."

HOW CAN THESE THINGS BE? In ver. 4 the question of Nicodemus was essentially an objection. In ver. 9 it is a humble inquiry. It confesses virtually that one may reasonably expect just such a change to be wrought, but "How is it to be had? what is the cause, and where may it be found?" How broad a difference between the spirit of cavil and that of earnest inquiry. The latter is the pathway to heaven. The former, the pathway to ruin. The struggle with Nicodemus is now over. He has surrendered to Jesus, and henceforth he sits at Jesus' feet, and listens to the grandest discourse that ever fell on mortal ears. He had now truly *come* to Jesus. He was, therefore, about to *see*, according to the promise.

ART THOU A MASTER, etc., ver. 10. One who taught others the way of life, and yet so ignorant of its first requirement. What fearful neglect! Ah, did Jesus but begin to press preachers, and Sunday-school teachers, and parents thus, how many like Nicodemus would stand abashed before him. This address of Jesus could but impress his hearer with a sense of personal ignorance, and thereby sharpen his appetite for what Jesus had to teach.

VERILY, VERILY, ver. 11. How solemn a matter it is to teach a listening soul. Jesus felt it, and so opened his address with this impressive assurance. Here is a hint for teachers of all kinds. **I SAY UNTO THEE**. How closely personal. "I" to "thee," not offensively personal, but lovingly, earnestly, intensely so. **WESPEAK . . . AND TESTIFY**.

Here other teachers may learn a lesson. What we *know* and have *seen* we can teach to best advantage. Thorough study, careful observation, and deep Christian experience enable us to know things which are most worthy of being known, and, therefore, most worthy of being taught by us to others.

EARTHLY THINGS . . . HEAVENLY THINGS, ver. 12. Jesus having brought his pupil to a low position, now begins to lead him up. By the "earthly thing," of which he had told and which had not been received readily, he means that new birth, without which nothing heavenly can be seen or entered into here or hereafter. But above all these are "heavenly things." There are matters of far higher grade. How shall these be believed? He would so point out the ascents to be made, and so prepare the way. Heb. 6. 1-3, does a similar work. Teachers may hence learn to lead up from the elementary to the higher ranges of truth, and work, and living. **FROM HEAVEN**, being eternal and pre-existent. **IN HEAVEN**, being at present there and on earth. How well qualified to teach!

AS MOSES, vers. 14. 15. Here is, first, an appeal to fact with which his hearer was familiar. An apt use of illustration. The illustration did not need to be illustrated. Then follows a direct application of it to himself, and an exposition of its purpose, which was high above that of the uplifted serpent as "eternal life" is superior to "temporal life." What a disclosure! This is fundamental to the new birth, for that begins spiritual life, and this culminates in eternal life. A sight of the brazen serpent was a new birth physically to the beholder. A sight of Christ Jesus is a new birth and a new life to the sinner. This is the initial truth, then, in all spiritual teaching. "How can these things be?" finds answer only in presenting, first of all, an uplifted Christ. Num. 21. 4-9.

GOD SO LOVED, vers. 16, 17. Another sweep of the divine Teacher's hand and another peerless picture stands before us. Why was the Son so lifted up? the wondering pupil is supposed to ask. In answer comes this heavenly response, "God so loved the world," etc. Who could know this but the only-begotten Son? And the purpose of this love is, that any who believe me may be saved. Farther back no teacher could go; farther out on either

side none could go; farther on none could go, for Christ founds his lesson in God's eternal love, he applies its scope to all the race, and he declares its effects for all eternity.

We may learn to preach and to teach a full gospel, founded in God's love, offered to a fallen race, saving forever. "But God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Rom. 5. 8. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. 8. 32.

The new birth is that which begins the new life. There is no other way to begin it. He who is not born again cannot live the new life, nor can he enter into eternal life, which is its natural sequence.

The way to the new life is opened through Christ. It originates in God's love. Its condition is looking to Christ lifted up on the cross.

Would I have eternal life? I must have spiritual life. Would I have spiritual life? I must be born again? Would I be born again? I must look to Christ crucified. Would I look to Christ crucified? I must cease to look to my sinful self.

.....One thing in Nicodemus is praiseworthy.

He came directly to Jesus, and dealt with him face to face. So say we to every one, Go thou and do likewise.

English Teacher's Notes.

It will be a great help to the teacher if he takes this passage, perhaps the most important in the whole Bible, and one around which countless controversies have raged, *historically* rather than doctrinally. That is, let the lesson be on *Nicodemus*, and take our Lord's doctrinal statements as spoken first to him. By this method not a little light is thrown on the passage, and it invests what many might consider "dry" with the interest of a narrative.

But first, what does the phrase in the third and fifth verses, "kingdom of God," mean? *Not heaven*—at least not primarily; but the new dispensation, or rather that which the new dispensation introduced, the company of those who received Jesus as their King, in other words, the Church. The "kingdom of God" under the old dispensation was the Jewish nation, and when the Jews heard that the

"kingdom of heaven" was at hand, they thought it meant their deliverance from a foreign yoke, and the re-establishment of the theocracy. But the new kingdom was to be, not the literal but the spiritual Israel, the aggregate of Christ's loyal subjects every where. If any one doubts the correctness of this view, will he just take a concordance and examine all the passages where the expressions "kingdom of heaven," or "kingdom of God," or simply "the kingdom," occur? See especially Matt. 3. 2; 12. 28; Mark 9. 1; 10. 15; 12. 34; Luke 17. 21; Rom. 14. 17; Col. 1. 13; Rev. 1. 9. Of course heaven is the consummation, the perfect completion, of the kingdom; hence many of the passages do refer to heaven, at all events in their full sense. Our third and fifth verses are quite true as applied to heaven; still, to *Nicodemus*, they were designed to mean the spiritual Church, the company of true disciples.

Now, whoever was admitted into Messiah's kingdom when he should come, Nicodemus would have no doubt that *he*, a strict and learned Pharisee, would be admitted as a matter of course, nay, that he would have a high place in it. This complacent assurance Jesus shatters at one blow—"You must be *born again*—without that, no admission." And then we find four things told to Nicodemus, and to us, about this new birth:—

1. *What is it?*

First of all, what would Nicodemus suppose it to be? He knew better than the foolish question in ver. 4 would indicate. The phrase "born again" was a common one among the Jews. It was applied to Gentile proselytes when they were baptized and admitted to the privileges of the Jewish covenant, (some curious baptismal customs are mentioned in the Talmud.) Their former life was to be regarded as nothing; they were considered just born. But what would startle Nicodemus was the idea of *Jews* requiring such a fresh start as could be called a "new birth." He might indeed allow that "publicans and sinners," though Jews, might need it; and he might approve of John the Baptist taking upon him to baptize such in token of their leading a new life. But *he!* a "master of Israel!"—by what strained figure of speech could it be said of *him* that he must be "born again?"

And therefore Jesus explains his meaning in the fifth verse, which may be thus paraphrased: "Yes, I do mean that you should have sub-

mitted to John's baptism as a sinner; I do mean that if you are ashamed to be thus 'born of water,' you cannot be my disciple. But I mean also something much greater and deeper. Even submitting to this humiliating rite will not save you. Being born of water is useless of itself. You must be *born of the Spirit*—heart, feelings, desires, will, life, all must be new—you must be a *new creature*, have a new nature created within you."

2. *Where does it come from?*

The sixth verse answers this question. Nicodemus had puzzled about a bodily birth—"How can a man be born when he is old?" Jesus says, in effect, suppose he could be, what use would it be? That which is born of the flesh is flesh. A man born over again would still have the old sinful nature. You must be born of *the Spirit*. See John 1. 13; Rom. 8. 5-9; 1 Pet. 1. 23.

3. *How can it be seen?*

Verse eight gives the answer to this. Just as, on a quiet, calm day, you cannot tell the direction of the soft breezes that make the tree-tops rustle—(the Greek word means a soft breeze)—and yet you know by the sound and the motion of the leaves that there *is* a breeze; so when a man who has not cared about God begins to look and speak, and act as if he did care, (like the motion of a sleeper as he wakes), you know it is the Spirit's work; you cannot see him, but you see and hear what he does. See Gal. 5. 22, 23; 1 John 2. 29; 3. 9, 14; 5. 1, 4, 18.

4. *How may we get it?*

The rest of Christ's discourse is devoted to answering this. If all need the new birth, it is because all are sinners. Then all deserve God's wrath—yes, even Nicodemus. But (ver. 16) *God loved the world*, (Jews and Gentiles alike), and sent his Son. Who, then, will be saved? "Whosoever believeth." So it is by believing in Jesus that we are born again.

In applying this lesson, the chief difficulty is that children do not see the importance of the new nature, because—whatever they may be taught to *repeat*—they do not *realize* that their nature is sinful. Perhaps an illustration like this may touch some: As the tiger-cub, though harmless, has in it a ferocious nature which will be developed *in time*, so is it with you and sin: pray, then, for the new heart *now*—the change will be harder as you grow older.

For Senior Scholars.

1. THEMES FOR BIBLE READINGS.

1. REGENERATION—ITS DEFINITION. 2 Cor. 5. 17; Rom. 6. 4; Eph. 2. 1, 5; Ezek. 36. 26; Eph. 4. 24.

2. REGENERATION—ITS NECESSITY. John 3. 6; Rom. 8. 7, 8; Matt. 18. 3; John 3. 3.

3. REGENERATION—ITS AUTHOR. John 1. 13; 1 Pet. 1. 3; 1 John 2. 29; John 3. 6; Titus 3. 5.

4. REGENERATION—ITS MEANS. James 1. 18; 1 Pet. 1. 23; 1 Cor. 4. 15; Psa. 119. 59; John 6. 45.

5. REGENERATION—ITS EVIDENCES. 1 John 5. 1; 2. 29; 4. 7; 2 Cor. 5. 17.

6. REGENERATION—ITS FRUITS. Eph. 4. 24; Rom. 8. 29; Col. 3. 10; 1 John 5. 4; R. m. 7. 22.

7. REGENERATION—ITS BLESSEDNESS. Rom. 4. 6-8; 5. 1, 3; 8. 16, 17; 2 Cor. 9. 8; Jude 24.

2. SEPT-THOUGHTS.

1. What is the *change* called the *new birth*?

2. Does it involve change of either *body* or *mind*?

3. What connection or agency have *water* and the *Spirit* of God with this change?

4. In what and how many particulars does the *mind* resemble the operation of the *divine Spirit*?

5. Was this a *new doctrine*?

6. Is it a natural, philosophical, or *super-natural* work?

7. Why *necessary* in order to enter heaven?

8. How *critical* and *extensive* is the change wrought?

9. Can any process of *education* or *culture* accomplish this change?

10. Does the *changed state* exist in connection with a *sinful life*? (1 John 3. 9.)

11. Can this change be *comprehended* without its experience?

12. When we judge of *heavenly* things by *earthly* things what follows?

3. DOCTRINE.

"Regeneration," John 3. 1-6; 2 Cor. 5. 17; Eph. 4. 24; John 1. 12, 13.

Recite ver. 16. Speak of the precious gift of God, and the necessity of a new birth, and then have the school engage for a brief season in silent prayer. While kneeling sing this verse:

More love to thee, O Christ!
More love to thee!
Hear thou the prayer I make
On bended knee;
This is my earnest plea,—
More Love, O Christ! to thee,
More love to thee!

The Primary Class.

When Jesus was upon earth many different kinds of people came to him to talk with him. One night there came to him a great man by the name of Nicodemus. He wanted to talk with Jesus about some of the wonderful things which the Saviour taught. Jesus told him some truths which very much surprised him. He told him that in order to get to heaven he must be born again. It seemed strange to Nicodemus that a man could be born twice, and yet there are many strange things in this world. For instance, the wind is a very strange thing. What makes it? Where does it come from? Where does it go to? Nicodemus ought not to have been surprised at the words "born again," because he was a teacher among God's people. It is not very easy to explain to little people what all this means, but we can try. The new birth is a change from a wicked heart to a good heart, so that we shall no longer love wicked things but holy things. The swearer stops swearing, the liar stops lying, the drunkard gets drunk no more, the thief does not steal any more. It is a new life, and very often the man who is born again seems like another man, a new man.

This, of course, is a very great change, and can only be made by God's power, the same power that causes the wind to blow in a way we do not understand. We cannot make ourselves new creatures any more than the people in the wilderness who were bitten by the fiery serpents could make themselves well. Do you remember that story? We had it in a lesson a long time ago. Now listen while I tell you about the Brazen Serpent. [Here let the

teacher give an account of the fiery serpents that bit the Israelites, and of the serpent of brass. A picture of the scene would help, or a blackboard sketch. Then let the class repeat the fourteenth and fifteenth verses.] The way to become changed from a wicked heart to a new heart is to look to Jesus in prayer, just as the poor people who were bitten by the serpent looked up to the serpent of brass. They were in danger; so is every sinner. They could not help themselves; neither can a bad man make himself better. They looked and lived; so a wicked heart may look up in prayer to the blessed Saviour and be made clean and new.

All this shows the great love which God has for sinners. He loved the Israelites, even though they were wicked, and when the serpents bit them he made a way by which they might be healed. So he loves all people, even sinners, and has found a way by which they may become good. [Here repeat the sixteenth and seventeenth verses, and the Golden Text.] Whenever you do wicked deeds, or speak wicked words, or think wicked thoughts, ask the Lord Jesus to forgive you, and to give you a new heart, and to make you better. Here is a little prayer which you ought all to learn, and say every day. It is a prayer that was once offered by a king who had been wicked and wanted to be better: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." [After the class have learned this, let all rise, and with eyes closed, heads inclined, and hands folded, reverently and softly offer it as a prayer.]

WHISPER-SONG.

Jesus, now I fly to thee,
Grant a clean, new heart to me,
Pure and holy may I be—
More like thee.
Jesus, now I fly to thee,
Thou canst do all things for me.

Lessons for August.

- Aug. 1. The Water of Life. John 4. 5-15.
Aug. 8. Jesus at Bethesda. John 5. 5-15.
Aug. 15. The Bread of Life. John 6. 47-58.
Aug. 22. Jesus the Christ. John 7. 40-46.
Aug. 29. Freedom by the Truth. John 8. 28-36.

The Prince of My Peace.

Words by Rev. W. F. CRAFTS.

Music by W. G. FISCHER.

1. I stand all bewildered with won - der, And gaze on the o - cean of
2. I struggled and wrested to win it, The blessing that setteth me

love; And o - ver its waves to my spir - it Comes peace, like a heaven - ly
free; But when I had ceased from my struggles, His peace Jesus gave un to

REFRAIN.

dove. The cross now covers my sins; The past is un - der the
me.

blood; I'm trusting in Je - sus for all; My will is the will of my God.

3 He laid His hand on me and healed me,
And bade me be every whit whole;
I touched but the hem of His garment,
And glory came thrilling my soul.

4 The Prince of my peace is now passing,
The light of His face is on me;
But listen, beloved, He speaketh:
"My peace I will give unto thee."

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