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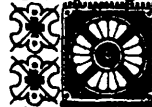
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The Teachers Monthly

Vol. V.

JANUARY, 1899

No. 1

OUR PLANS

THE HOME STUDY SERIES of Lesson Helps enters, with the present issue, on its sixth year. It has received a hearty welcome from the Church, and, now that permanent provision for its continuance has been made by the General Assembly, hopes to fill even a larger place in the Church's life.

Its aim is simple and single, to aid those who study God's Holy Word, whether in the Sabbath-school or the home.

The different publications of the series are so arranged as to fit into and supplement one another. **THE TEACHERS' MONTHLY** is for teachers and Bible-classes, but both teacher and Bible-class scholar may gain much by going through the lesson in **THE HOME STUDY QUARTERLY** as well; whilst the older boys and girls, for whom **THE QUARTERLY** is specially intended, will discover additional matter quite within their reach in **THE MONTHLY**, and parents and older brothers and sisters, who have access to the higher members of the series, will be thereby helped, when they come to use **THE PRIMARY QUARTERLY** in instructing the little ones. **THE LEAFLETS** contain the same matter on the lessons as the quarterlies, and are issued in the separate form for cheapness and convenience sake.

Our plans are not stereotyped. The present issues are but beginnings. The endeavor will be to touch the needs of teachers and scholars at every point.

Those belonging to the Home Department, which is now attracting attention in many localities, will find, it is believed, all necessary assistance in **THE HOME STUDY SERIES**.

In the preparation of the Lesson Helps these three things will be kept constantly in view—they are vital—the spiritual quickening of teacher and taught, the discovery of the precise meaning of God's word in the Book, and the applying of that word to heart and conscience and life.

R. DOUGLAS FRASER.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER IN VARIOUS ASPECTS

By Rev. Principal MacVicar, D.D., LL.D.

I.

THE TEACHER IN HIS STUDY

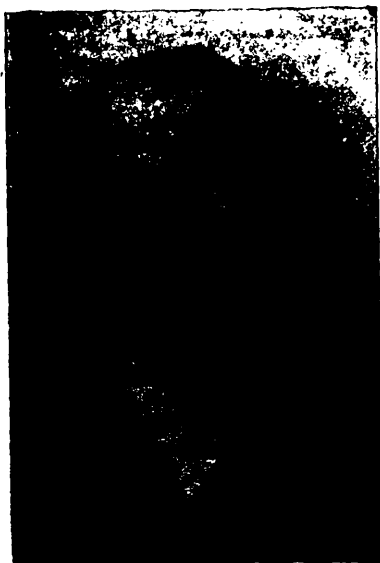
Every conscientious and successful teacher must spend considerable time in study. He can no more do without this than a minister can preach fresh and telling sermons without carefully preparing them.

He should begin to study the lesson early; if possible on the Sunday evening preceding that on which it is to be taught. He should restrict himself at the outset to the use of the Cambridge Reference Bible and "Companion," issued in 1893, *Cruden's Concordance*, and a Bible Dictionary. All other "Helps," published in Philadelphia, Chicago, Toronto and elsewhere, should be scrupulously avoided until he has done his very best with the books named. How is he to proceed?

1. Let him read the lesson repeatedly in as many versions as he knows—English, French, Gaelic, Greek, etc.—until he is able from memory to tell accurately what the lesson is about, and to give details as to persons, places and incidents mentioned. A well-written newspaper article deserves this much attention. How much more is due to the Word of God!

2. Let him now express in clear and simple sentences the thoughts discovered in the lesson, regardless, meanwhile, of order, only making sure that none are omitted and that none are inserted that do not legitimately belong to the passage. Now comes the most serious and essential business of all—to determine precisely the main thought, the great ruling thought of the writer, what is usually called the scope of the lesson. This is sometimes very apparent. For example: The inimitable parables recorded in Luke 15 were delivered by Jesus in answer to the charge made against Him by the Pharisees and Scribes: "This man receiveth sinners and

eateth with them." The parables all bear upon this one point, that of the lost sheep, the lost money, the lost son, and the son that thought himself not lost, and should be treated accordingly. Frequently, however, the dominant thought must be discovered by a comparison of the lesson with parallel records and a diligent study of the preceding and following contexts. No effort should be considered too arduous to make this discovery, for, unless the central thought is found and adhered to, grievous injustice may be done to the sacred writer and the truth of God. I have heard, for example, three sermons on the words: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. 2:3), in which the preachers insisted upon the greatness of the sal-



THE REV. PRINCIPAL MACVICAR.

vation instead of the precise truth urged by the writer, viz., the utter impossibility of escape on condition of neglect.

3. The arrangement of the matter of instruction is an essential part of preparation. Here the main thought must stand as the title or theme of the lesson, and the rest must be placed in natural or logical order as supporting it. For example, the Saviour "spoke a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). Persistent perseverance in prayer is the great truth here ac-

centuated, and all the incidents and drapery of the parable must be interpreted as enforcing this idea. Other lessons or inferences may occur to the teacher, but these should not be allowed to withdraw attention from or to obscure the dominant one.

Revision of the statement and order of subordinate thoughts, as first noted, will always be necessary, and in this work the teacher should, in the first instance, be self-reliant, acting on his own judgment; but, having finished, having exhausted his own resources of thought, he may now, with advantage, consult the best "Helps" at his command. In doing this he should be careful to safeguard his inalienable right of independent thought. Let him not, therefore, lightly set aside what has been impressively borne in upon his own consciousness as the result of prayerful searching of the Bible. The original teacher who makes and follows his own lesson plan, instead of copying one from a Sunday-school paper, and who speaks from the abundance of his own heart, from the treasures of personal Christian experience, is the one who wields power and moulds character.

4. Practical lessons bearing wisely upon the spiritual state and conduct of pupils should be carefully formulated. This implies that his class, and each member of it, is much in the prayerful thought of the teacher. Week by week this is the case, and, therefore, he is never aimless or unexpectant of results. These lessons should be clear and pointed, tersely expressed in words which the child can readily understand. They should rise naturally out of the heart of the subject taught, and be introduced in the course of teaching or reserved to the end. They should never be far-fetched or unduly multiplied. The neglect of this rule is confusing to pupils and apt to engender the thought that a skillful interpreter can make the word of God mean anything he pleases.

5. Vivid and apt illustrations should be framed or selected. The best are those drawn from the Bible, because they carry with them the instructiveness and authority of divine truth. Stories taken from fiction and the daily press should not be allowed to displace the teaching of the Holy Spirit. The purpose of illustrations is to make the truth plain, convincing and memorable. When they fail in these respects they are an en-

abundance which should never find its way into class-room.

Finally, the matter of instruction being all brought out, say about the middle of the week, it now be so thoroughly mastered, so completely made the mental property of the teacher, incorporated in his daily thought and experience, that he can recite it from the middle, the beginning, or the end without the aid of notes or printed leaflets. With prayer and earnest reliance on the promised help of the Spirit he is now ready to teach. But to guard against being found wanting when unexpectedly confronted with questions and difficulties proposed by thoughtful pupils he will do well to enrich his mind with reserve stores of knowledge.

I have been assured by teachers, whom I have lately instructed in the method of work in the study now outlined, that by following it their own hearts and minds have been strengthened and comforted in the knowledge of the Scriptures, and their pupils have shown no disposition to withdraw from their classes.

Montreal

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

By Rev. D. M. Ramsay, B. D.

The fourth gospel bears direct testimony to its own authorship. It professes to have been written by one of those who beheld the glory of the incarnate Word (1: 14) and, indeed, the disciple whom Jesus loved. The twenty-first chapter records a conversation between Jesus and Peter regarding that disciple, and then in verse 20 it is affirmed that "this disciple bears witness to these things and wrote these things." Now it will not be denied that the beloved disciple was one of the first three. But Peter is distinguished from him in this very chapter, while James is excluded by his early death. John alone remains.

The indirect testimony of the gospel agrees fully with this fairly direct profession. It is usual of the defenders of the Johannine authorship to speak from the gospel proof that it was written by (1) a Jew, (2) a Palestinian, (3) an eye-witness, (4) an apostle, (5) John. The contention at present seems to centre about the second and third points. Now his Jewish and Palestinian origin may be argued from his acquaintance with the topography of Palestine, the cast of his style, his

interpretation of Jewish names, his deep sympathy with the Old Testament. That he was an eye-witness is shown by his graphic and accurate pictures of the historical situation in that age, a situation which, after the fall of Jerusalem, so completely passed away that it must have been speedily forgotten.

The most plausible way of escape from the general belief of the Church is perhaps one of the current theories of partition whereby the facts or the discourses are traced to the apostle, while the composition of the gospel is assigned to a disciple of his or the like. The best reply to these theories may be to exhibit the profound unity of the work. The last chapter is evidently supplementary and does not come into consideration, but at the end of ch. 20 the purpose of the author is clearly stated. "That ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in His name." To this purpose our author is true throughout. The prologue occupies the first eighteen verses of the book (1: 1-18). It begins with a description of the Word, *i. e.*, the Son of God, in Himself and in His primary relations to the creation; it proceeds to His rejection by the world, even by His own people; it closes with the glorious issues of reception. "The Word, unbelief, and faith," such appears to Godet to be the plan of the piece.

The body of the gospel may be said to consist of five parts. The first part (1: 19-2: 11) describes Jesus' introduction to His disciples by the testimony of John, by His personal contact with them, by a marvellous sign. His disciples, we are told, believed on Him.

The second part (2: 13-ch. 4: 4) begins with the opening of the public ministry in Jerusalem, and shows Him at work in Judea, Samaria and Galilee. No response is made in Jerusalem, but unbelief is as yet passive.

The great third part (5: 12) exhibits Him in open conflict with the unbelief of men. It opens with two critical incidents at Jerusalem and in Galilee (5, 6). In the one case Christ expounds His relation to the Father; in the other, to men. In the capital, unbelief turns to enmity; in the country, belief in the miracle-worker changes to unbelief in Himself. At the same time, however, the faith of the disciples is put upon a solid footing. Then (7: 10) at the Feasts of Tabernacles

and Dedication the controversy reaches its height. As He reveals Himself more fully, His foes seek once and again to take Him, but He escapes from them. The great sign of the raising of Lazarus brings matters to an issue. The Jewish council, while owning His signs, finally resolves to put Him to death. He himself hails the fateful hour when the Greeks seek to see Him, for it is if He be lifted up that He will draw all men unto Him.

Now He turns to complete His revelation of Himself to the disciples by an act of great humility, by His last discourses and by His high-priestly prayer. This, the fourth part, occupies chaps. 13-17.

In the fifth part (18-20) unbelief appears to triumph, but the victory of faith is complete when Thomas cries out, My Lord and my God.

It is at once evident that this gospel differs in no slight degree from the other three, the so-called synoptists. To a large extent these three agree in the incidents they relate, while the facts of John's narrative are very largely different. Matthew and Luke have much of Christ's teaching in common, while John takes another line altogether. Hence many critics contend that the Jesus of the three is not and cannot be the Jesus of John.

Some dispute the facts which John relates. Certainly it is not easy to construct a satisfactory harmony of the life of Christ; but the narrative of John bears the more distinct marks of historic worth. Not only is the fourth gospel not dependent on the others, but from it alone can we (e.g.) reconstruct the external framework of the ministry of Jesus. It was at Passover that Jesus inaugurated His public work in Jerusalem, (2: 13). At another feast, perhaps a second passover, He went up again to Jerusalem, and healed an impotent man (ch. 5). The occurrence of another passover is noted at 6: 4, in connection with the feeding of the five thousand. The Feast of Tabernacles in ch. 7, and of Dedication in ch. 10, are notable landmarks in His history. Finally, it is at another passover (12: 1) that He is crucified. This is the frame into which the events recorded by the three must also be fitted.

Others again attack the discourses. (1) They differ in style from the synoptic discourses, and are assimilated to the sayings of the evangelist. Of this various explanations might be suggested, but at the very utmost the admission may be made,

with Sanday, that, after lying for fifty or sixty years in the apostle's mind, as it seems certain they did, they are reproduced with a certain unconscious modification of form. (2) They differ also in substance. The Christ of the three proclaims the kingdom of God, the Christ of John bears witness of Himself. This is largely true, but it is not the whole truth; for they also set Christ at the centre. There also the Son is Lord; has power to forgive sins; gives His own law to His disciples; claims entire devotion to Himself; promises to be with His people always; declares that he will come again to judge. But the most striking likeness to the Johannine teaching is found in Matt. 11: 27, "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father, and no one knoweth the Son save Father," etc. After this we ought not to be disconcerted even by such sayings as, "Before Abraham was, I am." The disciple who leaned on Jesus' breast was the fittest to understand fully the inmost mind of the Master. Hence it is he who has written "the gospel of the heart of Jesus." Let us seek, as we study it, to come close to the heart of Him who bled and died for our salvation.

Ottawa

THE I. B. R. ASSOCIATION

The daily readings used in "THE HOME STUDY SERIES" are those selected by "The International Bible Reading Association," and are inserted by their kind permission. The Association has an enrolled membership of 620,000, and is represented in sixty countries. The card of membership is issued in thirty languages. Members are supplied with card of membership, monthly leaflets containing hints on the daily portions, and quarterly circular letters. Branch Secretaries receive a quarterly magazine containing news of the work in all parts of the world. The subscription for members of a Branch of not less than ten is three cents for the year.

Two or three articles on pressing practical problems in Sabbath-school work have been reluctantly held over for want of space. This is a five-Sabbath month; hence room is lacking also for the concluding lesson in the Primary Department. It will appear in the February number, which will be in the hands of the teachers in time for the last Sabbath of January.

A WORD FROM THE COMMITTEE

The General Assembly's Committee on Sabbath-school Publications, Rev. Dr. R. H. Warden, Convener, has sent a circular to ministers, missionaries and superintendents, commending the recently appointed Editor and Manager and the Lesson Helps to the good-will of the Church. The circular concludes with these words, to which further attention is hereby drawn:

"The Committee, in soliciting, as they do, your co-operation in extending the circulation of the publications, would venture to emphasize the fact that they are our own Lesson Helps, published under authority of the General Assembly, and specially prepared for our Canadian Sabbath Schools. They have, therefore, a strong claim on all who desire to see our children, not only well-instructed in the Word of God, but brought up in thorough sympathy with what pertains to the welfare of their own country and their own Church."

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

Our list of contributors present and prospective includes some of the best known Canadian Sabbath school workers, and such as Mrs. Wilbur F. Crafts and Mrs. Woodworth from across the border. Excellent assistance has been given by several experienced pens in the preparation of the lessons in the present issue. Principal MacVicar's article on "The Teacher in His Study" is the first of a series. The next will be on "The Teacher in His Class. Principal MacVicar is himself a veteran teacher, not only of theological students, but in Bible-class. He may well speak with authority.

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Opening

I. SILENCE.

II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.

SUPT. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

SCHOOL. The same was in the beginning with God.

SUPT. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made.

SCHOOL. In Him was life and the life was the light of men.

III. SINGING.

IV. PRAYER; closing with the Lord's Prayer in concert.

V. SINGING.

The Lesson

I. STUDY IN CLASSES.

II. SINGING.

III. RECITATION IN CONCERT of Lesson Title, Golden Text and Heads of Lesson Plan.

IV. REVIEW FROM SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS; SECRETARY'S AND LIBRARIAN'S DISTRIBUTIONS.

Closing

I. SINGING.

II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.

SUPT. 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.

SCHOOL. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

SUPT. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

SCHOOL. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

ALL IN CONCERT. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

III. DOXOLOGY.

IV. BLESSING OR CLOSING PRAYER.

BIBLE DICTIONARY FOR FIRST QUARTER, 1899

A'-bra-ham. Chosen and called of God to a land, a seed, and to be a blessing to all nations.

An-drew. Son of Jona, of Bethsaida, Galilee, and brother of Peter.

Beth-sa-ida. A town near the north-western shore of the Sea of Galilee, in the plain of Gennesaret. The home of Andrew, Peter, and Philip. Distinct from Bethsaida Julius, east of the Jordan.

Oa'-na. A village five miles northeast of Nazareth, surrounded by valleys and mountains, with springs and gardens. The home of Nathanael, and where Christ turned water into wine, and healed the Capernaum nobleman's son.

Ca-per-na-um. A town northwest of the Sea of Galilee in the plain of Gennesaret, on the great Damascus road, having a custom house, military station, synagogue, etc. Here Jesus abode, taught, and did many mighty works.

Ce-phas. See Simon.

Dis-per-sion. The Jews who became scattered through persecution and business enterprise throughout Asia, Europe, and North Africa.

Gal'-ilee. The northern province of Palestine, containing 240 towns and villages of Jews and Gentiles. The scene of Christ's early life and most of His ministry, and from which His disciples chiefly came.

Gen't-iles. A word applied to all non-Jewish peoples.

Is-ra-el. A prince with God, or prevailing with God. The new name given to Jacob after his wrestling with the angel at Peniel. Became the designation of the whole nation; then of the ten tribes after their revolt under Jeroboam.

Ja'-cob. Son of Isaac. Sank many wells. Had twelve sons, who became the heads of the twelve tribes. Learned to live, not by guile, but by grace; so received the name of Israel.

Jacob's Well. On the eastern slope of Mt. Gerizim, one and a half miles east of Shechem, and one mile northeast of Sychar. Nearly on the north is Joseph's tomb, and here the Saviour rested, and spake to the woman of Sychar.

Je-ru-sa-lem. Originally a Jebusite stronghold, became the capital in David's time. The Temple was built there by Solomon. Jerusalem has been destroyed either wholly or partially seventeen times.

John. Son, with James, of Zebedee, a fisherman, pointed by the Baptist to Christ. The disciple whom Jesus loved. Cared for Mary after the crucifixion. Succeeded Paul in Asia Minor. Banished to Patmos. Wrote the Revelation, three Epistles, and the Gospel of John.

John the Baptist. God's gift to Zacharias and Elisabeth. The divinely-appointed forerunner of Christ.

Jo-seph. Husband of the Virgin Mary, and the reputed father of Jesus. A lineal descendant from David. Of great faith, humility, tenderness. Probably died before Jesus began his public ministry. Also JOSEPH, son of Patriarch Jacob.

Ju-de'-a. The province of Palestine south of Samaria and west of the Jordan. The real centre of Jewish life all through the history of the nation. Its capital was Jerusalem.

Mo'-ses. Born in Egypt during bondage of Israelites there, but educated at the court of Pharaoh. Fleed to Sinai, but returned at the call of God, and led Israel out of Egypt, and through the desert. Received the law for Israel from God on Sinai. Died on Mt. Nebo.

Na-than'-a-el, same as Bartholemew. Native of Cana. Found by Philip and brought to Jesus. Devout and guileless. Became an earnest disciple of Christ.

Naz'-a-reth. A town set in a basin in the south of Galilee, where Jesus lived at home for thirty years, and wrought as a carpenter. Here he preached, but did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

Nico-de'-mus. A ruler of the Jews, a teacher of Israel, and a Pharisee. At first came by night to Jesus as an inquirer; then, as a secret disciple, defended Him before the Sanhedrim; and at last boldly brought spices to anoint His body.

Phar'-i-sees.—Separatists. A religious party in the Jewish Church, careful against ceremonial uncleanness, zealous for the outward forms, and the oral teachings of the elders. This zeal was too often associated with sinful and bigoted lives.

Phi'-lip. Native of Bethsaida, Galilee. Called by Jesus when returning from the Jordan. Brought Nathanael to Jesus, answering his prejudice by "Come and see." A man of timid, inquiring mind.

Sam-a-ri'-a. The capital city of Northern Israel. Name came by degrees to be applied to the whole district.

Sam-ar'-i-tans. Descendants of foreigners introduced into Israel after the exile, and of the remaining Israelites. Baffled in their wish to share in rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem, they built a rival temple in Mt. Gerizim, and remain to this day hostile to the Jews.

Si-mon Pe'-ter. Son of Jona, and brother of Andrew. Brought by his brother to Christ. The apostle of impulse and hope. The first to confess, and the first to deny, his Lord. Afterwards became a very rock as an apostle. Wrote two epistles.

Si-lo'-am. A pool at the southern base of Ophel, receiving, by a long conduit, water from the intermittent spring, Enrogel, in the hill. These waters were thought to cure diseases.

Sy'-char. A village at the eastern base of Ebal, one mile east from Shechem and Jacob's well. The home of the Samaritan woman who received the water of life and brought many to know the Lord.

Ti-ber'-i-as. In O.T. Chinnereth. In N.T. Galilee or Tiberias. Called, like the town, after Tiberias Cæsar. It is an oval expansion of the Jordan, about twelve miles long by five wide. At had many towns on its banks. It was exposed to sudden storms from the mountains.

International Bible Lessons

Studies in the Gospel by John

FIRST QUARTER: LESSON CALENDAR

1. January 1	Christ the True Light.	John 1: 1-14.
2. January 8	Christ's First Disciples.	John 1: 35-46.
3. January 15	Christ's First Miracle.	John 2: 1-11.
4. January 22	Christ and Nicodemus.	John 3: 1-16.
5. January 29	Christ at Jacob's Well.	John 4: 5-15.
6. February 5	The Nobleman's Son Healed.	John 4: 43-54.
7. February 12	Christ's Divine Authority.	John 5: 17-27.
8. February 19	Christ Feeding the Five Thousand.	John 6: 1-14.
9. February 26	Christ at the Feast.	John 7: 14, 28-37.
10. March 5	Christ Freeing from Sin.	John 8: 12, 31-36.
11. March 12	Christ Healing the Blind Man.	John 9: 1-11.
12. March 19	Christ, the Good Shepherd.	John 10: 1-16.
13. March 26	REVIEW.	



LESSON I.

CHRIST THE TRUE LIGHT

Jan. 1, 1899

I. John 1: 1-14 Commit to Memory vs. 9-12. Study also John 1: 31, 8: 12-18, 12: 44-50

1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
 2. The same was in the beginning with God.
 3. All things were made (1) by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.
 4. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.
 5. And the light shineth in (2) darkness; and the darkness (3) comprehended it not.
 6. There (4) was a man sent from God, whose name was John.
 7. The same came for (5) a witness to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe.
 8. He was not (6) that Light, but was sent to bear witness of (6) that Light.

9 (7) That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.
 10. He was in the world, and the world was made (1) by him, and the world knew him not.
 11. He came unto (8) his own, and his own received him not.
 12. But as many as received him, to them gave he (9) power to become (10) the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:
 13. Which were (11) born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
 14. And the Word (12) was made flesh, and (13) dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of (14) the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.

Revised Version—(1) Marg. Through; (2) The darkness; (3) Apprehended; Marg. Overcame; (4) Came; (5) Witness; (6) The; (7) There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man coming into the world; Marg. This true light which lighteth every man was coming; (Marg. again, Every man as he cometh.) (8) Greek, His own things; (9) The right; (10) Children; (11) Marg. Begotten; (12) Became; (13) Greek, Tabernacled; (14) Marg. An only begotten from a father.

GOLDEN TEXT

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men."—John 1: 4.

* DAILY READINGS.

- M.—John 1: 1-14. Christ the true Light.
 T.—John 1: 15-24. John's Witness.
 W.—John 1: 25-34. The Son of God.
 Th.—1 John 1. Life and Light.
 F.—1 John 5: 9-12. Life by Christ.
 S.—John 8: 12-18. Light of the World.
 S.—John 12: 35-46. Receive the Light.

LESSON PLAN

CHRIST THE TRUE LIGHT.

I. IN HEAVEN, 1-4 (a).

The Eternal Word; With God and God; The Creator of all The fountain of life.

II. IN THE WORLD, 4 (b) 5, 14.

The Light of men; Made flesh; Dwelling among men; Showing forth the Father.

III. PROCLAIMED, 6-9.

By a God-sent witness; With purpose of grace; As the Light of men.

IV. REJECTED, 10, 11.

By the world; By His own.

V. RECEIVED, 12, 13.

By some; Through faith; To sonship. Of God.

TIME

Date of John's ministry, A.D. 26, 27.

PLACE

The wilderness of Judaea, whither many resorted to the Baptist's ministry.

CATECHISM

Q. 39. What is the duty which God requireth of man?

A. The duty which God requireth of man is obedience to His revealed will.

Q. 40. What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?

A. The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience, was the moral law.

LESSON HYMNS—(Book of Praise) 72, (Ps.), 584, 578, 138, 538

*The Daily readings throughout the year are those of the International Bible Reading Association by whose courtesy they are here used

INTRODUCTORY

Mark begins his Gospel with the ministry of Jesus, Matthew with His birth, Luke with the Annunciation. John carries us back to the pre-existent life that was "in the beginning with God."

It is natural; for John was the disciple who was most beloved and loved most, and therefore had deepest insight. His Gospel is more taken up with the thoughts and words of Jesus than with His doings, and was written to show His Divinity, and set Him forth as the Divine Life Giver. It is the gospel of the Son of God. "These are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in his name." (Ch. 20: 31.)

EXPOSITION

V. 1. "*In the beginning.*" The words with which the Book of Genesis also opens; but when the world began to be, the Word was already in existence. "*The Word.*" Greek "*Logos,*" which means a word or utterance of the living voice. The expression, the "Word of the Lord," was used by Jewish writers in the time of Christ as a synonym for Jehovah, especially for Jehovah as manifesting Himself to men, "God in expression." "The Word" was also used in some of the religious philosophies of John's day. John under the guidance of the unerring Spirit of God here makes known at first hand the true nature of the Word.

"*The Word was with God.*" A separate personality. "*The Word was God,*" truly Divine.

"*Was God.*" Not a God, which would have been abominable to Jewish ears.

V. 2. "*Was with God.*" The repetition, as does also the Greek preposition for "with," suggests more than the mere existence of the Word side by side with God. It betokens personal intercourse, fellowship, communion, mutual love.

V. 3. "*Made by Him.*" John is in no doubt. The Word is the Creator. "In Greek philosophy the problem was to ascertain by whom, of what and in view of what the world was made" (Dodds). John supplies the answer, "*All things were made by Him.*" In the first clause of the verse we sweep the universe with a telescope, and to its utmost bounds, we discover only the work of His hands. In the second clause we search creation with a microscope, and find no atom that He has not formed.

V. 4. "*In Him was life.*" To the student of science the origin and nature of life are a profound mystery. The Bible teaches us that, in all its forms, it comes from God, from Him who alone "has life in Himself" (ch. 5: 26).

"*The life was the light of men.*" When God made man in His own image He infused into him

such life—life in its highest form and most abundant measure—that man was enlightened somewhat as God himself is enlightened. "God is light." Where this light exists, what is beautiful, true and good is seen and approved and followed. Such was the condition of man before the Fall.

V. 5. "*The light shineth in the darkness.*" With the Fall and sin came darkness. Man lost the knowledge of God and the love of good. But the eternal, self-existent light had not perished; and, in the darkness, it was still shining. (Heb. 1: 1.) All the various forms of revelation which God gave the world under the old dispensation were beams from the Word, who is The Light.

"*And the darkness apprehended it not,*" i.e., did not lay hold of and use the Light. The mass of mankind still lay without knowledge of Divine truth and without will to follow it.

V. 6-8. The Evangelist is giving in a condensed, but orderly, way the history of Redemption. In the five verses preceding he brings us from the Beginning to the Incarnation, but before he tells us of the Incarnation, for *clearness and completeness' sake*, he must speak of the Forerunner, the God-sent "*witness,*" the Incarnate Word.

John the Baptist's ministry had made a sensation in Judea. Some, indeed, thought him the Messiah. They were mistaken. "*He was not the Light, but came that he might bear witness of the Light.*"

V. 9. There are different renderings of this verse. That of the R. V. margin is excellent. "The true light which lighteth every man was coming into the world"; even while John was bearing witness and some were mistaking him for the Light.

"*The true light.*" Patriarch, psalmist, prophet, had all revealed some portion of truth. But these were "broken lights." They were but planets shining with reflected brightness. Now the dawn had come; the Sun, the true Light, the Source of all light was rising.

"Which lighteth every man." Perhaps, as Godet, "enlightening every man, illuminating him by the sublime intuition of the good, the beautiful and the true."

V. 10. "And the world knew him not." Not even the intelligent world, the world of men, to whom light had once been given, recognized their Creator when He came.

V. 11. "His own." In the first clause, the Greek words "his own" are neuter plural, literally "his own things." The land, the city, the temple, the institutions, the people were all chosen and appointed by God, God's own. (Ex. 19: 5; Deut. 7: 6; Matt. 21: 33, etc.)

"He was in" the world; but to his own he "came" in a special way.

"His own." In the second clause, the words are masculine plural, "His own people" "received him not," although they knew who He was; as in the parable, Matt. 21: 38.

V. 12. "As many as received him." There were individuals who received Him.

"Power."—(Margin and R.V. "right.") The word signifies right, title or warrant, and this carrying with it the power.

Note how man's act and God's power are conjoined. They became children of God when they believed. Their faith was their own, and yet faith is the gift of God (Eph. 2: 8) and the new birth into God's family was the result of God's will and power (v. 13) (cf. Phil. 2: 12, 13).

V. 13. "Not of blood... flesh... man." In the new birth there is no question of descent as from Abraham or of any human relationship. All is at first hand from God.

V. 14. The great fact already stated—the coming of the Eternal Word into the world, is now more fully declared. (Note the parenthesis in the mid-

dle of the verse. "Full of grace and truth" refers not to "the Father" or "glory" but to "the Word." We shall discuss the rest of the verse first, the parenthesis later).

"The Word was made flesh." (R.V. "became flesh.") The great doctrine of the Incarnation. In "becoming" flesh He did not cease to be what He was before. "He was, and continueth to be, God and man, in two distinct natures and one person." The word "flesh," whilst making clear the fact that He possessed a "true body," must not be taken to exclude the "reasonable soul" which was also His. It expresses the totality of man.

"Dwelt among us." Literally "tabernacled," tented, as did Jehovah amongst His people in the wilderness.

"Full of grace and truth." The words correspond nearly to the O. T. expressions "mercy and faithfulness." How wonderfully these are set forth in Jesus Christ! The grace, the mercy, which purposes and plans the welfare of man; the truth, the faithfulness, which brings these purposes to fulfilment.

"We beheld his glory." This is John's personal testimony to the truth just set forth (cf. 1 John 1: 1, 2). Let no one doubt that the Word became flesh: "We beheld his glory," the glory of His personality and character. There was no mistake. He was truly nothing else and nothing less than that Eternal Word, that True Light, which John and his fellow disciples took Him to be; for His glory was "as of the only begotten from the Father."

"His glory." All the greatness and goodness which He manifested. God's glory is the sum of His attributes. (See Shorter Catechism, Ques. 4.)

"The only begotten." See Luke 1: 35.

ILLUSTRATION AND APPLICATION

"In the beginning was the Word," v. 1. How majestically this Gospel opens! There is no attempt at argument. It is revelation pure and simple. Argument comes later on. The words that He spoke and the things that He did are the arguments, and they were written down "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." (Ch. 20: 31.) The opening sentences are the sum of what John learned at the

mouth of his Divine Master, and of what the Holy Spirit, given in full measure on that Master's departure, had further revealed to him

"All things were made by him," v. 3. Read the words slowly. Let them sink in. Follow Him in thought in His great creative acts. The Almighty and, if mighty in making, also "mighty to save." There is a little glimpse given, too, into the chambers of His heart. He made all things, therefore they are precious to Him. He will not

forget the work of His own hands, not even the least thing or the least person.

"God who made the earth,
The air, the sky, the sea,
Who gave the light its birth,
Careth for me."

—Hymn 509, Book of Praise.

"*In him was life,*" v. 4. The Christian religion opens up the source of life. It is no mere philosophy speculating as to the why and wherefore of things. Nor is it a set of rules alone for holy living. It is infinitely more. It is the revelation of life, and of how men, dead in sin, may be made alive through God. None other than this Son of God has ever dared to say, "I am the Life of the World," and no other Gospel is like His; "He that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." (John 11: 25, 26.)

"*The life was the light of men,*" v. 4. Such it was in the bliss of Paradise. Their Creator's life fresh imbreathed into them, our first parents dwelt in the light. Because the life of God was in them they knew and loved and followed the good and the true, and walking in the light their happiness was complete. They rejoiced in all the good things which God had made. The light was shining; the world was full of light and joy.

In another sense also Christ's life was "the light of men." While on earth, wherever He went, He shed about Him the radiance of perfect candor, of sweet reasonableness, of tender compassion, of patience. His light shone in the darkness. He expects the same of those who profess His name. — "I am the light of the world"; "Ye are the light of the world. . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." (Matt. 5: 14, 16.)

"*For a witness,*" v. 7. A most honorable service. A service passed over to His disciples, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me" (Acts 1: 8). It falls to us also to so confess Him before men. It is thus men are to be most certainly won to the Saviour.

"*That all men through him might believe,*" v. 7.

"God loved the world of sinners lost
And ruined by the fall;
Salvation full, at highest cost,
He offers free to all."

—Hymn 129, Book of Praise.

It is a delightful exercise in arithmetic to count the "whosoever" of the Bible.

"*He was not that light,*" v. 8. It requires grace to take a second place. John the Baptist, as we shall read a little farther on (v. 15, 20-27), possessed that grace, and thereby stands as an example. There can be but few leaders. How ludicrous to envy them, or to refuse to serve except in the place of honor. Such a thing should not once be named among Christ's followers, for any position in His service is an honor, and those who possess only the talent for an interior place do better work there than as leaders.

"*Which lighteth every man,*" v. 9. A text which has bred much controversy. It is called the "Quaker's text," because on it "the Quakers found their doctrine that every man has a day of visitation, and that to every man God gives sufficient grace." (Expositor's Greek Test.) All will, however, agree that, whilst the world is dark, it is not all dark. The Eternal Light is still shining with subdued but steady radiance. It may be discerned by those who have eyes to see, in the goodness of God, in the rain from heaven, in the fruitful seasons which fill men's hearts with food and gladness. In conscience, too, not utterly silenced, it makes its existence known.

"*His own received him not,*" v. 11. Think out the perils of proximity and familiarity and privilege.

"*Full of grace and truth,*" v. 14. After such fashion, says John, did the Word "dwell among us." Picture the apostle in his old age looking back on those three years of precious intimacy, now so long past. He recalls every lineament of the features of the Man of Nazareth; listens again to his accents of love; trembles, as that voice becomes stern in the denunciation of wrongdoers; wonders afresh at the miracles of mercy; tarries once more in the upper room and in the Garden and on Golgotha. "Full of grace and truth," He was indeed. All who have known and loved the Saviour of men give like testimony. None have ever been disappointed in Him.

TOPICS FOR BRIEF PAPERS

To be assigned the Sabbath previous. Only one topic should be given to each scholar. Some times all may be asked to write on the same topic. The papers to be read out in the class.]

1. Prove that Jesus is Divine.
2. John the Baptist as the forerunner of Christ.
3. Why men reject Christ.

BLACKBOARD REVIEW

THE World - - DARKNESS AND DEATH
WORD - LIGHT AND LIFE

LESSON II.

CHRIST'S FIRST DISCIPLES

Jan. 8, 1899

John 1: 35-44. Commit to Memory vs. 35-37 Study also ch. 1: 47-51; Matt. 4: 18-26.

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

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

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

38. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rab'bi (which is to say, being interpreted, (1) Master,) where dwellest thou?

39. He saith unto them, (2) Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

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

41. He (3) first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the (4) Mes-si-as

which is, being interpreted, (5) the Christ.

42. And he brought him to Jesus. (6) And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of (7) Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation (8) A stone.

43. The day following Jesus (9) would go forth into Gal-i-lee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

44. Now Philip was of Beth-sa'i-da, the city of Andrew and Peter.

45. Philip findeth Nath-an-a-el, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nar-a-reth, the son of Joseph.

46. And Nath-an-a-el said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nar-a-reth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

Revised Version.—(1) Mary Teacher; (2) Ye shall see; (3) Findeth first; (4) Messiah; (5) Christ; (6) Jesus looked upon him and said; (7) John; (8) Peter; (9) Was minded to go forth.

GOLDEN TEXT

"Behold the Lamb of God!"
John 1: 29.

DAILY READINGS

M.—John 1: 35-42 | Christ's first
T.—John 1: 43-51 | Disciples.

W.—Matt. 4: 18-25. The second call.

Th.—Luke 8: 18-25. True discipleship.

F.—Matt. 5: 13-20. Teaching the Disciples.

S.—John 15: 12-21. Friends of Jesus.

S.—Matt. 10: 22-30. Reward.

LESSON PLAN

CHRIST'S FIRST DISCIPLES: Two Groups.

I. THE FIRST THREE (John, Andrew, Simon).

1. Parting from the old Master, 35-37.

2. Abiding with the new Master, 38, 39.

3. The bringing in of a brother, 40, 41.

4. The designation of a leader, 42.

II. THE NEXT TWO (Philip, Nathanael)

1. Philip called by Jesus, 43, 44.

2. Nathanael brought by Philip, 45, 46.

TIME

Feb., A. D. 27, directly after the Temptation in the Wilderness.

PLACE

Bethabara: a village probably at the ford of the Jordan, nearly opposite Jericho.

CATECHISM

Q. 41. Where is the moral law summarily comprehended?

A. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments.

Q. 42. What is the sum of the ten commandments?

A. The sum of the ten commandments is, To love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves.

LESSON HYMNS (Book of Psalms) 43 (Ps.), 136, 137, 138, 139

CONNECTING LINKS

In the last lesson we learned what the Forerunner had to say about "the true Light," whose life is the light of men, lightening every man coming into the world. In this lesson we are introduced, by the Forerunner, to Him as "the Lamb of God." We witness the winning of His first disciples. We hear His own first recorded word, spoken to every hungry, thirsty, seeking soul.

The first two disciples of the Man of Nazareth were won by the witness John the Baptist bore to Him. Many were looking for the coming of the promised Messiah, and were ready to hail John himself as the Christ, but he said (v. 15), My Successor is my Superior because he was my Predecessor, I am but a voice (v. 23) to tell you of Him whose sandal-thong I am not worthy to untie. The One who sent me to baptize said to me, "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding on Him, the same is he," vs. 33, 34. The Spirit was to descend as a dove, and the sign was so unique that there could be no mistake. The Forerunner and the Successor had not met before (v. 31) so that there could be no suspicion of collusion. The Baptist saw, believed, testified, and so fulfilled his mission.

EXPOSITION

I. The First Three Disciples.

Vs. 35, 36. "The next day," the day after John's first public proclamation, vs. 29-34. John was standing with two of his disciples, and looking—gazing intently—upon Jesus. Contemplating Him as the promised and expected Messiah, he exclaimed, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" The day before he had publicly testified that Jesus was "the Son of God," "the Lamb of God that taketh away—beareth—the sin of the world." "The Lamb of God" is the God-given sacrificial offering, which alone can take away sin. The two disciples would think at once of Isa. 53: 6-7. "There is only one way in which a lamb can take away sin, and that is by sacrifice." (Dods in Expositor's Greek Testament); and only the Son of God can expiate the sin of the world.

V. 37. "The Baptist does not bid them follow, but they feel the attraction which so often since has been felt." (Dods.) They followed Jesus.

V. 38. "Jesus turned." He always meets more than half way those who are coming to Him. Rabbi—literally "My Greatness"—a title of honor for Jewish religious teachers. The writer interprets it for Gentile readers, "Master" or "Teacher." "Where dwellest thou?" The question put probably through shyness, as Dods suggests. They hesitate, even when following, but wish to know where He might be found another time. His quick invitation, "Come and see," terminates their hesitation. Blessed termination!

V. 39. "The tenth hour." The Jewish day, from dawn till dark, or from sunrise till sunset,

was divided into twelve hours, longer or shorter according to the season of the year. The tenth hour would be about two hours before dark.

V. 40. "Andrew," when this Gospel was written in the end of the first century, would be better known as the more famous Simon Peter's brother. The one who is not named John, the writer of this gospel, who modestly leaves his own identity to be inferred. See also ch. 13: 23-25; 20: 2, 21; 20: 24.

V. 41. "First" may mean either that Andrew's first thought was to tell his brother the news; or, that both he and John had set out to find Simon, and that he had found him first; or, that each had set out to find "his own" brother, and that Andrew found Simon first. The first sense seems best. "Messias" is the Greek form for the Hebrew word Messiah, which means, in Greek, "Christ," the Anointed, solemnly set apart, as were the High Priests and Kings of Israel by the anointing with oil. The word is interpreted for the Gentile reader, as is Rabbi in v. 38.

V. 42. "Thou art Simon, etc." Andrew had probably introduced him when he brought him, though Jesus would already know his name, as he knew his character and destiny. "Thou shalt be called Cephas," Peter, rock or stone; as in French, Pierre, a stone, or proper name, Peter (see Mat. 16: 17, 18). Names so given were intended as indexes to character. Jesus knew what Simon was, and what he was to become. The naturally emotional, impulsive, unstable Simon was to become the strong, steadfast, fearless Peter, though Jesus himself never seems to have called him by any other name than Simon.

II. The Next Two Disciples.

V. 43. Jesus had gone to Judea to be baptized by John; He is now "minded" (R.V.) to return to Galilee. "*He findeth Philip.*" Whether before setting out or by the way is immaterial. "*Fol low us,*" be My disciple, imitate Me, learn of Me, take part and lot with Me.

V. 44. This is evidently given as one reason why Philip was called.

V. 45. "*Of whom Moses in the law did write*" (see Gen 3: 15; 22: 18; Deut. 18: 15, 18); and of whom "*the prophets*" did write, (see Isa. 53, etc., etc.). "*The son of Joseph,*"

as He was then commonly supposed to be, His divinity and supernatural conception were as yet known to but few. "*Of Nazareth,*" the place where Joseph and Mary lived and where Jesus was brought up.

V. 46. "*Can any good thing, etc.?*" (Cf. ch. 8: 52.) Nazareth was an out-of-the-way place, not once referred to in the Old Testament, nor in Josephus.

"*Come and see*" is the best answer to such prejudice. Nathanael had an open mind; he came and saw for himself.

ILLUSTRATION AND APPLICATION

"*Looking* (gazing intently) *upon Jesus,*" v. 36. So must every one contemplate Jesus who would direct others to Him. The witness of John was very simple and brief. "It was a small seed, but it has had a mighty growth."

"*Behold the Lamb of God,*" v. 36. This is what might be called the first gospel sermon. It was short and the congregation was small, but it was effective. The whole congregation was converted. Significantly enough, the sermon struck straight for the central truth of Christianity, a crucified Saviour.

The mission of the teacher, as of the minister, is to point others to the Lamb of God. John the Baptist was, in this respect, a model. A famous preacher has said, "Never preach a sermon by which a soul could not find its way to Christ." The teacher should as constantly keep the leading of souls to Christ in view as the preacher.

"*They followed Jesus,*" v. 37. This is what made them disciples; not simply following Him in the way, but all that it led to. It may seem to us it was easy for these two to follow Jesus. It should be far easier for us. "Blessed are those that have not seen, and yet have believed." Why have you not followed on to know the Lord? Is any work more important than working out your own salvation; is any companionship more delightful than communion with the Christ? If you reject the Lamb of God, who will bear away your sin?

"*What seek ye?*" v. 38. "This was the first breath of the winnowing fan." Jesus asks them why they follow, because He wants them to look into themselves. So much depends on the motive, the why. Their answer reveals the need of the question.

"*Where dwellest thou?*" v. 38. "They cannot all at once put their hearts' yearnings and high hopes into words. They want to know more of Him and to see their way more clearly before they commit themselves, before they confess their new-found, half-formed faith.

"*Come and see,*" v. 38. A gracious invitation at once accepted. If the Master was thus accessible how much more should the servant be? He wants all His to echo this precious invitation. The one who comes and sees will almost certainly abide and follow.

"*They abode with him,*" v. 39. As His home was at Nazareth, He was probably the guest of some Judean friend or relative, or possibly, making the best of some cave in the rocks. "The Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." What would curiosity not give for a phonographic record of their talk that evening!

"*He first findeth his own brother,*" v. 41. The first disciple becomes immediately a missionary. One of the surest proofs that we have found the Christ is our desire to bring others to Him, so truly is the missionary spirit the spirit of the true Christian.

"*We have found,*" v. 41, implies John's faith as well as Andrew's. It seems also to imply that they had been seeking. "They that seek me diligently shall find me," Prov. 8: 17. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found," Isa. 55: 6.

"*He brought him to Jesus,*" v. 42. This implies something more than mere telling. Andrew was thoroughgoing, finishing what he began. He was able to bring Simon because he had come himself. The teacher who can merely tell his class about Jesus has little power. He must be

able to say, "I have found the Christ." He must plead and persuade and pray, and never despair till he has brought them all, one by one, to Jesus. Simon was only one, but what a great thing it was to bring such a one! What teacher can know when he may bring a future Peter to Jesus?

"*Thou shalt be called Cephas,*" v. 42. Jesus knew what Simon was and what he was to become; almost the very opposite of what he had been. Have faith in the transforming power of the grace and spirit of God.

"*Jesus . . . findeth Philip,*" v. 43. Andrew findeth Simon, and now Jesus encourages him and the others by finding Philip. "The servant is not greater than his master." He does the work Himself which He wants us to do. Some souls are found by a teacher (John), some by a relative (Andrew), some by a friend (Nathaniel), some by the Master Himself. No one need wait for another to bring him. Jesus says unto all, "Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden," Matt. 11: 28. Whosoever will may come, without waiting to be brought.

"*Philip was of Bethsaida,*" v. 44, and probably, therefore, acquainted with Andrew and Peter. It is most important to win for Christ as many as possible of the same class, or set, or place. The ties of nature, of kindred, and of companionship count in the Christian life, in

Church work. Set your scholars to bring those of their own set to Jesus. Jesus finds Philip that he may find Nathanael, as Andrew had found Simon. "One lighted torch serves to light another and thus the faith is propagated." The closer the tie the stronger the bond of influence; and when the life confirms the lips the appeal of a dear one is well nigh irresistible.

"*Can any good come out of Nasareth,*" v. 46. Even a guileless man may be prejudiced. There is nothing that hinders so many from coming to Christ as prejudice.

"*Come and see,*" v. 46, is a challenge to put Christ to the proof, and it is a standing invitation any one may accept. Acquaintance with Christ will confirm all his claims. Urge on all in your class to "Come and see." If they will but "come and see" they will surely confess Christ as Nathanael did. Come and see what Christ is, what He has done, what He will do for you!

Every teacher should ponder the various ways in which disciples are won for Christ; as many by personal influence and persuasion as by the ministry of John, and only one of five directly by Jesus Himself. There are those who seek, themselves; those who have to be sought and brought; those who are prepared and ready to come, and those who are prejudiced and hence slow to believe; but, all are welcome.

TOPICS FOR BRIEF PAPERS

(To be assigned the Sabbath previous. Only one topic should be given to each scholar. Sometimes all may be asked to write on the same topic. The papers to be read out in the class.)

1. What the Bible says about lambs as sacrifices.
2. The cost of following Christ.
3. How we may bring others to Christ.

BLACKBOARD REVIEW

WAYS TO CHRIST

BY **P**ROCLAMATION OF THE WORD—Andrew, John
 PRIVATE INVITATION—Peter, Nathanael
 PERSONAL CALL—Philip



Lesson III.

CHRIST'S FIRST MIRACLE

Jan. 15, 1899

John 3: 1-11. Commit to memory v. 11.

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

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

3. And when (1) they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

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

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

6. And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after (3) the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

7. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

8. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the (3) governor of the feast. And they bare it.

9. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water (4) 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.

10. And saith unto him, Every man (5) at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have (6) well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.

11. This beginning of (7) miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

Revised Version.—(1) The wine failed; (3) The Jews' manner of purifying; (3) Governor: Marg. Steward; (4) Now become: Marg. That it had become; (5) Setteth on first the good wine; (6) Drunk freely; (7) His signs.

GOLDEN TEXT

"And his disciples believed on him."—John 2:11.

DAILY READINGS

M.—John 2: 1-11. Christ's first miracle.

T.—Mark 7: 1-9. Customs of purifying.

W.—Luke 7: 16-23. Miracles proofs of authority.

Th.—John 10: 31-42. Evidence of Divinity.

F.—Luke 24: 13-18. Good company.

S.—Rev. 3: 14-22. A visitor.

Sa.—John 16: 25-33. Do ye now believe?

LESSON PLAN

CHRIST'S FIRST MIRACLE.

I. THE MARRIAGE FEAST, 1, 2.

The Marriage; The Guests.

II. THE WATER INTO WINE, 3-5.

His mother's part; The servants' part; His own part.

III. THE GOVERNOR'S TESTIMONY, 9, 10.

IV. THE FAITH OF THE DISCIPLES, 11.

CONNECTING LINKS

The finding of Simon by his brother Andrew and his coming to Jesus were upon the day spoken of in v. 35. This was in Judea. The next day, (v. 43) Jesus departs to Galilee, taking with Him Simon, Andrew and John. Philip and Nathanael are added by the way. On the third day after leaving Judea He attends the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee with His disciples, and turns the water into wine. This Cana is most likely the Kefr Kenna of to-day, five miles north east of Nazareth, and some eighty or ninety miles from Bethabara, where John had been baptizing. It was a petty village. The surroundings of the miracle were extremely common-place. The story itself breathes the very atmosphere of affection and kindness, and reveals the tender interest of our gracious Lord from heaven in the humble joys of humble folk.

EXPOSITION

I. The Marriage Feast. 1, 2.

V. 1. "The third day." After Jesus and His disciples had left Judea, v. 43.

"A marriage." A great occasion in the East, as where is it not? As sunset drew near, the bridegroom, clad in fine vestments, supported by his friend (John 3: 29) and accompanied by a host of others, went to the home of his betrothed. She, arrayed in her best, veiled and surrounded by the village maidens, met him at its threshold.

Then by torchlight and with happy clamour of music and shouting, the gay company returned to the bridegroom's home (Matt. 25: 7, 10), there to spend the hours in feast and song. To the more thoughtful Jews "marriage conveyed much higher thoughts than those of festivity and merriment. The pious fasted before it, confessing their sins. It was regarded almost as a Sacrament. Entrance into the married state was thought to carry the forgiveness of sins. It al-

TIME

Feb., A. D. 27.

PLACE

Cana of Galilee—likely the modern Kefr Kenna, five miles north-east of Nazareth, on the road to Sea of Galilee.

CATECHISM

Q. 48. What is the preface to the ten commandments?

A. The preface to the ten commandments is in these words, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

LESSON HYMNS—(Book of Praise) 542, 68 (Ps.), 188, 176, 111, 478.

most seems as if the relationship of husband and bride between Jehovah and His people had always been standing out in the background" (Edersheim; compare also ch. 3:29; Matt. 9:15; 22:1-4; Rev. 19:7, etc.).

"*Cans.*" See Connecting Links and Dictionary. The home of Nathanael, ch. 21:2. "*The mother of Jesus was there,*" and evidently (vs. 3, 5) on terms of intimacy in the household. We are not to forget that it was in the home of the writer of this Gospel that Mary dwelt after the crucifixion (ch. 19:27). How often they would talk over those marvellous three years; and of this, as the first of the miracles, perhaps most frequently of all.

V. 2. "*Jesus also was bidden,*" and went. "Few, if any, incidents in the life of Jesus give us an equal impression of the width of His nature and its imperturbable serenity. He was at this juncture fresh from the most disturbing personal conflict. (The forty days in the wilderness) His work awaited Him, a work full of intense strife, hazard, and pain; yet in a mind occupied with these things the marriage joy of a country couple finds a place." (Dods in Expositor's Grk. Test.).

II. Water into Wine. 3-8.

V. 3. "*When the wine failed.*" Perhaps because of this very addition of Jesus and His disciples to the company. They were poor people, and the provision was limited. It was no uncommon thing, however, for the marriage festival to last a week. (Judges 14:12.) Such a failure would be an extreme humiliation to the bride and bridegroom, and a lasting social disgrace.

Wine was the common drink of that country and time, as it is still. Only by marvellous perversity can this miracle be adduced in favor of our drinking customs. Total abstinence, both for our own sakes and the sake of others, is an eminently Scriptural principle.

"*The mother of Jesus saith.*" Had she not some inkling of His Messianic power? She could never forget the Angel's message before His birth (Luke 1:35). The memory of those strange days was with her, and the thrill of His answer in the temple, "My Father's business!" (Luke 2:49). Perhaps His new-found disciples had whispered to her what had happened at His baptism (Matt. 3:16, 17), and what John the Baptist had said of Him (ch. 1:29, 36). It was a sore strait now, and He was no ordinary man.

V. 4. "*Woman.*" No disrespect. There is even endearment in the term (cf. 19:26; 20:13; Luke 13:12); but it carries a note of distance, too.

"*What have I to do with thee?*" "The true parallel to this passage," says Trench in his "Notes on the Miracles," "and that throwing most light on it, is Matt. 12:46-50." This was the hour of His leave-taking of home and friends, as He set His face to His great life work.



"*Mine hour is not yet come.*" The hour for bringing relief to these friends in distress? or the hour for miracle working? Both. It was not yet come, but, as we shall see, was very close at hand.

V. 5. " *whatsoever He saith . . . do it.*" Mary was not unhopeful, even if checked in her ardor. With deeper than a mother's instinct, "she read a Yes latent in his apparent No."

V. 6. "*Six waterpots,*" great vessels such as may be seen in use in the same locality to-day. "*Purifying of the Jews,*" for washing hands and vessels as a religious act (see Mark 7:2-4), the family on festal occasions producing or borrowing the largest and handsomest stone vessels that could be procured. "*Two or three fkins,*" i.e., quarter-barrels. Each vessel held from 17 to 25½ gallons.

V. 7. "*Up to the brim.*" Possibly treating the matter as a huge joke. But God has His own way of turning even men's merriment to account. The vessels brimming with water before the eyes of the company would silence any suspicion of delusion or collusion when the wine should be drawn out.

V. 8. "The Governor." Literally, the one who had charge of the triclinium or triple couch set round a dining table. "Apparently here the chairman, elected by the guests from among the company; sometimes by lot." (Dodds.)

III. The Governor's Testimony. 9, 10.

V. 9. "Knew not." John had his eye on the main purpose of his gospel; see ch. 20: 30. He will make it clear to the reader that this was in very truth a miracle. "There was the wine. It was no mesmeric trick."

V. 10. The common custom was to serve out the best wine first.

IV. The Faith of the Disciples.

V. 11. "This beginning of miracles." Tradition tells of miracles wrought in His boyhood at Nazareth, but the Scripture testifies that this was the first. The miracles all belonged to His public ministry and were a part of it. Four words are used to designate them, "works" (John 5:

36; 7: 21, etc.), "mighty works" (Mat. 11: 20; Mark 6: 14, etc.), "signs" (as here), tokens and indications of the presence and working of God; and "wonders" (Mat. 24: 24, etc.) This latter name is always used in connection with one of the others, never alone. A miracle is not simply a deed wrought to make men stare, but (putting the various terms together) a wonderful work of power wrought as a sign of the divine presence and grace.

"Manifested forth his glory," as King in physical nature and using His kingly power to save men from shame and to give them joy.

"His disciples believed on him." "Testimony, (ch. 1: 36) directs those who were ready to welcome Christ to Him. Personal intercourse converts followers into disciples (2: 2). A manifestation of power, as a sign of divine grace, converts discipleship into personal faith" (Westcott).

ILLUSTRATION AND APPLICATION

"Jesus was called . . . to the marriage," v. 2. "By His presence there He struck the key-note to the whole tenor of His future ministry." He was no ascetic, such as John the Baptist, living apart from the haunts and ways of men. He was to be one with them in their toil, their sorrows, and their joys. He came "eating and drinking." It is His example, and not that of the man of the "leathern girdle" and the "locusts and wild honey," that it is best to follow. The latter had a high view of life, but Jesus the highest. It is a nobler character that is formed in the world than in a cloister. Besides, is it not cowardly to refuse to take one's share of the common burdens of humanity? It is only by Christ's followers mingling freely with men, in the world, but not of it, that the world can be made Christ-like. Christians are the leaven and "the measures of meal are not to be changed by religiously keeping the leaven from coming in contact with them, but by hiding the leaven in them. We are to cleanse the world by our contact with it, not only in its business, but at its feasts. Only remember that to do that we must maintain our Christian character there, for by that alone can we influence for good those whom we shall meet" (W. M. Taylor).

"When the wine failed," v. 3. When the fulness and joy of life fail, whither shall we go?

Oh, there are such days, barren stretches of dusty highway, when nothing earthly satisfies, and heaven seems far away. Fortunate is it if, at such a time, we know to turn, like the mother of Jesus, to the blessed Man of Nazareth. We shall find, even as she found, that our emptiness shall be turned to overflowing richness. These are the words of one whose soul has been so filled:

"I thank Thee more that all our joy
Is touched with pain,
That shadows fall on brightest hours,
That thorns remain,—
So that earth's bliss may be our guide,
And not our chain.

"I thank Thee, Lord, that here our souls,
Though amply blest,
Can never find, although they seek,
A perfect rest,—
Nor ever shall, until they lean
On Jesus' breast.

—Hymn 195, Book of Praise.

"Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it," v. 5. The shorter and simpler a rule is, the better, if only it fully meets the case. Can anything be more admirable than this? "Whatsoever He saith,"—the living Word, Himself, at once the embodiment of God's mind and the perfect example

of obedience. What He says is an unerring finger-post to the path of duty; yes, and of true happiness. The whole law of life is His commandment.

"*Fill the waterpots with water,*" v. 7. Notice two things here. (1) The economy of miracle. Everything that others could do Jesus had them do, reserving for Himself only the silent, awful mystery of the actual transformation of the simple water into the rich wine; (2) the varied part which each bore in the great work: the mother initiating, the servants filling the waterpots and drawing out the wine and bearing to the governor of the feast, the governor giving his testimony to the wine and therefore to the genuineness of the miracle.

It has never been otherwise in the Lord's service. Only when we have done all that we can and ought to do, can we expect Him to do His part.

"*The water that was made wine,*" v. 9. It is the glory of Jesus Christ to change by His grace (ch. 3: 5; 1 Cor. 15: 10) the sinner into the saint, sons of men into sons of God (ch. 1: 12). As, simply by His presence and power, one natural element becomes another altogether different and, in the eyes of these guests, superior, so does He deal with the human character. Simon becomes Peter. John, the passionate, revengeful (Luke 9: 54; Mk. 3: 17), over-ambitious (Mk.

10: 37), the apostle whose constant theme was love. [Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, describes the slime from dirty footpath of manufacturing town. It is made up of clay, mixed with soot, a little sand, and water. These four elements may be separated from one another. The clay following its own instinct becomes a sapphire, the sand, an opal, the soot, a diamond, the water, a dewdrop or a crystalline star of snow. Thus God transforms the slime of the streets into pure and shining jewels fit for His home in heaven.]

"*Thou hast kept the good wine until now,*" v. 10. In life, as Christ bestows it, the first things are good, but the last, better. Spiritual enjoyment never satiates. A true friendship, a good book, a solemn harmony, fellowship with the Lord Jesus Himself, never pall upon the taste.

"*His disciples believed on him,*" v. 11. We are apt to see only what we are looking for. The governor and the guests in the whirl of the feast saw nothing but a fresh supply of wine. The disciples, with minds on the alert from what they had already learned of Jesus, and with hearts drawn out more and more to Him, saw His glory in the miracle and were led to deeper faith. What a lesson for teacher and scholar as they come week by week to the study of the Word of God and of Him whom that Word makes known!

TOPICS FOR BRIEF PAPERS

(To be assigned the Sabbath previous. Only one topic should be given to a scholar. Sometimes all may be asked to write on the same topic. The papers to be read out in the class.)

1. Describe an Oriental marriage.
2. How Jesus blesses our common life.
3. "To every one his work," (Mark 13: 34).

BLACKBOARD REVIEW

THIS FIRST MIRACLE	POWER	
DISPLAYS THE	GLORY	OF CHRIST
	GRACE	

LESSON IV.

CHRIST AND NICODEMUS

Jan. 22, 1899

John 3: 1-14. Commit to Memory vs. 35-37. Study also vs. 1-31, and compare 2 Cor. 5: 17-31.

1. There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

2. The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these (1) miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

3. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born (2) again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

5. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and (3) of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6. To which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born (2) again.

8. (4) The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest (5) the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Revised Version.—(1) Signs; (2) Anew; May, Or, from above; (3) "Of" omitted; (4) Marg., the Spirit breatheth; (5) Voice; (6) The teacher of Israel; (7) Understandest; (8) Bear witness of; (9) Marg., Many ancient authorities omit "which is in heaven"; (10) May in him have eternal life; or Marg., Believeth in him may have; (11) On; (12) Eternal.

GOLDEN TEXT

"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." John 3: 16.

DAILY READINGS

M.—John 3: 1-13 Christ and T.—John 8: 14-21 Nicodemus. W.—2 Cor. 5: 14-21. A new creature.

Th.—1 Peter 1: 15-25. Born again

F.—Num. 21: 4-9. The brazen serpent.

S.—1 John 4: 7-14. The love of God.

Sp.—Rom 8: 21-39. Mighty love.

LESSON PLAN

CHRIST AND NICODEMUS.

I. AN EARNEST TRUTH-SEEKER,

1, 2. Pharisee and Ruler: To Jesus by night.

II. A PUZZLING DECLARATION,

3, 4. A second birth imperative.

III. THE RIDDLE RESOLVED,

5-8. Of water and of the Spirit: Unseen, but real.

IV. A BLAZE OF LIGHT, 9-16.

To a teacher needing to be taught: Of heavenly things at first hand; The Cross and God's Love.

TIME

At Passover, April, A.D. 30

PLACE

Jerusalem, the Holy City.

CATECHISM

Q. 44. What doth the preface to the ten commandments teach us?

A. The preface to the ten commandments teacheth us, That because God is the Lord, and our God, and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments.

LESSON HYMNS 10 (Ps.): 125; 129; 148; 548.

CONNECTING LINKS

From the wedding feast at Cana of Galilee Jesus went down to Capernaum, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, with "his mother and his brethren and his disciples," (2: 12), and thence, soon after, to Jerusalem, where His real ministry was to begin. This section of the gospel extends to the end of chapter 4 and gives an account of the first great series of His public manifestations, viz.: in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria and in Galilee. He selected the time of the Passover for this first visit to Jerusalem, and His first act there was to cleanse the temple—"My Father's house"—of those who had been desecrating it with unholy traffic (vs. 14-16). His right to such authority having been challenged by the Jews, He established His claim by the working of miracles, which led many to a certain belief in Him (v. 23). Among these was Nicodemus, who appears in the lesson for the day as a seeker after further light.

EXPOSITION

I. An Earnest Inquirer, 1, 2.

V. 1. "The Pharisees." Narrow and bigoted sectarians, relying on form and ceremony rather than on holiness of life. The better class of them had at least this merit, that they were

zealous for the Law of God as they understood it. "Nicodemus." A Jew with a Greek name. (See Dictionary for Quarter.) "A ruler of the Jews." A member of the Sanhedrim or Great Council (7: 50). These

“rulers” should have been the very foremost to acknowledge Jesus’ claim to be the Messiah. How blind even the best of them, such as Nicodemus, were.

V. 2. “*Came to Jesus by night.*” Came to Jesus, to inquire further about His miracles and His mission; came “by night,” perhaps for the sake of a quiet interview; more likely through pudence. It took no small courage in a “ruler” to come at all to learn of this Galilean peasant.

“*We know.*” So far, well. Nicodemus had laid to heart the Baptist’s testimony (1: 19-27), and the “signs” which Jesus had just wrought, (2: 23.) There was no doubt that He was “a teacher come from God.” Thus and freely did the ruler profess his faith; and he was evidently looking to this wonder-worker for some new light from heaven in regard to the Kingdom of God on earth, for which His nation stood.

II. A Puzzling Declaration, 3. 4.

V. 3. “*Jesus answered.*” The “*Verily, Verily*”—“*Amen, Amen*”—is an emphatic prelude.

The answer itself is a riddle,—for without a new birth no man can see the Kingdom of God. Nicodemus was bewildered. Why speak to him of a new birth as a necessity for entrance into the kingdom; for was he not as a Jew and a “ruler” already high up in that kingdom? His view of the kingdom was that it was an outward kingdom. He had never learned, as our Lord now proceeded to teach him, that the Kingdom of God is within. (See Luke 17: 20, 21.)

“*Born anew*” of the Revised Version gives the true sense.

III. The Riddle Solved, 5-8.

V. 5. “*Born of water and of the Spirit,*” or, as in the Revision, “of water and the Spirit.” Perhaps as clear an explanation as any of this much-disputed phrase is as follows: “The Jewish proselyte, as a sign that he put off his old faiths, was baptized on entering the Jewish Church. John the Baptist, employing the same symbolic rite, baptized Jew as well as Gentile, as a sign of purification from past sins. Nicodemus, then, would certainly have understood by Christ’s expression, ‘born of water,’ a reference to this rite of baptism, and by the expression, ‘born of the Spirit,’ a reference to a new spiritual life.” What staggered him most was, probably, the meaning of the words themselves, but the astounding proposition that a Jew and a “ruler” not less

than unregenerate Gentiles, must enter the kingdom through the putting away of their old sins and their old selves.

V. 6. A principle which science has uncontroversially demonstrated, that like begets like and only its like.

V. 7. The emphasis is on “*ye.*” It was a sore truth for Nicodemus, but he needed it, that he and his fellow Israelites, “far ben” as they thought themselves, were really not even members of the true Kingdom of God.

V. 8. Said Coleridge, “By what manner of working God changes a soul from evil to good, how He impregnates the barren rock with gems of gold, is to the human mind an impenetrable mystery, in all cases alike.” Such change is none the less a fact. The motions of the invisible spirit are a mystery no greater than the movements of the invisible world. In each case the process is unseen, whilst the results are patent to all.

IV. A Blaze of Light, 9-16.

V. 9. Again candor, the candor of bewilderment, mingled likely now with a glimmering of insight.

V. 10. In sadness, rather than indignation, that one of the recognized teachers (“The teacher,” Rev. Version) of Israel should have so little penetrated the true spirit of God’s revelations to Israel, and that such blind guides should be the leaders.

V. 11. Here the dialogue ceases. Jesus alone speaks. “*We speak.*” The Divine “We”; or does Jesus include with Himself John the Baptist, whom Nicodemus had heard, but had not obeyed? “*That we do know*” the things of the inward spiritual life.

V. 12. “*Earthly things.*” The new birth, which belongs to the Kingdom of God on earth. “*If I tell you.*” He has returned to the first person singular, because He alone has knowledge by experience of “*heavenly things.*” But of these also He can testify at first-hand. See V. 13 (which read in full). “The Son of man,” a phrase used of Himself by the Messiah and by Him alone. It occurs eighty times in the four gospels. (Cambridge Bible.) It is appropriate here as denoting his accessibility. “*In Answer.*” God as well as man, and therefore in heaven (blessed contradiction!) even while on earth.

V. 14. "If the Son of Man alone has this knowledge, how is it to be disseminated and become a light to all men? The answer is in this verse" (Dods), and the emphatic word in the verse is "lifted up." (Compare John 12 : 32, 33.) "The Cross is the Throne of Christ," from which He not only gives forth light as the Revealer of God, but life as the crucified Redeemer of men.

V. 16. "The Little Gospel," as it has been called, (1) A gospel of *Salvation*; it tells what salvation is. (2) A gospel of *Love*; it reveals the fountain of love. (3) A gospel of *Power*; it displays a divine Mediator and Redeemer. (4) A gospel of *Grace*; it signifies the "Whosoever."

ILLUSTRATION AND APPLICATION

"*The same came to Jesus,*" v. 2. Another instance of the perfect accessibility of Jesus. John and Andrew had been welcomed, and Nathanael. His mother's request for His intervention at the wedding feast had been granted. And now the ruler finds the latch string out, when he seeks admission to His presence. Verily, as He Himself takes pains to declare, "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out" (6 : 37). He is as accessible now as Intercessor as He was then as Teacher and Friend.

"*By night,*" v. 2. How much even a small beginning may stand for. It is not so long until this night searcher is a secret disciple (7 : 50) and a bold confessor (19 : 39).

"*We know that thou art a teacher some from God,*" v. 2. There was genuine candor in Nicodemus. So far as he was convinced he would speak out. Courage is the twin sister of candor. His further development was the following on as candor and courage led.

"*I say unto thee,*" v. 3. "Unto thee, Jew and ruler and all as thou art!" There are no two ways into the Kingdom of God. A thousand avenues lead to the gate, for God guides each man according to his special peculiarities and susceptibilities, but there is only one gate. Moreover, the new birth is imperative. "Ye must be born again," and, as Meyer has said, "When Christ says *must*, it is time for us to wake up." There is no discouragement in this "must" of our Lord's, save to pride and presumption. It is only those who already think they are good enough as they are, who object to being made over again by the divine renewal from within. But what an appeal the doctrine of the new birth makes to those who have discovered how vile they are through sin, yea, and how helpless to become better! What a joy that David's prayer on the lips of the true seeker never fails of its answer, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." (Ps. 51 : 7).

"*How can a man be born when he is old?*" v. 4. "Man's nature is capable of being born again, and that is its peculiarity; there is in man a dormant or dead capacity which nothing but contact with God, the touch of the Holy Ghost, can vivify and bring into actual exercise." Is it thought too strange a thing to be credited? It has its analogue even in "the summer insects, which are twice-born, first of their insect parents, and then of the sun."

"*Born of the Spirit,*" v. 5. And how, pray, is this vivifying presence of the Holy Spirit to be secured? The question skirts the field of controversy. Does faith precede the new birth, or the new birth precede faith? This much is without controversy, that the Holy Spirit is given "to them that ask Him" (Luke 11 : 13); and this much, too, that if we wait in the way of God's commandments as did Cornelius, God will visit us with His Spirit of grace, even as the ship with sails set will catch every breath of wind that blows.

"*That which is born of the flesh is flesh,*" v. 6.

The barren branch is barren still,
Though on each twig, with rarest skill,
We tie on flowers and fruit;
And all in vain we toil and strive
By outward acts to seem to live,
While rotten at the root."

"*The teacher of Israel and understandest not these things?*" v. 10. Let us lay this word to heart. The teacher should himself have learned. What presumption to profess to guide in the way when not ourselves walking in it! And besides, all who "profess and call themselves Christians" will do well to make sure that they have really penetrated into the spirit of the religion of Christ. Here Nicodemus had fallen short. He was a zealous and irreproachable formalist. He had polished the shell to perfection, but had not tasted of the kernel within.

"*Even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,*" v. 14. This saying should be taken with that in v. 7, "Ye must be born again." The latter is the internal "must" of regeneration, the former the external "must" of the Atonement. Regeneration can come only through a sight of the crucified One, and for that purpose was He lifted up on the cross "*that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life,*" v. 15. "*For God so loved the world,*" v. 16. Strive

to pierce the vistas opened up by the word "so." Compare Rom. 5: 7, 8; 1 John 4, 9. It is glorious, but it is no marvel that God should so love, for GOD IS LOVE; but that He should so love me!

"On such love, my soul, still ponder—
Love so great, so rich, so free;
Say, while lost in holy wonder,
Why, O Lord, such love to me?"

TOPIC FOR BRIEF PAPERS

(To be assigned the Sabbath previous. Only one topic should be given to each scholar. Sometimes all may be asked to take the same topic. The papers to be read out in the class.)

1. The Pharisees.
2. "Ye must be born again."
3. The serpent in the wilderness (Num. 21: 4-9).

BLACKBOARD REVIEW

THE NEW LIFE

FREE TO ALL
WHO BELIEVE
ON THE SON OF GOD



LESSON V.

CHRIST AT JACOB'S WELL

Jan. 29, 1899

John 4: 5-15.

Commit to Memory vs. 13-15.

Study also ch. 4: 1-13.

4. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

5. Now Jacob's (1) well was there. Jesus, therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat (2) thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

6. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

7. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy (4) meat.)

8. Then saith the (5) woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a (6) woman of Samaria? for (8) the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

9. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked

of him, and he would have given thee living water.

10. The woman saith unto him, (7) Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

11. Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his (5) children, and his cattle?

12. Jesus answered and said unto her, (9) Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

13. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall (10) be in him a well of water springing up (11) into everlasting life.

14. The woman saith unto him, (7) Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come (12) hither to draw.

Revised Version.—(1) Marg. Gr. Spring, and so in v. 14; but not in vs. 11, 13; (2) Marg. As he was; (3) By; (4) Food; (5) The Samaritan woman therefore saith unto him; (6) Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Marg. Some ancient authorities omit the whole clause; (7) Marg. Lord; (8) Sons; (9) Every one; (10) Become; (11) Unto eternal; (12) All the way hither.

GOLDEN TEXT

"Whoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst," John 4:14.

DAILY READINGS

- M.—John 4: 5-15. Christ at Jacob's well.
 T.—John 4: 16-26. True worship.
 W.—John 4: 27-38. Christ the Revealer.
 Th.—John 4: 39-42. Samaritans believing.
 F.—Rev. 2: 1-7. The Water of Life.
 S.—Isa. 55: 1-7. Without price.
 S.—Isaiah 12. Wells of Salvation.

LESSON PLAN

CHRIST AT JACOB'S WELL.

- I. RESTING, 5, 6,
 II. ASKING, 7-9.

His request; her reply.

- III. OFFERING, 10-14.

"If thou knewest"; "Whence then hast thou?" "In him a well of water."

- IV. BESTOWING, 15.

In answer to her "Give me this water."

TIME

Dec. A. D. 27, some eight months after last lesson.

PLACE

Jacob's well, near by to Sychar, in Samaria, the modern Nablus.

CATECHISM.

Q. 45 Which is the first commandment?

A. The first commandment is, Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Q. 46 What is required in the first commandment?

A. The first commandment requireth us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly.

LESSON HYMNS 27 (Ps.), 146, 136, 565, 36, 418.

CONNECTING LINKS

Soon after the conversation with Nicodemus, our Lord left Jerusalem, and spent the summer and autumn in the country of Judea, probably in different places. Here He taught the people, His disciples baptizing them. The crowds left the ministry of John and flocked to that of Jesus. As He saw that the result might be jealousy on the part of the disciples of John, and that the Pharisees might take advantage of this feeling to make trouble and interfere with His work, He decided to leave Judea and go over to Galilee, where He might have freer fields of labor (vs. 1-3). The Province of Samaria lay between, and Christ and His disciples, travelling on foot, reached Jacob's well near Sychar on the first day's journey (v. 5). This, then, is the scene of the lesson.

EXPOSITION.

I. Resting. 5, 6.

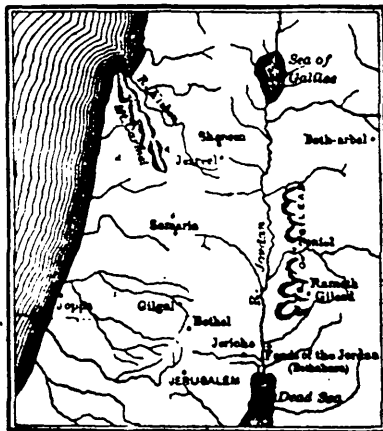
V. 5. "Sychar." See Dict. for Quarter. For "Jacob's well," likewise.

V. 6. "Wearied with His journey." Inexpressibly touching! "The sixth hour." There is dispute as to whether this was the noon hour or six o'clock in the evening. The fact that the woman came alone is rather in favor of the middle of the day, for, had it been evening, the usual time for drawing water, there would likely have been a number of others present on the same errand, and there would also have been more than a short halt on the part of Jesus and His disciples.

II. Asking. 7-9.

V. 7. "A woman of Samaria." A Samaritan woman, though not from the city of Samaria, which was two hours' journey away. "Give me to drink." The request is a testimony to His kinship with us in our bodily needs, and so of deep interest. Moreover it was an epoch-making request. "The effect of this little word was great; it began to overturn the wall which had for ages separated the two peoples" (Lange). Jesus and the woman were alone, for His disciples "were gone away into the city."

V. 8. "To buy meat." (Rev. Ver., "Food.")



The lines were very strictly drawn as between Jews and Samaritans. The Jewish doctors said: "He who eats bread with a Samaritan is as he who eats swine's flesh"; but certain forms of food as fruits, vegetables, and uncooked eggs were exempt. (Godet.)

V. 9. The reply of the woman to His request is in the form of banter, and it is perhaps impossible to say whether it was altogether good-natured banter, or whether there was in it a spice of malice. She, in common with other Samari-

taas, had often been incensed with the arrogance of the Jews, Christ's people, and it doubtless gave her a good deal of satisfaction to see one of the hated people in a place where He was led by bodily distress to crave a favor of her. For "Samaria" and "Samaritans" see Dict. for the Quarter. The Samaritans were more detested by the Jews than the Gentiles themselves; and the *dialikè* was heartily returned.

III. Offering, 10-14.

V. 10. The answer to her taunt was, however, quite unexpected. If she had expected to waken the Jew's anger, she was completely disappointed. The pathos of the situation had touched the Master, the unconsciousness on the part of the woman of the great things within her reach. His compassion goes out towards her. With what exquisite skill he proceeds. "If thou knewest." He arouses her curiosity and His tone and manner are such as to make it something more than mere idle curiosity. "Thou wouldst have asked of Him." What a turning of the tables! "Living water." Literally, and so likely the woman would interpret the words, "Spring water" (Gen. 26 : 19; Lev. 14 : 5).

V. 11. "Sir." (Rev. Ver. Marg. "Lord," Great Sir); fancying He is some great person in disguise. "The well is deep." Conder puts it at seventy-five feet now.

V. 12. "Our father Jacob." Recognized as a common ancestor by Jews and Samaritans alike.

Vs. 13, 14. "Jesus answered." To this new mood Jesus yields a ready response. The water which she had come to bear away in her jar gave only a temporary satisfaction, but that which He had to bestow was in itself sufficient to satisfy and would never be exhausted. This is a great prom-

ise. There is a positiveness in Him who speaks that men love to see. If only He can make good that which He proclaims, what a blessing He has in charge for men; and there was about Him that which distinguished Him from the mere charlatan. "The water of Jacob's well had two defects: it quenched thirst only for a time, and it lay outside at a weary distance, and subject to various accidents. Christ offers water which will quench thirst lastingly, and which will be "in" the person drinking, lastingly quenching human cravings, and always energetically and afresh shooting up. (Exp. Grk. Test.). Isa. 44; Joel 2; Ezek. 47:9; John 7:37-39.

IV. Bestowing, 15.

V. 15. "Sir, give me this water." Was it any wonder that, impressed by his appearance, the woman forgot her light mocking mood; forgot that this was a hated Jew that stood before her; saw only that He seemed to be One who had power to still the unrest that had so often been in her heart and life? And so she cried out, with that intensity of feeling that only comes when men have found that the world cannot satisfy their souls' needs, "Lord, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw."

This is as far as the lesson text goes; but in the following verses we have the wonderful statement made to this Samaritan woman that the Jew who sat by the well was the Messiah to whose advent both Jew and Samaritan were anxiously looking forward. She had been and was a great sinner, but in this Messiah she found forgiveness and peace. Overjoyed with her draught of the living water, she sought to hold it to the lips of her fellow-countrymen.

ILLUSTRATION AND APPLICATION

"Jesus being wearied with his journey," v. 6. There is no truth, perhaps, that is oftener dwelt upon than that the Master is kin to us in our human nature; and yet, like all great and wonderful truths, we do not always use it for comfort as we might. Sometimes, when we are wearied with work, we judge ourselves as though bodily weariness and the quieter frame of mind that to some extent is sure to accompany it were faults. But Christ, who always lived as men should live, was subject to weariness, and felt the need of rest. And there are times when it is our

duty to rest. Resting in its own proper place is just as truly glorifying God as activity; and those who learn to rest when the rest time comes are the people who can make the best use of their time and opportunity in active service.

"There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water," v. 7. It was an ordinary household task, and there is nothing in the narrative to lead us to think that she was in a specially receptive mood at that time; and yet we may be sure there was preparation, although she may not have known it. Our faith in God, who oversees and directs

all, leads us to be sure that He prepares for such "chance" meetings, as we call them, and that the heart that is to be impressed is prepared for the conversation that is the instrument of His working. If we had not this faith, no one could undertake the work of seeking to lead men aright; but when we have such faith we need never be afraid that our efforts shall be in vain. Unthinkingly she drew near, although the greatest and most important page of her life was being turned. Let us learn that no day and no task are unimportant. Each morning when we wake let us remember that perhaps to-day the "great thing is to happen. Be on the alert for the word from God at all seasons.

"Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink."

Jesus was a Jew, but one who rose above the prejudice of His people. We are all subject to prejudices, and it is only the larger natures who rise above them. Doubtless there was many a proud Pharisee who would have suffered any inconvenience from thirst rather than humble himself to ask a favor from a Samaritan woman. A distinguishing characteristic of Christ was that He had a kindly interest in men as men. Even in our day men are prone to limit their sympathies to those who belong to their own particular class, and seem to think that they can do more for their fellows by hating all others. There is a spurious patriotism that thinks to exalt its own nation by condemning and denouncing all other nations. The truest Canadian is not the man who thinks Canada faultless and all other nations unworthy, but who, whilst loving his own best, has a kindly thought for all peoples.

"How is it that thou being a Jew askest drink of me which am a Samaritan woman?" v. 9. Although Jesus rose above prejudice, the woman did not, and would seem to have taken a malicious pleasure in prolonging the inconvenience under which He suffered. She was ready for a controversy, ready to denounce the arrogance of the Jew. It is always very easy to find fault in another, and to exalt one's own virtue in contrast to another's failing. If this was her object, she was disappointed. Jesus at once raised the conversation to a higher level. A lesson we very much need to learn is that it lies in our power to turn the conversation, which has been frivolous or malicious, to that which is profitable. We are so apt to let it drift along low levels. In

this incident we have an instance of the skill that Christ displayed in such work. We may complain that we have not such skill; but if our hearts are set on the better things we shall find that, just as our natures are purified, so shall we be unwilling to waste time in profitless controversy or frivolous talk.

"If thou knewest the gift of God," etc., v. 10. Surely this is true. When one is led to see the truth, he never can be satisfied with less than the best. All the desires of men fade when they are shown the great blessing. And we should seek to be shown "the gift of God," to have our eyes opened that we may see its true value; for if only we have that, we shall never know abiding discontent.

"Jesus answered and said unto her, Every one that drinketh of this water," etc., v. 13. Christ did not despise the good things that are ours through our bodily senses. The water of the well of Jacob was good in its place, but its satisfying power was only momentary, and he whose thirst had been quenched must needs return again and drink. But the water of the well of truth and life, which He had come to lift to the lips of man, had in it the eternal satisfaction for which the souls of men crave. The figure under which the teaching is here given is beautiful in its simplicity and comprehensiveness. There is not one who has not known the distress of thirst, and the gratification with which one may quench his thirst with pure spring water. In fever's delirium, how men have longed for a draught of the water of a spring from which they had drunk in boyhood's days! (2 Sam. 23: 15.) How they have sung of "the old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket, the moss-covered bucket that hung in the well." And so men are delirious with many fevers, and try one draught after another from the "broken cisterns" of earth, and all the time there is flowing this well of salvation that springs up eternally and satisfies the soul of man. It was not entirely a new figure. It has all along commended itself to man's thought. Long ago, the ancient prophet cried, in the words of one who went about the crowded streets with a water-bottle upon his shoulder: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isa. 55: 1).

Many have come proclaiming that they had the one secret that satisfied, and always men are ready to be led astray, so thirsty are they. But above all the false prophets there stands this prophet, Jesus, and makes proclamation of the water that quenches the thirst of men's craving spirits once and forever.

"Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw," v. 15. There are few more pathetic statements to be found in the Bible or out of it, than this poor woman's cry. She knew that the stranger was speaking of something other than natural water, that satisfies the thirst of the body; but she still uses the figure. She had drunk deeply of earth's pleasures, and had found the streams but muddy, and now she craved with great desire the water that would satisfy.

As we study this lesson to-day, let us forget, for the moment, the Samaritan woman by the well, and realize that Christ is speaking to us, even as He spoke to her. He is ready to bestow upon us the gift that is beyond price. It matters not what the figure may be under which He presents it. There is no better expression of what it is than "This is life eternal, to know God, and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent." (See John 17: 3.) We may, like this poor woman, have been offenders against the laws of human society, or we may be perfectly reputable in character, but, whatever our reputation among men, we cannot know peace unless it comes to us through Jesus Christ, who is the manifestation of God, and who bestows eternal life, and so brings God's peace within our souls.

TOPICS FOR BRIEF PAPERS

(To be assigned the Sabbath previous. Only one topic should be given to each scholar. Sometimes all may be asked to take the same topic. The papers to be read out in the class.)

1. The enmity between Jews and Samaritans, how it arose, and to what lengths it was carried.
2. Outline the whole story, vs. 5-42.
3. Christ's cure for thirst.

BLACKBOARD REVIEW

WE NEED
CHRIST GIVES LIVING WATER
IT SATISFIES



Primary Department

HELPS FOR TEACHERS OF THE LITTLE ONES, BY MISS JESSIE A. MUNRO, SECRETARY,
SABBATH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO, TORONTO

FIRST QUARTER

STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

PREVIEW



Teachers have all realized what an advantage it is to have a definite thought running through the teaching of the lessons of the quarter. Without this they will be disjointed, will present no continuity of thought, will be more easily forgotten by the children, in short, will miss their aim. We shall be like marksmen without a target. The marksman's eye takes in the whole target, whilst his vision is centered upon the bull's-eye. Let us each Sabbath take in the whole target (the thought for the quarter) and centre our thoughts upon the bull's-eye (the central thought of the day's lesson) and let us hit it.

The lessons for the present quarter are in John's Gospel: Studies in the life of Christ. We see CHRIST in His different manifestations as THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, GIVING LIGHT THROUGH HIS WORDS AND WORKS.

We see Him:

1. Introduced as The Light, John 1: 1-14.
2. Drawing the disciples to the light, John 1: 35-46.
3. Brightening a feast with His light, John 2: 1-11.

4. Casting light on the way of life, John 3: 1-16.
5. Satisfying with light and grace, John 4: 5-15.
6. Bringing healing and light to a home, John 4: 43-54.
7. Reflecting God's light, John 5: 17-27.
8. Bestowing light and cheer on the needy, John 6: 1-14.
9. Inviting all to come to the light, John 7: 14, 28-37.
10. Flashing light into a prison, John 8: 12, 31-36.
11. Opening blind eyes to the light, John 9: 1-11.
12. Leading His flock in His light, John 10: 1-16.
13. Review—CHRIST THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

Dwelling on the thought of the last lesson of the quarter, we teachers all have need to solemnly ask ourselves: Are we good under-shepherds? Are we doing our best to save the lambs committed to our care, to lead them in His light? Let us, with renewed earnestness, turn to the "Sun of Righteousness" for more light and more heat, more knowledge and more love.

LESSON I.—January 1, 1899

CHRIST THE TRUE LIGHT, John 1: 1-14

PREVIEW THOUGHT: Christ gives Light through His words and works

Golden Text.—"In Him was life; and the life was the light of men."—John 1: 4.

To-day's Lesson Thought.—Jesus is our light; we must shine for Jesus.

Introduction (Point of contact).—Did the little ones in my class notice the beautiful bright sunshine when they were coming to Sabbath-school? Yes? Who put the beautiful sun in the sky? What is the sun for? To give us light and heat, is it not? If we had no sunshine

we could not see anything. We should have no flowers, or trees, or grass, or fruit. The sunshine keeps everything alive and makes things grow by the warmth of its rays, and makes everything light about us. Don't you love the beautiful sunshine? Shall we not thank God for giving us the beautiful sunshine? God gives us every good thing we have.

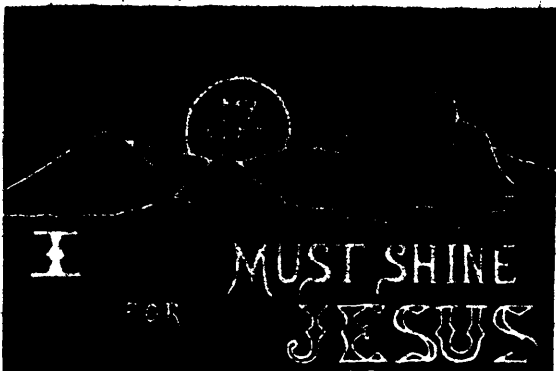
Lesson Story.—God made our world, and has always been watching over it and taking care of it. After a while He saw that people

needed someone to show them what God was like—someone who would be more kind, more full of love than any person who had ever lived, someone to show people how God wants them to live, and what they must do to become God's dear children and go to live with Him forever. So He sent Jesus Christ, His own Son, who was to be like a light to the world. Did you ever hear anyone say, "Oh, yes, Willie is just like his father; he does things just as his father would do"? Well, Jesus is just like God, His father. He went about

doing things that God would do, speaking words that God would speak. So He is called the *Word of God*. (Teach Golden Text.)

One of Jesus' dearest friends on earth—the one He loved most (Why?)—was John, the apostle. John went about with Jesus, bearing Him preach and seeing all the good, kind things He did. John wrote a book about Jesus, and told us all Jesus said and did. John tells us most about Jesus' love and Jesus' words. When we read this book it is just as if Jesus were talking to us, telling us what to do. For twelve Sabbaths we are to read about Jesus out of this book. (Show it.)

Did you ever see the sun rise? You did not see the big sun just at first? No! you saw the bright rays of light first, telling you the sun was coming. As you watched, you saw the beautiful sun appearing. God sent a man called John the Baptist, before He sent Jesus, to tell people that Jesus was coming—to tell them to watch for the *light*—to get ready to see Jesus.



Practical Thought.—Would you not all like to be little *rays of sunshine*, showing people a little bit of what Jesus is like—telling people about the beautiful "Sun of Righteousness," who came to our world, and is coming again sometime? Jesus showed what God is like by doing things that God would do—speaking words that God would speak. If we want to be light we must ask, "What would Jesus do?" "What would Jesus say if He were in my place now?" "I would be a little light, shining every place, Shining so that other souls may see my Saviour's grace.

A little light—a little light—dear Jesus, make me one;

Let me live and shine for Thee—God's own beloved Son."

Blackboard.—On the rays of sunshine (yellow chalk) write ways of shining for Jesus. The children will tell you, "Be kind," "Be truthful," etc. Sing "Jesus bids us shine."

LESSON II.—January 8, 1899

CHRIST'S FIRST DISCIPLES, John 1: 35-46

PREVIEW THOUGHT: Christ gives **Light** through **His** words and works

Golden Text.—"Behold the Lamb of God!" John 1: 36.

To-day's Lesson Thought.—Following the Light.

Connection.—What did you see this morning when you looked out of your window that

made you think of last Sabbath's lesson? Yes, the beautiful bright sunshine. What did John call Jesus? A light. Why? Whom did God send to tell the people that Jesus, the light, was coming? Have you tried to be little lights? What did you do for Jesus? Did you tell any one about Him?

Lesson Story.—One day John the Baptist was talking with two friends—Andrew and John. Just then Jesus walked by. John the Baptist said, "See, that is Jesus." "Behold the Lamb of God." (Explain.) What do you think these two men did? They followed Jesus. He saw them coming and waited for them and spoke very kindly to them. They stayed with Jesus all day (make three strokes on the board) listening to His beautiful words and learning to love Him. Andrew went home and found his own brother, Simon, and said, "Oh, come with me, Simon; we have found Jesus, the Christ"; and Andrew brought Simon to Jesus (another stroke). Yes, I am sure Jesus was glad. Jesus loves to have people come to Him. What did Jesus say about little children coming to Him? "Suffer the little children, etc."

Next day Jesus was going from Bethany back to Galilee. He saw a man named Philip. Jesus said, "Come, Philip, I want you to follow Me," and Philip followed Jesus (another stroke). Philip met an old friend, Nathanael, and asked him to come and see Jesus. Jesus talked with Nathanael and Nathanael said, "Yes, it is really Jesus—God's son," and he followed Jesus (another stroke). All were perfectly satisfied with Jesus. Jesus had power to draw people. (Explain how we may draw near Him now.) Jesus had now five disciples (name and count them on finger)—the *first disciples*. Jesus was showing them what God wanted them to do for Him. He was giving them light.

Practical Thought. — Following the Light.—Even the smallest of my little ones can be a disciple and follow Jesus and bring others to Him. We must ask Jesus to show us something to do for Him—then keep looking out for things to do. You may be able to bring some big people to Jesus. Have any of your brothers who do not come to Sabbath-school to

hear about Jesus? Perhaps if you ask them they will come with you.

Perhaps some little girl you know does not go to any school. Ask her to come with you. Try to get everybody you know to come to Jesus. This is being a true follower—a true disciple.

Follow, follow Jesus, follow where He leads; He knows all our sorrow, He knows all our needs.

We'll lead others to Him, and He'll bless them, too;

We'll be true disciples in all we say and do.

Illustration.—Bertie Lang, a cripple boy, lived with his old grandmother in an attic room in one of our large cities. He loved Jesus and wanted to tell others to follow Jesus, but he could not go about. He could not leave his bed. Some one gave him paper and pencils and he spent his time copying beautiful verses out of the Bible on little slips of the paper, which he folded up and threw out of the window. Some people picked up some of these little slips and were led to Jesus through reading them. We can all do something. Jesus drew people to Him by His beautiful life. It is what we are ourselves that will help most to draw others to Jesus. Sing "If I follow Jesus, He will make me glad."



LESSON III.—January 15, 1899

CHRIST'S FIRST MIRACLE, John 2 : 1-11

PREVIEW THOUGHT: Christ gives Light through His words and works

Golden Text.—"And his disciples believed on him."—John 2 : 11.

To-day's Lesson Thought.—Christ brightening a feast with his light.

Connection.—Draw five strokes. Who were the five about whom we talked last Sabbath? Recall the lesson. Did any of you help to bring anyone to Jesus? Have you been following the Light? or did you just do things that pleased yourselves? These disciples went with Jesus from place to place. When they came to Nazareth, Jesus' home (draw a square), Jesus found Mary, His mother, had gone to a wedding party at Cana (another square), Jesus and His disciples had been invited too; so He went and took His disciples with Him.

Have you ever been at a wedding party? Did you not have a happy time? &c., &c.

Lesson Story.—Describe the wedding. All was mirth and happiness; the table spread for the feast, the guests eating and drinking when Jesus arrived. (Shew a model of an Eastern table or draw one, explaining the custom of reclining on cushions at the table.) What do we have to drink at our parties? (Tea, coffee, milk, lemonade.) In that country they drank the juice of the grape, wine.

It was not a strong drink and did not harm people as the wine does that is used now. Don't you think the people were glad to see Jesus? There was one thing that troubled them—there was no more wine to offer the guests. It was quite a disgrace not to have enough wine at a party. Jesus' mother knew this and she went to Jesus and told Him there was no more wine. Jesus said He knew what to do when the time came for Him to do it. She knew that Jesus was able to help, so she said to the servants, "Be ready to do whatever He tells you to do." At those feasts there were large stone water pots full of water for the guests to wash their hands (they ate with their fingers). They wore sandals (explain); so their feet got

very dusty, and they always washed them when they entered a house. (Draw a water pot or shew a model.) There were six water pots. Jesus told the servants to fill them with water. They obeyed. He told them to pour it out and take it to the man who had charge of the feast.

What do you think Jesus had done? He had changed all that water into wine—enough to supply all they needed and more (His wedding present). All said it was the best wine they had had. How happy they felt! What pleasure it gave Jesus to see them happy! No one could have done this but Jesus—so we call it a *miracle*—a wonderful thing that no one can do but Jesus (or the disciples to whom He should give the power). This was Jesus' first miracle. Jesus used His



power to bring joy into a home—to brighten a feast—to give happiness, as well as to shew His power (explain), "and his disciples believed on him."

Practical Thought.—Would we like Jesus to come into our home? Invite Him. He will come. We shall not see Him, but His Holy Spirit will be with us all the time, making us happy and giving us all we need, if we are doing what pleases Jesus. Never do anything we would not want Jesus to see us doing. Never go any place where we would not invite Jesus. Tell Jesus all our needs. He will give what He sees best for us to have.

LESSON IV.—January 22, 1899

CHRIST AND NICODEMUS. John 3: 1-16

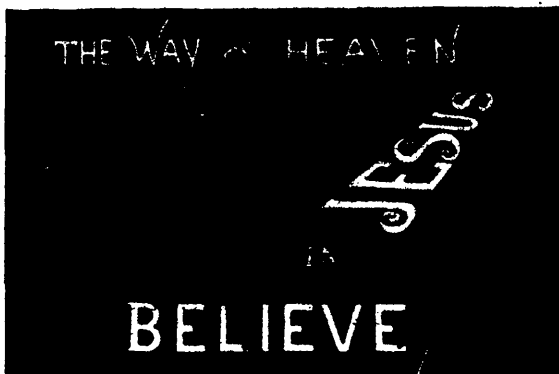
PREVIEW THOUGHT: Christ gives Light through His words and works

Golden Text.—"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." John 3: 16.

To-day's Lesson Thought.—Jesus casting light on the Way of Life.

Connection.—Draw a water-pot. (This will gain attention at once.) We are going to see a picture. We cannot see it unless we close our eyes and listen (all eyes closed). Describe the scene at the wedding, the table spread for the feast, the guests eating and drinking; someone enters. Who is it? Who are with Him? When Jesus is seated, someone goes to Him and whispers something. Who? What did she tell Him? What did Jesus do? What do we call that wonderful act? Jesus is always ready to—? in time of —? Did you invite Jesus any place this week?

it is or how God gives it to us, but we see that there is a change in people after they have got the new life. They are always doing things that please Jesus, their Master, best. Did you ever hear the wind? Did you ever see the wind? No? You have seen the leaves tossed by the wind? So you are sure there is wind? Even if you cannot see it or take hold of it? God's Holy



Lesson Story.—Sometime after the wedding Jesus was at the home of His beloved disciple, John, in Jerusalem (draw a square with a stroke in it and write Jesus). It is evening. There is a rap at the door—listen—who is coming? It is Nicodemus, a rich Jew, a great and learned man—(another stroke). What does he want? He had heard Jesus preaching and wanted to have a quiet talk alone with Jesus and hear more of his wonderful words. They went up on the housetop together. (Explain.) Jesus told him that the only way to enter heaven was to believe in Him and get a new life from God—be born again. Nicodemus did not see how he could be born again, when he was now a grown-up man. He did not think he could become a little boy again. God had given him one kind of life, so that he lived and grew to be a man. He had also given him another kind of life, so that he could think and love; but God wants to give us still another kind of life in addition to these, a *spiritual life*. God just puts this new life into everyone who asks for it. We do not know what

Spirit cannot be seen, but we can feel that He is with us, quietly helping us to do what is pleasing to Jesus. Jesus told Nicodemus the words of our beautiful Golden Text. Someone calls this the "sunrise" text. (Tell the story of the brazen serpent, Numbers 21: 4-9.) Believe in Jesus—He can cure us of all sin if we look to Him.

Practical Thought.—Even the very smallest one of my class can have a quiet hour with Jesus. To-night, as you kneel at mother's knee praying your evening prayer, you are having a quiet talk with Jesus. He loves to listen to you and wants you to love Him and believe in Him, and ask Him to show you how to please Him. He wants to give you the new life and keep you from doing naughty things. We must never forget to have this quiet talk with Jesus night and morning and whenever we feel we need His help.

Blackboard.—Use red chalk for the roadway (the way opened by the shedding of Jesus' blood for us); yellow for "Jesus"; white for "believe."

THE BOOK PAGE

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