

JANUARY  
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# SUNDAY SCHOOL BARRER

for

## TEACHERS

AND

## YOUNG PEOPLE.

Vol. XXXIII.

JANUARY, 1899.

No. 1.

### New Year's Thoughts.

BY LILLIAN GREY.

Let us walk softly, friend;  
For strange paths lie before us, all untrod;

The New Year, spotless from the hand of God,  
Is thine and mine, O friend!

Let us walk straightly, friend;  
Forget the crooked paths behind us now,  
Press on with steadier purpose on our brow,

To better deeds, O friend!

Let us walk gladly, friend;  
Perchance some greater good than we have known

Is waiting for us, or some fair hope flown  
Shall yet return, O friend!

Let us walk humbly, friend;  
Slight not the heart's-ease blooming round our feet;

The laurel blossoms are not half so sweet  
Or lightly gathered, friend!

Let us walk kindly, friend;  
We cannot tell how long this life shall last,

How soon these precious years be overpast;

Let love walk with us, friend!

Let us walk quickly, friend;  
Work with our might while lasts our little stay,

And help some halting comrade on the way;

And may God guide us, friend!

### Book Notice.

"Corner Stones of Faith." By Rev. Charles H. Small, B.D., M.A. Introduction by the Rev. John Henry Barrows, D.D., LL.D. Illustrated. 8vo. 470 pages. New York: E. B. Treat & Co. Toronto: William Briggs. Price, \$2.00.

This is a book of unique interest and value. It gives a condensed history of the Christian churches, and even of some religious organizations which can hardly be called Christian. These sketches are presented with candor and fairness. A representative of each of the leading denominations gives an account of the reasons why he belongs to that particular body. This secures the best possible statement by men of light and leading of the characteristics of the several churches.

Rev. Dr. W. R. Huntington writes on "Why I am an Episcopalian," and Dr. Edward McGlynn tells why he is a Catholic, and Dr. T. L. Cayler writes on the reasons why he is a Presbyterian. Rev. J. G. Butler writes on why he is a Lutheran, and President Raymond, fraternal delegate to our late General Conference, tells "Why We are Methodists." The volume is handsomely illustrated with 200 cuts of historic buildings, portraits, etc. The movements toward Church unity are described. The book is not only interesting and instructive, but valuable for reference. Many of the engravings it would be impossible to obtain elsewhere. Methodism is well presented.

The prodigal had to come to himself before he could come to his father.

## OUR PERIODICALS.

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## Sunday School Banner.

W. H. WITHROW, D.D., EDITOR.

TORONTO, JANUARY, 1899,

### On the Threshold.

We stand again on the threshold of a new year. Now, if ever, should we pause and render hearty thanks to the giver of every good and perfect gift for the mercies of the past and supplicate his guidance for the future.

"Here we raise our Ebenezer;  
Hither by thy help we've come;  
And we hope, by thy good pleasure,  
Safely to arrive at home."

The close of the year should also be a time of heart searching and inquiry. A young Methodist student at Northwestern University rescued over a score of lives from shipwreck on the stormy coast of Lake Michigan. But he could not rescue all. As he lay battered and bruised after his supreme effort, he said eagerly to his comrades, who were nursing him back to life, "Did I do all I could?" The poor fellow had wrecked his own health and has been an invalid ever since. But he could not be satisfied unless he thought he had done all

that was possible. Let us ask ourselves the question as we look back over the weeks and months of the past, "Have we done what we could?" Have we been instant in season and out of season? Have we watched and toiled and prayed as we will wish that we had when life's warfare is ended?—

"When the struggle and grief are all past,  
And the glory and worth live on."

At the same time we should look not mournfully into the past, but hopefully to the future. If we have wasted our time, let us waste it no longer. If we have made mistakes, let us profit by them. If we have had failures, let us resolve by God's help to succeed in the future. God gives us another opportunity. The book of the new year lies before us, its pages white as the snow upon the fields around us. Let us keep them unsullied and unstained, and write thereon deeds of high enterprise, of noble consecration, of earnest work—deeds that need not be repented of.

The coming year will be for some who read these pages the last opportunity of their lives. Concerning some of us the word may be spoken, Set thy house in order, for this year shalt thou die. What an incentive to increased diligence, to renewed consecration. No ground is there here for melancholy or regret. The soldier does not sorrow at the victory which shall soon be won, nor the sailor that he shall soon reach the haven where he vain would be. While the sentry may not forsake his post, but must stand on guard through the weary hours, he is, nevertheless, glad when the relief comes.

We were profoundly impressed with this thought at the funeral service of the late Rev. W. J. Barkwell, from which we have just returned. Our departed brother was smitten down in midlife, when years of usefulness might have been anticipated. The broken column is the symbol of his broken life, but the crown which lay upon his casket was the symbol of a life rounded and complete. Young though he was, he had faithfully laboured for years, the subject of intense physical suffering. As his comrades laid their tributes of love upon his bier, the words of Mrs. Browning seemed strikingly appropriate:

"With quiet sadness and no gloom I learn to think upon him,—  
With meekness that is gratitude to God whose heaven hath won him  
Nor ever shall he be, in praise, by wise or good forsaken  
Named softly as the household name of one whom God hath taken."

The beginning of the new year should fill us with a holy joy at the prospect of another season of life and love and service in the cause of God and man. Let it be the grandest year that ever we have known. The fields wave white unto the harvest on every side. Let us thrust in the sickle and reap, and rejoice before the Lord with the joy of the harvest.

The late Sir Arthur Blackwood was one of the most hilarious Christians of whom we have ever read. On his successive birthdays and anniversaries he used to write, "Hurrah! another milestone past! On the home stretch." Let us thank God who crowneth the year with his goodness, who maketh the outgoings of the morning and of the evening to rejoice, who reneweth the face of the earth, who gives us the glad and beautiful changes of the passing months and years, who fills our homes with joy and love and happiness. These are but types and symbols of the fadeless glories of God's endless years, of the undying love and gladness of the Father's house on high.

A Sunday-school superintendent found Withrow's "Harmony of the Gospels" so useful that he purchased one hundred and fifty copies for his senior scholars. Write to Rev. Dr. Withrow, Methodist Publishing House, Toronto, for special rates.

Methodist Magazine for December.

This Magazine closes its forty-eighth volume with a vigorous number. Among the admirably illustrated articles are, "Corea and her Neighbours," by the Rev. J. C. Seymour; "Snapshots from Jamaica," and "Among the Gypsies." "The Temper of a Saint; or, the Wit and Humour of John Wesley," by Rev. W. H. Adams; "George Fox and the Quakers," by Prof. Paisley; "Is the World Growing Worse?" by Dr. Dewart; "Some Curious Behaviours of Atoms," by Bishop Warren, and "An Indian Martin Luther," by Rev. Arthur Browning, are all strongly written and interesting articles.

In lighter vein are sketches of Irish Life, of Home Mission Work, "A Princess in Calico," and other stories. The Editor arraigns very severely the Hon. Attorney-General Longley's new book on "Love." "The Decadence of France," etc., are editorially discussed.

The departments of the World's Progress, Current Thought, Popular Science, Book Reviews, Religious Intelligence, are well maintained. The announcement of this popular Magazine for 1899 is the best yet made. New subscribers will receive the November and December numbers for 1898 free. Now is the time to subscribe.

Toronto: William Briggs. Montreal: C. W. Coates. Halifax: S. F. Huestis. \$2.00 a year; \$1.00 for six months.

Order of Services.—First Quarter.

OPENING SERVICE.

I. SILENCE.

II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES [Psalm 96. 7-13.]

SUPT. Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength.

SCHOOL. Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts.

SUPT. O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

SCHOOL. Fear before him, all the earth.

SUPT. Say among the heathen that the LORD reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved:

SCHOOL. He shall judge the people righteously.

SUPT. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad.

SCHOOL. Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth:

SUPT. He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with truth.

III. SINGING.

IV. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, OR THE APOSTLES' CREED.

V. PRAYER, followed by the Lord's Prayer in concert.

VI. SINGING.

LESSON SERVICE.

I. CLASS STUDY OF THE LESSON.

II. SINGING LESSON HYMN.

III. RECITATION OF THE TITLE, GOLDEN TEXT, AND OUTLINE by the school in concert.

IV. REVIEW AND APPLICATION OF THE LESSON by Pastor or Superintendent.

V. SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON. [Special lesson in the Church Catechism may here be introduced.]

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS [especially of the Church service and the Epworth League and week-evening prayer meetings.]

CLOSING SERVICE.

I. SINGING.

II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES. [1 John 1. 7.]

SUPT. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.

SCHOOL. And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

# INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

## FIRST QUARTER: STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL BY JOHN.

### LESSON I. CHRIST THE TRUE LIGHT.

[Jan. 1.]

**GOLDEN TEXT.** In him was life; and the life was the light of men. John 1. 4.

**AUTHORIZED VERSION.**

[Study John 1. 1-34; 8. 12-18, and 12. 44-50.]

**John 1. 1-14.** [*Commit to memory verses 9-12.*]

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 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 darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

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

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

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

9 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 by him, and the world knew him not.

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

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

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

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

**REVISED VERSION.**

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. All

3 things were made by him; and without him

was not anything made that hath been made.

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of

5 men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and

6 the darkness apprehended it not. There

came a man, sent from God, whose name was

7 John. The same came for witness, that he

might bear witness of the light, that all might

8 believe through him. He was not the light,

but came that he might bear witness of the

9 light. There was the true light, even the light

which lighteth every man, coming into the

10 world. He was in the world, and the world

was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and they that were his

12 own received him not. But as many as re-

ceived him, to them gave he the right to be-

come the children of God, even to them that

13 believe on his name: which were born, not of

blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the

14 will of man, but of God. And the Word be-

came flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld

his glory, glory as of the only begotten from

the Father), full of grace and truth.

**Introductory Statement.**—The gospel of John was written about 90 A. D., in the second or third generation of the Christian Church. It was not, like the other gospels, written largely for the benefit of inquiring heathen, but rather for the "new type of humanity which had been developed by the Gospel," men and women trained under Christianity, and able to comprehend divine truth. It is the profoundest work ever penned by mortal man. Let it be our prayer and endeavor through the first half of this year to come into close fellowship with the Son of God, whose words this evangelist repeats to us.

**Home Readings.**

*M.* Christ the True Light. John 1. 1-14.

*Tu.* John's witness. John 1. 15-24.

*W.* The Son of God. John 1. 25-34.

*Th.* Life and Light. 1 John 1.

*Fr.* Life by Christ. 1 John 5. 9-13.

*S.* Light of the World. John 8. 12-19.

*S.* Receive the Light! John 12. 35-46.

**Lesson Hymns.**

**No. 14, New Canadian Hymnal.**

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds  
In a believer's ear!

**No. 12, New Canadian Hymnal.**

Glory to God on high!  
Let heaven and earth reply.

**No. 13, New Canadian Hymnal.**

I will sing of my Redeemer,  
And his wondrous love to me.

**QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR SCHOLARS.**

**1. The Word of God, v. 1-5.**

What does John say was "in the beginning?"

With whom was the Word?

What was the Word?

Of what was he the maker?

Of what is he the fountain?

Where does the Light of life shine?  
Do men receive it gladly?

**2. The Man Sent from God, v. 6-8.**

What was the name of the man whom God sent to bear witness of the Light?

Was he believed to be the true Light? Acts 19, 1-6.

**3. The Light of the World, v. 9-11.**

Who was the true Light?

Is any man out of reach of salvation?

How did the world regard the Son of God when he came?

Who were "his own"?

How did they regard him?

**4. The Sons of God, v. 12-14.**

What did He give those that received him?

What is it to receive Jesus?

How are these men said to have been born?

Was Jesus really God?

**Teachings of the Lesson.**

Where does this lesson teach us that—

1. Moral darkness cannot comprehend the light of God?

2. Men are responsible for their rejection of divine life?

3. Our natures must be changed by the Spirit of God?

4. We cannot be saved without Christ's intercession?

**QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.**

**1. The Word of God, v. 1-5.**

What three things are here said about the Word?

With whom did the Word at first dwell?

What is said about his creative power?

What does Paul say was made by him? Col. 1, 16.

Where did the Light shine?

What is the GOLDEN TEXT?

How well was the Light understood?

**2. The Man Sent from God, v. 6-8.**

What messenger is here spoken of?

For what purpose was John sent?

What was he not?

To whom was he to bear witness?

**3. The Light of the World, v. 9-11.**

Who is the true Light of the world?

On whom does the true Light shine?

What three things does verse 10 say about the Light?

To whom did the Light come and was rejected?

**4. The Sons of God, v. 12-14.**

What blessing came to all who received him?

How were these born?

What glory was thereby revealed?

What was the Word made flesh filled with?

**Practical Teachings.**

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That Jesus was God?

2. That Jesus was a man?

3. The only way to the Father?

**QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.**

Who wrote the book of John? **John, the beloved disciple.**

What does he say was in the beginning?

Whom does he mean by "The Word"?

What more does he tell us about the Word?

What was made by the Word? "**All things.**"

How could Jesus make all things? **Because he was God.**

What was in Jesus that gave life to men?

**Life.**

Where did the light of his life shine? **In the darkness of this world.**

Whom did God send to be a witness to Jesus? **John.**

What John was this? **John the Baptist.**

What did he want people to do?

Were they willing to do it?

What is there in every heart? **Some of the heavenly light.**

Why was it given to us? **So that we might see Jesus.**

What did God let him do? **Come and live among us.**

**THE LESSON CATECHISM.**

(For the entire school.)

1. What name does the apostle give to the eternal Son of God? **The Word.**

2. What was the Word? **The Word was God.**

3. What did the Word become? **The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.**

4. What came by Jesus Christ? **Grace and truth.**

5. What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **"In him was life,"** etc.

**NEW CHURCH CATECHISM.**

45. What are the more particular duties unfolded in the New Testament? The more particular duties unfolded in the New Testament are our duties to ourselves, to our family, to the Church of Christ, to the state, and to society at large.

## THE LESSON OUTLINE.

## Aspects of Christ.

## I. THE WORD OF GOD.

*The Word was God.* v. 1.

His name.... the Word of God. Rev. 19. 13.

The Word of Life: 1 John 1. 1.

## II. THE CREATOR OF THE WORLD.

*All things were made by him.* v. 3.

By whom.... made the worlds. Heb. 1. 2.

By him.... all things created. Col. 1. 16.

## III. THE LIFE OF MEN.

*In him was life.* v. 4.

Brought life.... to light. 2 Tim. 1. 10.

Christ, who is our life. Col. 3. 4.

## IV. THE LIGHT OF MEN.

*That was the true Light.* v. 9.

The light of the world. John 8. 12.

To lighten the Gentiles. Luke 2. 32.

## V. THE SON OF MAN.

*The Word was made flesh.* v. 14.

God was manifest in the flesh. 1 Tim. 3. 16.

The form of a servant. Phil. 2. 7.

## VI. THE SON OF GOD.

*The only begotten Son.* v. 18.

My beloved Son. Matt. 3. 17.

His only begotten Son. John 3. 16.

## EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

Our lessons for to-day and for twenty-two Sundays following are taken from the fourth gospel. From the early years of Christianity this wonderful book has been dated near to the close of the first century and attributed to the apostle John. Of John's life after the Master ascended to heaven we have only a few notes in the Acts and the epistles. Tradition tells us that he lived fully thirty years after the destruction of Jerusalem, and that he resided for a long time in the city of Ephesus. John's gospel omits much that the other gospels tell, and records events and teachings of which we have elsewhere no trace. Why Matthew, Mark, and Luke should have overlooked such astonishing doings as the turning of water into wine, the healing at the pool of Bethesda, and of the man born blind, and especially the raising of Lazarus, we can no more than conjecture.\* Stranger still is it that such precious teachings as those on the Bread of Life, the Light of the World, and the Good Shepherd, those addressed to Nicodemus and to the woman of Samaria, and the farewell counsels and intercessory prayer given in John 14-17, should have been left for three fourths of a century without record when other discourses were so carefully written down. Most notable of all is the unique emphasis which John's gospel places upon certain theological truths. It is generally believed that it was written especially to protect the faith of Christendom from the errors of certain heretics who denied that Christ was in any sense God, or that he had in any sense being before his human birth. The wildest doctrines were taught at this time. With the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A. D. 70 the Jewish hierarchy had sunk into feebleness and obscurity; and the Jewish sects, so powerful in the days of our Lord—Pharisees, Sadducees, and the rest—had disappeared. Amid anarchical conditions of religious thought there arose teachers who tried to unite the doctrines of Judaism with the doctrines of Christianity. These were felt to be the most dangerous foes of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. An old tradition says that the bishops of the Asian Churches formally requested the aged apostle to write a book that should be a stronghold of truth against these new antagonists. And so John's gospel is almost universally regarded as the latest written book of the New Testament. It begins not with the cradle of Christ, but with the cradle of time. The evangelist's eyes, divinely touched, penetrate eternity, and he sees the eternal Word of God, by whom worlds were shaped and swung into space, and by whom, long before man came, man's salvation was provided. This eternal Word he defines as eternal Light, which, coming into the world, lights every man. God was revealed dimly in ancient days; his Word was measurably sounded forth in Moses, and even in heathenism; but the clamors of sin kept most men from hearing and understanding; but in the fullness of time, in the person of Jesus Christ, God was fully manifest. Here is the divine Word as it never before had been uttered; here is the eternal Light perfectly revealed.

\*The usual conjecture is that so long as Christians were persecuted by the Jewish hierarchy and mobs, the men who were the best evidences of the truth of the Gospel were in especial danger. The persecution continued, with a few breaks, till the first three gospels were written, and therefore many stories were repressed in behalf of the safety of the chief actors.



**Verse 1. In the beginning.** The first words of this gospel are the same as the first words of the Book of Genesis, the purpose of the writer being to show that He who created the heavens and the earth saves mankind from sin. **Was the Word.** (See John 17. 5.) The word here translated "Word" has the double meaning of *thought and speech*. Dr. Marvin R. Vincent says: "Christ is related to God as the word is related to the idea; the word being not merely a *name* for the idea, but the idea itself, expressed." The reverent men of antiquity, seeking to make plain to ungodly neighbors the nature of the divine Being, gave to him different descriptive titles or names, as, for instance, *El* (translated God), which means The Strong, and *Adon* (translated Lord), which means The Controller. Among such titles was *Minra*, The Word, which learned Jews were fond of using. So that John here uses a term already familiar as a name or title of God. Now, the word of a man is the expression of his thought to others, the manifestation of his mind. In broad and figurative usage a cathedral is the word of an architect, and a national constitution the word of a statesman. With something of this broad sense John uses the term "The Word." By it he means us to understand "the going forth of God to the human soul." As John himself sought to make us comprehend his meaning by writing down the words we are now studying, so God perpetually sought to make human beings comprehend his counsel and his will. Dreams, visions, miracles, Mosaic rituals, all methods by which God uttered his thought, were God's word. But none of these adequately appealed to the heart of humanity; not till the only begotten Son (which is in the bosom of the Father) declared him were his character and nature made plain.

**Was with God.** Apparently distinct from God.

**Was God.** Apparently identical with God. This is a mystery, and efforts to explain it often add to it.

**2. The same was in the beginning with God.** The evangelist repeats himself in fresh words, so that we may think of the Word as existing from all eternity, with God, "as light is ever with the sun."

**3. All things were made by him.** (Compare Col. 1. 16, 17.) **Without him was not anything made.** False teachers had invented wild notions of Existences which they called *Eons*, and of a Being whom they termed *Demiarqus*, to whom they assigned the origin of spiritual life. But John in this verse and the next makes plain that the life of the universe was derived from the eternal Word.

**4. In him was life.** As in a great fountain. "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he

given to the Son to have life in himself" (John 5. 26). **The life was the light of men.** Not merely the light which every morning chases away the darkness of the night, but all intellectual, and especially all moral, light shining upon the consciences of mankind. There is also a clarifying moral vision—an inner power of seeing—which we call conscience; and an inner Light as well, which we here learn is a direct emanation from God. If, then, we have any apprehension of truth and light and purity, any power over evil, these blessings are all rays from the eternal Light, which is essentially the same as the Life and the Word.

**5. The light shineth in darkness.** As we have seen under verse 1, this truth of God has been shining through all the centuries, and there have been in all the centuries, perhaps, a few who recognized it. But most minds "liked not to retain God in their knowledge," and so we read in general terms, **the darkness comprehended it not.** "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." These words very evidently apply to the sodden pagans who made gods out of their own bestial passions; they applied equally to the learned Jews who hid from the light behind their traditions and ceremonies; and they apply to-day to all who resist the conviction of conscience and spiritual influences brought home to the mind and heart.

**6. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.** Older scholars, especially those who have found delight in literature, should have their attention called to the exquisite literary art with which this passage is introduced. Our evangelist, having lifted us into such excess of light as to blind our eyes, now relieves us by turning for a moment toward the shadows where the forerunner of the incarnate Word raises aloft his burning and shining light (that is to say, his lamp), to show by the helplessness of its rays how much more helpful must be the full shining of the Sun of the soul, the Saviour dear.

**7. Came for a witness.** To bear testimony. **Of the Light.** And after having borne testimony to that Light for months or years John Baptist woke up with astonishment to find it shining in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. **Through him.** Through John the Baptist. His evidence should have been sufficient. Our Lord declared that there were none greater or more faithful than he. The Jews should have believed and sent his message on to the remotest parts of the earth; but they "would not."

**8. He was not that Light.** There were still

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in the evangelist's day a few inclined to place John the Baptist on an equality with the Saviour; hence this emphatic declaration from one who had been the disciple of both.

**9. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.** Revised Version, margin: "The true light which lighteth every man was coming into the world."

**10. He was in the world.** The shades of meaning here require most scrupulous study. It is best to understand this phrase to refer to the presence of the Word in the world before he appeared as man. Movings of God's providence and spirit, and especially the measurable revelation to the Hebrew nation, were utterances of the Word of God; nevertheless **the world knew him not.**

**11. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.** The verbs here show that this coming was different from that of verse 10; this refers to the incarnation. There is a difference, also, between the first "own" and the second, the first being neuter, and so referring to things, the second masculine, and so referring to persons. He came to his own rights, to his own inheritance, to his own land, and his own temple. But his own subjects, who held this inheritance in trust for him, and should have welcomed him with delight, willfully rejected him, recognizing him only to slay him.

**12. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.** (See Luke 20, 36; 1 John 3, 1, 2.) The Revised Version here is, "To them gave he the right to become children of God." **That believe on.** To believe on is to trust oneself to. One believes on a bridge who walks upon it; one believes on

Christ who depends his hope of heaven on him. **His name,** according to general oriental usage, means himself.

**13. Which were born.** Continuing the thought of the last verse. "Born again," as our Lord says to Nicodemus (John 3, 3-8). But this is not the natural birth of man, by which he can only inherit the will of the flesh, natural passions, but the new birth given of God to them that are made partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1, 4). **Blood** should be "bloods," pointing to the various races of the earth who have prided themselves on inherited spiritual privileges. **Flesh** may refer to human nature generally, and **man** to the individual father.

**14. The Word was made flesh.** "Flesh" comprehends here, as in some other places, the whole nature of man, spirit, soul, and body. **Dwelt among us.** As in a tabernacle. God pervaded every part of that man's nature, as the dweller in a home uses and makes like unto himself every corner and part of his home. **And we beheld his glory.** In many ways, by miracles, by marvelous teachings, by a still more marvelous character and nature, they beheld something that transcended any vision or theophany seen by patriarchs or prophets of old. In him they saw God. **As the only begotten of the Father.** The Revised-Version in the margin reads, "As of an only begotten from a father." This, which is indisputably the right translation, does not at all belittle the passage; it emphasizes rather the divine heredity of our Lord's nature. **Full of grace and truth.** Grace includes all mercy; truth includes all justice. Grace restores sinners; truth enlightens those who are in ignorance and error.

## CRITICAL AND HOMILETICAL NOTES.

In this prelude to his gospel John states the conception which was to be the view-point from which he proposed to write the history of the Son of man. This key-thought which runs through all of John's writings, his epistles as well as the gospel, is that "Jesus Christ is the revelation, the manifestation, the expression of God to men." It was from the high level of this idea that John undertook to write the life of his Master. This was the "Philosophy of the Life" (verse 18).

Two names, neither of which is applied to Christ in the three other gospels, are here used by John to express this conception of Christ as the Revealer of the Father, namely, "The Word," and "The Light."

### I. THE WORD.

"The Logos." This doubtless seems to many Bible readers a very strange and vague name to apply to Christ. John does not explain it, but its general meaning was well understood both among the Greeks and the Jews. To both it meant God revealed or manifested as distinguished from God in his invisible spiritual essence.

It is easy for us to see that the "office of a word is to reveal or express what otherwise might not be known." A thought, a purpose, or a sentiment might lie undisclosed and undiscoverable in a man's mind. But when he embodies it in suitable words and utters it, it is revealed to others. A man reveals himself in his

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words. Now, if we could construct a single word of such wealth and comprehensiveness of meaning that it would contain the entire contents of the human mind, that would be preeminently the "word of man"—it would reveal, declare, or manifest man. In that profound sense Christ is not "a" word of God, a partial revelation of God, but "the" Word of God—in him God expressed himself fully, for "in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2. 9).

**Verse 1. In the beginning.** That is, "always," "from eternity." Christ, observe, did not become the Word in his incarnation, but the Word became incarnated. He was eternally the Word, from the beginning the Revealer of God. We might not improperly substitute the term "Revealer" for "Word," and read this passage, "In the beginning was the Revealer, and the Revealer was with God, and the Revealer was God." The preposition "with" in the phrase "The Word was with God" is very expressive in the original, implying not simply close "association," but "intercommunion" and inner sympathetic fellowship. Dwelling thus centrally "in the bosom of the Father," the Word was able "to declare him."

**3. All things were made by him.** "Through him," more strictly. The Scriptures uniformly represent Christ as the active agent in all creation. Paul particularly sets this forth with great force and exactness. (See, for example, 1 Cor. 8. 6.) The "patterns" of all things lay in the Father's mind; they were wrought out into objective realities through the creative agency of the Word. Further light is thrown on this thought in chapter 5. 19, 20. The force of the word "made" should be observed. The Greek is *egeneto*, and it means to "cause to be, to generate, to cause to come into being." So that "all things were made by him," not in a merely mechanical sense, wrought into form out of material furnished at hand, but, in the deepest generic sense, brought into existence by creation.

It is interesting in this connection to notice that Jesus recognizes the same relation of source and expression between himself and the Father in respect to his teachings that John here points out in respect to his creative work. (See 8. 28; 8. 34; and 14. 10.) Just as Christ created nothing of himself so he spoke nothing of himself; in both alike he revealed the thought of the Father. The truths of nature and the truths of the Gospel are from the same source, the mind and the heart of the Father; and Jesus Christ is the Revealer of both classes of truths—of the first, as Creator, in the material world, which was made by him; of the second, in his incarnate life and in the words

which he spoke as divine Teacher. The scientist and the religionist should alike, therefore, bow down before the divine Word.

## II. THE LIGHT.

**9. That was the true Light.** The second name which John applies to Christ to express his office of Revealer is "The Light." The Greek word is *phos*, and abstractly it means "luminousness," and actively "to shine or make manifest." The office of light is the same as that of speech—to reveal. So Christ, both as the Word and as the Light, is the Revealer. Just as a thought might lie forever unknown and undiscoverable in the mind unless embodied and expressed in adequate words, so a landscape might lie forever unperceived by the eye unless revealed by the light. In Christ, as the Word, God uttered himself, expressed himself; as the Light he became apprehensible to men. Christ revealed God as the sun reveals the mountain and the sea.

John "was not that Light." He was a "light," indeed, but not this preeminent Light. Jesus later on said of John, "He was a burning and a shining light," but the word which he used was not *phos*, which means luminosity in the most primary sense, but *lucinos*, a lamp or a candle. John was a bright and shining "candle!" That is the best that can be said of the highest human genius. Men differ as to the light that is in them merely in candle power, but who can compute the candle power of the sun? A lamp or candle, however "bright and shining," can illuminate but a little area, but even the few rays of the sun which our earth intercepts are sufficient to flood its whole surface with light, while measureless billows of its light flood other worlds and illumine far-off chasms of space. So Christ is the Light of the world.

## Thoughts for Young People.

### The Word, the Life, the Light.

Probably no chapter in all the Bible has induced profounder Christian thought than the first chapter of John. Never was a greater mystery put into words than we have here. We cannot fathom its depths, but we may at least dip our little buckets into this well and bring up much of divine truth. The three figures of speech that are prominent in the lesson refer to one great eternal fact.

**1. The Word.** Every truly great man of history has brought a message to the world, and can hardly be thought of by the student apart from his message. We cannot think of that great orator and seer, Isaiah, except as the embodiment of his

own prophesies. Michael Angelo was one of the wonders of the world of men. But in all that Michael Angelo did there were grandeur and beauty. By form and color and size and sound he showed forth these two qualities, and he and his message are one. William Shakespeare cannot be well conceived of apart from his poetry. And so, although it is sometimes dangerous to try to make divine things plain by comparison with familiar human life, we may reverently say that just as these men were identical with their message God and God's words are identical. "The Word was with God, and the Word was God."

2. *In this Word was life.* Indeed the Word itself was life, because all things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made. Words of men have often been sources of intellectual and moral life. The Magna Charta at Runnymede gave life and liberty to many nations. John Milton in noble words has told us that he who destroys a good book is guilty of murder, because of the vivid life that there is in all words of truth. The Word and the Life were one.

3. "*The life was the light of men.*" This figure also becomes plainer when we think of similar similes we familiarly use. It is the light of civilization that disperses the gloom of barbarism; it is the light of liberty that chases away the darkness of slavery; it is the light of intelligence that destroys the midnight of ignorance.

4. *The gist of this lesson, however, is that Word, and Life and Light alike are God.* The Being who made this world made it by his word. Everything that comes from the good God is his utterance. He speaks in creation, in providence, in the redemption of mankind, in the general resurrection, and in our promised eternity. The noble theological statements of our creed concerning the relation of Father and Son should never be forgotten or pressed aside; but they should not be allowed to blind our eyes or deafen our ears to the often-repeated truth (they should rather emphasize that truth) that the great God who spoke by the ancient prophets, and who speaks to-day by the daisy and the lily, uttered his full message in the incarnation of Jesus. And in Jesus, the Word, was life, and the life was the light of men.

5. Everybody must have noticed that there are two divine utterances called by sacred writers the Word of God. One is this strange, sweet-spirited, divine Man, who spake as never man spake, and went about doing good, who suffered for our sins, and rose from the dead, whose life we have now again begun to study. The other is the Bible, which we hold in our

hands while we study. These two are essentially one. Nothing taught in the book was not in the life of Jesus; nothing in the life of Jesus is not in the book. They are both the expression of God's thought. Jesus has gone to heaven, and the same Word, the same Life, and the same Light are manifest in this Bible. If Jesus were here, would we not gather close to him? But he is here in this Bible. If Jesus were here, how ungrateful and wicked would be those who neglected him! But we neglect him when we neglect this Bible. If Jesus were here, we should have an infallible Counselor, guided by whose wisdom we need never make a mistake. We have that infallible Counselor in the Bible.

### Orientalisms of the Lesson.

Verse 3. "All things were made by him" meant much to the imagination of the Jew, though he had not modern conceptions of astronomy. "It would take five hundred years to traverse the distance between the earth and the sky immediately overhead. The same interval separates one heaven from another, and again there is the same distance between the two extremities of the heaven traversed in its breadth," was said by one rabbi.

Verse 4. "In him was life," would center in Jesus Christ all that the nations of the earth have praised as "Life." The Hindus say, "Brahma is life. The sun rises out of life, and sets into life; this is the sacred law; it sways to-day, it will sway to-morrow. Life is the 'Immortal One,' . . . unseen he sees; unheard he hears; unknown he knows. Life is the preserver of all forms; by life the universe is sustained." But it was reserved for the Gospel to separate this "Life" from the creation itself. The Logos was distinct from man, but he was "the light of men." "Light in its most elemental form," says Archdeacon Hardwick in his *Christ and Other Masters*, "fascinated the imagination of the early Aryan." Hence the worship of the sun, moon, and stars of the Zoroastrian and Vedic literatures. The Hebrews through all their history exhibit a high regard for light. "Men and women are bound to set a light in their houses on the eve of the Sabbath."—*Mishna*. Friday evening was called "the Light," because the Sabbath began then and the lamps were then lighted; and "the Sabbath began to dawn" (shine) when these were lighted, till when they did not sit down to take the evening meal.—*Steffen*. In the sacred temple a light was always to be kept burning, placed near the Shekinah in the holy place just before the rail. It was never allowed to go out.

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Verse 5. Lightfoot tells us that to complete the furniture of the synagogue there must always be a lamp hung from the roof, kept burning day and night, "an immemorial custom," he adds, "in all religions." He says: "Primeval man when he discovered fire, attached to it a sacred character. It was difficult to light; to keep it burning was, therefore, a duty which acquired a religious significance. The first altar of humanity was the family hearth, where the father cherished the life-giving fire. The Roman vestals fed the sacred flame." "No house in Palestine," says Geikie, "however poor, is left without a light burning all night; the housewife rising betimes to secure its continuance by replenishing the lamp with oil. If a lamp goes out, it is a fatal omen."

### By Way of Illustration.

BY JENNIE M. BINGHAM.

*The beginning of John's gospel.* One of the old Platonic writers, who considered all Christian writers barbarians, said of the opening words of John's gospel: "This barbarian has compressed more stupendous stuff into three lines than we have done in all our voluminous discourses." A Christian writer has said that there have been discovered more than three hundred mysteries in Revelation, and that the key to the whole truth of God is contained in the first three verses of this gospel. It is impossible not to be struck with the similarity of the style between the opening words of this gospel and those of Genesis. Moses wrote of creation, but John of redemption. Moses wrote of the beginning of time, but John wrote of the beginning before time.—*Pentecost.*

"In the beginning was the Word." Two gentlemen were discussing religious questions, when one of them said, "Can you give me the reason why Jesus Christ is called the Word? What is meant by the Word? It is a curious term." The other one answered, "I suppose as words are the medium of communication between us the term is used in sacred Scriptures to demonstrate that he is the only medium between God and man. I know no other reason." The man who received this answer had rejected the divinity of Jesus Christ, but these words were like a flash of illumination. He sat down to a study of this first chapter of John, and later accepted Christ as the Word who was God.

*Jesus, the Light of men.* Light is mysterious in nature, ineffably bright and glorious, everywhere present, swift-winged, undefiled, and undeflatable. Light is the source of life, of beauty, of mani-

festated reality, of warmth, comfort, and joy, of health and of power. It destroys all darkness; it unites in itself purity and cleanness. Without it the world would be but a mass of coldness and death. Now, what light does for the natural world Jesus does for the world of man. He reveals God and heaven and truth; he shows the way; he cheers, comforts, vivifies, renews. Jesus is the Light for every race, for every age, every nation. And the fact that he is thus universal, adapted to all, as is proved by what he is doing all over the globe where the Gospel is preached, is one of the strongest proofs that Christianity is the true religion.—*Peloubet.*

"The Word was made flesh." An Eastern king wrote to a conquering monarch who had carried his wife away and held her captive, "Send me a single word about the dear wife of my love." The conqueror sent back the wife herself to her sorrowing husband with the message, "This is my single word." This reply to his heart's longing was the dearest and sweetest that could have been sent. So God answers our cry for help by giving us the Lord Jesus Christ. "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!"

### Heart Talks on the Lesson.

BY MRS. J. H. KNOWLES.

I am glad we begin the year with Jesus. I pray that we may not only learn about him, but know him and walk with him every step of the way.

St. John's gospel is a "heart talk." He writes of Jesus as though he knew and loved him well. The first sentence of our lesson takes us far back to the sublime words in the first book of the Bible. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth; . . . and darkness was upon the face of the deep. . . . And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." The God who created all things, without whom nothing was made that is made, is the Lord Jesus, who took the form of a child in the manger at Bethlehem; lived on earth as the son of man; died upon the cross; rose from the grave; ascended to heaven; the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world; the Light of the world; God, filling the universe, yet dwelling in every heart that will receive him. There is range here for the mind to soar to loftiest heights; and while a child, taught by the Holy Spirit, may understand these wonderful truths, it is proof of the blindness of the natural mind that it cannot see the light shining, though ever so bright. The Creator and Owner of the universe came into his own world, and its people—his own people—would not receive him. But what of ourselves!

Who is it we reject when we refuse to open our hearts to Jesus?

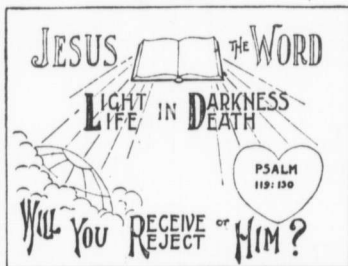
One of the most beautifully suggestive names given to Jesus by St. John, and used, also, by himself, is this—"The Light of the World." In creation the earth was without form, and void, and in darkness: God said, "Let there be light, and there was light," and after that creation took form, beauty, productiveness, and intelligence. When Jesus, the true Light, is admitted to our hearts we need do nothing else than allow him to carry forward the process of creation and transformation to the perfect finish. All pure and beautiful things grow in the light. All productive energy comes from it. The coal and the diamond are "condensed sunshine;" so every grace of the soul and power for service are products of the light which shines in our hearts in the face of Jesus Christ. The earth's possibilities are developed only in the rays of the sun. The possibilities of a human soul awake to life only under the power of Jesus. The colors of a flower are parts of one pure ray of white light. The Christian graces are parts of the completeness or fullness of Jesus which St. John says we who believe on him receive, "grace for grace"—that is, grace in us corresponding to grace in him—his love, his gentleness, his truth, his purity, in us, according as we are ready to receive from him as the flowers receive from the sun. A light in the center of a room streams in every direction, into every corner, if there is nothing in its way. So Jesus will fill your whole being with light if you give him a place in the center of your heart.

#### The Teachers' Meeting.

This is the first of a series of studies in the gospel of John. The transition from the Old Testament studies is sudden, and an introduction to this lesson (as brief as possible, but careful) is especially needed. The lesson is itself the best introduction to the life of Christ. About six centuries stretched between Zedekiah's overthrow and the birth of Jesus Christ.... I. The writer. (1) John, a young Galilean fisherman; (2) A disciple of John the Baptist; (3) A friendly acquaintance of the Sadducean high priest; (4) Our Lord's intimate personal friend; (5) Present, generally by special invitation, at all emergencies in Christ's life; (6) Remained at Ephesus after the dispersion of the Jerusalem church, while Paul and the other apostles wandered far and wide; (7) Was banished to Patmos, where "the Revelation" was unfolded to him; (8) His long-extended life; (9) His salient characteristic.... II. The Gospel. (1) The most "spiritual" of the

four; (2) The product of the writer's old age, and the latest given of all the gospels; (3) A "chronicle" by an eyewitness rather than a history; (4) Characterized by vivid sketches of typical persons; (5) Shows profound insight rather than picturesque vision; (6) Systematic in plan; (7) Unique in style; (8) Thoroughly Hebrew in thought; (9) Rich in symbolism; (10) Written for Christians.... III. The doctrine of "The Word." (1) Definition of "The Word"; (2) "The Word" was God—eternal (verses 1, 2), almighty (verse 3), a personality (verse 4); (3) "the Word" was man in the world (verse 10), in human flesh (verse 14), among his own people (verse 11); (4) "The Word" came to bless the human race—to enlighten the human race—to enlighten the world (verses 5, 9) and reveal the divine glory.... IV. Practical lessons. This is a doctrinal lesson, but its doctrines have a direct personal bearing on every student of sacred things. Draw from the lesson (1) Statements of divine attributes; (2) The divinity of Christ; (3) The humanity of Christ; (4) Sinfulness of the human heart; (5) Free will; (6) Conversion, etc.

#### Blackboard.



Jesus is the word, for by his life and death he made known to the world the mind of God. In him was life, and the life was the light of men; yet men loved darkness rather than light, and death rather than life. He was unknown in the world which he created, and when he came his own received him not. "I am come a light into the world," he says. If we follow this true and only Light, we shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. He is shining still for every heart that will open to receive. "The entrance of thy words giveth light" (Psa. 119. 130). Have we seen Jesus revealed in his word? Have we known through him a reconciled God? Not until we receive him; and then the darkness of error and sin will be dispelled and we shall be like John, a reflection of "that Light," and bearing witness of it. Will you receive or reject him?

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

Joy to the world. All hail the power of Jesus' name. Jesus, the very thought of thee. O, let us be glad. Love divine.

Jesus, thou everlasting King. Jesus, these eyes have never seen. Who is this. Hail, to the Lord's Anointed. Thou, who camest from above.

Library References.

BY REV. S. G. AYRES, B.D.

There are a number of general works that the teacher will find very helpful. For introduction use Gloag, J. P., Introduction to the Johannine Writings. For biblical theology the best book is Stevens, G. B., The Johannine Theology. The best

commentary on the Gospel of John is that by F. Godet. These can all be procured at our Book Rooms, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax.

The best life is that by Macdonald. This is unfortunately out of print, and to be met with only rarely. Culross's John the Beloved is a nice book.

THE LOGOS.—Thompson, H. M., The World and the Logos. Bedell, Lectures for 1885. The Expositor, third series, vol. ii, pages 163, 177; fourth series, vol. vi, page 65. Liddon, Divinity of Our Lord.

THE INCARNATION.—Gore, The Incarnation, gives the doctrinal treatment. Otley, The Doctrine of the Incarnation, two volumes, gives the historical account of the growth and treatment of the doctrine. Breed, Preparation of the World for Christ, gives a fine account of the world's struggle preceding the advent of our Lord.

JOHN THE BAPTIST.—Reynolds, H., John the Baptist. Congregational lectures. Houghton, R. C., John the Baptist. Feather, J., Last of the Prophets. Consult, also, Edersheim, Geikie, Andrews, Farrar, in their lives of Christ.

LESSON II. CHRIST'S FIRST DISCIPLES.

[Jan. 8.

GOLDEN TEXT. Behold the Lamb of God! John 1. 36.

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

[Study chapter 1. 35-51 and Matt. 4. 18-25.]

John 1. 35-46. [Commit to memory verses 35-37.]

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

36 And looking upon Je'sus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Je'sus.

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

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

40 One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was An'drew, Si'mon Pe'ter's brother.

41 He first findeth his own brother Si'mon, and saith unto him, We have found the Mes-si'as, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

42 And he brought him to Je'sus. And when Je'sus beheld him, he said, Thou art Si'mon the son of Jo'na: thou shalt be called Ce'phas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

43 The day following Je'sus would go forth into Gal'i-lee, and findeth Phil'ip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

44 Now Phil'ip was of Beth-sa'i-da, the city of An'drew and Pe'ter.

REVISED VERSION.

35 Again on the morrow John was standing, and two of his disciples; and he looked upon Je'sus as he walked, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Je'sus. And Je'sus turned, and beheld them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? And they said unto him, Rabbi (which is to say, being interpreted, Master), where abidest thou? He saith unto them, Come, and ye shall see. They came therefore and saw where he abode; and they abode with him that day: it was about the tenth hour. One of the two that heard John speak, and followed him, was An'drew, Si'mon Pe'ter's brother.

41 He findeth first his own brother Si'mon, and saith unto him, We have found the Mes-si'ah (which is, being interpreted, Christ). He brought him unto Je'sus. Je'sus looked upon him, and said, Thou art Si'mon the son of John: thou shalt be called Ce'phas (which is by interpretation, Pe'ter).

43 On the morrow he was minded to go forth into Gal'i-lee, and he findeth Phil'ip: and Je'sus saith unto him, Follow me. Now Phil'ip was from Beth-sa'i-da, of the city of An'drew and Pe'ter. Phil'ip findeth Na-

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45 Phil'ip findeth Na-than'a-el, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Mo'ses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Je'sus of Naz'a-reth, the son of Jo'seph.

46 And Na-than'a-el said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Naz'a-reth? Phil'ip saith unto him, Come and see.

than'a-el, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Mo'ses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Je'sus of Naz'a-reth, the son of Jo'seph. And Na-than'a-el said unto him, Can any good thing come out of Naz'a-reth? Phil'ip saith unto him, Come and see.

**Time.**—A. D. 27. Probably on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath. **Place.**—Bethabara, or Bethany (according to the Revised Version), but this little town near the Jordan is to be carefully distinguished from the Bethany of the Mount of Olives, where Lazarus and Mary and Martha lived. **Rulers.**—Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee; Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea.

#### Home Readings.

- M.* Christ's First Disciples. John 1. 35-42.  
*Th.* Christ's First Disciples. John 1. 43-51.  
*W.* The second call. Matt. 4. 18-25.  
*Th.* True discipleship. Luke 9. 18-26.  
*F.* Teaching the disciples. Matt. 5. 13-20.  
*S.* Friends of Jesus. John 15. 12-21.  
*S.* Reward. Matt. 19. 23-30.

#### Lesson Hymns.

No. 155, New Canadian Hymnal.

Oh, how happy a e they,  
 Who the Sav'our obey.

No. 151, New Canadian Hymnal.

I lay my sins on Jesus,  
 The spotless Lamb of God.

No. 142, New Canadian Hymnal.

Jesus, my strength, my hope,  
 On thee I cast my care.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR SCHOLARS.

- 1. Looking upon Jesus,** v. 35, 36.  
 After what event was this the "next day?"  
 By what singular title is Jesus here called?  
 What would such a name naturally suggest to one who understood Jewish history?  
 What are the characteristics of the lamb among animals?  
 What were the traits of Jesus's character?  
 What do you suppose the two disciples understood from John's words?
- 2. Following Jesus,** v. 37-40.  
 When the two heard John what did they do?  
 Why do you suppose they did this?  
 Who were the two disciples?  
 What is known about Andrew? Matt. 4. 18, 19; John 6. 8, 9; 12. 20-22.
- 3. Leading to Jesus,** v. 41-46.  
 What reason is given in verse 41 for the following which is mentioned in verse 37?

How many persons are shown to have followed Jesus in this lesson?

What disciple followed without being called or led to Jesus?

What one did Jesus call?

Which one showed his familiarity with Scripture?

Why should Nazareth make Nathanael doubt?

#### Teachings of the Lesson.

Find in this lesson that it is our duty—

1. To hear personal testimony for Christ.
2. To look to Jesus as the divine substitute for our sin.
3. To seek to bring other souls to our Saviour.
4. To work constantly up to our clearest light.

#### QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

**1. Looking upon Jesus,** v. 35, 36.

What three persons saw Jesus approaching?

What did John say to his disciples? GOLDEN

TEXT.

Why did he call Jesus a "lamb?"

What had he said the day before? Verse 26.

**2. Following Jesus,** v. 37-40.

Who at once followed Jesus?

What question did Jesus ask?

What was their answer?

What did Jesus bid them do?

How long did the disciples stay?

Who were these two disciples?

Who are now commanded to follow Jesus?

**3. Leading to Jesus,** v. 41-46.

Whom did Andrew lead to Jesus?

Whom did he say he had found?

What did Jesus say about Peter's name?

Whom did Jesus summon the next day?

Where was Philip's home?

Whom did Philip seek out?

What did he say to Nathanael?

What question did Nathanael ask?

What was Philip's answer?

What did Jesus say of Nathanael's character?

What was Nathanael's question of surprise?

#### Practical Teachings.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. Whom we should seek?
2. When we should seek Jesus?
3. That we should lead others to Jesus?



### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What can you tell about Jesus and John when they were boys?

Read the whole wonderful story of John's birth in the first chapter of Luke.

Where did John baptize and preach?

Who did he tell the people was coming?

What did he say as Jesus passed by?

Of what would this remind his disciples? **Of the daily offering of the lamb in the temple.**

What were these lambs called? **Sacrifices for sin.**

What did the two disciples do when they heard John speak? **They followed Jesus.**

Who were the two disciples?

What did they ask Jesus? **Where he lived.**

What did they probably want? **To get acquainted with him.**

Whom did Andrew bring to Jesus?

Who called Philip?

What friend did Philip find?

How many disciples were there now? **Four.**

### THE LESSON OUTLINE.

#### The Members of Christ's First Church.

#### I. ANDREW THE WORKER.

*One of the two.... Andrew.* v. 40.

*Findeth his own brother.* v. 41.

There is a lad here. John 6. 3, 9.

Certain Greeks.... Andrew. John 12. 20-22.

#### II. JOHN THE BELOVED.

*Two disciples.... followed Jesus.* v. 37.

One.... whom Jesus loved. John 13. 23.

The disciple standing by. John 19. 26, 27.

He saw, and believed. John 20. 4, 5, 8.

#### III. PETER THE FERVENT.

*Thou art Simon.* v. 42.

### THE LESSON CATECHISM.

(For the entire school.)

1. Who came to prepare the way for Christ? **John the Baptist.**

2. What did he say of Jesus? **GOLDEN TEXT: "Behold the Lamb of God!"**

3. Who heard John the Baptist say this? **Two of his disciples.**

4. What did they do? **They followed Jesus.**

5. What did one of these two disciples say to his brother Simon? **"We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ."**

6. Who were among the earliest disciples of Jesus? **Andrew and Peter, Philip and Nathanael.**

### NEW CHURCH CATECHISM.

46. What are our duties to ourselves?  
Our duties to ourselves are to guard the health, temperance, and chastity of the body; to cultivate the mind in the knowledge of truth; and to preserve the spirit in purity and communion with God

Thou art the Christ. Matt. 16. 15, 16.

Knowest.... I love thee. John 21. 17.

Peter standing up. Acts 2. 14.

#### IV. PHILIP THE PRACTICAL.

*Jesus.... findeth Philip.* v. 43.

*Come and see.* v. 46.

Two hundred pennyworth. John 6. 5-7.

Show us the Father. John 14. 8, 9.

#### V. NATHANAEL THE PURE-HEARTED.

An Israelite indeed. John 1. 47.

Be sincere. Phil. 1. 10.

First pure. James 3. 17.

### EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

For thirty years Jesus of Nazareth had been growing up into preparation for his work. John the Baptist had stirred the people and made ready a chosen few, the choicest spirits of their time, to receive their Lord. On the afternoon of a certain day the Baptist and two of his followers were standing near the river Jordan, probably upon its eastern bank, not far from the place where their ancestors had walked across the flood, fifteen centuries before. One of these two disciples was the practical Andrew, the other was the deep-thoughted John. They saw that their master, the prophet, was gazing steadfastly upon a Gallean who was passing by. It was Jesus, who had just come from the wilderness of temptation, and bore upon his face the serene look of conquest. The Baptist pointed toward him and said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" We do not wonder that after such an introduction the two young men left the side of their former teacher and followed this new Star. They spent the few hours of that day in converse with the Saviour, and left his presence fully believing in him as the Messiah of Israel. Each sought his own brother with the glad news that the Consolation of their people had come. Andrew found his brother first, and led him to Jesus. Before he had been Simon, the son of Jonas; henceforth he is to be known

throughout the world as Peter, the Rock. On the next day another disciple is added to the little company, and he in turn brings another, Nathanael, who at first doubts, but at one glance into the Saviour's face, and one sentence of power from his lips, accepts him as the King of Israel. Thus the little company grows, and in the first two days of its history the Church, which is to embrace the whole world, counts five members around its head.

**Verse 35. Again, the next day, John stood.** "The next day again John was standing." The reference is to verse 29, where John says, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." "John" here, of course, was John the Baptist, who had taken his usual position, intent upon his office, probably as before at Bethabara. **Two of his disciples.** John names Andrew as one (verse 40); it can hardly be doubted that he himself was the other, but he nowhere in his gospel speaks of himself by name. In Galilee and Judea a rabbi without disciples would not have been entitled to the slightest respect. John the Baptist had many; he was now directing some of his own to follow a new Rabbi.

**36. Looking upon Jesus.** Gazing intently: not happening to see him, but with penetrating vision seeking to analyze his character and nature. John knew, with more or less distinctness, that the Word had existed from all eternity, that he was with God, that he was God, that he had been in the world, that the world had not known him, and that he now was about to come to his nation, to be incarnated in a human being, to be the Lamb of God. To his own great surprise he had only the day before this, by a flash of divine penetration, recognized this Word of God, this Lamb of God, this Son of God, in his own cousin Jesus, and he had so frankly testified. But clear as that flash of recognition had been, John could not help looking upon Jesus again, questioning whether, indeed, these things were true. **Behold the Lamb of God!** This can hardly be regarded as a full announcement of the Messiah. Andrew and John, the evangelist, like all other Jews, expected that Messiah to be a national military deliverer, a son of David—Solomon, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah rolled into one. Not even such good young men as Andrew and John yet yearned for a Saviour of the world; it was a king of the Jews they wanted. John the Baptist's teaching had antagonized this conception of the Jews. He had sought to create a universal sense of sin, to cause the feeling of the need of a universal Saviour. When multitudes were baptized, confessing their sins, he pointed to a particular salvation, to the Lamb of God which taketh away not the sin of the Jews, but the sin of the world. Such a figure of speech would call the attention of everyone

to the spotless lamb which was sacrificed at the altar in Jerusalem; perhaps, also, to the scapegoat which was periodically sent forth to the wilderness after the nation's sins had been formally placed upon its head. Exactly how much of all this was understood by the multitudes who heard John and how much by these disciples it is impossible to say.

**37. The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.** They did not, however, give up their business interests until later. They did not speak to him at once. The Lamb of God was too holy a character for them to intrude upon. The young Master whose shoe latchet their own great master was not worthy to loose was not one to be rashly approached. They timidly walked after him in the hope of becoming better acquainted with him.

**38. Then Jesus turned.** Our Lord knows well when a soul takes a step toward him, and is always ready to open conversation with human hearts. **What seek ye?** Not "Whom seek ye?" but "What seek ye?" For what purpose do you follow me? He seeks to draw out our desires. **Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted,) Master.** In later times, if not at once, the title rabbi was conferred with much ceremony. Jesus was evidently regarded by the other rabbis as an intruder, a self-appointed master, an unauthorized teacher. **Where dwellest thou?** Not, what is thy permanent home? but, where do you now stay in the neighborhood of John's baptism? All around were booths of wattled boughs, and in many of them, doubtless, rabbis were even now being freely entertained, for nobody would accept money of a rabbi for lodging.

**39. Abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.** So they had from ten o'clock in the morning till sundown. What a wonderful privilege was theirs! and yet not so great as ours, to whom has come the whole Gospel. The common Jewish method of dividing the day from sunrise to sunset into twelve equal hours makes the tenth hour about four o'clock in the afternoon. But it is now almost certain that John used a different reckoning, which substantially agrees with ours.

**40. One of the two.** We have already seen that the other of the two was probably John. **Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.** Of

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whom little is known. He was a fisherman of Galilee, lived at Bethsaida, and was in business partnership with his brother Simon.

**41. He first findeth his own brother Simon.** The Revised Version makes it, "He findeth first," which brings the thought that each of these two disciples went to find his own brother, and Andrew found his first. If every Christian would begin to work in his own family, the world would be the better for it. **We have found the Messias.** The Anointed of Jehovah, the title of the one whom the Jews expected to come as their deliverer and prince. And yet their old master had not said, "Behold the Messias," but "Behold the Lamb of God." **Being interpreted, the Christ.** Again John translates the Hebrew term for his Gentile readers.

**42. He brought him to Jesus.** Such a service as any one of us can perform. **When Jesus beheld him.** Looked with penetration. **Thou art Simon the son of Jonas.** That is thy present name. The name of one's father or the place of one's residence or birth was frequently attached to one's name by the Jews and used as our family names are used, to distinguish different Simons from each other. Jonas is nearly the same name as John. **Thou shalt be called Cephas.** There is another occasion when this name is said to have been given to Peter. It is usual to explain this as being a prophecy. **Which is, by interpretation, A stone.** It is unfortunate that we have not this in our Bibles as it is in the Revised Version, "Which is, by interpretation, Peter." Here is a promise that the natural impulsiveness and fitfulness of Simon shall be changed into solid, Petrine steadfastness.

**43. The day following.** We have four

days accurately marked in this chapter (verses 19, 20, 35, 43). According to Edersheim the day here specified was the first of the week, the same as our Sunday. **Jesus would go forth into Galilee.** Jesus purposed to start on his journey from Bethabara, somewhere in the valley of the Jordan not very far from the Dead Sea, to the province which was his home, Galilee, the northern of the three provinces west of the Jordan, the tetrarchy of Herod. The prescribed time of his stay in Judea was doubtless over, besides, he had been invited to a wedding in Cana of Galilee. **Findeth Philip.** A man of practical mind. **Follow me.** The same command is given to men of different characteristics.

**44. Bethsaida.** Fish town. The name of a village on the east bank of Jordan, just above the Sea of Galilee, which the tetrarch Philip rebuilt and named Julius in honor of the daughter of Augustus.

**45. Nathanael.** Probably the same apostle whom the other evangelists call Bartholomew. Bartholomew is commonly coupled with Philip in the list of apostles. **We have found him, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write.** The "law" was a general term for the first five books of the Bible. The "prophets" included both the historical and the prophetic books. **The son of Joseph.** Philip did not know the circumstances of our Lord's birth, and speaks according to the common notion of his parentage (Matt. 13. 55).

**46. Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?** Nathanael probably knew that the prophecies had foretold the birth of the Messiah at Bethlehem. (Compare chapter 7. 52.) There is no need to interpret the words as implying particular depreciation of Nazareth.

### CRITICAL AND HOMILETICAL NOTES.

**Verse 35. John stood.** He stood the "stateliest representative of the human race up to that date." "There hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist" (Matt. 11. 11). Luke tells us the providential particulars connected with his coming into the world (1. 5-25, 57-80). He "was sent from God" (John 1. 6). There is an eloquence of terseness and strength in this announcement concerning him. It breaks upon us like the sudden call of a trumpet. There is a sublime philosophy in it concerning the nature and origin of the human soul. Its descent is from God. The naturalists may have their way with the body of man, and account for it as they may be able. It came from the dust of the earth, we know. If it was a few million years in coming,

and started with a mollusk, and was handed on by an ape, that does not greatly matter. But as to the spirit of man, that is quite another thing. It came "down," not "up," from God, and will return to him.

"John represented one of the unknown quantities of history." Great men always do. God holds great men in his hands in reserve against the demands of crises periods in history. Things go on after a certain fashion; wrongs and falsehoods and misconceptions become established, and there seems no hope. Then God sends a great man, specially commissioned and geniuised for the work of the hour, and lo! there is a revolution. These great men represent "the imperative mood of God's providence in the world." A

divine compulsion is somehow wrought into their freedom, and their life work becomes a kind of fate or destiny.

"To the spirit select there is no choice ;  
He cannot say, This will I do, or that,  
For the cheap means putting heaven's ends in  
pawn,

And bartering his bleak rocks, the freehold stern  
Of destiny's firstborn, for smoother fields  
That yield no crop of self-denying will ;  
A hand is stretched to him from out the dark,  
Which grasping without question, he is led  
Where there is work that he *must do for God.*"

**Verse 35. And two of his disciples.** Andrew was one of these (verse 40), and John without doubt was the other. We do not know how many disciples John had, nor just what duties their discipleship involved, though not unlikely they assisted him in his work of baptism. We do not know that the other three of these first five men who became the followers of Christ were the disciples of John, though it is probable they were. We do not know how long those of them who were John's disciples had been such, though it is probable that they had come to him after Christ's baptism, some time during the forty days of Christ's temptation in the wilderness. We know that John had other disciples who did not leave him to follow Christ, but who were with him, and served as his messengers during his imprisonment (Matt. 11. 2), and who buried him after he was put to death (Mark 6. 29). The eloquent Apollos, of whom we learn nearly twenty-five years later (Acts 18. 24-28), may have been one of John's original disciples, or, if not, had been gained over and instructed by John's disciples. That he, so long after the resurrection of Christ, knew "only the baptism of John," and that Paul found certain disciples at Corinth (Acts 19. 1-3) who said that they had "not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost," and told Paul that their conversion was simply "unto John's baptism," clearly shows that John's followers for some years represented a distinct movement, and reveals the limitations and imperfections (not errors) of John's teachings. John himself evidently never intended that his following should be permanent ; but a few lost sight of the King in their attachment for his lordly outsider.

**37. And they followed Jesus.** The way in which these first disciples came to Jesus and became attached to him as close personal followers seems so simple and natural that the circumstances appear almost accidental, so much so that we might be led to think that it might

very well have happened that other men than they might have fallen in with Christ in the chances of that multitude by Jordan, and that so the company of the disciples might have been differently constituted. But naturalness is not accident. It is God's way to be natural and simple, but he leaves nothing to chance in his plans. The machinery of his arrangements may not always or often appear, but he arranges, nevertheless. As we look at it carefully we see that all the details of the coming of Christ and the introduction of his kingdom in the world were according to divine plan and purpose. Nothing was accidental. The time of his coming was fixed. The line through which he should come was chosen. The parents of his forerunner were selected. Out of all the women of the world Mary was chosen for the glory and the pain of the divine motherhood. No accident, no chance anywhere. So we may be sure, however simple the process may appear, there was no accident in the selection of the twelve men who were to be the innermost circle of his pupils, and through whom his Gospel was to be promulgated to the world. This divine foresight is hinted at and partially revealed in the incident connected with Nathanael, "Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." So the Lord saw the treasurer of Queen Candace before another Philip found him in his chariot on his way down to Gaza with his finger on the great Gospel chapter of Isaiah. More than three years later Christ said to his disciples, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." This lesson beautifully and strikingly illustrates how, through the naturalness of human agencies and the simplicity of apparently common circumstances, God's great and gracious purposes are attained.

## Thoughts for Young People.

### The Growth of the Kingdom.

**1. The Kingdom of Christ grows from small beginnings.** There was a time when the entire body of Christ's followers consisted of two persons—John and Andrew. From that small number it has grown until it now embraces the world.

**2. The Kingdom grows gradually.** It did not at once leap into large numbers. "First the blade, then the ear ;" two, four, six believers ; twelve disciples following Jesus, a hundred and twenty at the close of his earthly life, three thousand on the day of Pentecost. It was advanced, but not in a sudden or tumultuous manner.

**3. The Kingdom grows by the personal experience of its members.** Andrew talked with Jesus and was convinced ; Philip saw him and believed ;

Nathanael doubted until he met Jesus and then accepted him at once. Each member of Christ's true Church has been in personal contact with his Lord.

4. *The kingdom grows by personal testimony.* John the Baptist bore his testimony, and the two disciples who heard it sought Jesus; in turn, Andrew and Philip tell others, and they, too, come to Christ. So now the testimony of converted men and women is the great power of the Gospel.

5. *The kingdom grows by the personal investigation of inquirers.* Andrew and John went personally to find out who Jesus was, and they came away believers. Nathanael doubted at first, but accepted the invitation to "come and see," and when he had talked with Christ believed with all his heart. The Gospel does not shirk investigation, but courts it from every honest inquirer.

#### Orientalisms of the Lesson.

"Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" "Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet" was a common proverbial saying, but this did not mean that the population was void of all moral excellence. Josephus says, "Galileans were inured to war from their infancy, and have always been numerous." The Talmud compliments them in saying, "The Galileans were more anxious for honor than for money; the contrary was true of Judea." The people were bold, and furnished most of the zealots and fanatics of the Roman wars. Jesus chose his first two disciples from this thriving, pushing, energetic center; John and Andrew, and, later, Peter and James, and St. Matthew, also, were of Galilee.

#### By Way of Illustration.

*Personal testimony.* Hand-picked fruit is the best, and hand-picking is the best way to get the fruit. It is personal work that tells. It is so in business, it is so in politics, it is so in religion. Five minutes of private personal entreaty will often accomplish more in winning a soul to Christ than five months of public preaching. Close work is effective. When you talk to me you mean me, and I know it. Try personal work. Be a committee of one. Andrew was a committee of one when he found his brother and brought him to Jesus. John and Philip followed his example. When God wanted his people delivered from Egypt he did not send a committee, he sent a man.

At Kidderminster Richard Baxter followed up his efficient sermons by visiting the parishioners and bringing them to his house, and conversing

with them one by one, alone. As a result more than one third of the inhabitants were converted. —*New York Observer.*

"Come and see." When Jacob heard that his son Joseph was alive he could not believe the good news till he saw the Egyptian wagons Joseph had sent. Facts convinced him. This is an excellent illustration of the convincing proofs of Christianity. The religion of Jesus is not a mere theory, it is proved abundantly by facts. The lives that have been made better, the fact that it does change for good all those who receive it into their hearts, that wherever it enters a community or a nation it elevates them—these are facts, like Jacob's wagons, that should convince men. When some one said to Wendell Phillips that the religion of India is as good as Christianity he replied, "The map of India is the answer."

*They abode with him.* It is not only to believe on Jesus and to follow him, but it is to abide with him that makes the best disciple. God has always taken those whom he has specially used apart to dwell with himself. Moses abode with God in the wilderness; Elijah abode with him in Horeb; Paul abode with him in Arabia; as John the Baptist did in the Jordan wilderness; Luther in the old Wartburg Castle; John Bunyan in Bedford jail; Madame Guyon in her prison; John Wesley ostracized from the English University, and so of scores of others. No doubt a man will learn more of the secrets of the Almighty by dwelling with him one day than he could gain by a lifetime of solitary study. "Abiding in Christ" is the privilege of every believer, even while most busily engaged in their earthly calling.—*Bible Studies.*

*Andrew brought Peter and Philip brought Nathanael.* This is always the impulse of the truly converted man. The Gadarene demoniac went back to his own home to tell them of Jesus; the Samaritan woman went back to her own city and told all the men; Mary rose from the sepulcher whence Jesus had risen and flew to the disciples to tell them the good news. If every sinner who has found Jesus should but bring one sinner to Christ in the course of a year, fifty years would see every sinner in this great world rejoicing in the Lord. What a mighty work it was for Andrew to bring Peter! Andrew was not one of the greatest disciples. He never wrote a gospel, nor even an epistle. He never founded a church. He was not a great preacher, if he ever preached at all, but he was a quiet, zealous winner of souls. He found Simon Peter, one of the greatest of the apostles, who afterward by one sermon won three thousand souls to Christ. So Andrew was a great preacher after all. It was Andrew

who brought the little boy with the loaves and fishes to Jesus, and so helped to feed the multitude. It was Andrew to whom the Greeks came, saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus." There must have been something winsome about him, as well as quick and fertile.

#### Heart Talks on the Lesson.

That is a happy day in any life which marks the beginning of discipleship with Jesus. This was not only the beginning of a new life for these five men mentioned in our lesson, but because they began to follow Jesus thousands since then through their influence have followed him too. If you should begin now a new life by becoming a Christian, or if you already are one and should make a fresh beginning in earnestness, faithfulness, and enthusiasm, what opportunities would open before you, what treasures of reward in soul-winning you would lay up for yourself in heaven.

St. John seems to have been deeply impressed with this expression used by John the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God!" No other writer in the New Testament uses it, but he repeats it many times in the Book of Revelation. John and Andrew having this name applied to Jesus, understood its connection with the lamb slain for a sin offering in their Jewish worship. Their training in Old Testament teaching and their habit of worship prepared them to receive the truth now to be more fully revealed to them in their intercourse with Jesus. The value of early training cannot be told. I heard recently a man say that he had wandered very far from God, and one day when he was a long way from home he was passing a church and heard a hymn his mother used to sing when he was a boy. The tune and the words woke the old memories, and he could not rest until he found again the light of his Father's face.

It is a precious thought that some word spoken here, though it may seem to be forgotten for a while, may yet wake up in your hearts.

To know Jesus as the Sin-bearer is the beginning of true discipleship. It is a searching question which he first puts to those who first followed him, "What seek ye?" We shall find whatever we seek. If pardon of sin, we shall have it; if increasing light and opportunity to do good, he will give it. His answer to their question, "Where dwellest thou?" is his answer to everyone who wants to know him, "Come and see." That is the only way to get questions answered, doubts removed, difficulties settled. See for yourself; get an experience of your own by personal talks with the Lord through his word

and prayer. An evening with Jesus; hours of conversation and communion; how much more this will do for us than years of talking with others about him without learning of him in personal fellowship. These first disciples have settled once and forever in their own minds, and so they could speak convincingly to others. Andrew said to Peter without hesitation, "We have found the Christ," and his confident assertion brought Peter to see for himself. And so with Phillip and Nathanael.

Jesus knows us when we do not realize that he sees us at all. He perfectly understood Peter, and gave him a name which exactly fitted his character. He saw Nathanael in the privacy of his own garden. We never lose our individuality in the sight of God.

#### The Teachers' Meeting.

For centuries the unsolved problem of explorers was the source of the Nile—that river which in a thousand miles receives no tributaries, yet pours a mighty tide into the sea; which finds Egypt a desert, and turns it into a garden. Our lesson shows the origin of a greater and more benign stream—the Church of Christ.... Contrast the vastness of the Christianity of to-day with its small beginning, when two men were its first believers.... A good plan would be to present the persons of the lesson in order, each as a type of character: (1) John the Baptist, the herald of Christ, self-denying and generous; (2) Andrew, the man who brought people "one by one;" (3) John, the deep, thoughtful mystic; (4) Peter, the bold, ardent leader; (5) Phillip, the plain, practical man, who could not argue, but could say, "Come and see;" (6) Nathanael, the skeptical but pure-hearted inquirer, who believes when he sees the evidence of Christ's divinity.... Notice, too, the various kinds of examples in Christian work shown by this lesson.... See also the aspects in which it names Jesus: (1) The Lamb of God; (2) The Messiah, or Christ; (3) The theme of prophecy; (4) The omniscient One; (5) The Son of God; (6) The King of Israel; (7) The Mediator between earth and heaven.

#### OPTIONAL HYMNS.

Come, said Jesus' sacred voice.  
 Jesus is tenderly calling.  
 Come, come to Jesus.  
 Who'll be the next.  
 There's a gentle voice within.

s; hours of  
much more  
alking with  
him in per-  
have settled  
and so they  
s. Andrew  
have found  
ion brought  
Phillip and

alize that he  
stood Peter,  
ly fitted his  
privacy of  
individuality

ng.

lem of ex-  
—that river  
tributaries,  
which finds  
arden. Our  
and more  
rist.... Con-  
ty of to-day  
men were its  
d be to pre-  
er, each as a  
Baptist, the  
generous;  
people "one  
ful mystic;  
Phillip, the  
t argue, but  
thanael, the  
who believes  
divinity....  
examples in  
.... See also  
us: (1) The  
Christ; (3)  
disciple One;  
y of Israel;  
heaven.

oice.

hin.

Hark! the voice of Jesus calling.  
The Saviour is calling.  
The Saviour calls.  
Jesus, I will follow thee.  
While Jesus whispers to you.

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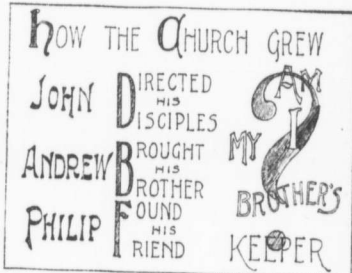
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#### Blackboard.



The truth and permanent growth of the Church of Christ depends upon personal effort in winning souls. The increase of its membership will always rest, as at first, upon the earnest invitation and testimony of the followers of Jesus—directing, finding, bringing. See the firstborn of Adam as he conceals his blood-stained hands and looks up with wrathful countenance into the face of God, exclaiming defiantly, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Then look upon the first disciple of Christ—"He first findeth his own brother Simon.... And he brought him to Jesus." In like manner must the question of Cain be answered by every disciple of Him who came to seek and to save that which was lost.

### LESSON III. CHRIST'S FIRST MIRACLE.

[Jan. 15.]

GOLDEN TEXT. And his disciples believed on him. John 2. 11.

#### AUTHORIZED VERSION.

John 2. 1-11. [Commit to memory verse 11.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### REVISED VERSION.

1 And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: and Jesus also was bidden, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when the wine failed, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. And Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. Now there were six waterpots of stone set there after the Jews' manner of purifying, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the ruler of the

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

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

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

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

9 feast. And they bare it. And when the ruler of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants which had drawn the water knew), the ruler of the feast calleth the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man setteth on first the good wine; and when men have drunk freely, then that which is worse: thou hast kept the good wine till now. This beginning of his signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

**Time.**—The spring of A. D. 27. Four days after the last lesson, and probably on a Wednesday, **Place.**—Cana of Galilee. **Rulers.**—Herod in Galilee; Pilate in Judea.

#### Home Readings.

- M.* Christ's First Miracle. John 2. 1-11.  
*Tu.* Customs of purifying. Mark 7. 1-9.  
*W.* Miracles, proofs of authority. Luke 7. 16-23.  
*Th.* Evidence of divinity. John 10. 31-42.  
*F.* Good company. Luke 24. 13-18, 25-32.  
*S.* A visitor. Rev. 3. 14-22.  
*S.* Do ye now believe? John 16. 25-33,

#### Lesson Verses

No. 17, New Canadian Hymnal.

I love to sing of that great power  
That made the earth and sea.

No. 157, New Canadian Hymnal.

Happy the man who finds the grace,  
The blessing of God's chosen race.

No. 159, New Canadian Hymnal.

My God, I am thine! what a comfort divine,  
What a blessing to know that my Jesus is mine!

#### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR SCHOLARS.

1. The Marriage in Cana, v. 1, 2.

Where was Cana of Galilee?

How were weddings conducted in Christ's day?

After what was this the "third day"?

Who were present at the wedding?

What may we learn from the presence of Jesus at such a social festival?

2. The Mother of Jesus, v. 3-5.

What does the phrase "wanted wine" mean?

Who told Jesus about it?

Was there any disrespect in his accosting his mother as "Woman"?

What may we infer from the order that Mary gave to the servants?

How may we turn it into a wise direction for our own daily lives?

3. The First Miracle, v. 6-10.

For what were the waterpots used?

What is the meaning of "the purifying of the Jews"?

How much is a firkin?

Who was the governor of the feast?

What did he say to the bridegroom?

Was this a joke or a sober statement?

Is there any justification to be found in this lesson for the use of intoxicants in our social gatherings?

4. The Manifested Glory, v. 11.

What was the effect of this miracle on the public?

What was its effect on his disciples?

What are some of its elements of importance to the Christian Church?

#### Teachings of the Lesson.

Where does this lesson intimate—

1. That cheerfulness and sociability are consistent with true godliness?

2. That we are to obey God even when we do not understand his design?

3. That God can work his wonders with the most ordinary materials?

4. That God delights to give bounteously?

5. That Christianity rests upon a miraculous basis?

#### QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. The Marriage in Cana, v. 1, 2.

At what time did this marriage occur?

From what time is "the third day" reckoned?

What guests are mentioned as being invited?

Give the names of these disciples. J—, A—, P—, P—, N—, J—.

2. The Mother of Jesus, v. 3-5.

What lack arose at the feast?

What did Mary say to her Son?

What was his reply?



Was it disrespectful for him to call her "Woman?"

What did he mean by "mine hour?"  
What did Mary say to the servants?

**3. The First Miracle, v. 6-10.**

What vessels were near at hand?  
Why were such vessels needed? Mark 7. 3.  
What command did Jesus give about the vessels?

What did he direct the servants to do?  
Who first tasted the wine?  
What was the custom at feasts?  
How did this occasion differ?

**4. The Manifested Glory, v. 11.**

What does John say of the "glory" of Jesus?  
John 1. 14.  
What was the effect of this miracle on the belief of the disciples? GOLDEN TEXT.

**Practical Teachings.**

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. Whom to invite to share our joys?
2. To whom to tell our wants?
3. Whose manifested glory calls for our faith?

**QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.**

Where was the little city of Cana?  
Who were invited to a wedding feast there?  
Who went with him to the feast?  
What good woman was there?  
How long did the feast last?  
What happened one day?  
Why were the people of the house so much troubled?  
What did Mary do?  
Why did Mary think her Son had wonderful power?  
What did she tell the servants to do?  
What did this show that she had? **Faith in her Son.**

Why did Jesus call his mother "Woman?"  
**It was a term of reverence among the Jews.**

Why were there so many waterpots? **The Jews used a great deal of water in hand washings, etc.**

What did Jesus do to the water in these pots?  
**He changed it into wine.**

What is a miracle? **Something out of God's usual way of working.**

Why did Jesus do this miracle? **To show that he was God.**

**THE LESSON CATECHISM.**

(For the entire school.)

1. In what place was Jesus's first miracle performed? **In Cana of Galilee.**
2. Who told Jesus that there was no wine? **His mother.**
3. What did Jesus say? **"Mine hour is not yet come."**
4. What did he tell the servants to do with the six waterpots of stone? **To fill them with water.**
5. Into what was the water turned by Jesus's power? **Wine.**
6. What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **"And his disciples," etc.**

**NEW CHURCH CATECHISM.**

47. What are our duties to our family?  
Our duties to our family are the duties to each other of husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, master and servant, as set forth in the Scriptures.  
Colossians iv. 1. Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

**THE LESSON OUTLINE.**

**Christ at the Feast.**

- I. A SOCIAL SAVIOUR. v. 2.  
Came eating and drinking. Matt. 11. 19.  
They made him a supper. John 12. 2.
- II. AN ACCESSIBLE SAVIOUR. v. 3.  
The mother . . . saith. v. 3.  
Come boldly. Heb. 4. 16.  
Access with confidence. Eph. 3. 12.
- III. AN OBEDIENT SAVIOUR. v. 4.  
Mine hour is not yet come. v. 4.  
About my Father's business. Luke 2. 49.  
Not to do mine own will. John 6. 38.

- IV. A WILLING SAVIOUR.  
Fill the waterpots . . . Draw out. v. 7, 8.  
Came . . . to minister. Matt. 20. 28.  
The form of a servant. Phil. 2. 7.
- V. AN ALMIGHTY SAVIOUR.  
Water . . . made wine. v. 9.  
All power is given. Matt. 28. 18.  
All things in subjection. Heb. 2. 8.
- VI. A MANIFESTED SAVIOUR.  
Manifested forth his glory. v. 11.  
We beheld his glory. John 1. 14.  
Manifest in the flesh. 1 Tim. 3. 16.

## EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

From the valley of the Jordan Jesus went up into the highlands of Galilee, attended now by a little company of followers. He came to Cana, the home of one of his disciples, and only a few miles distant from his own home at Nazareth. At Cana he hallowed by his presence a marriage feast, and wrought his earliest miracle. Perhaps by the unlooked-for attendance of so large a company as Jesus and his followers the supply of wine was exhausted. The mother of the Lord came to her divine Son, and with the intuition of faith informed him of the need, which she felt that he could supply. He showed her that his powers were not for her to control, but for his heavenly Father, and that when the right hour came they would be exercised. The hour came in that very moment, and the mother saw it, perhaps by the look of divinity upon his face, and she bade the servant fulfill his bidding. There were standing in the hall six large stone jars containing water for washing the guests' feet and hands before they reclined around the tables. Jesus calmly bade the servants fill them to the brim with water, and then take out and bear to the master of the banquet. He knew not whence it came, but tasted it, and at once spoke across the table to the bridegroom, declaring that generally men offered their best wine first, and then that of poorer quality, when the taste had been dulled by drinking, but that he had kept his best wine until now. The unthinking company of feasters may not have known of the miracle, or, knowing it, may have accepted it in mere wonder, but the little group of disciples around Jesus saw in this miracle the token of divine power, and with greater intensity believed in their Master.

**Verse 1. The third day.** Counting the day of the call of Nathanael as the first, the day of the northward journey as the second, and the day of the arrival as the third. During the three days Jesus traversed the entire length of the province of Perea. It is conjectured that the **marriage** was in the family of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Her familiarity and assumption of authority seem to give weight to this conjecture. As Joseph is not mentioned after the time when our Lord's ministry began, it is supposed that he was now dead. **Cana of Galilee** is a town about five miles from Nazareth, on the road to the Sea of Galilee, built upon a terraced hill which slopes toward the setting sun. Its present name is Kefr Kenna. There may or may not be incidental significance in the fact that Jesus and his disciples were "called" (bidden) to the feast, but the **mother of Jesus was there**, already there when the young Rabbi and his disciples arrived.

**2. Jesus was called** (bidden). He came, says Dr. Churton, not so much regarding his own dignity as the benefit of those who invited him. "The holy estate of matrimony Christ adorned and beautified by his presence." **His disciples** were Andrew, Peter, John, Phillip, and Nathanael; and it is well to remember that one of these eyewitnesses of the scene wrote this record. Doubtless they were invited in honor of Jesus. Their discipleship was only a few days old, and could hardly have been known in Cana before they arrived; and it has been suggested that the sudden increase of the number of guests thus brought about accounts for the failure of the wine.

**3. When they wanted wine.** "When the

wine failed." Dr. M. R. Vincent quotes some early authorities: "They had no wine, for the wine of the marriage was consumed." Marriage festivals sometimes lasted a whole week. **The mother of Jesus saith.** Many questions and suggestions arise to the thoughtful reader. Was her interest in the wedding festival caused by her own relationship to the happy pair, or by her anxiety because of the unexpected arrival of the disciples of her Son? Did she really understand his divine nature? Did she expect a miracle? Was she seeking to exercise maternal authority over him? **They have no wine.** There is no special reason to suppose that the family was poor. Guests in the Orient not infrequently contribute to the supplies of the entertainment.

**4. Woman, what have I to do with thee?** Dr. Churton, whom we here follow, translates, "What is it to me and thee?" The request should have come, he quotes Chrysostom as saying, directly from those who needed help. It is unfortunate that the word of address, "Woman," is in English commonly used in disrespect. Hence the literal rendering gives a wrong impression, the original being a word of affectionate respect. (See John 19, 26.) In classic literature the word here translated "woman" is used by Priam to Hecuba, and by Augustus to Cleopatra on occasions where not harshness but gentleness was expressed; and the other occasions when our Lord thus addressed women were occasions when his heart was unusually stirred with pathos and tenderness, as, for instance, when he was about to relieve a foreigner's daughter; when he pitied and healed her who had suffered long with infirmity; when he re-

vealed divine truth to the inquirer at Jacob's Well; when he refused to condemn the sinner; when he committed his mother to the care of John; and when he found Mary Magdalene in an agony of tears. For the rest of the sentence our Authorized Version is idiomatic; but it is hardly conceivable that our Lord should have used this phrase in the same sense as the demoniac who addressed him (Mark 5, 7). The words, however translated, are words of gentle and mild reproof. Mary had erred in her anxiety to serve her friends, and it was a premature request to him to display his power. **Mine hour is not yet come.** This is not a seasonable time for me to work a miracle. "He waited for a moment chosen by the Father for each successive crisis of his life." But the Virgin appears to have understood the words as spoken to try her faith.

### 5. His mother saith unto the servants.

We are compelled to believe that Mary felt responsibility for the success of this festival; else her action was that of officiousness and impertinence. **Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.** "If the holy mother," says Dr. Gobin, "had desired to give the world a perpetual admonition respecting the Son, she could not have devised a nobler command than this." "Whatsoever;" "He saith;" "To you;" "Do it"—the whole of practical Christianity is in these four little phrases. Let us take them as our motto in life.

**6. There were set there six waterpots of stone.** The Jewish authorities prescribed stone waterpots to be used in the washing before and after meals, because they were less liable to impurity. The number six indicates the minuteness of an eyewitness. **After the manner of the purifying of the Jews.** To facilitate the purifications customary among the Jews, which the evangelist's Gentile readers were not familiar with. The extreme to which this purifying was carried is astonishing to us. In the Hebrew home, the Talmud tells us, the washing of jugs and cups and bottles went on the whole day. **Containing.** "Having room for." **Two or three firkins apiece.** The firkin is a liquid measure containing nearly nine gallons.

**7. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water.** They had presumably been emptied by the washings and purifications. **They filled them up to the brim.** Prompt obedience.

**8. Draw out now.** In the original, "Ball out." Canon Westcott thinks that the water that was changed into wine was not taken from the vessels of purification, but the servants were bidden, after they had filled the vessels, to continue drawing from the well or spring. The

exact method of the miracle is not of importance. There is, however, a simple parable suggested here in the juxtaposition of the verbs "fill" and "draw out." Those two injunctions taken together furnish the perfect recipe for large living in spirituality and in secular endeavor. Fill your body with vitality, fill your mind with information, fill your soul by all the means of grace, and then draw out abundantly for the benefit of others. **The governor of the feast.** It was the custom with the Jews, as with other ancient nations, to elect one of the company to preside over a festive entertainment and direct its arrangements, acting as a chairman. The Romans and Greeks selected such a "ruler" by the throwing of dice. It might readily be part of such an office to taste the wine before it was offered to the guests. But there is some doubt whether this "governor" was not a hired head waiter.

**9. Notice here that the ruler of the feast** knew that the liquid presented him was wine, but **knew not whence it was,** while the **servants which drew the water knew** whence it came, but apparently did not know by what power it had been transformed. **Had tasted.** (See note on verse 8.) **Called the bridegroom.** Called across the table in sportive banter.

**10. Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine.** He means to say that that is the general custom. **Have well drunk.** Have drunk freely. "When the palates of the guests have become less sensitive through indulgence."—*Vincent.* **Worse.** Literally "smaller"—that is, weaker. Dr. Vincent instances the English use of the word small beer. **Thou hast kept the good wine until now.** "This speech of the governor of the feast is no doubt recorded by the evangelist as denoting his wonder at the event, not knowing the cause. But the words are often applied with a symbolical meaning, of which they are capable, to the gifts of grace bestowed by Christ, the last more precious than the first."—*Churton.*

**11. This beginning of miracles.** "This as a beginning of his signs." The turning of water into wine was not merely a prodigy, a wonderful thing, a power, it was distinctively a sign, a mark of his power and grace and divine character, and therefore it manifested forth his glory. **His disciples believed on him.** Literally "believed into him." When they saw this miracle their faith was greatly strengthened. Canon Westcott aptly says that the word conveys the idea of the absolute transference of trust from oneself to another. We do not read, however, of any permanent effect upon the guests.

## CRITICAL AND HOMILETICAL NOTES.

*A strange beginning.* If men had been asked, "How shall the Messiah inaugurate his work?" it is certain a program would have been suggested very different from that adopted by Jesus. Jerusalem, doubtless, would have been the place, and he would have been expected, in the sight of the chiefs of the nations, to perform such an overwhelming miracle as would have carried conviction to every mind. But instead we find him at a little village in the interior of Galilee, a simple guest at a wedding feast among common people, and working such a miracle as probably attracted the attention of but few even of those who were present.

*The universal wedding guest.* But this miracle teaches us that Jesus was infinitely more than a mere "wonder-worker." He never said in words or by implication, "Come, now, behold, I will work a miracle in your sight, that you may be convinced of my divine power." And when people came to him and asked him to work such wonders he refused to do so. Just as apparently, unless the Sermon on the Mount be an exception, his teachings were never given in the form of set addresses, but were drawn out from him by the people who came to him; so his miracles were responses to human needs. The "moral" purpose of his miracles was always primary, the "logical" always secondary. So certainly it was in this case at Cana. It was intended to emphasize his sympathy with ordinary human life, and especially to put his seal of approval upon the family life of the world. His presence there and the miracle he wrought have made him the Universal Wedding Guest. In that stately and beautiful marriage ceremony which has come to us from the English Church marriage is referred to as "an honorable estate, instituted of God in the time of man's innocence, signifying unto us the mystical union which exists between Christ and his Church; which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified by his presence and first miracle that he wrought in Cana of Galilee." And at every marriage where the sanctities of home are appreciated the thought of Christ's presence at that wedding will give added sanctity and beauty.

*The Master of matter.* In the prelude to his Gospel John says of Jesus, the divine Word, that "all things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." Jesus was the Creator of matter, and the Master of all its chemical and vital processes. In making this wine out of water he only did immediately what from the beginning he had done slowly. All the wine that had ever been pressed

from purple grapes had been of his making. Every vineyard to-day shows us his ordinary method of turning water into wine. Just so later, when he multiplied the loaves. The bread grew in his hands. But it had grown in his hands from the beginning. Never a loaf is now broken to satisfy the hunger of men that is not of his making. If the Master of matter, for a special purpose, does "quickly" what he ordinarily does "slowly," need we be unbelieving?

*Man's noise, God's silence.* In the "machinery" of the process of this miracle, how much was human, while in the "power" of it, how wholly was it divine! There were, doubtless, much labor and confusion in carrying those more than one hundred gallons of water and pouring it into the six waterpots of stone. But no man saw or heard when that water was transformed into wine. Man works noisily, God works silently. With what infinite clatter does man sow, and reap, and grind, and with what sublime silence does God do that without which all of man's noisy work would be in vain!

*Man's best first, God's best last.* We can only imagine the richness and perfection of the wine which the servants bore to the ruler of the feast. It was pure as the dew and the sunshine that kissed the clusters that hung in the vineyards upon the Syrian hillsides, sweet and harmless as the milk of kine and the honey that dropped from the rocks. What astonished the ruler was that this incomparable wine was served at the close instead of at the beginning of the feast. But in his surprise he spoke a larger truth than he knew. In the kingdom of Christ this is the established order—"the best things last." God works to climaxes. The soul's progress is "from glory to glory." The divine light increaseth "more and more unto the perfect day." The "miracles" of Christ illustrate this climatic order. This "beginning of miracles" was not his greatest miracle. They rose from one range of power and revelation of divine glory to another. The great miracle was not at the beginning but the close of his life. It is so also with his "teachings." His greatest teachings were not at the opening but at the end of his ministry. The Sermon on the Mount, great as it is, does not rise to the spiritual altitude of the discourse to the disciples on the night of the last supper. And the course to the principle is illustrated in the progressive character of Christ's kingdom in the world. Greater things were to follow his ascension, greater power, greater knowledge. Christian faith looks forward; its golden age is not in the past, but in the future. God's

better wine is forever being brought in. On the contrary, sin's best is first, its worst last.

*Divine transmutation.* Christ is the great transmitter of lower values into higher. At his touch brass becomes gold, iron becomes silver, and stones become iron (Isa. 60, 17). His presence and Spirit illumine, transfigure, transmute all the commonplace of life into beauty and richness. James Freeman Clarke has finely interpreted this spiritual element of this lesson in verse:

"Gay mirth shall deepen into joy,  
Earth's hopes shall grow divine,  
When Jesus visits us, to turn  
Life's water into wine.

"The social talk, the evening fire,  
The homely household shrine,  
Shall glow with angels' visits, when  
The Lord pours out the wine.

"For when self-seeking turns to love  
Which knows not mine and thine,  
The miracle again is wrought,  
And water changed to wine."

### Thoughts for Young People.

#### Lessons from the First Miracle.

1. We learn that the highest type of religion is cheerful, joyous, and social. If it was right for Jesus to be present at a festive gathering, it is right for his followers. Ours is a Gospel of joy, and not of gloom. (Verses 1, 2.)

2. We learn that it is our privilege to go to Jesus with all our needs, for common things as well as great, for secular as well as spiritual. Jesus did not rebuke his mother for telling him of the need at the feast. We can freely tell our Saviour all our troubles and our desires, and leave to his judgment the way of relief. (Verses 3-5.)

3. We learn that Christ transmutes the common things of earth into the higher blessings of the Gospel—water to wine, earth to heaven, men into angels. Everything that Christ touches he purifies and hallowes. (Verses 6-8.)

4. We learn the abundance and riches of Christ's bounty. What he gives is given liberally, for he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think. So let us not fear to ask largely. (Verses 6-9.)

5. We learn that, while the world gives its best first and its poorest afterward, Christ gives better than earth's best now, and better still beyond. (Verse 10.)

#### Orientalisms of the Lesson.

The Jews held marriage in high esteem. Rabbi Phinehas says the law, the prophets, and the Holy Scriptures all contain the idea that matches in

marriage proceed from God. In the case of Rebekah we read "the thing proceedeth from the Lord." In the case of Samson "his father and his mother knew not that it was of the Lord" when he wanted a special woman of the Philistines for his wife. The Proverbs meant this where we read "a prudent wife is from the Lord." The legend has been preserved which a modern writer has incorporated in one of his works of romance, which runs as follows: "How long did it take God to make the world?" Rabbi Josébar Chalafra said, "Six days." "What has God been doing since that time?" was asked, and the Rabbi said: "The 'Holy One' has been sitting in heaven arranging marriages." The Talmud contains the assertion that "if a man remain unmarried after the age of twenty, his life is a constant transgression. The 'Holy One,' blessed be he, waits until that period to see if one enters the matrimonial state, and curses his bones if he remain single."

The information which is furnished in the Talmud concerning marriage customs strongly confirms the Gospel references to the same. Moses gave no directions which have come down to our time concerning the ceremony to be observed in marriage. The Talmuds show the three separate stages, that of the engagement, of the betrothal, and of the marriage. There might be enough "promises" of marriage to satisfy the modern summer girl, all of which could be readily broken at any time before "betrothal," properly so called. Rabbi Simeon (Mishna Ta'anith) has the following: "There is no feast in Israel like that of the 15th of Ab and of Cippur. On these two days the young girls in Jerusalem, dressed in white robes newly washed, go out to dance in the vineyards. They lend each other their dresses, so that none may be put to shame by not having a clean one. And what do they talk about? Young man, look that thou choose well. Be not ensnared by beauty, but rather consider what the family is."

Even when the father made an engagement the young girl could break it off if she had reached her majority. The betrothal was distinct from this "engagement," and lasted a whole year. If she broke that, she might be stoned to death. In the early history of the Hebrews the promise was given only by word of mouth. Later it became the custom to sign written contracts. The amount of dowry the young man would give the bride's father for her was more controlling than the choice of the young woman; this was called "mohar." When the two families met he gave a gold ring or some other valuable, or a written promise to marry her, saying to her: "See by this ring [token]

thou art set apart for me, according to the law of Moses and of Israel." At some periods in Jewish history the father was required to give the bride a dowry, but the groom must give a larger one. The least amount the father could give was \$8.50 and the groom's must be \$34 or more.

This, or most of it, is recited by Stapfer, and has been verified in the Talmuds and Mishna by the writer. Much more might have been cited from the original sources. Stapfer's picture of the marriage ceremony itself is quite clear and concise (*Palestine in the Time of Christ*). The most solemn moment was when the bride entered the house of the bridegroom, her new home. "She went out from her father's house perfumed and adorned and with a crown on her head." As she went from one house to the other her hair was "loose and floating," and her face veiled. Her relatives went in front and "scattered ears of parched corn to the children." When she reached the house matrons arranged the hair, so as to hide her locks under a thick veil; henceforth she was never to be seen in public uncovered. She was led under a canopy and placed at her husband's side, and words of benediction were pronounced by both fathers or some important person. The wedding feast was presided over by a person whom John calls in our translation the "ruler of the feast." He gave thanks and pronounced the benedictions throughout the feast. Among other parts of the ceremony he blessed the wine. "It was good manners to exalt the bride, often ascribing to her merits which she by no means possessed. 'Lovely, gracious, blooming bride' was heard on all hands. Grave men danced before the groom to do him honor. . . . There was no religious ceremony at the marriage. The benediction of relatives and friends was all that the newly married pair received." It is said that marriage was celebrated with more decorum in Jerusalem than in Galilee, but even there much hilarity was common. Some of the grave men seem to have been expected to interrupt it when it became extravagant. They do not seem to have made formally any call or demand for order, but to have done some act which would arrest the attention of the company. The rabbis themselves are recorded to have become so jovial on one occasion mentioned (Beracoth) the father of the groom broke a vase worth \$68 in the presence of the company to moderate their transports.

It would not be well to convey the impression that in all points the Jewish marriage ceremony as we have written of it was the same among all the races of the Orient. Substantially in many respects there is marked similarity in most particulars, but in others there is just as notable

difference. Not in all of them do the bride and groom have nothing to say in the ceremony. For instance, in the Hindu marriage ceremony we find that a part of the formula requires that the bride shall address the groom thus: "If you live happy, keep me happy also; if you be in trouble, I will be in trouble too; you must support me, and must not leave me when I suffer. You must always keep me with you, and pardon all my faults. . . . You must have nothing to do with any other woman while I live; you must consult me in all that you do," etc. "Vishnoo, fire, and the Brahmans are witnesses between you and me." To this the groom replies: "I will all my lifetime do just as the bride requires of me; but she also must make me promises. She must go with me through suffering and trouble; and must always be obedient to me. . . . When she sees another man in better circumstances, or more beautiful than I am, she must not despise or slight me." The bride promises: "I will all my lifetime do just as you require of me. Vishnoo, fire, Brahmans, and all present are witnesses between us." This has much more the color of our modern church ritual, especially that of the Church of England, than the Jewish custom in which neither party say anything during the marriage ceremony.

### By Way of Illustration.

*The attractiveness of Jesus.* One of the marked features of Jesus's character was his personal power to draw men to him. There was nothing repulsive about his piety. Children liked to be with him; people invited him to their weddings and feasts; they came to him with their needs. Some one has said that "Jesus never smiled." How does anyone know? The word "smile" is not in the Bible, and if the fact that it is not recorded of Jesus that he smiled proves that he did not, the same reasoning would prove that no one smiled during the four thousand years of Bible history. Although Jesus was bearing the sins of the world, he was a cheerful companion and an attractive guest.—*Select Notes.*

*Verse 4.* Our Lord often tests us by his manner of receiving our statements of our trouble. He does not always show an instant readiness to supply our every need. That was the way he did with the Syrophenician mother. There is a verse in Isaiah which I always connect with the story of that mother: "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee." Then it is that we have an opportunity to prove our loving trust in our Saviour; and nothing is surer to gladden the heart of Jesus than our faith in him.

*Verse 5. Obedience.* The servants could not see the reason for a large quantity of water. The guests had all arrived, been purified, and were sitting at the feast. But they did not dispute the Lord's commands by saying, "It is wine they want, not water." They carried out his instructions to the letter. Baron Rothschild and the writer Balzac were excellent friends. Once when Balzac was obliged to take a trip to Germany and was without money he went to the baron. The rich man gave him some money and a letter of introduction to his nephew at Vienna. Balzac, thinking the letter cold, formal, and not particularly complimentary, ignored the wish of the baron and never took it to his nephew. Returning to Paris, Rothschild asked, "Did you see my nephew?" The author replied coldly that he had kept the letter. "I am sorry for you," said the baron, taking the despised epistle in his hand and pointing to a peculiar hieroglyphic below the signature. "If you had but given it to my nephew, it would have opened a credit of twenty-five thousand francs for you at the Vienna firm." O, how much we miss when we follow our own judgment instead of our Lord's "whatsoever."—*A. C. Morrow.*

*The first miracle was a type of Christ's mission.* The change of water into the luscious juice of the grape is the symbol of what Christ is doing in the world. He turns sinners into saints, the old wilderness of the world into a new paradise of God, and the jaws of the sepulcher into an outgoing gate.—*Macdonald.*

*A creative miracle.* This was one of the two creative miracles which Jesus wrought. It was early noticed by the fathers of the Church that the two creative miracles of Jesus set forth the materials for the Eucharist. First, he turns water into wine, and after turns a few little fishes and loaves into a great supply of bread for the people.

*Jesus at a wedding feast.* Without Christ's presence earth's joys at their best and brightest are like some fair landscape in shadow. When he comes to hallow them, as he always does when he is invited, they are like the same scene when the sun blazes out on it, flashes from every bend of the rippling river, brings beauty into shady corners, opens the flowers, and sets all the birds singing in the sky. Joys on which he can let the sunshine of his smile fall will be bettered and prolonged thereby; joys on which he cannot are not for his servants to meddle with.—*McLaren.*

### Heart Talks on the Lesson.

Jesus is our human friend as truly as he is our divine Saviour. He cares about all that interests us; there is not a joy nor a sorrow in which

he does not share. We are apt to think the spiritual life must be lived apart from the natural life; that religion is one thing, daily living and thinking quite another. We expect to find the Lord present in a prayer meeting, but never think of him as going with us to a feast and sharing our pleasures with us. And that is the reason our social enjoyments too often separate us from him. Both Jesus and his disciples were called to this feast. There are times when his disciples are called where Jesus could not be included in the invitation. On such occasions surely his disciples should refuse to go. But there are social festivities in which he loves to mingle with his friends. If you ask me where you may go or may not go, as a Christian I answer, you may go anywhere with Jesus, nowhere without him. You can readily know whether or not he goes with you, by your own consciousness of his approval or the loss of it, if you speak to him about it with an honest heart.

At this feast it is said Jesus manifested forth his glory. The glory of our blessed Master is his service for humanity for love's sake. "I am among you as one that serveth" was the testimony of his life. He came from heaven, "and to be ministered unto, but to minister," and he began to show forth the glory of his great love by a miracle proving his sympathetic interest in this occasion of family festivity. His glory is his perfect oneness with humanity in all that pertains to our good and to our happiness. His disciples might have thought the supply of refreshment at a wedding feast a small occasion for the display of his divine power; some great case of healing or casting out of devils would seem more fitting. But no; this was an occasion in accord with his mission; he identified himself in the beginning of his public ministry with the everyday interests of men and women. His mother, who had pondered in her heart, through the years, her wonderful Son, told him the difficulty they were in. She knew it might be left with him to manage, so she said to the servants, "Whatsoever he saith to you, do it." He gave the command, "Fill the waterpots with water," and to the full measure they obeyed; "they filled them up to the brim." It was a simple thing to do, but surprising results followed. Men saw only the water put in, the wine drawn out. It is always so when we obey the Lord Jesus. He bids us do certain things which seem to us useless, unreasonable. He says, "Believe in me," and if we obey, he works the miracle of a changed heart within us. He says, "Do this work for me," and if we obey, he changes the water of our weak endeavor to the wine of rich success.

### The Teachers' Meeting.

Begin by drawing a map showing Galilee, the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan, and the Dead Sea. Locate Bethabara and begin there as a starting point. Trace the journey of Jesus to Cana, taking, perhaps, Nazareth on the way.... Who were with him at Cana? J., J., A., P., P., N.... Present the story, bringing it out from the class.... Show the oriental customs of reclining at supper, marriage feasts, washing, etc.... Do not permit a long discussion on the wine question. Show that whether the wine then made was "fermented" or "unfermented" is of very slight account, for the ordinary wines of that time were less intoxicating than those of the present, and infinitely less than the drugged liquors now in use. If Christ made weak wine, we have no warrant for drinking strong whisky.... Present the aspects of Christ in the lesson.... Show especially "the glory of Christ" in this event.... How may we be like Christ as here shown? By gentleness, kindness, helpfulness, submission, living for others.

### OPTIONAL DEVOTIONS.

O for a thousand tongues to sing.  
Come, let us join our cheerful song.  
Take the name of Jesus with you.  
What a Friend we have in Jesus.  
Called to the feast.

Jesus, only Jesus.  
'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus.  
Tell it to Jesus.  
Go tell it to Jesus.  
Lord, we come in faith believing.

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—Andrews, *Life of Our Lord*, pages 148-151.  
Burton, *Gleanings in the Gospels*, page 47. Geikie,

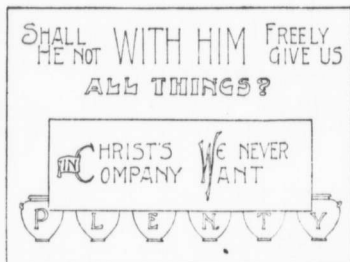
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WINE.—*The Temperance Bible Commentary*, pages 301-308.

FREEMAN'S HANDBOOK: Ver. 6, The firkin, 792. Ver. 8, The governor of the feast, 793.

### Blackboard.



As yet Christ had worked no public miracle to evince his divine authority. The urgent need of the entertainers at the marriage feast afforded opportunity for "showing a sign," and he turns the water into wine. Jesus should be welcomed at all times and places as a guest and invited to share our enjoyments. Not alone will he honor us by his presence, but he is ready to supply our wants, for when we take him into our joys he will not leave us in our sorrows. If we seek his company, God will with him freely give us all things (Rom. 8. 32).

### LESSON IV. CHRIST AND NICODEMUS.

[Jan. 22.]

**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.

#### AUTHORIZED VERSION.

[Study verses 1-21. Compare 2 Cor. 5. 17-21.]

John 3. 1-16. [Commit to memory verses 14-16.]

1 There was a man of the Phar'isees, named Nic-o-de'mus, a ruler of the Jews:

2 The same came to Je'sus by night, and said unto him, Rab'bi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these

#### REVISED VERSION.

1 Now there was a man of the Phar'isees, named Nic-o-de'mus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came unto him by night, and said to 2 him, Rab'bi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with 3 him. Je'sus answered and said unto him,



3. Ellicott, *Life of Christ*, pages 1-10.  
 4. Geikie, *Life of Christ*, pages 1-10.  
 5. *Life of Christ*, pages 1-10.  
 6. *Life of Christ*, pages 1-10.  
 7. *Life of Christ*, pages 1-10.  
 8. *Life of Christ*, pages 1-10.  
 9. *Life of Christ*, pages 1-10.  
 10. *Life of Christ*, pages 1-10.  
 11. *Life of Christ*, pages 1-10.  
 12. *Life of Christ*, pages 1-10.  
 13. *Life of Christ*, pages 1-10.  
 14. *Life of Christ*, pages 1-10.  
 15. *Life of Christ*, pages 1-10.

miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

3 Je'sus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 Nic-o-de'mus 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 of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6 That 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 again.

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

9 Nic-o-de'mus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

10 Je'sus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Is'ra-el, and knowest not these things?

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

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

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

14 And as Mo'ses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

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

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

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 God. Nic-o-de'mus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be

5 born? Je'sus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the king-

6 dom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit

7 is spirit. Marvel not that I say unto thee, Ye

8 must be born anew. The wind bloweth where

it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither

it goeth: so is every one that is born of the

9 Spirit. Nic-o-de'mus answered and said unto

10 him, How can these things be? Je'sus answered and said unto him, Art thou the teacher

of Is'ra-el, and understandest not these

11 things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and bear witness of

that we have seen; and ye receive not our

12 witness. If I told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you

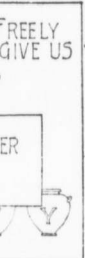
13 heavenly things? And no man hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of

14 heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent

15 in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth

16 may in him have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten

17 Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.



18. The miracle to which no man had ever before afforded access, and he turns to the world and he is welcomed and invited to the feast. He will honor the Father and supply our needs. He will seek his own glory as all things

**Time.**—A. D. 27 or 28. **Place.**—Jerusalem.  
**Rulers.**—Herod in Galilee; Pilate in Judea.

**Home Readings.**

- M. Christ and Nicodemus. John 3. 1-13.
- Th. Christ and Nicodemus. John 3. 14-21.
- W. A new creature. 2 Cor. 5. 14-21.
- Th. Born again. 1 Pet. 1. 15-25.
- F. The brazen serpent. Num. 21. 4-9.
- S. The love of God. 1 John 4. 7-14.
- S. Mighty love. Rom. 8. 31-39.

**Lesson Hymns.**

- No. 110, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 I heartily welcome voice,  
 That calls me, Lord, to thee.
- No. 418, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 Nearest O God, to thee!  
 Hear thou my prayer.
- No. 421, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 Jesus is tenderly calling the home—  
 Calling to-day, calling to-day.

[Jan. 22.]  
 at whose-  
 Phar'i-sees,  
 the Jews: he  
 and said to  
 part a teacher  
 can do these  
 God be with  
 unto him,

**QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR SCHOLARS.**

1. **The New Birth: Its Necessity, v. 1-7.**  
 To what Jewish sect did Nicodemus belong?  
 Of what official body was he a member?  
 Why may he have come by night to Jesus?  
 What did he recognize in him? Verse 2.  
 Why was he sure that God was with Jesus?  
 What did our Lord say concerning entrance into the kingdom of God?  
 What is the kingdom of God?  
 What is it to be born again?  
 Have you been born again?  
 What question did Nicodemus ask Jesus?  
 What is the meaning of "Verily, verily?"  
 How can a man be "born of water?"  
 How can a man be "born of the Spirit?"  
 Is it necessary for a Christian to belong to the visible Church of Christ?  
 What did Jesus say we could know and could not know about the wind?  
 What does he imply that we can know and cannot know about the Spirit?

**2. The New Birth : Its Mystery, v. 8-12.**

Did Nicodemus understand Jesus?

By what question did Jesus reprove Nicodemus?

How does Jesus say he had thus far spoken and testified?

How had his teaching thus far been received?

What reason did he give by implication for limiting his teaching?

**3. The New Birth : Its Source, v. 13-16.**

Who is "He that came down from heaven?"

How could the Son of man be in heaven while on earth?

Tell why "Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness?"

Who must now be lifted up as an object for the world's faith?

What have those who believe on the Son of man?

How has God always regarded this world of sinners?

How did Jesus afterward define God?

How far does Jesus say God loved the world?

**Teachings of the Lesson.**

Where does this lesson intimate—

1. That Jesus worked his miracles as signs of his divine mission?

2. That God requires us publicly to confess his name?

3. That spiritual truths need spiritual discernment.

4. That the mysteries of the Christian religion cannot be explained?

5. That God loves and seeks to save every one?

**QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.****1. The New Birth : Its Necessity, v. 1-7.**

What ruler is here named, and of what sect was he?

What visit by night did he make?

What did he say that he knew?

How only can one see the kingdom of God?

What says Paul about the change in this new birth? 2 Cor. 5. 17.

How did Nicodemus answer Jesus?

What two kinds of birth did Jesus contrast? Verse 6.

About what did he tell Nicodemus not to marvel?

**2. The New Birth : Its Mystery, v. 8-12.**

In what way is the wind like the new birth?

What question did Nicodemus ask?

What question did Jesus ask him?

What did he say of his own utterance?

What about earthly and heavenly things?

**3. The New Birth : Its Source, v. 13-16.**

Who only has ascended to heaven?

Who is this "Son of man?"

What act of Moses was a prophecy of Christ?

Why was the Son of man lifted up?

What moved God to give his only Son?

GOLDEN TEXT.

**Practical Teachings.**

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That we must be born again?

2. That the new birth is God's work?

3. The measure of God's love for the world?

**QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.**

Who was Nicodemus?

What did a Pharisee think? **That his good works would save him.**

What only can save a man? **Faith in Jesus.**

When did Nicodemus go to Jesus?

Why did he not go in the daytime?

What did he think of Jesus? Verse 2.

What strange things did Jesus tell him?

What did he mean by being "born again?"

**Having a new heart and a new inner life.**

What had God said long before this?

What does the old heart love? **The things that please self.**

What does the new heart love? **The things that please God.**

How can we be "born again?" **Only by letting the Spirit of God come into our hearts.**

What wonderful picture of faith was given long before?

Who has been "lifted up" for our salvation?

**THE LESSON CATECHISM.**

(For the entire school.)

1. What did Jesus say to Nicodemus? **Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.**

2. How did he say a man must be born again? **Of water and of the Spirit.**

3. Like what did Jesus say is the working of the Spirit? **Like the wind, that bloweth where it listeth.**

4. To what did Jesus compare his own death for mankind? **To Moses's lifting up the serpent in the wilderness.**

5. What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **"For God so loved," etc.**

## NEW CHURCH CATECHISM.

48. What are our duties to our country?  
Our duties to our country are to render due honour to rulers; to observe the laws of the land in the fear of God and to support their authority; to contribute our just share to the expense of

government; to promote the public well-being; and to exercise our franchise for the public good.

Matthew xxii. 21, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

Romans xiii.

## THE LESSON OUTLINE.

## What Christ is and What He Brings.

## I. A TEACHER BRINGING TRUTH.

*A teacher come from God.* v. 2.

I will raise. . . . a Prophet. Deut. 18. 18.

Spoken unto us by his Son. Heb. 1. 2.

## II. A WORKER BRINGING MIRACLES.

*These miracles that thou doest.* v. 2.

Miracles. . . . God did by him. Acts. 2. 22.

Went about doing good. Acts 10. 38.

## III. A REVEALER BRINGING KNOWLEDGE.

*Except a man be born again.* v. 3.

Not of blood. . . . but of God. John 1. 13.

By the word of God. 1 Pet. 1. 23.

## IV. A SACRIFICE BRINGING REDEMPTION.

*Son of man. . . . lifted up.* v. 14.

Redeemed. . . . precious blood. 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19.

Lifted up. . . . draw all men. John 12. 32.

## V. THE SON BRINGING LIFE.

*God so loved the world.* v. 16.

Spared not his own Son. Rom. 8. 32.

Heirs. . . . of eternal life. Tit. 3. 7.

## EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

From Cana Jesus went to Capernaum, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. His mother and "brethren" accompanied him, and also the little band of followers, most of whom lived near by. They remained there but a few days, and then Jesus journeyed to Jerusalem with the throng of pilgrims to celebrate the feast of the passover. He entered the temple, and found its outer courts resounding with the noise of trade, beasts and birds for sacrifice being sold, and the tables of the money changers standing on every side. With the authority of a prince in his father's house he broke in upon the confusion, drove out the buyers and the sellers, and made the Gentiles' court, at least for a time, as holy as the inner halls. But his act aroused against him the bitterest enmity from the classes having an interest in the profanation of the temple—priests whose perquisites he had interfered with, scribes whose shortcomings he had exposed, and merchants whose wicked gains he had stopped. All interests combined against him, and believers in him were few. His miracles awakened curiosity, but failed to inspire a true faith. Among the ruling classes there were, however, a few who were aroused to interest. One of these was Nicodemus, a man timid by nature and slow in spiritual perception, but bearing in his heart the germs of a faith which should one day blossom out in noblest confession. This man came to Jesus by night, and received from the great Teacher the revelation of one of the cardinal doctrines of the Gospel, that of the new birth by faith in Christ.

**Verse 1.** There was a man. Godet, and following him Dr. M. R. Vincent, observe the close connection between this verse and the last word of the previous chapter: "Many believed in Jesus, but Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." Nicodemus is a convenient specimen of the race of mankind which Jesus knew so well. **Of the Pharisees.** A party which undertook to fulfill the law of Moses to the letter, and too often neglected its spirit. **Nicodemus.** There are slight descriptive touches of this man in the Talmud which mention his enormous wealth when Titus began the siege of Jerusalem, and the abject poverty to which his family was afterward reduced. His later career shows a firmness which is not at all inconsistent

with the inquiring spirit manifested in this lesson. **A ruler of the Jews.** He appears to have been a member of the great council, or Sanhedrin. (See John 7. 50.) As such he was an authorized teacher of the law, a master in Israel (verse 10), and possessed of certain judicial power.

**2. Came to Jesus by night.** Fearing to compromise his own dignity and possibly safety. Jewish superstition kept men home at night. A guest, which Jesus was in Jerusalem, would be given the "upper room," which was nearly always approached by an outside staircase, so that a visit could be paid to him in secrecy. It is pleasant to note that Nicodemus was one of those who out of weakness was made strong. We find him afterward pleading a little more boldly in the council in our Lord's behalf (John 7. 51), and

then, like a confirmed disciple, assisting, with Joseph of Arimathea, to give the body of Jesus an honorable and costly burial (John 19. 39). **Rabbi.** "Master." It would be of great interest if we could ascertain by what means Jesus came by this title. It was, as we have seen in a recent lesson, a very new title, unknown before the days of our Lord, and one (Matt. 23. 7) of which Jesus did not approve. **We know.** Nicodemus seems to intimate that other members of the council shared his conviction, which was based on our Lord's miracles. **Thou art a teacher come from God.** "Thou art come from God as teacher." It is from God that thou hast come.

**3. Answered and said.** This phrase is often used in reply to an objection or criticism, or to something present in another's mind, and not simply in direct reply to another's address. **Verily, verily.** Amen, amen. An Hebraic phrase of emphasis. **Except a man be born again.** In the margin it is "born from above." (Compare John 1. 13.) Our Lord begins his discourse by imparting to this inquirer this first and fundamental truth, that if we would enter into the kingdom of God, we must be born again. For to be born again is to be quickened by God's Holy Spirit to new hopes, new desires, new affections, and "to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." **He cannot see.** Until the nature of man is correspondent with the divine order spiritual things cannot be apprehended. Nicodemus had supposed that the kingdom of God was a new imperial state; Christ would have him understand that it was a spiritual empire, wherein citizenship was to come through renewed human nature.

**4. How can a man be born when he is old?** Or, "an aged man," far advanced in years, as probably Nicodemus was. **Second time.** As Godet remarks, "Nicodemus does not understand the difference between a second beginning and a different beginning. He looks at the subject from the secular side."

**5. Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit.** Of the water in holy baptism, as the outward sign; of the Holy Spirit, as the effectual cause (Mark 16. 16; Acts 2. 38; Tit. 3. 5). **Enter into.** Become partaker of.

**6. The flesh.** Used in something like the sense in which we use human nature—that which is born under the conditions of this life. Kind begets kind. **That which is born of the Spirit.** The Holy Spirit of God. The beginning of life in the earthly economy is of an earthly sort, but the life that begins amid heavenly conditions is instinct with heaven. To enter the supreme

kingdom one must become partaker of the supreme nature.

**7. Ye must be born again.** Even ye, Israelites, and Pharisees, and members of the Sanhedrin.

**8. The wind bloweth.** (Compare Eccles. 11. 5.) "As in the natural world everyone is sensible of the power of the wind, its unchecked freedom, its diffusion everywhere, hearing the sound, and seeing the effect of its gentler or stronger force, so in the spiritual world we may well believe that the grace of the Holy Spirit works unseen, breathing often imperceptibly upon the soul, and in ways which we cannot sensibly feel or distinguish (1 Cor. 2. 11); but it is discerned by its effects."—*Churton.* **Thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth.** "The possibility that this illustration would not be applicable to a modern scientist does not lessen its force and beauty."—*Gobin.* **So is every one that is born of the Spirit.** As you see the effect of the wind, though you cannot see the wind, so you have visible evidence of the power of the Spirit's invisible influence.

**10. Art thou a master of Israel.** The words in the original may mean, "Art thou the famous master?" **Knowest not.** Better, as the Revised Version, "understandest not."

**11. I say unto thee.** "I" to "thee;" loving, earnest, intense. **We speak that we do know.** "What we have seen and heard with confidence we tell." **Ye receive not our witness.** The Jewish elders as a body had rejected Christ, but our Lord insists that the new birth impart a new vision. He that is born of the water and of the Spirit sees the kingdom of God.

**12. Earthly things . . . heavenly things?** By earthly things, or "things that are done on earth," we must understand the grace of the new birth. If ye, Jews, believe not these things when they are declared to you, how will ye believe those higher mysteries concerning my heavenly nature?

**13. And no man hath ascended.** "Nicodemus had begun this conference by saying, 'We know that thou art a teacher come from God.' Our Lord here tells him that he was more than this, that he was come from God to dwell with men as 'the Son of man,' but was still in the power of his Godhead united with his Father 'in heaven.' As the Son of God, he alone had perfect knowledge of heavenly things."—*Churton.*

**14. As Moses lifted up the serpent** (Num. 21. 9). The brazen serpent was a type of Christ, in that those who looked upon it were delivered from temporal death: so they who look

with faith upon Christ crucified are saved from eternal death.

**16. God so loved the world.** (Compare Rom. 3. 29 and 8. 32; 1 John 4. 9.) Most of what our

Lord had said was in harmony with the general teachings of the Pharisees; but here was an enlargement of view which a strict member of the sect would shrink from.

### CRITICAL AND HOMILETICAL NOTES.

*A distinguished visitor.* Nicodemus was probably the most distinguished man who ever called on Christ. As a Pharisee he belonged to the orthodox and most respectable class. As a ruler of the Jews he was a member of the great Sanhedrin, which consisted of seventy-one members, the legislative and judicial body of the nation, the Jewish Parliament and supreme court combined. It required the highest qualifications to become a member of this august body. If degrees such as are conferred now had been recognized then, Nicodemus would have been both D.D. and LL.D., and had there been learned societies then as now, he would have been a "Fellow" in the most royal of them all. Moreover he was rich, for wealth was another qualification for membership in the Sanhedrin, and tradition has it that he was the wealthiest man in Jerusalem. Such was the man who came to Jesus by night—senator, supreme judge, man of opulent learning, millionaire.

*A "four-square" man.* After popular clamor and excitement subside people turn to a few well-balanced, self-possessed, thoughtful men to ask what they think. Nicodemus was a man of this four-square kind. We can easily imagine him standing in the crowd that surrounded Christ as he taught and wrought miracles in the temple area—his keen gray eyes looking out from under heavy eyebrows, his face grave and calm and thoughtful. He was profoundly impressed. Clearly this Galilean teacher and miracle-worker was no ordinary man. God was manifestly with him. But who was he, and what could be his mission? Nicodemus was too earnest a man to dismiss so weighty a matter. He would seek a personal interview with the Prophet himself. And so, as the stars came out, he passed out through the city gate, down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, over the brook Kedron, up the steep ascent of the Mount of Olives, to the place where he had learned that Jesus would pass the night. And there at last the proud Pharisee, the honored ruler, the eminent scholar, the man of great wealth, looked into the face of the peasant Prophet. It was a fateful hour for Nicodemus! When he should reenter the city's gate that night he would carry in his heart such a weight of new and vital truth as would revolutionize the whole system of his previous think-

ing and make necessary the reconstruction of his life and character.

*Not a coward.* The fact that Nicodemus came to Jesus by night is not to be set down to cowardice. He came by night because in private he hoped to have better opportunity for asking the questions which were in his heart. His subsequent history does not reveal him to us as a coward. There are but two other references to him in the gospels, and they both reveal him as a man of strength and courage. Study him in the light of the incident recorded in John 7. 45-53. It is so easy to "say nothing," to draw ourselves down a little closer in our chairs and keep still. Nicodemus could have kept still and let the tide of hatred and prejudice among his fellow-rulers have its way. But, not unlikely, the memory of that night conversation came back to him and the searching voice of the great Teacher sounded in his ears. And so he rose and asked, "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him and know what he doeth?" A "coward" would not have asked that question under those circumstances.

The third and last view we get of Nicodemus is in connection with the tragedy of Calvary. During that awful afternoon, when all but a few of Christ's friends had fled, two men took counsel together and determined to do a brave and beautiful thing. One of these men was Joseph of Arimathea and the other was Nicodemus. They requested of Pilate the body of Jesus, and in the sad silence which closed a day of unutterable agony they tenderly took down the pitiful, mangled body from the cross and reverently bore it away to the new-made sepulcher. This they did in the sight of their fellow-rulers who had so relentlessly persecuted Jesus and put him to death. That was not the act of a coward. And this is the last sight we get of Nicodemus. But it means much if in the last sight we have of a man his face is turned in the right direction. So Nicodemus went out of sacred history bearing the body of the crucified Christ to loving burial, and we may expect to find him among those whom Christ shall raise up at the last day.

*Great germinal truth in deep soil.* Christ took the measure of Nicodemus's soul and saw that it was deep enough to give growing room for a great truth. So he put into the receptive soil of

his mind the germinal idea of spiritual birth. It was a truth not so much to be mastered by Nicodemus as one that should master him. It was given him as a doctrine that should haunt his deepest thought and ultimately transform his whole conception of the kingdom of God. "Ye must be begotten from above!" That was really what Christ said, for the Greek word translated "born" is from the active verb *gennao*, which means to "beget," and not the passive verb *tikto*, to be "born;" and the word translated "again" is *anthen*, and means "from above," and not a "second time" merely. That is the law of all life—nothing passes up into any realm of life except as vitalizing power from above comes down upon it in quickening transformation. So the ooze and muck at the bottom of the pond is born upward into the white radiance of the water lily; so coarse and common matter is begotten from above into the flashing beauty of the humming bird! A great mystery! So Nicodemus felt, and said, hopelessly, "How can these things be?" But all life is a fathomless mystery, and, as Jesus reminded Nicodemus, every wind that blows comes from desert plains of mystery.

### Thoughts for Young People.

#### Characteristics of the Young Rabbi.

1. From Nicodemus's standpoint. A Galilean mechanic, bred far outside the schools, and yet somehow, to an unprecedented degree, the exponent of God's truth.
2. From his disciples' standpoint. A brilliant young leader who started his work where John the Baptist stopped his work, and who might be expected to seat himself on the throne of his father David and reward each of his disciples liberally.
3. From the average Jewish ecclesiastic's standpoint. A contemptible peasant, ignored as long as they could afford to ignore him, and when popularity made that impossible, persecuted and killed.
4. We know him to have been in very deed the Son of man and consummate flower of humanity, the greatest and best human being who ever lived. We know him to have been, also, in literal truth the God of glory, the one human being of whom it could be truthfully said, "In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." His teachings on this vital point of theology are, therefore, to us authoritative and final.

#### Orientalisms of the Lesson.

The son of Jewish parents was born a member of the chosen people. But a proselyte was—certainly before our Lord's time—made a Jew with

a baptism (accompanied with circumcision and sacrifice), which was regarded as his new birth, his naturalization into a new and higher race. And if the proselyte had children, they were baptized with him as "little proselytes."—Gore (on Ephesians). But deeper than this lay the Jewish conception of salvation by works. Every good work, whether of obedience or mercy, established a certain degree of merit with God; every evil work was a demerit, and man's salvation depended on having more "merits" than "demerits," as a scholar might be graduated on his merit markings, and refused graduation for "demerits." The balancing of "merits" and "demerits" was made daily. The results could not, however, be known to the individual, and this created uneasiness. To allay this the doctrine of vicarious righteousness of the patriarchs and saints of Israel was developed not later than the Christian era. A man could therefore summon to his aid the "merits" of the fathers who had a surplus of "merits" to counterbalance his own "demerits." There was in this substitution, but not forgiveness; it was only payment in full, God not caring by whom, so long as all the debt was paid. Mr. R. H. Charles treats of this in his discussion of the "Apocalypse of Baruch." Thus came the notion that the good works of righteousness were laid up as a treasury of merits, and "Have we not Abraham to our father?" came to mean more than a blood relationship. If Nicodemus had these notions, it will be seen how difficult it was for him to conceive what Jesus meant by being "born again." He was not outside the pale; he was a full-blooded Jew. Why should he need anything more than was provided for him in the "merits" of the patriarchs to make up his "merits" against his "demerits?" Gentiles were incapable of "righteousness," but the world was created on account of Israel.

#### By Way of Illustration.

*The new birth.* Man by nature is as dead and incapable of seeing and entering into the kingdom of God, or into living communion with God, until he is born again, as a blind and deaf person is incapable of seeing and enjoying the material creation. God was revealed to us by the incarnation of Jesus, and he is revealed in us by the new birth.

*The blowing of the wind.* We hear the wind as the waves of the sea are tossed and the trees of the forest are bowed. There is no power of motion in water or in trees themselves. Those effects are produced by an invisible agent, which comes and goes by laws of its own. So with everyone who is born of the Spirit. Electricity,

magnetism, oxygen, show how the mightiest agencies are above the reach of our senses.—*Whedon.*

*God's love.* A preacher went into a coal mine to tell the news of God's love to lost sinners. As he was returning to the shaft to ascend the foreman said, "I cannot believe in your religion. It's too cheap." The preacher, seeming not to notice the objection, asked, "How do I get out of this place?" "Simply by getting into the cage." "And does it take long to get to the top?" "Only a few seconds." "Don't I need to help raise myself?" "Of course not, you have nothing to do but get into the cage." "But what about the people who sunk the shaft? Was there much labor or expense about it?" "Indeed, yes; the shaft is eighteen hundred feet deep, and it was sunk at a great cost to the proprietor." "And when God's word tells you that whosoever believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life you say, 'It's too cheap!' forgetting that God's work to bring you out of the pit of destruction was accomplished at a vast cost, the giving of his own Son."

*Verse 16.* Luther called this verse "the little Bible." It is said to be the best thing ever put into human speech. On the tiny retina of the eye is pictured a wide-extended landscape in its minutest details, mountains, rivers, forests, fields, cities, villages. So the whole Bible, the whole Gospel, the whole scheme of redemption, is condensed into the few words of this verse.

### Heart Talks on the Lesson.

I wish this lesson might be for my class, as it was for Nicodemus, a talk with Jesus. He did not argue with this inquiring soul. He said distinctly, "Ye must be born again." "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." There is surely no place for controversy over a truth so emphatically declared by the Lord himself. The great question, then, for us is, Have I been born of the Spirit? You know you have had a natural birth because you live to-day. You can remember nothing about the time, place, or circumstances, but you know there was a day when you began to live because you have now the faculties and senses of a living being. You see, hear, feel, think. Of course you are alive. Somewhat the same it is in spiritual birth. Some persons cannot tell the happy day when the experience began; others can tell just when and where it took place. But we all can tell whether or not we live now by the spiritual senses through which we see, hear, and feel spiritual things. If you care to please God: if you hate sin and love

goodness: if you choose Christian companionship rather than the worldly and sinful, these are signs that you live spiritually, for these are not the choices of the natural heart. But there is a clear and definite experience of the new birth, to which thousands of people give testimony and which brings great joy to the heart. It is coming out of darkness into light; becoming consciously a new creature in Christ Jesus. It is my unhappy, sinful self falling into grievous ways which fill me with shame; my old self, with blind eyes, hearing about the kingdom of God, but never "seeing" it; my baffled, disheartened, captive self changed into a new creature, with sins forgiven and remembered no more forever; eyes opened to see and power to enter into all the blessings of the kingdom; with quickened faculties of brain and heart, like a butterfly breaking from its chrysalis to gather sweets from every flower; like a bird set free to use its wings for flying high. How can these things be? Jesus answers, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life."

These things can be this way, and no other way. If I should try forever to explain how one can become a new creature, I could say no more than this—it is for "whosoever now believeth." The bitten Israelite was healed by a look at the brazen serpent. The sinful soul is saved by a look at the Lord Jesus. Remember, it is not a choice; it is a necessity. "Ye must be born again."

### The Teachers' Meeting.

Pay proper attention to date, place, etc. This lesson contains Christ's statement of the "doctrine of conversion" (the new birth), and it is the privilege of the teacher to strip from that doctrine the false mystery with which it has been too often enrobed. We will glance first at the learner, then at the lesson. . . . I. The learner: (1) A good man, well versed in Scripture and correct in theology; (2) A man whose spiritual nature was totally blind; (3) A sincere though probably a timid inquirer after truth. . . . II. The lesson. We are to learn the truth from Jesus to-day, not from any theological school of earth; and it would be well to study this lesson as fresh investigators, as nearly as possible in the temper in which we would approach it if we had never before heard its precious truths: (1) A man must experience a spiritual change so radical that it is not to be compared to any other human experience but that of beginning life; (2) This change must be performed by God and evidenced by an open confession (verse 5); (3) The

result of this change is citizenship in God's kingdom, the spiritual nature of which kingdom Christ's whole public life was spent in explaining; (4) There is no use trying to philosophically explain this change, it is beyond human comprehension (verse 8); (5) This change is made possible only by the atonement of Christ (verse 14); (6) This change depends simply on thorough belief in and consecration to Christ; (7) Christ's atonement and our salvation all depend on the love of God; God wills our salvation. These are a few of the many lessons which will occur to every teacher, and can be easily multiplied and enlarged upon.

### OPTIONAL HYMNS.

Sing them over again to me.  
Wondrous words.  
O for a heart to praise my God.  
I lay my sins on Jesus.  
A wonderful joy and salvation.

Come, Holy Spirit.  
Thou who camest from above.  
All glory to Jesus be given.  
Come every soul by sin oppressed.  
God loved the world.

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### Blackboard.

GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD  
THAT HE GAVE HIS  
ONLY BEGOTTEN  
SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH  
IN HIM SHOULD NOT  
PERISH. BUT HAVE  
EVERLASTING  
LIFE. NONE OTHER  
NAME

The whole G-O-S-P-E-L is epitomized in this verse—the universal love of God, the plan and condition of salvation and the promise of everlasting life. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?

### LESSON V. CHRIST AT JACOB'S WELL.

[Jan. 29.]

GOLDEN TEXT. Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.

John 4. 14.

#### AUTHORIZED VERSION.

[Study chapter 4. 1-42.]

John 4. 5-15. [Commit to memory verses 13-15.]

5 Then cometh he to a city of Sa-ma'ri-a, which is called Sy'char, near to the parcel of ground that Ja'cob gave to his son Jo'seph.

6 Now Ja'cob's well was there. Je'sus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

7 There cometh a woman of Sa-ma'ri-a to draw water: Je'sus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

8 For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.

9 Then saith the woman of Sa-ma'ri-a unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Sa-ma'ri-a?

#### REVISED VERSION.

5 So he cometh to a city of Sa-ma'ri-a, called Sy'char, near to the parcel of ground that 6 Ja'cob gave to his son Jo'seph: and Ja'cob's well was there. Je'sus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus by the well. It was 7 about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Sa-ma'ri-a to draw water: Je'sus saith 8 unto her, Give me to drink. For his disciples were gone away into the city to buy food. 9 The Sa-ma'ri-tan woman therefore saith unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a Sa-ma'ri-tan woman? (For Jews have no dealing 10 with Sa-ma'ri-tans.) Je'sus answered



Lewin, *Life*of the Jewish  
the Jews, vol. ii.i. *The Ec-*  
81; vol. viii,  
in the *Time of*  
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Pharisees, 693;

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for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 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.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; from whence then hast thou that living water?

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

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

15 The woman said unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

**Time.**—A. D. 27 or 28. The date is not very certain. **Place.**—Jacob's well, in the valley of Sichern. **Rulers.**—Herod in Galilee; Pilate in Jerusalem.

**Home Readings.**

*M.* Christ at Jacob's Well. John 4. 5-15.

*Tu.* True worship. John 4. 16-25.

*W.* Christ the Revealer. John 4. 27-38.

*Th.* Samaritans believing. John 4. 39-42.

*F.* The water of life. Rev. 22. 1-7.

*S.* Without price. Isa. 55. 1-7.

*S.* Wells of salvation. Isa. 12.

**Lesson Hymns.**

No. 123, New Canadian Hymnal.

I am coming to the cross;  
I am poor, and weak, and blind.

No. 127, New Canadian Hymnal.

Blessed be the Fountain of blood,  
To a world of sinners revealed.

No. 123, New Canadian Hymnal.

Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole;  
I want thee forever to live in my soul

**QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR SCHOLARS.**

1. **The Well of Sychar**, v. 5-9.

What town of Samaria did Jesus approach?  
From what great gathering had he probably come?

What mementos of the patriarchs were about him?

How many hours had he probably traveled on foot?

At what time of day did the Samaritan woman approach?

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.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep:

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself,

13 and his sons, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Every one that drinketh of

14 this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him

15 shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water

16 springing up unto eternal life. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I

17 thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw.

Is there any mention in the Old Testament of this "parcel of ground" or of "Jacob's well"?

Where had Jesus's disciples gone?

What is meant by "meat"?

Why had the Jews "no dealings with the Samaritans"?

For what did Jesus ask?

2. **The Well of Salvation**, v. 10-15.

How did Jesus reply to the woman's question?

What did he mean by the "gift of God"?

What did he mean by "living water," which he offered the woman?

Was Jacob really the ancestor of the Samaritans?

What may we learn from the manner in which Jesus makes a request for an ordinary courtesy the occasion for a deeply religious conversation?

Is it possible for a man to live in this vexatious world with a perennial spring of deep religious joy in his heart?

Are any intelligent people to-day as lacking in spiritual acumen as this woman?

**Teachings of the Lesson.**

Find in this lesson—

1. A pathetic indication of the veritable humanity of Jesus.

2. An evidence of the folly and wickedness of race hatred.

3. An instance of the absurd notion that what did for our fathers is therefore good enough for us.

**QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.**

1. **The Well of Sychar**, v. 5-9.

Near what city was Jacob's well?

In what parcel of ground was it? See Josh. 24. 32

What weary traveler sat by the well?  
At what time of the day was this?  
What visitor came to the well, and on what errand?

Where were the disciples of Jesus?  
What did Jesus ask of the woman?  
What question did the woman ask?  
What reason did she give for her surprise?

**2. The Well of Salvation**, v. 10-15.  
What did Jesus say about the living water?  
What did the woman say in reply?  
What question did she ask about Jacob?  
What did Jesus say about the water from the well?

What about the living water? GOLDEN TEXT.  
What about everlasting life?  
What request did the woman make?

### Practical Teachings.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That earth cannot satisfy our heart's longings?
2. That Jesus can satisfy our heart's longings?
3. That through Jesus we can help to satisfy others?

### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Where was Jesus going now?  
What country lay between Judea and Galilee?  
Where did Jesus sit down to rest?  
Near what town was Jacob's well?  
Why was the well called by Jacob's name?  
Who were the Samaritans?  
What do you know about their temple?  
Why did the Jews look down upon the Samaritans?  
**The Jews thought themselves the only good people in the world.**

Who came to draw water at the well? **A Samaritan woman.**

Why was she surprised when Jesus spoke to her? **Because she saw that he was a Jew.**

Was she a good woman? **No; she was a very wicked woman.**

What did Jesus offer to give her?

What did he mean by living water?

Who may have the Holy Spirit in the heart?  
**Those who want him.**

To whom does Jesus most gladly offer his gifts? **To those who need them most.**

### THE LESSON CATECHISM.

(For the entire school.)

**1.** Where did Jesus stop on his journey from Judea to Galilee? **At Jacob's well.**

**2.** Whom did he meet at the well? **A woman of Samaria.**

**3.** Of what did Jesus talk with her? **Of the water of life.**

**4.** What did he promise to those who should drink this water that he would give them?

**Everlasting life.**

**5.** What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **"Whoever,"** etc.

### NEW CHURCH CATECHISM.

49. What are our duties to the Church of Christ? Our duties to the Church of Christ are to take our part in the public ordinances of worship; to assist according to our ability in all Christian work; to contribute according to our means to the support of the Church and its institutions, and particularly to the extension of the Gospel in the world.

### THE LESSON OUTLINE.

#### The Saviour at the Well.

- I. A HUMAN SAVIOUR.  
*Wearied with his journey.* v. 6.  
The feeling of our infirmities. Heb. 4. 15.  
Not ashamed... brethren. Heb. 2. 11.
- II. A SEEKING SAVIOUR.  
*Jesus saith unto her.* v. 7.  
To seek... was lost. Luke 19. 10.  
To save sinners. 1 Tim. 1. 15.
- III. A DIVINE SAVIOUR.  
*If thou kneest... who.* v. 10.  
This is my beloved Son. Matt. 3. 17.  
Before Abraham... I am. John 8. 58.
- IV. A GRACIOUS SAVIOUR.  
*The water that I shall give.* v. 14.

- By grace ye are saved. Eph. 2. 8.  
Him that is athirst come. Rev. 22. 17.
- V. AN ALL-KNOWING SAVIOUR.  
*Not thy husband.* v. 18.  
He knew what was in man. John 2. 25.  
The Lord looketh on the heart. 1 Sam. 16. 7.
- VI. A REVEALING SAVIOUR.  
*God is a Spirit.* v. 24.  
No manner of similitude. Deut. 4. 16, 15.  
The Lord is that Spirit. 2 Cor. 3. 17.
- VII. A CONFESSED SAVIOUR.  
*I that speak... am he.* v. 26.  
Whom thou hast sent. John 17. 3.  
That talketh with thee. John 9. 37.

## EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

The first year of the Saviour's public ministry is known as "The Year of Obscurity," because so little is revealed concerning it. All our information comes from the first four chapters of John's gospel, in which we read of a few conversations and hints of a few miracles. It is supposed that it was spent in Judea, perhaps in the hope that the leaders of Jewish thought might recognize the nation's opportunity and accept its Messiah. But as the months wore away the attitude of the rulers became more and more unfriendly, and, following their lead, the people of Jerusalem were opposed to their Saviour. Indeed, throughout the ministry of Jesus his strongest friends were in the provinces and his bitterest enemies in the capital. At last he determined to leave the hard soil of Judea and seek the more promising fields of Galilee. On his way lay the province of Samaria, inhabited by a people who were sufficiently related to the Jews, both in race and religion, to be their jealous rivals. Most Jews who journeyed between Jerusalem and Galilee traveled around this alien country rather than to pass through it, but for some reason Jesus took the direct line of travel, and hence on the second day of his journey found himself at Jacob's well, an ancient landmark near the foot of Mount Gerizim. Here took place one of the most remarkable conversations during the Saviour's ministry. It was with a woman, a Samaritan woman, and a woman who had been leading an unchaste life. Yet she was at the same time a person of no common mind, but quick in perception, apt to understand the divine teachings of the Saviour, and, withal, possessing force and influence in the community. This was, perhaps, the reason why the Saviour chose such a person to receive some of the most exalted instructions and the first open declaration of his Messiahship.

**Verse 5. Then cometh he.** On his way from Jerusalem to Galilee Jesus passed through Samaria. This was not his usual course. Like most Jews, he preferred to cross the Jordan twice on his way to Galilee and pass through Perea, which, though largely inhabited by Gentiles, was not as hostile to the Jews as was Samaria. **A city of Samaria.** But not necessarily a place of great size or importance. Samaria here means the province. It had done duty as a name for the ancient capital city of the kingdom of Israel and for the kingdom itself. Its people at the present time were mongrels, whose origin is told in 2 Kings 17. 23-41. They mingled the worship of Jehovah with foreign superstitions. They hated the Jews, and constantly persecuted them in petty fashion. **Which is called Sychar.** This was formerly supposed to be Shechem, or Sichem, as it is called in the Old Testament, situated in a green and fruitful valley between the mountains Ebal and Gerizim. The people of the place point out an ancient tomb there, which they call the tomb of Joseph, and a well of abundant and cool water, much resorted to, which is probably Jacob's well. (See Josh. 24. 32.) But it is now reasonably certain that a village about two miles to the east, very near to Jacob's well, which still bears the name of El-Askar, is referred to. **The parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.** We only know that Jacob bought ground from Shechem, and that the whole region afterward was inherited by the son of Joseph.

**6. Jacob's well was there.** Jacob's spring. It is one of the sacred sites which has perhaps never been disputed. The traveler finds it on a

slight eminence near to Mount Gerizim. There is no mention of it in the Old Testament. In the Middle Ages the Crusaders built a church over it, and recently devout hands have erected a chapel amid the ruins of the older building. The well is about nine feet in diameter and seventy-five feet deep. **Wearied with his journey.** A tired man, as weary as we should have been if we had walked as far. **Sat thus on the well.** Sat as he was by the spring, reclined on or against the curb.

**7. There cometh a woman of Samaria.** A very undignified character. She was a woman, and in the ancient East that meant a thing to caress and a beast of burden, but hardly implied possession of an intellect or a soul. She was a Samaritan woman, and therefore of peculiar contemptibility to the eyes of Jews. She was a poor woman very evidently from the rest of the story, and bad. **To draw water.** She came down, probably, with a rope in her hand and a leather bucket over her shoulder and a crockery jar on her shoulder or on her head. **Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.** Here was a strange sort of rabbi! He jarred and shocked rabbinic prejudice at every turn. It is a good lesson in the art of winning souls to God to note that Jesus used his own thirst as a means of approach to the woman's heart.

**8. His disciples were gone away into the city to buy meat.** Food; not necessarily flesh. Many Jews would not eat provisions purchased in Samaria.

**9. How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me.** This woman had a deep na-

ture underneath much of froth. And it really was strange for Jesus thus to reject the restraints of caste. How did she know he was a Jew? Jews have never been hard to identify. Doubtless by his features, by his dress, and by his dialect. "Jew" here does not mean Judean, but is applied to the race broadly. **The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.** This remark is singularly illustrated by the unneighborly words of the son of Sirach: "There be two manner of nations which my heart abhorreth, and the third is no nation: they that sit upon the mountain of Samaria, and they that dwell among the Philistines, and that foolish people that dwelleth at Sichein." According to Greek and Roman writers Jews habitually refused to give any information to Gentiles who inquired concerning the road from town to town or to the nearest well.

**10. Jesus answered and said unto her.** He saw that she was susceptible to the truth. Patiently and kindly he led this inquiring mind, but he pays no attention to the captious question; he had greater work to do than to recognize the quarrels of sects. **The gift of God.** Water in the East, especially in Egypt, is often referred to by this phrase. The best gift of God is the grace and mercy now offered. **Who it is.** "It is the Son of God who asks water of thee." **Thou wouldest have asked of him.** The positions would have been reversed; in reality she was the thirsty one and he the abundant giver. **Living water.** Running water, or water from a spring, but here referring to the water of life, which cleanses the soul from sin (Isa. 12, 3; 44, 3). Our Lord's manner of speech was richly figurative, and he was always ready to use objects immediately before him as illustrations of spiritual truth.

**11. Sir.** A phrase that might be translated "My Lord." The woman's respect is rising.

**Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep.** She is; "fencing." It is evident that he does not refer to this well; but what does he refer to?

**12. Art thou greater than our father Jacob.** The Samaritans claimed a descent from Jacob and Joseph; but they were a mixed race of Eastern people, probably with little of Israelitish blood among them (2 Kings 17, 24-41). "Jacob, the great patriarch, had to toil hard to secure this boon to his children. Who is this stranger, that he can give it without even a bucket to draw with?"—*Moulton*.

**13. Whosoever drinketh of this water.** (Compare John 7, 37-39.) They who drink of this well will for a time be refreshed; but their natural thirst will return again. They who drink of the fountain of life and salvation will find all their desires satisfied.

**14. Whosoever drinketh.** "Shall have drunk." Once for all we drink of this spiritual water when by faith we enter into fellowship with Christ and become partakers of the divine nature. **Shall never thirst.** "Shall not thirst forever." There is a sense in which the Christian sings:

"Insatiate to this spring I fly;  
I drink, and yet am ever dry.  
Ah! who against thy charms is proof?  
Ah! who that loves can love enough?"

But the water of salvation possessed the power to satisfy the longings of the heart. **A well of water springing up into everlasting life.** A fountain of goodness.

**15. Sir, give me this water.** She speaks as still understanding his words literally. Before she can realize that it is a spiritual supply the woman must be aroused to the spiritual need. Hence our Lord's next words.

### CRITICAL AND HOMILETICAL NOTES.

*A contrast.* It can hardly be a matter of accident that the record of Christ's conversation with Nicodemus is followed immediately by the record of a conversation equally lengthy with a nameless woman. It is a purposed contrast. The same contrast is directly afterward illustrated in Christ's miracles. Both as teacher and healer Christ's mission was alike to the palace and the highway, to nobles and to beggars. The contrasts between Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman are striking. The one represented one of the proudest and noblest of peoples; the other a race most despised and hated. He was a scholar of the highest rank; she was untaught

and ignorant. He was rich and powerful, and of the highest churchly respectability; she was probably a common field laborer, and bore a reputation most shameful in the sight of the world, that of a woman without virtue.

*Barriers broken down.* In this interview with the Samaritan woman Christ broke through several strong barriers of prejudice. There was first of all the barrier of "national hatred." There was deadly animosity between the Jew and the Samaritan. To the Jew the name of Samaritan was equivalent to that of devil, and he would hold no intercourse with what he considered an accursed race. The Jew would travel

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entirely around Samaria rather than set foot on its polluting soil. But Jesus passed through Samaria and talked with a Samaritan. The second prejudice broken through by Christ was that "against woman." The Talmud forbade a rabbi to speak to a woman in a public place, even his own wife. A woman was not to be instructed in the things of the law. "Let the words of the law be burned," said one of the rabbis, "rather than committed to women." Said the Talmud, "He who instructs his daughter in the law instructs her in folly." But Christ talked with this woman, and about the highest subjects of theology. Christ not only talked to a Samaritan, and a woman, but she to whom he spoke was "a sinner." The nature and the depth of her sin Christ understood perfectly, as he let her know. And yet he talked with her; and that because he was "the friend of sinners," and came "to seek and to save that which was lost."

"If thou knewest." A great though unrecognized opportunity had come to this fallen woman. And the astonishing thing is that such an opportunity should have come to such a woman. We take great account of antecedents and environment and character in estimating the chances of people. We are not surprised that a great opportunity came to Nicodemus, learned, rich, respectable; but that it should have come to such a woman as this Samaritan prostitute—that amazes us. Her ancestors were bad, her environment was bad, and she was utterly bad. And yet she is given a personal interview with the Son of God, and he presents to her a measureless opportunity, and labors with her patiently until her eyes are opened to see it! "If thou only knewest"—if "we" only knew when the great chances from the eternal seas drop anchor for a little while in the harbors of our lives!

"Give me this water." Jesus had worked with divine skill to draw out this request from the woman. It was one of his characteristic methods, to bring people to feel that he had something which they needed, and so elicit from them the prayer that he would give it to them. So it may be seen in chapter 6 that he held up the thought of the "bread of life" to the people until they spoke forth the prayer, "Lord, evermore give us this bread." They did not half know what they were asking for; but it was something that Christ had lifted them up to pray for, something higher than the bread that perishes. So Jesus evoked from this woman's heart the request, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." She did not understand; indeed, her words indicate

that she wholly misunderstood. But she was made to feel that whatever this strange water of which Christ spoke might be, it was something she needed. And so the door of prayer was opened in her soul. However vaguely, she was stirred out of the range of her former low desires. Now it was possible for Jesus to help her.

*Probing a heart.* Jesus had the woman's sinful heart in view from the beginning. He was probing for its ugly secret. When at last he had drawn from her the request that he would give her the water of which he spoke he suddenly said to her, "Go, call thy husband, and come hither." She guarded quickly and said, "I have no husband." Miserable half truth! But Jesus pushed remorselessly on and laid bare the whole guilty past. But still she sought to escape by shifting to a question of theology, "Where ought men to worship?" There are still men and women who find it easier to discuss theology than personal sin! But God insists on probing the heart. He breaks in upon us with startling questions which reveal our guilt.

*A Saviour revealed to a sinner.* The heart of the woman, convicted of sin, and impressed with the lofty words of Jesus about the nature of true worship, turned sadly and yet hopefully to the great expectation, the longed-for Messiah, and said, "When 'he' is come, he will tell us all things." Then Christ made the great declaration, "I that speak unto thee am he." The sinner's Saviour stood over against the exposed and convicted sinner.

## Thoughts for Young People.

### How to Work for Souls.

1. From the example of Christ we learn the value of *wayside* work—that is, of work which comes to us apparently by accident. We can work while we are resting from earthly labor, and in the work of Christ we will find refreshment.

2. We see the value of *individual* work—that is, of work for one soul. Christ was ready to use his time and his powers in working to reach one as earnestly as though that one were a thousand. Not all of us can speak to a thousand, but all can talk to one.

3. We see the power of *skillful* work. With what exquisite tact the Saviour approached the sinner! How wisely he led her to deeper interest and to a conviction of her sin! Let us seek some of his wisdom in winning souls.

4. We see the importance of *practical* work. The woman was constantly endeavoring to turn aside to questions of controversy and opinion;

Christ kept ever in view the aim of convicting her of sin and leading her to repentance.

5. We see the *results* of work for one soul. What a transformation was wrought in this woman—from a sinner to a missionary!

### Orientalisms of the Lesson.

The digging of a well is in all tropical countries considered an act of peculiar merit. Among Hebrews it was held to be a greater work than to erect a castle or fortress, and they hand down the name of the person who caused the well to be sunk to after generations as a great benefactor of his own and of later times; hence the interest which attached to Abraham's well at Beersheba and to that of Jacob's at Sychar.

A recent traveler asks why this woman should come here from Askar (Sychar) half a mile away, when she had a good spring in her own village, and had to step over a running brook by the way, and answers that the associations of the place or the superior quality of the water may account for it. Dr. Trumbull finds a reason for her coming hither in the custom of the time, when women engaged in field work (this was "the well of the cornfields") came to the well to get water, and thus she may not have come from the town at the time at all, but merely to obtain water for herself or the field hands. And when she was prompted to return to her home she "left her waterpot" by the well in the field, and "went away into the city."

Dr. Trumbull finds more in the request of Jesus for a drink of water than the mere fact that the Master was thirsty. If one person gave drink to another, it was understood to be a temporary covenant of peace, such as giving the salutation, "Peace to thee," is in so many oriental lands, and gives as an instance of the custom the case of an oriental who receiving two Christian leaders in his tent, gave one cool snow water, but refused to let the same courtesy be extended to his companion because he was a "wretch," to whom he would not extend the covenant of safety, and he immediately cut off his head. He thinks the wonder to the woman was that Jesus was willing to make a friendly compact with a person of a hostile race.

Stapfer reminds us that it was customary generally for travelers to speak to one whom they met, but if a Jew met a Samaritan or a Gentile by the way, he would at once accost him with curses. A phrase quite commonly used on meeting friends or persons supposed to be of the same race was, "Blessed be thy mother!" or if of an antagonistic people, they would say, "Cursed be thy mother." One woman addressed Christ

(Luke 11. 27) after the first manner, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked," the equivalent of "Blessed be thy mother."

But this does not exhaust the oriental coloring. The disciples marveled that Jesus spoke to the woman, apparently irrespective of her race or of what he had said to her, or of his asking her for a drink. It was not considered decorous to speak to a woman in public. Rabbi Samuel said, "Man must not ask a service from a woman, nor salute her," and the Talmud also has this: "The woman who transgresses the Jewish law is one who appears in public with unveiled head, who shows herself in public places and speaks to the first man she meets." Again, "It is forbidden for a man to speak to a woman in the street, even to his own wife." They might, however, have been surprised, if they knew the subject of their conversation, that he should talk with this woman on religious topics. "As to teaching the law to a woman, one might as well teach her impiety," was one of the rabbinical sayings. The religious education or women was certainly not good "form." From a religious standpoint the woman was inferior to man. The boy must go to the temple at twelve years of age; the girl might go when she or her parents pleased. The women were not assigned any religious duties on fixed days or hours, nor obliged to recite or be present at the reading of the Scriptures, to wear fringes to their mantles, or to dwell in a tent at the feast of tabernacles. They might do these things if they chose, but it was not obligatory on them to observe them. What they learned in the woman's private apartment in the synagogue or temple was, so to speak, of the nature of that which is overheard.

### By Way of Illustration.

*Jesus the Friend of sinners.* This lesson shows Jesus as the Friend of sinners. When Bishop Thoburn returned to this country from India, after an absence of several years, he was asked what impressed him most in the church life of America. He answered: "I no longer see in these churches any very poor or wicked people. Wherever Jesus is held up as the Friend of sinners, there sinners will come. When I was pastor of a church in Calcutta the women of a Magdalen home came one evening with their matron. One of them said afterward: 'That is the queerest church I ever saw. All the bad people in Calcutta were there.' I considered that as blessed commendation, believing that sinners will always be attracted to the Friend of sinners."

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*The conversation.* In this conversation there are seven sayings of our Lord which may be regarded as the seven rounds of a ladder whose foot is on earth and its top in heaven. The first is the request, "Give me to drink," which reveals a manhood of physical need. The last is the full revelation of his dignity in "I that speak unto thee am he." How wide the distance between the two!—*McLaren.*

*Using an opportunity.* Nothing could be more commonplace and incidental than that of a thirsty man asking a woman for a drink of water, and yet by means of this apparently insignificant incident Jesus was enabled easily and naturally to turn the attention of the woman to the greatest of all subjects. To the wise soul-winner a cup of water is a good enough text. God does not require great things with which to accomplish his testimony. A sling and a stone, an ox goad, a lamp and pitcher and trumpet, even a shepherd's crook, are good enough for him to use in bringing his people out of Egypt. It is not the instrument, the words, or the occasion, but the power of God that makes weak things mighty.—*Peacock.*

*A small audience.* Jesus talked to the woman at the well; he received Nicodemus alone; he taught Mary in her home. There are said to be nineteen such private interviews mentioned in the gospels. They leave to his followers a memorable example. This is, perhaps, the most effective of all forms of instruction, as it is certainly the best test of earnestness. A man who preaches to thousands with enthusiasm may be a mere orator, but the man who seeks the opportunity of speaking closely of the welfare of their souls to individuals must have a real fire from heaven burning in his heart.—*Stalker.*

*The gift of God.* In Egypt and other hot countries water is so valuable it is spoken of as "the gift of God," to denote its preciousness. Water-carriers passing through the streets cry, "Behold the gift of God." If the same custom prevailed in the time of our Saviour, there would be added force in his words to the woman, "If thou knewest the gift of God."

*Living water.* Christ does not give us a cup of water which we can drink up and the contents be exhausted, but a fountain of water in our own souls, ever flowing, inexhaustible. Note Jesus's method of giving, not by a definite supply from without, but by a fountain within.—*Woubet.*

Take away a toy from a child and give him another and he is satisfied. But if he be hungry, no toy will do. The world's toys do not satisfy the longings of a soul.—*Newton.*

## Heart Talks on the Lesson.

Wearied with his journey, Jesus sat upon the well. Our divine Saviour, our human Friend, knows what it is to be tired, hungry, and thirsty. He seems far above us when he talks of spiritual mysteries with Nicodemus; but it seems as though we might come very near and talk freely with him ourselves when we meet him under conditions with which we are so familiar. He was tired and thirsty, but the wants of his body were insignificant matters with him compared with the needs of a sinful, famishing soul. The story of Jacob's well is repeated every day. A misguided, disappointed woman, taken up wholly with the things that are seen, coming a long way to draw from an earthly well with great efforts that which ministers only to the mortal body and never reaches even the slightest need of the immortal soul; and the Life-giver, unrecognized at her very side, saying with longing pity, "If thou knewest....thou wouldest ask....and I would give." Evidently nothing she had yet found had satisfied her, for as soon as Jesus told her he could offer something better than she had ever known she cried out, "Give it to me!" She had very dim comprehension of his meaning, but she knew life had disappointed her, and a far, faint cry went up from her heart like a voice from a remote and dreary desert. But this day, when she met the Lord, was a jewel in the crown of her years. She said to Jesus, "Sir, the well is deep, and thou hast nothing to draw with;" but from that depth which represented to her only hard work for daily sustenance Jesus drew for her the truth which transforms her life. He told her of a possible well of joy within her own soul; a satisfying source of blessing not dependent upon anything outside of herself; a fountain of peace and comfort springing up unto everlasting life. She must have believed, although she could not understand, for she ran to call her friends in the village to hear this wonderful teacher. No doubt afterward she went over that same road day after day as before; the water had to be carried, duties had to be done; there was no change in the monotonous round; but the pitcher never seemed heavy any more, and the water was easier to draw, because her heart was light and she was refreshed by the living fountain within. Ah, if we knew the gift of God, and who it is that speaks to us in the restless dissatisfaction of our poor, unfilled hearts, we would ask of him and he would give the comfort, peace, and joy we blindly seek for. He waits beside us in our daily work, whatever we are doing, to show us, if he can, that there is something better for us than even the best that

earth can offer. If only thou knewest! How shall we know?

Let us talk with Jesus, by his word and in prayer. He can teach us wonderful things even through the events of a dull day of ordinary work if we are ready to hear what he says.

### The Teachers' Meeting.

If the teacher has a picture of Jacob's well, show it to the class and describe its location, dimensions, appearance, etc.... Draw a map showing the journey from Jerusalem to Sychar.... Give a word-picture of the Saviour at Jacob's well.... Show the characteristics of the woman of Samaria as here exhibited, and her gradual awakening from carelessness to conviction of sin.... Notice the teachings of Christ in this lesson concerning salvation: (1) It is for sinners, such as was this woman (verse 10); (2) It comes from God (verse 10); (3) It is a free gift (verse 10); (4) It comes through Christ (verse 14); (5) It is satisfying (verse 14); (6) It is eternal (verse 14).

### OPTIONAL HYMNS.

Come, said Jesus' sacred voice.  
Come with thy sins to the fountain.  
The Spirit and the Bride say "Come."  
I heard the voice of Jesus.  
Glorious things of thee are spoken.

Saviour, I come to thee.  
Of him who did salvation bring.  
Ho! everyone that thirsts.  
O, what amazing words of grace!  
The water of life.

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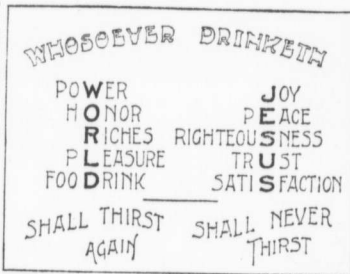
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### Blackboard.



There is no lasting comfort or satisfaction in the things which this world gives. All power, honor, riches, pleasure, like our daily food and drink, leave us in need. However much or often we drink, we "shall thirst again" and will thirst forever, unless we now take the waters of life, the Holy Spirit which the Saviour has promised to them that ask him. The water that Jesus gives satisfies. His kingdom is not of this world. It is joy, peace, and righteousness, and if we seek these things first, all others shall be added unto us. When Christ dwells in the heart, and we have the work and witness of the Spirit, a fountain of living, running water flows continually, and we "shall never thirst." If we knew the gift of God, we would ask of him, and he would give us the blessings of salvation.

### Thoughts for the Quiet Hour.

—Christ hath shined in all ages in the works of creation and Providence. He left not himself without witness. Every creature is a kind of professor that readeth man a lecture concerning God, of his wisdom and power and goodness.—*Arrowsmith*.

—It is a peculiar instance of mercy toward a sinner, a city, or a people when a holy man is sent from God to prepare them for the reception of salvation.—*Quensel*.

—An overzealous attention to the doctrine of the Spirit has made me, in some degree, overlook the medium by which the Spirit works—I mean the word of truth, which is the wood by which the heavenly fire warms us.—*Fletcher of Madeley*.



## PRIMARY TEACHERS' DEPARTMENT.

### "A Happy New Year."

THE new year, the new year, all new, with such beautiful possibilities, what will the children do with it? The thought touches a child's imagination. So much before it that is novel, a great, new country opening before them, and what will they do with it? The season is all astrir with the giving mood, and it has had beautiful manifestations, some of them rich and costly. What a child may have as its opportunity for personal gifts to friends may seem very poor and mean, but there is something worth more than any material expressions to-day of a generous spirit, and that is this great new year that is coming, and this heart within which will make it all the domain of our heavenly Father. Can you not get guest room for this thought in some child's breast, and make it a source of positive, vital influence? God will give you great success in your effort if you will have it so. How much it will mean to another! If we look back over our lives, we shall see how they have been marked off by crises, by decisions. How the past has been dotted with turning points! Let us make this month a glorious corner in the life of a young pilgrim. Under God, under the gentle pressure of that divine presence, what a decider of destiny in a child-life a teacher may be!

It would be worth much to the great company of primary teachers who turn to these pages for inspiration and help if many teachers would share their experience with others. A most earnest invitation is hereby extended to practical workers who have something to say on this great theme—how best to help the little ones to know their divine Lord—to send their helpful suggestions and experiences to the editor of the BANNER. It is not needful that one be practiced in writing to do this. The simple experience, the pertinent question, the practical thought, all will be welcome, and doubtless used to advance our good work.

Trying days come to every teacher of the little ones. The spirit of mischief seems to pervade the class. Little eyes and thoughts are everywhere save on the lesson. Then must the teacher turn to the great Father and Mother heart brooding over her and her little charge, and "take" fresh supplies of patience, tact, and love, or the day will be lost.

### "The Tiny Department."

BY MRS. WILBER F. CRAFTS.

THE term "Kindergarten Department" is a misnomer as applied to the Sunday school, and therefore the sooner it is exchanged for something else the better. It is certainly an injustice to the kindergarten to take a few of its features and say that we have the system.

The kindergarten might be called an elementary trade school, because the children are given materials with which to produce useful and beautiful things; "inventions" being considered the most meritorious, because it is desired that the child shall work out what is in him rather than be so directed that he becomes an imitator. The kindergarten differs, however, from the trade school in that the altruistic idea is made more prominent than utility, for what the children make is usually disposed of as gifts to friends or used to beautify the room so that all may enjoy it. But there is a purpose still beyond this in setting little hands to work, even thus to bring the children into an understanding of God, who is the Maker of all things. I will not now take exception to this method of directing a child Godward, but I will say that the Sunday school is in no sense a trade school, and not only altruism must be developed, but a Christlikeness. "God's precious book, the Bible," must be made the basis of knowledge, and the children must learn that God is the Maker of all things, because the Bible tells us so. And they should early learn that their little hands must be busy in doing good for others, because Jesus went about doing good when he was in this world, and we should try to be and do and love like him. And more than this, they should be shown their need of him as a Saviour.

As diverse as the kindergarten and the Sunday school must seem, one may yet learn much from the other.

The Bible should certainly have a place in the kindergarten, but instead how often classic myths and nature fairy stories are given to the children!

The Sunday school can learn from the kindergarten not to overlay the children with texts and truths which they do not understand. One of the nicest things yet done by primary Sunday school teachers was the arrangement in five columns, made at one of the recent summer schools, of what should be taught to children of three and four years of age, five and six, seven and eight.

nine and ten, and lastly what should be taught to children twelve years of age.

The Sunday school is learning from the kindergarten to grade the teaching to the faculties of the scholars.

It is also learning attractive ways of presenting lessons. The so-called "appliances" have come out of the effort to adapt the use of kindergarten material to Sunday school work. Mistakes have undoubtedly been made in this direction, and there is a reaction against it. Well-informed primary teachers do not claim that they have a kindergarten when they use a sandboard, or when they just cut cards for the children to sew at home with a symbol that will impress the lesson and secure the interest and cooperation of the mother. Therefore let those who know there is not, nor can be, nor should be, a kindergarten in the Sunday school use their influence to discontinue the misnomer.

What, then, shall we call the class of little ones three and four years of age who really are below the grade of the primary department? I have thought often and long on this subject and venture now to suggest that it be called "The Tiny Department," the little members of which may be affectionately called the "Timies." I could wish there might be an expression of opinion about this name, and possibly a better name may come to light.

### Impressions upon Baby Minds.

BY JULIA H. JOHNSON.

To teach is to instruct, but to impress is to stamp. In order to receive instruction in the primary class the children must be old enough for the waking of some mental activity and receptivity, and this is possible very early. But what of the babies who come in, the wee ones held proudly by the hand of older brothers and sisters? Even in a kindergarten department there must be some younger than others, and in the ordinary primary class, although certain rules of grading obtain, there is a sprinkling of very little ones who clamor to come with the older members of the family to what one dear child called "Happy Tool," even before they are three years old.

There is not a loving-hearted teacher who would not rather stoop in the midst of an animated sentence to lift and replace a plump little toddler that has rolled from the small chair than to spare the darling who wants to come. But are there no possibilities for these who are perhaps too young to receive very much definite instruc-

tion? Ah, yes; surely they may receive impressions in God's house, and the stamp of holy and helpful influence.

Two or three years ago, in a western newspaper that speedily went the way of newspapers, especially those not regular comers to the house, there was an incident which, once read, lodged in the memory, and was like some lasting treasure washed up by a forgotten tide.

It was related by Dr. Goodwin, the well-known Congregational Church pastor, that upon one occasion he preached (as doubtless often before and after) with special earnestness to parents. A tiny girl sat near the front, too young to understand the solemn, tender words; but something in the speaker's manner arrested her attention and quieted her restlessness. After looking and listening with serious eyes a moment, moved by some sweet prompting from within, the baby turned and kissed softly her father and then her mother.

Was it not an exquisite tribute to the good minister that his tender pleading and fervent manner, though not understood, should yet so influence that little child and impress her with its connection with her parents as to move her to that soft caress? Was it not a distinct gain to the little one that there in God's house she felt the quickening impulse of love which lavished itself upon those dearest to her? Verily, there is a place even for babes in the Lord's house, and the children's portion is remembered and distributed oftener than we think. "The bread that comes from heaven needs finest breaking," but, oftener than we know, the Lord himself is near to do it.

But, dearly beloved, can we in the primary room stamp upon the youngest hearts the feeling of reverence and of love, of regard for the place, and a certain unconscious appreciation of the best things? May we, O, can we, in moments of self-surrender and self-forgetfulness, by the divine inbreathing which best fits for service by bringing us closest to Christ, so teach that even the babies will have some impression of Jesus made upon their hearts, that they will turn in love to him?

There are uncounted elements in the teacher's life and character, in her own spiritual atmosphere, in voice and look and manner, which will combine to fix impressions upon little hearts. No amount of mere technical preparation of the lesson, no accumulation of illustrations and object lessons, nothing which the teacher may do, will take the place of what she must be in order to influence all the children, and, most of all, the youngest. It is the old and ever-recurrent truth which we must assimilate till it be-

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comes the fiber of the fabric of life, that what we are counts for more than what we do.

One of the most beautiful and encouraging things about the charge of the wee ones is the swift outgiving of their love and confidence and the sense of personal relationship which they acquire in the class. One day a morsel of a fellow made his first appearance in a certain class. He was such a baby that the teacher could no more help gathering him in her arms for a moment than a small girl could help fondling a doll. After the child had been in the class two Sabbaths, and had merely looked about with marveling face, not seeming to take in any of the teaching, but simply fitting himself to the strange, new place, his teacher met him on the street with his mother on a week day. After speaking to him she said in an aside to the mother, "I wonder if he knows me." "Who is it?" asked the mother. The mite of the boy looked up with bright and roguish face and said, "It's my lady."

This sweet appropriation sent a happy thrill to the teacher's heart. It is because the little ones are so ready to take possession in this way, and are so easy to win, that the opportunity is so large and beautiful, and the responsibility so great, that primary teachers feel the joy of one and the weight of the other to be unspokeable.

### A Word with Teachers.

With every new year beginners are added to the host of primary teachers. Some of these may wish the furnished helps were fuller. Please remember, dear comrades, that lesson outlines are meant to be but the warp and woof of your teaching fabric, while the filling in must be your own, according to the needs of the class and in harmony with your own mind and methods. The giving will be bare indeed unless part of the teacher's life goes with the lesson given.

Let it be understood that questions and reviews hinted at must be supplied in full by the teacher. Repeat each lesson point; review each lesson past. This is among the indispensables. Recall what is told immediately after the telling by questions sure to be answered in concert by the class, as, for instance, "Where did I say this happened? How many people have we learned about? What was the boy's name?" Such interruptions in the story need not break into its continuity, but will impress details.

The Lesson Story itself is unspokeably important. Let nothing crowd out its completeness. Children often come to the class who do not learn the sweet Bible stories at mother's knee.

Resist the temptation to teach too much by way of application. Fasten one point at a time; fix

one truth that will not be misunderstood nor forgotten. "Let illustrations be like spokes in a wheel, all running to the hub," as we impress the special truth selected.

God give us all his grace and guidance and bless each little flock.

## INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS. FIRST QUARTER.

### LESSON I. (January 1.)

CHRIST THE TRUE LIGHT. John 1. 1-14.

GOLDEN TEXT. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." John 1. 4.

LESSON CHAIN—LINK FOR EACH SUNDAY.

Initials of lesson title above each link, and first words of Golden Text below, curving along the link, and word for leading thought within:

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| Jan. 1.<br>C. T. T. L.<br>Shine.<br>In him was... | Jan. 8.<br>C's. F. D.<br>Follow.<br>Behold the... | Jan. 15.<br>C's. F. M.<br>Believe.<br>And his disciples... |
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| Jan. 22.<br>C. and N.<br>Love.<br>For God so loved... | Jan. 29.<br>C. at J's. W.<br>Come.<br>Whosoever drinketh... |
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### Primary Notes.

BY JULIA H. JOHNSTON.



Bring into class three or four links of chain [paper ones will do]. What is a chain? What used for? Will one link make it? [Discuss uses of chain and need of perfection in each link.]

We now begin a new quarter. There are true things and sweet lessons in every part of the Bible given us to study. These come one at a time. We will have a chain of golden links through the twelve Sundays. Fastened together they will help us to hold fast the truths we learn. They will be memory links. Each week we will make a new link on the black-board, with letters for the lesson title and the first words of the Golden Text around it, and inside the word we are to remember. Drop a link, and the chain will be weak. Come every Sunday, and don't lose a lesson link.

Now we will learn a little verse that will tell us about whom we are to study. We will sing it

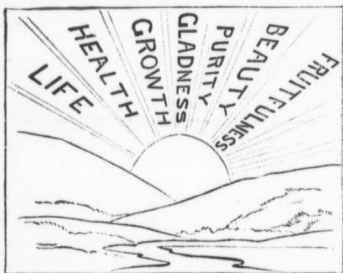
each week in opening. [Air, "I think when I read," in Gospel Hymns:]

"The lessons are all about Jesus, our Lord, The Saviour who came from above; Of his wonderful power, of his care every hour, And his goodness and mercy and love."

Four Bible books tell us of Jesus's life. We are to study it now from the book written by that loving disciple, John. [Tell something about John.] Jesus has many names, each meaning a great deal. One would not tell all. First, John calls Christ "The Word," He was sent to tell us what God wanted to say to us. In the beginning, before the world even, Jesus lived. John was sent to tell the people about Jesus before the Lord began to preach. He calls Christ "The Light," but says all he had to do was to tell about Jesus. John was like a little candle shining in the night. But even a little candle can show the way out of a dark place into the light. We cannot be just like John in everything, but we may shine for Jesus and show the way to him.

John says Jesus was the Light of men. Light shines. See. We have the first link in our golden chain. How is Jesus the Light? What does light do? It makes things clear and plain that were hidden. It shows us the way. The light of day comes from the great sun. We will make a picture of the sun, with rays of light, and we will name those rays to help us see what light does for the world and for our bodies, since Jesus does the same for our hearts. We will call these rays life, health, growth, gladness, purity, beauty, fruitfulness. [Enlarge upon these thoughts, multiply questions about them, and impress each, comparing what Jesus does for the world with what the sun does for nature and the body, emphasizing *true* light.]

Are we ever afraid there will not be light



enough in the sun to last all our lives? O no. So Jesus, the Light, will live forever. Because of

this light in him he is the Light and the Life of this world. [Drill on Golden Text, title, and "lesson link."]

Do you pay the sun to shine? Do you turn on sunshine as you do gas? How do you get the light? Go out in it; open the window for it. It is waiting to come in. Open your heart. Sin shuts it. Ask Jesus to take it away and shine in, making good things grow, helping you to see his love and what he wants you to do. Jesus's love shines everywhere. Shine for him.

### Study and Occupation for the Sub- primary Department.

BY ALICE MAY DOUGLAS.

CHRIST THE TRUE LIGHT. John 1. 1-14.

MEMORY GEM: "I am the light of the world." John 8. 12.

INTRODUCTORY: The Bible [hold one up] is made of many little books all put together as one. Each little book has a name. I have opened to the book which is called John, because God let a man named John help him write it. God told John what to say and then John wrote the book, just as you tell mother what to say and she writes it in the letter to grandma and you say you have sent a letter to grandma. The letter has your words in it, and it makes no difference who writes down the words.

THE LESSON STORY: John tells us about Jesus before Jesus came to live with men. Jesus lived in the beginning—that is, before this world was made, before the people in it, before the stars, before the sky. Sometimes mother calls you Birdie because you sing like a bird. John called Jesus the Word because he was to speak God's Word to people when there should be people, and was to say to them what God wanted said.

Let us, too, call Jesus the Word. John says the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Yes, Jesus is God and the Holy Spirit is God. St. Patrick once told the people of Ireland that God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are all one. They asked how it could be, and he showed them a leaf like this. [Show a shamrock or clover leaf.] God could be three and at the same time one.

John says [read verse 2] God is Jesus's Father, and God let Jesus help him make everything just as your father lets you help him make things.

In Jesus was life. [Show the difference between animate and inanimate objects by means of a seed and a grain of sand, or a natural and an artificial flower.] All life—yours, mine, the birds', the flowers!—comes from Jesus. Were there no God, there would be no life. We all have this kind of life, and if we are Christians,

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we have another kind of life too. This comes from Jesus Christ, so we will call it the Christ-life. It is life that never ends. [Show a plant and dwell upon the facts that its life will end, but the Christian's never. Tell the children to try to count the stars some evening and explain that there will be more years in which the people who have the Christ-life will live with God than there are stars in the sky. Neither stars nor years can be counted.]

John has another beautiful name for Jesus. He calls him the Light, and says that this Christ life is the light. When mother loves you and calls you Birdie she does not mean that you are a bird, but that you are nice, like a bird. When John calls Jesus Light he does not mean that Jesus is light, but that Jesus is good, like the light. Let us see what we could do without light. [Darken the room. Explain that the darkness is due to the absence of light. Speak of perpetual night.] How much this room wants light. How much light does for this room.

Sometimes the light shines on the dark, but the dark won't let the light go through it. See the light of this candle shine upon this piece of black cloth I hold between me and the candle. Can you see the light? No. So some people are like that dark, they won't let the light of God shine through them. Because of this darkness [point to cloth] I had to tell you that there was to be a light here. Because of the darkness in the world—I mean the wrong that there is—God had to send a man to tell people that Jesus and his light were coming. This was another John. He was called John the Baptist, because he baptized people.

You make a playhouse; y whose is it? Yours, of course. What if you should come to that house and find some boys and girls there? You would say, "It is nice that they are having a good time here." But if they should say to you, "You must not come in, there is no room for you in your own house," they would not be doing right. Who made the world? Jesus. Who owns the world? Yes, Jesus. But when Jesus came from heaven to his own world he found lots of people in it, and he was glad that they were having a good time here; but some of them told Jesus that they did not want him where they were, that there was no room for him in his own world.

[Show several tiny candles or tapers. Have one in the center much taller than the others. Take one candle after another to central one, lighting each brought forward. Leave a few untouched.] See, the candle has given of its light to every candle that would come to it and it has as much left as if it had given none away.

Why did this other candle get no light? [Let the children answer.]

Jesus will give his light, his never-ending life, to everyone who comes to him, and he will do it just as easily and just as quickly as the candle gave its light; but if people won't come to him, they can't get life or light.

## LESSON II. (January 8.)

CHRIST'S FIRST DISCIPLES. John 1. 35-46.

GOLDEN TEXT. "Behold the Lamb of God." John 1. 36.

### Primary Notes.



Shall I tell you a lantern story? I call a lantern story one that is not true in itself, but is made up and put around something that is true, just as the glass is put around the light in the lantern, to let the light shine through. In a lantern story the meaning is worth most, as the light is worth more than the glass around it.

Well, once upon a time three boys in separate boats went out and gathered water-lilies and other things that would be worth money when sold. When they came to shore one boy jumped out in a hurry, saying, "I guess the boat will stay till I get back," and left it unfastened. When he came again the boat and all its treasure were gone. The second found a piece of chain and tied it to the boat, saying, "I think this is heavy enough to hold the boat still." When he came back the boat was gone down the river. The chain itself was not fastened to anything. The third boy found a stout chain fastened to the dock, and to that he fastened his boat. When he came back he found boat and treasure safe.

Do you see the light shining through this story? It means this: If you want to keep fast hold of what you have, you must not only have a few links of a chain, but the chain must be fast at one end and you must fasten it at the other. Now we are finding, this quarter, the links of a golden chain. God holds this chain in his hand. We must fasten it in our memories, and then it will hold our treasure of truths. [Review last Sunday's lesson from the blackboard with its "link," and sing again "The lessons are all about Jesus, our Lord."]

John, the loving disciple, kept his light shining. When the Jews asked who he was he said he was not the One who was to come; he was just like a voice crying out, "Make ready the way."

Next day at Bethabara [see map] John, seeing Jesus, called him by another name. What was the first? The Word. Next? The Light. Now, the Lamb of God. [Explain giving of this name, and question back the explanations.]

Again John saw Jesus and called him by this name. Two of his own disciples heard, and followed Jesus. Was John glad? O yes. He told them to look at Jesus. He wanted them to follow him. Here is a word for our lesson link—"Follow." These were Christ's First Disciples. That means followers, learners. Shall he have some new ones, little learners, to-day?

[Drill on lesson title, text, and golden word.]

Do you sometimes go visiting? Have you visitors? These men went home with Jesus and spent the rest of the day. A day with Jesus! Think what they learned. One of them, Andrew, hurried to bring his brother Simon Peter to Jesus. Is there some one in your house who does not know the Saviour? Can't you bring that one? At least you can speak to Jesus in prayer about him. Next day Jesus said to Philip, "Follow me." Philip obeyed, and soon wanted to bring another follower. There was Nathanael. He said to him, "We have found the One Moses said was coming." When Nathanael wondered how One so good could come from that poor little town of Nazareth, Philip only said, "Come and see." That was the way to find out.

On the board we will make a picture of one friend inviting another to come with him. Think of Philip's invitation, "Come and see." [Reproduce picture, or make marks representing it.]

O, if people would only come and see how it is! O, if they would only spend a day with Jesus! Wouldn't they learn enough of him to want to follow him always? Well, we have



this day. Shall we spend it learning of Jesus? That is what we are here for in his house.

Can you follow one path without leaving

another behind? What must you leave to follow Jesus? Only what is wrong. What is before? Heaven and Jesus, and his love and care all along. A step at a time, that is the way. Keep close and you are safe. Say to others, "Come." You can't if you don't follow. Begin now.

### Study and Occupation for the Sub-primary Department.

CHRIST'S FIRST DISCIPLES. John 1. 35-46.

MEMORY GEM: "Behold the Lamb of God." John 1. 36.

LESSON STORY: Almost as soon as God made people they began to do wrong. People who do wrong can't go to heaven. Heaven is a large place and God wants it full of people, so he has to make good people for heaven out of bad people. He could get them in no other way. No one but God can do this.

Here is the way in which God used to take the sin—that is, the bad—out of people. He told everyone who had done wrong and was sorry for doing wrong that if he would bring a lamb to the temple—that is, to the church—he would forgive him. [Explain forgiveness, also place a lamb upon the altar of the temple model.] It was because lambs had done nothing wrong that people brought them to the temple. They felt too bad to go to God alone, so brought a lamb to show that they wished to become like a lamb, and then God made them good.

God soon began to tell his prophets—that is, his ministers—about another way to take sin away from people, and what he told them they put in the Bible. God said that he would send his only Son, Jesus Christ, to his Church on earth, just as people sent lambs to the temple, and that Jesus would take the sins of the people upon himself as the lambs had done. That is why Jesus is called the Lamb of God.

Our lesson for to-day is about the first disciples of Jesus. These disciples were men who believed that Jesus is the God-man, and who went about with him to hear his words and to learn how to do good.

[Make three marks on the board to represent John the Baptist, Andrew, and John, "who wrote our lesson," also a cross to represent Christ.]

John the Baptist, on seeing Jesus coming, said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" [Review the significance of this appellation.] Andrew and John wanted to see more of Jesus, so they followed him. [Represent this upon the board. Repeat verse 38.] Jesus asked the disciples to his house [a square upon the board]. They went in and had so nice a call that they stayed until evening. [Make stars at the top of the board.] What do

you suppose Jesus was talking about all that time? [Let the children answer. Represent the return of the disciples from the house.]

Andrew said to himself, "I must not go to bed until I find my brother Simon and bring him to Jesus; to-morrow may be too late." [Make several houses and groups of people upon the board and Andrew searching among them for Simon.] There, he has found Simon [a mark]; he said to him, "We have found Jesus!" Of course Simon wanted to see Jesus, so Andrew took him to the house where Jesus stopped. See the two brothers walking down the street. No one had told Jesus Simon's name, but he knew it and called him by it. Jesus knows all things. He gave Simon a new name, which means stone.

The next day Jesus went to Galilee. [Let a corner of the board represent Galilee.] Here he found a new disciple, Philip. Jesus said to Philip, "Follow me." He meant, "Try to be like me; be a Christian." Philip was glad to do so, and he wanted others to know that the God-man was really upon earth, so he hunted around and found Nathanael. [Represent all on the board as you explain.] Philip said to Nathanael [repeat the latter part of verse 45]. Nathanael could not see how the God-man could come from a little town like Nazareth, where not many good people lived. [Repeat verses 46 and 47, illustrating all upon the board, and imitating the sound of walking by the crayon.] Jesus loves to tell people that they are good when they are good. [Repeat verse 48.]

### LESSON III. (January 15.)

#### CHRIST'S FIRST MIRACLE. John 2. 1-11.

GOLDEN TEXT. "And his disciples believed on him." John 2. 11.

#### Primary Notes.



How many of you ever went to a party? How did you know you were to go? O, you had an invitation. Did you have a good time when you went? Were there others besides yourself at the last party? Was Jesus there? Think. Was he asked to come? If it was right to go, it would be right to ask him. He will always go where it is right to go. Were you ever at a wedding party? To-day's lesson tells about one. Jesus was asked to come, and he went. [See map.] It was the third day after what we have already learned about. [Here review last Sunday's lesson.]

We have learned about Christ's first disciples,

and now we come to his first miracle. A miracle is a wonderful thing, which only God can do. We will learn this title and Golden Text, all of us. What is the most important word in the text? "Believe?" Yes, surely. Put that golden word in our link for to-day. [Repeat in concert the three links.]

Come, now, shall we take a thought journey, and go to that wedding feast long ago? [Describe the probable house, table, and customs of the feast.]

But see! There is trouble among those who are serving the guests. Jesus's mother finds out what it is. The wine of that country which they drink so much has given out. They are ashamed and troubled. Mary goes straight to Jesus with the need. She doesn't know how he will get them out of their trouble, but she knows he can and will do something for them; she—what is the golden word?—believes. "Whatever he says to you, do it," she tells the servants. There are no grapes there to make wine, or time to press them; but there is water, and something to hold it. See! we will make some big jars on the board. Now come back to Cana. Here are the waterpots. Jesus says, "Fill them with water." The servants fill them to the brim. Jesus bids them take to the head man of the feast. How surprised he is at its goodness. He doesn't know where it comes from, but the servants who drew all the water for the jars, they know. Do we not want to be Jesus' servants, always near to him, doing as he says, and seeing his wonderful power?

How wonderful the guests are! How they praise the wine! And it was nothing but water till Jesus changed it. None but he could do such a thing; so this is a miracle. Now his disciples, who knew before something of Jesus, know more and believe as never before since they knew him.



The more we learn the more we will trust Jesus. So we come back to our golden word "Believe." Take Jesus at his word. He can change bitter

things into something sweet and good for us. Here is Mary on a little white cot in a hospital. She has been hurt and will never walk again. O, how hard and sad, and the pain is so bad. But Jesus stands beside her. If she had not been hurt, she might have forgotten him, but she won't now. He gives patience in the pain, and teaches her sweet lessons she would never have known any other way. She lives to help others love Jesus. The pain is changed to blessing. Isn't this better than water turned to wine? Nothing is too hard for Jesus. He is with us everywhere and always, to make everything turn to good if we trust and obey. Fasten in your hearts the golden word "Believe."

### Study and Occupation for the Sub- primary Department.

CHRIST'S FIRST MIRACLE. John 2. 1-11.

MEMORY G. M.: "And his disciples believed on him." John 2. 11.

LESSON STORY: There is to be a wedding at Cana. Cana is a town in the country where Jesus lived. We will call this room Cana, making believe that the wedding is to be here, the wedding feast, too, which lasts seven or eight days. We will call this [point to an aisle] the street on which the man lives who is to be married. We will hang up lanterns as he does before the wedding. [Stretch two lines of twine, upon which, at equal distances, place pieces of bent wire, to which the children can hang lanterns.]

The time for the wedding has now come. These people always have their weddings in the evening. [Pin stars to the wall; also divide the class into two parts, one representing the friends of the bride, and the other friends of the bridegroom. Have the two sections march and meet, then march in one direction. Explain that this represents the way the friends of the bride carry her to the home of the groom, who with his friends comes to meet her with music and festivity.]

We are at the wedding now, and Jesus and his disciples have come, too, but they have come late, and we did not know they were coming at all. [Let the children name these four disciples.]

These people always have at their weddings what they call wine, but what is just pure grape juice. There is a poison called alcohol in real wine, and the Bible tells us we must not drink real wine. At this wedding wine can do no harm. If it could, Jesus would have nothing to do with it.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, is at the wedding. The people there have used all the wine before Jesus and his disciples come, so she says to Jesus, "They have no wine." She knows that Jesus can get wine where no one else can, for he

is God. He says to her [repeat verse 4]; this means, "We must not worry. I will get wine for our friends when God wants me to. He, not we, must choose the hour for what he wants done." [Repeat verse 5.]

Jesus tells the servants to bring six waterpots—the large ones, from which people get water to wash their hands before they eat. Here they are. The people want wine and none is here. [Turn the waterpots upside down.]

Jesus tells the servants to fill the waterpots with water, and they fill them up to the brim. [Let the children fill the receptacles.] They wonder why Jesus tells them to do this. It is wine and not water that the people want.

[Explain the work of the governor of the feast, that is, to see that everything about the table was satisfactory, to take the first taste of the wine to learn if it was all right, etc. Repeat verse 8.] The servants minded Jesus and asked no questions. They had put water into the waterpots. They had taken out wine. How did the wine get there? The water had turned into wine. Jesus poured nothing into the waterpots. He did not touch them. He did not tell the water to turn into wine. He just wanted the water to turn into wine, and what Jesus wants done can always be done without word or work. The governor did not know that this wine had been water once. [Repeat verses 9 and 10.]

John the Baptist had said that Jesus is God, and now Jesus shows the people that he is God, for no one but a God-man can turn water into wine. When Jesus did anything that no one else could do it was called a miracle. No one but Jesus can turn water into wine. So the turning of water into wine was a miracle, and this was the first miracle that Jesus ever did.

### LESSON IV. (January 22.)

CHRIST AND NICODEMUS. John 3. 1-16.

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.

### Primary Notes.



Once upon a time a little boy who had been long away from his father's house was to make the journey home. It had to be on foot, and the way was long and dangerous. The child did not know the road at all. But there

was nothing to fear. The father sent the boy's older brother, who knew the way, to be his



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John 3. 1-16.

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guide and companion. This brother never left his charge. Whatever happened the two were always close together. Sometimes they overtook a happy company of travelers. Then the older brother was glad to see the younger one's enjoyment, and helped it on. Sometimes there was a dark and lonely piece of road, but there were always two to travel it; the little pilgrim was never alone—the brother was there!

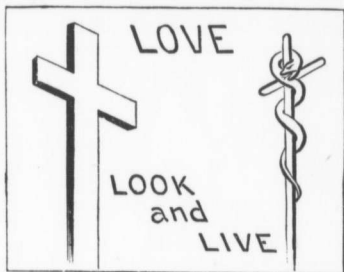
Now, isn't this like Jesus, our Lord? He is our Elder Brother, leading us home, and he is with us always and everywhere. Last Sunday we found him at a glad marriage feast, and in today's lesson we find him in the darkness and quiet of the night, with just one troubled man who wants to ask questions. With many or with few, it is always "that same Jesus," understanding us when we are glad, when we are sorry, when we are alone! How is this? Why does he keep so close? Why is he ready to help many to be happy, or one to find the truth? O, he loves us so. He came for love's sake. He was sent for love's sake. Our text says so. [Drill on Golden Text.] With such a text, "Love" is the word to go into our lesson link-to-day. Whose love comes first? Jesus's love. Whose should come next? Ours—yes, ours! How many links have we? Shine for Jesus, follow Jesus, believe on Jesus, love Jesus. "The lessons are all about Jesus, our Lord." [Sing verse given in Lesson I.]

[Let word-picture follow. Describe the quiet hour, the waiting, sympathizing, loving Saviour—the man of the Pharisees, the ruler of the Jews; the strange words, "Ye must be born again;" the man's perplexity, the illustration of the wind, the story of the serpent in the wilderness, lifted up that the bitten Israelites who looked might live, no matter how feeble the look, how sore the hurt, how far from the lifted serpent, nor how many had looked before. After giving details recall them by questions.]

The bite of those fiery serpents put poison in the veins of the people. Can life go on with poisoned blood? No, the poison must be taken out, and then it seems as if new life were in the body. We begin to live over again. Now, Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again. Just as a wee baby begins to live, with everything fresh and new, and with everything to learn and trusting some one to teach it always, so Jesus says we must be made over new, with the sin taken away and forgiven, and we must have a new heart altogether, like a little child's heart—loving and trusting and ready to learn. Jesus gives us this new life, but he wants us to look to him for it. Did those poor, bitten people in the wilderness make themselves well when they looked at the brazen serpent? O no; but

they did as they were told, and God did what he said he would. God wanted every one of them to be healed; so God wants every one to turn to Jesus with that loving look of trust that he asks for, and he will heal our hearts of sin and give us new life—a loving, trusting, obedient life.

Can we tell what the life of the body is? Yet we know when we are alive. The living body moves its hands and feet and lips, and shows in a hundred ways that it is alive. If Jesus's love lives in our hearts, we will show it by what we do. We know when the wind blows by what it does, though no one ever saw the wind. You never saw what we call love, but you know what love does. Jesus loves you; will you love him?



Study and Occupation for the Sub-  
primary Department.

CHRIST AND NICODEMUS. John 3. 1-16.

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.

MEMORY GEM: "Ye must be born again." John 3. 7.

PREPARATORY: Call a table Jerusalem; build a wall of blocks about three sides, leaving the one facing the class open.

LESSON STORY: At Jerusalem are a lot of men who know much and spend their time telling others what to do. One of them is Nicodemus. Here he is [a sand-map man]. Nicodemus says to himself, "My books tell me much. Jesus can tell me more than my books. I will go and see him to-night." [Put stars on the wall.] These people [point to them] see him going, and say, "There goes the great Nicodemus! How good he is! How much he knows!"

Nicodemus has now reached the house where Jesus rests. [Place an Eastern house on the table.] He looks at Jesus—yes, he looks at God. Rabbi means master. Nicodemus calls Jesus rabbi, because he knows that Jesus knows more than he does. [Repeat verses 2 and 3.]

God has given us this [hold up a bud] to show us just what Jesus means. What is this? [Many will say, "A flower," but do not accept this answer.] When its petals or leaves begin to round we say a bud is born. That was its birthday. This is not a flower. Perhaps it will some time be born into a flower, and perhaps it will not. We can't tell. Often buds are naughty, and say, will never, never be flowers. We will always be buds." When a bud is born into a flower its petals open [point to them] and it has a second birthday.

A person, like a flower, must be born again. He must have two birthdays, else he cannot go to the kingdom of God, which is heaven—God's home—no more than a naughty bud in the garden which would not be a flower can go into our houses in bouquets. But sometimes we want a few buds in our homes, so we take the sweet little baby buds. God wants some buds in his home, so every little baby and every little tiny child that dies he takes right to heaven and calls them his little buds. [Dwell largely upon the beauty of the celestial land.]

Every person must be born twice before he can go to heaven. He must be born a person the first time, a spirit the second time. When he is born the first time he is a baby of flesh and blood. We feel his hands and know they are flesh; we see his blood flowing under his skin. [Have the children examine the veins of their hands.]

When a person is born again he is born a spirit. We do not know now what a spirit is, for we cannot see spirits, but when we get to heaven and have new spirit eyes we shall know all about them. God, the angels, and everything in heaven are spirits. God is our Father. What a father is his children must be. Since God the Father is a spirit, people who are born of God—who are born again—are spirits. When a person is born a baby he takes his father's name. [Call for examples.] When a person is born the second time he is born of God; he takes the name of his new Father—God; Christ is God; so the person on his second birthday takes Christ's name and is called a Christian. [Have the children repeat the words Christ and Christian to note the similarity.]

When a person is born the first time everyone in the house knows it, but people elsewhere do not; so his father and mother send their friends tiny cards with the baby's name on them. [Show one.] The friends who get them say, "So there is a new baby." When a person is born the second time he knows it and God knows, but other people do not; so God tells him to be baptized; then the people will know it, and they say, "So there is a new Christian." [Explain baptism; repeat verse 8.]

### LESSON V. (January 29.)

#### CHRIST AT JACOB'S WELL. John 4. 5-15.

GOLDEN TEXT. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." John 4. 14.

#### Primary Notes.



Take a glass of clear water into class. What is this? What used for? Can we live without water? Is it even more needful than food? Yes. Does it make any difference what sort we drink and where we get it? Once some travelers

grew very thirsty as they walked along, and each went a different way to see if water could be found. Two of them found some little streams, muddy enough, but they were in a hurry to drink, and tasted this murky water. The third said, when he saw a muddy stream, "I'll hurry on till I find the spring and drink the clear water there." So he did. He found the cool water flowing from a rock, where there was nothing to spoil it as the streams were spoiled that flowed through the marshy ground. Isn't it worth while to seek the best at the fountain head? Would you? Flowing water is called living water. This seems to give new life to a thirsty one. What had we about new life last week? [Here bring in review and link lessons closely together.]

When is it that we want a drink? When is it warm, and we are thirsty and tired? Was Jesus ever thirsty and warm and tired? [Describe as vividly as possible the journey through Samaria, pointing out on map. Picture the weary Saviour upon the well-side, the woman with her waterpot, Jesus's request—he asked her to give him something, but it was that he might do more for her. Tell of the woman's surprise, her curious questions, the strange, new feeling that came to her about this stranger at the well-side; her belief that he must be divine because he told her what she had done; her mission to the city, leaving the waterpot that was worth so much to her; the invitation "Come," the gathering of the people to listen to Jesus, and their word to the woman, "We have heard him ourselves and know." Then return to the wonderful thing Jesus said to the woman, that if she knew what gift he had to give, she would have asked the living water, and her answer, not quite understanding it all, "Sir, give me to drink."]

Jesus gave this poor woman a loving invitation. He went out of his way to bring it to her

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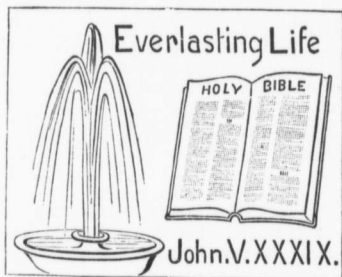
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himself. He came to her that she might have a chance to come to him for the love and blessing that would be to her heart what living, pure water is to the thirsty one who drinks so gladly. We will put in our lesson-link to-day the invitation "Come." The woman said, "Give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." Again and again she came with her waterpot to Jacob's well. Jesus says that the love and the life that he gives to our hearts will last always, so that we shall not be longing with all our hearts for something to help and comfort and bless us, as a thirsty man longs for water. This blessing is so wonderful that he calls it the water of life. He bids us come and take it. See picture of fountain on board. See how many lessons we can learn about the living water. Does a fountain give purer water than the stream along the muddy road? So Jesus gives us better things than this world ever can, and the life we cannot have in any other way. Does the fountain flow always? Jesus's love always does. Does water cost anything? It often costs much to make a fountain, but people drink freely. It cost Jesus's life to save us, but we may have this blessing of life if we ask. Only the thirsty care to drink. Do we want Jesus's love? Will we take it to-day? He says, "Come."

Let us learn this little closing verse and sing as a prayer:

Teach us, Lord, this precious lesson,  
Written for us in thy word ;  
Help us, Saviour, to remember  
Truths that we to-day have heard.



### Study and Occupation for the Sub- primary Department.

CHRIST AT JACOB'S WELL. John 4. 5-15.

GOLDEN TEXT: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst."  
JOHN 4. 14.

LESSON STORY: It was three days after our

Christmas. Jesus had been walking for a long way. He was alone, for his disciples had gone to the city, off there [point], to buy bread. He was in Samaria—let's call this table Samaria. Samaria is a hot country and its people are thirsty very often, and so they have a great many wells. Here is one [point to the well on the table]; it is called Jacob's well, because a good Bible man named Jacob made it years and years before, and God kept it filled with water all the time for the people.

God got all ready for men before he made men, and because he knew they would want water to drink he placed a lot under the ground. [If time, speak of the clouds as God's water bottles.] God wants us to rest when we are tired, and in this country men and animals always rest at noon. See, it is noon now, for the sun is directly overhead. [Point to a gilt ball suspended over the table.] Jesus looked into the well. [Peep into the well yourself.] O how cool the water looked, and he was so thirsty, but he had no waterpot from which to drink.

Jesus looked up. There was a woman coming with a waterpot. The women in this land seldom go out of their rooms excepting to draw water from the wells.

Jesus was a Jew. The Jews prayed to no one but our God. The woman was a Samaritan. The Samaritans prayed to our God and to other little gods they called idols. [Show one or a picture of one cut from some missionary journal.] The Jews did not love the Samaritans. Jesus was better than the other Jews, and he loved everyone, even the Samaritans, although he did not like to have them pray to idols. We must love everyone, as Jesus did. The best way to make bad people good is to love them.

Jesus said to the woman, "Give me to drink." Jews did not even speak to Samaritans, and she said [repeat all of verse 9] The woman did not know that this was Jesus. He thought he would let her try to find out who he was, so he said [repeat verse 10].

Before God made people he knew they would want goodness, so he placed this in his Son Jesus, just as he placed water in the ground. Now when people want this goodness, righteousness, or salvation they have only to go to Jesus and get it, just as this woman went to the well for water and got it. Jesus calls his goodness, which is for everybody, the living water. This woman grew thirsty every day, and had to go to this well every noon for water; but Jesus told her that whoever would drink of the water that he would give would never thirst again. When people take this living water from Christ we say that they become Christians.

Repeat verse 15. Then Jesus told the woman a great many things she had done. No one had told him about them, so she knew that Jesus must be God, and after she had given him a drink she ran to tell people to come and see the God-man. She wanted to tell them so much that she forgot all about the water she came for, and left her waterpot at the well. Here it is now.

[The well: Take a piece of card or bristol board about the size of a sheet of note paper and fasten the ends together. Cut out and fit over the top of this a circular piece of board, representing the curb, about an inch in width. A round box or a tin can covered with brown paper could be used for a well.]

[Bucket: This was of leather, with three sticks across the mouth to keep it open. Take a piece of brown paper three inches long and one inch wide. Fasten the ends together so that it will assume a circular shape. Insert wire for a bail. Also provide a long piece of twine for letting the bucket down the well. If desired, the three sticks referred to may be made use of.]

### Whisper Songs for January.

#### FIRST LESSON.

Holy Lord Jesus,  
Light us, we pray,  
Out of the darkness  
Into the day.

#### SECOND LESSON.

Loving Lord Jesus,  
Lead us, we pray,  
Lest we should wander  
Far from thy way.

#### THIRD LESSON.

Lord of thy little ones,  
Holy and true,  
All that thou biddest us  
Help us to do.

#### FOURTH LESSON.

Spirit of Jesus,  
Breath of the Lord,  
Breathe on thy little ones  
Out of thy word.

#### FIFTH LESSON.

Spirit of Jesus,  
Truth from above,  
Spring thou within us  
A fountain of love.

### Order of Service

FOR THE PRIMARY DEPARTMENT.

#### First Quarter.

#### CONCERT RECITATION.

Safely through another week,  
God has brought us on our way;  
Let us now a blessing seek,  
Waiting in his courts to-day;  
Day of all the week the best,  
Emblem of eternal rest.

*Teacher.* Lord, open thou our lips:

*Class.* And our mouth shall show forth thy praise.

PRaise SONG, "We praise thee, O God."

*T.* Come, let us worship and bow down.

*C.* Let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker.

#### WHISPER PRAYER.

Before my words of prayer are said  
I'll close my eyes and bow my head;  
I'll try to think to whom I pray,  
And try to mean the words I say.

#### PRAYER.

MOTION SONG, 66, "Melodies for Little People."

#### CONCERT RECITATION.

Small are the gifts that we can bring,  
But thou hast taught us, Lord,  
If given for the Saviour's sake,  
They lose not their reward.

OFFERINGS. "Give, said the little stream."

#### RESPONSIVE EXERCISE.

*Teacher.* For life, and health, and happy days,  
*Class.* We praise our loving Lord;  
*T.* For love that leads us in wisdom's ways,  
*C.* We praise our loving Lord;  
*T.* For this dear friend, so kind and true,  
*C.* We praise our loving Lord;  
*T.* That she may know and serve thee, too,  
*C.* We pray our loving Lord.

#### BIRTHDAY GIFTS.

#### FIRST PSALM.

#### LESSON TAUGHT.

#### ECHO PRAYER.

#### SINGING.

#### CLOSING CONCERT PRAYER.

Be with us, loving Saviour,  
Through all our childhood days;  
And help us now and always  
Walk in thy holy ways.

*Teacher.* The Lord watch between thee and me,

*Class.* When we are absent one from the other.

#### DISMISSAL.

## Happy New Year.

Though 'tis not the time of roses, and the weary land reposes  
Underneath no golden glory and no shade of froned palm;  
Tho' the earth has lost her brightness, save for robes of snowy whiteness,  
And the wild winds whistle coldly in the place of summer calm;  
Yet a power divine attending, and a love supreme befriending,  
Fill the heart with sunlit gladness and with summer all the time;  
There's no lack of light and beauty on the path of faith and duty,  
For a life to God devoted is forever in its prime.  
So we cross the mystic portal, for a hand benign, immortal,  
Takes our own and leads us onward to the unknown nights and days;  
And an eye that never sleepeth loving vigil o'er us keepeth,  
As we tread the New Year's pathway with the song of trust and praise.

## As Others See Us.

BY REV. N. BURWASH, S.T.D., LL.D.  
Chancellor Victoria University.

In a recent number of our able contemporary, the Westminster, we notice a review of the new Methodist Catechism, by the Rev. John Laing, D.D. As might be expected, Dr. Laing's doctrinal standpoint differs in many essential points from ours. Of this we have no reason to complain, nor is it worth while now to revive the controversy as to whether our more emphatic presentation of human duty, or the Westminster emphatic presentation of Divine sovereignty and the work of the Spirit, is more perfectly scriptural.

We are also most happy to acknowledge our indebtedness to the grand old Westminster symbol. It is indeed not the first time that we have incurred this debt. More than half a century ago, the eminent Methodist theologian, Richard Watson, in preparing a catechism for English Methodism, drew largely on the same source, so that many of these definitions are as familiar to us as they are to our Presbyterian brethren.

But on one or two points we think our Calvinistic, or, if he prefers it, Augustinian brother, has done us scant justice, and has, we think, unduly magnified the divergence of the two churches. Of

course our brother must permit us not to accept the Westminster definition, or doctrine of Divine sovereignty, foreordination and election, inasmuch as we do not believe these to be the true expression or sense of Scripture. But it does not follow that we ignore a true doctrine of Divine sovereignty as presented in Scripture, nor even a true doctrine of foreordination and election; though we do not regard these as first principles to be taught to children.

Again, in the Westminster enumeration of the Divine attributes, why are his mercy which "endureth forever," and his love of which it is said "God is love," omitted? The answer will, of course, be that they are included in his goodness. So we have included justice as one of the most essential elements of the Divine holiness, in this following many of the ablest theologians.

We make no objection to several other notes in which our standpoint certainly differs from that of the Westminster Catechism. But on two points we may venture to suggest that our critic may not have read more than sectional headings, when he says that "from the sixth section on, much is taught in detail that is regarded by the church as duty and only deduced from Scripture." In re-examination of these sections we fail to find a single element of Christian duty which can be regarded as resting on the authority of ordinances of the church, or which is not directly taught as a duty in the New Testament. We have simply attempted to apply the Christian ethics of the New Testament to our modern everyday life.

The other point relates to the office and work of the Spirit. The criticism leaves the impression that "the work of the Spirit is ignored," because it does not appear in one particular question—forgetting that in 29, repentance is a grace of the Holy Spirit, in 33, regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit, in 37, sanctification wrought by the Holy Spirit, and that in 72, 73, 74, the work of the Holy Spirit in the church and in the individual believer is fully defined. Of course it is not so defined as to include an irresistible operation of the Spirit by which one class of men are separated from another. In a section dealing with the practical use of the means of grace, we have thought it sufficient to teach our children to "attend thereto with diligence, preparation and prayer." Surely those who obey this teaching cannot and do not ignore the work of the Spirit.

## Oh, Lift up Your Hearts.

J. E. KURZENNABE.

1. Oh, lift up your hearts, for he com - eth, The promised one ho - ly and true;  
2. The sto - ry so old and so pre - cious, Once told to the shepherds at night,

Oh, greet him with glad a - do - ra - tion, And car - ol his prais - es a - new.  
Grows dear - er and sweet - er, and fills us With ev - er re - turn - ing de - light.

## CHORUS.

He com eth,  
He com - eth, he com - eth, ex - pect - ed so long! No vis - ion of beau - ty we see,

But glo - ry, great glo - ry of heav - en - ly song, And crowning of an - gels hath he.

3 Oh, could we but look through the ages,  
How sweet to behold from afar,  
The gleam of the angels in glory  
Reflected in Bethlehem's star!

4 O tidings, most holy and blessed,  
Of "peace unto men and good-will,"  
Come, quicken our hearts with devotion,  
Our souls with thy melody fill.

—Mrs. R. N. Turner.



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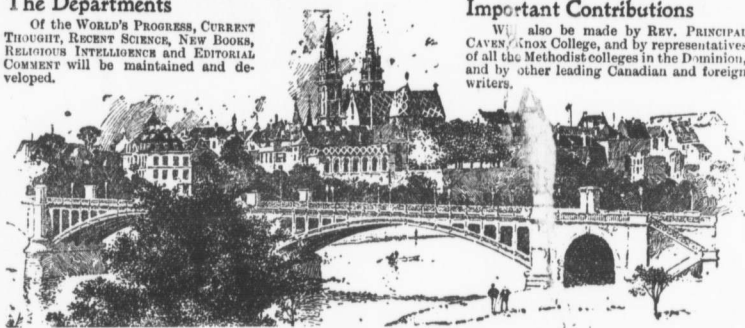
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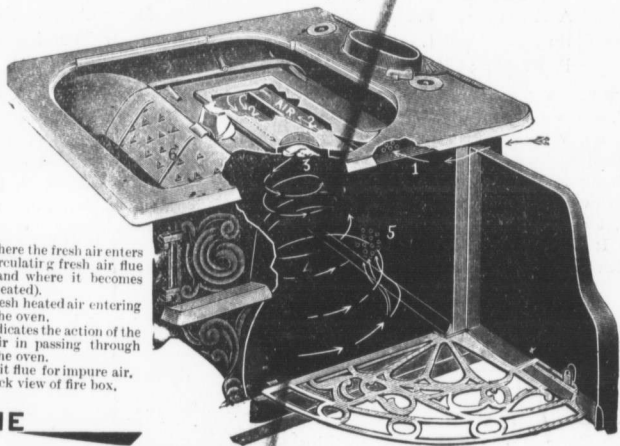
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