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Teachers' Preparation Leaflet

LESSON 9.

AUGUST 26th 1894.

3rd QUARTER.

First Miracle of Jesus. John 2: 1-11.

GOLDEN TEXT: "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory." John 2: 11.

COMMIT TO MEMORY verses 1-5. Children's Hymnal 12, 8, 228, 81.

PROVE THAT—Jesus is all-powerful. Matt. 28: 18.

SHORTER CATECHISM—Quest. 90. How is the word to be read and heard that it may become effectual to salvation?

DAILY PORTIONS.

(The Selections of the International Bible Reading Association.)

MONDAY.	TUESDAY.	WEDNESDAY.	THURSDAY.	FRIDAY.	SATURDAY.	SABBATH.
John 2: 1-11	Mark 7: 1-9	John 15: 8-14	Mark 2: 14-20	Matt. 11: 1-6	John 17: 1-11	Rev. 8: 14-22

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

INTRODUCTORY. The intervening days were occupied in the journey, a distance of about sixty miles. On the third day from the calling of Philip and Nathanael, Jesus arrives at Nazareth with his new disciples. Finding himself invited with his companions to a wedding at the not far distant village of Cana, whither his mother had already gone, he repairs thither. His first public act is to sanction with his presence the sacred relations of the home; and his first miracle is one of kindness, setting the stamp of his approval upon innocent joy.

LESSON PLAN. I. Jesus Sharing our Joy. vs. 1-2. II. Jesus Observing our Wants. vs. 3-5. III. Jesus Supplying our Need. vs. 6-11.

I. JESUS SHARING OUR JOY. 1. The third day—from the calling of Philip and Nathanael. Nazareth was more than 60 miles in a direct line from Bethany, where John was baptizing. They would arrive quite early, on the third day after setting out, the sixth day from the first testimony of John (ch. 1: 19). Eidersheim calculates that the day would be Wednesday, to which day Jewish brides were as partial as their Anglo-Saxon sisters are now. There was a marriage—the whole feast would last several days. See the weddings of Jacob (Gen. 29: 22) and Samson (Judges 14: 12). By his presence at this feast Christ in effect repeats the first nuptial benediction, (Gen. 1: 28), and honors the family as a divine institution. Note among the "doctrines of devils," 1 Tim. 4: 3, the contrary sentiment. He is himself a "Bridegroom," (Eph. 5: 32). Cana of Galilee—There was an

other Cana in the tribe of Asher, (Josh. 19: 28.) Some think that it lay seven miles N. E. of Nazareth and is now called *Kana el Jelil*. Others, with more probability, place it about four and a half miles N. E. at *Kefr Kenna*. This last is the traditional spot. Only ruins now remain at either place. Godet maintains that the place pointed out to Dr. Robinson as *Kana El-Jelil* ("Cana of Galilee") is properly *Khurbet Cana*, and that the Arab guide out of politeness gave it the name which he perceived Dr. Robinson wanted to give it. "It is a certain fact that the name *Kana El-Jelil* no longer exists at the present day." This would seem to decide the question in favor of the latter place, which was larger, with a more stable population and more likely situation, being nearer to Nazareth. "To the end of time, whenever and wherever there shall be a bride and the bridegroom, then and there will

The TEACHERS' PREPARATION LEAFLET is published weekly by the General Assembly's Sabbath School Committee, Presbyterian Church in Canada, at 35 cents a year, or 25c. If four or more copies are sent to one person. Address Rev. T. F. Fotheringham, 107 Hazen Street, St. John, N. B. Editing Committee: T. F. Fotheringham, Jas. Turnbull and Principal Kirkland.

Cana of Galilee be remembered. Some names we pronounce with honor, some with shame and sorrow, many with cold indifference; but Cana will ever mingle in the song of the happy, to symbolize the bliss of wedded love—the peace and purity of domestic life.” (Thomson). **The mother of Jesus**—We would naturally infer that she was there because of the wedding. John never names her, perhaps because she was one of his own household so long. See ch. 19: 26, 27. The brothers of Jesus were also present (verse 12.) From the fact that Joseph is not mentioned it is supposed that he was dead. Mary gives instructions to the servants like one who was more than a stranger guest. **2. Jesus was called**—(R. V.) “bidden,” invited. Every wedding, or other social gathering, should be such that we could invite Jesus there. “There comes a time in our lives when scenes of social conviviality are out of harmony with our spirits; but it is not for us, who have passed the halcyon days of youth, to look frowningly down upon those who are just stepping across the threshold of life. If we cannot partake with them in all their pleasures, let us sympathize with and sanctify them by our loving presence, and seek to furnish them with that better wine, even the wine of the kingdom, without which, perhaps, their good wine may degenerate, as it too commonly does, into the worse.” (Pentecost). **His disciples**—The five already mentioned, with the addition of James perhaps. Nathanael may have been acquainted with the family but the others were from another part of the country, and were probably invited as being friends of Jesus. In this marriage feast, “which he adorned and beautified with his presence,” Jesus sets the stamp of his approval upon the sweet relationships of the home. He shews that monks and nuns are far from realizing the ideal of a religious life which he would most richly bless. He sanctions too all innocent pleasure, and gives the approval of his presence to festive occasions of a proper kind.

II. JESUS OBSERVING OUR WANTS; 3. **When they wanted wine**—R. V. “when the wine failed.” Evidently the family had no wine cellar. They were not accustomed to the lavish use of wine, and had made a miscalculation when laying in a supply for the occasion. They would feel mortified to think that the guests might say that they were stingy. Mary’s words “they are short of wine,” convey a tacit request that Jesus would do something to relieve their embarrassment. “Did she hope for some supernatural act? When we bear in mind (1) that Jesus would not likely leave for the Jordan without some intimation to his mother that the old home life had come to a close, (2) that he had returned with several men who regarded him with the reverence of a Master, (3) that from them she had probably heard of the Baptist’s testimony to Jesus, (4) that she retained and pondered in her heart the unforgettable memories of His

birth, which were kept alive by the sight of graces adorning His daily humble life, we can scarcely escape the conclusion that her expectations were keen, that he was about to fulfil all that had been foretold of Him. Why might he not reveal his powers there? A mother’s pride and womanly vanity were combined with a real wish to do her friends a kindness. Jesus read all her heart, and answered all her secret thoughts rather than her words.” (Reith). Compare the gentle, yet most powerful appeal, in a similar indirect form in ch. 11: 3. **4. Woman**—not a disrespectful term. He uses it when on the cross (ch. 19: 26, 27). Still it intimated that in this matter her rights as a mother had no place. **What have I to do with thee?**—lit. “What is there to thee and me.” This was the answer of the unclean spirits to Jesus. (Mark 1: 24; compare Josh. 22: 24; Judges 11: 12; 2 Sam. 16: 10; 19: 22; 1 Kings 17: 18; 2 Kings 3: 13). “There is nothing in our relations as Son and mother which gives you a right to make suggestions in regard to the exercise of my miraculous powers as Messiah.” He has now begun his ministry and asserts his right to absolute freedom from human control. No doubt the tone and manner in which the words were spoken took away the harshness that they seem to wear. In spirit it corresponds to His words in Luke 2: 49 and Mark 3: 33. “The idolatrous worship of Mary by the Roman Catholic church is condemned by the incident alone. She is warned back from assuming any place of privilege simply because she is Christ’s mother.” (Reith). **Mine hour**—This expression usually refers to the hour of his supreme suffering. See ch. 7: 30; 12: 23, 27; 13: 1; 17: 1. Here it means simply “When the proper time comes I shall act.” “Not till the wine is wholly exhausted will his time arrive; as yet it was only failing. Then will be the time to act, when, by its complete failure, manifest to all, the miracle will be above suspicion. When all other help fails, then and not till then has Christ’s hour come.” (Trench). **5.** Mary is not hurt at his answer, but understands His “not yet” as a promise. She is willing to bide his time, and tells the servants to do his bidding without question. “Years’ experience of all her Son had been to her in their home at Nazareth speaks out in those words ‘whatsoever &c.’” A man is known at home if anywhere. (Reith). The same words were used by Pharaoh with reference to Joseph, who was a type of Christ. (Gen. 41: 55). Mary’s direction to the servants is suitable for all, it is the Christian’s rule of life. He has a right to be obeyed absolutely; his approval is the only sure test of conduct; our obedience should extend to all his commands; and it should be prompt and unquestioning.

III. JESUS SUPPLYING OUR NEED. 6. **Waterpots**—Stone jars used for holding water. They were set where they would be convenient for the ceremonial washings of the company. Compare Matt. 15: 2; Luke 11:

38; Mark 7: 3; John 3: 25. John is an accurate reporter, he mentions number, material and size. Firkin—i. e. "Four-kin"—the fourth part of a barrel. About nine gallons. The six-pitchers together would hold between 108 and 162 gallons. This was a very large quantity of wine. God's blessings never come in stinted measure. Wine was the ordinary beverage of the country. Whether this was intoxicating or not will always be a matter of discussion. The duty of Christians to abstain from alcoholic drinks in our day is not affected by the decision of the point. Granting that it was intoxicating, it does not follow that Jesus would approve of the use of wine now when so much harm is done by it. At what point the water became wine, we are not informed. The natural inference is that the whole was changed. *Lympha modesta Deum vidit et erubuit.* "The modest water saw its God and blushed." 8. **The governor**—lit. "the tablemaster." He was the chief of the servants, and it belonged to his office to taste the meats and drinks before they were placed on the table. The view that the "governor of the feast" was a president, or chairman, chosen by the guests from among themselves, is advocated by Alford, Schaff, and others. Such a dignitary could more appropriately use jocular freedom in remonstrating with the bridegroom. 9. **The water that was made wine**—does not distinguish this from water that had remained unchanged, but the proper translation is, as in R. V. "the water now become wine." This is not an illustration of Romish transubstantiation. "The water had been made wine in form as well as in substance; it looked like wine and tasted like the best of wine; but the pretended change of bread and wine in the Eucharist contradicts all the senses and is a complete delusion." (Schaff). **Knew not whence it was**—His words prove that this was not water mingled with wine, but water changed into wine. His testimony was impartial. 10. **Have well drunk**—R. V. "have drunk freely." Tyndal and Cranmer translate "when men be dronke." He spoke sportively as was not unbecoming in the license of the festive occasion. It is a wonderfully graphic touch to the narrative. The statement does not imply that any one then present was the worse of wine. We may be quite sure that Jesus would not have sanctioned by his presence any such abuse of his gift. It was merely a proverbial expression, and referred either to a custom which might be joked about, when to insinuate that it was followed would be an insult, namely, substituting inferior wine when the power of nice discrimination was destroyed through partial intoxication, or else it refers to the very proper practice of diluting the wine with water to prevent unseemly excess on the part of any. 11. This was Christ's first miracle. It proved that he was indeed the Son of God, and the faith of his disciples was confirmed.

Christ's example as to wine. (Condensed from Peloubet's Notes). I. *Wrong*

Inferences. (1) It is a wrong inference to imagine that the precepts of Christ do not require total abstinence in our circumstances. (2) It is one of the worst of fallacies to argue that because a certain thing is right, therefore another thing with the same name is right; or because an act is right under certain circumstances, therefore that act is also right under entirely different circumstances.

II. *Difference of Circumstances.* It is of the utmost importance to remember the difference between those times and ours. (1) The chief agents of intoxication now are something very different from the wines of those days, and were altogether unknown then. The greatest danger of wine-drinking to-day is its leading to stronger drinks, a danger then unknown. (2) The circumstances are entirely different, and the temptations to drunkenness, while real, were much less than now. There were no open bars, no saloons. "The wines were usually very light, and with slight intoxicating properties, and they were usually mingled with two or three times their quantity of water." (Edersheim).

III. *Conclusions.* (1) There is a right and proper use of the fruit of the vine. There are few things more delicious and healthful than the juice of the grape fresh from the vines. Most have heard of the "grape cure," and many know from experience that the demon of dyspepsia is cast out by taking each morning a draught of grape juice, one's own mouth being the wine press. (2) Christ's example shews that drinking some kind of wine is not a sin *per se*, and that the time may come in the millenium, perhaps, when it may be right. (3) It is perfectly right to wholly abstain from wine and all intoxicating drinks. There is no law, human or divine, that requires us to use what is so dangerous to ourselves and others. (4) There certainly can be no proof that the wine Christ made was intoxicating, or that its superior goodness was in anything but a finer flavor, a more delicious taste. (5) In this wonderful miracle we cannot for a moment suppose that Christ would minister to intemperance, either in that age or in any other. It is clear that neither Christ's precepts nor his example justifies the ordinary drinking usages of society to-day, with their bars, wine shops, beer gardens, fiery wines and strong liquors, and all their attendant evils. (6) The principles of the Bible and of Christ are wholly on the side of temperance. (7) The basis of total abstinence is the giving up of that which may be lawful in its self, whenever it becomes dangerous to ourselves or the means of evil to others. This is our Christian duty and privilege.

"To force total abstinence out of this lesson, or to force it into the lesson, is impossible. To argue that Christ did not create real wine, but something that looked like wine and tasted like wine, while yet it was not wine, is unwise. To teach that wine-drinking is itself a sin, goes contrary to the Scriptures. To argue that no man can be a true believer and

use wine, is utterly false. Should the teacher feel called upon (as many doubtless will) to treat the subject of total abstinence, he will have to place it on a different foundation. I believe in, and practice, total abstinence, placing it upon the two-fold foundation (1) of personal safety and (2) of example." (Rev. A. F. Schauffler, in *S. S. Times*).

THE BLACKBOARD.

Write the first letters on the board sometime beforehand, and complete the words with the portions in brackets as you review the lesson.



Ten Minutes Normal Drill

Based on the text-book, "The Sabbath School Teacher's Handbook; or, The Principles and Practice of Teaching, with special reference to the Sabbath School," and prepared by Principal Kirkland of the Toronto Normal School.

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE IDEAL SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

(Continued.)

Principle III. In communicating knowledge, whether religious or secular, we should start from the concrete and end with the abstract.—This was the method of the Great Teacher. The mind of the child can only grasp the abstract through the concrete.

Principle IV. The acquisition of Religious Knowledge by the child should accord in mode and arrangement with the way in which mankind has acquired religious ideas.—God has dealt with the world as a judicious teacher deals with his pupils. A careful study of the way in which truth was revealed during old Testament time will greatly aid the teacher in helping his pupils to acquire the same truths.

Principle V. Our teaching should be such as to foster the principle of self-direction, self-instruction and self-activity to the fullest extent. The pupil must co-operate with the teacher.—The following corollaries naturally follow from this principle:—

(1) Tell the pupil as little as possible and lead him to discover as much as possible. The connection between *doing* and *knowing* is deep and far reaching. We learn to *do* by *knowing* and to *know* by *doing*.

(2) Never do for the pupil what you can lead him to do for himself.

(3) The *less* the teacher talks to the pupil, and the *more* the pupil talks to the teacher, the better will be the teaching.

Exercise yourself on the questions at the end of Chapter V.