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The Sabbath-School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

First Quarter, Lesson 6. Feb. 5, 1899.

THE NOBLEMAN'S SON HEALED.—JOHN 4 : 43 54.

Commit Verses 43-51.

Golden Text.—Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.—JOHN 4 : 53.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time.—A. D. 28, early in January, or late in the previous December.

Place.—Cana, a village among the hills of Galilee: and Capernaum, a city twenty or twenty-five miles to the northeast, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Jesus.—31 years old.

A GOOD FOUNDATION FOR FAITH.—Vs. 43 45. *Now after two days.* The two days mentioned in v. 40, which Jesus spent at Sychar preaching to the Samaritans. *Went into Galilee.* Continuing his journey, which had been interrupted by the incident at Sychar.

Galilee in the time of Christ. 1. Galilee was very populous, containing, according to Josephus at least three millions of people, including two hundred and four towns of over fifteen thousand inhabitants.

2. It was a very fertile country, well watered from the mountains of Lebanon on the north. It was full of trees, orchards, gardens, grain fields, vineyards.

3. It was a business country, full of activities, manufactures, fisheries, exports of oil and fruits. It had contact with the outer Roman and heathen world.

4. The Galileans were a moral, intelligent, industrious, and enterprising people They were more accessible to new teachings than the people of Judea.

Jesus left Judea for Galilee because a deepening opposition was developing in Judea. *Jesus himself testified*, from his own experience, *that a prophet hath no honour in his own country*, therefore he went to Galilee. Meyer seems to us very near the truth when he explains thus: Jesus, knowing well that a prophet has no honour in his own country, began by gaining honor for himself beyond it, at Jersalem (v.45); and so it was that he now returned to Galilee with the reputation of a prophet, which gave him access to hearts in his own country. *The Galileans received him.* The reason given. *Having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast.* The feast must be that referred to in 2: 13 24 and chap. 3: 1 22. And many things, doubtless, were done at that time which are not recorded.

THE NEED OF FAITH.—V. 46 *So Jesus came again into Cana.... where he made the water into wine.* Because, having once been welcomed there as a friend he would now be likely to receive a favorable hearing and make more disciples. *A certain nobleman.* He was some high officer, civil or military, of Her d's court Some think it was Chuza, Herod's steward or chamberlain, whose wife Joanna was one of the women who ministered to Jesus. *Whose son was sick*, at the point of death with a fever. Times of sorrow and deepest need lead us to Christ. Many a one has gone to Christ from a sense of want and conscious helplessness.

FAITH USING MEANS.—V. 47. *When he heard that Jesus was come.* Knowing that Jesus had wrought cures for others, he hoped that he might be willing to help him. *Besought him that he would come down.* Thinking that Jesus must go and see the boy in order to cure him. He could not cure his boy himself; he therefore went to one who could.

LITTLE FAITH A STEPPING STONE TO LARGER FAITH.—V. 48. *Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.* Jesus saw that his miracles had impressed the people more deeply than the teachings they were intended to convey. They saw the sign, but forgot the thing signified. He wished that they would see his character, his mission as the Son of God, his gospel of salvation from sin, his love and friendship for men.

THE EARNESTNESS OF FAITH.—V. 49 *Sir, come down ere my child die.* He had no strength to reply or explain, he would be hindered by no seeming rebuke. He showed that he was no waiting to see wonders, but could trust Jesus to heal his son. When the soul is in earnest it will not stumble at small obstacles.

FAITH REWARDED.—Vs. 50 54. *Go thy way; thy son liveth.* Here is the reward of his faith. *And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken.* Here was a step higher in his faith. He not only believed in general in the power of Jesus to heal, but he believed for himself and acted upon his belief. He believed the word of Jesus. He had come nearer the true faith, which is a personal trust in the Lord Jesus. *And he went his way.* He left Jesus, and started immediately for home. *At the seventh hour, the fever left him*, showing a sudden and decisive change. *Himself believed, and his whole house.* Household, family. He believed on Jesus as his Saviour. Before he had believed about him, now he believed on him. They all became disciples.

Note the progress and growth of his faith. First step. Faith in Jesus as a worker of miracles. Second step. Faith enough to seek Jesus for relief for his son. Third step. Faith, after seeing Jesus, in his promise and his character. Fourth step. Faith in Jesus as the Messiah, so strong as to openly confess him

1. It was faith overcoming many obstacles.

2. It was a faith exercised for others. It reached out into the region of unselfishness.

3. It was a reasonable faith, based on facts.

4. It was a faith that led to an avowed discipleship, that sets its candle on a candlestick, and shines.

Second miracle. Not the second miracle Jesus had wrought (v. 45), but the second in Galilee.

PRACTICAL HINTS.

Let us be careful not to dishonor the prophets in our own country,—the saints in our own households, the good in own church, the talent in our own families.

Facts are a true foundation for our faith. All that God has done for others proves that he can do the same for us Every saint, every triumph over sorrow, every miracle of conversion, every noble deed, what Christianity has done for individuals and for nations,—all are proofs of what Jesus can do again, and do for us.

The sorrows, the trials, the temptations, the difficulties of life, are permitted in order to send us to Jesus, not only for relief from these evils, but through them to obtain spiritual blessings.

God has patience with weak and imperfect faith, as a stepping stone to higher and purer faith.

It is right to pray for temporal blessings, but God cares more for the spiritual blessings which may come to us by the way he gives or withholds the temporal.

He that has faith, will act upon that faith, and through acting upon it the faith will be increased.

Keeping Baby Busy.

Satan's ingenuity, while idle hands serve his turn, is proverbial. From his Majesty the wise mother will learn a lesson of being alert, but her findings will be a satisfying occupation instead of mischief Keeping just in advance of the baby's active little body and mind may become almost an unconscious habit. Material is always close at hand, and it is encouraging to find that the ability to seize and use it increases with practise. Let the energetic little person do as nearly as possible what the mother herself is doing; this will satisfy two natural instincts, the social and the imitative.

If it is buttoning her boots let baby put away her slippers, one at a time, to make the occupation last the longer. If she is writing at her desk let an old envelope or letter be torn into bits; the heap may lie on her lap, and it is easy, without looking up, to hold out the pieces to the little midget, who will trudge to the scrap basket, returning again and again for another until all are gone. While the breakfast table is being cleared let baby carry away a spoon, a napkin, anything which entails no breakage and no injury to him. If dusting is the occupation, give him a duster, too. One point of great importance is to see to it that the objects are put in the real places in which they belong; thereby the opportunity to train eye and hand, as well as to develop order and perceptive faculties, will not be lost, neither will the child's satisfaction be marred by the fear that it is only play.

He is in all the above ways happy because he is helping mamma; he is saved from the fret and ill temper which are sure to possess the idle child; he is learning little ways of usefulness which will become natural to him; the impression is being received that he, too, must do his part of the work within his range. The mother will find herself much less tired at the end of such an hour than at the close of one through which an unanswered baby has been teasing and fretting trying his own limited best to do something for entertainment, and failing utterly for lack of sympathy and suggestion.—H. W. R. B in Congregationalist.

The Case Against Tobacco.

Dr. J. H. Kellogg, of the Battle Creek Sanitarium, writing in the Voice of recent date states the evil effects of tobacco in the following terms: Tobacco owes its evil properties to a heavy oil which it contains, known as nicotine. It contains also various other poisons which are similarly injurious, but less deadly. Nicotine is one of the most powerful of all known poison. It is almost as potent for evil as prussic acid. One fourth of a drop of nicotine will kill a frog: one-seventh of a drop placed on a cat's tongue has produced instant death. Two or three drops distilled into the ear of a sleeping man once produced death. A child died from the application of a little oil from its grandmother's pipe to a burn upon its forehead. A decoction of tobacco is used for killing parasites upon sheep and other animals. The smoke of tobacco is used for destroying green flies and other pests in greenhouses. The first attempt to use tobacco generally makes a person very sick, even though the amount used is very small. It is clearly a deadly poison. A cigarette contains enough nicotine to kill two frogs. A single cigar contains enough to kill two men.

The poisonous effects of tobacco upon the body are manifested in many ways, especially the following:

1. The production of various nervous disorders, such as weakness of the heart, general nervousness, irritability, blindness. 2. The use of tobacco, especially in the form of chewing, destroys digestion disorders the liver, and produces Bright's disease. 3. A general cachexia or a state of chronic poisoning, indicated by emaciation, dingy skin, lusterless eye, weakness of muscles, brain, and nerves, not infrequently results from the use of tobacco. 4. Its dwarfing effects upon boys is so generally recognized that in many countries, as France and Switerland, and some States of the Union, its use is forbidden to boys under eighteen years of age. The tobacco using habit has no redeeming features whatever. It is only evil and leads to other evils, such as the use of alcohol and other narcotics.

Your Pupils for Christ.

If you are a wise and faithful teacher your chief aim and prayer will be the conversion of your pupils to Jesus Christ. Your main reliance must be on the power of the Holy Spirit. Yet you are to do your part. Remember that it is not enough to ask a child Do you love Jesus? or to urge that child to rise for prayer. Conversion means change of heart, change of character, and that is to show itself by change of conduct. Impress on your scholars that the only proof of faith in Christ and love of Christ is keeping Christ's commandments. Mere emotion is short-lived Strike for something deeper. Exhort your children to break off from their besetting sins and to obey Christ. Childhood is the best time to be real Christians, and the worst time to make shallow and sham Christian profession. A solemn trust is yours, and if you are wise and faithful you may win a crown of glory that an archangel might covet. It is a glorious thing to be an earnest untiring, and devoted Sunday-school teacher, wise to win souls and mould character for heaven. And it is an awful thing to be a trifler or a blunderer with children's souls. If you love your Master and love your scholars, you may ask Christ's help, and he will give it.—Epworth Herald.

Folly of Useless Risks.

It is better to keep away from a moral danger than to see how near we can go with safety. It is better to understate a fact than to risk an overstatement, which may be the first step toward lying. There is a lesson for us all in the familiar story of the gentleman who advertised for a coachman, and three men applied. He asked each of them how near he could drive to the edge of a precipice without going over. The first said half a yard, the second, a foot. The third said he would keep as far from it as possible. He was given the place. No one wants a coachman who is willing to calculate how much needless risk he can take. And taking needless risk is equally unwise in the conduct of life. If you have a weak place, keep away from what would tempt it, as far as other duties will permit Never court temptation, for that is a first step toward yielding to it. It is putting yourself on the devil's side of the fence, whom which it is hard to ask for divine help; for you have to ask it of a God who has bidden you to pray Lead us not into temptation.

Why go to College?

1. Because it increases one's capabilities for earning a livelihood. In all lines of business, trained men are more and more in demand.

2 For the pleasure of knowledge and the development of character.

3. Because of the indirect as well as the direct benefits. There is an atmosphere in a good college. To breathe it for a single year is to live a richer life forever.

4. Because it increases the power and possibilities of a life for useful service.

5. Because you can go if you determine to do so.

6. Because you will always regret it if you can go and fail to do so.

7. Because, though the difficulties may seem insuperable, if you will begin, the way will open.

8. Because it will help you to discover your talents and know yourself.

9. Because it is a religious duty to cultivate one's intellectual gifts.

10. Because now in your youth is the accepted time; now is the day of your mental salvation.

Worth of a Warm Heart.

A warm heart is more attractive than a large brain. There are men who give more pleasure in a cordial handshake than most men can give in a learned talk about literature or philosphy. Men are influenced through their emotions more easily, and oftener, than by their logical faculty. A strong character has added power when it shows a loving spirit. Even a weak character can win favor and do good when it evidences an affectionate nature. A good city missionary said of a man whom he valued as a helper, He isn't much of a man if you measure him some ways, but he's worth a hundred dollars a year as kindling wood in a prayer meeting. The world needs warming in order to have all in it do their best work. For this use, a handful of kindling-wood on the social hearth is better than a wagon-load of ice. Which are you in the habit of furnishing?

Better Plant Than Build.

If a man builds, nature straightway sets to work to undo his building. Rust eats into the iron and decay into the wood, and little by little time ravages and destroys. But if a man plants, nature proceeds to complete his unfinished work. He sows a seed, and behold, wheat; he plants a cutting, and behold, a tree. Such is the difference between working alone and working with God. He who sows truth in human hearts works with God. The seed drops into the heart; lies there, is long time hidden; sprouts; pushes forth the blade and ear, and finally the full corn. Not at once; often after long delay; but it fails not. Heaven and earth shall pass away; all things material decay; but my words shall not pass away: truth is imperishable.—Lyman Abbot, D. D

Like Unto His Brethren.

A white man went as a missionary to the black people of the West Indies; but although he preached the gospel to them, they were very suspicious of him and received not his help. At last he sold himself as a slave and was driven with them in the early morning. He fainted beneath the lash of the task master, dragged his way back again to the slave hut when the day's work was done, and entering into their lives he gave them the sympathy for which their hearts were craving. Verily He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He was made like unto His brethren.—Dr. Wilbur Chapman.

Kind words do not cost much. They never blister the tongue or lips. We never have heard of any mental trouble arising from this quarter. Though they do not cost much, yet they accomplish much. They make other people good natured. They also produce their own image on men's souls, and a beautiful image it is We have not yet begun to use kind words in such abundance as they ought to be used. Pascal.

A holy life is a voice; it speaks when the tongue is silent, and is either a constant attraction or a perpetual reproof.

Satan selects his disciples when they are idle, but Christ chose His while they were busy with their nets or casting them into the sea.

To bless God for mercies is the way to increase them; to bless Him for miseries is the way to remove them.

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