

The Sunday-School.

FIRST QUARTER.
LESSON VI.—Feb. 5.

JESUS AT JACOB'S WELL.

John 4: 5-14.

Commit vs. 13. 14. Study vs. 1-42.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* Rev. 22: 17.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time.—Probably December A. D. 27, as is inferred from the saying of Jesus in v. 35.

Place.—Province of Samaria. At Jacob's well, near Sychar, about a mile from Sechem, in the valley between Mts. Ebal and Gerizim.

Place in the Life of Christ.—At the close of the Judean ministry and beginning of the Galilean ministry. The end of the first year of his public ministry.

Jesus.—Now about 31 years old, having preached about a year.

John the Baptist preaching at Enon, near the Jordan, between Jericho and the Sea of Galilee.

THE TEACHER RESTING BY A FAMOUS WELL.—Vs. 1-16. For several months Jesus and John were preaching to crowds at the same time in different parts of Judea. Then Jesus left Judea, by one of the great highways which led to the valley between Mt. Ebal on the north and Mt. Gerizim on the south, where was a town called Sychar, the ancient Shechem. That Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Few places in Palestine, after Jerusalem, have had so much of Bible history connected with them. Near the place where Christ talked with the Samaritan woman now stands a Baptist church, with a congregation of a hundred persons. Now Jacob's well was there. One of the few sites about which there is no dispute. The well is 75 feet deep, but originally much deeper; it is 7 feet 6 inches in diameter, but the mouth is a narrow neck 4 feet long. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey. He had probably been walking several hours, about the sixth hour, or noon, according to Jewish reckoning. Sat (was sitting) thus on (by) the well. On the low curb placed around wells, resting.

THE UNLIKELY SCHOLAR.—V. 7. There cometh a woman of (out of) Samaria. Not the city of Samaria, seven miles away, but from the country of Samaria. To draw water. Dr. Trumbull thinks that she did not come from the city, but that "this was the well of the corn-fields, dug there for the express purpose. Commonly, the women drew the water.

A CHARACTER STUDY.—The women of Samaria was a most unlikely disciple. She was entirely different from the women who ministered to Jesus. She was disreputable; a Samaritan; of a perverted religious training. Christ should often speak his most remarkable words to the least remarkable persons. What a comfort.

THE WISE APPROACH.—Vs. 7-9. He asked a favor, Give me to drink. Jesus asked for water because he needed it, but he used the request as a means of preparing the way for his teaching. The

largeness of heart shown by his entirely ignoring race prejudice and religious differences, was an attractive factor. For his disciples were gone, etc. This is given as the reason why he asked the woman instead of his disciples to draw the water. To buy meat. Provisions. How is it that thou being a Jew. Jesus would be recognized as a Jew by his dress. Askest drink, etc. "The wonder of the Samaritan woman was that a Jew should seek a favor of a member of a hostile race. The Jews have no dealings with (the) Samaritans. No familiar intercourse. The Samaritans were partly of heathen origin, accepted only the first five books of the Bible, and had a different temple and ritual from the Jews.

A LESSON ON THE WATER OF LIFE.—Vs. 10-14. If thou knewest the gift of God. The Messiah, and the waters of eternal life. There is no cry more striking than that of the Eastern water-carrier,—"The gift of God," he cries as he goes along with his water-skin on his shoulder. Thou wouldest have asked of him. Spiritually, our positions are reversed. It is thou who art weary, and footsore, and close to the well, yet unable to drink; it is I who can give thee the water from the well. And he would have given thee living water. Springing from an unfailing source, bringing life. Nothing to draw with. No leather bucket. Art thou greater than our father Jacob. Can you dig a better well. Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again. This water satisfies only bodily thirst. Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him. The living water is a gift. The best things of God can never be bought. Shall never thirst. The water that satisfies is not from without, an external supply that may fail or be far away, but shall be in him a well (a fountain, a spring), of water springing up into (unto) everlasting life (compare John 7: 38, 39).

THE HEART OF THE LESSON.

The Urgent Need of the Water of Life.—Thirst is the type of the intense human desires.

This World Can Never Satisfy the Thirsts of the Soul.—The ambitions, longing, thirsts for wealth, power, and pleasure are never fully and continually satisfied by anything the world or flesh can give. Solomon tried all that the world can give, yet found all to be vanity and vexation of spirit.

The Water of Life.—Jacob's well was a type of the sources of earthly good. As God has made the world full of streams to satisfy our bodily thirst, so he has made it full of springs to satisfy our natural longings and desires. And by each fountain of earthly good Jesus sits, pointing men to the higher and better things of which it is a hint and a type.

How Jesus Awakened and Deepened the Consciousness of Thirst.—The remainder of the story shows how Jesus brought the woman to a consciousness of her sin and unworthy life, in order that she might feel her need, and then seek for the waters of eternal life. No one will seek a physician unless he feels sick, or take food unless hungry, or read good books without a thirst for knowledge.

GREATNESS IN THE BOY.

A boy is great for many reasons—here are five of them:

1. A boy is great because he is made of the stuff men are made of. The only man who was never a boy to begin with turned out badly. Somebody once asked a Sunday school why Adam was made a man to begin with, and never was a little baby, and there wasn't a teacher in the whole school who could tell, but Mr. Peck's good, smart boy said, "Because there wasn't anybody to nurse him!"

2. A boy is great because he is so interesting. Why, even a dog delights in his company!

3. A boy is great because he can do so many things. He will learn to "skin the cat" if he has to skin himself a dozen times in the effort. And when he has done everything that he ever saw or heard of another boy doing, he will turn in and invent some new thing to do, and do it.

4. A boy is great because he has more energy and hustle in him to the square foot.

5. A boy is great because he would rather work than play.

"What?"

That is what we said and we don't mind saying it again, that a boy would rather work than play. He is glad to play, because he must do something! But he is proud to work and show what he can do. The world has gone about crazy trying to invent "playthings" for children. Even old Santa Claus himself, who ought to have learned better by this time, doesn't know any better than to cram the children's stockings full of playthings, playthings, playthings, and candy! He'd be in "a sight better business" if he would drop in some work-things! The kindergarten people are getting their eyes open to this fact, and they will tell you that the children are more delighted with their work-things, than they are with their play-things.

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Even a little chap six years old is old enough to work, if some one would only give him something to work at. Don't you believe it? Then catch him playing ball or marbles and ask him if he won't come and hold the horse for you, or drive him round to the barn, and see how quick he drops the ball; or tell him you'll give him a nickel if he will fill the wood-box for you, and then watch him work!

It is literally true that thousands of boys are "spoiling for a job," a job of work, with pay in it. Perhaps the proudest day in a boy's life is the day he earns his first quarter, and knows it is all his very own. A quarter earned is worth a dollar found or given to him. Give him a dollar, and he will feel like a boy; let him earn it, and he will feel like a man, and feel good. Give him a dollar and watch him waste it; let him earn it, and watch him take care of it!

Early habits are often life-long habits, and good habits are as strong as bad ones. If there were more parents in the world who would encourage, or even permit their boys to earn a little money of their own, there would not be so many aimless, shiftless, lazy men in the world.—Sunday School Star.

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Works both ways. Welles: "Did Christian Science cure you of rheumatism?" Syckley: "No; but rheumatism cured me of Christian Science."

Something that Should be Rubbed in.—Whenever pain is felt in the limbs or back, take Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil; pour a little in the hand and applying it to the surface beneath which the pain lies, rub briskly. If the first application does not afford relief, which is not usually the case, keep rubbing. The Oil will gradually penetrate to the affected part and relief will come.

While preaching from the text: "He giveth his beloved sleep," a minister stopped in the middle of his sermon, gazed upon his dozing auditors, and said: "Brethren, it is hard to realize the wondrous unbounded love the Lord appears to have for a good portion of this congregation."

Good Digestion Should Wait on Appetite.—To have the stomach well is to have the nervous system well. Very delicate are the digestive organs. In some so sensitive are they that atmospheric changes affect them. When they become disarranged no better regulator is procurable than Parmelee's Vegetable Pills. They will assist the digestion so that the hearty eater will suffer no inconvenience and will derive all the benefits of his food.

"Ma," said a newspaper man's son, "I know why editors call themselves 'we.'" "Why?" "So's the man that does not like the article will think there are too many people for him to tackle."

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