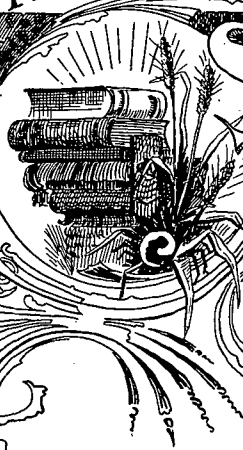
INTERNATIONAL SABBATH SCHOOL QUARTERLY



Sabbath School Lessons

ON THE

Gospel by John

Chapters 6:15 to 9:41

FOR

SENIOR CLASSES

FOURTH QUARTER, 1896

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"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deut. 6:6, 7.

PROGRAM FOR FAMILY STUDY OF S. S. LESSONS.

SABBATH.—(After church services or at the close of Sabbath.) Review the lesson of the day by relating in detail the substance of the lesson, recalling Scripture words and references. Read the lesson for the intermediate division for next Sabbath from the *Little Friend*, and learn the memory verse.

SUNDAY.—Study the first half of the lesson in the following manner:

1. Assign a reference to each member of the family, using the lesson pamphlet to ascertain what references are used in the lesson.

2. Then read the texts in their regular order, carefully considering what each one says before reading the next one. Be sure to have each member of the family understand the meaning of all the words in each text.

3. Select two texts to be committed to memory through the day.

4. Repeat the memory verse.

MONDAY.—Review the portion of the lesson already studied.

1. Have each one name as many references as he can.

2. Give each one an opportunity to repeat the two texts that were to be committed to memory on the previous day.

3. Assign each one a text found in the first half of the lesson, and let one member of the family ask the questions from the lesson pamphlet, and the others in turn read the answers given in the texts or in the LESSON QUARTERLY.

Then study the last half of the lesson in the same manner that the first half was studied on Sunday.

TUESDAY.—Repeat the texts already committed to memory, and ask the questions on the last half of the lesson, being sure that all understand the questions and the meaning of the words used in them.

Select two texts to be committed to memory during the day.

WEDNESDAY.—Repeat the texts already committed to memory, and review the entire lesson by asking the questions in the LESSON QUARTERLY, the *Instructor*, or the *Little Friend*, as may be thought best. The number and age of the children would usually indicate which lesson help would be the best.

THURSDAY.—Read the lesson notes in the QUARTERLY and those in the *Sabbath School Worker*, and any other helps that may be accessible, and review the intermediate lesson in the *Little Friend*, or the one found in the LESSON QUARTERLY. Repeat the texts committed to memory.

FRIDAY.—Thoroughly review the entire lesson in the following manner:

1. Ask the questions as found in the LESSON QUARTERLY.

2. Call upon different ones to give a synopsis of the lesson or the lesson story in their own language.

3. Have the references given by different ones, and have those texts repeated that have been committed to memory.

4. Give each one the privilege of questioning others upon the lesson.

SABBATH.—Review practical truths of the lesson, repeat all the texts committed to memory, and relate personal experiences in which the truths of the lesson have been found helpful.

(This program is simply suggestive and can of course be varied to suit circumstances, but we do urge upon all the necessity of thorough, regular, systematic study of the Scriptures as given in our Sabbath school lessons.)

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

ON THE

Gospel by John

FOR SENIOR CLASSES 4th QUARTER, 1896

LESSON I.—October 3, 1896.

CHRIST'S POWER OVER THE STORM; FALSE MOTIVES IN SEEKING CHRIST.

(Chapter 6, verses 15-27.)

QUESTIONS.

1. AFTER seeing such a display of Christ's power, what did the people purpose to do?
2. How did Christ prevent this?
3. Where did the disciples go at even?
4. For what port did they start?
5. Had Jesus joined them?
6. What sort of weather did they experience?
7. Toward morning what unusual sight met their eyes? What effect did it have upon them?
8. What did Jesus say to them?
9. How did they respond to His words?
10. What effect did His presence have in completing the voyage?
11. What facts did the people observe the next day?
12. From what other place had boats come?
13. For what place did the people then set sail? For what purpose?

14. After finding Jesus, what did they say to Him?

15. What did He declare to be their reason for seeking Him?

16. What food did He urge them to labor for? Who could supply it? Why?

NOTES.

1. By usurpation and fraud Satan had established his kingdom in the earth. Christ came to win back the dominion which had been betrayed by man into the hands of Satan, and to reëstablish His own authority over those who would willingly yield allegiance to Him. So He preached concerning His kingdom from the first (Mark 1 : 14, 15), of His ministry until His ascension (Acts 1 : 3); but He found great difficulty in freeing His disciples' minds from the idea that His kingdom was a temporal one, and in impressing them with the belief that the kingdom which He came to establish would be a greater boon to them than to be delivered from the rule of the Roman power. The miracle of the loaves had made a deep impression upon the minds of the people. "His teachings and work of healing had already nearly convinced them of His divinity, and this miracle crowned their growing conviction with entire belief. . . . They quietly consult among themselves, and arrange to take Him by force, and bear Him upon their shoulders, proclaiming Him the king of Israel. . . . This, to the faithful followers of Jesus, seemed the golden opportunity to establish their beloved Master as Israel's king." But this is entirely out of harmony with the work which Jesus came to accomplish, and so He sent away His disciples, and then dismissed the multitude. "There were men of strong minds and firm determination in that throng, but the kingly bearing of Jesus, and His few quiet words of authority, quelled the tumult in a moment and frustrated all their designs."

2. From another record (Mark 6 : 46) we learn that Jesus went into the mountain to pray. "He needs that communion with the Father which is His very soul's life, and the more so that the hatred of the priestly party and the enthusiastic but unspiritual admiration of the Galileans are more and more complicating His position and embarrassing His work." "Our Saviour identified

Himself with our needs and weaknesses, in that He became a suppliant, a petitioner, seeking from His Father fresh supplies of strength, that He might come forth braced for duty and trial. . . . His humanity made prayer a necessity and a privilege. He found comfort and joy in communion with His Father. And if the Saviour of men, the Son of God, felt the need of prayer, how much more should feeble, sinful mortals feel the necessity of fervent, constant prayer. . . . The life must be like Christ's life, —between the mountain and the multitude."

3. "HE could not maintain the heavenly life in His soul without continually separating Himself from man, and communing with His Father. . . . What a lesson for every Christian! . . . Nothing can atone for the loss of secret and direct intercourse with God. . . . The law of the heavenly manna, that what is heavenly can not remain good long upon earth, but must day by day be renewed afresh from heaven, still holds good. . . . It is from Heaven alone that the power to lead a heavenly life on earth can come. . . . Christlike praying in secret will be the secret of Christlike living in public."

4. THE narrative in verses 16–21 is a perfect picture of the experience of those who are trying to get along without Jesus. There was no lack of effort. They were "toiling in rowing," but the fourth watch found them only "five and twenty or thirty furlongs" from their starting-place. But when they had received Jesus, they "immediately" reached their destination.

5. WHEN the people had come across the sea and found Jesus, "they began to inquire how and when He had crossed the sea. They were astonished when the disciples related to them the events of the preceding night. The fury of the storm, and the many hours of fruitless rowing against the fury of adverse winds, the appearance of Christ walking upon the water, the fears thus aroused, His reassuring words, the adventure of Peter and its result, with the sudden stilling of the tempest and landing of the boat, were all faithfully recounted to the wondering crowd, amid frequent interruptions and exclamations of amazement. . . . As soon as the discourse was ended, they gathered around the Saviour, questioning Him, hoping to receive from His own lips a

fuller account of His mighty work of the previous night. . . . Jesus declared to them that they did not seek Him from any worthy motive. He bade them not to labor for the meat which perishes, but to seek for spiritual food, that wisdom which endures unto everlasting life."

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY.

1. IT was on a mountain that Christ gave the law, delivered His longest sermon, was transfigured, ascended to heaven. Note other important events which have occurred upon mountains. What lessons have been connected with mountains as used in comparisons?

2. It is no new thing for Christ to control the winds. As God's agent He had done it at the Red Sea (Ex. 14 : 21; 15 : 10), and the stormy wind fulfils His word (Ps. 148 : 8).

3. In connection with the sealing of Christ by the Father, study Lev. 2 : 4 (the meat offering anointed) and Heb. 1 : 9.

4. Observe the displays of royal power and authority by One who would not allow Himself to be made king.

5. In what way is life through Christ again taught in this lesson?

LESSON II.—October 10, 1896.

THE BREAD OF LIFE.

(Chapter 6, verses 28–40.)

QUESTIONS.

1. WHAT inquiry did the people address to Jesus?
2. What did He define the work of God to be?
3. What demand did they then make of Him?
4. What historical fact did they mention?
5. What scripture did they quote?
6. What error in their belief did He then correct?
7. What positive teaching did He inculcate?
8. How did He define the real bread?

9. What request was then made by the people?
10. What did Jesus declare that He was?
11. Who did He say would not hunger? Who would not thirst?
12. What former statement did Jesus call to their attention?
13. How many did He say would come to Him? How would He treat them?
14. What was the declared purpose in His coming to earth?
15. What did He say was His Father's will?
16. In what other form did He repeat this same statement?

NOTES.

1. IN His reply to the inquiry of the Jews, Christ presents the foundation principle of all Christian experience. "He places *being* before *doing;* because the spiritual tree must have life before it bears fruit." There must be a change of nature (John 3 : 5), an indwelling Saviour (Eph. 3 : 17), and then we can do (Phil. 4 : 13), yet not we (1 Cor. 15 : 10), but God in Christ working in us (Phil. 2 : 12, 13). To believe on Christ is the all-important thing (Acts 16 : 31), but it is very necessary to understand the true meaning of such faith. "Where there is not only a belief in God's word, but a submission of the will to Him; where the heart is yielded to Him, the affections fixed on Him, there is faith,—faith that works by love and purifies the soul. Through this faith the heart is renewed in the image of God."

2. "THE works that Christ performed bore testimony to the fact that He was God manifest in the flesh. . . . The believer is by his faith united to Christ even as the branch is to the vine. The influences and efficiency of the vine all reveal themselves in the branches. . . . What Christ can do, faith can do." Thus what God requires of us is summed up in true faith. This includes the self-denial (Matt. 16: 24), the submission (Rom. 10 : 3), and the yielding (Rom. 6 : 16), that the fruits of righteousness (Phil. 1 : 11) may appear in us.

3. THE rabbis taught that the Messiah when He came would renew the gift of manna, which may explain the reference made to the giving of the manna in the inquiry made by the Jews. "His life was one continual miracle, but they knew it not, and demanded

that He should show them a miracle." Their inquiry was virtually saying, "If you are sent from God, we may surely expect you to rival Moses." Jesus answers their very thoughts, saying: "Not Moses gave you the bread out of the heaven; but My Father gives you the bread out of heaven, the real bread." "As to the Samaritan woman, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so now to the Galileans, Jesus manifests Himself as sent to communicate to man life eternal. . . . What is there in Christ which constitutes Him the Bread of Life? There is, first of all, that which He Himself constantly presses, that He is sent by the Father, that He comes out of heaven, bringing from the Father a new source of life into the world. . . . Christ is the Bread from heaven, because in Christ God gives Himself to us, that by His life we may live." Christ is the "Desire of all nations" (Hag. 2:7), that which meets the longing of the human soul; and so those who receive Him are satisfied.

4. "IF, on the one hand, it is true that all the given ones shall come, it is also true, on the other hand, that all who come are included among the given ones. Would you know whether you are one of these? Ask yourself if you have truly come to Christ, or believed in Him as Saviour, Friend, and King." Men may cast out the believer in Jesus (John 9:34), but the Saviour will never do so. This is but carrying out God's will (Matt. 18:14), whose heart embraces all (2 Peter 3:9), and who in Christ invites all (Matt. 11:28).

5. "IT is not enough to impart eternal life. That would bless the spirit, but leave the body untouched. And the Saviour will not rest until the whole of our complex nature shares the emancipation and blessing of His salvation. A transfigured manhood and a glorified body must be the crown of His work for His own; and so by His mighty power, He will raise us up in the likeness of His glory, and make us the sharers of His royal and exalted state. Phil. 3:21." "Christ gives eternal life. . . . The life which man forfeited in Eden is given back in the second Man, the Lord from heaven. . . . We can not explain the mystery of the imparting of this eternal life; and we know as little of the life itself. We are sure that it can not be acquired, but must be given. We are sure that life is not the result of knowledge, but knowledge

the result of life. . . . And we know that by this the religion of the Bible is distinguished from all other religions whatsoever, that it provides for the communication of this life to all who believe. Whatever a man professes and knows, without this life he is no Christian."

6. HE who "seeth the Son and believeth on Him," is the one who looks with the eye of faith. Moses saw Christ in this way. Heb. 11:27. "He saw Jesus as his Saviour, and he believed that the Saviour's merits would be imputed to him. This faith was to Moses no guesswork; it was a reality. This is the kind of faith we need,—faith that will endure the test." "Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY.

1. STUDY the meaning of the word "true" as used in this gospel. Compare the "True Light," the "True Bread," the "True Vine."

2. What is the force of the present tense in verse 33?

3. Observe that throughout this lesson Christ sets Himself forth as the very heart and life of Christianity. A personal Saviour is the need of every individual.

4. Compare bread in its power to sustain life, as containing all necessary food elements, with other kinds of food, and note the force of the statement, "I am the Bread of Life."

LESSON III.—October 17, 1896.

THE BREAD OF LIFE—Continued.

(Chapter 6, verses 41-59.)

QUESTIONS.

1. How did the Jews receive the teaching of Jesus?

2. At what statement did they stumble?

3. By what reasoning did they try to show His statement to be untrue?

4. What injunction did Jesus give to them?

5. In what way only did He say men could come to Him? What promise was made to every one who comes?

6. What scripture did Jesus then quote to them?

7. What comment did He make upon it?

8. Who is the only one who has seen the Father's person

9. What is received through faith in Christ?

10. What did Jesus again declare Himself to be?

11. What happened to those who ate the literal bread from heaven?

12. What different experience is for those who partake of the spiritual Bread?

13. In what words is this same teaching repeated? What did Jesus declare the living Bread to be?

14. What effect did this teaching have upon His hearers? With what inquiry did they reveal their unbelief?

15. In what way did Jesus teach that life must be obtained?

16. What assurance did He then give them? What promise did He make?

17. What did He declare to be true food? True drink?

18. What experience belongs to those who partake of this true food?

19. What comparison did Christ draw between His own life and the life of such followers?

20. How did He again compare the spiritual and the literal bread?

21. Where did Christ teach these things?

NOTES.

1. THE plain declarations of Jesus concerning Himself and His work greatly stirred the Jews. "Their jealousy was aroused, that this man of humble birth was able to work wonders that they could not explain away, and teach truths that could not be contradicted. So they endeavored to awaken the prejudice and unbelief of the people by referring scornfully to the lowly origin of Jesus. . . . They contemptuously referred to His life as a Gali-

lean laborer, and to His family as being poor and lowly. They declared that the lofty claims of this uneducated carpenter should at once be repudiated. But Jesus . . . again, in more forcible language, declared His connection with the Father, and the necessity for the heart to be enlightened by the Spirit of God before it can feel the need of a Saviour."

2. JESUS "declared unto them that the temporal food then given them from heaven was but a meager gift compared with the blessing of eternal life which he now offered them. The food eaten then sustained the strength, but did not prevent the approach of death, nor insure immortal life. The Bread that the Son of God offered to man was death-destroying, giving in the end immortal life to the body. . . . He declared that as temporal bread imparts health and strength to the body, so will faith in Christ and obedience to His teachings give spiritual vigor to the soul, and life everlasting." In His statement concerning giving His flesh for the life of the world, Christ "points forward to His approaching death, the only true propitiation for the sins of humanity."

3. "THE connection between Christ and us must be of the closest possible kind, so close that the assimilation of the food we eat is not too strong a figure to express it. . . . We eat His flesh when we use in our own behalf the death of Christ, and take the blessings it has made possible to us; when we accept the forgiveness of sins, enter into the love of God, and adopt as our own the spirit of the cross. . . . The figure of eating reminds us that receptance of Christ is an act which each man must do for himself. No other man can eat for me. It also reminds us that as the food we eat is distributed, without our will or supervision, to every part of the body, giving light to the eye and strength to the arm, making bone or skin in one place, nerve or blood-vessel in another, so, if only we make Christ our own, the life that is in Him suffices for all the requirements of human nature and human duty."

4. CHRIST in His humanity lived a life of dependence upon the Father. This He did, not of necessity, but of choice, that He might be a perfect example to us. He did not exchange His divinity for humanity, but, clothing His divinity with humanity, He

emptied Himself, and did not avail Himself of His divine attributes in His contest with evil. As Son of man, through a life of complete dependence upon the Father, He won back the glory and exaltation which belonged to Him as the Son of God. And not only this, but He won for us in our human nature a life of victory over evil, and made it possible for us to live the life which He lived. This involved His death; for "the life which He had before His death was fair, but not communicable; that which He won in death and its defeat is fairer still, and capable of being given to all who hear and obey His invitation to come." Christ's life of voluntary dependence demonstrated that it is possible for humanity, through the provisions of God's grace, to render perfect obedience to the law of God, and forever silenced the charge that God required more of His creatures than it was possible for them to render. Christ in His humanity, subject to all the conditions and limitations of humanity, obeyed perfectly that law which He in His divinity had proclaimed with His own voice from Sinai, and thus won for us a life of obedience, which, as our High Priest, He ministers to all who yield themselves to Him. "Great is the mystery of godliness."

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY.

1. How many are drawn to Christ? Who will be responsible if any do not come?

2. Emphasize the difference between the present possession of "everlasting life" and being made immortal.

3. Study the force of the word "living" in verse 51. Compare Rev. 1 : 18, etc.

4. The marginal reading of the Revised Version of verse 55 is "For My flesh is *true* meat, and My blood is *true* drink." Apply the previous study of the word "true."

5. Is there any connection between the showbread of the tabernacle and the "Living Bread"?

6. Compare "the bread which cometh," of verse 50, with "every word that proceedeth," of Matt. 4: 4.

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LESSON IV.—October 24, 1896.

SPIRIT AND LIFE.

(Chapter 6, verses 60-71.)

QUESTIONS.

1. WHAT effect had this teaching of Jesus upon His disciples?

2. Did they need to give expression to their unbelief? What question did Jesus ask them?

3. What further spiritual truth does He present to their minds?

4. How does He compare spirit and flesh?

5. What key does He give to the explanation of His previous teaching?

6. What does He say is the experience of some of His disciples? Was this revelation of their unbelief a surprise to Jesus?

7. What previous statement had been based upon this knowledge?

8. What separation resulted from this presentation of deep spiritual truth?

9. What inquiry did Jesus make?

10. With what question did Peter introduce his reply? What reason did he give for remaining with Jesus?

11. What confession of faith did he make?

12. With what question did Jesus reveal His knowledge of the individual character of His followers?

13. Whose case was then in His mind? What was he to do to Jesus?

NOTES.

1. MANY of the same company which was fed with "the meat which perisheth" have now been fed with "that meat which endureth unto everlasting life," but the very ones who were then ready to "take Him by force to make Him king," now pronounce His discourse in the synagogue a hard one. His teaching had the evidently intended effect of making a separation among His followers, and of revealing their own motives to those who were seeking Him because of the loaves. The man in the par-

able regarded his lord as a "hard man" (Matt. 25 : 24), and did not make a right use of the talents delivered to him; so these selfish followers regard His saying as a hard one, and will not remain with Him longer. "Great crowds are following Him to be healed and to be fed, while the politically inclined have at last made a distinct effort to make Him king, to force Him into a collision with the authorities. His proper work is in danger of being lost sight of. He finds it necessary to sift the crowds who follow Him. And He does so by addressing them in terms which can be acceptable only to truly spiritual men—by plainly assuring them that He was among them, not to give them political privileges and the bread that perisheth, but the bread that endureth. . . . They seek earth, and Heaven is thrust upon them. They turn away disappointed, and many walk no more with Him."

2. "SOME may question the wisdom of Jesus in introducing a subject so easily misunderstood as that which turned so many from Him on this occasion. But He had a purpose in view. He saw that a most trying ordeal awaited His disciples in His betrayal, His agony in Gethsemane, and His crucifixion. He knew who among His followers were unbelieving and who were of weak faith. Had no test been given them, Jesus would have had many among His followers who were weak in character, and undecided. When the great trial came, and their Lord was betrayed and condemned in the judgment hall; when He was humiliated, and the multitude, who had hailed Him as their king, hissed at Him and reviled Him; when the cruel, jeering crowd cried, 'Crucify Him!' then these faint-hearted ones would have sunk beneath their fear and disappointment. The apostasy of these professed followers of Christ at such a time would have been more than the twelve could have endured, in addition to their great grief and the ruin of their fondest hopes. . . . But Jesus brought about this crisis while He was still present to comfort and strengthen His chosen, and prepare them for what was to follow."

3. " 'IT is the Spirit that quickeneth;' in these words and the corresponding ones of Paul, 'The Spirit giveth life,' we have the nearest approach to what may be called a definition of the Spirit . . . as a life-giving principle. ["The Spirit is what gives life."] In contrast to the Spirit our Lord places the flesh. . . .

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It is the power in which the natural man, or even the believer who does not fully yield to the Spirit, seeks to serve God, or to know and possess divine things. . . . His words are spirit and life; they are not meant for the understanding, but for the life. . . . They have themselves a divine life, working out effectually with a divine energy the truth they express into the experience of those who receive them. . . . Not into the mind only, nor into the feelings, nor even into the will alone, must the word be taken, but through them into the life. . . . It is the Spirit that comes from God, the Spirit that Christ came to bring, becoming our life, that will make them become the truth and power in us. . . . The Holy Spirit has for all ages embodied the thoughts of God in the written word, and lives now for this very purpose in our hearts, there to reveal the power and meaning of that word. . . . The Scriptures, which were spoken by holy men of old as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, can only be understood by holy men as they are taught by the same Spirit."

4. ENOCH walked with God (Gen. 5 : 22) when God was the invisible One, but when He was manifested in the flesh, those who listened to His gracious words refused to walk with Him, but went "away behind." When, under special tests, many are turning away from Christ and are showing that their professions are an empty form, and "the question comes to us, as in Providence it does, 'Will ye also go away?' we must have our answer ready."

5. "AND we have *believed* and *know* that Thou art the Holy One of God." Verse 69, R. V. *Knowledge* of Christ as the Holy One is the result of *faith* in Him.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY.

1. WHAT kind of hearing is referred to in verse 60? Compare Rev. 2 : 7, etc.

2. Observe that the preëxistence of Christ is taught in verse 62.

3. Christ says, "The words that I speak unto you," rather than "My words." What is the difference? Compare Deut. 18 : 18; John 17 : 8, etc.

4. Study the opposite effect of the same teaching and privileges upon Judas and the other disciples. What lesson in this?

FOR MISSION WORK IN INDIA.

5. Since Christ's words are life, may we not expect them to perform the functions of life? Compare Heb. 4:12; Acts 12:24; 19:20, etc.

6. Observe the progress of the change in the feeling of the people toward Christ as shown in this chapter. Verses 15, 41, 52, 60, 66.

7. The word translated "a devil" in verse 70 is translated "slanderers" in 1 Tim. 3:11, and "false accusers" in 2 Tim. 3:3 and Titus 2:3. Satan was the great original slanderer, who slandered both God and Christ. Judas followed in his track. He "misrepresented Christ in telling the priests falsehoods about His teaching."

8. In what ways is "life only in Christ" taught in this lesson?

LESSON V.—October 31, 1896.

JESUS AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

(Chapter 7, verses 1-20.)

QUESTIONS.

1. In what country did Jesus now remain? Why did He avoid Judea?

2. What annual gathering was approaching?

3. What did some members of His family urge Jesus to do?

4. What reason did they give for their counsel?

5. Did they have confidence in His work?

6. In His reply what contrast did Jesus draw?

7. What did He say was the attitude of the world toward them? toward Him? Why this difference?

8. What did He urge them to do? What did He say of His own plans?

9. Where did He remain for a time?

10. After a while where did He go? In what manner?

11. What inquiry was made by the Jews?

12. What opinions prevailed among the people concerning Jesus?

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13. Did they express their opinions publicly? Why not?

14. What did Jesus do at the height of the feast?

15. In what inquiry did the Jews express their astonishment about Him?

16. Who did Jesus say was the author of His teaching?

17. What did He present as the true way of understanding about the teaching?

18. What test would reveal the character of the teacher?

19. What charge did He bring against the people?

20. In what question did He reveal His knowledge of their true feeling toward Him?

21. How did they endeavor to repel the charge?

NOTES.

1. "THREE times a year all the Jews were required to assemble for religious purposes at Jerusalem. Jesus had not attended several of these gatherings, because of the emnity of the Jews." It was now time for the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. "But this feast was not solely a celebration of the ingathering, or a thanksgiving for the harvest. The name of it reminds us that another feature was quite as prominent. In its original institution God commanded, 'Ye shall dwell in booths or tabernacles seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths,' the reason being added, 'that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt.' The particular significance of the Israelites dwelling in booths seems to be that it marked their deliverance from a life of bondage to a life of freedom; it reminded them how they had once no settled habitation, but yet found a booth in the desert preferable to the well-provided residences of Egypt. And every Feast of Tabernacles seemed intended to recall these thoughts." "The sons of Joseph, who passed as brothers of Jesus, were very much affected by this desertion of so many of His disciples, and, as the time approached for the Feast of Tabernacles, they urged Jesus to go up to Jerusalem, and, if He was indeed the Messiah, to present His claims before the rulers and enforce His rights." "The lever they use

to move is a taunt: '*If* these works of yours are genuine miracles, don't hang about villages and country towns, but go and show yourself at the capital. No one who is really confident that he has a claim on public attention wanders about in solitary places, but repairs to the most crowded haunts of men. Go up now to the feast, and your disciples will gather around you, and your claims will be settled once for all.' " "For not even His brothers were putting faith in Him." "Thus their very intimacy with Jesus, growing up with Him, as they did, from the beginning, in the same Nazareth home, not only had not predisposed them to belief in His Messiahship, but had probably prejudiced them unconsciously against such belief, the principle which prevailed with His fellow-townsmen (chapter 4 : 44) operating yet more powerfully with those of His own household." "At the following Passover He entered Jerusalem in the manner desired by His brethren, and the result, as he foresaw, was His death."

2. "At the commencement of the Feast of Tabernacles, the absence of Jesus was commented upon. The Pharisees and rulers anxiously looked for Him to come, hoping that they might have an opportunity to condemn Him on account of something He might say or do. They anxiously inquired, 'Where is He?' but no one knew. Presently a dispute arose among the people in regard to Jesus, many nobly defending Him as one sent of God, while others bitterly accused Him as a deceiver of the people. . . In the midst of the feast, when the dispute concerning Himself was at its height, Jesus walked calmly into the court of the temple, and stood before the crowd as one possessed of unquestionable authority. . . . They were astonished at His dignified and courageous bearing in the midst of many powerful men who were thirsting for His life. Standing thus, with the eyes of all the people riveted upon Him, He addressed them as no man had ever done. His knowledge was greater than that of the learned priests and elders, and He assumed an authority which they had never ventured to take. . . . The hearts of the people thrilled with awe as they listened to His divine words. His discourse showed that He was well acquainted with the law in all its bearings, and was a clear interpreter of the Scriptures. The question passes from one to another, 'How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?'

Some, less acquainted with His former life, inquire in what school He has been instructed."

3. "IF any man *willeth* to do His will" (R. V.). "Everything depends on the right action of the will. The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise. . . . This will, that forms so important a factor in the character of man, was at the fall given into the control of Satan; and he has ever since been working in man to will and to do of his own pleasure, but to the utter ruin and misery of man. But the infinite sacrifice of God in giving Jesus, His beloved Son, to become a sacrifice for sin, enables Him to say, without violating one principle of His government, 'Yield yourself up to Me; give Me that will; take it from the control of Satan, and I will take possession of it; then I can work in you to will and to do of My good pleasure.'"

4. "IN these words (verse 20) they would insinuate that all the wonderful works of Jesus were instigated by an evil spirit. They also wish to direct the minds of the people from the words of Jesus revealing their purpose of taking His life." "Such is the climax of unbelief—death to the Christ of God! For this is its essential meaning, even where the same literal deed is impossible."

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY.

1. WHEN the Jews sought to kill Jesus in Judea, He avoided that country and walked in Galilee. What lesson may we learn with reference to the question of persecution for the truth's sake?

2. Why did not God by miraculous interposition save His own Son from the murderous schemes of men? Why does He not save His people from the persecutions of wicked rulers?

3. "He deceiveth the people." Compare Rev. 12:9; 1 Tim. 2:14; 2 Thess 2:10. From the beginning of the first disaffection in heaven it has been Satan's plan to charge upon others the very things of which he is guilty himself. What blindness of mind when the arch-deceiver himself can persuade men to charge Christ, "The Faithful and True Witness," with being "that deceiver"!

4. What is the force of the appeal to Moses and the law in verse 19?

LESSON VI.—November 7, 1896.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING CHRIST AND HIS WORK.

(Chapter 7, verses 21–31.)

QUESTIONS.

1. WHAT previous miracle did Jesus now mention?
2. What rite had the Jews received from Moses? Was it first known in the time of Moses?
3. Did they regard the work of circumcising as a transgression of the fourth commandment?
4. What argument did Jesus build upon this well-known fact?
5. What principle of judging did He command to them?
6. What inquiry did the people make concerning Him?
7. At what did they express their astonishment?
8. What reason did they suggest for the course taken concerning Christ?
9. Did they really believe their own suggestion?
10. How far did Jesus declare that their knowledge of Him extended?
11. With whom were they unacquainted?
12. Was Jesus acquainted with Him? To what extent?
13. What were they desirous of doing? Why did they not carry their desire into execution?
14. How did the people respond to His teaching?
15. In what inquiry did they show their confidence in Him?

NOTES.

1. IN speaking of the "one work" in verse 21 "Jesus referred to His act of healing the man on the Sabbath (chapter 5:8, 9), and showed that it was in accordance with Sabbath law. He alluded also to the custom among the Jews of circumcising on the Sabbath. If it was lawful to circumcise on the Sabbath, it must certainly be right to relieve the afflicted."

2. CIRCUMCISION did not originate with Moses. Gen. 17:10; Rom. 4:11. In fact, both the moral and the ceremonial law were given to Adam. "If man had kept the law of God, as given to

Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai, or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the ten commandments, there would have been no need of the additional precepts given to Moses. The sacrificial system, committed to Adam, was also perverted by his descendants. Superstition, idolatry, cruelty, and licentiousness corrupted the simple and significant service that God had appointed. Through long intercourse with idolaters, the people of Israel had mingled many heathen customs with their worship; therefore the Lord gave them at Sinai definite instructions concerning the sacrificial service." So, although it was repeated to Moses and by him given to the people, yet in reality it was not "of Moses but of the fathers."

2. THE boldness with which Jesus taught in the most public manner astonished the people and induced the inquiry, "Have the rulers come to know that this is the Christ indeed?" "Many of those who lived at Jerusalem, and were not ignorant of the designs of the Sanhedrin council against Jesus, were charmed with the doctrine that He taught and with His pure and dignified bearing, and were inclined to accept Him as the Son of God. They were not filled with the bitter prejudice and hatred of the priests and rulers; but Satan was ready to suggest doubts and questions in their minds as to the divinity of this man of humble origin. Many had received the impression that the Messiah would have no natural relationship to humanity, and it was not pleasant for them to think of Him whom they hoped would be a mighty king of Israel, as one who sprung from poverty and obscurity. . . . The minds of these men were closed to the prophecies, which pointed out how and when Christ was to come." "They thought they could account for Christ and trace Him to his origin; and therefore they could not believe He was from God. This is the common difficulty. Men find it difficult to believe that one who was really born on earth,

and did not suddenly appear, nobody knew whence, can in any peculiar sense be from God."

3. "THEY claimed a knowledge of what the origin of Christ should be, while they were in reality utterly ignorant of it, and were locked in spiritual blindness. If they had lived in accordance with the will of the Father, they would have known His Son when He was manifested to them. The words of Jesus convinced many of those who listened; but the rage of the rulers was increased by this very fact, and they made an attempt to seize Him."

4. OBSERVE "the insufficient tests used both by the people and the authorities for ascertaining whether Jesus was or was not their promised king. The tests they used were such as these: 'Will Christ do more miracles?' 'Will He come from the same part of the country?' and so forth. . . . In all His conversations with the unbelieving Jews, He condemned them for their unbelief, ascribed it to moral defects, and persistently maintained that it was within the reach of any man to ascertain whether He was true or a pretender."

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY.

1. WHAT was and is the true circumcision?
2. Who were "the fathers"? and why so called?
3. Study the evil consequences of resting our decision concerning Christ upon a knowledge of Him which is merely human.
4. How is the unity of purpose between Father and Son in the plan of salvation shown in verse 29?

LESSON VII.—November 14, 1896.

THE ATTEMPTED ARREST; THE WATER OF LIFE.

(Chapter 7, verses 32-52.)

QUESTIONS.

1. WHO learned of the attitude of the people toward Jesus?
2. To what action did this lead?

3. What was Jesus saying when the officers arrived?

4. What evident reference did He make to their errand?

5. What questions arose among the Jews concerning His departure from them?

6. What other statement of His was also discussed?

7. What time of the feast had now arrived? What lesson did Jesus connect with the principal ceremony of the day?

8. What promise did He make to every believer?

9. What was the real meaning of this figurative statement? Why was the fulfilment of the promise still future?

10. What did some of the people declare? What did others say? What objection was raised to this?

11. What scripture was quoted in the argument?

12. To what did these discussions lead?

13. What did some desire to do? Did they make the attempt?

14. After hearing Christ's teaching, where did the officers go?

15. What question was asked them?

16. What reply did they make?

17. How did the Pharisees express their surprise at the reply?

18. How did they show their regard for the action of the leaders?

19. How did they show their contempt for the action of the people?

20. What former inquirer was present to defend Jesus?

21. What principle of common justice did he urge?

22. By what question did they seek to ridicule him?

23. With what argument did they answer him?

NOTES.

1. "THE words of Jesus found a place in many hearts, and, like seed sown in goodly soil, they afterward bore abundant harvests. The spies scattered throughout the throng now report to the chief priests and elders that Jesus is gaining great influence among the people, and that many are already acknowledging their belief in Him. The priests therefore secretly lay their plans to arrest Jesus; but they arrange to take Him when He is alone; for they dare not risk the effect upon the people of seizing Him while in their presence." Jesus understood their purposes, and replied to them in verses 33, 34. "Soon the Saviour of the world will find a refuge

from the persecution of His enemies, where their scorn and hate will be powerless to harm Him. He will ascend to His Father, to be again the Adored of angels; and thither His murderers can never come." Believers have no difficulty in finding Christ (Matt. 7 : 7), and they will soon go to meet Him (1 Thess. 4 : 17), but the world sees Him no more (John 14 : 19).

2. "THE condition of the people made this appeal very forcible. They had been engaged in a continued scene of pomp and festivity, their eyes had been dazzled with light and color, and their ears regaled with the richest music; but there had been nothing to meet the wants of the spirit, nothing to satisfy the thirst of the soul for that which perishes not. Jesus invited them to come and drink of the fountain of life, of that which should be in them a well of water springing up into everlasting life. . . . The words of the divine Teacher presented the gospel in a most impressive figure. . . . Jesus knew the wants of the human soul. . . . Many of those who heard Jesus were mourners over disappointed hopes, some were nourishing a secret grief, some were seeking to satisfy the restless longing of the soul with the things of this world and the praise of men; but when all this was gained, they found that they had toiled to reach only a broken cistern, from which they could not quench their fever thirst. . . . That sudden cry, 'If any man thirst,' startles them from their sorrowful meditation, and as they listen to the words that follow, their minds kindle with a new hope. . . . The cry of Christ to the thirsty soul is still going forth. It appeals to us with even greater power than to those who heard it in the temple on that last day of the feast. The weary and exhausted ones are offered the refreshing draught of eternal life. . . . All who come to Christ receive His love in their hearts, which is the water that springs up into everlasting life. Those who receive it impart it in turn to others, in good works, in right examples, in Christian counsel."

3. "THE church has long been content with little of the blessing of God. They have not felt the need of reaching up to the exalted privileges purchased for them at infinite cost. Their spiritual strength has been feeble, their experience is of a dwarfed and crippled character, and they are disqualified for the work the Lord would have them do. They are not able to present the great and glorious truths of God's holy word, that would convict and convert souls through the agency of the Holy Spirit. The power of God awaits their demand and reception."

4. THE people are believing on Jesus as the Christ, the officers

are softened by the power of His teaching, and Nicodemus speaks in His behalf before the Sanhedrin. The Pharisees are furious, but their rage is held in check. "They were startled and chagrined that one of their own number had been so impressed by the power of Jesus as to openly defend Him in the council." "Note their bitterness towards their servants, who had presumed to think for themselves; towards the multitude, who were cursed; towards Nicodemus." How characteristic it is of opposers of the truth to resort to sarcasm and ridicule when arguments fail! Thus did the Pharisees.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY.

1. How did it happen that the Pharisees had "officers" of the law at their command? To what extent were they permitted to exercise civil authority? What law did they administer?
2. What daily ceremony of the Feast of Tabernacles would suggest the figure used by Jesus in verses 37 and 38?
3. By what experience is Jesus glorified? How is He glorified by us? 1 Peter 4 : 12–14.
4. Upon what foundation does Christ rest the promise made in verse 38?
5. How many among the Jews were supposed to know the law? What was included by them in "the law"?
6. The Pharisees had already judged Jesus without a hearing, but the law requires a hearing before *it* judges. The Pharisees are justifying both of the charges made against them by Jesus. Verse 19.
7. How is life only in Christ taught in this lesson?

LESSON VIII.—November 21, 1896.

A LESSON IN FORGIVENESS; THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

(Chapter 7 : 53 to chapter 8 : 18.)

QUESTIONS.

1. WHERE did the people now go?
2. Where did Jesus go?
3. To what place did He come the next morning? Who assembled there? What did He do?

4. What unusual event occurred during His discourse?
5. What charge was made against this woman?
6. What punishment did they say had been provided in such cases? What inquiry did they make of Jesus?
7. What was the real object of this question?
8. What did Jesus do?
9. As they pressed the question, what reply did He make?
10. How did He further arouse their curiosity?
11. What were the accusers led to do? What was the cause of this action?
12. Who were thus left together?
13. When Jesus perceived this, what did He ask?
14. What reply did the woman make?
15. What assurance and instruction did Jesus then give to her?
16. What did Jesus declare Himself to be?
17. What promise did He make to His followers?
18. What charge did the Pharisees make against Him?
19. What reply did He make to them?
20. What reason did He give for His statement?
21. What contrast did He draw in the matter of judging?
22. What kind of judgment was He capable of giving? Why?
23. With what law was His decision thus in harmony?
24. Who did He say were the two witnesses required by the law?

NOTES.

1. THE Feast of Tabernacles is ended. For a week they have lived in booths, "to commemorate the time when the Hebrews dwelt in tents during their sojourn in the wilderness," but "the last day, that great day of the feast," with its experiences, as set forth in the last lesson, is gone, and "every man went unto his own house;" but "Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives." They had permanent dwellings to which they could return after their brief and typical experience of camp life, but not so with Him. Matt. 8:20. He seeks the solitude of the mountain as being more in harmony with His feelings, and as offering the desired opportunity for communion with His Father. The shadow of the cross is deepening, and the climax of His earthly career is nearing. Feeling the need of that help rendered necessary by His humanity, He seeks it from the Father, just as we are bidden to do.

2. THE story of the woman taken in sin "reveals in our Saviour's character a wisdom so profound, a tenderness to sinners so delicate, a hatred of sin so intense, an insight into human hearts so searching, that it is impossible to suppose the mind of man could have conceived, or the hand of man invented, this most pathetic story."

3. "JESUS well knew for what purpose this case had been brought to Him; He read the secrets of their hearts, and knew the character and life history of every man in His presence. He seemed indifferent to the question of the Pharisees, and, while they were talking and pressing about Him; He stooped and wrote carelessly with His finger in the sand. Although doing this without apparent design, Jesus was tracing on the ground, in legible characters, the particular sins of which the woman's accusers were guilty, beginning with the eldest and ending with the youngest. . . . As their eyes fell upon the words written in the sand, fear and surprise took possession of them. The people looking on saw their countenances suddenly change, and pressed forward to discover what they were regarding with such an expression of astonishment and shame. Many of those who thus gathered round also read the record of hidden sin inscribed against these accusers of another. . . . There was not one of her accusers but was more guilty than the conscience-stricken woman who stood trembling with shame before Him."

4. "JESUS did not palliate sin nor lessen the sense of crime; but He came not to condemn; He came to lead the sinner to eternal life. . . . Instead of to condemn the guilty, His work was to reach into the very depths of human wo and degradation, lift up the debased and sinful, and bid the trembling penitent to sin no more."

5. "IT is a terrible thing for a sinner to fall into the hands of his fellow-sinners. Sin blinds them to their own faults, but sharpens them to detect the faults of others. . . . Ah, how many there are around us who had never come to what they are, had they not been driven to it by the way in which the religious people around them dealt with their first deviation from the paths of strict integrity. . . . The world is full of sinners who are plunging

into deeper sin, because they have been taught by their more religious fellows that there is no hope for such as they are. But they ~~might be saved if they could only be freed from the religious world~~ and left alone with Jesus. . . . O souls conscious of sin, do not wait to *be brought* into His holy presence! Haste thither of your own free-will. It is the only place in all the universe where you will be safe. Accusing voices are hushed there, and accusing forms are banished. Wait! He will condemn thy sin but not thee."

6. "THIS was the beginning of a new life to this tempted, fallen soul, a life of purity and peace, devoted to the service of God. In raising this woman to a life of virtue, Jesus performed a greater act than that of healing the most grievous bodily malady; He cured the sickness of the soul which is unto death everlasting. This penitent woman became one of the firmest friends of Jesus."

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY.

1. CHRIST wrote the law on stone, but the sins of these men on the sand. What lesson do these facts teach?

2. How is life only in Christ taught in this lesson?

3. Who acts the part of an accuser even in the presence of the Lord? Read Zechariah 3. Whose mouthpiece are those who do the same?

4. In connection with verse 12 study the following scriptures: 1 John 1:5; Matt. 5:14; John 17:18. Compare the light of the physical world with the light of the spiritual world. See Mal. 4:2.

5. How did Christ bear witness of Himself? How did the Father bear witness of Him?

LESSON IX.—November 28, 1896.

JESUS TEACHING THE PEOPLE.

(Chapter 8, verses 19-30.)

QUESTIONS.

1. WHAT query did Jesus' last statement raise in the minds of the Pharisees?

2. How did Jesus expose their ignorance of God's character?
3. Where was Jesus speaking? Why was He not arrested?
4. What further instruction did He then give them?
5. How did they interpret His teaching?
6. What contrast did Jesus then draw between the character of the Pharisees and His own character?
7. Of what statement did He declare this to be the reason?
8. How did He further explain the reason for that same statement?
9. What inquiry did this lead the Pharisees to make?
10. Where did He tell them to look for an answer?
11. What did He say of His future work among them?
12. To whom did He refer as the source of all His instruction?
13. Did the Pharisees perceive the meaning of this statement?
14. What event did Jesus declare would make it clear to them? In what more specific way did He refer to the source of His teaching?
15. Whose presence did He say that He had?
16. What made this experience possible to Him?
17. What result followed from His teaching at this time?

NOTES.

1. THE fact that the Jews did not recognize the character of God in Christ (2 Cor. 5 : 19) showed that they did not know God. Christ was the "outshining" of God's glory (Heb. 1 : 3), the arm reaching down from heaven (Isa. 53 : 1), the means devised in infinite wisdom and condescension to reveal God to men (Matt. 11 : 27), and yet the very people to whom had been intrusted the oracles of God (Rom. 3 : 2), foretelling all these things, rejected Him (John 1 : 11).

2. THE rejection of Christ by us here involves His rejection of us in the heavenly courts (Luke 9 : 26), whither He went. Refusing to follow Him here (Matt. 16 : 24), we can not follow Him there (Rev. 14 : 4). It is important to notice that Christ says "can not" rather than "will not." So He said to Nicodemus "can not see" and "can not enter." There is only one way (John 14 : 6; Heb. 10 : 19, 20), and one name (Acts 4 : 12); and when these are refused, God "can not," in harmony with His divine plan, and in

view of man's freedom of choice, bring man into His presence. "The goodness of God leadeth to repentance." But it is equally true that by the mystery that attaches to our creation, man has it in his power to frustrate this intention of God. The Holy Spirit pleads with him, but he resists. He can resist. Were it not so, he would be a mere machine. "Hearts can not be compelled; they can only be drawn. Christ knocks at the door; but we can, if we choose, keep it bolted on the inside, and Christ will not break the door down and force the way in." The choice which we are making daily is fixing our choice for eternity. What choice are we making? The personality of Christ is inseparable from His teaching. He *was* what He taught. He not only spoke the truth, but He was the truth; He not only revealed the way, but was Himself the way. He not only instructed them about eternal life, but He was "that eternal life." The Word was made flesh.

3. How constantly Christ presents the Father to the people, and Himself as merely the mouthpiece and representative of the Father. "The only witness He cared for was that which the Father bore to Him. Chapter 5:32; 8:18. The name in which He came was the Father's. Chapter 5:43. He professed that all the attraction wrought by Him upon men was due to His Father's agency. Chapter 6:44. He was sent by the Father; He lived by the Father; He could do nothing of Himself; the life He had was given; so also was the authority with which He executed judgment. Chapter 5:26, 27; 6:57. He spoke only as the Father taught Him. Chapter 8:28. He could dispense with all human help, because the Father never left Him alone. Chapter 8:16, 29. To honor Him, to please Him, to work His works, to live in His love, to perform His commandments, to show good works from Him, to glorify His name, to divert the attention of men to Him—such was the passion of His life." We are to follow His example (Matt. 16:24; 1 Peter 2:21), but "service like this is a fruit which can only be plucked from trees which have been planted and are tended by the Spirit of God."

4. THREE times in this gospel Christ speaks of Himself as one to "be lifted up." The first was in His private talk with Nicodemus. This is the second time He has spoken of it, but the first public mention.

SABBATH SCHOOL CONTRIBUTIONS THIS QUARTER

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY.

1. WITH "His hour" of verse 20 compare "your hour" of Luke 22 : 53.

2. The people who thought that possibly He might kill Himself, probably little thought that they would kill Him. Acts 3 : 15. What wrought this change in their attitude toward Him?

3. What is the difference between being "in the world" and being "of the world"? Note carefully Christ's statements, I am "from above," I am "not of this world."

4. Christ says, "I judge no *man*" (verse 15), and, "I have many *things* to . . . judge *concerning you*" (verse 26, R. V.). Make the difference between these statements clear.

5. The word rendered "lifted up," in chapters 3 : 14; 8 : 28, and 12 : 32, is rendered "exalted" in every other place in the New Testament, with one exception only. What part did the crucifixion have in the exaltation of Christ? Compare Phil. 2 : 8, 9; James 4 : 10, etc. The cross was the ladder to the throne.

6. In what way is life only in Christ taught in this lesson?

7. Christ *was* what He taught, and this gave power to His teaching. What a lesson for all who would be teachers of the Word!

LESSON X.—December 5, 1896.

FREEDOM THROUGH CHRIST; DEEDS REVEAL THE TRUE CHARACTER.

(Chapter 8, verses 31–51.)

QUESTIONS.

1. WHAT experience did Jesus declare to be the basis of true discipleship?

2. What would His disciples understand? What would it do for them?

3. From whom did they say that they were descended? Had they ever been in slavery? What question did they ask?

4. How did Jesus show that He was speaking of the bondage of sin?

5. What contrast did He draw between the experience of a slave and that of a son?

6. Who did He say had the power to give complete freedom?

7. Did He know from whom they were descended? How did He now show that He understood the thoughts of their hearts?

8. What did He say that He spoke? What did He therefore urge them to do?

9. In what statement did they reveal their ignorance of His real meaning?

10. How did Jesus make their own statement testify against them?

11. What intent on their part showed that they were not truly Abraham's children?

12. Whose works were they doing?

13. Whose children did they now claim to be?

14. What did Jesus say would follow as a consequence?

15. With what question and answer did He further instruct them?

16. Who did He say was their father? What course did they choose to follow?

17. What was the character of their father? What was natural to him?

18. What did Jesus declare to be the reason for their not believing Him?

19. With what argument did He set forth the ground of faith in Him?

20. What did their rejection of His teaching show?

21. What charge which the Jews had previously made did they now reiterate?

22. Did Jesus admit their charge? What counter-charge did He bring against them?

23. What aim in life had He repudiated?

24. How did Jesus teach that one could be saved from death?

NOTES.

1. "THE 'word' of which Jesus here speaks is His whole revelation, all He taught by word and action, by His own habitual conduct, and by His miracles. This it is which gives knowledge of

the truth. That is to say, all the truth which men require for living they have in Christ." To continue ("abide," R. V.) in His word is to abide in Christ (chapter 15 : 5), in the faith (Col. 1 : 23), in hope (Rom. 12 : 12), in love (Eph. 3 : 17). To those who do this the promise is, Ye shall know the truth."

2. "WHEN the Lord Jesus reveals the truth of all that He has done for us—that in Him we are accepted and triumphant; that through Him we sit in heavenly places, with Satan beneath our feet; that from Him we are equipped with power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and all the power of the enemy—*then* the whole aspect of our life alters; we see our position, and we take it; we learn our power, and we use it; we realize that we are free, and as such we begin to act. . . . Acting by faith in the truth revealed to us, we discover that it is so."

3. JOHN THE BAPTIST, in his preaching, had taught them to the contrary (Matt. 3 : 9), yet the Jews were resting in their literal descent from Abraham. Christ emphasizes the fact that "not descent, but character, is the important thing." Rom. 9 : 8; Gal. 3 : 29.

4. "HERE [verse 34] is one of the profoundest sentences ever spoken by our Lord. Men had not been wont to count themselves slaves. They were in the habit of thinking that they could take up sin, or lay it down, at their will, that they were its masters. Christ, however, has shown that it is not so, but that every time we yield to sin we increase its hold over us and become more deeply enthralled under its tyrannous power, so that we are compelled to obey its behests, however cruel or malignant they may be." "Every sinful indulgence strengthens the soul's aversion to God. The man who manifests an infidel hardihood, or a stolid indifference, to divine truth, is but reaping the harvest of that which he has himself sown. In all the Bible there is not a more fearful warning against trifling with evil than the words of the wise man, that the sinner 'shall be holden with the cords of his sins.' Prov. 5 : 22. Those who are "of the devil" (1 John 3 : 8) are slaves (2 Peter 2 : 19); but the service of Christ is freedom. "Jesus Christ came into the world to set men free, and to plant in their souls the genuine principle of liberty, liberty actuated by love,

. . . liberty in which man may be free from all men, yet made so gentle by love that he would willingly become the servant of all, in order to bring them to the enjoyment of this same liberty. This is freedom indeed. This is the freedom which Christ gave to man."

5. How much is included in the promise, "Ye shall be free in reality"? We are free from the imputation of Adam's sin, because He as the second Adam has borne it away; free from the lash of a broken law, because He has paid the penalty, and met its last demands. We are set free for service (Luke 1 : 74, 75), and that the character of God as set forth in His law may be fulfilled in us (Rom. 8 : 2–4) through Christ. Freedom from *the curse* of the law (Gal. 3 : 13) and the privilege of being "made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5 : 21), have been purchased for us. "Oh, blessed announcement that God our Father has taken our part against our sin, and, in the person of His Son, has come to make us free, that we may be free indeed." "Christ is ready to set us free from sin, but He does not force the will; and if by persistent transgression the will itself is wholly bent on evil, and we do not *desire* to be set free, if we *will* not accept His grace, what more can He do? We have destroyed ourselves by our determined rejection of His love."

6. THE true children of Abraham "do the works of Abraham." By nature inherited from Adam being children of wrath (Eph. 2 : 3) we need a new nature (2 Peter 1 : 4) in order that "we may work the works of God." "As Adam never could have brought us under the power of sin and death if he had not been our father, communicating to us his own nature, so Christ never could save us except by taking our nature upon Him, doing in that nature all that we would need to do, had it been possible for us to deliver ourselves, and then communicating the fruit of what He effected as a nature within us to be the power of a new, an eternal life. . . . So alone could He be the second Adam, the Father of a new race."

7. JESUS "spoke the truth, but always in love. He denounced hypocrisy, unbelief, and iniquity, but tears were in His voice as He uttered His scathing rebukes. . . . These words (verse 44

were spoken with sorrowful pathos, as Jesus realized the terrible condition into which these men had fallen." Speaking the truth roused emnity against Himself, and so it will against His messengers (Gal. 4 : 16); but let every messenger be sure that he gives no other cause for enmity than "speaking the truth in love."

8. CHRIST was without sin *in Himself*, although sin was laid *on Him* (Isa. 53 : 6), being found without fault at His trial. John 18 : 38. No one could convince Him of sin (1 John 3 : 4); for the law which He fulfilled (Matt. 5 : 17) was in His heart (Ps. 40 : 8). He is asking of many to-day, "Why do ye not believe Me?" Is there any answer? See Matt. 22 : 12.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY.

1. HAD these Jews forgotten Egypt, Babylon, and the Roman power? What was the cause of their subjection to other nations?

2. Note that the personality of the devil, and the fact that he has inspired others with his nature, are clearly taught here. See 1 John 3 : 10, etc.

3. How many of the human family had Satan involved with himself in the guilt of being murderers? See 1 John 3 : 15; Titus 3 : 3, etc.

4. How did the Jews condemn themselves by their appeal to their descent from Abraham?

5. How is life only in Christ taught in this lesson?

LESSON XI.—December 12, 1896.

JESUS AND ABRAHAM; JESUS AND THE BLIND MAN.

(Chapter 8 : 52 to chapter 9 : 12.)

QUESTIONS.

1. OF what did the Jews regard the last statement of Jesus as proof?

2. By what course of reasoning did they prove His statement to be unreasonable?

3. How did they regard Him in comparison with Abraham and the prophets?

4. On what ground did Jesus base His claim to greatness?

5. What did He say to them concerning His acquaintance with God?

6. In what statement did He declare His preëminence over Abraham?

7. How did the Jews show their failure to apprehend the real meaning of Jesus?

8. In what unequivocal terms did Jesus then declare His divinity? With what result?

9. How did Jesus save Himself from their attack?

10. As He left the Jews, whom did Jesus meet?

11. What inquiry did the disciples make concerning this man?

12. Did Jesus regard the man's misfortune as the result of sin? What opportunity was afforded by this condition?

13. What did Jesus say concerning His work?

14. What did He declare Himself to be?

15. What outward ceremony did Jesus then perform?

16. What did He command the man to do? What was the result of obedience to His directions?

17. What inquiry was made by those who had known of his former condition?

18. What did some of them say? What did others say? What did he say?

19. What question did they ask him?

20. What account did he give of the miracle?

21. For whom did they then inquire? What reply did the man make?

NOTES.

1. JESUS came to be the bearer of eternal life to the world (John 6:51), but the very assertion of the purpose of His mission became to the darkened minds of the Jews evidence that He was possessed of "a demon." The Jews said, "Now we *know* that Thou hast a devil," but their knowledge was not based upon faith, and so was not *fact*, but rather falsehood. They were being taught by a liar (chapter 8:44), and were believing a lie (2 Thess. 2:11);

but those who are taught of God "may know" through faith that Christ's words are true (1 John 5 : 13, R. V.). As His words are life (John 6 : 63) and He is the word, those who keep His words find Him in them, and so find life (Prov. 8 : 35). What the Jews were thinking of as death was changed into sleep by the work of Christ for man. 1 Cor. 15 : 22. Death comes later to those who have not laid hold on "the life which is life indeed." 1 Tim. 6 : 19, R. V.

2. "IF I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father that glorifieth Me." Verse 54, R. V. Christ glorified not Himself (Heb. 5 : 5), but He desired glory that He might shed it back again upon His Father," who gave it to Him.

3. IN verse 58 Jesus makes the plainest declaration of His divinity and preëxistence. He declares Himself to be the I AM, as He did later in the presence of the high priest. Mark 14:61, 62. "He appropriated the incommunicable name of Jehovah."

4. THE connection between the eighth and ninth chapters is very close, and should not be broken. The Jews were rich and increased with goods and had need of nothing, and so refused the treasures offered to them in Christ. He was driven from them, and so "passed by" them, but in doing so He found the blind beggar, and gave him light.

5. IN His reply to the question of the disciple, Jesus "did not mean to suggest that there is no such thing as suffering for individual or hereditary sin. . . . It was our Lord's intention to warn the disciples against a curious and uncharitable scrutiny of any man's life to find the cause of his misfortunes. We have to do rather with the future than with the past, rather with the question how we can help the man out of his difficulties, than with the question how he got himself into them. . . . No matter what has caused the suffering, here it certainly is always with us, and what we have to do with it is to find in it material and opportunity for a work of God. . . . We can cause men to feel that God is thinking of them, and has sent help through us to them. . . . If men can be induced to believe in the love of their fellow-men, they are well on the road to belief in the love of God." "It is true that sin brings suffering; but there is some suffering which is

not the evidence of special wrongdoing. . . . Suffering is permitted for wise and good reasons, which we shall one day comprehend, and among them is this: that it may provide a platform on which the grace and power of God may manifest themselves, each new phase of evil leading to some new forthputting of the heart of God. . . . If there is need for the works of God to be manifested, we must be at hand, and willing at all costs to manifest them. . . . The unique work of healing blindness and enriching beggary is confined to earth, and we must hasten to do all of this allotted to us before the nightfall."

6. CHRIST, who was the Light of heaven, was sent *into the world* that He might be "the Light of the *world*." So dense was the darkness in which men were living, and so glorious was the light which He came to manifest, that it was necessary to veil the light, lest men should be destroyed by it. So He clothed His divinity with humanity. If this Light is received and followed as the "Light of life," our path will grow brighter (Prov. 4 : 18) until we shall be able to endure the vision of His perfect glory (John 17 : 24) in the world of light. As He is the light of this world, so He will be of the heavenly city. Rev. 21 : 23.

7. "THE waters of Siloam by their very name ["Sent"] were a perpetual reminder to the Jews of the water of life which God sent to them in the desert land of their wanderings, and a parable of the true water of life which He would send to them in the desert land of this world's evil. How impressively, as he washed his blindness away, must they have spoken to the blind man of the healing mercy which had been sent to him by the stranger, with the result that his spiritual vision was likewise restored!"

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY.

1. IN this lesson we have the plainest statements yet made of Christ's divinity ("My Father . . . is your God"), and His preëxistence ("Before Abraham *was* I am"), and also the strongest outbreak of unbelief yet noted. The greater the light rejected, the greater the darkness. See Matt. 6 : 23.

2. How did Abraham see Christ's day?

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3. What lesson is taught in the fact that Jesus used some outward means in restoring sight to the blind?

4. What added force is given to this miracle by the statement that the man "was blind from his birth"?

5. Compare this miracle with the one recorded in 2 Kings 5:9–14. Note the similarities and the differences.

6. How is life only in Christ taught in this lesson?

7. The combination "verily, verily," occurs repeatedly in this gospel, but not once in either of the others. "Verily" is our word "amen." In Isaiah 65:16 God is called "the God of Amen" (R. V., margin). Compare 2 Cor. 1:20. What is the lesson taught?

LESSON XII.—December 19, 1896.

THE MIRACLE DISCUSSED.

(Chapter 9, verses 13–25.)

QUESTIONS.

1. WHAT was done with the man who had received sight?
2. On what day was the miracle performed?
3. What inquiry did the Pharisees make?
4. How did the man reply to them?
5. What conclusion did some of the Pharisees draw?
6. How did others view the matter?
7. What was thus made manifest?
8. How did they continue their questioning of the man?
9. What did he declare his belief to be?
10. What conclusion did the Jews adopt concerning his story?
11. What question did they ask his parents?
12. What did his parents admit that they knew?
13. Of what did they deny any knowledge?
14. What did they recommend the Jews to do?
15. Why did the parents take this course?

16. What caused this feeling on their part?

17. What action was based upon this threat of the Jews?

18. Who was now called again?

19. What did the Jews declare their belief to be concerning the One who had wrought the miracle?

20. Of what did the man admit his ignorance?

21. What did he know?

NOTES.

1. It may have been no special ill feeling which led the neighbors to bring to the Pharisees the man who had been healed of his blindness, "but as work had been done on the Sabbath, they judge it best to refer the matter to these great authorities in matters of religion." The former inquiries are now repeated. "Again, therefore, he was asked, and (now) by the Pharisees, how he had recovered his sight." The reply of the man caused a division among his judges, and it is worth while to observe carefully the conclusions arrived at, and the basis of their reasoning. The one party say, This Man is not of God, because He keepeth not the Sabbath day. Their course of reasoning is virtually this: We have certain regulations in regard to the observance of the Sabbath, and this Man has gone contrary to them. The fact that a remarkable miracle of mercy has been performed by this Man does not weigh in our minds against the other fact that He does not keep the Sabbath, in harmony with our well-established rules. This is really saying that God Himself must act in harmony with their traditions if He wishes them to acknowledge Him as God. They are exalting themselves above God. But this is only the logical result of putting man's ideas in place of God's ideas, and demanding submission to a man-made creed. We see the same thing being done over again to-day. Then the chief question was whether the Sabbath should be kept as God intended that it should be kept, and so be a blessing to men, or whether it should be a burden grievous to be borne because weighted down with the added exactions of men. Now the question is whether the same day which God blessed, and thus made a blessing to men, shall be observed, or whether a rival day, upon which God has never placed a blessing,

shall be foisted into its place under ecclesiastical authority alone. Christ Himself was condemned by the religious teachers of His day as a Sabbath-breaker, and some of those who choose to follow Him in the matter of Sabbath-keeping are being condemned in the same way to-day. But, according to His own testimony, He kept the commandments of God (John 15:10), and now through His word He bears similar testimony (Rev. 14:12) concerning those who refuse to accept the traditions of men about the Sabbath.

2. THE other party among the Pharisees yielded to the evidence, and agreed with Nicodemus (John 3:2) that He exhibited divine credentials. It does not follow that they became believers on Christ, but in view of the nature of the miracle, they were not prepared to accept the logic of their traditions, lest haply they should be "found to fight even against God." They broke away from ecclesiastical bondage far enough to say, "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" This may be a step toward belief on Him.

3. "JESUS had been among this people, so marked with bigotry and prejudice, and He knew that in healing on the Sabbath day He would be regarded as a transgressor of the law. He was aware that the Pharisees would seize upon such acts with great indignation, and thereby seek to influence the people against Him. He knew that they would use these works of mercy as strong arguments to affect the minds of the masses, who had all their lives been bound by the Jewish restrictions and exactions. Nevertheless, He was not prevented by this knowledge from breaking down the senseless wall of superstition that barricaded the Sabbath, and teaching men that charity and benevolence are lawful on all days."

4. "IN all His lessons, Jesus presented to men the worthlessness of merely ceremonial obedience. He sought to impress them with the spirituality of the law, unveiling its vital principles, and making plain its eternal obligation. The righteousness of the law was presented to the world in the character of Christ, and the holy, benevolent, and paternal attributes of God were revealed in the Saviour's dealings with mankind."

5. THE prophecy stated that Christ would be "numbered with

the transgressors" (Isa. 53 : 12), and so He was, during His ministry (John 9:24), and at His crucifixion (Mark 15 : 27, 28).

6. THE Jews were not seeking for evidence that Jesus was the Christ, for they had not only decided against Him themselves already, but had threatened with excommunication any who might believe on Him. And this being put out of the synagogue was a "punishment involving the direst consequences socially and religiously. It was, in fact, the lesser excommunication, which lasted thirty days, but might be lengthened for continued impenitence, or curtailed by contrition. It shut a person utterly from the synagogue; for even if he entered it, he was reckoned as not present. No mourning for the dead, and no right of circumcision, could take place in his house, and no one but his wife or child could come within four cubits of him."

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY.

1. JESUS made the clay and anointed his eyes; the man went and washed. What lesson is taught in these facts?

2. Every effort to hinder Christ's work only resulted in advancing it. 2 Cor. 13:8. The semi-official and critical examination into this miracle only established its reality beyond a doubt. How is the same principle illustrated in God's work to-day?

3. God treated Christ as a sinner. Why? Men treated Christ as a sinner? Why? What was the difference in their treatment of Him?

4. Some now accept the view of the Pharisees that Jesus broke the Sabbath. Are they prepared to accept the conclusion that He was "not of God"?

5. Were not the Pharisees right in their logic? If a man wilfully breaks the Sabbath, can he be "of God"? What is the present application of this principle?

6. Are miracles ever wrought through the instrumentality of "a man that is a sinner"? Will the question be of any special interest to this generation?

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LESSON XIII.—December 26, 1896.

SIGHT TO THOSE WHO ARE BLIND; BLINDNESS TO THOSE WHO SEE.

(Chapter 9, verses 26–41.)

QUESTIONS.

1. WHAT further inquiries did the Jews make of the man born blind?

2. What reference did he make to their former discussion of the matter?

3. What inquiry did he make of them?

4. What did they declare concerning him? What did they claim for themselves?

5. What did the man regard as a remarkable circumstance?

6. What admitted truth did he state concerning a man's relation to God?

7. Was the miracle which had been performed upon him an ordinary one?

8. What conclusion did he arrive at?

9. In what way did they meet his convincing argument?

10. What did they do to him?

11. Who heard that they had cast him out? What did He ask him?

12. What response did the man make to this question?

13. How did Jesus then declare Himself to him?

14. How did the man receive this declaration?

15. How did Jesus say that His coming into the world would affect the blind? How would it affect those who had sight?

16. Who were listening to this teaching?

17. What did it lead them to ask?

18. How did Jesus reply to their inquiry?

NOTES.

1. IT is perfectly evident even to the man whose case is being investigated that the Pharisees are not repeating their inquiries in

order to obtain more complete information. They are simply quibbling. Their continued nagging stirs up the man to ask them the question which above all others would exasperate them: "Are ye, too, wishing to become His disciples? But they reviled him, and said, Thou art a disciple of that One, but we are Moses' disciples." (Rotherham.) A disciple of that One, as if putting Him far from them in disdain. A disciple is a learner, and unintentionally the Pharisees were speaking in praise of the Man whom they despised. They prided themselves upon being followers of Moses, but their treatment of Jesus proved their claim a false one. Chapter 5 : 46. They were right in thinking that God spake to Moses (Ex. 33 : 11), but it was *God* in His Son who spoke, and not *Moses*. Although Moses was dead, yet God still lived, and had they really known Him, they would have recognized that He was speaking to them "*in* His Son." Heb. 1 : 2, R. V.

2. How these Jews contradict themselves! A little while ago they rejected Jesus because they felt too well acquainted with Him (chapter 6 : 41, 42), but now they reject Him because they "know not from whence He is." The logic of the beggar was better than that of the Pharisees. He is not a theologian by profession, but light seems to have come into his mind as well as into his eyes. His experience illustrates a truth already taught to the Jews. Chapter 7 : 17. "He does not know much, but he knows this [How is it that *they* do not know it?] that such a miracle is an answer to prayer, and that the prayer of the wicked is not answered."

3. THE case is no ordinary one. The miracle is a "notable" one, and induces an irresistible conviction that the doer is "of God." But this the Pharisees have decided beforehand not to admit, and so no weight of evidence can compel them to change their view. Their very decision has shut out the light which would enable them to reach a right conclusion. It is the light from the sun shining into the eye which enables us to see the sun itself, and if one deliberately closes his eyes, it is no wonder if he does not see the sun. But there is still one course open to the Pharisees, and, like a dishonest lawyer when the evidence is all against him, they can abuse the witness, and this they proceed to

do. They now admit what they had been inclined to deny, that he had been born blind, by taunting him with it as a proof that he was evidently a child of sin; and, with a self-sufficiency which they seem to regard as enough to settle the whole question, they scornfully inquire, "Dost thou teach us?"

4. "THERE are men in such repute as leaders of opinion, and so accustomed to teach rather than to learn, and to receive homage rather than to give it, that scarcely any greater humiliation could be required of them than to publicly profess themselves followers of Christ." It was the application of this principle which prevented the Pharisees from receiving instruction from the beggar. They did not have power over his mind, and so could not cast the truth out of it, as they gladly would have done if possible, but they did have power over his connection with the outward forms of worship, "and they cast him out."

5. "BUT Jesus heard of his punishment, and sought him out, and declared to him more fully who He Himself was. He thus gave to the man assurance of a friendship outweighing in value what he had lost. He made him feel that, though cut off from the fellowship of the visible church, he was made a member of the true commonwealth of men—numbered among those who are united in friendship, and in work, and in destiny, to Him who heads the real work of God, and promotes the abiding interests of men. And such is ever the reward of those who make sacrifices for Christ, who lose employment or friends by too boldly confessing their indebtedness to Him. They will themselves tell you that Christ makes up to them for their losses by imparting clearer knowledge of Himself, by making them conscious that they are remembered by Him, and by giving them a conscience void of offense, and a spirit superior to worldly misfortunes."

6. "THE blind man now saw, because he knew he was blind, and trusted that Christ could give him sight; the Pharisees were stone-blind to the world Christ opened to them and carried in His person, because they thought that already they had all the knowledge they required. And wherever Christ comes, men thus form themselves around Him in two groups, blind and seeing. 'For judgment,'—for testing and dividing men,—He is come. Nothing

goes more searchingly into a man's character than Christ's offer to be to him the Light of life, to be his Leader to a perfect life. This offer discloses what the man is content with, and what he really sighs for."

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY.

1. WHAT kind of sinners does God refuse to hear? To what kind does He lend a listening ear? Compare Ps. 66:18; Dan. 9:3, 23.

2. What connection did the Jews make in their teaching between poverty, or physical blemish and suffering, and sin?

3. What is taught in the statement that Jesus found him?

4. What is the measure of responsibility in God's sight?

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