

# SUNDAY SCHOOLS

## LESSON

LESSON IV., JANUARY 22.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.—John 2:5.

I. The Scene. A Wedding at Cana.—Vs. 1, 2. On the Way. 1. "And the third day," reckoning from the last day mentioned (John 1: 43), when Jesus started for Galilee, and found Nathanael in the way.

So far the disciples had believed on Jesus, because of the prophecies and the testimony of Jesus, and their experience with him as a teacher. But their faith would soon be tested by the contrast between a humble teacher and the glorious King they had expected. It was necessary, therefore, that in some way they should have revealed to them his true nature, his real grace and glory (v. 11.)

The Wedding. "There was a marriage." "Including the marriage feast, which was frequently celebrated for several days (Gen. 29: 22 ff.; Judges 14: 12, Samson's wedding feast)."—Cook. "Among all Orientals, marriages were occasions of much ceremony, and of unbounded feasting."—Tristram. "Cana of Galilee." (See "Place.")

The Guests. "And the mother of Jesus was there." Already present as a friend, possibly a relative.

2. "And both Jesus was called (invited) and his disciples," the five or six who accompanied him.

Jesus and the Home. The fact that Jesus necessarily, as the Son of God, remained unmarried has led many to imagine that celibacy was the highest and purest mode of life. Hence, in part, monks and nuns. The Bible view is just the opposite. Marriage was ordained in Eden, and was sanctified by Jesus' first miracle; for true, unselfish love is the way back to Paradise. Jesus renews the heart, and fills it with love, and in his love the highest earthly love is possible.

To the family pertain the noblest ideals of human love, the best illustration and type of divine love. Not friendship alone, but the highest love of husband and wife, of parents and children, is "the master passion"; for it includes perfect friendship and more. The family is the soil in which love and friendship flourish most luxuriantly and bear the best fruit.

Mrs. Hunt says that the Star of Bethlehem for temperance stands over the schoolhouse. The Star of Bethlehem for morals and religion stands over the home. It is well to note Jesus' own conduct in the home when he was a boy and young man, as described in Luke 2: 40, 51, 52, his obedience to parents, his development, his gracious character and piety. Then, too, he frequented several homes, especially that of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. He loved little children. Three times he uttered parables concerning the marriage feast, and often in the Bible it symbolizes the union of God with his people (Isa. 61: 10; 62: 5; Hos. 2: 19; Matt. 9: 15; John 3: 29; Eph. 5: 31, 32).

Jesus and the Social Life. It is one of the most interesting things in the life of Jesus, that he began his ministry, and first showed forth his glory, amid the domestic festivities of a home. Jesus' presence recognizes the value of social pleasures, of joyousness, of the satisfaction of common desires, of "the feast of reason and flow of soul," of the fact that life is not all a grinding at the mill, a time of toil and sacrifice, but also of spiritual refreshments, of joys unspeakable, of exquisite satisfaction and rest. Even the hard duties are pleasant because inspired by love; they are the alabaster boxes of precious ointment poured out upon the loved one.

II. The Opportunity. The Failure of Supplies.—Vs. 3-5. 3. "And when they wanted (lacked, came short of)

wine." The supply of wine having failed. Probably the family of Cana was in humble circumstances, and hence their supply was limited. "The mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine." It is plain, (1) that she was on terms of intimacy with the family; (2) that she knew of the failure of the wine (3) that she may have felt a measure of responsibility on account of the unexpected coming of her son and his followers; (4) that she looked to Jesus for relief.

4. "Jesus saith unto her, Woman." The impression is more correct when we translate "woman" with the Cambridge Bible, "lady." "What have I to do with thee?" "We stand on this matter on different grounds." There is "no disrespect, but a very distinct refusal to admit her to a directorship or partnership in his action; and the assertion that he must await another call than hers, and an "hour" that is all his own."—Chadwick. "Mine hour is not yet come." Jesus thus does not deny her request, but implies that he will relieve the want at the best time.

5. "His mother saith." This implies that she understood Jesus as really granting her request. "Unto the servants." Who might not otherwise obey one who was only a guest. "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." This, the "Golden Text" of the lesson, is a noble motto for every life. What Jesus bids you do by his word or by his life, is always the best and highest you can do. Obedience to this injunction will keep you from every error, and guide you to the best possible life both in this world and the world to come.

III. The Deed that Was Both a Witness and a Sign.—Vs. 6-10. 6. Six waterpots of stone." No well has yet been discovered among the ruins of Kana-el-Jellil, and the surface water was probably collected in cisterns. Hence the need for so many large jars of water for the purpose of washing the hands and feet of the dust-stained guests and the cleansing of vessels.

"Two or three firkins apiece." 7. "Fill the waterpots with water." Being water-pots, and not wine skins, there could be no thought of any remnant or sediment of wine so that deceit or collusion was rendered impossible. "To the brim." Implying an abundant supply, and no room for adding anything to the water.

Why Such an Amount. 1. "In Palestine, a wine-growing and wine-consuming country, it is not merely a beverage, but the beverage of the common people" (Abbott) as wine in France and beer in Germany.

2. "This large quantity of wine would provide but little for each guest, considering the habits of the people, who crowd into the house to partake of the feast as long as the provisions last, being pressed to do so by their hospitable host or master of the feast, who also urges even the passers-by to come and drink to the health of the bridegroom and bride."—Dr. H. J. Van Lennep, Bible Lands, pp. 122, 603, 604.

8. "Unto them (the servants who had filled the jars with water), Draw out now" into pitchers or wine cups. "Governor (R. V., "ruler") of the feast." Either the head waiter (Weiss, Holtzmann) or, more probably, the chairman elected by the company from among the guests, who, in general, regulated the course of the feast and the conduct of the guests.

9. "But the servants . . . knew." So that they could testify as to the source of the wine.

10. "Every man," etc. This is the universal custom. "Have well drunk." R. and Am. V., "Have drunk

freely." "The word, at least, must indicate a condition in which men are unfit to distinguish good wine and bad. The company then present was not in that condition, because they were able to appreciate good wine."—Exp. Greek Test. "Thou hast kept the good wine until now." "The significance of this remark consists in the certificate thus given to the quality of the wine."—Exp. Greek Test.

Relation to the Temperance Question. There are two opinions as to the nature of the wine Jesus made. While no one can prove that the wine Christ made was wholly unfermented, it is equally certain that no one can prove that it had any intoxicating qualities. It may well have been the ideal wine, the delicious and healthful juice of the grape fresh from the vines, just as God is making it now every autumn. "Those who believe that the wine spoken of in this lesson was unfermented, will teach in accordance with that belief. Those who believe that it was ordinary wine, will teach that the making of such wine by our Lord no more endorses intoxication than the creation of the poppy, from which laudanum is made, endorses suicide."—A. F. Schaeffler.

There is a right and proper use of the fruit of the vine. There are few things more delicious and healthful than the juice of the grape fresh from the vines.

Christ's example shows that drinking some kind of wine is not a sin per se.

It is perfectly right to wholly abstain from wine and all intoxicating drinks. There is no law, human or divine, that requires us to use what is so dangerous to ourselves and others.

The basis of total abstinence is the giving up of that which may be lawful in itself, whenever it becomes dangerous to ourselves or the means of evil to others. This is our Christian duty and privilege.

It is interesting in this connection to notice that in all references to the Lord's Supper, the word "wine" is not once used in the New Testament, but always the cup or fruit of the wine, so that that divine institution does not throw its influence in favor of intoxicating wine.

IV. This Miracle a Witness and Sign of the Grace and Glory of Jesus.—V. 11. "This beginning of miracles." The first one he wrought in his ministry. "And manifested forth his glory." His true nature and work hidden under the form of a man. He manifested it not for himself, but in order that men might see him as their Savior, worth trusting and obeying. The result was that "his disciples believed on him" with a new increase of faith.

John says in 1: 14, And we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth.

This miracle was a revelation of his real nature, of his divine power, of his spiritual nature hidden by the flesh. He did a deed worthy of the expected Messiah. This was the spiritual side of what was more clearly revealed before their eyes at the Transfiguration more than two years later, when the glory seen by Paul (Acts 9: 3) and by John (Rev. 1: 13-16) shone through his flesh and his garments, as by a light from within, as the sunlight shining through dull stained glass windows reveals the true nature of the picture. Jesus was a prince in disguise, and he threw off his outward guise and appeared in his own royal glory.

The change of water into the luscious juice of the grape (far more than into fermented wine) "is the sign and symbol of all which Christ is evermore doing in the world, ennobling all that he touches, making saints out of sinners, angels out of men, and, in the end, heaven out of earth—a new paradise of God out of the old wilderness of the world. For the prophecy of the world's regeneration, of the day in which his disciples shall drink of the fruit of the vine new in his kingdom, is eminently here."—Trench.

### Bare Feet for Health.

People who go barefooted and those who wear sandals instead of shoes, it is said, rarely have colds in the head or any form of influenza.

If everybody possessed the sense of humor most people would have to laugh when they look in their mirrors.

For one man who can stand prosperity there are a hundred who will stand adversity.—Carlyle.

Piso's Cure for Consumption is an infallible medicine for coughs and colds.—N. W. SAMUEL, Ocean Grove, N. J., Feb. 17, 1900.

Some actors become tramps because they get hungry at times.

TO CURE A COLD IN ONE DAY  
Take Laxative Bromo Quinine Tablets. All druggists refund the money if it fails to cure. E. W. Grove's signature is on each box. 25c.

### SENTENCE SERMONS.

A joy unshared is always short lived.

Making a life is greater than making a living.

There will be good will in all when God's will is over all.

You cannot touch men as long as you think of them as masses.

The man who suspects everybody is surely a suspicious character.

You can't expect a nickel's worth of religion to last you over Monday.

The man who sows nothing always reaps something a good deal worse.

They who really pray for the poor find themselves saying Amen at their door.

The flowers on the streets of heaven are the transplanted sorrows of earth.

It is easy to preach on the benefits of walking when you are in the band wagon.

Here's something wrong about a man's piety when it provokes others to profanity.

When a man thinks he has a cinch on sin he is apt to find that the halter is on him.

Our biggest, blackest troubles are often only the locomotive drawing our richest treasure train.

It will take a lot of nerve for some Christians to stand up and look over their lives at last and hear the judge say: "Well done, good and faithful servant!"—Chicago Tribune.

### MIGHT HAVE SAVED IT

A Lot of Trouble from Too Much Starchy Food.

A little boy of eight years whose parents did not feed him on the right kind of food, was always nervous and suffered from a weak condition of the stomach and bowels. Finally he was taken down with appendicitis and after the operation the doctor, knowing that his intestinal digestion was very weak, put him on Grape-Nuts twice a day.

He rapidly recovered and about two months thereafter, his Father states, "He has grown to be strong, muscular, and sleeps soundly, weighs 62 pounds, and his whole system is in a fine condition of health." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

It is plain that if he had been put on Grape-Nuts at an earlier period in his life, and kept from the use of foods that he could not digest, he never would have had appendicitis. That disease is caused by undigested food decaying in the stomach and bowels, causing irritation and making for the growth of all kinds of microbes, setting up a diseased condition which is the active cause of appendicitis, and this is more marked with people who do not properly digest white bread.

Grape-Nuts is made of the selected parts of wheat and barley and by the peculiar processes of the cooking at the factory, all of the starch is turned into sugar ready for immediate digestion and the more perfect nourishment of all parts of the body, particularly the brain and nerve centers.

Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," found in each pkg.