

# SUNDAY SCHOOLS

## LESSON

LESSON VI—FEBRUARY 5.

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

1. The Teacher Resting by a Famous Well.—Vs. 1-6. For several months Jesus and John were preaching to crowds at the same time in different parts of Judea, John extending his labors up the Jordan, but not entering Galilee, so far as we know. Jesus, through his apostles, brought the believers to open confession by baptism. John, from the nature of his work, sent to Jesus those interested and desiring to be delivered from sin, till, ere long, Jesus had more confessed followers than John. John's glory was in self-renunciation, and in leading men from himself to the Messiah.

The natural result was that the growing popularity of one who claimed to be their Messiah, but disavowed their views and condemned their conduct, should awaken intense opposition on the part of the Pharisees, as well as envy on the part of the more zealous, but less Christianized disciples of John.

It was wise, therefore, that Jesus should leave these stony and brier-overgrown fields and go to Galilee, where there were fewer prejudices and more open minds, and there get his kingdom well rooted and started, before he returned to Judea again. Hence he left Judea, by one of the great highways which led to the valley between Mt. Ebal on the north, and Mt. Gerizim on the south, where was a town (v. 5) "called Sychar," either the ancient Shechem, or the neighboring village of Askar. "That Jacob gave to his son Joseph." See Gen. 33: 18-20; 48: 22.

6. "Now Jacob's well was there." "Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey." He had probably been walking several hours, as the Orientals were accustomed to start early in the morning, and it was now "about the sixth hour," or noon, according to Jewish reckoning. "Sat (was sitting) thus on (by) the well." Probably on the low curb usually placed around wells (Ex. 21: 33), resting, and waiting for the return of his disciples (v. 8).

II. The Unlikely Scholar.—V. 7. "There cometh a woman of (out of) Samaria." Not the city of Samaria, seven miles away, but from the country of Samaria; one of Samaritan race and religion. "To draw water."

A Character Study.—The woman of Samaria was a most unlikely disciple. She was entirely different from the woman who ministered to Jesus, such as Mary and Martha of Bethany, Salome, and the wife of Chuza. (1) She was disreputable; (2) rather bold and free in her manners; (3) with a rather coarse attractiveness; (4) of some native ability; (5) of open soul; (6) a Samaritan; (7) of a perverted religious training. One would think she would be almost repulsive to Jesus, and yet he so saw the open mind, and the possibilities of her nature, that he spoke to her in his choicest truths. Dr. Fairbairn says, "It is strange that Christ should often speak his most remarkable words to the least remarkable persons." What comfort this is to us!

III. The Wise Approach.—Vs. 7-9. He asked a favor, "Give me to drink." Jesus asked for water because he needed it, but he used the request as a means of preparing the way for his teaching. A useless request would have defeated his purpose. "It was an act full of the nicest tact, and exhibiting perfect knowledge of the human mind. He asks a favor and puts himself under an obligation. No line of proceeding, it is well known to all wise people, would be more likely to conciliate the woman's feelings towards him, and to make her willing

to hear his teaching."—Bishop Ryle.

8. "For his disciples were gone," etc. This is given as the reason why he asked the woman instead of his disciples to draw the water; and also why he could talk more freely to the woman. In very many cases, reproof, advice, and entreaty are much more effective with one person alone than when others are present. The wise parent or teacher avoids the effect of the audience upon the child. "To buy meat." Provisions, the plural being used in the Greek.

9. "How is it that thou, being a Jew." "Jesus would be recognized as a Jew by his dress. The color of the fringes on his garments was probably white; that of Samaritans would be blue. Doubtless, other peculiarities indicated his nationality."—Professor Riddle. "Askest drink," etc. "The wonder of the Samaritan woman was that a Jew should seek, by asking and receiving drink, to make a friendly compact with a member of a hostile race."—Trumbull, Studies in Oriental Social Life. (The) Jews have no dealings with (the) Samaritans. "Have no familiar intercourse."—Vincent. Jesus had reason to feel as many of his followers have felt since, that if he were too free with the Samaritans, he would prejudice his cause with the stricter Jews. But he went straight forward in the path of duty, leaving the consequences with God. The greater the mind and nobler the character, the more assured the position, the less power there is in prejudice.

IV. A Lesson on the Water of Life.—Vs. 10-14. 10. "If thou knewest." There were two things which the woman did not know—the gift of living water, and the presence of the Messiah. "The pathos of the situation strikes Jesus. The woman stands on the brink of the greatest possibilities, but is unconscious of them."—Exp. Greek Text.

"The gift of God." The Messiah, and the waters of eternal life. Perhaps there is no cry more striking than that of the Eastern water-carrier.—"The gift of God," he cries, as he goes along with his water-skin on his shoulder. "Thou wouldest have asked of him." Emphasize the thou and him. "Spiritually, our positions are reversed. It is thou who art weary, and footsore, and parched, close to the well, yet unable to drink; it is I who can give thee the water from the well, and quench thy thirst forever."—Cambridge Bible. "And he would have given thee living water." "That is, perennial, springing from an unfailing source (Gen. 26: 19), ever flowing, fresh (Lev. 14: 5)," (Westcott), bringing life, refreshing.

11. "Nothing to draw with." No leather bucket, "a skin with three cross sticks at the mouth to keep it open, and let down by a goat's hair rope. "Unconsciously she gives utterance to a spiritual truth—the water of life beyond our reach, but the rope of faith long enough to reach it.—Rev. William Mowatt, M. A.

12. "Art thou greater than our father Jacob?" Can you dig a better well, or find sweeter water?

13. "Whoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again." This water satisfies only bodily thirst, and for brief periods,—a type of all worldly supplies for the deeper thirsts of the soul.

14. "Whoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him." Emphasize give. The living water is a gift, and all that is asked of the people is that they be willing to receive. The best things of God can never be bought. "Shall never thirst." This does not contradict the Beatitudes, "Blessed are

those that hunger and thirst after righteousness," but it declares that there is an unfailing supply always at hand for the thirst. Life is made up of a succession of thirsts and their satisfaction. There is no enjoyment unless there is a thirst, and unless the thirst be satisfied. This satisfaction is what is promised in this verse. The reason follows. The water that satisfies is not from without, an external supply, that may fail or be far away, but "shall be in him a well (a fountain, a spring) of water springing up into (unto) everlasting life" (compare John 7: 38, 39).

### The Heart of the Lesson.

The Thirsts of the Soul. The Urgent Need of the Water of Life. Thirst is the type of the intense human desires which impel men to activity, and in the satisfying of which lie happiness, life, and progress. Absence of physical moisture from a man's body for a day or two brings indescribable distress, and if continued long will cause death.

"Of all the physical wants man can feel, none is capable of being raised to such a pitch of intensity as the want of water."

This expresses the pain of unsatisfied desires of the soul. For every person is full of wants, longings, desires, hopes, both of the body and of the soul.

This World Can Never Satisfy the Thirsts of the Soul. The ambitions, longings, thirsts for wealth, power and pleasure, are never fully and continually satisfied by anything the world or flesh can give. The pleasures clog as in Johnson's Rasselas, where is described one who in the absolute perfections of the Happy Valley was so discontented that with great difficulty he climbed over the surrounding wall of mountain crags and escaped.

The Water of Life. Jacob's well was a type of the sources of earthly good. As God has made the world full of streams to satisfy our bodily thirst, so he has made it full of springs to satisfy our natural longings and desires. And by each fountain of earthly good Jesus still sits, pointing men to the higher and better things of which it is a hint and a type. By earthly pleasure he points to heavenly and spiritual joy; by earthly riches he teaches us of treasures in heaven; by earthly love he points to heavenly love; by earthly desires to heavenly desires; by earthly activity and business to zeal and earnestness in the kingdom of God.

Christ does not give us a cup of water, which we can drink up and the contents be exhausted, but a fountain of water in our own souls, ever flowing, ever fresh, inexhaustible. This is what completes the gift and makes it perfect. It is not a cistern, but a fountain. It is not outside; it is within us.

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

### Banish All but God.

When God speaks He likes no other voice to break the stillness but His own, and hence the place that has always been given to solitude in all true religious life. It can be overdone, but it can be grossly underdone. And there is no lesson more worth insisting on in days like ours than this: when God wants to speak with a man He wants that man to be alone.

### Folly of Disbelief.

No excuse can be offered by the would-be "thinker," who denies God's existence because God fails to perform miracles or other childish feats for the "thinker's" special gratification. Atheism, lack of religious feeling and lack of religious reverence are typical not of sin but of stupidity.

### A WOMAN'S MISERY.

Mrs. John LaRue, of 115 Paterson avenue, Paterson, N. J., says: "I was troubled for about nine years, and



what I suffered no one will ever know. I used about every known remedy that is said to be good for kidney complaint, but without deriving permanent relief.

Often when alone in the house the backache has been so bad that it brought tears to my eyes. The pain at times was so intense that I was compelled to give up my household duties and lie down. There were headaches, dizziness and blood rushing to my head to cause bleeding at the nose. The first box of Doan's Kidney Pills benefited me so much that I continued the treatment. The stinging pain in the small of my back, the rushes of blood to the head and other symptoms disappeared."

Doan's Kidney Pills for sale by all dealers. 50 cents per box. Foster-Milburn Co., Buffalo, N. Y.

### Punctured Bubble.

The phrase "punctured bubble" is applied to any person, enterprise or thing that in the beginning looks brilliant and promising, but which, after a short existence, is punctured by criticism and then disappears as quickly as a broken bubble.

### Pasteboard Resists Bullets.

At some firing experiments by the Swedish government the bullets failed to penetrate targets made of pasteboard three inches in thickness, yet they easily pass through planks five inches thick.

### Book Brings Big Price.

The sum of \$20,000 was paid at a Londo auction for a "Codex Psalm arum" of the year 1453, of which only twenty copies were originally printed.

### Life of Telegraph Wires.

Telegraph wires will last for forty years near the seashore. In the manufacturing districts the same wires last only ten years and even less.

A New York contemporary wants to know if Julius Caesar is dead. We have not noticed his death notice anywhere.

### SPREADING THE NEWS BROADCAST.

That Dodd's Kidney Pills cured his Diabetes. After long suffering Mr. G. Cleghorn found a permanent relief in the Great American Kidney Remedy.

Port Huron, Mich., Jan. 30th.—(Special)—Tortured with Diabetes and Bladder Disease from which he could apparently get no relief, Mr. G. Cleghorn, a bricklayer, living at 119 Butler St., this city, has found a complete and permanent cure in Dodd's Kidney Pills and in his gratitude he is spreading the news broadcast.

"Dodd's Kidney Pills made a man of me," Mr. Cleghorn says. "I was a sufferer from Diabetes and Bladder Disease. I was so bad I could do no work and the pain was something terrible. I could not get anything to help me till I tried Dodd's Kidney Pills. They helped me right from the first and now I am completely cured. I have recommended Dodd's Kidney Pills to all my friends and they have found them all that is claimed for them."

Dodd's Kidney Pills cure all Kidney ills from Backache to Bright's Disease. They never fail to cure Rheumatism.

He is not dead who departs from life with a high and noble name; but he is dead, even while living, whose brow is branded with infamy.—Tieck.