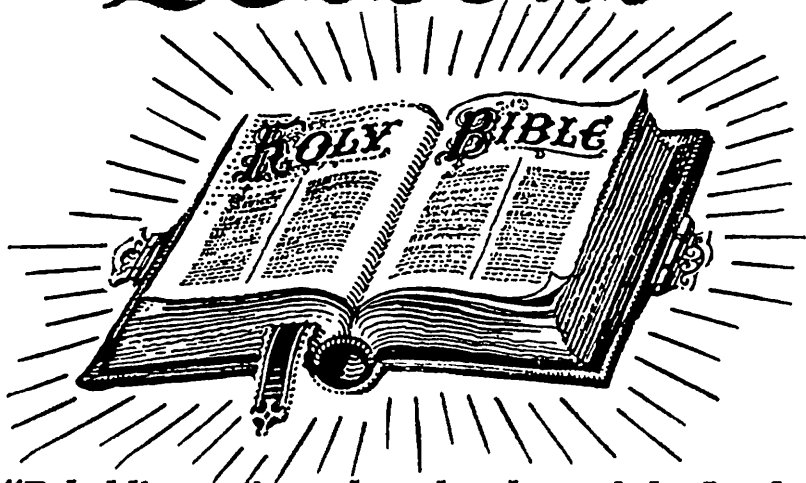


Bible Lessons



**"Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,
we are CHANGED" II Cor. 3:18**

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

**Vol. 4, No. 2
April, May, June,
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Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

Vol. 4

April, May, June, 1972

No. 2

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THEME FOR THIS THIRD QUARTER OF 1972



As we continue to study the book of John, let us notice that every root of the Christian truth is planted in the soil of the Old Testament. Jesus, Himself, made use of each festival to show that the old covenant pointed to Himself as being the type. He also made use of other incidents to point the people to Himself. He had, in chapter two, represented Himself as the true temple; in chapter three, as the true brazen serpent; in chapter six, as the true bread of heaven; in chapter seven, He is the true rock. He is the true light; and so on, until in chapter nineteen, He will become the Paschal Lamb offered for our sins, and the sins of the whole world. Then through His death, resurrection, and ascension, we can be filled with the Holy Spirit. Our souls are filled with praise and adoration to such a wonderful Saviour. Today we can enjoy the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, dwelling in our souls. We, who are saved, compose the Church of God. "In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Eph. 2:22. Glory to God for His perfect plan for all who will come to Him! —Sis. A. Marie Miles

April 2, 1972

THE EMPTY TOMB

Luke 24:1-8; 1 Cor. 15:51, 52, 55, 57, 58

Luke 24:1 Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

2 And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

3 And they entered in and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

6 He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,

7 Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

8 And they remembered his words.

1 Cor. 15:51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Memory Verse: But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. 1 Corinthians 15:23.

Central Thought: The believers, who have died, will have the same mighty power wrought in them, as worked in Christ, to bring him forth from the grave.

Word Definition: Resurrection means "the rising again of all the human dead before the final judgment." Webster's Dictionary. "Sinful men" or "heathen" mean the Romans as they were the only ones who could put Christ to death. Corruption would mean that the body had changed into a state of decay or, putrid. Incorruptible is the opposite of corruption. It would be a body that is sound, whole, or changed.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary, the mother of James and other women came early in the morning to the tomb of Christ. (Luke 24:10). They brought spices to complete the preceding

operation on his body. They found the stone rolled away. We learn a lesson from them that if we will have strong confidence in God, obstacles do not hinder us from undertaking whatever we believe God requires.

Luke mentions "two men" or angels. Matthew and Mark mention only one of them.

Burial places were considered unclean by the Jews. Therefore the living were not usually found there.

Note that Jesus was resurrected on "the first day of the week" which is Sunday. What better day would there be to meet together in worship and praise to our Lord and Saviour for His great love to us by completing the great plan of salvation through His resurrection on that day?

It is said that in a period of ten years almost all the particles of matter in our body have changed many times here on earth. When we think of changing into another body, we might think about the caterpillar that changes into a butterfly or the tad-pole that changes into a frog. Great are the plans of God concerning His creation!

Lesson References: Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1; Acts 1:10; Matt. 16:21; Rev. 1:18; 1 Thess. 4:15; Matt. 24:21; Rom. 7:25.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Matt. 28:4, 11-15 which tells about the reaction of the guard that was placed around the tomb of Jesus. 2. What effect does the resurrection of Jesus have upon our souls? 3. What effect does it have upon our physical bodies? 4. How are we to live when we have a spiritual resurrection in our souls here in this life? 5. What has taken the sting out of death for the redeemed from sin?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

Rejoice and be glad! Our Saviour is alive! The grave could not hold Him. The mighty power of God shook that tomb and our Saviour came forth. He arose with victory over death, hell and the grave. He ascended upon high and today He is sitting at the right hand of God interceding for us. We hear Him saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. . . . Observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matt. 28:18, 20.

Is Christ alive in your heart today? Are you seeking our Saviour among the dead? He is not there! He has risen! Through faith we can be quickened in the inner man and be raised from being "dead in trespasses and sins." Our life be-

comes new. We are setting our affections upon "things above and not on things on the earth." We are dead to these things and our "life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Col. 3:1-4. What a glorious thought and reality!

I am glad that God showed us the mystery of the last resurrection. In a moment or instant the graves will break open. The dead will be raised with a new body which is incorruptible. In just one moment there will not be any dead, but all will come alive. What a glorious day that will be for all the redeemed from sin! We will arise to meet our Lord and Saviour in the air and forever be with Him. I want to be in that "great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and people, and tongues." Rev. 7:9. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Jesus was born of flesh and blood like all other human beings, yet He was different from all other humanity. That human beings could be just exactly what God wanted and intended for them to be was proved by the fact that Adam accomplished this for a time, at least. When Adam fell into sin and lost God's image, God was no longer pleased with him; and not only him, but his offspring also fell under the same blight, and so God could not be pleased with them either. Now in Christ we find One upon whom God was willing to place His approval and to give recognition. Why? Because He was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and consequently was pure in His heart, and possessed His Father's nature and likeness. As long as Adam kept himself pure, he had access to life. Jesus did no sin, was altogether pure, and therefore He, too, would have access to life. When sin is present, it will of itself cause death; therefore we become dead in trespasses and sins. Everyone of us had sinned, and our spiritual life was taken as a result. We had nothing to offer that would restore life. Jesus did no sin, was not guilty in any degree; therefore sin could not cause death in Him, but He gave Himself to die just as though He had been the vilest of sinners. That was a price paid for sin where no price was due and could be applied wherever the donor saw fit. In His mercy and love for us He elected to pay the price for our sins and set us free that we might live. His flesh became dead, but the Spirit was very much alive, and therefore He was resurrected from the grave to live anew. By His resurrection from the physical death, He brings to us hope that we, too, may be raised to live anew. How important it is that we seek His pardon to free us from committed sin, then yield ourselves to Him completely that He might keep us from sin. In so

doing we may stand before Him at the end of the way pure in heart and esteemed worthy to enter into the joys of the Lord, which is eternal life! —C. W. Wilson

THE DEAD WILL ARISE

My two granddaughters spent the night with me. I read to them from the Bible during our morning devotions. The subject of heaven came up and one of them mentioned about someone being put in the grave recently. I explained that only their house of clay that they lived in was put in the ground, but their soul went to be with the Lord to await the resurrection day. The little five-year-old asked, "If everyone dies, who will bury the last one that dies?" Well, now, if you did not know, this would be a logical question. I am glad that the Bible gives us the answer to some of these questions. The Apostle Paul, through the revelations of the Spirit, gives us the answer to that mystery. Some will still be here when Jesus comes in the clouds of glory. In a moment we will be changed and put on an incorruptible body and "be caught up together with them [Christians who arose from the grave] in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thess. 4:15-17.

When we die we want to be in the kingdom of God and have the kingdom in us. Only those who have their sins under the blood will arise and meet the Lord in the air.

Some are looking for Jesus to set up a kingdom here on the earth, but let Jesus Himself tell us about this. "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, lo, there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17:20, 21. This is far different from the kingdoms of this world. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world." John 18:36.

"The Kingdom of God is within you,
So the greatest of Teachers hath said:
And the faithful and loving have found it,
And enjoyed it before they were dead."

Christ is now the universal King. He must continue to reign until the last enemy, which is death, is conquered and destroyed. "Then cometh the end when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." —M. Miles

April 9, 1972

NOBLEMAN'S BELIEF BRINGS RESULTS

Psa. 103:2, 3; John 4:46-54

Psa. 103:2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

John 4:46 So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.

47 When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.

48 Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

49 The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

50 Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him and he went his way.

51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth.

52 Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

53 So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.

54 This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee.

Memory Verse: Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Hebrews 13:8.

Central Thought: The reason for the miracles of Christ is to bring about belief that Jesus is the Christ.

Word Definition: Divine healing is healing wrought by the divine power of God. Faith is taking hold of Christ, keeping hold of Him and not letting Him go. The Bible definition of faith is found in Hebrews 11:1.

LESSON BACKGROUND

As we study the book of John let us notice that he records eight miracles of Jesus. The healing of the nobleman's son is the second one.

"This nobleman was an official of Herod Antipas, whom John the Baptist warned, and whose criminal and slavish attachment to his brother's wife led to his becoming John's murderer. And as was the king, so for the most part would be his friends and the officials of his court, . . . but even amid such surroundings may be found traces of a better life. . . . How far God had dealt with this man does not appear. But now He touches him with affliction, and his beloved little boy lay nigh to death. Then he would be led to ask: Whence comes this sorrow? Where can help be found?"—Hom. Com.

"He began to amend," from that very hour. This does not mean that he received new strength or flesh was immediately put upon his body but that the affliction was rebuked at that hour. From that time he began to get better.

The nobleman resided in Capernaum. Cana, where Jesus was, would be about six to eight hours away.

The seventh hour would be what we would "call one o'clock." Some "think the Roman hour was intended: i. e., seven o'clock in the evening." —Clarke Com.

If Jesus had power to reach from Cana to Capernaum to heal, He has power to reach us today to heal.

Lesson References: James 5:13-16; Mark 6:13; Acts 16:34.

QUESTIONS:

1. Has divine healing been done away with since the apostles have died? 2. Discuss the reason why the nobleman came to Jesus. What will cause us to go to Jesus today? 3. We only have God's Word today. What word did the nobleman step out upon? 4. What was the result of the nobleman believing? 5. Can you give an account of God healing you or someone else?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

This world is turning away from the very thing that they need most. They need faith in God. Many troubles come to every person born into this world. How often we hear about those whom the doctors have given up to die. How often we hear about those who have exhausted every avenue of help they can find to get them out of their trouble. Recently I read about a man who had got into trouble, but through trickery he got in deeper. He has gone to the courts of the land, but

no help is for him. His son is always seeking an interview with the president, trying to get help for his father. If you have faith in God you are among the blessed in the land. As one looks at the circumstances, he may see darkness, but thank God, we can raise our eyes higher. Raise them up to Jesus. Through Christ there is a way out. I often tell people to be willing to trust God's wisdom as well as His power. We can securely rest upon His wisdom. That is our way out. God always does the right thing for those who are His children and are walking according to His Spirit.

Notice the ladder of faith that we see the nobleman ascending. First, his need drove him to Jesus. We find him standing before the Lord. Only parental love can fully understand the depths of his sorrow and need. As Jesus talks to him we see him taking another step on the ladder of faith. Faith and the temptation to doubt strove with each other. What could have been his first impulse when Jesus just told him to "go thy way; thy son liveth?" But he took the next step up on the ladder. He believed and went his way. What were the results? Oh, dear weary one, look to Jesus. Believe and receive. Jesus will honor faith where He sees it today. Faith is not a sense, nor sight, nor reason, but just taking God at His Word.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It seems as though the nobleman had in mind that Jesus should come down to his house and visit the child in order to effect the child's healing. Jesus apparently tested the man's faith a bit further, and gave him simply His word to depend on. Knowing the tenderness and compassion of the Saviour, all will readily agree that the Lord would no doubt have been glad to have gone and met the wishes of the father of the child, for He loved children, but there was a lesson that needed to be taught. Jesus, in the flesh, would have only a short time to fulfill His entire mission here on the earth, and then He would have to return to His Father. If He were to foster the idea in people's minds that He would have to be there personally in every case in order to effect a healing, then at His physical departure from this life, hope for future healing would also disappear. How much more blessed is the method He used! If the nobleman could believe His word, then the blessing he desired could be his. This method would establish a pattern that would open the door of healing to all who would hear the Word of the Son of God and believe its teaching. Jesus would have to be crucified and His physical body placed in the tomb in order for Him to become a sacrifice for us, but His word could and did continue on down to

all succeeding generations, yea, even unto us, almost 2,000 years later. If we can accept His Word and believe its teachings, then the same power that worked a work for the nobleman when he believed will also work a work for us as we believe. Thank God for such texts as these: Psalm 117:2; 1 Peter 1:25; Psalm 100:5. He told us in His Word, "Behold, I am God, I change not."

—C. W. Wilson

GOD HEALS TODAY

Our baby, Don, was born April 7, 1971. He seemed to be healthy and gained weight the first two weeks. Then he started vomiting his milk. Changing his formula didn't seem to help. He lost weight and his eliminations became less and less. At four weeks old we took him to the doctor to see if he could give us a better formula. Baby Don had already lost a pound and a half. The doctor examined him and took several x-rays. They found the walls of the tube leading from the stomach had thickened so only a trickle of food could pass. They wanted to admit him to the hospital right then, build him up with intravenous feeding and operate. An operation was the only answer, and we were told that without it, the baby had a very slim chance. But we told the doctor that we believed God was going to heal our baby and we wanted to trust Him. The doctor was nice and said it was our baby and our choice. We took the baby home with a real determination to trust God to the end. We had already called the saints for prayer and had him anointed. Our baby was slowly starving to death, losing weight. So we called several places again for prayer and asked the saints at Guthrie to send an anointed cloth. But the baby seemed to grow worse. At five weeks old, he went into a hard convulsion and we thought he was going for sure. He had three or four that day and at the last one, he lost consciousness. There were several of the saints here praying. We started feeding him a few drops at a time with an eye dropper. He stayed in a coma for about a week, having convulsions every little bit. From that time until the baby was 2½ months old, he would seem to gain a little strength and take the bottle, then go into a coma again. It looked as if he would take his last breath any time.

All this time, my husband and I were praying and fasting as much as our bodies could take and doing a lot of soul searching. The Lord, the Bible, God's promises, and the saints, all, became dearer to us through all this. The things of this world seemed as nothing to us. We both made a deeper consecration to God and drew closer to Him. We had the baby fully committed into God's hands. As one brother told us, we must learn to trust God not only for

His power but also for His wisdom. Others encouraged us to keep looking up and not become discouraged by the circumstances. It wasn't easy to do; but God helped and taught us many lessons. The 21st of June, God performed the operation that was needed after a simple prayer of faith was prayed and he has been improving ever since. God seemed to let us know He would answer in His own time, and we must learn to wait on Him.

Baby Don was 2½ months old and weighed five pounds and at four months, he weighed 8½ pounds. He is still gaining weight. In December he weighed 17 pounds.

Dear ones, don't be afraid to trust God for your children. He will not fail you. Learn to trust His wisdom along with His power. Yes, God healed our baby. For some reason, He may not heal yours, but God knows the future and does all things well.

In Christian love,

—Jim and Esther Hightower

A Comparison

Recently, an article in the GRIT newspaper tells about the doctors trying to correct the same trouble that baby Don had. The clipping said, "Jimmy's first operation came when he was nine days old. Doctors tried to correct a blockage between his stomach and small intestine. Complications set in . . . small intestines were removed. He underwent 50 operations . . . His first birthday was spent in the hospital. Now he has normal weight, at the low end of the scale, on his second birthday."

I say it is a privilege to trust God for our healing.

April 16, 1972

"SIN NO MORE"

John 5:1-9, 14; Matt. 12:43-45

John 5:1 After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

2 Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the waters stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

8 Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

Matt. 12:43 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.

44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out: and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.

45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is

worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

Memory Verse: And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick. Matt. 14:14.

Central Thought: Jesus Christ, who is our Saviour and Healer wants us to live carefully, lest we, through thoughtless conduct bring punishment down upon us.

Word Definition: Bethesda means House of mercy. Impotent means "wanting strength, or vigor, whether physical, intellectual, or moral."

LESSON BACKGROUND

Jesus was again at Jerusalem during the great feast of the Jews. It probably was the feast of Purim, during which, great festivity was kept up, gifts were distributed to the poor, etc. The fact might account for the large number of sick, blind, halt, etc. then congregated at Bethesda awaiting the moving of the water.

This is the third miracle recorded by John that Jesus Christ performed.

The last verses of our lesson from Matthew were added for us to study so we will see the need of keeping saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. If a person backslides, "the last state of that man is worse than the first."

"The number seven was a favorite number with the Jews implying . . . complete . . . Seven demons—as many as could occupy his soul, harassing it with pride, anger, self-will, lust, etc., and torturing the body with disease." Clarke's Commentary.

You will notice we are leaving out the thought in this lesson about Jesus healing on the Sabbath. Our lesson next Sunday will be on the Sabbath rest. It would be good to study the lesson outline at the end of next Sunday's lesson and be prepared to use some of those scriptures in your short lesson period for discussion.

Lesson References: Matt. 9:6; Hebrews 4:13; John 8:11; 1 Peter 2:20; Hebrews 6:4.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you suppose Jesus chose this particular man to speak to since there were many others waiting around the pool? 2. Putting yourself in this man's place, being a victim

of sin, lying helpless for 38 years, how would you answer the same question if asked of you, not knowing who asked it? 3. Does God force His blessings upon us? What are the conditions of receiving them? 4. What kind of spirits are ever seeking a home? 5. What do we want to keep our hearts full of to keep out evil spirits?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

Many today are sitting by the "pools" of human systems of religion, philosophy, medical help, etc., vainly waiting for something, or someone, to lift them up out of their hopeless state. They could find help if they would only be receptive to the call of the Saviour who, today, is asking, "Wilt thou be made whole?" But they ignore the pleadings of the Spirit or the voice of God's people and with hopelessness, turn their eyes to the "pools" of education, laws, man's ideas, wisdom of the world and stay in their miserable condition. God will not force His gifts on the unwilling. God will not violate the conditions of the freedom of human nature. But in our lesson, we see Jesus seeking to awaken a desire in the mind of this man who, for 38 years, had been in this wretched, helpless and despairing state. Jesus' question reveals to us his state of mind. He seemed to have fallen very low. Thirty-eight years before, this man had committed some sin. Maybe one or many, we do not know, but this had resulted in 38 years of suffering. (Not all diseases are caused from sin. Read article, "Sources of Diseases.") Jesus, who knows all things, knew how to get to the cause of his need. We do not know all that was spoken between them but, thank God, we know that hope sprang up in this man's heart and he wanted to obey the words of Jesus. He looked away from the pool and looked to Jesus. Immediately, he was made whole.

Sin brings many troubles to mankind. Today, Jesus is saying to those who have been redeemed from sin to "sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee" than you had before.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

We find in this lesson, one of the requirements of the Word of God which seems so hard for many folks to accept. Everyone knows that Jesus came as the Saviour of the world, and died for our sins. Almost all will acknowledge that He has power to forgive sins, and that He will, and does, forgive the sins of all who will believe on Him with all their heart. But so often there is a failure to recognize that the same Word that teaches us forgiveness for sin also teaches

us the forsaking of sin. What is accomplished in having our sins forgiven, if we are to continue to pursue that same course? If I repent and confess my sins and receive forgiveness this evening, and in the morning commit another trespass, am I not again a sinner? Is this not "laying again the foundation for repentance" which Paul instructs us not to do? Heb. 6:1. Sin is, without question, a moral impurity. How can I obey the teaching of 1 John 3:1-10 if I allow sin to continue in my life?

Diseases of one kind and another attack our physical bodies, but the disease of sin attacks the soul. Some physical diseases are fatal, some are not, but all sin is fatal to the soul. If I subscribe to the idea that I am not able to refrain from sin, then my chances of salvation become very narrow indeed. In order to meet the judgment without condemnation, I would have to obtain forgiveness just before I left this life, and then die before I had time to sin again, else that sin would appear against me and condemn me at the judgment.

Dear reader, "sin-you-must" is an erroneous doctrine. Christ came and died for our sins and forgave them once and for all. Then He supplies us with grace sufficient to put a stop to the sin business in our lives so that we need not become guilty again. A religion that will not work a change in a man's heart and clean up his life is neither safe nor sufficient to bring to the judgment.

At the pool, the man was healed and forgiven at once, and immediately admonished that to return to sin would invite the destruction of his soul, for sin destroys. That condition would then be much more serious than an afflicted body.

—C. W. Wilson

SOURCES OF DISEASES

We are not left in doubt concerning the cause of this man's disease. The Redeemer's own lips have told us what it was. He said, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." We can see that there is a connection between moral evil and the bodily affliction of this man. Let us think about the sources of diseases or sicknesses, according to the Scriptures. They come from three sources: natural causes, Satan, and God, Himself.

As in our lesson, sin caused this affliction. We know that people abuse their bodies through taking dope, alcoholic beverages, bodily abuse, tobacco and various other sins committed against the body. "His bones are full of the sin of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust." Job

20:11; Hosea 7:5. Now other natural causes could be overwork and mental strain, as in the cases of Daniel and Epaphroditus. Read Daniel 8:27; Phil. 2:27-30. "Because for the work of Christ, he was nigh unto death." Now for the healing of these diseases, the Bible instructs the sinner to seek forgiveness for his sins. Many are healed of some diseases when they are saved. "Bless the Lord, O my soul and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities: who healeth all thy diseases." Psa. 103:2, 3. If the affliction is from your own fault of overwork or some cause through lack of wisdom, the instructions are: "confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." James 5:16. Then we must take into consideration that there are certain diseases that come from circumstances over which we have no power. There are diseases which are contagious, or may come through impurities in food or water. God has told us, "I am the Lord that healeth thee." Jesus "was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick." Matt. 14:14.

We know that Satan afflicts; as we read, "And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond?" Luke 13:16. "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." Acts 10:38. "So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown." Job 2:7. If we are living for God and Satan imposes sickness upon us, we can rebuke the devil in the name of the Lord, and God will grant healing. After God gives healing, the devil might try to take it away from you. In the face of affliction, claim healing. Remember, we walk by faith and not feelings nor sight.

We also know that God sometimes afflicts directly. "God is not the author of moral evil, but He is the direct author, in many cases, of physical evil; either in the entire destruction of wrong-doers, as in the threatened overthrow of the Ninevites (see Jonah 3:10), or in the destruction or affliction of individuals, as a direct punishment for sin. God has always dealt with men thus. 'Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity.' Rom. 11:22" —F. G. Smith. It is recorded many times in the Bible how God afflicted. Read in Acts 13:10, 11 about Elymas, who was doing evil. "The hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately. . ." We think of the plight of Miriam because

of her wrong doings. "And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them . . . Miriam became leprous." Numbers 12:9, 10. Those who have been afflicted by God must confess their sins to be delivered. Read Psa. 107:17-21. "Because of their iniquities, are afflicted . . . they cried unto the Lord in their trouble . . . He sent his word and healed them . . . Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness." —M. Miles

April 23, 1972

SPIRITUAL SABBATH REST

John 5:9-11; Col. 2:14, 16, 17a; Heb. 4:4, 9, 10;

John 5:12-18.

John 5:9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

10 The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.

11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.

Col. 2:14 (Paul says) Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

17a Which are a shadow of things to come.

Heb. 4:4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

John 5:12 Then [Jews] asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?

13 And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place.

14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

15 The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.

16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

Memory Verse: Serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. Luke 1:74b, 75.

Central Thought: The sabbath, or rest, reached its fulfillment in Christ in whom our souls have found an everlasting rest.

Word Definition: Sabbath means rest. The Sabbath day was Saturday which is the seventh day.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Under the Mosaic law, it made the Sabbath day unholy if anyone performed manual labor. In our lesson, it was labor for this man to carry his bed. The Jews were looking for something against Jesus, and this was their chance to accuse Him.

We have chosen scriptures to use in our printed lesson to show that the ordinances and days under the law system were done away with in the gospel dispensation, and that Jesus fulfilled the Sabbath when He came to give soul rest. We can have a continual Sabbath rest in our souls.

Notice the words of Jesus in our lesson, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." The God who gave the Sabbath to the Jews as a "sign between me and them" prompted Jesus to do as He had done. (Exodus 31:13-17)

"There is no statement that any of the patriarchs kept the Sabbath or knew anything about it."—Canright. "There is not one command in the book of Genesis to keep the seventh day as a Sabbath."—Riggle.

The Sabbath was a memorial of the Israelites' deliverance from Egypt.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why was the Sabbath given to the Israelites? (Exodus 20:10, 12) 2. What does the word sabbath mean, and how did Christ fulfill it? 3. Is Sunday the sabbath and why do we meet together on Sunday to worship the Lord? John 20:19; Acts 20:6, 7; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2. 4. What scriptures teach us that the sabbath, as a holy day, was abolished? 5. Discuss the severity of all religious persecutions and, why? 6. How did Jesus feel it and what was He accused of?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

We must remember that the law system was but a "shadow of things to come." Heb. 10:1. It was a school-master to bring us to Christ. Every ordinance pointed to Christ. So the Sabbath, which means rest, was pointing to Christ who was to give us rest to our souls. The day did not have any holiness, only as it stood as a type in holiness. When the type was abolished, then the holiness of that day was abolished. Jesus brought a new teaching and broke down the law system by fulfilling it. The Jews were amazed. They said, "What new doctrine is this?" Mark 1:27.

We are thankful that we are living under the "ministration of the Spirit," (2 Cor. 3:7-18) which giveth life. The first covenant was the "ministration of death." This "was written and engraven in stones" but it is "done away" with and "abolished." But the "ministration of the Spirit" or the "ministration of righteousness" is the "glory that excelleth" and it is "written in the fleshly tables of the heart" and "remaineth." Jesus came to bring life. When He told the man to "rise, take up thy bed, and walk," He was working under the "ministration of righteousness" which brought life and blessing. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." The very nature of God's law is love. This is what governed Jesus.

The spiritual sabbath rest was never realized under the law. Jesus came to give "rest unto your souls." Matthew 11:28, 29. By faith we enter into this glorious "rest." By the "blood of Jesus," we enter into the "holiest of all." Every day is holy because our desire to live holy and the power of the Holy Spirit working in us makes us holy.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When there is no inclination in the heart to accept a presentation, then folks feel there has to be a valid reason why not. In the illustration given in the lesson, the "high-ups" of the current religious systems of the day had no inclination to accept the teachings of the Son of God regardless of how reasonable and right they might be. As a direct consequence of this attitude of heart, there was manifested an active resistance. Anything at hand that might offer excuse for their rejection was utilized to promote their cause. This latest event would most certainly prove them correct for all would know that a man sent from God would not ignore and defile God's holy Sabbath. Surely, all would be able to recognize in this man nothing more nor less than an imposter, for He set Himself up as being "Lord of the Sabbath" even. No one had that right but God.

But when a soul has been touched by the hand of the Lord and his body healed; when a heart has accepted Him and its very nature been changed; when the Spirit of the Lord has dealt with an individual and its witness is operating in his inmost being, it is indeed hard to convince that one that there is nothing to the workings he is experiencing. If folks today can lay aside human reasoning, stop their questioning and doubting and without reserve accept the plain and simple teaching of the plan of full salvation they will most certainly experience the most complete and satisfying spiritual sabbath rest ever known to man. Thank God! Not a rest to be observed one day and then laid aside for six more, but rather a continuing, abiding experience of soul satisfaction not to be compared with any experience they have ever known! There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God. Not a laying aside of the physical activity of the flesh, but a casting upon Him of all the burdens and problems and perplexities of our everyday lives while we enjoy a peaceful, calm assurance that is free from struggle and strife in our hearts.

—C. W. Wilson

THE SABBATH

I. Sabbath Means Rest. (Ex. 31:15; Ex. 35:2)

II. There Was No Pre-Mosaic Sabbath—No Day Kept As A Rest-Day Until The Exodus. 1. The first mention of the Sabbath as a rest-day enjoined upon man that we have in the Bible was 2,500 years after the creation. (Exodus 16:23-30) 2. The covenant which contained the Sabbath commandment was not given to the people of God before the Exodus. (Deut. 5:2-22) 3. God made known the Sabbath

to Israel in the wilderness. (Neh. 9:13, 14) 4. "Enoch and all the rest, who neither observed Sabbaths, nor any other rites, seeing that Moses enjoined such observances. For if there was no need of circumcision before Abraham, or of the observance of the Sabbath, of feasts and sacrifices, before Moses, no more need is there of them now." "The Sabbath began with Moses."—Justin Martyr. "Abraham without circumcision, and without observing the Sabbath, believed in God."—Ireneus. "They (the Pre-Mosaic saints) did not observe the Sabbath, neither do we."—Tertullian. 5. The book of Genesis was not written at the time of creation, but 2,500 years after, and not until the law had been given on Sinai, in which the seventh-day Sabbath had been enjoined upon the children of Israel. Moses, in writing the history of creation, says that "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work," etc. Gen. 2:3. You see at a glance that the sanctifying of the day took place at a later date than God's rest. The day was not sanctified until God delivered it to Israel on Sinai. (Nehemiah 9:13, 14)

III. The Mosaic Sabbath: 1. Was the observance of every seventh day. (Ex. 20:8-10) 2. Was enjoined upon the Jewish nation alone, and the few Gentile proselytes who came within their gates. (Deut. 5:14, 15; Psa. 147:19, 20) a. What the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law. (Rom. 3:19) b. The Gentiles had not the law. (Rom. 2:14) c. Christians are not under the law. (Rom. 6:15) 3. Was simply a sign between God and the children of Israel. (Ex. 31:12-17; Deut. 5:15; Ezek. 20:10, 12) 4. It belonged to the "shadow of things to come." (Heb. 10:1; Col. 2:13-17) 5. The Ten Commandments compose the "old" and "first covenant" given on Sinai. (Deut. 5:2-22; Ex. 34:28; Deut. 4:13; Deut. 9:9, 11; Deut. 10:4; 1 Kings 8:21, 9; Heb. 9:4) 6. The covenant which containeth the Sabbath commandment is abolished. (Galatians 4:21-31; Heb. 8:6-13; Heb. 10:9, 10; 2 Cor. 3:3-18).

IV. The Christian Sabbath, Or Rest. 1. Is not the observance of any particular day. (Gal. 4:9-11; Rom. 14:5; Col. 2:16, 17) 2. Was prophesied as a spiritual rest; a rest of the soul that was to come through Christ. (Isa. 11:10; Jer. 6:16) 3. Christ taught that the Christian Sabbath is a rest of the soul. (Matt. 11:28, 29) 4. This is the Sabbath rest that now remains for the people of God since the law Sabbath was abolished. (Heb. 4:9, 10) 5. The Christian Sabbath is entered by faith. (Heb. 4:3).

V. The Mosaic Sabbath And The Christian Sabbath Compared. 1. The first was a rest of the body. (Ex. 35:2, 3) 2. The second is a rest of the soul. (Matt. 11:28, 29) 3. The

first enjoined but one day in seven—the seventh—to be kept holy. (Ex. 20:8-10) 4. The second enjoined that every day be kept holy. (Luke 1:74, 75) 5. Abstaining from manual labor constituted a holy day to the Jews. Performing manual labor made the day unholy to them. (Deut. 5:12-14; Ex. 31:14) 6. Performing manual labor or abstaining from labor does not make a day holy or unholy to us under the gospel dispensation. (Rom. 14:5, 6) By abstaining from sin and living holy lives, we keep every day holy. By living in sin, men make all their days unholy. 7. In the first, they abstain from manual labor. 8. In the second, we cease from sinful labor, or works. (Heb. 4:10) 9. By performing any manual labor on the former, they broke the Sabbath and suffered death as a penalty. (Ex. 31:14) 10. By indulging in sinful works, we lose our sweet soul rest and incur spiritual death. 11. The blessings of the former were but temporal. 12. The blessings of the latter are eternal. 13. The former was but a type of the latter. (Col. 2:16, 17; Heb. 4:10).

VI. The Example Of The Early Church Was To Assemble Together For Their Public Worship On The First Day Of The Week. (Luke 24:33, 36; John 20:26; Acts 2:1-4; Acts 20:6, 7; 1 Cor. 16:1-3) 1. It was called the "Lord's day" in honor of the resurrection. (Rev. 1:10) 2. We today follow the example of the early church, and set apart the first day of the week (Sunday) as a day of worship and spiritual devotion. 3. Since the laws of the land have set apart the first day of the week as a Sabbath day from manual labor, and we are law abiding citizens, we as a God-fearing people abstain from manual work in general on that day.

—from Bible Readings For Bible Students And For The Home And Fireside.—S. L. Speck and H. M. Riggle

April 30, 1972

CHRIST'S EQUALITY WITH GOD

John 5:19-32

John 5:19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

20 For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

23 That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself:

27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

31 If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.

32 There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.

Memory Verse: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. John 5:24.

Central Thought: Live always in view of the judgment to come, knowing that eternal life and safety is in Christ.

Word Definition: Quicken means "to make alive; to come to life." Quick means "living." Condemnation means "state

or fact of being condemned." Condemn means "to pronounce guilty; to convict of guilt." (Webster's Dictionary)

LESSON BACKGROUND

The last verse in last Sunday's lesson tells us why the Jews sought to kill Jesus. One was because He had broken the Sabbath or they pretended He had dissolved the obligation of keeping it holy. The other was, that He was guilty of blasphemy, in making Himself equal to God. For both of these crimes, according to the law of Moses, a person must suffer death. See Num. 15:31; Lev. 24:11, 14, 16.

In today's lesson, our Saviour deals with the answer to these two accusations yet more in declaring His identity and equality with God. In verses 19-23, He shows His relation to the Father. In verses 24-29, He shows His relation to men. The Son doeth nothing self-determined of Himself, which would be impossible, (verse 19). Notice that the thoughts and statements in verses 19-22 are bound together with the four words, "for".

Jesus points out that if He had broken the Sabbath, God had, also. They work together. Jesus also points out that God, the Father, raised up the dead (verse 21) which we read about in the Old Testament. (1 Kings 17:22-widow's son; 2 Kings 4:32-35-Shunammite's son) Then Jesus says, "the Son quickeneth whom he will." We know that He raised the dead as in the case of the ruler's daughter, Mark 5:35-42; Lazarus, John 11:14-44 and the widow's son, Luke 7:11-15.

We want to note in our lesson in verses 24-27 that Jesus is speaking of the work in the soul of bringing it out of a dead state in sin and making it alive in God. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." Eph. 2:1. There are three kinds of death spoken of in the scriptures; natural, spiritual, and eternal. Natural would be separation of the body and soul. Spiritual would be the separation of God and the soul. Eternal is the separation of body and soul from God in the other world. There are also three kinds of life. Natural life is the union of soul and body. Spiritual life is the union of God and the soul, by faith and love. Eternal life begins in the redeemed soul here but to those who are faithful, it consists in the final life in the realms of bliss.

We note in verses 28, 29 Jesus speaks of His judging the world and all will come out of the graves.

Lesson References: Eph. 2:1; 1 Cor. 15:52; Dan. 12:2; Luke 7:14.

QUESTIONS:

1. In Jesus' statements declaring that He and the Father were one, what did He point to as some proof? 2. What did Jesus mean when He spoke of believers who have "passed from death unto life?" 3. If Jesus has "life in himself," to whom can He give eternal life, and will it be just for this life, in this world? 4. Discuss the first resurrection and the second resurrection. 5. The other one that Jesus spoke of in verse 32 as bearing witness of His being the Son of God is the Spirit of God speaking through the prophets. Can you tell of some prophecy of the Old Testament that was fulfilled in Christ?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

With awe and reverence, I studied this portion of scriptures which is our lesson today. Jesus, the Son of God, has revealed to us some wonderful deep truths. The revelation to us of the Godhead, and its workings, makes us know that they are one, yet in subordination to God. The Son is equal to God, yet both are interested in our salvation. God bore witness of His Son to come, through the inspiration of the prophets of old. They spoke of Him as they received glimpses of His coming here to this world, living and dying for our salvation. Verse 32 makes us know of this witness. We thank God for the Son of God and we want to live so we will be ready to die because after death there is no time to get ready. We want to be among that number who will be resurrected to eternal life in the realms of bliss. But we must have partaken of the first resurrection of our soul from a dead state to eternal life here in this world so we can be ready for the second resurrection in that last day when the trumpet will sound and the dead will come forth from the graves.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When we read the record of the Scripture and follow the pattern it lays down from the prophets on down to its fulfillment, it is easy for us to accept Jesus as the very Son of God. But suppose someone clothed in flesh just like you and me were to present himself to us and assert that he was the Son of God, what do you suppose would be our reaction?

Jesus was conceived of the Holy Ghost just as the angel witnessed to Mary that He would be. The power of the Highest came upon her so that this was indeed God's own Son, a part and parcel of His very Self. It was His Word made flesh to dwell among us. Then why would not the

Father be in complete accord with the Son, both being of the same lineage? Of course He would be, and proved it time and time again when He acknowledged His son before man.

The Lord taught us, in the account of the prodigal son, of one son who remained in his father's house, and when he objected to the banquet and all the proceedings for the returned prodigal, the father testified to him that all that he had was available to him all the time. This, in essence, is what Jesus was attempting to convey to the minds of these people in the lesson. Everything the Father possessed was entrusted into His hands, and because He was true to the Father, therefore He would administer it exactly the same as His Father would, had He been there. On this basis then, to reject Jesus was to reject the Father. To embrace Him was to embrace the Father.

God is a person, an individual, a being who is the ultimate in moral virtue and character. His offspring, which proceeded forth from Him, was in His likeness for His own qualities and characteristics were transmitted to His Son. That is why they are so completely one and yet, at the same, individual. Separate beings, but both molded from the same pattern.

What a sobering thought this is when we aspire to designate ourselves the sons of God by virtue of a new birth, being born of His Spirit. What a pattern of holiness, of virtue, of purity of heart and character for us to live up to! What a responsibility for us to fulfill before God, ourselves, the saints, and the world about us! When others look on our lives, can they see God and His nature, or is something else on display? No wonder Paul expressed it as, "Yea, what clearing of yourselves."

—C. W. Wilson

GOING BY THE BOOK

A foreman on deck of a steam-ship in the ship-building yard on the Clyde said to his carpenter, "Well, Scott, I want to talk to you. I'm told you are one of those who say they know they are saved. Is that true?"

"Yes, thank God, I know I'm saved; there is nothing I am more sure of than that," replied Scott.

"Well, now," replied the foreman, "that is something I don't understand, how any man can say he is saved as long as he is in this world. I think it is too presumptuous to say that."

"Well," said Scott, "whatever you may say about presumption, it is real to be saved, and know it. What is the breadth of this water-way?"

The foreman, astonished, said, "Why fourteen inches all around. What makes you ask that, when you know?"

"But are you sure it is fourteen inches?" said Scott.

"Certainly." "But what makes you so sure?" asked Scott.

"Why, I'm going by the book. I'm sure it is fourteen inches, for here it is in the book, and I got the book from headquarters."

"Oh, I see," said Scott. "That is exactly how I know I'm saved. I'm going by the Book. It came from Headquarters. It is God's Book." —Sel.

May 7, 1972

CHRIST'S PROOF OF HIS DIVINITY

John 5:33-47

John 5:33 Ye [Jews] sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.

34 But I [Jesus] receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved.

35 He [John] was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

36 But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

37 And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

38 And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

41 I receive not honour from men.

42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.

43 I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

44 How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?

45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust.

46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

47 But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

Memory Verse: Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. John 5:39.

Central Thought: Man should never trifle with the Gospel, for it is able to make him wise unto salvation through Jesus Christ.

Word Definition: Search means to subject to a thorough inspection; to examine; to scrutinize; to make inquiry.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson is a continuation of last Sunday's thought. The Jews accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath, but in our lesson (verse 45), Jesus asked the Jews if they thought He would accuse them to God, the Father. He told them that Moses, whom they had a practice of referring to and trusting in, already had accused them of a breach of the whole law. Moses wrote of Jesus and they would not believe him. (See Gen. 49:10; Deut. 28:18; also Acts 3:22; 7:37.)

Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible. Note what Jesus said in verses 46, 47 about His belief in what Moses wrote. When you read those books, remember that Jesus wrote them and has left it on record for us that what Moses wrote was true. This takes in the creation of the world and man, etc.

It is supposed that John had been cast into prison about four months before this time.

The time of our lesson was 28 A. D.

Lesson References: 1 John 5:9; Matt. 17:5; Isa. 8:20; 1 Thess. 2:6.

QUESTIONS:

1. How was John the Baptist a witness of Jesus? 2. What greater witness did Jesus have than John? 3. Discuss how

a person can be a "burning and shining light" today. 4. What proof did Jesus continually refer to that He was the Messiah that the Jews were looking for? 5. Discuss the books that Moses wrote and what did Jesus say about them after He had read them?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

Do we need any stronger argument to the divinity of Christ than we have in these scriptures? When a person is determined not to believe in Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, then any proof is lost on that person. But how blessed it is to believe! What a work belief will work in one's soul and in his life! There are multitudes of witnesses down through the years that if they could speak today, would proclaim that Christ is the Saviour because they found, by experience, that by obeying His words, it brought sweet peace to the soul. Today, there are many witnesses living that speak the same thing. I, for one, can testify that there is no other way to live in this life only for Christ. Many young people today have found Christ to be the answer to all their problems. There is no generation gap between those who love Christ because all are desiring to obey His words which work in the soul of the young as well as in the old.

Jesus spoke of John as being a "burning and a shining light." Dear ones, it takes the burning for a light to shine. Some might say they are followers of Christ, but do you see the light shining from their lives which is an evidence that they have had their desires, their ways, their ideas and their ambitions burned up or destroyed? The burning makes the light. It takes the Holy Spirit fire to burn out and cleanse the heart of carnal desires. Study the life of Peter before and then after he was filled with the Holy Spirit. Are you trying to save your life? We must lose it for Christ's sake to save it.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The title of our lesson is "Christ's Proof of His Divinity." Immediately, there comes to our mind the question, "Proof to whom?" If Jesus was human, and we believe that at least one part of His being was, then there would need to be assurance within Himself that would sustain Him and give Him courage to continue on. If He did not experience that need, then why did He offer to us the consolation that He had trod the way before us and knew exactly how to succor us in our need? At various times, and on different

occasions, He gives us glimpses of His Father's communion and witness of His approval. After the conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well, His cup was so full that it took His appetite. Is not this a witness of the pleasure of the Father upon Him? On one occasion, after having taught the people in parables, He gave thanks to the Father for having hid those things from the wise and prudent and having revealed them unto babes. Was this not a recognition that His Father had bestowed upon Him a special wisdom to know how to expound His truth? As you read the Sacred Scripture, take special note of these indications that let us know that the Father Himself was constantly reassuring His only begotten, just as He reassures each one of us who have been born again and follow His wishes. It is necessary that we receive that help along the way lest we fall into despair and become faint in our hearts. One who has known the Lord and becomes acquainted with His dealing is not hard to convince. It is an entirely different matter to attempt to convince the outside world. Christ offered the people in His day an abundance of evidence to convince them of His divine origin, and still they refused Him. Then He left us the admonition that if they do those things in the green tree, what would they do in the dry? This indicates to us that even as they would not accept and receive the evidence He had to offer, neither would they accept nor receive what we would have to offer. Volumes of evidence will have little effect on the heart that is already fixed in its refusal to accept. Christ was unable to convince some in His day; you and I will be unable now. A neutral mind that is open and honest can be convinced. A fixed mind is closed and hardened. Folks who will ignore plain, reasonable teaching of truth and continue to defend their error won't accept us now any more than they did the Savior when He was here.

—C. W. Wilson

HONESTY

Jesus has told us that we "are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." Matt. 5:14. One time, I had some things happen to me within a few months that caused me to think of this scripture. God wants us to be examples of honesty to the world. I had gone to the creamery to buy a gallon of cottage cheese to help with a dinner. When I got home, I found it was a gallon of sour cream. This, of course, would have cost a great deal more than I had paid for. I took it back. Later, I bought several pieces of material to give to a needy mother who was getting ready for campmeeting. When I got home with my package,

there was an extra piece of real nice material and a pair of scissors in it. I had to take that back also. Later, I gave a clerk ten dollars to pay for some things I had purchased and she gave me change for a twenty. I, of course, immediately called her attention to that mistake. After this, I walked up to the bank window to take care of some business and a five dollar bill was lying there. I could have easily put it with my own money, but I gave it to the clerk and told him about it. I got to thinking about these things. The Lord made me know that He let these things happen so we could be a light to others. Surely there were many who had to stop and think about being honest. Each one seemed appreciative that I had corrected his mistake. Jesus also told us, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. 5:16. In this world of corruption, others will have to acknowledge that only those who know God will be perfectly honest with themselves and others. —M. Miles

May 14, 1972

CHRIST IS THE SUPPORT OF LIFE

John 6:1-15

John 6:1 After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias.

2 And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.

3 And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

4 And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

5 When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

6 And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.

7 Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,

9 There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?

10 And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down; in number about five thousand.

11 And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.

12 When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.

13 Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

14 Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

15 When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

Memory Verse: Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Matt. 6:34.

Central Thought: What we place in God's hands is multiplied and His purpose is worked out in our lives.

Word Definition: Prove him means "to test or try him." That Prophet means "Messiah".

LESSON BACKGROUND

" 'After these things' clearly means a considerable interval, for nearly a year had expired since the healing of the impotent man and the discourse to which it gave rise in the preceding chapter. Jesus was now at the Sea of Galilee and had spent the greater part of this interval in Galilee. He had made His second and third circuits through that portion of Palestine; had begun to speak by parables; and had performed many miracles, all of which are passed in silence by the Evangelist John."—McDonald.

The miracle of feeding of the five thousand is recorded by all the Evangelists. See Matt. 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44;

Luke 9:10-17. It is an entirely different miracle from that of feeding the four thousand.

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are the four who wrote about the life and works of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.

Ten farthings equal one penny in Greek and Roman money. One Greek or Roman penny equals 15c in American money. —(Smith's Bible Dictionary) Two hundred pennyworth would be \$30.00.

Someone has said that "Order is heaven's first law." We notice that Jesus had the five thousand sit down in "ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties." (Mark 6:40).

The fragments were saved. All of God's gifts are valuable and must be preserved. Wastefulness is against God's laws.

The Apostle John recorded eight miracles that Jesus did. This is the fourth miracle.

Lesson References: 2 Kings 4:43; Ex. 23:25; 1 Tim. 4:5; "That Prophet"—Gen. 49:10; Deut. 18:15, 18; Isa. 9:6; Isa. 35:5.

QUESTIONS:

1. Name some other miracles that compare to this one; such as: multiplying of widow's cruse of oil and the barrel of meal. (1 Kings 17:16). 2. Should we try to figure out just how the miracle was done or simply accept it as the creative act of God? 3. Discuss Jesus' proving Philip. 4. What are we today to do about our left-overs? 5. At the time of our lesson the Old Testament was written and studied by the Jews. What did the men who saw this miracle say about Jesus?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

In this miracle of feeding the five thousand we find that we need to have just simple faith in the creative power of our Lord and Saviour. Just as God spoke and there was light, Jesus blessed the loaves and fishes, brake and gave them out and it fed the five thousand. To receive anything from God we need just that same faith. It's not for us to figure out just how it will come or how it will be done but just believe that God can speak and it will come to pass. If we would seek to know in just what manner it was done or how, it eludes our grasp. So we need just simple child-like faith to believe God can do all things consistent with His nature and character.

We plant seeds in the ground and they sprout and grow and bring forth a great many seeds. We see the miracle of

the five loaves and two fishes growing in Jesus' hands to feed the five thousand. It's truly wonderful! And just think about it, this is the same Jesus Christ whom we serve today. He can do the same for us.

We notice that Jesus spoke to Philip about feeding the five thousand. Philip had been with Jesus over a year or more and saw Him perform many miracles but in answer to the question we find him using human reasonings. Are we not prone today to try to use some human reasonings in our problems? Oh, if we would only put them in God's hands and know that He is able to perform a miracle for us then we would save ourselves many anxious moments. May God give us an increase of faith. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

If you were invited to partake of a meal spread by a king, what sort of fare would you expect to receive? Or, on the other hand, if you were a king in your own right, would you be ashamed to offer just bread and fish to those who were your guests?

Questions such as these open up avenues of deep thought into the character and motive of our Savior. He was indeed a King, in fact, a King of kings and Lord of lords. His Father was the Creator of the whole universe, and all of the very best was in His hands. The banquet that He could have spread before the people might have been one such as never was before nor since for splendor and elegance, and its fame spread far and near among the people. An earthly king would no doubt have felt compelled to put on such a demonstration as that in order to establish in everyone's mind that he was capable, and therefore worthy of recognition. That is human reaction. The Son of God did not come to establish a reputation among the people, nor to draw multitudes to Himself. He was not building a material dynasty for Himself, but rather His mission and purpose was to invite men into the kingdom of His Father. Material pomp and show will not draw souls toward the kingdom of God. Jesus was not attempting to draw people's attention toward what He could do, nor the miracles He could perform, but rather He sought to lift their vision to a higher plain where they could perceive the beauty and glory of a heavenly character. Had He been willing to indulge in the practices and customs of the elite, in just a short time the common people would have been left out, for unless they could somehow come by sufficient means, they would not feel free to attend. Oh! but when He kept it all plain and simple, then everyone would be able to come and partake and at the same time hear the gracious words that fell from His lips.

That was the important part all the time. May we ever practice to keep the gospel we present so plain and common and simple until all who come and partake can feel comfortable and welcome!

—C. W. Wilson

I HEARD MY MOTHER CALL MY NAME IN PRAYER

While kneeling by her bedside in a cottage on the hill,

My mother prayed her blessings on me there.

She was talking then to Jesus while every thing was still,

I heard my mother call my name in prayer.

She was anxious for her boy to be just what he ought to be,

She asked the Lord to take him in His care—

Just the words I can't remember, but I know she prayed for me,

For I heard my mother call my name in prayer.

My heart was touched and tendered by the prayer that mother prayed.

I can almost see her form bending there,

As she told her blessed Savior just how far from him I've strayed;

Yes, I heard my mother call my name in prayer.

Then I gave my heart to Jesus and I'm living now for Him,

And some day I'll go meet Him in the air,

For He heard my mother praying and He saved my soul from sin;

I know He heard my mother call my name in prayer.

May 21, 1972

PEACE ON TROUBLED WATERS

John 6:15-20; Matt. 14:28-33

John 6:15 When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

16 And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea,

17 And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.

18 And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew.

19 So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid.

20 But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid.

Matt. 14:28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

32 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, of a truth thou art the Son of God.

Memory Verse: These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. John 16:33.

Central Thought: Our faith needs to be quickened and our confidence and trust become strong in Jesus, knowing that He is with us in the events and circumstances that surround us even though we do not recognize Him at first.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Jesus left the people, who were overwhelmed at the mighty power that they saw through the miracle of feeding the five thousand. He did not want to be their earthly king. His kingship was not of this world, yet in the miracle He showed His true royal dignity. No doubt this is the reason He wanted His disciples to depart to the other side as He did not want them to be infected by the carnal enthusiasm of the people.

"In Syria and Palestine, during winter and spring, sudden storms arise at regular intervals, lasting usually two or three or more days. Then the turmoil of the elements is often awe-inspiring and grand. The rains fall with tropical violence, lightning flashes all around, whilst the thunder crashes overhead and reverberates among the valleys and ravines of the hillsides. From those heights the storm-winds rush in fury and roar over the level country, lashing the waters of those inland lakes into stormy commotion, and sending foam-capped waves dashing on the shore."—Hom. Comm.

Five and twenty or thirty furlongs means between three and four miles. The sea of Tiberias upon which they were, according to Josephus, was five miles in breadth and 18 miles in length.

This is the fifth miracle recorded by John that Jesus performed.

We do not want to just conclude that Christ's body was exempt to the natural law of gravitation and stop there. We must acknowledge that we see a higher law or the spiritual law working in the midst of the natural laws. We see Peter entering into this active faith when his will came to absolute harmony with the will of Christ. Peter walked as long as his faith held strong and he looked at Jesus.

For some who want to think on this a little farther you might note that a person's body is lighter when he is awake. Would one's consciousness work as an opposing force to the attraction of the earth?

Lesson References: Mark 6:48; Matthew 28:45-52; Matt. 22-33; John 14:1.

QUESTIONS:

1. Do we need to seek a place of prayer when others are wanting to honor us as well as when they persecute us?
2. Compare your life for God as a voyage upon a sea.
3. Discuss Peter walking upon the water and his faith.
4. Tell some of the incidents of the fierce storms the church has faced down through the years. Did it go down?
5. Discuss the

power of God that can alter the natural laws that God has set up in this world, such as walking on the water.

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

Oh, the glories from heaven that flood our souls when our sins are forgiven and we know that all is clear between us and our God! All condemnation is gone and we are blessed beyond words to express. Then soon we come face to face with a mighty foe. Giant doubt and fear come marching right into our view as we set sail out on the sea of the Christian life. There is the scorn of our friends and maybe loved ones, which hit us sharply from another side. Then some of those wrongs we need to make right grow as mighty waves which tower over us, ready to dash us to the bottom of the sea of despair. Where is Jesus, who, not too long ago was so real to us? Has He left us alone to buffet with the winds and waves of the world's opposition? Is this what we will have to face alone on the sea of the Christian life? Oh no, Jesus will never leave us alone. Listen, don't you hear those words of Jesus ringing out above the howl of the storm? "Let not your heart be troubled." "It is I, be not afraid." Jesus is watching. Jesus is near. Jesus came when He thought it was the right time to come. He will never leave us nor forsake us. He will help us. We need to get our spiritual ears sharpened. We need to set our eyes on things higher than the waves of opposition around us. We need to look up and look to Jesus. He is there to guide us and to comfort us. He is there to speak the word and the calmness that faith brings and cheer will flood our souls. He will impart power within us to face those waves and walk upon them, but we must not doubt as Peter or we will sink. If we doubt, but cry to the Lord as Peter did, Jesus will reach out His hand and lift us up.

The church on the earth is like a ship. The ship has to contend with the winds and waves of opposition but God will bring it to a safe and quiet haven since Jesus is the ship's captain.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Had there been any human ambition of any kind within the bosom of the Savior He would have remained among the multitude where honor and recognition were building up for Him. He would have cultivated that accumulation of prestige, and, no doubt, could have worked it into quite an influence. How reasonable it would have been! Here was a whole multitude who were interested in the things of God. They had responded well and indicated it actively by their willingness

to accept Him and give esteem to what He had to say. It would not be wisdom to leave them to the ravages of the enemy who would rush in and separate and divide and destroy if He left them alone! Is not all this logical, sound reasoning? What is the one factor that must take precedence over, and exercise jurisdiction above, all human reasoning in our lives, as well as that of the Son of God? It is purely and simply the will of the Father. His ways will not follow our human, reasoned-out ways, but rather we must submit our ways to His superior guidance. No one knew this any better than His own dear Son. He did not hesitate, nor falter for a moment. When He realized that what the people had in mind to do would hinder Him in doing the will of His heavenly Father, He simply conveyed Himself away from their presence and continued on to do His Father's will.

You and I will find it necessary to follow the same rule if we would aspire to remain in the will of God. To give place to the prompting of the people and begin to cater to the sentiment of the crowd will soon eliminate the leading of the Lord in our lives, and sever our contact with His guiding hand. Our ways are not His ways, nor is the way of a multitude His way, either! Not one man, nor a hundred, nor a thousand can fathom the will of God to the extent that we no longer need His leading for us. We must receive it from Him and walk by it as it comes, or else we lose His divine leadership.

—C. W. Wilson

STEP OUT

Step out on the waves that would crush you!
Step out in the storm that would hush you!
And you will find, as you touch the crest
You feared so much, and walk on its breast,
There was One walking there, the whole night through,
Walking, watching, waiting—FOR YOU!

The Apostle Paul said, "when I am weak, then am I strong." 2 Cor. 12:10. When we feel our very weakest and look to Jesus we are more dependent upon Him than we ever are. The very weakness makes us look for something strong. When you are faint you look for a chair or a support. When the problems come and the pressures are from different sources you feel a great need of an outlet. Where can you go but to the Lord? In that very distressing time you are drawn to the Lord. God will bless those who depend upon Him. Faith is the strongest at that time because of the great need. The disciples felt their helplessness out there in the storm. Peter probably would never have walked on the water if he had

not been in the storm and had felt his need of Jesus. He wanted to be near One who was so great and mighty and who controlled the storms. He stepped out by faith. The thing that brought distress and fear he could step right upon with no fear. Why? Because he had his eyes on Jesus.

We are told that on the American prairies the butterflies will start westward in their migrations. They will make progress even though the wind is against them and the sea in front. Someone has said, "The delicate butterflies rebuke me."

The golden-crested wren will rebuke us also. It is the tiniest of birds. It is said to weigh only the fifth part of an ounce, but it will face hurricanes and will cross the northern seas.

Step out, lean heavily upon the grace of God. God has told us, "My grace is sufficient for thee." The Apostle Paul adds, "For my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." 2 Cor. 12:9. He suffered for "Christ's sake". So be strong in the Lord. Don't let your faith fail. God will see you through. —M. Miles

May 28, 1972

LOVE THE GIVER MORE THAN HIS GIFTS

John 6:24-29; 37, 38, 40, 42-47

John 6:24 When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.

25 And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

28 Then said they unto him, what shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

42 And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.

44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

45 It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

Memory Verse: But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Matt. 6:33.

Central Thought: If we seek the spiritual, the material will in due measure be given.

Word Definition: Labor not means "work not." (Bible margin.)

LESSON BACKGROUND

We must remember that those people of Capernaum, who sought after Jesus, wanted to make Him a king. Therefore, they felt they would be partakers of His material blessings such as they had partaken of by eating of the multiplied loaves and fishes.

Christ's kingdom was not to be a kingdom similar to those of this world. He had repulsed at the very beginning of His ministry those temptations by Satan to give Him the kingdoms of this world if He would fall down and worship him. (Matt. 4:8-10). But the kingdom of God which Christ has

established is not to be compared with the empires or kingdoms of earth, which are but for a brief space. This spiritual kingdom is far above all earthly kingdoms. It was to be set up in the hearts of men. (Dan. 2:44, 45; Luke 16:16; 17:20, 21). Those whom the Father draws unto Himself become citizens or members through a great spiritual conversion that takes place within them and unites them in oneness of spirit and aim with the King and with their fellow-subjects. Christ is the center and His kingdom is one of light and life. Those who come to Jesus abide eternally. They seek earnestly to rise to the Saviour's example of perfect obedience. The longer they taste of His rule the more they desire closer fellowship with their King. They want His will and the will of the Father to be their will.

Our printed lesson portion for today was preached by Jesus in the synagogue in Capernaum where He was constantly interrupted by the Jews. (John 6:59).

Lesson References: Matt. 3:17; John 4:14; Luke 22:42; 1 John 2:19.

QUESTIONS:

1. How did our lesson prove that material things satisfy only for a moment? 2. What is to be our first and supreme concern in life? What is to be the second? 3. Why would a rich man take his life? What did he need to be fully satisfied? 4. What did Jesus say was the foundation of our working God's works? 5. What will come to us if we do the will of God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

The material food that Jesus miraculously provided for the hungry multitudes satisfied only for the moment. Soon they were seeking Him for further material manifestations. All around us we see and hear of the widespread discontent in the world because so many are seeking after the material things. Not only does the Scripture teach us this, but also human history—the religious rites of heathenism, ruined shrines and temples of religions of peoples of the past, colossal fortunes of many, scientific and intellectual pursuits, the ever seeking pleasure-seeking crowd, unrest, wars and rumors of wars. The material satisfies men only for a brief time. God alone, who is the Source of all spiritual blessings, can fill up the needs of our higher nature. The spiritual life must come first. Seeking after the Giver of all good gifts will give us the needed gifts. His children possess all things. There will be none of that over-anxious striving for material things that often takes the joy out of life, and at times embitters it. Those who love

the Giver more than the gift will have that sweet angel of content ever dwelling with them.

It was an important question which the people asked Jesus in Capernaum when they asked, "How shall men work the works of God?" Jesus pointed them to the foundation work and that was to believe. Faith must work by love. (Gal. 5:6). And it is only when we believe in Christ, become His, and are filled with His Spirit of love that, like Him, we shall delight to do our Father's will. Without a living faith and the assured hope and peace that faith brings, all our work would be but vanity. This is the foundation work. We will ever be seeking to serve God after the example of Jesus, especially in the works of mercy, kindness and love. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In the twenty-ninth verse of the lesson we find the embodiment of man's basic responsibility toward himself, and all he is able to offer toward the work of salvation. Review the entire plan that God has worked out for fallen man, and see where man's part appears. Man could make no sacrifice that would effect his redemption, for he had no perfect sacrifice to give. The blood of bulls and goats would answer for the committed sin, but it had no power to cleanse the heart and remove the cause. But even the animals belonged to God, and He graciously gave permission for their lives to be taken in lieu of man's life. Man had not enough wisdom to devise a means of escape from sin; it took the wisdom and mercy and grace of God to work a work that would be acceptable to do the job completely.

God worked out the plan. He offered a sacrifice in righteousness that He could accept. His sacrifice was able to meet the need of our souls and purge out the cause of sin in the heart. The Sacrifice, Himself, before He was offered, taught us how the plan would work, and He demonstrated to us the way that we must follow. When God and His perfect sacrifice had done all that they could do, and made every provision that they could make, there was still one thing that must be reckoned with before the plan could become effective. The ones they sought to deliver must believe. There is no way for man to obtain anything from the Lord unless he believes there is a God and that this God will reward a diligent search for Him. All the sacrifice, trouble, time, and effort that the heavenly host has invested in man's salvation becomes fruitless and of no avail if the object of their concern will not even believe that they exist and have made provision for him. God's plan is doomed to failure unless we believe. That is the only contribution we have, or are able to make to the plan of sal-

vation, but the plan is incomplete and ineffective without that one factor. As we supply the belief, it becomes a part of the work of God and our salvation becomes effective and complete. If we would aspire to work the works of God, then our prime contribution is to believe.

—C. W. Wilson

ALL THE LORD HAS LEFT

"When I was sixteen I claimed to get saved," said an elderly lawyer recently. "Several months later, one blustery January day, Deacon Crandall stopped me on the road. There had been a number of fine catches of fish through the ice, and Joe and I were ready for an early start next morning."

"I've been over to Jake Streeter's," the deacon said. "The folks are all sick, and my wife and Miss Adams wanted to send over some things. There was no fire in the house to speak of, Robert, and there ain't a stick of wood in the shed, so I'm going to draw 'em a load of four-foot and enough stove wood to last 'em over night. Why can't you play the Good Samaritan and saw it up in the morning?"

"Joe and I plan to go fishing tomorrow," I replied. "I guess you'll have to look up somebody else."

"I see," the deacon said mildly. "I didn't know that. I thought it would be a good chance for you. The way it comes to me is that you and he and the rest of us are all the Lord Jesus has left to tell what a good, self-denying Savior He was. If there were no Christians living up to their high calling, Robert, there wouldn't be a whisper for the Lord—not a whisper—this side of heaven. I thought maybe you'd prize the chance and be glad to take it."

I gave up my fishing trip and sawed the wood, and I learned that day what real service was, and since then whenever I've been tempted to shirk my Christian obligations Deacon Crandall's homely aphorism has rebuked me:

"We're all the Lord Jesus has left!"

—Sel.

June 4, 1972

CAPERNAUM HEARERS TESTED

John 6:51, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60-69

John 6:51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; Who can hear it?

61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?

62 What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?

63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.

64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

66 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, will ye also go away?

68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.

69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

Memory Verse: It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. John 6:63.

Central Thought: We must be partakers of Christ's life, which flows into our souls, nourishing and building us up. We are members of His body, partaking of His Spirit, branches of the living vine, nourished and made fruitful by His life in us.

Word Definition: "Eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life." "Eating and drink ideas are borrowed to express partaking of, and sharing in."—Pearce. "This can never be understood of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper."—Clarke.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Jesus gave this discourse in the synagogue in Capernaum. He fed the 5,000 people the natural bread, and now He is bringing to their attention that He is the true Bread of Life.

Much research has been done trying to find a resemblance between manna given to the Israelites and something that falls from a certain shrub and other plants of the Sinai Peninsula. An Arab physician describes it as "a dew which falls on stones or bushes, becomes thick like honey, and can be hardened so as to be like grains of corn." It is said that many in that country eat this in a form of syrup with bread. But we believe God performed a miracle in giving the manna. It was a constant supply for forty years and ceased when the Israelites crossed the Jordan River. It would not keep overnight for them. They had manna to eat, and they also ate of their flocks and herds. (Exodus 16). Jesus referred to the manna as a type of Himself.

In verse 64 Jesus mentioned that He knew who would betray Him. In our unprinted portion we read that Jesus told His disciples He had chosen twelve and one of them was "a devil." John lets us know that He is referring to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, who would betray Jesus. (John 6: 70-71).

Lesson References: Heb. 10:5, 10; 1 John 4:15; Matt. 11: 6; Romans 8:2; Exodus 16:11-35.

QUESTIONS:

1. Would eating of Christ, who is the Bread of Life, be salvation of the soul? How is that obtained?
 2. Discuss the
- (45)

manna given to the Israelites and it being a type of Christ. 3. Compare the natural bread, which is the staff of life, and the spiritual Bread, which is Christ in the soul. 4. Why did many refuse to pass the test that Jesus gave them through His discourse on His coming from heaven as the Bread of life? 5. Discuss Peter's reply when he was asked if they, the twelve, would also go away.

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

"The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Clarke comments that this is "one of the weightiest, and one of the truest and most important sayings in the book of God." Jesus, the Son of God, suffered greatly in body and His humiliation was of the most degrading according to the world's ideas. Jesus became obedient unto death, that He might become bread for us. In the lowliest hut you find bread. It is a universal food, simple and common. Follow the course of the sun around the world, and almost everywhere you will find bread in some form or other; thus it is well named the staff of life. Just so, Christ is the universal spiritual food for humanity. Just as the body needs bread for its existence the soul needs bread for its partaking of eternal life. As we turn away from earthly things and seek after Christ, confessing our sins and yielding to Christ, He forgives us of our sins. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit our desires and longings are satisfied in Christ. He is in us and we are in Him. This is a union that only can be obtained if we will partake of Christ and make Him Lord of our life. Jesus came to give us the Bread of Life that fully satisfies.

Youth goes out to seek pleasure, maturity, honors, and rewards. But he finds that earthly things change their aspect with time and fashion. What delighted yesterday is counted of little worth today; what fascinates today will have lost its glamour tomorrow. It is not so with Christ and the treasures He brings into the life. In Him are unfailing sources of satisfaction, and joys that never fade. They become more and more satisfying right to the end. Those who feed on this spiritual Bread show a growth in grace and knowledge and every spiritual gift. The "inward man is renewed day by day."

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The words of this lesson are shocking and repulsive if taken at face value, and applied exactly as they read. One of the most despicable practices known to mankind is for one human to devour another, literally. That practice we recognize as

cannibalism. Over and over again we read where Christianity, when carried to lands and peoples where such practices were common, overcame the heinous thing and elevated men's lives above such awful acts. Can it be possible then, that the Lord intended for His followers, where He was concerned, to turn cannibal and devour Him literally, flesh and blood? In verse 56 He plainly states that by eating His flesh and drinking His blood we would be assured of His indwelling in us and our being able to dwell in Him. Many heathens believe that if someone has a strong member of body and they can acquire and devour that member, its superior quality will be imparted to them. For instance, if someone they know has excellent eyesight, and they can obtain and devour their eyes, then their own vision will improve to the level of the other. If the words of Christ in the lesson are indeed to be taken literally, then the heathen is more nearly correct than the Christian. If He intended us to devour Him literally, in order to obtain His likeness, then He defeated His own mission, for His literal body was never found after the resurrection. How could we eat something we could not find? No, He was not speaking in literal terms. He was the embodiment of the Word, which was made flesh and dwelt among us. His blood, which is the life-giving quality of the flesh, finds its counterpart in the Spirit, which is the life-giving quality of the Word. His flesh and His blood, in the literal, become the Word and the Spirit in the spiritual. The spiritual can be devoured, and yet not consumed, or even damaged. Its ingestion in us will indeed transform us into its likeness so that His image appears in us, yet, instead of His being consumed, He becomes the stronger by having gained us. As He is, so are we in this life. We become so by feeding on His heavenly qualities and virtues of character, for then they become real, and active in our lives, glorifying Him.

—C. W. Wilson

HOW TO DIGEST SPIRITUAL FOOD

Andrew Bonar tells of a simple Christian in a farmhouse who had "meditated the Bible through three times." This is precisely what the Psalmist had done; he had gone past reading into meditation. Like Luther, he "had shaken every tree in God's garden, and gathered fruit therefrom."

The idea of meditations is "to get into the middle of a thing." Meditation is to the mind what digestion is to the body. Unless the food be digested, the body receives no benefit from it. If we would derive the fullest benefit from what we read or hear, there must be that mental digestion known as meditation. If we would "buy the truth" we must pay the price which Paul intimates when he wrote to Timothy, "Medi-

tate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them." David meditated in God's Word because he loved it, and he loved it the more because he meditated in it. —Sel.

June 11, 1972

TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE

John 7:1, 2, 10-18, 23-26, 31

John 7:1 After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.

2 Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand.

10 But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.

11 Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he?

12 And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man; others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people.

13 Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.

14 Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.

15 And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

16 Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

18 He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

23 If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?

24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

25 Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill?

26 But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?

31 And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?

Memory Verse: Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. John 7:24.

Central Thought: Earthly mindedness and prejudices will cause people to turn a deaf ear to the voice of truth. If we are to be with Him, there we must seek Him here and listen to His teachings.

Word Definition: Jewry means, "the people of Judea." Doctrine here would mean Jesus' teachings.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The Feast of Tabernacles was held each year on the 15th day of the month of Tisri (September-October). Lev. 23:33-43.

"About six months had passed since the discourse at Capernaum, following the miracle of feeding the five thousand." The green grass had withered on the Galilean hillside and when this chapter opens the fields had been reaped and the fruits gathered in. The people were preparing for the feast of tabernacles.

"This feast was celebrated in this manner. All the people cut down branches of palm trees, willows, and myrtles, (and tied them together with gold and silver cords, or with ribbons,) which they carried with them all day, took them into their synagogues, and kept them by them while at prayers. . . . On this day many sacrifices were offered."—Clarke's Com. For seven days the people lived in huts constructed of branches in memory of the wilderness march of their fathers toward Canaan land.

The Apostle John omits many things that the other evangelists mention. Jesus had traveled over Galilee four or five times yet He continued there. He knew that the hatred of the Jews was of such that they would kill Him if He had gone into Judea so He lingered and went up later to the feast, secretly at first.

The power of the Sanhedrin was great. Acts 8:3. None of the Jews wanted to incur their wrath. Yet even His enemies were astonished at His teachings. Such a teacher! and yet not of the schools.

Lesson References: Lev. 23:34; Matt. 21:46; Acts 2:7; Prov. 24:23; Jas. 2:1.

QUESTIONS:

1. What miracles did Jesus perform to cause the people to feel that He was a good man? 2. Why did some feel He was deceiving the people? 3. How did Jesus know the teachings of the Old Testament which they studied in school in those days since He had not gone to school? 4. Discuss man's will and God's will. How can our will be God's will? 5. Discuss the sin of wrong judgment and righteous judgment. 6. What conclusions did some make concerning Jesus in that day?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

It seems, according to human nature, many are continually judging "according to appearance." Many express judgment on others after being swayed by various influences and prejudices. In this age of criticism, judging of others seems to be a custom of many from their youth up. Often the faults of others are magnified, their words are twisted and made to mean something entirely foreign to the person's intentions or thoughts. The person's good characteristics are left out and overlooked. Jealousy and unmercifulness try to destroy another's influence or his work of good. Such a spirit will not find a place in the heavenly world. Yet Jesus has said, "judge righteous judgment." The gospel does not leave the attainment to the spirit of right judgment to the future world. The more we progress to love our neighbor, the more will the fault of judging others pass away. Love in our souls will do away with harsh, exacting, and crushing judgment. We cannot enter into the hidden thoughts, motives and feelings in the life of another. Jesus was unmercifully judged and condemned by the Jews. This same spirit was manifested in the persecutions of the early Christians.

Jesus has given us a rule to go by in righteous judgment. We are to judge men "by their fruits." The Word of God is to be the guide. In this case it will not be us but God's Word that is doing the judging. This will be done in a spirit of love and gentleness, not harshly. We need to judge between good and evil so we can keep in God's will. We need to judge between evil men and good men so we will not "walk in the counsel of the ungodly."

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Jesus was not an educated man, yet He was thoroughly acquainted with His Father's law and how to administer it.

He had never learned letters, yet His delivery was of such quality that it would search the very heart and expose the need of every soul. What does this reveal to our understanding? Simply this: There is an education that can be obtained in no other manner except by a real close, intimate, faithful walk with God. While walking that singularly devoted life with Him, He will teach His students the things they need to know in order to fill the place in His body to which He has called them. No other qualification that man can obtain will produce the same result as a close walk with God. It is God's will for His people to walk so closely with Him that He can teach them, and the teaching that He will give will be the essence of His doctrine. A man familiar with God's teaching and manner of instruction is not easily fooled when one comes along manifesting a doctrine of man's wisdom. There is a pronounced difference between the two.

Jesus obtained His Father's doctrine by doing His Father's will. Then He opened the door to anyone else who was willing to follow the same avenue of approach and let it be known that any man who would do the Father's will would know the doctrine, also. No one any longer needs to be in doubt about the doctrine. Obedience to the Father's will will make it known to all who obey, just as Jesus promised it would.

To attempt to acquire a working knowledge of the will of God and the doctrine which supports it through secular education and much book learning is a waste of time and effort. True, one may learn the traditions, and how to say the right things at the right times in the proper manner to influence the people, but if we would aspire to touch the hearts, we had better obtain our schooling on our knees at the feet of the Master.

—C. W. Wilson

GOD CARES FOR BABY HELEN

Perhaps many have heard the story of the China missionaries, John and Betty Stam, who were martyred in 1934. The night previous to their murder, was spent in a dark room, John being bound to the post of a heavy bed. Their little three-month daughter, Helen Priscilla, was held by her mother that memorable night. Early the next morning, the young parents were stripped of their clothes and led out with their hands bound, to meet their cruel death, leaving their little daughter behind. The baby was left there alone for thirty hours when a Chinese evangelist found her and picked her up. He was without money and with a wife and sick child. But he took baby Helen and left her with his wife while he went to make preparations for the burial of her parents. The evangelist along with his wife, the two babies, and another

man, then set out to walk to the nearest mission station which was a hundred miles to leave Helen where she would have care. It was only with the strength and courage provided from above that they made this journey. The evangelist and nearly everyone else had been robbed of all their money. But as they journeyed, the evangelist's wife took little Helen from her sleeping bag. Upon doing so, she also discovered a clean nightgown, some clean diapers and two five-dollar bills.

It was hard to figure out how Betty Stam had succeeded in retaining this ten dollars; but it was provision for this company to make the hundred-mile journey. They were able to buy some baby food to feed Baby Helen, and safely deliver her into the arms of a missionary at the mission station. The Heavenly Father had watched over and cared for the innocent child even though she had no earthly parents to watch over her.

—Sel.

June 18, 1972

CHRIST, THE FOUNTAIN-HEAD

John 7:32, 37-47, 50-52

John 7:32 The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him [Jesus]: and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.

37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

40 Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said: Of a truth this is the Prophet.

41 Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee?

42 Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?

43 So there was a division among the people because of him.

44 And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.

45 Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?

46 The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.

47 Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?

50 Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them.)

51 Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?

52 They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.

Memory Verse: . . . Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. John 7:37b.

Central Thought: The stream from Christ, the fountain-head, rises from the unfathomable and eternal depths of the divine wisdom, power and love of God. It appears to men and is seen to flow through the Saviour.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson continues from last Sunday. Jesus is in Jerusalem at the feast of the Tabernacles. Lev. 23:33-43. The Sanhedrin, the ruling body of the Jews, had sent the officers to bring Jesus to be tried. The officers heard some wonderful truths.

On the last day or the eighth day of the feast of tabernacles sacrifices were offered for the Israelites. On the other seven days they professed to offer sacrifices for the seventy nations of the earth. (Clarke's Com.) When Jesus cried out in the midst of the feast and referred to Himself, who would give them living water, probably was when, in the ritual, they went to the pool of Siloam and drew water from it and poured it out at the foot of the altar. "The ceremony pointed out the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, our Lord, who was the fountain whence it was to proceed." If the people would believe on Him they could be made partakers of the Holy Spirit. The pouring out of the water of Siloam reminded the people of God's goodness to them at the smitten rock at Horeb.

Ex. 17:6, 7. Paul said, "They drank of that spiritual Rock [Christ]." 1 Cor. 10:4.

In verses 41 and 42 the Jews imagined that Jesus had been born in Galilee. They did not desire to check to find out that He was born in Bethlehem. Then in verse 52 they again refer to Jesus as being from Galilee and make a false statement that no prophet had come out of Galilee. Did they forget Jonah, Hosea, Elisha and Nahum, who were from Galilee? People who do not want to accept truth will accept falsehoods.

Lesson References: Isa. 55:1; Rev. 22:17; Isa. 12:3; Acts 2:17; Luke 2:4; 1 Cor. 1:20.

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Jesus say on the last day of the feast and why did He think of Himself? 2. If a person believes on Christ what will flow out of his heart and soul? 3. From whence does this stream of eternal life come and what fruits will that one bear who is planted by the water of life? 4. What can stop up the flow in our lives? 5. Point out the places in our lesson that the Jews who wanted to take Jesus made false statements. 6. What did the officers say when they returned without Jesus?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

Water is absolutely essential to life. In the land where our lesson takes place water is not as plentiful as in other sections. There, it is very precious. Remember how important the wells mentioned in the Old Testament were? There is nothing in the Orient which causes a man's name to be remembered more than for him to erect a well for general use.

Christ came to quench man's spiritual thirst. Men seek satisfaction in the world's pleasures, ambitions, pursuits, prizes, intellectual gains, and so forth. None of these things will satisfy the needs of the soul. They are like the mirage, which deceives the traveler, who hurries on with a false hope of standing on the shore of some lake. But lo! the vision vanishes and he is in despair. Christ never deceives. Praise the Lord! In Christ our souls can be fully satisfied.

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

"And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." Rev. 22:1. The Apostle John had a vision of that great stream of water which issues from the land not seen by

human eye, of which the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple. In Jer. 17:7, 8 we read about the man who trusteth in the Lord and "he shall be as a tree planted by the waters." He will "root downward and bear fruit upward." The love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance will flow from Christ, the stream, and up through the child of God's roots and out into his life. From his life, on out to the world, he will spread heavenly influences. Watch and pray, fellow-traveler, and keep the channel open. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is something about humanity that causes it to be reluctant to stand alone. It takes an individual with a strong will and determination to hold his ground in the face of numbers, even if he knows beyond doubt that he is correct in his position. When an individual has some proposition he wishes to promote, he will immediately seek the sanction of as many people as possible. The more he can get to agree with him the more secure he feels in his endeavor, and the more vigor he will put into his campaign. His proposition need not possess any scruples of any kind if he can get the masses of the people to sanction and support it. That is a startling thought, isn't it? In a democratic country where the will of the majority is the rule, the ability to win the support of the people becomes a fine art and men devote their entire lives to that pursuit. Even war cannot be carried on by a democracy without the support of its people. When enough people reject the idea, the war is over regardless of who won.

Now, what does all this have to do with the lesson? Simply this: The rulers of the people were very desirous to do away with the Son of God, but they could not obtain sufficient support from the people. His doctrine was so plain and convincing and His conduct and performances so unusual that the masses were not willing to support a counter move. After all, what harm was He doing? All His works were good, for He went about doing good. Why, then, should they reject Him? How marvelously the power of His Father worked to keep the way open so He could finish the work He was sent to do! God knew just exactly how to do it. When the time came, God withdrew His protecting hand. The rulers immediately convinced the people in their favor, and the masses rejected the Son of God in support of their wicked rulers. The Son of God was left to "tread the wine-press alone." May Almighty God grant sufficient grace to all His own to follow the same path if need be. —C. W. Wilson

WHAT THE RAIN DID

A merchant was one day returning from market. He was on horseback, and behind his saddle was a bag filled with money. The rain fell with violence, and the old man was wet to the skin. At this he was quite vexed and murmured because God had given him such bad weather for his journey. He soon reached the border of a thick forest. What was his terror on beholding on one side of the road a robber who, with a gun, was aiming at him, and attempting to shoot him! But the powder's being wet caused the gun not to go off, and the merchant, giving spurs to his horse, had time to escape. As soon as he found himself safe, he said, "How wrong was I not to endure the shower patiently, as it was sent by God. If the weather had been dry and fair, I should not have been alive at this hour. The rain, over which I murmured, has saved my life and preserved my property." In Exodus 16:18 we read, "The Lord heareth your murmurings." —Sel.

June 25, 1972

THEIR CONSCIENCE CONVICTED THEM

John 8:1-12; Matt. 5:14, 15

John 8:1 Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.

2 And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down and taught them.

3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

9 And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the

eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Matt. 5:14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

Memory Verse: For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. John 3:17.

Central Thought: Sins are revealed clearly when a person comes into the light that shines from God through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Word Definition: Adultery means "marital (sexual) relations committed voluntarily by a married person with other than his or her legal companion." (See Webster's Dic.)

LESSON BACKGROUND

Jesus no doubt went up into the mount of Olives to pray before He again came to the temple to teach the people. It seems that the woman was brought before Him just as He started His discourse. In verse 12 He again spoke to the people who were still with Him in the temple.

This is the first and only time we have any record of Jesus' writing. We are told that schools for children are frequently held under trees in Bengal, and the children, who are beginning to learn to write their letters, write them in the dust.

"The Jewish method of stoning, according to the rabbins, was as follows: The culprit, half naked, the hands tied behind the back, was placed on a scaffold, ten or twelve feet high; the witnesses, who stood with her, pushed her off with great force; if she was killed by the fall there was nothing farther done; but, if she was not, one of the witnesses took up a

very large stone, and dashed it upon her breast, which generally was the finishing stroke. However, this procedure does not appear to have been always attended to. See Lev. 24:16 and also verse 59 in the same chapter of our lesson."—Clarke's Com.

"It is observed that the Jews added a ninth day to this feast, (feast of tabernacles) which feast they termed, The feast of joy for the law; and on that day they were accustomed to take all the sacred books out of the chest where they had been deposited, and put a lighted candle in their place, in allusion to Prov. 4:23: 'For the commandment is a lamp [or candle] and the law is life;' or to Psa. 119:105: 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.' " (Clarke's Com.) Possibly that is what our Lord alludes to when He uses it as a type of Himself when He says, "I am the light of the world." The prophets frequently spoke of the Messiah under the emblem of light. Christ in our souls and in His church makes us the light today in the world.

Lesson References: Lev. 20:10; Matt. 19:9; Rom. 7:2, 3; Rom. 2:22; Luke 9: 56.

QUESTIONS:

1. Adultery was punished under the law by what? 2. The Bible teaches us that we are to have pure minds. What effect do impure pictures, reading, etc. have upon the mind and will it eventually be put in practice? Discuss. 3. Why did the woman's accusers leave one by one? 4. The woman no doubt repented as the sinner should when he comes to Jesus. What did Jesus tell her? 5. How can Jesus be the light of the world, yet He said, "Ye are the light of the world"? meaning those who are born again.

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

Our lesson was written when the Jewish nation was becoming ripe for destruction. They had been given the great commandments of God but they did not live by them. Outwardly they professed to be very righteous but their lives were corrupt. Jesus warned them of their coming fate but they rejected that warning. He would have saved them but with tears He said, "ye would not. Behold your house is left unto you desolate." How sad! Let us now think of our nation that was founded on principles taken from the Bible. See how far from the Bible our nation has wandered. The laws are twisted and turned. Justice is not given today as it used to be. Many in authority live such corrupt lives that they have lost the vision of righteousness and justice. As with many sins today, adultery is not thought to be so awful. In many

social circles married persons exchange their companions. In the schools and universities morality is considered as being out. High officials lives are bared and their deeds of adultery are exposed yet they are still in office. Even so-called ministers and pastors are caught in this hideous sin yet go right on. Are we living in the last days? Is our nation ripening up for destruction? Will we be punished as the nation of the Jews were punished and scattered? Thousands of that generation, who heard Jesus, later starved or were killed.

Jesus definitely called that which the woman had done a "sin". He forgave her since she was sorry and told her to "Go, and sin no more." But yet those who were the religious leaders of that day had sinned also. Some old manuscripts have it that Jesus wrote on the ground "the sins of every one of them." But this is not in the original and is to be left as conjecture. But we know that these men left one by one since they had come into the light of One who knew their hearts and lives like an open book. Some day we will stand before Him in the judgment.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

This, like many other discourses on this subject, has to be purely speculation, for we have no way of knowing what actual facts were; but let us see for awhile if we might obtain some inkling of what went through the Savior's mind. Jesus knew the penalty for adultery was death. He was thoroughly familiar with all the requirements of the law, for His Father had laid them down. He knew that there was no allowance made in the law for mercy. The act demanded the penalty. When the penalty was exacted, all hope for recovery was shattered, for there was no reprieve from death.

Along with this knowledge, He also possessed an understanding of the law of grace, which was the fulfillment of the old, rigid law. While the old law demanded merciless extinction, the law of grace was given to separate a man and his sins, destroy the sin, but save the man, and make him a child of God. He loved every one in the group; the woman, the accusers, and all. He not only came to save poor degraded people like the adulteress, but He came also to deliver the highly esteemed rulers as well, for all were guilty of sin. According to the measure He was sent to establish upon the earth, all sinners were guilty and needed to be saved, not just some of them. Now, here was this circumstance presented, and deliberately designed to render Him speechless. What answer could He give that would give them all, accused and accusing alike, a true picture of actual circumstances as they were?

Only heavenly wisdom is sufficient at times like that. His Father supplied Him exactly the correct words to say and the manner in which to say them to create the right effect. Everyone left His presence with a deeper, more forceful impression of the awfulness of sin and its effect on all men than they had ever had before. The sad part of the entire affair is that only one received the help that was needed, but it was available to all had they only sought it.

—C. W. Wilson

MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH CHRIST

In the summer of 1950, while visiting with friends, my brother met an English evangelist and invited him to our home. He came, carrying a small Bible. Although I was 16 years old, that was the first time in my life I had seen a Bible. I thought they were huge volumes used only in a law court for swearing on, and I never dreamed an ordinary person could own one. I was thrilled as he read the wonderful stories of Jesus, and later he gave me a Bible of my own.

The English evangelist came to our home quite often, and when he opened a hall for services, he invited us all to come. We didn't feel we should, being Catholic, but just to please him my father decided to go. We all reluctantly went, and it was very unusual to me, and I thought it irreverent. However, I was very much impressed by the genuine happiness of those who knew the Lord. In the weeks that followed, we went to these services fairly regularly. My father came close to salvation, but he preferred to keep his old habits of drinking and gambling. I saw my need of Jesus, and received Him as my personal Saviour. At the time I didn't have a tremendous experience, but the next day when I began to testify for the Lord, His Peace flooded my soul, and I experienced what I had been looking for so long.

When my father turned his back on Christ, he was determined to bring us all back into the Roman Catholic Church. When I told him I was a Christian and would continue attending the meetings, he did everything he could to keep me from it. Priests were sent for, and for hours they tried to convince me of my error. Although I could neither understand nor answer all their deep theological arguments, I did know I was saved, and that was the only way I could answer them. Even though my father beat me continually, I could not give up my wonderful Saviour. Once I heard my father and a priest talking about putting me away in a convent, but I knew that nothing they could do would take away the peace and satisfaction Christ had given me.

My mother was very sick at this time, having always been weak and the rest of the family accused me of being the cause

of her illness. They begged me to give up "this foolishness," but I could not give up. Often my sisters would not speak to me, and many nights I would come home from work to find no supper left for me.

When I heard about water baptism, I felt I wanted to follow Christ in this. I was taken to Belfast, and baptized there. How happy I felt to be openly renouncing the Church of Rome, and as I stood in the water and the congregation sang "Follow, follow, I will follow Jesus" a fresh wave of joy swept over me. When I returned home late that night, I was tempted to lose my joy when I saw my father in the doorway with his belt in his hand. But even the worst beating I had ever had did not take away the Joy He had given me.

My mother, weak and frightened, pleaded with me to give it all up for her sake, and this was harder to stand than my father's devil-and-Rome inspired brutality. God gave me grace, and to show them I was still determined to be a Christian I got out my Bible. I turned to Psalm 118, and tried to read it. My head was spinning and I felt dizzy, and the first four verses were a hopeless blur. But God made the fifth verse stand out for me: "I called upon the Lord in distress: the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place." Standing on this promise, I asked Him to deliver me within a half hour. The clock said eleven o'clock, and the priests would soon be coming. I knew God was worth serving and suffering for, and I knew He would keep His Word. I tested this promise and told God if He didn't help me now, I would not continue to go against my people. So I just sat back, waiting for Him to move.

At the Mission that morning the Christians felt anxious about me, and they began to pray. At half past ten, they definitely prayed for God to deliver me in an hour. At this same time another young man from the Mission had a few hours to spare, and in a churchyard in Dublin city, suddenly felt burdened to pray for my deliverance.

At quarter past eleven my father came over to me and put his hand on my shoulder. The hardness had vanished from his face, and tears were in his eyes. He said, "We can't keep you here any longer against your will. We'd like you to see things our way, but if not, you'd better leave."

I walked out of the house, bruised and battered, but with a sweet peace. God had delivered me.

The next few months of my life were filled with battles, but God gave me victory.

Since then I had the joy of leading my mother to the Lord a few days before she died. My two younger sisters have also responded to the Gospel message, and I am praying that my whole family will be saved. My one desire now is that the

Gospel Message might be proclaimed to Ireland, for the intense spiritual darkness of that land can be overcome only by Jesus, who is the Light of the world. —Norah Jackson

CONSCIENCE—WHAT IS IT?

Conscience is a mirror before which no sin can be concealed. It is an accuser who cannot be silenced. It is a witness whose testimony cannot be gainsaid. It is a judge before whom men cannot stand. It is a preacher who rests neither day nor night. It is a brand which cannot be obliterated. It is a gnawing worm which dies not. It is as a fire that ever burns. Conscience is something that agrees with truth when it has not been seared. A person should therefore, endeavor so to act that neither before God nor your own conscience nor any man sin can be brought against you. Faith gives freedom from sin before God. Through faith all our sins are cast into the deep ocean of divine mercy; for then they are forgiven and forgotten. Before conscience you may be free from sin if you make even the smallest sin a matter of conscience, and therefore seek to shun even the smallest sin. Before men you may be blameless when you seek to "give none offence," to take offence at no man, so that no one may take offence at you. —Sel.

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