

* The Sunday School *

BIBLE LESSON

Abridged from Peloubets' Notes.

First Quarter.

JESUS AT MATTHEW'S HOUSE.

Lesson XI. March 18. Mark 2:13-22.

Compare Matt. 9:9-17.

Commit Verses 15-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.

He said unto him, Follow me.—Luke 5:27.

EXPLANATORY.

I. THE CALL OF MATTHEW: THE EVOLUTION OF A MAN.—Vs. 13, 14. 13. AND HE WENT FORTH AGAIN, from the city of Capernaum, where he had been teaching and healing. BY THE SEA SIDE, where he had often been before. He probably went to the northeast of the city toward the mouth of the Jordan. Here he had larger room for teaching than in the city. THE MULTITUDE RESORTED. HE TAUGHT; i. e., by the tense of the original, "the multitude kept coming to him, and he kept teaching them."

14. AS HE PASSED BY, moving along the shore, instead of remaining all the time in one place. HE SAW LEVI THE SON OF ALPHAEUS. Levi was his name at the time of his call. He is elsewhere called Matthew. "Either he had originally two names, as was not uncommon among the Jews, or he received the name of Matthew when he became a Christian, as Simon did that of Peter." SITTING AT THE RECEPT OF CUSTOM. Toll house ("tol booth," in Edinburgh), or custom house, for the collection of the taxes on fish, or duties on the merchandise which passed along the great roads to Jerusalem, Tyre and Damascus, and the East, which centered at Capernaum. The Romans taxed heavily almost everything, every tree, every house, every door, every column, all property, real or personal.

Matthew was engaged, not in a wicked calling, but in a disreputable one; one which in general was followed by bad men, in wicked ways, and which therefore threw a shadow of suspicion on every one engaged in it. But it is probable that Matthew was not corrupt, like Zaccheus, who could have been like most other publicans or it would have been impossible for him to have restored fourfold.

SAID UNTO HIM, FOLLOW ME, both in heart as his Saviour, Teacher and Master, and literally by taking his place among our Lord's constant attendants.

II. BANQUET AND RECEPTION AT MATTHEW'S HOUSE: A MEANS OF REACHING THE PUBLICANS.—V. 15. Some weeks or months after Matthew's call.

15. AS JESUS SAT (better, he [Matthew] was reclining) AT MEAT IN HIS HOUSE, at a great feast which Matthew made, according to Luke. AND MANY PUBLICANS (see on v. 14) AND SINNERS. Disreputable sinners and outcasts, notorious offenders. The Pharisees were quite as great sinners, but in another way. SAT ALSO. WITH JESUS. They were invited by Matthew to meet Jesus, probably that they might learn more of the truth from him. It seems to have been an effort of Matthew to bring his old acquaintances and friends into the kingdom of God. FOR THERE WERE MANY present who were following Jesus wherever he went to learn more of him, and these were present. Matthew seems to have selected those who were the nearest the kingdom. These only would be likely to come. If they came they would get the most good.

III. DISCUSSIONS: SEEKING AND SAVING THE LOST.—Vs. 16-20. 16. WHEN THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES. The strictest outward religionists and observers of the ceremonial law, the men who were like whited sepulchers and dishes washed on the outside, but full of all uncleanness within, (see Matt. 23:23-28; Luke 11:39-42). SAW HIM. The Pharisees were not guests, but freely came into the house and looked on, according to the custom of the East. SAID UNTO HIS DISCIPLES, who were probably nearer. And it was easier to criticize Jesus to his disciples than to the face of the Master himself. HOW IS IT THAT HE EATETH AND DRINKETH WITH PUBLICANS AND SINNERS? Eating and drinking was a covenant of friendship. "The substance of their charge was not that he 'taught' sinners, but that he 'ate' with them, that is, mingled with them on terms of social equality."

17. WHEN JESUS HEARD IT. He either overheard their words or the disciples reported them. HE SAITH UNTO THEM. He made two answers to their criticism, one from analogy, the other from the Scriptures. THEY THAT ARE WHOLE. Strong, healthy, hale, as the Pharisees imagined they were morally. It is only they that are sick who need a physician. So that the very things on account of which the Pharisees objected and found fault with Jesus were the reason why he should go among publicans and sinners.

The second answer was an appeal to their Scriptures, given more fully in Matt. 9:13. BUT GO YE TO THE SCRIPTURES, with which the scribes were familiar; but they often know more about the husk than the corn, the shell of the nut than the meat. AND LEARN. Get at the real meaning. WHAT THAT MEANETH. He quotes from Hos. 6:6. I WILL HAVE (I wish in my people) MERCY, deeds of kindness to those in need, pity and help for the sinful, AND NOT SACRIFICE, the external forms of religion, without the heart and deeds they signify.

I CAME NOT TO CALL THE RIGHTEOUS (those really good, those free from sin) BUT SINNERS TO REPENTANCE, for they need the call. The contrast is not between Pharisees and publicans, but between two kinds of character. By going among the publicans Jesus was accomplishing his mission, the very thing the Pharisees themselves ought to have been doing. Jesus brings hope and health and salvation to the lowest of men.

18. THE DISCIPLES OF JOHN AND OF THE PHARISEES FAST: better, as R. V., "were fasting" at this time. So that the banquet was held on a fast day, and the contrast between the feasting of Jesus and his disciples and the fasting of the hungry onlookers naturally called out the question, WHY DO THE DISCIPLES OF JOHN AND OF THE PHARISEES FAST, BUT THY DISCIPLES FAST NOT? Why are your disciples less religious? Why do they not realize the evils of the time and the oppressions of the nation?

The reply was by a familiar illustration. 19. CAN THE CHILDREN OF THE BRIDEGROOM. The bridegroom's friends, who conducted the bride from her father's house to her future home, amid festivities and rejoicings, to the marriage feast. FAST. WHILE THE BRIDEGROOM IS WITH THEM? It would be a moral discord to fast at the wedding feast.

20. BUT THE DAYS WILL COME, etc. At Jesus' death they will feel like mourning, so sad and troubled that fasting will be the natural expression of their hearts.

IV. NEW METHODS FOR NEW TIMES.—Vs. 21, 22. Jesus continues his reply by a general principle, of which his answer to their question about fasting was one application.

21. NO MAN ALSO SEWETH A PIECE OF NEW CLOTH, unfilled, unshrunk, rather than "undress d," as in R. V., which is an unfamiliar manufacturer's term. ON AN OLD GARMENT, as a patch. TAKETH AWAY FROM THE OLD, etc. The patch, exactly fitting the rent in the old garment, would shrink more and more, till the older and weaker cloth gave way under the intense strain, and the rent became much larger than before.

22. AND NO MAN. None are so foolish. PUTTETH NEW WINE INTO OLD BOTTLES. R. V., rightly, "wine-skins," i. e., skins of animals from which the body is withdrawn, leaving the skin whole, except the neck, which becomes the mouth of the bottle, and the legs, which are tied up. ELSE THE NEW WINE DOETH BURST THE BOTTLES, by the pressure of the gases produced by the process of fermentation upon leather weakened and cracked by age. A prominent brewer says that the pressure of champagne in glass bottles after nine months is equal to sixty pounds to the square inch. Probably some of the gases evaporate through the wine-skins, and make the pressure less.

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NORMAL NOTES.

No. 15.

THE SOUL.

I. Its Capabilities and Destiny.

1. The Soul. (a) The soul created. "God breathed into man the breath of lives and man became a living soul," Gen. 2:7.

(b) Its forfeited life. Sin brought all under the death penalty.

(c) Christ by his blood bought back from the death penalty, 1 Cor. 15:3; Lev. 17:11; Rom. 3:24-26; Isa. 55:6; Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2.

(d) God's condition of eternal life, a belief of the heart on Christ that makes the life conform to his will, Rom. 10:9; John 1:12, 13; Rom. 5:1.

(e) Eternal condemnation. They that believe not are condemned already to eternal punishment, John 3:18; 1 John 5:10; Mark 16:16.

2. The soul's capabilities aided by the Spirit.

(a) It can "long after," "desire," "bless," "magnify" and be "joyful" in the Lord.

(b) It is an intelligent Spirit, capable of "knowing," "believing," "praising," "loving" and "worshipping" God, John 4:23-28; Ps. 62:1; 84:2; 103:1; 139:14; 146:1; Song Solm. 1:7; Isa. 26:9; 61:10; Luke 1:46.

(c) The soul leaves the body at death, Gen. 25:8; Abraham dies and is gathered to his people, then his sons bury his

body hundreds of miles from his father's grave, 900 from his grandfather, 400 from his father. First gathered to his people, then the body buried. Of Rachel it is recorded at death her soul departed, Gen. 35:18. See also Gen. 35:29; 49:33; Deut. 32:50; 2 Sam. 12:23; 1 Kings 17:21-22; Luke 8:55.

(d) The soul of the redeemed immediately enter glory at death, 1 Thes. 4:14; Ps. 16:11; Rev. 14:13; 2 Cor. 5:6, 8; Phil. 1:22-23; Eph. 3:15.

(e) The soul of the unregenerate enter into suffering at death. The Lord keepeth "the unrighteous under punishment unto the day of judgment," 1 Peter 2:9, R. V.; John 3:36; Luke 16:23.

3. Jesus came to save those that believe with the heart, and obey with the life, his gospel.

(a) From their sins, Matt. 1:21.

(b) From dying in sin, John 8:12.

(c) From everlasting shame and contempt, Dan. 12:2. From eternal burning, Isa. 33:14.

(d) From being forever separated from the good, Matt. 13:49, 50.

(e) From unending fire, Matt. 18:8; 25:26.

(f) From punishment that lasts forever and ever, Mark 9:49; John 3:36.

(g) From both soul and body having to suffer forever, Matt. 10:28; Luke 12:4-5; 2 Thes. 1:8-9.

For references on resurrection and eternal judgment see Acts 24:15; John 5:28-29; Rev. 20:11-15; 2 Cor. 5:1; Matt. 25:31-46.

II. Winning Souls.

God ordained to win souls through human agency guided by the Holy Spirit. A right handling of the word is bringing Christ to the pupil; then with what loving, prayerful tenderness, what scrupulous care, unwavering fidelity and holy reverence should the word be used. The teacher represents Christ, has the mind of Christ, and is to the scholar the mind of Christ. To do this is to know the indwelling Christ until "I live and yet not I but Christ liveth in me."

This indwelling of the living word will explain why the unlettered win for Christ where powerful worldly wisdom fails. "For it is not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord of hosts." Yet there is "natural law in the spiritual world." This religion appeals to the throne of reason, Isa. 1:18. Therefore question carefully and illustrate wisely. Know your pupils, their temperament and capability, know by private, personal conversation, are they saved or unsaved. Study your pupil, study the word, use all available help, but know. "Spiritual things are only spiritually discerned." Christ is centre and circumference of every lesson.

As chaff is to wheat so is history, geography, biography to the gospel. Christ alone is the bread of life of which they must partake or perish. Live the religion you commend, know the truth contained in the lesson, stand true to its doctrine, be loyal to Christ. "Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine: continue in them for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee, 1 Tim. 4:16. Christ with his nail-pierced hand splits earth into two great camps, no neutral ground for him or against him. Against him the hireling, who cares for fleece but not for flock. Those who serve for self-aggrandisement. Those in the church or out of the church to whom a spin, a sleep, a dinner, or drive is of more importance than a Sunday School, to whom souls are more than souls. Satan himself as an angel of light with pleasing story or enticing game to keep from a systematic study of the Word. The card, the dance, the novel, pleasure ease, pride, with his weaker allies of profanity, vulgarity, tobacco, rum and false critics, these are against.

Those for: All consecrated Christians, the church of God, the Word of God, the spirit of God. While the Christ of God himself, in the triumphant note of a divine conqueror, proclaims all power in heaven and earth reposes in my arm. "Go teach them all in my command, I am with you till time shall end." R. M. BYRON

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