



LESSON VII.—FEB. 13.

The Call of Matthew.

Matt. ix., 9-17. Memory verses, 12, 13.

Daily Readings.

- M. Matt. vi., 24-34.—Our Father's care.
- T. Luke xii., 22-32.—Our Father knows our needs.
- W. I. Pet. v., 1-14.—Casting all your care upon him.
- Th. Matt. vii., 1-14.—Every one that asketh receiveth.
- F. Matt. vii., 15-29.—End of the Sermon on the Mount.
- Sat. Acts xvii., 22-34.—We are the offspring of God.
- S. Ps. civ., 1-35.—The wonderful providence of our Father.

Golden Text.

'Follow me.'—Matt. ix., 9.

Lesson Story.

'Follow me'—Again the voice of Jesus is heard in loving command to a new disciple. And Matthew, the tax-gatherer, arises at once to follow his Master. As Jesus sat at meat many publicans and sinners, the lowest of the people, came and sat down with him to hear his gracious words. Then the Pharisees came and asked the disciples why Jesus associated with these sinners. Jesus heard them asking, and answered them himself—'They that be whole need not a physician, but they that be sick.' He had come as a physician to heal the sin-sick souls, the self-righteous Pharisees thought they had no need of a Saviour; and so they could not be saved.

The disciples of John the Baptist came to ask why Jesus and his disciples did not fast more, as John had taught his disciples to do, and as the Pharisees did. Jesus said unto them, 'Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them?' It would be time enough for his disciples to mourn when their Lord was taken from them. The figure of the new cloth tearing the old garment, and new wine breaking the old bottles, illustrates the need of an entirely new disposition. The new covenant was not given to patch up the old ceremonial law, that was worn out, the time for the New Testament had come.

Lesson Hymn.

O Jesus, I have promised  
To serve thee to the end;  
Be thou forever near me,  
My Master and my Friend;  
I shall not fear the battle,  
If thou art by my side,  
Nor wander from the pathway,  
If thou wilt be my guide.

O let me feel thee near me;  
The world is ever near;  
I see the sights that dazzle,  
The tempting sounds I hear;  
My foes are ever near me,  
Around me and within;  
But Jesus draw thou nearer,  
And save my soul from sin.

O let me hear thee speaking,  
In accents sweet and still;  
Above the storms of passion,  
The murmurs of self-will;  
O speak, to re-assure me,  
To hasten, or control;  
O speak and make me listen,  
Thou Guardian of my soul.

O let me see thy foot-marks,  
And in them plant my own;  
My hope to follow duly,  
Is in thy strength alone;  
O guide me, call me, draw me,  
Uphold me to the end,  
And then in heaven receive me,  
My Saviour and my Friend.

—Hymns A. and M.

Lesson Hints.

'Receipt of custom'—collecting taxes. This was a profession held in small repute, because of the dishonesty and corruption of most of the tax-gatherers. 'In the house'—probably at a feast in

Matthews house. One could only eat with friends, as the breaking of the bread and eating salt together constituted a covenant of friendship.

'Pharisees'—those who considered themselves holy men and leaders of the people. They had very little sympathy with the common people, and did not understand that if the people were to be helped, it must be by the loving friendship such as Jesus gave them.

'Physician'—for both soul and body. No doctor can cure a sick man who thinks himself well and who will not obey directions and follow prescriptions. Neither will Christ heal a soul that does not feel the need of healing, or that will not obey and follow him.

'Mercy, not sacrifice'—(Hosea vi., 6; Mic. vi., 6-8; I. Sam. xv., 22; Matt. v., 24.)

'Sinners'—those who are satisfied with their own condition away from Christ cannot be saved. Those who feel themselves sinners and come to Christ for salvation shall in no wise be cast out.

'John'—he was at this time in prison and his disconsolate disciples did not understand why Christ was not mourning for him. But Jesus had come to make friends of the poor and sinful and he could most easily reach them in their own homes and social life. Notice the kind of conversations our Lord held when he was at a feast, or what we might call a party.

'Children of the bridechamber'—a term applied to the friends of the bridegroom, John had announced Christ as the 'bridegroom.' (John iii., 29.) and it was meet that he should rejoice with his friends as long as he was with them.

'New cloth into an old garment'—the gospel is a beautiful new garment in itself, it can not be patched on to the old covenant. (Heb. viii., 13, 8.) 'New wine'—a new spirit, the Holy Spirit can not work now trammelled by the old law. He must have liberty to work in our hearts according to the perfect law of love.

Primary Lesson.

Following Jesus—what does it mean? how shall we do it? Following Jesus means trying to do always what he would do if he were in our place.

'You are in his place, that is, people who are not Christians, look at you to see what Christ is like. If you are kind and loving and helpful, then they will know that Jesus makes you like himself. But if you are selfish and proud and cross they will say that they do not want to follow Jesus if it will not make them any better than you. It is like making an ugly picture on your slate and saying that is a picture of your mother. If any one who did not know your beautiful mother saw that picture they would not love her any more for seeing it, would they? You would have made a misrepresentation of her—that means a false picture.

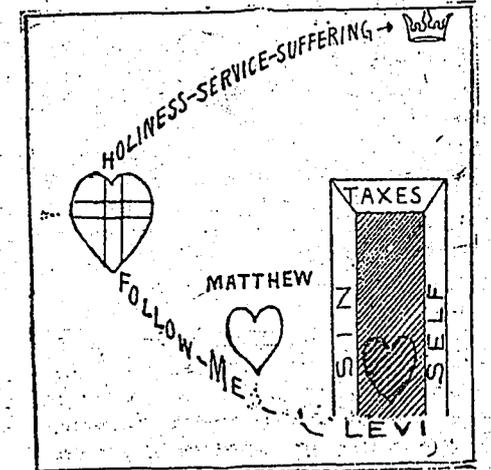
We can not make a true picture of Jesus unless we truly love him with all our hearts and try to do what he wants us to all the time. We can not do this of ourselves, but we can keep asking him to make us into his likeness, and he will.

I wish you would all learn the Lesson Hymn for to-day, it is a simple prayer to Jesus, our Master and our best Friend.

The Lesson Illustrated.

CALL OF MATTHEW.

Pictures Levi sitting in the receipt of customs, with his occupation over the door and



his surroundings of sin and selfishness, while the shadow over him typifies the darkness of sin. Levi means 'joined,' emphasize what

he was joined to. Then the Christ symbol calling Levi to walk the path of holiness, service and suffering. As Levi obeys the call he receives a new clean heart, and a new name, Matthew, 'the gift of God.' No road to the crown but the road of the cross, and the path of Christ, which faithfully followed, always brings us to the 'crown of righteousness' laid up for us.

Suggested Hymns.

'He leadeth me,' 'Saved by grace,' 'More about Jesus,' 'Jesus calls us,' 'My brother, the Master is calling for thee,' 'Out on the mountains,' 'Jesus is tenderly calling you home.'

Practical Points.

FEB. 13—MATT. ix., 9-17.

A. H. CAMBRON.

Wanted—men of business habits, to work in the Lord's vineyard. Verse 9. No wonder the sinners found out the Saviour when his special mission was to seek and save them. Verse 10. They certainly misunderstand the mission of Jesus who think he came to upholster self-righteousness. Verses 11-13. There is a time to fast and a time to feast. Verses 14, 15 also I. Cor. xiv., 40. The Christian may have the shrewdness of the worldling, and yet have his heart set upon heavenly things. Verses 16 and 17, also Matt. x., 16.

Christian Endeavor Topic.

Feb. 6.—The Christian's confidence.—II. Sam. xxii., 1-4, 29-37; I. Pet. i., 3-9.

Making Bad Boys Good.

(By the Rev. D. Sutherland.)

Some years ago a clergyman visiting a ragged school in London, asked a class of bright, mischievous urchins, all of whom had been gathered from the streets, 'How many bad boys does it take to make a good one?' A little fellow immediately replied: 'One, sir, if you treat him well.'

That boy revealed the secret of how to make bad boys good. Like most secrets, it is very simple once you know it. To treat a boy well is to trust in the better side of his nature. Even the worst boy has some elements of goodness in him. Suspicion hinders their expression, but trust helps them to blossom into flower and fragrance. A great teacher of our century lays down as the law in man-making the axiom: 'Trust a man and you make him trust-worthy.' He but put into other words the thought of the little boy in the ragged school. Experience proves over and over again that trust is the atmosphere in which the best qualities flourish of those who are tempted to evil.

A writer remembers an experiment that was tried some years ago in a city where many boys and young men used to congregate at the corners of certain streets. A hall was engaged in that neighborhood, furnished comfortably, and fitted up with tables on which were placed newspapers and illustrated magazines, and with a long table running the entire length of the room at which innocent games could be played. The loafers were lovingly invited into the hall, and made to feel at home in it. The superintendent laid down the rule that the young fellows themselves were to keep order, and prevent all rough and unruly conduct. He trusted them, and they responded nobly to his faith in them. At first, they could scarcely understand it, and suspected that something lay back of it; but, after a few evenings, their latent manhood came to the surface. An intoxicated young man reeled in one night, and urged the boys to have a good time, but they lifted him in their arms, and carried him out to the corner. Inside of a month the institution was as quiet and orderly as any in the city. The young fellows strove hard to become worthy of the confidence placed in them. Their rude voices took on a gentler tone, and coarse words that once tripped lightly from their lips were checked. They washed their faces, tidied their persons, and gradually grew to look quite decent. Not a few of them gave up loafing and found steady employment. A moral revolution was accomplished in that part of the city. Bad boys were made good by trusting them. What was done in one city, can be done in any other city where workers have faith and wisdom enough to trust boys and young men so as to make them trustworthy.—Sunday-school Times.