

another the opposition of the scribes, a fourth the action of Jesus, and a fifth the effect on the people. Have read by your scholars the parallel accounts of the call of Matthew (Levi), see above. Bring out especially the love and condescension of Christ in eating with publicans and sinners, and refer in connection to Luke xv. and its beautiful parables, and impress on all that Jesus came to heal the sick, to call the sinners to repentance and receive them to Himself. Have you—has your class heard the voice, and are they now "friends of Jesus?"

Notes and Comments.—Ver. 1. "Again," the same as Matt. ix. 1. This took place after the journey to Gadara. "House," possibly His own, as he "dwelt there" (Matt. iv. 13).

Ver. 2. Not only house, but court filled. "Preached," instant in season and out of season.

Ver. 3. "Palsy," likely paralyzed entirely. "Of four," so he was a grown-up man, though not old (ver. 5.)

Ver. 4. They could pass on to the roof by the outside steps; they would easily break up the roof of lattice-work and clay, then, by the four corners, let down the bed into the room or court. "Bed," light mattress, or possibly only a sheepskin rug, hence v. 11.

Ver. 5. "Their faith," including the palsied man. They don't appear to have said anything yet. "The sins"—the Jews thought sickness and death a judgment of God for sin (Luke xiii. 2, 4.) Still, disease is the result of sin, so first Christ forgives sin.

Ver. 6. "Scribes," the custodians and interpreters of the law—legality and tradition their life—right through Christ's life His bitter enemies.

Ver. 7. "This man," with scorn, such a man. "Blasphemies," irreverent, impious words. "Who can forgive," quite right, an unwilling testimony to Christ. He only who is sinned against can forgive.

Ver. 8. He knew their very thoughts, He knows ours. "In His spirit," His own, which is omniscient. The Holy Spirit not called Christ's before the day of Pentecost. Matthew is very graphic. "Seeing their thoughts."

Ver. 9. None could answer. Here, as often, the cavillers against Jesus had to keep silence. Note the question is. "Is it easier to say?" i.e., to claim; not to do either.

Ver. 10. "May know," here was a thing capable of proof; on this they could not be deceived, and from this they might accept the other; one of the many purposes for which Christ's miracles were wrought—to confute unbelievers.

Ver. 11. "Bed"—see (on ver. 4) with what conscious power and authority He speaks.

Ver. 12. No word of doubt now, all silenced. "Glorified God"—Luke tells us he first glorified God. He knew the source of the healing. They followed, not the scribes, we may be sure.

Ver. 13. "Forth," indicating the position of Capernaum, connected with the sea by a suburb of fishers' huts and custom houses—*Lange*.

Ver. 14. Alphaeus—distinct from Alpheus, father of James the Less. Matthew's occupation and associates no bar to Christ's call to him, afterwards named Matthew. "Sitting," all trades sit at their work in the East. "Receipt of custom," at the custom house. "He arose"—no hesitation. Luke says "left all." He was a publican, i.e., a tax collector for the Romans, and as such hated by his countrymen.

Ver. 15. "Sat at meat." Matthew made him a great feast, later on likely—Luke v. 29. "Publicans and sinners," bad and disreputable, Christ came into contact with them as a friend.

Ver. 16. "When the Scribes," etc., they did not sit down, oh, no! R omits "how is it that"—reading "He eateth;" more forcible; these Pharisees were shocked at Christ.

Ver. 17. "Heard"—overheard or told by his disciples. "They that are whole," lit. "strong"—"not the righteous"—their own idea of themselves. "Sinners," their judgment of all others.

Current Lessons.—That we should bring the sick of body and sick of soul to Jesus.

That faith will surmount all difficulties.

That in Christ is fulfilled Psalm ciii. 3.

That we should glorify God for His mercy to us and others.

That Christ searcheth the heart and knoweth our thoughts.

That Christ finds the men He wants where some would least look for them.

That formal religion is utterly ignorant of the heart of Christ.

General Lessons.—All men are sinners—soul sick, Isaiah i. 5-6; Psalm lvi. 2-3; Rom. iii. 10-12.

Christ is the friend of such and came to save them, Luke xiv. 9, 10; Rom. v. 8; 1 Tim. i. 15.

All who have felt the power of Christ's love should strive to bring others within sound of the Gospel. See Lesson 1. (This truth will bear repeating.)

Jan 29, { **THE PHARISEES ANSWERED.** { Mark ii. 18-1882. } 28; iii. 1-5.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."—Ex. xx. 8.

TIME.—Not quite certain—likely two periods are included, one shortly after last lesson, the other probably some months later.

PLACES.—Still in Capernaum and its neighbourhood.

PARALLEL.—Vs. 18-22; in Matt. ix. 14-17. Luke v. 33-39. Vs. 23-28; in Matt. xii. 1-9. Luke vi. 1-5; iii. 1-5; in Matt. xii. 10-14. Luke vi. 6-10.

HINTS TO TEACHERS.

Dangers.—Several in this lesson. The temptation to come to air their knowledge about fasts among the Jews; about customs and ceremonies of Oriental weddings; even much talk about the Sabbath as a Divine institution, would be out of place here; nor yet go into the whole circumstances of David's history in connection with taking the shew-bread: each of these may have—should have—a passing notice, but that should not occupy the time of the pith of the lesson.

What and How to Teach.—By putting the incidents together, you will see that the key thought is the place and power of religious forms and observances; and the teaching is that there is a place for fasting, that there is righteousness in the observance of the Sabbath, but that these are secondary to the spirit of Christ's religion. That His people are not to be burdened with outward forms, but to have the liberty of the sons of God. That to attempt to do otherwise is like putting new wine into old bottles—they would burst. With reference to the Sabbath, two incidents in the portion enabled Jesus to place that in its right light. The first was the plucking by the disciples of ears of corn when passing through the cornfield on the Sabbath; in so doing they had violated the traditions of the Pharisees. Christ shews that necessity is higher than a form, and quotes a remarkable instance of its violation in a case of necessity—never condemned; and having defended his dis-