

Sabbath School Teacher.

LESSON XXXX.

THE PUBLICAN CALLED.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 16. 17.

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. ix. 9; Luke v. 27.

With v. 13, read Luke xxi. 38; with v. 14, Rev. xiv. 4; with v. 15, Luke v. 29; with v. 16, Isa. lxxv. 5; with v. 17, 1 Tim. i. 15.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—He receiveth sinners.

LEADING TEXT.—For they have wholly followed the Lord.—Num. xxxiii. 12.

A conquered people does not easily reconcile itself to the conqueror. All the badges of power on the one hand, and of subjection on the other, are hateful, as the flag, the fortress, the foreign soldier, and the collector of the taxes. The "publican" stood to the Jews in this unfavorable light. But if in addition to this general dislike the "collectors" should be regarded as selfish, unscrupulous, and dishonest, as using their place in order to enrich themselves by fraud, it is easy to see how intense the feeling may become. It would be thought that in the first instance high-minded and self-respecting Hebrews would not take the place; and that, had in going into it, it made them worse. Hence the word rendered "publican" in Matthew, Mark and Luke, is commonly put with "sinners." (See Illustration.)

When it is remembered that, abstractly, the scribes doubted if any tribute to a heathen was lawful, it is easy to see what odium attended this class. When a better-class fisherman, tempted by gain, took the place, all the men of good feeling drew off from him, and he was left to consort with only those who like himself lay under the ban of general society. (See Matt. ix. 11.) Promises made to murderers, thieves and publicans were not held binding by the Rabbis, and a publican's money would not be taken in a collection, nor his evidence in a court.

This explanation is long, but it will render other matters plain. We have two things here; Matthew called by Jesus, and other publicans called by Matthew. In both transactions the Saviour is seen receiving sinners.

I. MATTHEW CALLED BY JESUS (v. 13, 14), at the seaside, at Capernaum, where Jesus was teaching, and where he had a multitude of hearers. He was the son of Alphaeus, concerning whom we know nothing certainly, if he was not also the father of (Matt. x. 3) James. He is called Matthew in the first Gospel, and Levi in the second and third (Luke v. 27). The name was probably changed by our Lord. Probably he had a collector's box on the side of the house, where he took the dues of persons and goods crossing, in which (like all persons not in actual movement in the East, he was sitting. That this was the first approach to Levi, is not likely. The Baptist preached to these men (Luke iii. 12), some of them in all likelihood were baptized. He told them what they should do (v. 13). What forbids us to think that Matthew was one of those reformed collectors? The other disciples did not wonder at his call, and no one but himself says "Matthew the publican." Jesus had been there before—"again," ch. i. 16. He had gone "forth" from the town, to the seaside.

(a) In one way or another God is constantly calling men, Prov. i. 24. Any true call to the ministry is from God. He chooses whom he will.

(b) This man is to be an evangelist and an apostle—the highest honour that could be put on any man. God is sovereign, taking those whom men do not expect to be taken, both for his family and his ministry.

(c) A call is first of all to Christ, the living person. Then the called are taught. "Follow me," Jesus says to Levi, "that you may learn, and in time, teach others." What a moment for this man! Such a moment may be to a soul at any time. His response made him, speaking humanly, immortal in the sense of life everlasting, and in the sense of undying reputation; for Matthew is still, and will be to the end of the world, a preacher of Jesus Christ, and his Gospel. His obedience was prompt, and it involved the sacrifice of a lucrative, if not an honourable, place.

II. MATTHEW CALLING OTHERS (v. 15). There was an entertainment, something different from an ordinary meal, as we read "many" publicans, &c. It was at Matthew's house (Levi) as Luke tells us. The publican, glad of his new close relationship to Christ, probably sought to bring others of his own class into contact with Jesus. A good example this for all. Boys may influence boys, and girls, girls. Young men speak with great force to young men. A consistent Christian merchant speaking a plain straightforward word to his brother merchants, will usually have great influence. Our religion is likely to reach first towards those of our own class, if it is genuine, as a candle makes most light nearest to itself. Spurious zeal wishes to do something out-of-the-way, startling, romantic.

In those days men reclined on cushions, resting on the left arm, at table, here called "sitting at meat" (v. 15). This explains how the woman "stood at his feet behind him" (Luke vii. 38).

The same watchful spies whose eyes were so malignantly on him watched his company. "The Scribes and Pharisees" already hated him, and lay in wait for him. But his personal dignity—for Jesus was not one, though meek and lowly, with whom men could take liberties kept them from attacking him directly. They question his disciples—"How is it that, &c.?" Eating and drinking stand for close, friendly intercourse. Jesus was guarded against such interference with Gentiles.

The disciples perhaps had no answer; they were puzzled, as disciples often are; but Jesus came to their aid, as he often does, in such circumstances. He wastes no words in needless explanation, but goes to the very heart of the matter at once. He knew their unspoken thoughts, and ad-

resses himself to them (v. 17). "You think yourselves whole, and these publicans and others whom you have cast out of the synagogue sick. Well, be it so. I came as the physician to heal their diseases; where should a physician be but with his patients? or to drop the figure, you count yourselves righteous and these men despicable sinners. Well, be it so: I came to call not those who think themselves righteous, they do not wish for me, but sinners, who, you see, follow me; and where should I be but with those whom I came to call? I came not to call the righteous, &c."

This is an ironical concession. He does not mean to say that the secret thoughts of the Pharisees was right, or that any such distinction that they set up was real. He takes them at their own word, and answers their objection on their own chosen ground. If we found such a prompt and conclusive reply in the biography of a more man, we should consider it, like the rejoinder as to tribute (Matt. xxiii. 17), a masterly stroke. But never man spake like this man. (See Ps. cxxxix. 1.)

Matthew, who always reproduces the Old Testament, records his allusion to Hos. vi. 6. The more rapid Mark, writing for Gentiles, omits this.

(a) We owe something to these captious objections for drawing out Christ's encouraging word. How many it has cheered?

(b) Notice also how uniform is Christ's plan of action. Scribes and Pharisees evil (v. 7) and charge blasphemy on him. He calls a publican. So they do in Matt. xv., and he enters the coats of Tyre and Sidon and blesses the woman of Canaan. The Jews reject him, and his gospel goes to the world. They despise Paul's preaching, and "lo! we turn to the Gentiles," Acts xiii. 46.

(c) What Jesus does, is as Master. He controls all. He does not go among publicans in conformity to them. They conform to him. This is always to be taken into account in estimating his example to us.

(d) Christianity is still lifting up the lowly. No amount of sin, no blackness of guilt shuts out salvation. No "goodness, real or fancied, deserves it. If we think ourselves whole, we are sick. If we feel ourselves sick, we are in the way to be made whole.

(e) Let us obey this call, "sinners to repentance." The word is the warrant. There is no need of any other. The penitent robber felt himself sick, and the dying Saviour healed him.

SUGGESTIVE TOPICS.

Condition of the Jews—how the Romans collected tribute—character of tax-gatherers—their social position—how regarded—their general character—their system—their faults—Matthew's other name—how he was employed—probable former opportunities—Christ's words to him—the effect—example he sets us—the company at his house—the spectators—their objections—to whom stated—the secret ground of it—the Lord's reply—the principle of it—the style of it—the meaning of it—the lesson to us—the encouragement to sinners, and the purpose of our Lord's coming.

Modern Dress.

Are we more civilized in our dress than in our dwellings? Not a whit. Our guide and ruler here is that irresponsible tyrant we call fashion, and neither comfort nor beauty has a word to say. To be sure, men have discarded many absurdities, though they have retained more. They hold to their stiff shirt-collars, which rasp their necks; their wide expanse of linen front, which the very act of fastening rumples; their meaningless swallow-tails, their hideous hats, their tight-fitting military uniform, and all the mysteries of seam and gusset and band, which are mere symbols of the art of cutting out, and not necessary to the comfort or shape. But, even with the follies they retain, they can move about with ease and unhampered. Women, on the contrary torture themselves in the name of fashion with touching fidelity. They would as soon forego their nationality as their stays, and the Thirty-nine Articles are less sacred to them than their multiplicity of garments, all hanging from the waist. It is to keep these up, and to lessen their heavy weight, that they put themselves into steel corsets which destroy all grace of line, and all contour of movement, save in walking. The beauty of simplicity is a thing dead and done with in their code. Heads are loaded with false hair stuck about with lace, feathers, flowers, and colored glass; ears are pierced, that bits of crystallized earth, or imitations thereof, may be hung in the holes; health is destroyed, and the tender vital organs which Nature has so sedulously protected by the outer casing of ribs, are compressed and crushed that the waistband may be reduced to seventeen inches, and the highest efforts of millinery genius are directed to the most elaborate method of sewing one bit of stuff on to another bit of stuff, to the confusing of anything like a L. a. line, or an intelligible idea. We laugh at the Chinese "golden water blues," the Papuan head-dress, the Hindu muslin, the African hip-stender; we laugh while we look in the glass, and complacently brush out our frills, and congratulate ourselves on looking "stylish" and "well got up." But our highest efforts culminate in partial nakedness in the middle of winter, if we are women, in black broadcloth in the dog-days, if we are men—in absurd lengths of silk trailing after us as we walk in the one case, in ridiculous penon meandering at our backs in the other, they culminate in fashion, not in use or beauty of simplicity, but in what we do thus dress without personal convenience or artistic meaning, we have no true civilization in the matter of our clothes. Modern millinery is neither art nor Nature. It is a translation of the primitive man's delight in rags and grainy colors, and there is no essential difference between the two. What difference there is consists simply in conventional acceptance, but the essential base of each is the same.—Cornhill Magazine.

Summer Breakfasts.

We are going to have, unless all tokens lie, a royal Summer. But its quality will depend very much on how we breakfast. The sun rises early enough to give us ample time and his golden help besides. Set your breakfast table where it will invite his shimmering gleam to dance upon the wall. A northern or western room is too dull and gloomy. Our sunny days are precious, and most so in the morning, when the day is new, and the hours are freshest. Sleep has invigorated us. Editors excepted, we want to be early, and have no valid excuse for not getting up rosy and cheerful. Emerson says that it was said of Lord Holland, that he always came down to breakfast with the air of a man who had just met with some signal good fortune. Though he must sometimes have been a hypocrite, we commend him for a saint. Don't leave out the golden sky from our breakfast picture. Sit where you can see the green tips brushed by the golden pencil of the sun.

But not to be looking out of the window too absent-mindedly, why should not the tablecloth be clean and white, and put on square and smooth? And why in the name of self-respect shouldn't the china be good enough, every day, for company? We will say just here that we are not moralizing for the upper ten, nor sketching any aristocratic breakfast-table. The fact is that few of us, rich or poor, make the most of what we have, or might have just as well not. Toiling after the coming fortune and imaginary enjoyment, we overlook the present and the thousand helps to daily happiness right about us. Our plea is for more of the cheap elegancies of life that might so easily be universal gifts.

To come back to breakfast. Why not, while we are about it, have good hot, fragrant tea, instead of the watery, half-transparent, grayish, herby, bitter beverage; good coffee, instead of the restaurant, chicorized, luke-warm, nauseating, Laodicean article? Why not have good bread, or if that be beyond the present stage of American civilization, toasted bread? And why not good butter? We beg leave to insist on these questions, because they are morally important. It is of great social and spiritual moment that we do not quarrel with our bread and butter, particularly at breakfast. A great deal of wretched character and dyspeptic piety come of sour bread and heavy griddle cakes. We infer that Lord Holland, to come down in that way to breakfast, must have generally had a good one when he got at it. To say "Good morning" without hypocrisy, one should have a fair prospect of a good breakfast. We appreciate the Scripture blessing given to Jael: "Blessed above women shall Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, be; he asked water and she gave him milk; she brought forth butter in a lordly dish." She knew how to put things on the table.

Of course, flowers cannot be dispensed with on such a table, nor, as the season advances, the Summer fruits. What so suitable as flowers gathered out of the crisp and dewy air to help express and satisfy our morning sentiments? They are the smiles of good-natured Nature, answering back to the welcome in our hearts. Let us invite within their bewitching fragrance and their fair colors. "And because," as Lord Bacon says, "the breath of flowers is far sweeter in the air (where it comes and goes, like the warbling of music) than in the hand, therefore nothing is more fit for that delight than to know what be the flowers and plants that do best perfume the air." It was Lord Bacon's own custom always to have the flowers of the season on his table. And if not flowers, let us have leaves, tree blossoms, sprigs of ivy or sweet-brier, the oak twig with its acorn tassels, the green tips of hemlocks, grape blossoms, or the glistening leaves of laurel.

What a preparation is such a Summer breakfast for him "who goeth forth to his labor until the evening," and what a satisfaction for his Aurora, goddess of the morning.

How Shot is Made.

A reporter of the Baltimore American, thus describes one of the many processes of making shot in one of the shot towers of that city: One of the "secrets" of the manufacture is the mixing of a lead with a certain proportion of a combination of mineral substances called "temper." The temper is fused with the lead, and gives the molten metal that consistency which makes it drop, and without which the lead would be moulded by the sieve, and would form little pencils instead of round shot. When "B B" shot, for instance, are to be made, the lead is poured into a pan perforated with holes corresponding to that size. The little pellets come pouring down in a continuous shower, and fall into a tank filled with water on the ground floor. In their descent of two hundred feet they come perfectly spheroidal, firm and dense, and they are tolerably cool when they strike the water, although the swift concussions make the tank foam and bubble as if the water was boiling furiously. The shot must fall in the water, for if they would strike any firm substance they would be flattened and knocked out of shape. To get the little pellets perfectly dry after they have been in the "well," is the most difficult and troublesome process of the whole manufacture. An elevator with small buckets (very much like those in flour mills) carries them up as fast as they reach the bottom of the well, and deposits them in a box sixty feet above the first floor. The water drips from the buckets as they go up, and not much is poured into the receiver above, although it is intended to be a sort of dripping machine. From this receiver the shot runs down a spout into a drying pan, which greatly resembles a gigantic shoe, made of sheet iron. The pan rests at an angle which permits the shot to roll down slowly down to the chamber below, and the pellets become perfectly dry as they pass over the warm sheet iron.

Open your mouth and purse cautiously, and your stock of wealth and reputation shall at least in repute be great.

Spread of the English Language.

Bayard Taylor, writing from Alexandria, Egypt, says that the most remarkable change since his visit there twenty years ago is the astonishing spread of the English language within the last twenty years, resulting both from the numbers of English and American travelers of other nationalities. French, which until the last few years was indispensable has been slowly fading into the background, and is already less available than English for Italy and the Orient. I was a little surprised in Rome at being greeted by a native boot black with "Shine up your boots?" In Naples, every peddler of canes, coral, photographs, and shell-fish, knows at least enough to make a good bargain; but this is nothing to what one meets in Egypt. The bright-witted boys learn the language with amazing rapidity, and are so apt at guessing what they do not literally understand, that the traveler no longer requires an interpreter. At the base of Pompey's Pillar to-day a ragged and dirty little girl came out a fella-hut and followed us, crying, "Give me a ha'penny."

"Basement Dungeons."

In answer to the question, What shall be done with the primary-class scholars in a Sunday School having but one room for its sessions? the Christian at Work says, pithily: "Build another for them as soon as possible, or take them to a neighboring house or barn." And we would add: don't build it in a dark cellar under the church, but the above ground—and make it as cheerful as possible. We have often felt when entering these Sunday School basement dungeons, where the rays of the sun never have a chance to dissipate the gloom, that the "Sun of Righteousness," too, was prevented from shedding his bright beams upon the scholars, and dispelling the moral darkness from their young minds.—Presbyterian Weekly.

The greatest truths are the simplest; and so are the greatest men.—Archdeacon Harve.

One hundred American students who were converted met together to speak of their conversion. Ninety of them traced their blessings to their mother's prayers.

The crowds at the Metropolitan Tabernacle (Spurgeon's), just now are so great that on Sunday evening the doors had to be locked before the proper time, even to seat-holders, who had not arrived soon enough to be admitted.

Across the night of paganism philosophy fitted on like the lantern-fly of the tropics—a light to itself and an ornament; but, alas! no more than an ornament of the surrounding darkness.—Coleridge.

Life is a stream which continually flows on, but never returns. We die daily; for each day takes away some portion of life. The days which are past are gone forever, the present moment only is our own.

It is a significant fact, that Mr. Mill, throughout his entire autobiography, makes no mention or allusion whatever to his mother; and yet he was peculiarly appreciative of other women and their influence.

Some English daily papers have been so malicious or so facetious, or both, as to include notices of High-church celebrations among the theatrical entertainments.

"Patrick," said the priest, "how much hay did you steal?" "Well, I may as well confess to your reverence for the whole stack, for I'm going after the rest to-night!"

One very common error misleads the opinion of mankind universally; that authority is pleasant, submission painful. In the general course of human affairs the very reverse of this is nearer the truth. Command is anxiety; obedience, ease.—Pascal.

The Christianity of the heart cleaves us in twain, lights our homes with a gleam from God's heaven, smooths our pillow in sickness, and in the sad, stern hour of death signs hymns to our parting soul, and leads it gently home to immortality. Can this religion of the heart ever die?

Philosophy is a proud, sullen detector of the poverty and misery of man. It may turn him from the world with a proud, staid contempt, but it can not come forward and say, "Here are rest, grace, peace, strength, consolation!"—Cecil.

President Finney is delivering a course of lectures on Revivals in the Oberlin Seminary during this summer time. Though in the 82d year of his age, he speaks with all his old vigor and his lecturers are listened to by the students with deep interest.

It is thought that there are at least 300,000 children in the Sunday-schools on the Continent of Europe, although this institution is comparatively new there. Its foothold seems now secure in Germany, France, Switzerland, Holland, and Sweden, and it is gaining in Russia and Denmark.

At the meeting of the English Presbyterian Synod in London, on May 11th, Dr. Fraser, of Marylebone, who was chosen Moderator, suggested, as a means of making the church more acceptable in England, that the Confession of Faith should be abbreviated and simplified. This course, though not so easy of accomplishment as relaxation of the terms of adherence, was, in his opinion, safer and more advantageous.

Whatever good advice you may give your children, if the parents pursue a bad, reckless course of conduct, depend upon it the children will follow the example, instead of following the advice. They will turn out ill, and probably worse than the parents whose example they are imitating. There are few principles of human nature stronger than that of imitation, and where children see a man and wife quarrelling, the mother dirty, and the father drunken, and the house uncomfortable—it is not in human nature possible that those children should be the girls clean and well-conducted, the sons sober, honest, and industrious.—Lord Palmerston.

Hearing the Sermon.

A little girl used to go to church. She was only between four and five years of age—quite a little girl. But she listened to her minister. She knew that he would tell her good things, and she wanted to learn. Once when she reached home from church, she said to her mother:

"Mother, I can tell you a little of Mr. H.'s sermon. He said, 'Touch not the unclean thing.'"

That mother wished to know whether her dear little daughter understood the meaning of these words. So she replied:

"Then, my dear child, if Mr. H. said so, I hope you will take care in the future not to touch things that are dirty."

The little girl smiled, and answered:

"Oh, mother, I know very well what he meant."

"What did he mean?" said the mother. "He meant sin," said the child; "and it is all the same as if Mr. H. had said, 'You must not tell lies, nor do what your mother forbids you to do, nor play on Sunday, nor be cross, nor do things that are bad or wrong.' The Bible means that a sinful thing is an unclean thing."

I hope that little girl tried after that always to shun all kinds of bad things. What will my little friends do? Say, little boys and girls what will you do.—S. S. Herald.

Miscellaneous.

These born once only die twice—they die a temporal and they die an eternal death. But those who are born twice die only once; for over them the second death hath no power.—Jay.

Brigham Young, Jr., according to the Salt Lake Tribune, has an original way of complying with Scriptural injunctions. At a conference meeting recently, he thus instructed the brethren:—"I pray for our enemies, brethren, but I always pray that they may go to hell!"

The unpleasant odor produced by perspiration is frequently the source of vexation to persons who are subject to it. Nothing is simpler than to remove this odor much more effectually than by the application of such costly unguents and perfumes as are in use. It is only necessary to procure some compound spirits of ammonia, and place about two tablespoonfuls in a basin of water. Washing the face, hands and arms with this leaves the skin as clean and sweet as one could wish. The wash is perfectly harmless and very cheap. It is recommended on the authority of an experienced physician.

Much ado is still occasionally made by ministers of the old school and good old days, when sermons were hardly considered sermons if occupying less than an hour or an hour and a quarter in delivery; at the saddening degeneracy of an age that prefers its preaching in homœopathic doses. A good lady once remarked to Dr. Adams that his sermons were a little too long. "Don't you think so, Dr. Adams?" said she, "just a little." "Ah! good sister," said he, "I am afraid you don't like 'the sincere milk of the word.'" "Yes, I do," said she; "but you know the fashion now-a-days is condensed milk."

Prof. Patton has prepared his appeal to the Presbyterian Synod of Illinois from the decision of the Chicago Presbytery acquitting Prof. Swing. The document fills over a column of the Chicago newspapers and is summed up under these heads: 1. Irregularities in the proceedings. 2. Hurrying to a decision before important testimony was taken. 3. Prejudice. 4. Mistake. 5. Injustice. Under these heads Prof. Patton groups the reasons which induced him to make the appeal. These embrace twenty-three specifications and are simply the argument presented by him at the trial. Mr. Swing's congregation are taking steps to build for him, in a central location, a new, plain, and capacious church, which will seat 3,000 persons.

The Foreign Missionary (Presbyterian) gives an account of the first mission year at Teheran, Persia. The public services, conducted in the Turkish language, have been attended by 60 to 80 hearers. The day school, with two village schools in the neighborhood, numbers 60 scholars. The children instructed are generally Armenians though a few Mohammedans have been taught privately. The missionary draws a dark picture of Persian affairs, of the political uncertainty, the extravagance, and the utter falseness of the Persian people. Owing to greater acquaintance with Europe, there is more toleration in the Persian capital than in any other part of the country. A chapel has been erected and public worship conducted in the language of the people, without any serious molestation.

The two medical missionaries of the A. B. C. F. M. in Japan find access where doors are closed to other missionaries. In their tours through the Shikama district they have required the wealthy Japanese to pay for the medicines prescribed to the poor, and have besides raised \$2,500 for three charitable hospitals. "So thoroughly am I convinced," says one of the physicians, "of the pernicious influence which the use of foreign funds will have upon the question of self-support among the churches that I have felt it my duty to refuse offered gifts from resident foreigners, in behalf of the sick poor of certain stations in our field of work."

Several errors have occurred in recent notes upon missions in Japan. There are, as far as we know, ten Protestant societies at work in that empire, not twelve—the most recent being the United Presbyterian-Scottish-Mission, not the Church-Missionary Society, which is simply opening a new station at Yedo, after previous labors at Nagasaki and Osaka. Furthermore, the theological class at Yokohama is not specially under Reformed patronage, but is, we are glad to hear, a union effort among several of the churches.