



LESSON II.—JAN. 8.

Christ's First Disciples.

John i., 35-46. Memory verses, 35-37. Read whole chapter.

Golden Text.

'Behold the Lamb of God.'—John i., 36.

Home Readings.

- M. John i., 35-42.—Christ's first disciples.
- T. John i., 43-51.—Christ first disciples.
- W. Matt. iv., 18-25.—The second call.
- T. Luke ix., 18-26.—True discipleship.
- F. Matt. v., 13-20.—Teaching the disciples.
- S. John xv., 12-21.—Friends of Jesus.
- S. Matt. xix., 23-30.—Reward.

The Story.

John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah, announced himself as 'the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord.' John baptised with water those who came to him at the Jordan, promising that the coming One should baptize with the Holy Ghost.

One day, as John the Baptist was standing with two of his disciples, they saw Jesus walking by, and John said, 'Behold the Lamb of God!' The two disciples understood that this was the Saviour of whom John had been preaching, and they walked after Jesus. Then our Lord turned and asked them what they were seeking. 'Master, where dwellest thou?' they asked. 'Come and see,' was his kind reply. They went to his humble dwelling and stayed with him the rest of that day.

These two disciples were Andrew and John. Andrew went at once to find his brother Simon, and, telling him that they had found the Messiah, he brought him to Jesus. When Jesus looked on Simon, he saw his heart, and knew what he would become. 'Thou art Simon, thou shalt be called Cephas, a rock.'

The next day Jesus went into Galilee, and, finding Philip, bade him 'Follow me.' Philip went joyfully to find Nathaniel, saying, 'We have found him of whom Moses and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.' Nathaniel wondered if any good thing could come out of Nazareth, but Philip, without stopping to argue, entreated him to 'Come and see.' Nathaniel went to see Jesus, and a few words from the Saviour quickly brought from Nathaniel the joyful acknowledgment, 'Thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel.'

The Bible Class.

- 'Beginning'—Gen. i., 1; Luke xxiv., 27; John viii., 44.
- 'Life'—Gen. ii., 7; vii., 22; I. Cor. xv., 16-22, 45-50, 54; Matt. vii., 14; Mark x., 29, 30; John iii., 36.
- 'Light'—Gen. i., 3, 4; Psa. xxvii., 1; Matt. iv., 16; v., 14; John iii., 19; viii., 12; II. Cor. iv., 6; I. John i., 5; ii., 9; Eph. v., 14; Rev. xxi., 23, 24.
- 'Witness'—Ex. xxiii., 1; Prov. xix., 5; Isa. xliii., 12; Acts i., 11; Heb. xii., 1; I. John v., 10; Matt. xxiv., 14.
- 'The Lamb'—Ex. xii., 3-13; Lev. xiv., 10-13, 20; Isa. liii., 7; I. Pet. i., 19; Rev. v., 12; vii., 14, 17.
- 'Where dwellest thou?'—Ex. xxix., 45; Isa. lvii., 15; Zech. ii., 10; Eph. iii., 17; Col. i., 19; John xiv., 17; Rom. viii., 9; I. John iv., 16; Luke xix., 5.
- 'Abode with him'—Psa. xv., 1; xci., 1; John xv., 4-10; I. John ii., 6.
- 'Brother'—Gen. iv., 9, 10; ix., 6; Lev. xxv., 35, 36; Matt. v., 24; xviii., 15; Mark iii., 35; Rom. xiv., 21; I. Cor. viii., 13; I. John iv., 20.
- 'Follow me'—Ex. xiii., 21; John x., 4; Eph. v., 1; Matt. iv., 20; viii., 19; Luke ix., 23; xxii., 54.

Suggestions.

The references under the title 'Bible class' are intended to be looked up by all, as they throw new light on the lesson, and illustrate the different thoughts. They are only a few out of many; the student should jot down any other reference he thinks fitting. It

is a good plan to have a large, plain bible, with good type, for study. Such a book could be purchased for about sixty cents at the Bible House, Phillips square, Montreal. This book may have no references or 'helps' of any kind, but you can soon make its margins very helpful and interesting by putting in references and notes with a fine pen. This is a most fascinating form of bible study, and will fix the Scripture in our minds in a way that nothing else could. The references that will be given every week are only suggestions. You may not use them all, but they may suggest others to your mind. Be sure to verify every reference before using it, as it is very difficult to have them all correct when there are a great many figures. Each lesson can be well illustrated by stories from other parts of the bible, and the connecting links can be shown quite plainly.

Read the chapter carefully through. Emphasize the work of John the Baptist; he was 'sent from God,' and he perfectly fulfilled his mission; therefore, he was a great success, though the world might call his short life a failure. Explain the significance of the title 'Lamb of God.' The lamb slain for the Passover was a type of Christ, also the lambs slain for the sin-offering and atonement. God chose this way of keeping in remembrance that the Messiah was coming to atone for their sins by the sacrifice of his own life-blood.

Jesus invited the disciples to his dwelling-place, and there they spent the two remaining hours of the day. What happy hours those must have been for the two inquirers! How many questions they must have asked! How they must have drunk in the words and looks of him who was to be henceforth their Lord and Master. With what joyous alacrity did they leave all to follow him, and with what glad sincerity did they hasten to tell their own brothers the wonderful news and brought them to Jesus.

Central Thought.

'Follow me.' This was the command our Lord Jesus Christ gave to his first disciples. This is the command he gives to each of his young disciples to-day.

What does it mean to follow Jesus? What did it mean to those men who first left all their hopes of earthly success to follow Jesus? We may think that it was easier for them to follow because they could see him and walk about with him. They could see him as a man. We cannot see him, but we know him as God. So that it is really easier for us to follow him than it was for them.

What made them leave their business and their chance of becoming rich, to follow Jesus, who was so poor? They followed him and obeyed him because they loved him, and believed in him.

God often calls men and women to leave all, all their business, all their pleasures, all their earthly cares, and follow him. Often he calls them to follow him out into the dark lands to heathenism, to carry the light of his love and the gladness of his salvation.

Some men are like the first disciples. They immediately leave all to follow Jesus. Immediately, without a moment's doubt or hesitation.

Others wait a while and consider all they must lose, if they follow. They must lose their chance of becoming rich. They must lose their chance of an idle, comfortable life. They must be willing to follow Jesus through all the trials and discomforts which he bore for us. They say they cannot do all this for Jesus. They are not loving enough to be faithful. They are not brave enough to obey.

What kind of a follower will you be, brave, and loving, or cowardly and disobedient?

Questions.

1. What was John's testimony of Jesus?
2. Why was Jesus called the Lamb of God?
3. What did Jesus first ask his disciples?
4. What invitation did he give them?
5. What great thing did Andrew do?
6. What did Jesus say to Philip?
7. Whom did Philip bring to Jesus?

Practical Points.

(By A. H. Cameron.)

Christ's first disciples.—John i., 35-46. Looking upon Jesus, John foresaw the atoning sacrifice for sin. When invited to

the gospel feast, who can resist saying, 'O, Lamb of God, I come.' (Verses 35, 36.) They who follow Jesus as little children will receive richer blessings than they ever dreamed of. (Verses 37-39.) Love to Christ always begets love to our neighbor. (Verses 40, 41. I. John iv., 20.) Peter showed his rock-like character as long as he clung to the Rock of Ages. (Verse 42, Acts iv., 13.) When Jesus says 'Follow me,' our hearts should respond, 'Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.' (Verses 43, 44.) Jesus was despised and misjudged because of his lowly extraction, yet he was and is the noble son of heaven's king. (Verses 45, 46.)

The Victoria Cross.

(M. H. P. in 'Sunday-school Times'.)

Rudyard Kipling tells, in a magazine article, some interesting facts about the 'Winning of the Victoria Cross,' the reward given by the English Government for acts of special bravery by men in the army or navy. He says that he has talked with a number of those who have received it, and that nearly every one said that he simply saw something that ought to be done very quickly, and did it, with no thought in his mind of honor or reward to follow. The peril and possible rescue, the sudden emergency and the one way to meet it, the onward step that could be taken one moment, but, if not taken then, would be lost the next moment,—such opportunities were seized instantly by the brave heroes who wear the Victoria Cross.

Thinking on these things, the question arose whether we Christian men and women, servants of Christ Jesus, do not need more of his same spirit in our life and work. Not so much in the great crises that come but rarely to us, and which more resemble the sudden emergencies of the soldier's life, as in the less conspicuous opportunities which are ours in the home, in Sunday-school, in whatever occupies us as the chief business of our lives.

You sit before your Sunday-school class of wide-awake, mischievous boys. They are quick to turn anything and every thing into fun. You teach them the lesson, interesting them by anecdote and illustration, holding their attention fairly well, for they love you, and like to please you by listening to what you say. You make no direct appeal to them to become Christians, partly because it is not easy for you to speak of personal religion, and also because you doubt whether such appeal would be received as you would wish. You dread a laugh as the response to any such effort.

One day a chance remark by a member of the class opens wide a door for you to enter and speak directly to the hearts and consciences of those boys. There is your opportunity. A moment, and the door will be closed by the lively talk which is all ready to follow the remark. Will you quickly enter in, overcoming your natural hesitation, and say the word of warning or of invitation which may reach and win those young souls? It may be an act of true heroism to do it, but it will be something done by a soldier for his king.

It is far more comfortable to sit at home on some rainy evening, when there is a prayer meeting at your own church, and when, if you go, you are liable to be called upon to take part in the service, something which is never easy to you. You are not at all in the mood to do that; you are tired, and not in very great sympathy with the subject of the evening. Will you straightway rise, putting aside all these suggestions of ease and comfort, and go to that little gathering of Christ's people, ready to say a word for him if he gives it to you?

Perhaps there is not much real heroism in such an act, yet we may surely believe that our Lord recognizes something akin to it in every resolute effort to overcome the sins which do 'so easily beset us' on our way to heaven.

Our path may be in very humble, quiet places, and our work monotonous to weariness, with little opportunity for special service of any kind. Patient continuance in well doing may be our highest duty. Yet, keeping eye and heart intently open for what may be God's call to us for some self-denying, out standing service, we shall find a blessing in quickly obeying the call, at any cost to self and selfish ease.