



LESSON III. — Jan. 16.

Beginning of the Ministry of Jesus.

Matt. iv., 17-25. Memory verses, 17-20.

Golden Text.

'The people which sat in darkness saw great light.' (Matt. iv., 16.)

Daily Readings.

- M. John i., 35-51. — The first disciples of Jesus.
- T. John ii., 1-12.—The first miracle of Jesus.
- W. John xi., 13-3: 24.—Beginning of Jesus' ministry in Judea.
- Th. John iv., 1-42.—Jesus journeying from Judea to Galilee.
- F. John iv., 43-54. — The second miracle of Jesus.
- S. John v., 1-47.—Close of Jesus' ministry in Judea.
- S. Matt. iv., 12-25.—Beginning of Jesus' ministry in Galilee.

Lesson Story.

Jesus in the beginning of his public ministry, proclaimed the same message that John had brought — 'Repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'

One day, as Jesus was walking by the sea of Galilee, he called to Andrew and Peter to leave their fish-nets, by which they earned their living, and to follow him as their Lord. 'I will make you fishers of men,' was his promise.

Without a moment's hesitation or questioning, they left all to follow Jesus. Our Saviour then called James and John, the two sons of Zebedee. These also were fishers, but they left their nets, to follow Jesus.

Then Jesus, with these four disciples, went about through all Galilee, teaching and preaching and healing. He preached the gospel of the kingdom of heaven. He healed all manner of diseases. Lunacy, palsy and devil-possession, he healed with a loving touch. Nothing was too hard for Jesus.

The fame of his mighty deeds spread abroad through all Syria and Decapolis, the region beyond Jordan, as well as Galilee, Judea and Jerusalem. Great multitudes flocked to him from all these regions, and he healed their sick and preached to them the gospel of the kingdom.

Lesson Hints.

Over a year elapses in the history of Jesus between this lesson and the last. In the meantime he had made friendship with those disciples whom he now called to leave all and unconditionally follow him in the work of founding his kingdom.

Jesus had cleansed the temple in Jerusalem and baptized in Judea, but he could do no mighty works there nor in Nazareth because of their unbelief. He worked quietly and with few miracles while John was still preaching. Now that John is gone, our Lord begins, in the despised country of Galilee, those wondrous miracles and teachings which quickly spread his fame abroad.

'Straightway'—we cannot be too prompt in obeying God's voice.

'Other two brethren' — James and John were partners of Peter in the fishing trade. (Luke v., 10.) 'Zebedee'—was evidently a rich man, able to spare his sons, for he had 'hired servants.' (Mark i., 20.)

'Healing'—He who refused to satisfy his own bodily wants by divine power, now pours forth his power unstintingly on the suffering bodies of others. As the Sinless. One bore our sins, so he bore our sicknesses and sorrows in his own body. (Matt. viii. 17: I. Pet. ii., 24.)

Lesson Hymn.

God calling yet! shall I not hear?
Earth's pleasures shall I not hold dear?
Shall life's swift passing days all fly,
And still my soul in sinners' lie?

God calling yet! shall I not rise?
Can I His loving voice despise?
And basely his kind care repay?
He calls me still; can I delay?

God calling yet! and shall He knock,
And I my heart the closer lock?
He still is waiting to receive,
And shall I dare His Spirit grieve?

God calling yet! and shall I give?
No heed, but still in bondage live?
I wait, but He does not forsake;
He calls me still; my heart, awake!

God calling yet! I cannot stay;
My heart I yield without delay:
Vain world, farewell, from thee I part;
The voice of God hath reached my heart.
—Gerhard Tersteegen, 1730.

Primary Lesson.

'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.

'Follow me.'
What does it mean to follow Jesus? What did it mean to those four 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 only see him as a man. We can not 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 of 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.

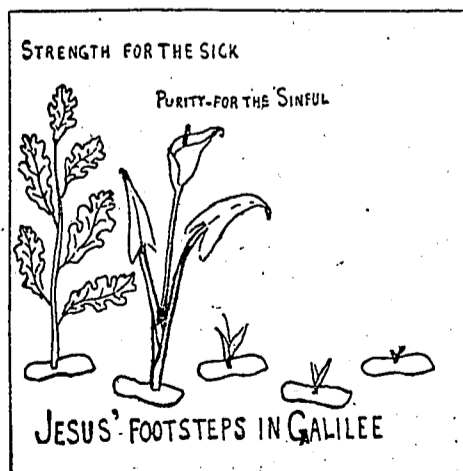
Which kind of a follower will you be, brave and loving, or cowardly and disobedient?

Suggested Hymns.

'Jesus calls us o'er the tumult,' 'Calling for thee,' 'Jesus is tenderly calling,' 'By Galilee,' 'I hear Thy welcome voice,' 'Jesus, I come to Thee.'

The Lesson Illustrated.

Beginning of the ministry. We will have the call of another disciple later on, so here use our board to illustrate the general work of Jesus. An old legend said that where Jesus walked on the shores of the Lake of Galilee, lilies sprang up from his footsteps.



We do know, though, that where he walked, sinful lives blossomed into purity, so we draw our lily, the sick became strong, so beside the lily we place a young oak, for the renewed bodies.

If we are like him, deeds of kindness, words of help and love will leave brighter hearts and stronger lives in our footsteps.

Practical Points.

A. H. CAMERON.

Jan. 16.—Matt. iv., 17-25.

Jesus was the only preacher who could rightfully preach himself. Verse 17; I. Cor. ii., 2. The Lord seeth not as man seeth, and those whom he calls to preach can do nothing else so well. Verses 18 and 21. They who would be skilful in the use of the gospel net must receive their training from the Captain of their Salvation. Verse 19. Prompt obedience has a special reward, for he gives twice who gives quickly. Verses 20 and 22. Jesus was a teacher whose doctrine was sound and simple, a preacher who always delivered the right message at the right time, and a physician whose skill never failed. Verse 23. Some followed Jesus to secure healing for their friends, some to be healed themselves, some out of idle curiosity, and a few because they loved him. Verses 24, 25.

Christian Endeavor Topic.

Jan. 16. — Fishers of men: how to win souls.—(II. Tim. iv., 1-8.)

How to Manage Boys.

A young teacher, who has had great success with a class of little 'ragamuffins' in the worst quarter of a large city, was once asked to tell something of the method by which she had transformed the lawless street urchins into respectable little citizens, in so many cases.

'I haven't any method, really,' said the young woman, modestly. 'It is only that I try to make the boys like me, and I say "don't" just as seldom as I possibly can in my work with them. They had learned to lie, steal, and fight; but truth, honesty, and courtesy were unknown terms.'

'So I began by telling them a story every morning about some boy who had done a brave, honest, or kind thing, and held him up for their admiration. And after a while I asked them to "save up" good things they had seen or done to tell at these morning talks. Their eagerness about it, and pride when I was pleased with their little incidents, showed me that they were being helped.'

'There was just one boy who seemed to be hopeless. He was apparently indifferent to everything, sat for weeks during the morning talks with a stolid expression, and never contributed anything to the conversation. I had begun to be really discouraged about him, when one morning he raised his hand as soon as it was time for the talk to begin.

'"Well, Jim, what is it you have to tell us?" I asked, encouragingly.

'"Man's hat blew off as I was comin' to school. I ran and picked it up for him," he jerked out, in evident embarrassment at finding all eyes fastened on him.

'"And what did the man say?" I asked, hoping that a "thank you," had rewarded his first attempt in the right direction:

'"You young scamp, you'd have made off with that if I hadn't kept my eye on you!" said the boy, in the same jerky fashion.

'"And what did you do then?" I asked, in fear and trembling.

'"Didn't do nothin', but just come along to school," said the boy, soberly. "I reckon he didn't know no better; prob'ly he hadn't had no sech teachin' as I have got," and he lapsed into silence with an air of perfect satisfaction.

'I think he had a pretty severe rebuff, but he has told a great many pleasant things since that day, so you see, he was not disheartened.

'Some people would say, I know, that I ought to tell how bad stealing and lying and fighting are; and yet as long as they will listen to me when I say "Do be honest, do be truthful, do be kind," I shall not keep the other things before their minds.'

'Whatever may be said for other methods, hers—which she did not even call a method—commends itself.—'Christian Observer.'

I think we need to realize more than we do how short a time it takes for the boys to become the men. We unconsciously act as if we thought we were sure of them for many years, and need not, therefore, hurry. But in truth we have no time to lose. In a few years the boys in our classes will be the men with votes. The Sunday-school teachers throughout the world to-day can have, and should have, an enormous power over the new century.—Marianne Farningham.