

It is true that our Catechism says: "The Holy Ghost has called me through the gospel." But not at all times when the gospel is preached do we listen to this call. The Holy Spirit must first prepare our hearts and get them ready for the understanding of the ways of God. Abraham was called and at once followed this call, altho house and home, relatives and friends, were left behind. He did not heed this voice because he hoped for gain.

Thus, too, Matthew, in the pleasure found in his work, could have chosen to remain there where the money was. But this he did not do, for this is the great hour that has brought him salvation. Money does not keep him back; mammon-worship does not lead him astray and prevent him from seeking what is eternal. Rather could his sin and disgraceful occupation have kept him back from following the Master's call. But these, too, do not stand between him and his Redeemer. He who is earnestly seeking his salvation and in contrite heart is filled with faith and trust in God, need not be ashamed of his sins; these are only monuments of the mighty, saving grace of God. In this light Levi regards his own life, and therefore he follows the call of Jesus. What now awaits him he does not know, but the Lord who has called him will also give him strength to deny himself, to despise the world and take up his cross. For such a word out of the mouth of the Son of God is not merely a word of command which requires of us the strength to carry it out. Such a word contains also the power of God to make such a command a reality and a truth. No one needs to despair that it will be too hard for him to tear himself loose from the arts of the world and to follow Christ. Jesus will help you as He helped Matthew. Only try to do His will faithfully and He will surely be at your side.

"And he arose and followed Him." See what a simple matter conversion really is. Matthew does not look back, but puts his hand to the plow and goes

forward in his work. It is remarkable how little he says of his conversion. In spite of his humble calling he must have been a man of powerful mind; otherwise he would not have been able to compile the Sermon on the Mount nor have edited the Parables of Christ as he did. But to this he devoted no thought. In a few short words the story of his conversion is told. How different this is with many others, who speak loud and long of their many spiritual experiences! And altho St. Paul twice tells the story of his conversion, this need not be done by everybody or at all times. Only give your heart to the Lord; to men you need not say much of your wonderful secret joy of conversion. Work rather, as did Matthew, and your actions will speak louder than your words.

II. It is almost something in the nature of a surprise to see that Matthew celebrated his conversion by festivities. It would seem more natural that when a man bids adieu to the world and its delights, he would proceed to his secret chamber and thank God on his knees, and not invite his friends to a feast. But yet the father of the prodigal son celebrated the return of his wayward child by killing the fatted calf, and it certainly is something commendable to invite poor and lost sinners into one's house for the purpose of showing them Jesus and the new life that emanates from Him. It is especially something grand when the Savior Himself takes part in such a feast and eats with the sinner.

An English popular speaker once declared that Jesus preaches to the rich, but eats with the poor, but that His servants nowadays do the very opposite. Matthew's idea is of a different kind. It is not his purpose to despise his associate of former and wicked days and to refuse to recognize them, but he proposes to take an impressive method. Here they sit together, light and darkness, heaven and earth; a strange and mixed society. The world would declare them to be miserable creatures.