

was the scene of some of Christ's most notable miracles. Galilee is now very thinly peopled, and the lake, though beautiful, is desolate.

Simon was called Peter, or Cephas—a stone—see John 1: 42. Simon, same as Simeon. Andrew was one of the earliest disciples. He and John, following the direction given by John the Baptist, followed Jesus. Andrew led Peter to Christ. The brothers were just beginning their day's work as fishermen,—“casting their net into the sea.”

Vv. 19-22 —“Follow me;” compare John 1: 35; Luke 5: 4. In John we have the account of the *first* call of the disciples; in our lesson, the *second* call (more minutely given by Luke); in Matt. 10, we have their call to be apostles. Note the three stages,—first, followers; second, evangelists; third, apostles.

*Fishers of men*: the world is a “sea;” ministers, Sabbath school teachers, and all labourers for Christ, are “fishers of men,” prudently, diligently gathering souls into the Gospel net. James and John (the Evangelist) were also called by the shore of the lake. The four instantly obeyed the call, leaving all their worldly wealth.

V. 23.—Galilee, the northern section of Palestine, fertile, well-peopled. Synagogues, houses of local worship. “It cannot be proved that they existed before the Babylonish captivity.” In our Lord's time, the rule was to have a synagogue wherever ten learned men or students of the law resided. The Jews built these places of worship wherever they resided. In the larger towns, there were several, and in Jerusalem the number is said to have reached 500. Christian congregations were modelled on the synagogue. Jesus and his disciples made use of the synagogues whenever opportunity offered. *Gospel*: good news. This *gospel* was that the Kingdom of the Messiah was at hand. In order to confirm the good news, Jesus performed miracles of healing, so many and so wonderful that his fame spread throughout all the land.

V. 24.—*Torments*—acute disease. *Possessed with devils*, demoniacs. *Lunatic*, “moon-struck”—affected by changes of the moon. *Palsy*—Paralysis.

V. 25.—The Decapolis—“Ten Cities” on the east side of Jordan, inhabited by Greeks.

### DOCTRINES.

1. Repentance is the gate of Heaven. The call is to us—to all.

2. Christ's Kingdom is set up among us; let us take heed that He reign in our hearts.

3. The Gospel is “glad news;” let us do what we can to spread the news.

4. See how promptly the four answered the call of Jesus!

5. Miracles are a sign of Christ's power; healing and help, mercy and love characterized all his doings. All His miracles are blessings.

6. He who can cure diseases, can heal our souls.

### SECOND SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—The *Beatitudes*—Matt. 5: 1-12.

Multitudes followed Jesus, drawn by His preaching and His miracles. He addresses to them the sermon of which we have here the beginning.

The Beatitudes (blessings) are *eight* in number. There are seven distinct features of character, on which the blessing comes. The *eighth* is an added blessing, to follow the persecution to which the good are to be subject. *Seven* is the number to perfection, completeness; and our Lord here draws a complete, a perfect character.

V. 3.—*Poor in spirit*—God's people are very often, in the Old Testament, styled the “poor—the oppressed, the afflicted, the needy.” The reference is not to outward circumstances, but to the frame of mind. To be “poor,” in this sense, is to be humble, to feel our littleness in God's presence. They already *have* the Kingdom, and are rich beyond measure.

V. 4.—*Mourn*—the distress felt on account of distance from God. God comforts those that long for Him by coming into their hearts by His Spirit.

V. 5.—See Ps. 35: 11. *Meek*, gentle and lowly. The *earth—the land*. See 1 Cor. 3: 21, 22.

V. 6.—*Hunger and thirst*—to long for ardently. *Righteousness*—rightness in ourselves, and the justifying righteousness of Christ.

V. 7.—*Merciful*; compare Ps. 18: 25. The meek bear the ills of life; the merciful bravely try to relieve the misery around them.

V. 8.—The pure in heart—those who are right, sanctified, pure in their inmost thoughts and purposes. See God; compare 1 Cor. 13: 12, and 1 John 3: 2.

V. 9.—Peace-makers—those who carry the glad news of peace, and exert themselves in extending the Kingdom of Heaven. “They enjoy the exalted rank of full-grown sons of God.”

V. 10-12.—The righteous cannot escape persecution, but, in the midst of its flames, “theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.” He shows them that the old struggle between