

her up and got into a grand wrangle, and the bass and the soprano had it for about ten seconds; but the soprano beat (women always do) and the bass rolled down into the cellar, and the soprano went up into the garret, but the latter kept on squalling as though the bass, in leaving her, had wickedly torn out all her back hair. I felt anxious about the soprano and looked back to see if she had fainted; but I found her reclining on the arm of the young man, who looked strong enough to take care of her.

Now, I admit that we all cannot have such things in our churches. In the church of the Holy Bankak it costs one hundred dollars to have sung that communion piece: "Ye wretched, hungry, starving poor!" But let us come as near to it as we can. The true "Pisgah" has been standing long enough, on "Jordan's stormy banks." Let us pass over, and get out of the wet weather.

"Good-bye "Antioch," "Harwell," and "Boylston." Good-bye, till we meet in glory."

But, if the prescription of new tunes does not end congregational singing, I have another suggestion. Get an irreligious choir, and put them in a high balcony back of the congregation. I know choirs that are made up chiefly of religious people, or those at least respectful for sacred things. That will never do, if you want to kill the music.

INTERNATIONAL S. S. LESSON.

Sunday, Feb. 13.

THE PREACHING OF JESUS.—Luke iv. 12-21

GOLDEN TEXT.—The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind,—to set at liberty them that are bruised.

Commit—16-19.

INTRODUCTION AND CONNECTION.

The Baptism of Jesus. His Anointing, or setting apart by the Holy Ghost, (ch. iii. 21-22), and His Temptation are the three great events that intervene between our last lesson and this. Having passed triumphantly through the latter, He returned to Galilee, His own country, as Mark terms it, and at once entered upon His great work of teaching, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

LESSON NOTES.

(14.) And Jesus returned from Judea, whither He went to be baptized, tempted, and fully endowed with power from on high. In the power of the Spirit—filled with the Spirit, for the working of miracles, and otherwise setting forth His divine character and claims. Unto Galilee. Galilee was much despised by the Jews—John vi. 41-62; for at this time it was peopled to a large extent by Gentiles, (Matt. iv. 15) by whom the Jews' religion had been modified or corrupted; yet it was to this despised region that Jesus first went with the Gospel. And there went out a fame, etc.—a wide-spread report of His teaching, preaching, and miracles—(See Matt. iv. 23-25).

(15.) Taught in their Synagogues—those of the Galilean Jews. The account of Jesus' teaching and miracles while passing through Galilee on His way to Nazareth, is omitted here; but related by the other evangelists, or elsewhere by Luke. Being glorified by all. This accords with Matthew's account alluded to above.

(16, 17.) And He came to Nazareth where He had been brought up. It is supposed by many that Jesus visited Nazareth twice; but, from a careful comparison of accounts given by the different evangelists, it seems probable that they all refer to this, and that this was His first and only visit there. And as His custom was—not as it had been in former years, but as it was at that time, or since He commenced His public teaching. There is no reason to suppose He had ever taught in Nazareth before. He went into the synagogue, etc. Jesus' fame had gone before Him (see v. 23); consequently the people seem to have been looking for some special exhibition of His power.

And stood up for to read. The Rabbins usually conducted the worship in the synagogues; yet others were not unfrequently permitted to do so (Acts xiii. 15). So when Jesus stood up, thus signifying His willing-

ness to teach on that occasion, there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Esaias (Isaiah)—the prophet who more pointedly and emphatically than any other spake of Himself. This did not occur by chance. God knew that the men of Nazareth would reject His Son, but He would have their horrible guilt without excuse. They had known His pure and holy character from His childhood up; they should hear His own testimony to the truth of prophecy in regard to Himself; they should listen to His gracious words (v. 22);—in the judgment of the great day they should not be able to say—we had no means of knowing Him. He found the place. We are not told He happened upon it, but He found it—evidently turned to it by design—to show those people how greatly they had been privileged by hearing from His own lips the prophet's testimony in regard to Himself.

18, 19.) The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. Esaias uttered these words some seven hundred years before this, and now He whom Esaias personated stands before the people of Nazareth repeating them in their ears. He (the Lord) hath anointed me. Anointing was the special act by which the high priest under the Levitical law was set apart to his sacred office. Jesus had been anointed (Acts x. 38) by the Spirit to a spiritual High Priesthood, and He here in the prophet's words announces His own mission. This mission was (1) to preach the gospel to the poor; (2) to heal the broken-hearted; (3) to preach deliverance to the captives; (4) recovering of sight to the blind; (5) to set at liberty them that are bruised.

The great distresses of humanity are poverty, heart-brokenness, bondage, blindness, bruisedness. To the first Jesus brought soul-riiches (Eph. iii. 8); to the second, soul-healing (Mal. iv. 2); to the third, deliverance (2 Cor. i. 10); to the fourth, sight (John ix. 11, 30-33); to the fifth, releasement from crushing bondage (Rom. viii. 15; Heb. ii. 15); and to all He was to preach (or proclaim) the acceptable year of the Lord—that is, the Gospel era, then opening upon the world, in which God would accept, first of all, the sacrifice He had Himself provided in Christ, and through Him, all who came to Him in faith trusting in that sacrifice.

(20.) He closed the book—gave it to the minister—and sat down. He announced in the prophet's words Himself, His work and for whom it was to be done; and then left His hearers to reflect for a little while upon His meaning. The eyes of all—were fastened upon him. They undoubtedly saw that He was applying the words He had just read to Himself—virtually announcing Himself as the one who was to fulfil all that the prophet claimed Messiah would do; and they gazed at Him with amazement.

(21.) But He did not leave them in doubt as to the meaning He Himself gave to the prophet's words; for He proceeded at once to declare that this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. Here, then, Christ evidently claims to be the Messiah,—God's anointed. Happy, indeed, would Nazareth have been, had she that day accepted her own prophet. But no;—scorning His pretensions, and enraged at His words, they thrust Him out of their city, and would have taken His life, but could not, for His time was not yet come. We have no satisfactory proof that Jesus ever again returned.

SUGGESTED THOUGHTS.

Nazareth and Judas Iscariot, clearly prove that mere association, even with the Son of God Himself, when there is no change of heart, makes men worse instead of better.

Nazareth, that had known His holy character and life for thirty years, fell upon Him with murderous fury and would have slain Him;—Judas, who had been with him for three years on terms of the closest intimacy, betrayed Him. How must it be, then, to bring men into Heaven with no preparation of heart for such holy companionship?

There are some who claim that Jesus was a good man and nothing more. Had He not been what He here and elsewhere claims to be, the Christ of God, He would not have been a good man even; but the greatest deceiver that ever ved.

QUESTION SUMMARY.

(FOR THE CHILDREN.)

(14.) What country did Jesus return from? What three very important things had happened to Him there? See introduction. What country did He return to? What went out through all that region

What is fame? (15.) Where did Jesus teach? What is a Synagogue? (16.) What city did He come to at length? How many years had He lived at Nazareth? To what place did He go on the Sabbath day? Had it been His custom to do so in other places? Why did He stand up? (17.) What portion of the Bible was given Him to read from? How long before had it been written? Why did Jesus turn to that particular place? Because it had been said about Him, and He wished the people to know it. (18-19.) Who did He say, in the words of the prophet was upon Him? What did He say the Spirit had done to Him? When was Jesus anointed by the Spirit? (ch. 3: 22) What had He been anointed to do? Name the different classes of people spoken of. Do all people belong to one, or more than one of these classes? To how many of them do you belong? When did Jesus come to bless all people? (20.) What did He do when He had finished reading? Why did the people look at Him so? Because they saw that He applied the prophet's words to Himself, and they were astonished. (21.) What did He mean by this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears? He meant that He Himself was the very one that the prophet had written about. Did the people believe it? What did they try to do to Him? See v. 29. It is not likely Jesus ever went back to Nazareth. Let this teach you then, each time you reject Christ, that He may never come to you again! Hear and obey Him whenever He calls lest He leave you forever.

THE OLD PATHS THE BEST PATHS.

It is often highly important that we should pause and reflect. Human nature is so depraved, the flesh is so weak, the influence of the world is so binding, corrupting, deadening; Satan, the great adversary of souls, is such an artful deceiver, that there is great danger of our being tempted into forbidden and sinful paths. Even amid our most spiritual exercises and in our most guarded moments, we are conscious of being on enchanted ground, and of a strong gravitating tendency to the world.

Besides this, there are no errors into which we are so apt to fall as those of adapting ourselves to existing habits and customs, of adopting popular views, and of going the way of the multitude. That this view is generally entertained, that this doctrine is currently believed, that this custom universally prevails, that this amusement is popular and fashionable, are considerations that have sufficient weight with most of us to influence and control our conduct. It should be borne in mind, however, that might is not always right—that the many have most frequently erred—that, in all ages, Truth has had comparatively a few true adherents, while Error has always had hosts of deluded worshippers—that,

'Broad is the road that leads to death,
And thousands walk together there;
While Wisdom shows a narrow path,
With here and there a traveller.'

To catch the spirit of the age, then, and tamely and blindly to follow the multitude, is to be animated by the spirit of error and sin. There is need that we shall examine for ourselves. Religion is a strictly personal matter. "Ask for the old paths; where is the good way." We should ask for the old paths not the new, because in true and undefiled religion there is nothing new. Truth and righteousness are coeval with the existence of Jehovah himself, for they constitute essential attributes of His character. Righteous has ever been the habitation of His throne, and His law has been the truth. And when, in the fulness of time, He was pleased to reveal Himself in Christ, and to transmit to us the system of religion known as the gospel, He gave us a code of laws and a system of doctrines perfect and complete in themselves, and consequently susceptible of no improvement whatever. It was a revelation made once for all, and is adapted to all ages and to all conditions of society. If we would know what the right way is, we must ask

for the old paths. If we would know what truth is, we must go back to the fountain. We must seek it where it comes fresh, pure, radiant from the sure word of prophecy—from the unsullied page of inspiration. Seek it as held and exhibited among men, and you find it perverted, distorted, caricatured. Look away from existing beliefs, from prevalent practices. The question is not or should not be, what are the opinions and practices of the age? but, what is my duty as revealed in the Scriptures?

There is a widely prevailing notion that, as this is an age of progress and improvement, new practices and principles in religion should be adopted—such as are more congenial with the cultivated taste, high refinement, and social habits of the people. As if poor, weak, erring, sinful man, ascending by an effort of his own to a higher plane, may lift religion after him—elevating it in proportion as he elevates himself improving upon God's plan as he improves his own understanding, character and conduct. He would elevate what is really the only means of his own elevation!

I will not dwell upon the new departures of the present day, so prevalent in the churches—such as the offer of salvation without self-abasement, humiliation of soul, contrition of heart—the toleration and even the sanction of such frivolous and worldly amusements as tend to obliterate the line of distinction between God's friends and His foes—the setting aside of the simplicity and devoutness of church worship for a formal, pompous, ritualistic service—the substitution of quartette performances, most artistically rendered by hired, and, in many instances, irreligious men and women, for the far more inspiring and enrapturing scene of a whole assembly worshipping in the service of song—pandering to a vitiated, worldly taste, by holding, fairs, festivals, tableaux, &c., in churches, making God's house a house of merchandise, and a place for the exhibition of theatrical performances, to raise money for religious purposes, instead of the old, Scriptural method of taking collections and of making regular contributions.

But enough of this—enough to convince us that we are not in the old paths in the paths most plainly and luminously set before us in the Scriptures, and hallowed by the footsteps of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, saints. In all deference to the wisdom of the age, we do not hesitate to affirm, with the apostle Paul, that the foolishness of God is wiser than men. All their attempts to improve upon His plan, are as foolish and futile as would be the attempt, by the aid of a flickering taper, to light the glorious sun along the luminous track through the heavens.

It is only by walking in the way of God's appointment—in the good old way that we may expect to find rest for our souls. "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." Many professors of Christianity have just enough religion to make them unhappy. They have no experimental knowledge of what is meant by rest of soul. They are tossed hither and thither on a stormy sea, with no sure and steadfast anchor. Or, to recur to the imagery of the language just quoted, they do not walk so fully in the way of God's appointment as to realize that Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and that all her paths are peace; nor do they go far enough into the path of the ungodly to reap "the pleasures of sin." They walk where light and darkness blend, and a cheerless twilight is ever brooding over their souls.

Reader, the path of happiness lies in the line of duty. Christian enjoyment is the sure reward of Christian fidelity.—L. W. Moore, in Religious Herald.