

some handicraft (so Paul). Luke says, "the carpenter's son" - evident that he had worked at His reputed father's trade in Nazareth. Building His spiritual work (Zech. 6: 12). The natural inference from this verse is, that Joseph was dead. "Brethers, sisters" - whether step, actual, or cousins, we do not know. Many Protestant writers believe these, the children of Joseph and Mary, own brothers of Jesus.

Ver. 4. He quotes a Jewish proverb and applies it to Himself (John 1: 11) in a higher sense. So it has ever been. Can we, who have not their prejudices to overcome, cast stones at these unbelieving Nazarenes?

Ver. 5. "No mighty work." Why? No faith. Miracles were at once the reward and teachings of faith. Unbelief practically limits Divine power. "Save a few" - a few drops upon the parched land, when they might have had showers of blessing.

Ver. 6. "Marvelled." Wisdom has its wonders as well as ignorance. Here at the want of faith, where it ought to have been abundant; once at its strength, where it could not have been expected (Matt. 8: 10). "Went round" - left Nazareth, never, so far as we know, to return, but kept on teaching in the surrounding villages.

Ver. 7. "Called," lit. "having called;" "two and two" - six pairs. For the arrangement see Matt. 10: 24. "Power over" - the mightiest proof of the divinity of their commission.

Ver. 8. "Take nothing." The general idea through this verse is the dependence of faith. "A staff only." Luke says (9: 3) "neither staves." Probably the harmonizing idea is, that if they had a staff they might take it, otherwise they were not to provide one. It was a walking-stick. "Scrip:" a wallet or knapsack. "No money in their purse," lit. girdle. Money and small articles required for use on a journey are often kept in the folds of the girdle.

Ver. 9. To go just as they were, not carrying any extra garments (see Matt. 10: 10; Luke 10: 4). "Coats," the tunic worn under the mantle.

Ver. 10. As their stay would be short, they were not to waste their time by going from house to house, especially as such a course would be an offence to a hospitable people. Matt. 10: 12 adds that they were to salute the house; Luke 10: 5 - they were to say "Peace be to this house," meaning those who dwell in it.

Ver. 11. "Whosoever shall not" - REV. "Whoever shall not" - "shake off" - dust, a symbolical practice: the Jews, as taught by the Scribes, did so when entering their own country from Gentile land. So Paul and Barnabas at Antioch - Acts 13: 51; they rejected those who rejected them - Prov. 1: 24, 28. "More tolerable" - the guilt greater of rejecting Christ than that of the corrupt cities of the plain. Remember and teach that there is a "day of judgment."

Ver. 12. "Men should repent." So had preached John, and so Jesus - not a mere sorrow for sin, but, as we find, a complete change from sin to righteousness - from Satan to God.

Ver. 13. "Cast out many devils" - wonderful power committed to them. "Anointed" - not medicinally, but as the vehicle of healing power; also, likely, as a symbol of the giving of the Spirit.

Topical Analysis. - (1) Christ rejected in His own country, vers. 1-6; (2) The sending forth of the Twelve, vers. 7-11; (3) The work of the first missionaries, vers. 12, 13.

What and How to Teach. - On the first topic we

shall have to note the blinding effects of prejudice, and to point out how much evil it has done in the world. Here it prevented these Nazarenes from listening to the teachings of Christ - from accepting His message and Himself as the long-expected Messiah, and shut them out of the glories of His kingdom. It left many of their sick folk, who otherwise would have felt the power of His healing, to languish and die, and sent Him forth from them, never, as we think, to return. John 1: 46-49 will show that while a good man may have prejudices, he will abandon them in the face of the truth; while from chapter 7: 41, 42, 52, we see its blinding effects among the people at Jerusalem, and in the highest court of the nation. Show that prejudice against Christ and His Gospel still exists and works - that religion is thought by some to be weak, unmanly - that its professors are all classed as hypocrites - pretenders, because of the inconsistency of a few. So again, if it is not associated with wealth and power, some men will have none of it. But as the Jesus rejected by the prejudiced Nazarenes is the most potent power in the world's history, so His religion, scorned by the worldly, despised by the mammon-worshipper, and trodden under foot by the votary of pleasure, is to be the one mighty test by which the hereafter of all shall be decided. Happy if those you teach can receive with meekness the word of God.

On the second topic, show how they were to go forth in faith, unencumbered by the things of life - to take only what was absolutely needful, and to place themselves in the Divine hands for the rest; what they had to do: to preach repentance - the great work of Christ's servants to-day - that they were to be the heralds of Jesus; that upon those who rejected them would come a terrible doom, because in rejecting them they rejected Him who sent them - the Christ of God. So now, those who turn away from the message of Christ's disciples are shutting themselves out from hope and salvation.

On the third topic, we can teach how these men, fulfilling the commands of Christ, accomplished mighty works, even healing the sick and casting out devils. Perhaps they went forth on their mission fearing and trembling; but when they came back they could gather to Jesus with gladsome hearts, and tell Him "all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught" - ver. 30. And the true servant of God, worker for Jesus, going forth to his duty trusting in the Master alone, shall rejoice to find that by the power of the Spirit he is able to "cast out devils" - the devils of worldliness, intemperance, covetousness, and many vices which hold in thralldom the souls and bodies of men. So practise, and so teach.

Incidental Lessons. - To guard against foolish and hurtful prejudices.

That some to-day, like the Nazarenes, do, because of this, reject the Gospel of Jesus.

That even Jesus was rejected. Shall His servants wonder if they are likewise?

That the rejected Nazareth is the Lord of the Universe, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

That labour has been honoured, for Christ laboured.

To pray that God will send forth many labourers; and to say, "Here am I, send me."

That truly to work for Jesus, we must first be His disciples.

Main Lessons. - To beware how we reject Jesus: our eternal future is at stake - Matt. 21: 44; Acts 4: 12; 1 Cor. 1: 18; 2 Cor. 2: 15, 16.

The disciples of Jesus must still preach Him, whether men will receive their message or not - Ezek. 2: 4, 5, 7; Rom. 1: 15, 16; 1 Cor. 9: 16.