

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

INTRODUCTORY. Jesus remained two days at Sychar, and then proceeded on his way to Galilee. He came "in the power of the Spirit." That divine presence received at his baptism manifesting itself in his Messianic teaching and works. His doctrine aroused widespread interest, and miracles only increased the fame which the teacher had already acquired. At Cana he healed the son of a nobleman of Capernaum, and in his progress through the cities of Galilee he came once more to the town in which he had spent his childhood. He has now entered upon the second year of his ministry, the year of his greatest popularity. About this time John the Baptist was thrown into prison, and his work as Christ's Forerunner came to a close. The narratives in Matt. 13: 53 ff, and Mark 6: 1 ff, are different accounts of incidents in our lesson.

LESSON PLAN. I. Reading the Bible. vs. 16-20. II. Explaining its Meaning. vs. 21-27. III. Rejected by the People. vs. 28-30.

I. READING THE BIBLE. 16. Nazareth—Many commentators place the incidents of our lesson at a later period in the ministry of our Lord. But those who have arranged this series of lessons for us have placed it at the beginning of his work in Galilee, because it affords a satisfactory explanation of his removal from Nazareth to Capernaum. They have accepted Luke's order of events in preference to that of Matthew and Mark. Some hold that there were two visits to, and rejections at, Nazareth, but (1) it is very unlikely that the same words would have been spoken and the same answer given in such exactly corresponding terms on two occasions; or (2) that Jesus would have marvelled at their unbelief after experiencing the violent treatment here narrated; and (3) the miracles narrated by the other two evangelists do not contradict our Saviour's words as given by Luke, for they were comparatively insignificant, exciting the desire for something more marvellous. **Where he was brought up**—Christ must have entered the familiar synagogue with the deepest emotions. The memories of his own childhood and youth, those on every hand whom he had known and who knew him from infancy, the sacred desk and ancient rolls from which he had learned to recognize his Father's voice calling him to his long-foretold work, the change of immeasurable, indeed infinite, significance which had come over him since he last took part as one of themselves in the sacred exercises, all this would fill him with the most earnest yearning over their spiritual welfare, and the most ardent desire to preach to them the acceptable year of the Lord. **As his custom was**—either his custom of attending the synagogue on the Sabbath, or of standing up to read at the service. The first is the most natural meaning. Jesus here, by his example, rebukes those who for trivial reasons, connected with the mere accessories of worship, neglect the house of God, as well as those whose irregularity of attendance prevents the performance of this duty from crystallizing into a "custom." The baldest service and the poorest sermon are full of spiritual elevation and quickening to the heart that is waiting on the Holy Spirit. Impress upon scholars the duty of forming and maintaining church-going habits. Too many of our young people fail to

realize their importance in strengthening character and commanding the divine blessing upon the life. **Stood up to read**—It would appear as if Jesus stood up, thus offering himself as the reader for the day, an offer which was at once accepted. It was customary for the presiding elder to request any seemingly competent stranger to address the congregation. (Acts 13: 15.)

17. The book—A parchment roll containing the prophecies of Isaiah. **He found the place**—Isa. 61: 1, 2. This passage is taken from the portion of the book which some think was not written by Isaiah, but by some later prophet. Our Saviour's use of it stamps it as inspired whoever wrote it. The immediate meaning of the prophet was the deliverance of the nation from captivity. The higher or "Messianic," meaning is unfolded in our Lord's application of the words to himself. "The meaning of this prophetic citation may be better seen, when we remember that it stands in the middle of the third great division of the book of Isaiah (ch. 49: 66), and that, viz, which comprises the prophecies of the person, office, sufferings, triumph and church of the Messiah;—and thus by implication announces the fulfillment of all that went before, in Him who then addressed them." (Alford). There was a regular "lectionary," or prescribed course of lessons for every day, but the language indicates that the passage was accidentally, or intentionally a departure from the regular course.

18. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me—See verse 14 and John 3: 34; Ps. 45: 7; Isa. 11: 2; Col. 1: 19. **Anointed me**—prophets (1 Kings 19: 16) and priests (Ex. 28: 41; 30: 30) were consecrated by anointing with oil. Hence the expression stands for the solemn setting apart to holy duties, and the endowment with spiritual qualifications for the discharge of them (Heb. 1: 9). **Preach the gospel to the poor**—"preach good tidings unto the meek" is our version of Isaiah. Proclaim gladness to those in captivity and distress. It includes the "poor" rich as well as those who suffer penury. All who lack what is necessary to their real happiness, and are therefore objects of compassion to a benevolent Being. (Matt. 5: 3; 11: 5). Poverty becomes plenty when the joy of salvation gladdens the heart. **Heal the broken**