

be surprised to find how much is new to him; and he will feel a peculiar pleasure as he strikes a vein with which he is familiar.

We shall close this article by converting a passage from "Todd's Student's Manual." Before doing so we wish to observe that that treatise is the most useful small book we ever read, and to recommend it to all who seek mental improvement. It advises the reader to criticise every sentiment of other books, and to accept none which do not seem to be sound. In applying that principle, we cannot accept the following statement:—"You can never read to advantage unless you feel well, and the mind and spirits are buoyant. Otherwise, any author will be stupid." This is far too strong. Of course, no one can read to advantage who is very sick, or in acute pain; but as a man who feels dull and disinclined to walk, after a few minutes' exercise, finds his dullness gone; as a person not inclined to write can begin, as Dr. Johnson said, "with dogged determination," and after awhile can write easily and strongly, so after reading a few minutes the apathy of the mind disappears, the indisposition is forgotten, and the reading is accomplished. We have sometimes read the same pages three times, till the mind moved easily, and afterward unconsciously went beyond the prescribed task.—*Christian Advocate*.

INTERNATIONAL S. S. LESSON.

Sunday, April 3.

GOLDEN TEXT, v. 62:—And Jesus said unto him: No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Commit—57-58.

INTRODUCTION AND CONNECTION.

Still following Luke's narrative, we find in the portion of Scripture intervening between our last lesson and this, the account of the miraculous feeding of the multitude; our Lord's announcement to His disciples of His rejection by the elders, His death, and resurrection; the story of the transfiguration and the subsequent casting out of an unclean spirit; and the lesson of humility He taught His disciples.—v.v. 46-48.

Beginning with our present lesson and extending to ch. xviii. 14, we find a portion of Scripture of surpassing interest, the greater part of which is peculiar to Luke. Dr. Brown says of it:—"As there are scarcely any marks of time and place in all this peculiar portion, it is difficult to fix these with any certainty. But there is reason to believe that the earlier portion of it belongs to the period of our Lord's final journey from Galilee, which was probably a circuitous journey with the view, perhaps, of ministering in localities not before visited; and that the latter portion of it belongs to the intervals between the Feast of Tabernacles and that of the Dedication, in our Lord's last year, and between the Feast of the Dedication and that of His last Passover—during which intervals He appears to have sojourned chiefly in Perea, within the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas."

LESSON NOTES.

(51). And it came to pass that when the time was come (drew near) that He should be received up, (to the Father), He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem. Jesus had almost reached the end of His earthly mission. He had demonstrated by His word and His works both (John xv. 22-24) that He was the Messiah; John the Baptist had witnessed to Him, stating the proof he had received, (John i. 32, 33); God had twice proclaimed Him from heaven to be such (Matt. iii. 17; Mark ix. 7); and now He is about to finish His work by a voluntary death. To die, was part of His pre-appointed work—such was His Father's command as well as His own purpose. (John x. 10).

(52). And sent messengers. Previous to this, Jesus had rather courted obscurity—now He sends messengers before His face—to make ready for Him. His advance to Jerusalem is heralded by His own appointed servants; amid shoutings and hosannas He is going to be formally proclaimed as the KING THAT COMETH IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; and entering His own

temple, is going to assert, and for a time maintain His kingly authority. He is going to Jerusalem, not as a victim but as a king, and as a king to be rejected and slain.

(53). And they (the inhabitants of the Samaritan village) would not receive Him, because His face was as if He would go to Jerusalem. There was much hostility between the Jews and the Samaritans, and they maintained no friendly relations beyond buying and selling when it became a necessity (John vi. 51). Josephus tells us that it was customary with the Galileans, when going up to the sacred feasts, to go through Samaria; and it would seem that, as a rule, they were not inhospitably treated. But it was, doubtless, taken as an affront to be asked to extend hospitality to one claiming to be the Messiah, who so far ignored their claims to preference (John iv. 12, 20) as to be journeying to Jerusalem.

(54). And when James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume these Samaritan villages? These disciples evidently felt that they were not only the Lord's messengers, but were called to avenge any insult that might be offered to Him. This fiery zeal, when tempered and mellowed by the indwelling Spirit of God, was a most valuable characteristic. As Elias did—an example which, in their resentful mood, they would, doubtless, gladly have copied.

(55, 56). But He rebuked them, and said—Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of, for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. Christ's work was not one of destruction, but of salvation—not one of wrath, but of mercy; and this was but a small part of the contempt and scorn His disciples must see Him bear before His work was accomplished. How different the character of the "Boanerges" from that which grace was destined to make it! And they went to another village,—our Lord thus adhering to the rule He had Himself laid down for His disciples.—(Matt. x. 23.)

(57). A certain man (a scribe, Matt. viii. 19), said, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest;—a rash promise, this, for Jesus was not going to an earthly crown, as probably this man supposed, but to a crown of thorns and a cruel death.

(58). Jesus saith unto him: Foxes have holes, and fowls of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head. Homeless, a wanderer, just refused the hospitality of a poor Samaritan village, on His way to a cruel death, Jesus had no earthly advantages to offer this man—no, not so much as a place whereon to lay his head. Mark:—Jesus does not reject this man,—He only shows him what he must expect. Few words of Christ have such mournful and touching interest as these. It is not likely this man followed Him with such a prospect as this before him.

(59, 60). He said unto another, follow me. This was an imperative call; and it was, undoubtedly, obeyed; but not without a momentary hesitation. There were earthly claims upon him—an aged father, soon to die, to whom he owed the duty of a son. That his father was not yet dead, we gather from the fact that, as the Levitical law made a dead body unclean, it was customary to bury it as soon as possible; and further, from our Lord's reply, which otherwise would have appeared harsh and unsympathizing. Let the dead those spiritually dead bury their dead (attend to those last offices for those they have lost), but go thou, and preach the gospel. This command was not to be turned aside, or put off; and, as in the case of the Apostles, was, undoubtedly, obeyed.

(61). Another also said, Lord, I will follow thee, but let me first go bid farewell to my father and mother. This man had made a formal kind of resolve to follow Christ, yet even in doing so had begun to look back longingly towards what he was leaving behind. He was wishing to do the very thing that would, most likely, unsettle his mind, and turn him from his purpose. Hence the Lord's answer—

(62). No man putting his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of heaven. Jesus had seen the backward look, the longing for what he must needs give up if he became a true disciple, and here announces a principle applicable not only in this case, but to all similar cases and for all time. Looking back regretfully upon anything that has to be given up for Christ's sake, reveals the radical unfitness of him who does it to be a subject of Christ's kingdom. He who gave up all for us, would have us willing to give up all for Him.

SUGGESTED THOUGHTS.

The case of the Samaritan is suggestive of many in our own day who reject Christ because there is a something, either in Himself or His claims, that does not quite suit them. If His face is not as though He would go to Jerusalem, it is something equally as frivolous, possibly more so.

James and John, had Christ said the word, would gladly have destroyed the Samaritans at once. Jesus in rebuking their spirit, sets before them His own better spirit of long-suffering and tender compassion; and that sweet patience which only resorts to judgment when mercy has waited long and in vain.

From v.v. 57-62 we learn (1) that they who follow Christ closely, must count upon privation. If God gives them the opposite, it is of His sovereign goodness. The servant should not expect to be better than his Lord. (2) God's service often takes us away from what seem to be urgent earthly claims. Obeying Him we may, however, safely leave all the lower duties to those whom He does not call to the higher. (3) Christ's call is imperative, urgent, and admits of no delay; and he that finds himself looking back from it to the world, may fear lest he has made a very serious mistake.

QUESTION SUMMARY*

(For the Children.)

(51). What time had almost arrived to Jesus? What is meant by received up? Towards what city did Jesus set His face?

(52). In going to Jerusalem from Galilee, what country must He pass through? What were His messengers to do in the cities near to which He travelled?

(53). Why did those people reject Him? Why did that displease them? See note. (54). Who were very much displeased? What did they ask Jesus? What did Jesus say to them? (55). What did Jesus say He did not come to do? What did He say He came to do? Were the people very wicked in rejecting Jesus? Why, then, did not Jesus destroy them? Because He wanted to give them a chance to repent, and become good. Does He do the same now? Will He always do so?

(56). What did this man say to Jesus? (57). And what did Jesus tell him? Why did Jesus tell him that? Because He did not want him to look for any earthly comforts or pleasures as a reward for following Him. Does Jesus not give anything to those that follow Him? See Matt. xix. 29.

(58). What did Jesus say to another? What did this man ask to do? What did he probably mean by that? To ask if he might go and take care of his father until he should die. (59). What did Jesus tell him? What did He mean? He probably meant to say—let the worldly ones—those who are spiritually dead—do that. What then was this man to do? (60). What did this man want to do before he followed Jesus? (61). What did Jesus say about it? What did He mean? He meant that those who will follow Him must go right ahead, and not as soon as they are started be sorry, and want again the things they gave up for Him. What does Jesus say about such people?

*Parents are urged to help and encourage their children to study these questions until they can answer every one of them.

HUSBAND AND FATHER AT HOME.

How many among ourselves require some patriarch to come to us, and, as it were, reintroduce us to our wives and children! We live beneath the same roofs as our families; we do some of our eating and all of our sleeping in the house beside them; we pay the bills; we say now and then an honest word of commendation to one or other of the household band; we preside at the breakfast table and the dinner table—and what else? we cannot honestly add much more. Yet we lay "the flattering unction" to our souls that we are model husbands and fathers; and we imagine, too, that we are training our children into habits of industry and frugality. What a miserable delusion.

Business is important enough in its own place, and public work for the city and for the country is not to be neglected. But it seems to me that in these days, men—ay, even Christian men—are too largely forgetting that their first obligation is to their homes. When

the apostle wrote, "It remaineth that those that have wives be as though they had none," he did not mean that when you sit down to the morning meal you should bury yourself in the newspaper, and become entirely oblivious of those who are seated at the table with you, and of her who is even at the moment ministering to your comfort; neither did he mean that you should come home, after your weary business day, cross, testy, and cantankerous, such a son of Belial that you cannot be spoken to; and that when dinner is over you should go to sleep on the sofa, or adjourn with a masculine friend to the smoking room, utterly forgetful of her whom you have solemnly vowed to make the companion of your life and the sharer of your lot; and indifferent, also, to the welfare of the children, who are left to be dragged up by some fount-tongued nurse or some cynical tutor. How many of the domestic tragedies which are constantly snocking the community and rending households in twain, have had their origin in just such thoughtless indifference as that! Oh, my friends! we could do with a little less courting before marriage, if we only had a good deal more after it; and if parents were to be slightly less solicitous about getting the very most out of every bargain they made in the store, and a great deal more anxious to become acquainted with their own children, and to lead them into ways of holy happiness, the profiting would appear unto all men. What is the good of your money to you if you neglect your son, and let him grow up unregulated and revengeful, so that at the least provocation he shoots down the imagined author of the offence? Would you not, when that occurs, willingly offer the half of your fortune to wipe out its consequences? And yet it would have been far more sensible to have sought to prevent its causes; even if you should not have made the half of those thousands which you now call your own.

Let me ask every father and husband to ponder well the appeal which I am now making. Your wife and children are of infinitely more importance than success in business, or the gaining by you of some public office; yet is it not true that you are largely a stranger to those under your roof? You give them no confidences; you never say a word of endearment to them; you only want to be let alone and left to yourself when you come home; and so you know just as little of the inner life and disposition, just as little of the dangers and temptations, just as little of the aptitudes and tastes of the members of your own family, as if they were in Kamschatka and you in New York.

Think how the sons of Eli brought his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave; remember that the sons even of Samuel lived to shame the name of their father; and learn, I beseech you, this great lesson: that even public usefulness, as well as business success, is too dearly purchased by the sacrifice of the highest welfare of your children.—*W. M. Taylor, D. D.*

—A certain legal "inn" has got a reputation that would destroy any inn for the accommodation of man and beast, namely, for bad wine. When a certain bench, with the reputation of being a wit, was told by a member of that inn that he "didn't think much of the wine," the only answer he got was, "You'll think more of it to-morrow."

RECENTLY a whole family, consisting of nine persons, were baptized in the Free Church, Calcutta. The head of the family was brought to Christ through the influence of his wife, and she received her instruction through the zenana missionary.