

Lesson VII.

THE PRODIGAL SON

May 15, 1904

Luke 15: 11-24. Study vs. 11-32. Commit to memory vs. 17-19. Read Luke chs. 13 to 15.

GOLDEN TEXT—Come, and let us return unto the Lord.—Hosea 6: 1.

11 And he said, A certain man had two sons:
12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

14 And when he had spent all; there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

Revised Version—¹thy substance; ²he; ³country; ⁴one of the citizens; ⁵been filled with; ⁶But; ⁷here; ⁸in thy sight; ⁹I am; ¹⁰while; ¹¹afar off; ¹²was moved with compassion; ¹³quickly; ¹⁴Omit hither; ¹⁵make merry.

18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet ^{11a}a great way off, his father saw him, and ¹²had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight ⁶and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth ¹⁰the best robe, and put ¹¹it on him; and put ¹²a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

23 And bring ¹⁴hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and ¹⁵be merry:

24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

THE LESSON EXPLAINED

Time and Place—January, 30 A.D.; Perma.

Connection—Those chronic fault-finders, the scribes and Pharisees, were offended because Jesus received and ate with sinners, v. 2. He replies with three parables, showing how natural a thing and right is God's love for sinners: the first two—of the lost sheep and the lost coin—showing God in search of the sinner, the third—of the lost son—God welcoming the sinner who seeks Him.

I. THE DEPARTURE.—11-13 (a). A certain man; a father, representing God, our heavenly Father. Had two sons; representing the Pharisees and the "sinners," the professedly religious and the openly irreligious. And the younger said; making foolish choice. He is a type of all sinners. The portion of goods; one-third, Deut. 21: 17. Such a division of property before the father's death was not unusual, although the son had no legal right to make this demand. He divided unto them his living (property); seeing how restless and discontented the younger son was becoming. Not many days after; impatient to be rid of home restraints, and free to gratify his desires. Gathered all together; leaving nothing to draw him again towards home. A far country; far from the love and kindness and wholesome restraints of his father's house. (Compare Acts 2: 39; Eph. 2: 13-17.)

II. THE FAR COUNTRY.—13(b), 14. There; away from his father's care and control, and from the observation of those who knew him. Wasted his substance; his possessions. With riotous living; "living ruinously," to body and soul as well as pocket. He wanted "to see life" and he saw the worst and vilest of it. Spent all. Sinful joys soon come to an end. A mighty famine. "A famine not merely of the body, but of the soul (compare Jer. 2: 13.) In want; the sad result of wasting the gifts of life.

15, 16. Joined himself to a citizen of that country; in effect, a slave: a vivid picture of the sinner's bondage to the powers of evil. Sent him. He

who seeks to be "free" from righteousness becomes a slave to sin. To feed swine; the most degrading work a Jew could do. "Enticed by Satan's pleasures, the prodigal becomes Satan's drudge." The husks; the bean-shaped pods of the carob-tree, eaten only by the poorest of the people. And no man gave unto him. Satan has no pity for the misery of his victims.

III. THE RETURN.—17-19(a). Came to himself. In his sin he had been "beside himself," (Compare Acts 26: 11.)

Hired servants of my father's.

Better the lowest place in God's service, than all the pleasures of sin, Ps. 84: 10. I will arise and go to my father. Compare Isa. 55: 7; Jer. 3: 12; Hos. 14: 1, 2. I have sinned; taking all the blame to himself.

Against heaven. All sin is against God, Ps. 51: 4. No more worthy. His confession will be frank; no excuses. To be called thy son. Sin costs us our sonship in God's family. And

he arose, and came to his father. His repentance was as real and decided as his sin.

IV. THE WELCOME.—19(b)-28. A great way off. Compare Eph. 2: 13. His father saw him. God never forgets: is always on the watch to forgive and bless. (Isa. 49: 15; Matt. 7: 11.) Had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck. God's forgiveness is full, frank and complete, Ps. 103: 8-10, 12. Kissed him; literally, "kissed him warmly or



"This, My Son!"