

'MESSENGER BIBLE' COMPETITION.

THE GREAT EASTER STORY.

At Christmas time our young readers were busy writing the story of the birth of Christ. Now what more fitting than that at Easter time they should study of his death and resurrection. Our Christmas competition was the most closely contested we have had for a long time. Let us make the Easter competition still better, both in numbers and quality.

SIX HANDSOME PRIZES.

For the best story of the death and resurrection of Christ we will award six handsome prizes, three junior and three senior. The Senior Prize may be competed for by all young men and women under twenty-one; the Junior Prize by boys and girls of thirteen and under. The prizes are:

First Prize—A handsome Morocco Teacher's Bible, with references, maps and concordance.

Second Prize—A handsome Morocco Bible with references and maps.

Third Prize—A year's subscription to the 'Northern Messenger.'

The prizes for seniors and juniors are just alike.

RULES OF COMPETITION.

In competing, pay strict attention to the following rules:

1. Write on paper the size of note, and on one side only.
2. Pin sheets together at left hand upper corner.
3. Write some motto or fictitious name and age on the upper right hand corner of the first page.
4. Enclose full name and address in sealed envelope. Write your motto or fictitious name on the outside and pin it to upper left hand corner of the manuscript.
5. Essays must be neither rolled nor folded, but mailed flat.
6. The essay must not exceed 700 words in length.
7. If any winner of first or second prizes should already have a Bible we will substitute a book of the same value.

All essays must be mailed not later than fourteen days after the date of this paper.

Address all essays, 'Northern Messenger' Bible competition, John Dougal & Son, Montreal.

OUR CHINESE LILY BULBS.

We have received from our subscribers on all sides word of their success with our premium bulbs this past winter. Many wish to know if the Chinese lily bulb may be kept to blossom again next winter. One lady asks why she succeeded this winter but failed in the past when she gave the bulbs just the same care.

In reply to this query one of our subscribers, who always has great success with flowers, says: 'The probability is that the bulbs were inferior. The bulbs grown in this country are not ripened, the flower scape is not formed, and the consequence is there is no bloom. Some florists bloom the bulbs in their greenhouses for cutting in the winter; they are then put in the ground and in the fall are taken out and dried, and sold for flowering bulbs. Such bulbs will never flower. The bulbs exported from China are all flowering bulbs. The bulbs are grown by a method known only to themselves. They attain a great size and strong vitality. They will send up spikes of bloom in four to six weeks after planting. There is great cheating in those bulbs. When you are buying them, get those with dark rough skins and large size—the light-skinned ones are not ripened. The bulbs that have bloomed once are of no use. By setting them in the ground in the spring they will grow to a large size, but I never had one bloom yet. I have had the best success with this lily when grown in rich soil mixed with coarse sand half and half. I have drainage in the pot and keep it in a saucer filled with water all the time. The flowers are much larger and some will come double.'

CHRIST AROSE ON EASTER DAY.

(By Phillips Brooks.)

Tomb, thou shalt not hold Him longer;
Death is strong, but life is stronger;
Stronger than the dark, the light;
Stronger than the wrong, the right,
Faith and hope triumphant say
Christ will rise on Easter Day.

While the patient earth lies waking,
Till the morning shall be breaking,
Shivering 'neath the burden dread
Of her Master cold and dead,
Hark! She hears the angels say
Christ will rise on Easter Day.

And when sunrise smites the mountains
Pouring light from heavenly fountains,
Then the earth blooms out to greet
Once again the blessed feet;
And the countless voices say
Christ has risen on Easter Day.

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

LESSON II.—April 12, 1896.
Luke 14: 15-24.

THE PARABLE OF THE GREAT SUPPER.

Commit to Memory vs. 21-23.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Come; for all things are now ready.—
Luke 14: 17.

THE LESSON STORY.

Jesus was now in the Perea country. This was a part of Palestine, having a range of high hills down which streams of clear water flowed to the Jordan. In the Old Testament it is called Gilead. There were a good many Jews in the land, but most of the people were Arabs and Syrians, who did not worship the God of the Jews. Jesus went to Perea because it was no longer safe for him to be in or near Jerusalem. The chief priests and Pharisees were determined to kill him, and his work was not yet done. The people of Perea were ready to hear him, but there were proud Pharisees there too.

It was in Perea that Jesus told some of the most beautiful parables, or stories with a meaning.

One day when he was at a dinner at the house of a rich Pharisee he saw how each one tried to get the best place. The Pharisees thought that when Christ came he would set up his kingdom by giving a great banquet to his friends, and they wanted to be there and have high places at the feast. Jesus told a story to show what eating bread in his kingdom really was. Read the story in Luke 14: 16-24. By the great supper Jesus meant the kingdom of heaven. It was God who made the great supper, and Jesus was the servant who invited the guests. First he invited the priests and Pharisees and Jews, but they would not hear him. Then he called the poor and those for whom nobody cared, and so his house was filled with guests.—Berean Lesson Book.

LESSON OUTLINE.

- I. The Supper Prepared. vs. 15-17.
- II. The Invitations Declined. vs. 18-20.
- III. The Tables Filled. vs. 21-24.

HOME READINGS.

- M. Luke 13: 1-9, Parable of the Barren Fig Tree.
T. Luke 13: 10-21, Healing and Teaching.
W. Luke 13: 22-35, Warning against Sin.
Th. John 10: 22-42, At the Feast of Dedication.
F. Luke 14: 1-24, Parable of the Great Supper.
S. Luke 14: 25-35, The Cost of Discipleship.
S. Isa. 55: 1-13, The Gracious Invitation.
Time.—A.D. 30, January, soon after the Feast of Dedication, which Jesus attended at Jerusalem, December 20-27, A.D. 29.
Place.—Perea, near Bethabara where John at first baptized.

HINTS AND HELPS IN STUDY.

The Home Readings for Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday give the record of events following Lesson XII., March 22, 1896, and up to near the close of Jesus's journey through Perea toward Jerusalem. Then coming to Bethany he visited Mary and Martha. Luke 10: 38-42. We next see him at Jerusalem at the Feast of Dedication, Dec. 20-27, A.D. 29. Here the Jews sought to arrest him, but he retired beyond Jordan, probably to Bethabara, where many believed on him. Thursday's Reading. He was invited on the Sabbath to a feast at the house of one of the Pharisees, and while there healed a dropsical man, rebuked the selfishness of the Pharisees who sought the best seats,

and spoke the parable in to-day's lesson. It is a rich exposition of God's merciful provision for sinners, and of his desire for their salvation. At the same time it warns and rebukes those who refuse the gospel invitation. In Saturday's Reading Jesus shows that those who would follow him should count the cost.

QUESTIONS.

What was the occasion of this parable? What is represented under the figure of the great supper? What invitation was sent to those who were bidden? How did those who were invited treat the invitation? What excuses did they give? What excuses like these do men now make for neglecting the gospel? Who were then invited? What final command was given to the servant? What did the Lord say of those who had despised his invitation? What important truths are taught by this parable?

WHAT THE LESSON TEACHES.

1. Salvation is a heavenly feast prepared for earthly guests.
2. Many people reject the invitations of mercy, and refuse to come to the feast.
3. The excuses for not accepting Christ are only refusals put into polite words.
4. When some reject salvation the messengers are sent to others.
5. The worst sinners are invited to come to Christ and be saved.—Westminster Question Book.

ILLUSTRATION.

The invitation. 'Say—come.' V. 17. 'I have been in and out of this church for forty-five years and no one ever invited me to Christ before,' said an old man, as a young lady took his hand and asked him to accept salvation.

'Come with me to the revival service to-night,' one young friend said to another. The invitation was accepted and another soul was saved. A young man during one revival season brought eighty-two persons to the altar.

'Lady, talk more,' said an employee on a railway train in answer to a few words about Christ. 'It does me good; it's just as my mother used to talk, and you are the first one who has spoken to me about my soul since my mother died.'

The Compulsion. 'Compel them to come.' V. 21-23. Lovingly, gently, persistently. We have heard an evangelist, much used of God, tell how, on the evening of his decision to become a Christian, Mary C. Nind held him by the hand and persuasively drew him, while a gentleman, much interested in his salvation, gently pushed him toward the altar. They compelled him. We stood one evening, at the close of a service, conversing with an infidel. Again and again we asked the privilege of kneeling with him and praying, but each time he refused and turned to go. The touch of our hand on his arm would detain him. It was late. He was a poor man. At last we said, 'Is it not the least a gentleman could do to let a lady pray with him when she had waited until this hour.' 'You may,' he said, quickly, and not unkindly. As we finished we said, 'Pray for yourself.' He surrendered, and accepted the invitation to the gospel supper, and arose with such a happy look on his face. 'I can never say again I do not believe there is a God; I know it,' he said. After days proved him true.—Arnold's Practical Commentary.

LESSON III.—April 19, 1896.

Luke 15: 11-24.

THE LOST FOUND.

Commit to memory vs. 18-20.

GOLDEN TEXT.

There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.—Luke 15: 10.

THE LESSON STORY.

There are three beautiful parables, or stories, in the thirteenth chapter of Luke. They all teach the same lesson, that God loves the lost and sinful people so much that when one leaves his sins and comes back to God and goodness there is joy among all the angels in heaven.

The last one of the stories is about a rich man who had two sons, and the younger one came and asked to have his share of his father's money. His share would be one-third, and his father gave it to him, and he went away. He spent it all, for he lived only to please himself. Then he had to work, and to do very low, hard work, and even then he could not earn enough to satisfy his hunger. He took care of swine, and often ate the hard dry pods of the carob tree. At last he went home to his father and told him how foolish and wicked he had been. His father saw him coming and ran to meet him and kissed him, and was full of joy because his lost son had come

home. He even made a feast and asked his friends to come and help him rejoice over the son that had been lost, but now was found.

God loves the humble one who sees his sins and is sorry for them more than the proud one who thinks himself very good and looks down upon those who have strayed away from God.—Berean Lesson Book.

LESSON OUTLINE.

- I. Leaving Home. vs. 11-13.
- II. In the Far Country. vs. 14-19.
- III. Returning and Restored. vs. 20-24.

HOME READINGS.

- M. Luke 15: 1-10, The Lost Sheep and Piece of Money.
T. Luke 15: 11-24, The Prodigal Son.
W. Luke 15: 25-32, The Elder Son.
Th. Psalm 40: 1-17, The Helper of the Needy.
F. Isa. 63: 7-16, God our Father.
S. Psalm 103: 1-22, The Pitying Father.
S. Eph. 2: 1-22, The Far-off Made Nigh.
Time.—A.D. 30, January, shortly after the last lesson.
Place.—Perea.

HINTS AND HELPS IN STUDY.

After the parable of the Great Supper, multitudes attended Jesus. He told them plainly what is required of true disciples. Last Saturday's Reading. Many publicans and sinners came to hear him. The Scribes and Pharisees complained because he received sinners and ate with them. In justification of his action Jesus spoke three parables. In all of them God's yearning love for sinners and his joy over their salvation, are beautifully pictured. In the first two (Monday's Reading) the seeking love of God for the lost is especially shown (comp. Matt. 18: 11-14 and Luke 19: 10), while the third (Tuesday's and Wednesday's Readings) exhibits his welcoming love to the penitent. Consider carefully the other Readings for the week which throw additional light upon that great love which commends itself by the fact that while we were yet sinners, and enemies, Christ died for us, to reconcile us to God.

QUESTIONS.

Who came in great numbers to hear Jesus? Of what did the Scribes and Pharisees complain? How did Jesus answer them? Describe the first parable. The second. What do these especially show? What is especially exhibited in the third parable? Who is represented by the father? The two sons? How did the younger son sin? Into what misery did it bring him? How did he show his repentance? How did the father welcome him? What must we do to be received by our heavenly Father? What is repentance unto life?

WHAT THE LESSON TEACHES.

1. We can leave God if we will; God does not compel us to stay.
2. Sin soon wastes our blessings and leaves us beggared.
3. The soul has hungers which this world has no power to satisfy.
4. The only thing to do is to repent and return to God.
5. The sinner who comes to God is welcomed home and restored.

ILLUSTRATION.

'Degraded. Sent to feed swine.' V. 15. Companionship with the lowest. 'The palace of pleasure has a gorgeous entrance, adorned with statuary and brilliant lights and luring music. The exit is a dark, narrow, concealed, rear way, which leads into the fields where the swine are kept.' It is degrading to fail to be what we might have been, to have companionship lower than our privilege, to live for purposes lower than God intended. One with unblemished reputation, an elegant home and no gross vices may be living a degraded life. If his powers are frittered away, if his enjoyments are worldly, as sure as the sensualist of the parable, he has turned away from a celestial feast to prey upon garbage.'

The Way Home. I. Consider. 'He came to himself.' V. 17. A pleasure-loving young lady was persuaded to think on her eternal interests. The world was fascinating, and the life of a Christian seemed narrow and unattractive, but as she thought of the future she said to herself 'I will decide this matter.' Taking a sheet of paper she wrote upon one page 'Reasons why I should serve the Lord,' and upon the opposite page 'Reasons why I should serve the world.' She made the comparison honestly. The reasons for serving the Lord were so many and momentous, and for serving the world so few and paltry, she threw the paper from her in utter disgust of herself. On her knees, seeing how she had been feeding on husks her soul loathed them. She came to herself and to her Father and felt his forgiving kiss, and was clothed with his robe of righteousness and filled with his own peace and joy.—Arnold's Practical Commentary.