

Sabbath School.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Adapted from Feltner's Bible Notes.

SECOND QUARTER.

Lesson III. April 19. Luke 15: 11-32.

THE LOST FOUND.

Read Luke 15: 1-32. Commit verses, 18-30.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."—Luke 15: 10

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Subject.—"The Return of the Wanderer; or, The History of a Sinful Soul and its Recovery."

This is the crown and the pearl of parables. It is a world of wisdom, and hope, and joy condensed into a few words, as a whole landscape is painted on the retina of the eye. It is a vision of the heart of God.

"The three parables" of this chapter should be studied together, as each one is completed by the others. The most understandings which might arise from the presentation of one view are corrected by the others.

EXPLANATORY.

I. THE FATHER AND HOME.—V. 11. Here we have a picture of what God meant the world to be. "A certain man had two sons." The father is our heavenly Father, full of love for his children. This beautiful world is the home fitted up with every comfort for them.

II. WANDERING FROM FATHER AND HOME.—V. 12. "Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." The older son, according to Jewish law, inherited a double portion (Deut. 21: 17).

III. THE WASTED LIFE.—"Wasted his substance with riotous living." "The down grade of life are generally steep and short, and so one sentence is enough to describe the downward career, down which the youth plunges so heedlessly."

IV. A FAMINE IN THAT LAND.—V. 14. "And when he had spent all," which did not take long, "there arose a mighty famine in that land." It was a famine of the soul, "a famine for the father's presence and for the father's smile, longing for the lost Eden."

V. THE RETURN.—"I will put my resolves into action immediately." Doubtless there was a terrible battle of conflicting emotions; hope, need, desire, conscience, remembrance of his father and home, struggling against doubt whether he would be received, shame for his past, conscious unworthiness, fear of the taunts of his companions.

VI. THE WASTED LIFE.—"Wasted his substance with riotous living." "The down grade of life are generally steep and short, and so one sentence is enough to describe the downward career, down which the youth plunges so heedlessly."

VII. RETURNING HOME.—REPENTANCE AND CONFESSIO.—V. 18-20. The next step was to act upon his resolves. Good resolutions are not so vain as some would make them out. They are the first step to a better life.

VIII. THE WELCOME HOME.—V. 20. "When he was yet a great way off," coming slowly, wearily, in rage, shamefaced, and questioning about his welcome. So the sinner, conscious of his sin, knowing his unworthiness, yet hungering after God and home, returns to God ready to take the lowest place in his service. He is "far off" in his feelings, and had begun his return.

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the world sees him as its drudge and slave." The boasted freedom of sin soon becomes the most degrading slavery. Enslaved by Satan's pleasures, he becomes Satan's drudge. "He sent him into the fields to feed swine," the basest, most degrading work a Jew could do.

16. "He would fain," he ardently desired, as hungry was he. "The hounds that the swine did eat." "These hounds are the pods and seeds of the locust, or carob tree 'Ceratonia alilqua,' a common evergreen tree bearing an abundant crop of fruit, long, curved pods, which are used for feeding cattle, and are largely exported to England for feeding hogs, under the name of locust beans. They are capable of sustaining human life, like the acorns of the oak, eaten by our forefathers in times of dearth, and the swine are driven into the woods to feed on the fallen acorns, so in Syria they feed under the locust trees. Latin classical authors speak of the locust bean as the food of the most miserable of the people in the East."

"At the present day they are employed in Spain and other countries as food for hogs, asses, and mules. A tree will sometimes produce 500 to 900 pounds of pods, each pod being six or eight inches in length, and one inch in breadth, and about a quarter of an inch thick. 'No man made unto him.' The friends he had made by sin had deserted him in his need. They always do. And then there is no food that can satisfy the soul in that far country."

PRACTICAL LESSONS.—"The way of the transgressor is hard." The transgressor had to break over the barriers of conscience, of earthly training, of the father's love, of Bible and Sabbath, all of which stood in his way, and now the end was reached.

2. The course of sin is ever downward.—First pleasure, then love, then want, then degradation, then loss of honor, all the sinner becomes a citizen of that country, belonging there, as the drunkard, having his chains and longings at times for better things, all cling to his cups. He came as a visitor, he remains a citizen. The wine of sin first sparkles and glows, but 'at last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder.' "At first the grateful stimulus of an hour; at last it is the worm that never dies, and the fire that is never quenched."

3. Satan always tells his promises to the sinner in his terrible way. "VI. COMING TO HIMSELF.—V. 17. 'And when he came to himself,' as one awaking out of an evil dream, or one who has lost his reason, and has been wandering in strange hallucinations, becomes himself again, and sees things as they are. The sinner is like Jonah, sleeping in the storm, dreaming beautiful dreams, but awake and sane, now he awakes to realities."

The famine, the hunger, the distress were God's messengers to the sinner, calling him home. They were God's voice saying, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11: 28-30.)

"How many hired servants," those least connected with the family; even those "have bread enough, and to spare." Observe that the very lowest possible moral condition for a sinner is in Christian experience. The prodigal is moved by hunger in the first instance. Any motive that actually leads the soul to repentance suffices, no matter what it is.

VII. RETURNING HOME.—REPENTANCE AND CONFESSIO.—V. 18-20. The next step was to act upon his resolves. Good resolutions are not so vain as some would make them out. They are the first step to a better life. "The way to hell is not 'paved with good resolutions,' but with broken resolutions, with failures to resolve. It is the way to heaven that is paved all the way with good resolutions."

18. "I will arise and go." I will put my resolves into action immediately. Doubtless there was a terrible battle of conflicting emotions; hope, need, desire, conscience, remembrance of his father and home, struggling against doubt whether he would be received, shame for his past, conscious unworthiness, fear of the taunts of his companions.

19. "I am no more worthy." He makes no excuses. He humbly confesses his sins, and asks not for rights or mercies. This is a sign of true penitence. "And he arose and came to his father." "Toward," not "to." He did not come "to" his father, but "toward" him. This actual setting out on the homeward journey is the turning point in a prodigal's life. All that went before would be vain, and all that came after would be impossible without this.

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B. Y. P. U.

OUR OFFICERS.

The constitution of Baptist young people their Christian education; their stimulation in knowledge their instruction in Baptist history and their interest in the Christian community activity, through extending denominational institutions.

Kindly address all communications for the B. Y. P. U. to Rev. G. G. Gates, St. John, N. B.

Prayer Meeting Topics for April 11.

B. Y. P. U. Topic.—"From Death to Life."—Ezekiel 3: 1-10.

C. E. Topic.—"Will our excuses stand."—Acts 20: 19-20.

B. Y. P. U. Daily Bible Readings.

Wednesday, April 8.—Lamentations 2. Threnes carried out (vs. 17). Compare Deut. 28: 25-27.

Thursday, April 9.—Lamentations 3. "He doth not afflict willingly" (vs. 33). Compare Heb. 12: 10.

Friday, April 10.—Lamentations 4. Comfort for Zion (vs. 22). Compare Isa. 40: 2.

Saturday, April 11.—Lamentations 5. The eternity of God (vs. 19). Compare Ps. 90: 2.

Sunday, April 12.—Prayer Meeting.—Topic.—"The Lord's Prayer."—Matt. 6: 9-13. S. Lesson.—Parable of the great supper. Luke 14: 15-24.

Monday, April 13.—Ezekiel 1. A vision of God. Compare Ps. 29.

Tuesday, April 14.—Ezekiel 2. "The Spirit entered into me" (vs. 2). Compare Ezekiel 3: 24.

DEAR EDITOR.—Will you kindly tell the young people who read your paper the news items, and all passages of communications, intended for the Baptist Union, should be sent to 324 Dearborn Street, Chicago, and do not to me. I have nothing whatever to do with the business management of the paper, nor do I edit ordinary news items from the societies. All this is attended to in Chicago. O. C. S. WALLACE.

Toronto, March 24, 1896.

Hebrew, N. B.

Our Society has not been reported in these columns for some time, but think the letter of the Maritime Union to report should stir up all the Unions to report. We find this year's lessons of the S. L. very interesting. We have made a change in our Missionary Conquest meetings, holding them on the first Sunday evening of the month, instead of on a week night, as heretofore. The last one "The Carey Movement," was especially interesting.

We observed "Young People's Day," last month. In the morning our pastor delivered a powerful address on the importance of beginning God's service in our youth, and in the evening we had an interesting meeting carrying out the program of our "youthful army" with one exception. As we have no Junior Union, we substituted in place of the Junior review, an excellent paper on Junior work prepared by one of our members. We have had a busy winter, as we have been trying to raise some finances toward church work. Our next entertainment will be "An evening with the Scotch," on Friday evening, March 27th.

Miss E. A. Dorr, Pres.

Springfield, N. S.

It is with deep regrets that we are about to leave the B. Y. P. U. of Springfield. Since the organization of our Union, we have sought the highest and best interests of our young people. Quite a number have since converted, and joined the church. The Union has always manifested a willingness to cooperate in every good work. Last Wednesday evening, after prayer meeting they gave us a genuine surprise in the personage. About thirty five took possession of our home, and Miss Helen Hunter, on behalf of the young people, read an address and presented us with two volumes—Tennyson's complete works and Poem Treasury. This was a tangible expression of their appreciation of interest and labor. We felt unworthy of such a gift; to all this the pastor made a suitable reply. Whoever has the privilege of laboring with the young people here will find them a source of stimulus. May they ever be a power for good in my humble prayer. After the young people had furnished the music and refreshments, we all sang "Annie Loring Young's" good night was said all round, and they departed leaving this thought stamped upon our minds that labor for Christ is not in vain. H. B. SMITH.

March 27.

Oshawa, N. B.

The editor of the B. Y. P. U. department asked for short articles from pastors stating the benefits derived from the Society in their church. Our Society has been a source of strength to the church since its organization in Feb. '95. The social meetings conducted by the young people at the close of the Sabbath evening services have been seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Our S. S. has been helped by it. The study of the C. C. Courses is a means of gaining knowledge of great value which, but for the B. Y. P. U., many of us would have remained in ignorance of. Our S. L. Class is not as large as last year, but we find great pleasure in pursuing the course of study. At our annual meeting the following officers were elected for the ensuing year: Pres., Rev. N. E. Dunn; Vice-Pres., Mrs. Selina Allen; Treas., Mrs. N. E. Dunn; Sec'y., Bro. Stanford Hayden, these with a strong executive committee compose our officers. All the churches in the Convention would be blessed by having an active Society to help in the various operations. Con.

Half Island Cove, Guys, Co., N. B.

Secretary G. T. Henderson writes that the B. Y. P. U. Society has been organized at Fall Island Cove and that good progress is being made. The Society started with a membership of 32 and now has 57 active members who are desirous of doing something to promote the cause of Christ.

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What Brings Peace.

A doctor who was visiting a christian patient had himself long been anxious to feel that he was at peace with God. The Spirit had convicted him of his sin and need, and he longed to possess that peace which the world cannot give. On this occasion, addressing himself to the sick one, he said:

"I want you to tell me just what it is—this believing and getting happiness, faith in Jesus, and all that sort of thing which brings peace."

His patient replied:

"Doctor, I have felt that I could do nothing, and I have put my case in your hands; I am trusting to you. That is exactly what every poor sinner must do in the Lord Jesus."

This reply greatly awakened the doctor's surprise, and a new light broke into the soul.

"Is that all?" he exclaimed; "simply trusting in the Lord Jesus? I see it as I never did before. He has done the work. Yes, Jesus said on the cross, 'It is finished.' 'Whoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.'"

From that sick bed the doctor went a happy man, rejoicing that his sins were washed away in the blood of the Lamb.—361.

Animalism in Man.

When God wanted to make the best thing he knew how to make he composed it of one part spirit and the other part matter—one grain of deity to one of dust. There is nothing in the history of that transaction to indicate that man without body is more than man with body. Spirit in man, all such reference to the body as that it is a vessel for the occupancy of the jewel, or a cage for the temporary retention of the imprisoned spirit, is sheer gratuity, and it is like the language that the more favored classes sometimes use of those less favored, who forget that those who are at the top are so in considerable degree because these who are underneath furnish the foundation and make the opportunity. Animalism is an imagined fiction, and we shall be a great deal more sensible and far better off if we accept the situation with serenely. The whole doctrine of the resurrection is a way that Scripture and the Church have taken to record the importance they attach to the body as an indelible element of our being. The body is so framed in with the other elements of our being that they will not be at their best unless it is at its best, which will not be if you are so foolish, who do it splendidly. That's the only way to take up a pleasure or a pain.—Phillips Brooks.

Suffer, if you must; do not quarrel with the dear lord's appointments for you. Only if you are so foolish, who do it splendidly. That's the only way to take up a pleasure or a pain.—Phillips Brooks.



Charles H. Hutchings.

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Began Taking Ayer's Pills

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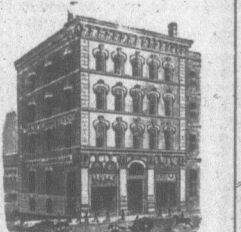
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