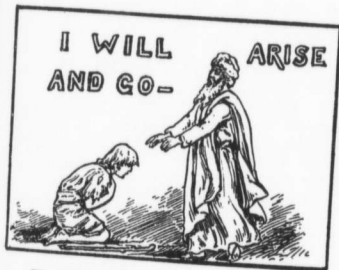


was not fit to be called his son, but he would rise and go to his father and tell him what a wicked boy he was, and how sorry too. The father saw him coming, and did not wait to hear the story. He was so glad to see the lost one found, the wanderer at home again. He had loved him all the time. He was waiting to forgive him and take him back into his place. He sent the servant for the robe the boy used to wear, and shoes for his feet and a ring for his finger, to show that he belonged to the family. Then there was a great feast to show the father's joy over the son.

O children, God's love is like this. Love that forgives is the strongest love.

*Things to remember.* This picture on the board will help us to remember, but we will write down besides, "The Prodigal Son—his wandering, his wastefulness, his want, his coming home;" then, "His Father—his goodness, his love, his forgiveness, his joy."

We need forgiveness, too. We have not used all the time and all the good gifts given us as we should, but have wasted some of them. But going away from our Father does not change our name, does it? We belong to God still. We have not had time to go far yet, have we? O, let us go back while the way is short. Write, "God will forgive; let us go to him."



For the Youngest Children.

GOLDEN TEXT: "I will arise and go to my father."

*Point of contact.* Boy who has disobeyed his father.

*Approach.* A fear that his father will not be ready to forgive keeps the child from asking right away, though he really is sorry.

*Lesson story.* A similar story about a man. Emphasize the father's longing to forgive.

*Impression.* Our heavenly Father always forgives and helps those who are truly sorry for wrongdoing.

*Expression.* Trust in God's willingness to forgive.

Walter sat in the parlor alone one afternoon and looked very unhappy indeed. He was unhappy because he had disobeyed his father, and he couldn't have a happy time playing out of doors with his friends because he could not forget the wrong thing he had done. He was sorry, very sorry, and he knew he could never be a happy little boy again until he had told his father what he had done and asked to be forgiven. His father was right there in the house, just across the hall in the library, and yet Walter did not go to him. I wonder why? Perhaps if you and I could know just what Walter was thinking we would find it was something like this: "I want to go and tell papa what I did, and tell him I am sorry, but I am afraid he won't forgive me." After a while Walter did go across the hall very slowly and knocked at the door very softly, but right away the door opened and Walter's father took him right up in his arms. When Walter started to tell what he had done his father said: "Yes, my dear little boy, I know all about it. I knew you had disobeyed me, and have just been waiting for you to come and tell me you were sorry. Of course I forgive you, and I am very sure you won't do that way any more."

Jesus wanted all his friends to know how ready the heavenly Father is to forgive all who are really sorry when they do wrong, so he told this parable or story about a young man who took his money and went away from home because he wanted to have his own way. He did not want to obey his father, so he went to another place a long way off to live. There he spent his money just as he liked, and no doubt thought he was having a very good time for a while; but before very long his money was all spent, and he had not even enough to buy some bread to eat. Then he tried to get some work to do, and hired himself out to a farmer. He was so hungry that when he was feeding the pigs he would have been glad to eat the same sort of food he gave them to eat. Then he had time to think of all the wrong things he had done, and how he had grieved his kind and loving father. He wanted to go back and tell his father how