

LESSON III—April 19th, 1896.

The Lost Found. LUKE 15: 11-24.

(Commit to memory verses 18-20).

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

PROVE THAT—Jesus invites us to come to him. Matt. 11: 28.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Quest. 55. *What is forbidden in the third commandment?* A. The third commandment forbiddeth all profaning or abusing of anything whereby God maketh himself known.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal*—Nos. 13, 32, 82, 105.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* Joy in heaven. Luke 15: 1-10. *Tuesday.* The lost found. Luke 15: 11-24. *Wednesday.* Joy of salvation. Luke 15: 25-32. *Thursday.* Departing from God. Jer. 17: 1-10. *Friday.* Punishment and pardon. 2 Chr. 33: 1-13. *Saturday.* The Father's voice. Ezek. 18: 20-32. *Sabbath.* Return! Return! Hosea 14. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections*).

HELPS IN STUDYING.

INTRODUCTORY. This pearl of parables should be studied in connection with the other two contained in the chapter. All speak to us of God's yearning love over lost sinners and the joy with which he receives the penitent ones. It was spoken somewhere in Peraea as our Saviour journeyed towards Jerusalem. It is found only in Luke.

LESSON PLAN. I. A Wilful Youth. vs. 11-13. II. A Wasted Life. vs. 14-19. III. A Welcome Return. vs. 20-24.

11. A certain man—He represents our Father in heaven. Two sons—These stand for the professedly religious and the openly irreligious. 12. The portion of goods that falleth to me—The eldest son would have a double portion (Deut. 21: 17). This would leave one third to the younger son. He wanted to be his own master and free from the restraints of his father's house. His living—His means of living, his property (Mark 12: 44; Luke 8: 43). God gives us freely all we possess and deals impartially with all men (Ps. 145: 9; Acts 10: 34; Matt. 5: 45). 13. A far country—Representing the great distance which lies between the sinful one and God (Acts 2: 39; Eph. 2: 17). Riotous living—He scattered his wealth to the winds by "living ruinously." Intemperance, extravagance and sinful pleasures soon consumed his small fortune and starvation stared him in the face. A sinful life is a wasteful life. It wastes body and soul, it consumes time and opportunities and leaves the heart empty of real peace and satisfaction. 14. Spent all—And purchased nothing (Isa. 55: 2). A mighty famine—Had he lived prudently and soberly he would not have suffered from the famine. God's judgments are sent to make us feel more keenly the effects of our sinful conduct and thereby lead us to think of the real blessings which attend a godly life (Amos 8: 11-13; Jer. 2: 13). 15. To feed swine—A most degrading occupation for a Jew, to whom it was impolite even to use the word for a pig. A sinful life must end in moral degradation. 16. The husks—The course, bean-shaped pods of the carob tree. All his lavish prodigality had not won him a single true friend. 17. Came to himself—As if his evil life had been the folly of a madman. He awakes as from a dream (Ecc. 9: 3). The hired servants at the old home were happier than he, surely he had better serve his father than a heartless stranger. 18. I will arise—He proved the sincerity of his repentance by reforming his life (Isa. 55: 7; Jer. 3: 12; Hos. 14: 1, 2). I have sinned against heaven—Against God. He places his conduct in its true light—it was wicked, as well as ungrateful (Ps. 51: 4; Luke 18: 13). He makes no excuses for himself but casts himself at his father's mercy (Ps. 32: 5; 130: 4). 20. A great way off—The father was on the lookout for him (Eph. 2: 13; Isa. 65: 24; Jas. 4: 8). Kissed him—Better "caressed him," "kissed him again and again." Read Ps. 103: 8-10, 12; Isa. 49: 15; Matt. 7: 11; Neh. 9: 17). 22. Bring forth quickly the best robe (R. V.)—The father seems to have cut short the son's confession. He did not get a chance to speak of being made a servant. He clothes him as a most honored guest. Read Isa. 61: 10; Rev. 3: 18; 19: 8; Phil. 3: 9. The ring and the shoes were the marks of a freeman. He was restored to his old place in the family. 23. The fattened calf—Kept for any sudden call such as this, or for some festival near at hand. 24. Was dead and is alive again—The penitent are represented as dead because they have no spiritual life and are insensible to spiritual influences (Eph. 5: 14; 2: 1; Rom. 6: 13; Rev. 3: 1). Merry—The angels and the redeemed in heaven rejoice with God over those who repent.

LESSONS. 1. God gives us all our blessings to use, or abuse. 2. A sinful life is a wasted life. 3. Repentance and return are the sinner's only hope. 4. No penitent need doubt of his acceptance.