

never ceased to plead with God for her. At last, one dark night, at midnight, the lost child came home. Creeping up to the cottage door, she found it unfastened. Entering she was welcomed by her mother with great joy. When the greeting was over, the girl said, 'Mother, why was the door unfastened to-night at midnight?' The mother replied, 'Never, my child, since you went away, has the cottage door been locked by day or night. I prayed God to

bring you home, and I left the door unfastened, that whenever you might come in, you might know you were welcome, and might enter at once.'—Miller. So God welcomes those who turn from sin to Himself.

God receives and forgives a sinner who comes back repenting and He delights in the act of forgiving the repentant sinner: on these points no ambiguity is left, and no room for controversy.—Arnot.

#### TEACHING HINTS AND HELPS

*S. de la*

The two cuts, taken from Peloubet's Notes, and which the teacher may show to the scholars, give the pith of the lesson. In the one the prodigal is at his moment of direst distress; but the sunlight is breaking through the dark clouds. In the other he is in his

father's arms and on his father's bosom and the benediction from his father's heart is falling like sweet music upon his ears.

The connecting link is the Golden Text: "I will arise and go to my father."

An interesting study can be made of:

I. *The steps downward*, each one sadder than the last.

(1) Discontent; (2) A foolish choice; (3) A reckless journey; (4) Riotous living; (5) All spent; (6) Famine; (7) Beggary; (8) Feeding swine.

Each step has its counterpart in the spiritual sphere, which the teacher will readily trace.

II. *The steps upward*, ever toward light and joy and peace.

(1) Coming to himself; (2) Thought of better things; (3) The resolve to return; (4) Penitence of spirit; (5) The journey fatherward; (6) Into the father's arms; (7) In the father's home.

Again these steps may and should be identified in the experience of those who turn from sin unto God.

With an older class, a quick and careful analysis of Question 87, Shorter Catechism, will clench the truths taught by the parable.

*Questions for Juniors*—II. What two parables had Jesus just spoken? Why had He spoken them? What is the parable usually called? Who is meant by the father? How many sons? Which one represented by the scribes and Pharisees? Which by the publicans and sinners?

12. What request made? By whom? Why? What was the law of inheritance? (Deut. 21: 17.) Was the request granted?

13, 14. What did he then do? How are lives wasted now? What happened when he had

