

## V. PLEDGE.

*Then will I teach, v. 13.*

"Converted, strengthen thy brethren." Luke 22. 32.

"This ministry....received mercy." 2 Cor. 4. 1.

## Thoughts for Young People.

## True Penitence.

1. *The true penitent sees that the darkest shadow of his guilt is its wrong to God.* It is true that every sinner sins against man. You cannot break God's law without injuring yourself and some one else also. But all earthly wrong is overtopped by sin against God. "Thee, and thee only."

2. *The true penitent does not regard pardon as his right.* Sin is not a mere mistake; it is a crime against our Maker. God is just even in his utmost severity. Apologies and excuses are not to be heard in the prayer of him who regards punishment as his true desert, and pardon the gift of God's loving-kindness. He rather stands afar off, and will not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smites upon his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me, a sinner."

3. *The true penitent realizes the height of the divine standard and the depth of his own depravity.*

4. *The true penitent longs for forgiveness, purity, and his Father's smile.* He does not ask for exemption from punishment; that is the legitimate result of his sinful act, as his sinful act is the natural outflow of his evil heart. "Restore to me the joys of thy salvation," and I am satisfied.

5. *The true penitent is concerned for other lost souls, and longs for mercy, that he may offer it to other transgressors.*

"Now I will tell to sinners round  
What a dear Saviour I have found."

## Lesson Word-Pictures.

BY REV. E. A. HAND.

O, the thick darkness of the place! A room all in shadow, and somebody on the ground moaning in misery, crying out to his God, "Have mercy! Have mercy!"

Do you ask who it is? Did you not see him stealing in a short time since, disfigured with sackcloth, his head bowed in shame? Let me tell you who is in that room of shadows.

A prophet went out from the presence of a king, leaving him in his royal robes, leaving him on a throne, leaving him surrounded by a haughty guard, leaving him after saying, "Thou art the man!"

The scene changes. We see the king leaving his throne and his proud guard. He lays aside the kingly purple. He puts on coarse garments,

drapes sackcloth about him, tosses ashes on his head, and then steals into this room of shadows to fall upon the ground, to beat his breast, to clutch his sackcloth, to sob, to cry out, "Have mercy, have mercy upon me, O God!"

O, how dark it is! And in the darkness is a disgraced, humiliated, self-despised king. How he moans and groans and cries out for mercy, this man with blood on his hands! In his record there is nothing to which he can appeal. He has shown neither justice nor mercy. He can only cry out to the compassion of an infinite One!

How his sin rises up before him! The room is dark, but his sin is vividly lighted up, like great mountain peaks that, shooting up dark in the midnight storm, come out in a sudden, weird, ghostly horror as the lightning flashes about them. In all its hideous outlines his sin stands before him. He is living through the hour of his temptation, living through the shame of his awful fall, and then he sees a white face staring at him in the fixedness of death and reproaching this king who brought death upon him. O how the vision burns into his soul, making its way as if red hot iron into his heart or flesh. And then the penitent seems to see his God, the loving, long-suffering God who tried to warn him, tried to restrain him, and yet he broke away from warnings and restraints and rushed into sin. O guilt, guilt, guilt! It lives and stings and scorches and burns.

O, if he could be cleansed from this sin! He had seen a man that was healed of leprosy pronounced clean. He had seen the priest approach the blood of cleansing, a hyssop spray in his hand. He had seen that hyssop dipped in blood, lifted, waved above the silent, bending form, sprinkling, purifying, cleansing. He had heard the priest pronounce clean this exile from home and house of God and mart of business, and then with a light heart and a joy in his face the man had gone away to kindred and friends. O, where are hyssop branch and cleansing blood and sprinkling priest for this royal penitent?

He had also seen the snow. He had watched it on Lebanon's summits and Hermon's lofty head, so lustrous, shining, dazzling in the sunshine. O, that God would pass this poor penitent through some cleansing tide and let him come out of it "whiter than snow."

Still dark is his room. Only his sin is lighted up. O, for cleansing! O, for washing! But what is all this outward lustration! He needs a washed heart, a heart renewed, a heart made over.

And hear him cry, "Create in me a clean heart, O God!"

That is it.

A new creation within, a divine renewal!

And look!

The room is not so dark.

The shadows are lifting.