

Youths' Department.

Lessons for 1871.

THE WORDS OF JESUS.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 27TH, 1871.

The Prodigal Son.—Luke xv. 11-24.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"I will arise and go to my Father." vs. 18.

SCRIPTURE SELECTIONS.—Psalm cvii. 1-21; Is. lv. 1-7.

What is the name of this parable? Who are meant by the two sons? vs. 1, 2. who by the father?

What was the younger son's request? vs. 12. In what spirit was it made? Was it granted? Does God sometimes grant the wicked, hurtful desires of men?

What in vs. 13 shows the son's haste to escape from his father? What his purpose to return no more? What his sin and folly? The spiritual meaning?

What was it to "come to himself"? vs. 17. What stirred up the thought of home and father? Is it thus ever of the wanderer from God?

What was the resolve? vs. 18. Did this come of mere selfishness or of humble penitence? vs. 18, 19. Can a sinner return to God except in repentance?

What next? How did the father meet him? vs. 20. What does this show of God's heart? What followed the reconciliation? vs. 22-24. Wherein does God reprove, adorn, and feast the penitent? Have you returned to God? Have you reason to expect a place in the heavenly home at the heavenly feast?

SUMMARY.—Ruin waits on impiety; God's grace and glory on penitent return.

ANALYSIS.—I. Departure from God.—1. The process. vs. 11-13. 2. The Result. vs. 14-16.

II. Return to God.—The Resolve. vs. 17-19. 2. The Reconciliation. vs. 20, 21. 3. The Reward. vs. 22-24.

EXPOSITION.—The father and the sons.—The father is God, and that not as seeking so much as receiving, rather in the person of the Father, than of Son or Spirit. The sons are two types of men, the Pharisees and Scribes one; the publicans and sinners the other. Many make the elder son the Jews, the younger, the Gentiles.

The request.—vs. 12.—The younger son asks for his share of the property. It does not belong to him till his father's death, but he like many is restless, not contented to stay at home. He does not wish to be under authority. So does the sinner dislike God's law; and many openly express the wish to escape from it.

The consent.—The son was not compelled to remain at home. Everything had been done to attract him, but in vain. His heart was elsewhere. So the father says, "if you will go, go." So with God, a child is to him no child if his heart is away; and how often does he allow the wicked wish to have its object and run its own course. It is no evidence of God's approval that he lets us have our own way.

The departure.—vs. 13. (1) The time. "Not many days after." Very quickly. Often when the outward restraints of God's law begin to be felt by a youth, he hastens to break away. (2) The manner. "He gathered all together." He left nothing. Why? There should be nothing to bind him to the old home, and nothing lacking to his own indulgence. How exact this description of many a young man's treatment of God and his law, and gospel, and ordinances. He will have nothing to do with them. (3) Whither. "Into a far country." This completes the picture of his eagerness, his determination to have nevermore anything to do with home. How very far from God and his law many a young man and woman, in city and country, go in a little time. Intemperance, licentiousness, profanity, Sabbath-breaking, money-making, pleasure-seeking, into these, away from religion, far, far away.

The waste.—"Wasted his substance in riotous living." Reckless of the future, regardless of the parental will, no sense of the value of his blessings. "With harlots." Fornication is in Scripture the symbol of idolatry, or the abandonment of God for some other good.

In trouble.—vs. 14. Two events conspired to his grief. (1) "He spent all," no return of reason to the last. (2) Then came "the mighty famine in that land;" no surplus, no overflow, the course of dissipation, soon turns pleasure to disgust, and a sense of worthlessness comes. Character, reputation, respect both from self and others, all go. A sense of emptiness, dreariness, wretchedness within.

The expedient.—vs. 15. Does he now think of home? It is not said. Does he now go home? No. What then? "To a citizen of that country" he joins himself. Stays away from his father, among foreign-

ers, and will get what he can there. The citizen, as it were, employs him to get rid of him. So with the wanderer from God.

The employment.—Among the hogs, to the Jews an abomination. What a fall! To a Jew there could be no deeper depth. A most striking exhibition of the deep degradation into which sin speedily brings one.

Starvation.—The child of wealth and luxury laid to eat "hucks." These hucks "were the fruit of the carob tree. This tree is commonly met with in Syria and Egypt. Its pods are shaped like a horn, (the Greek name for them means horns) and are in length from six to ten inches and about an inch wide. They contain a thick, pithy substance very sweet to the taste, and are used as food for cattle, especially for pigs, also sometimes for poor people." "And no one gave him." He must soon starve. The companions of his carousals all fail him. He must perish alone and unpitied. So one conscious of the want of his immortal spiritual nature away from God finds at last that he has nothing to eat. The soul can live only on "the bread which came down from heaven." Without it sooner or later comes starvation, and what a starvation is that!

Reflection.—vs. 17. Imagine the wretch, amid the filthy swine. Memory begins to work. How could it fail to work? Such a contrast. The dear old home. Its plenty, its ease, its many friends, its sweet, deep, tender parental love. Then and now. Happy if they come to know the mighty distance between that which is and that which might have been; for then may follow,

The resolve.—Only one hope left. The father can save. Will he? The only doubt comes from the prodigal's own conduct. Such sin, sin against God and the father. The father must so love him. So should the wanderer from God say, "arise." So must he, or perish utterly.

The meeting.—vs. 20. The matter did not end with resolutions, much less with vague vain regrets and wishes. He "arose and went." What a description here of God's love for the soul in conscious ruin. "He saw him when "a great way off," and at once "ran." God does not have to be turned into compassion.

Home again.—He had expected so little, he gets so much. So does God make the repenting returning sinner a new creature, clothes him with a perfect righteousness, gives him the seal of the spirit, and makes him with new songs in his mouth, and amid the joy of saints and angels to sit in high holy communion with himself at a celestial feast, not like an, earthly feast soon to end, but eternal. How significant that our Lord in the parable leaves the party still joyful at the festal-board. "They began to be merry."

ILLUSTRATION.—In true repentance, the heart breaks for sin and from sin.—Nevins. Sitting on the deck of a steamer, one beautiful evening, two Christian girls, recently converted, began to sing one of the Psalms of David. This attracted a part of the crew, when one gruff "Jack" bade them be still. He hated the music because it was sacred. They did stop singing but one of the girls spoke to the sailor of his soul and the Saviour. He listened; became absorbed. His eyes filled with tears; they flowed. He spoke, said he remembered days gone by when he had heard such things before, but had long forgotten them. She pressed home Scripture arguments. And when he heard that for such as he there is mercy and pardon, he drew from his rough jacket pocket a bottle, flung it overboard, and said, "Never more shall I take that accursed thing, strong drink. The Lord enable me to live to him henceforth and forevermore."

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Recite.—Scripture Catechism, 325, 326.

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE ENIGMA. No. LXI.

F-ortunatus . . . 1 Cor. xvi. 17. E-den . . . Gen. ii. 15. A-drammelech . . . 2 Kings ix. 37. R-uel . . . Exodus iii. 1, 2.

G-abriel . . . Dan. x. 12. O-rpah . . . Ruth i. 14. D-ebrah . . . Judges iv. 4, 5, 9.

FEAR GOD. Eccles. xii. 13.

Christians pray with outspread, because clean hands; with uncovered head, because they are not ashamed; and without the aid of a prompter, because we pray from the heart.—Tertullian,

LETTER FROM BURMAH.

The following letter, was recently received by Mrs. J. McKenzie wife of Rev. W. S. McKenzie from Miss DeWolf, and contains some interesting particulars respecting the domestic life and habits of the people on whose behalf she is laboring.

MY DEAR MRS. MCKENZIE—I was somewhat surprised, and very much pleased, on the receipt of your letter last mail, and with much pleasure I take a few moments to answer it. I have read with deep interest of the formation of the ladies into bands to aid the missionary cause, and think it one of the best methods that could have been employed to awaken the Baptists to their privilege of doing something for the destitute of their own sex in heathen lands; when once the ladies are thoroughly aroused, their husbands and friends will take an interest sufficiently deep to make them act, and if once our people learn to give of their means, there will be found sufficient among them to support—if not a mission—at least quite a large branch of some other. My heart rejoices in the prospect of being joined in my work here by a young lady so much beloved, as Miss Norris seems to be, by all who have the pleasure of her acquaintance. I hope the dear Lord, who ordereth all these things, will guide her footsteps into the path which leads to Lenthadu. From a letter received last mail from Dr. Murdock, I began to have fears she would go off to Bassein, or rather have to go. Dr. M., in answer to Mr. Smith's request to build a larger house, so that both of us could be accommodated, said: "The committee were not willing to build on to this, or a new one to accommodate the missionaries of another society." I am not at all surprised at this; but still we conclude we have room for her. The room I am now in is too small to take in another person to live from year to year, so we intend to build a house of bamboo sides, taking some of our tithe money, and trusting to the generosity of our society, who have already had one Missionary on the field nearly three years living in houses belonging to another society, without costing them much of anything, to give what aid they can. This will be large enough for us both and give Mr. Smith this room, which they need very much, as they, with their family of three children, are now crowded into one room. But you will think I am a long time coming to matters that will be interesting to your society; but I thought you would be pleased to know we intend to do all we can to have Miss Norris a laborer in this part of the vineyard. First then, shall I introduce you to this country? Not long since, and I dare say you saw the same, there was an article in the Macedonian, from some one asking "where Burmah was?" It seems hardly possible there can be such ignorance in America, and of course none such among you; so you will all realize at once that we are living and dwelling in a land of several days travel from India, still going east; a very hot land, where the thermometer is sometimes 96 or a 100 in the house from day to day, and this would be so a very long time, did we not have the rain falling for nearly six months, but not one steady fall day after day. We have light and pleasant showers, and again some pouring, unpleasant ones. During this time, everything is mouldy and musty and rusty; your album all falls to pieces; your friends' faces grow dim, and are covered with mold; your needles rust so that when you take a stitch (if you have time, which I have not) the point or eye goes at once, and you try another; your soiled garments, unless you take particular care, become mildewed, and even the Dhobies, with all their pounding, cannot get it out. This is now our dry season, and let me tell you a little of it: With the beginning of this month comes cold nights and mornings, when it is down to sixty-three or five, rising in the day to eighty or over; during the day we have a westerly breeze, cooling the air and making it delightful. This weather we have through this month and next; after that comes the hot, dry season, when everything is parched and curled up with the heat; dust flies in every direction in clouds—you eat it, you drink it, inhale it, and are surrounded by it. This is so much for the weather. Let me now speak of the face of the country: The parts I have visited (with the exception of our last visit to Convention in Tongoo, where there are grand old mountains) are low rice-growing lands, covered a foot or more in water during the rainy season. I have a mind to tell you how they cultivate their fields, to give you

an idea of how primitive everything is out here. This you can read or not, as you feel it will be best. They allow the land to remain under water until it is softened, for during the dry season it is baked down two or three feet deep, and nearly as hard as stone. Just think of no rain for nearly seven months. Then they plow it by hoeing: their buffaloes and cattle tramp it over and over again, dragging a sort of plow made of a log of wood, sharpened at one end to go through the earth. This is dragged behind the buffaloes, with the driver clinging on behind, up to his knees in mud and water, till it is a good thick batter; when this is all done, the seed is scattered over the ground; in two or three weeks a young tender plant of a beautiful green is seen all over the ground; in a month or so this is all pulled up, tied into bundles, and transplanted. You would be amused to see them at this work—they do it so quickly and with such a knack, showing practise. Just think of all these broad paddy plains transplanted in that way; but they press into the service even their little children of five and six years. Then if there is not too much water, or too little, they have a good crop to pay them for all their hard work. The harvest is being reaped about this time, while you have yours stored long ago. This is threshed out by preparing a very nice place on the ground; a man stands in the centre with lines, and a pair of cattle go round and round treading it out; this is then taken up, tossed up by hand, and the grain swept in heaps. The way they grind it, reminds one of the way it was done in Bible lands; they have two logs cut out so as to be rough, the upper one with a basket arrangement on the top to hold the grain, and you see them with short sticks put in for handles on opposite sides, worked by two women, reminding one of our Saviour's words—"Two women shall be grinding at the mill," &c. It is the work of the women to winnow this, which goes through five or six different processes before it is fit to come into the cook's hands. I think you would be interested could you see the dexterity and knack they show in tossing up the article that holds the rice: it is light, so of course easily handled; but if our grain had to be prepared in this slow manner, and all by hand, we would think we were living in the past ages sure enough.

Will you come with me to one of the largest and, perhaps, most wealthy (if they can be said to have wealth) Karen villages among the Christian Karens. The one I have in mind is situated on somewhat of an eminence; you come to a house; it shows for itself the owners are not very well off; the posts of the house are all bamboo—the sides are bamboo, woven into large mats, and tied up with rattans; you look around for steps to ascend, for they kindly invite you to come up, saying, "Ha-o-tha-can-pga-man," and soon you see, perhaps, a bamboo ladder or a log of wood with notches cut in it; you are reminded to be careful how you ascend, or, from want of practice in this branch of climbing, you may come to the ground; you reach the floor, and find it is only bamboo, with cracks in it sometimes an inch and a half wide; this is certainly convenient, for you never have litter or dirt collect on your floor—everything must, of course, go right through; you look around for a seat, but nothing is visible but mats—they have brought out the visitors' mat for you to sit upon; if you sit down you will find it not very easy, and do so quite awkwardly, and they generally smile at your first attempts in trying to make yourself at home in one of their houses; you look around and see a great many things you never saw before—things used in helping them manufacture their clothing, and various other things for home use; off in one corner you see smoke ascending, and you look for the stove or fire-place and find it made of mud, baked in the sun, with three or four bricks to rest their chatties on while the rice is boiling; they have no chimneys or holes for the smoke to go through, and yet it is very seldom you see the smoke filling the house as it does at home sometimes; their houses are so much like being out doors, that the smoke does not find much chance to spread itself.

What is this girl at the right, doing you ask? Why, she is weaving one of their skirts; it is for herself, and she takes a good deal of pains to have it nice and pretty. It is a very roughly put together and simple loom she is using to form such pretty variegated stripes, diamonds, and other figures, and you wonder such an article could come from such a place; but it is a work of time—they are sometimes months

making one article; the girls' upper dress is generally some material from the bazar—sometimes cotton and sometimes velvet; this they embroider with every variety of colored silk they can find; they take a piece and double it together, leaving two places for the arms, and cutting a slit in the centre for the head to pass through, so of course, when this is worn, it is pointed back and front; this they trim all round with red scalloped strips of flannel, and a fancy braid of some kind; these strips are put round the arm holes, and hang down nearly two feet; these, too, are put round the dress at the bottom at regular distances, hanging at the sides; besides this, the girls wear small calico jackets, sometimes under and sometimes over, and to finish off, two gay handkerchiefs, used as one, over the head or shoulders. The hair is peculiarly put up—all combed back and tied in a knot, all their own, which stays just so all day long. The most of them are fashionable enough to add quite a piece of some friend's, or a purchase made in bazars. The heathen often add to all this, long necklaces of beads, made of silver and gold, brass and glass earrings as large round as a good sized reel of cotton, wristlets and anklets, as they are able to afford. The men dress in the same costume as the Burmans—a patsoo, which has in it ten yards of silk or cotton; this is sewed together, so as to make a sort of bag in the end; this is tucked around them without the aid of buttons, pin or strap; over this is worn a jacket of white cloth or other material, and then the last, but by no means the least, the head-dress, or Copeh. This is of the gayest, most fancy material they can find; sometimes they wear sandals, but they are seldom seen in the jungle; it is only in town. The men comb the hair all on the top of their heads, and tie it in the same knot the women do. The young girls, before they come to womanhood, wear a long dress, made of white material woven by themselves, and made like the older one's dresses, with the exception of its coming down to the feet.

Did I write you of their mode of eating? They have large dishes, made of "lacc" work, that stand about a foot and a half high; these come to table full of steaming rice, and in another one is the curry, with the myah-en (or rotten fish) as a flavoring; each man puts in his hand and helps himself to as much as he thinks he will eat, and then, with a very rough spoon-made urn, they dip out the curry. In their eating, as in all their work, hands take the place of knives, forks and spoons; when they are through, they go to a chatty standing under the eaves, pour some water from a cocoonut shell on their hands, let them dry without any towel, drink what they want, and are done. You can see from this, their wants are few, and their mode of living simple; yet, for all this, many of them are very poor, with hardly a garment to wear. Why, some of the children in my school are so anxious for education, they come, and have but one suit, for months and months. Of course, they get very dirty and shabby. We pity and desire to help them, but what can we do! It we begin, we don't know when to end, and so they go as they are.

I thought to take you in our school this time, but this letter is so long now, I fear you will lay it down several times before getting to the end of it. I have written it to you, choose from it some parts, if you think they will interest the sisters, and the remainder keep for yourself. Give my christian love to them all. I rejoice greatly they have begun so noble a work. May the Lord help them to sustain it. With kind regards to Mr. McKenzie, believe me your affectionate sister in Christ.

MINNIE DEWOLFE.

A SCENE IN INDIA.—A Calcutta letter in the Times says:—"We are in the midst of the Festival of the Bathing of Juggernaut; his great day—the Roth Jatra, or the journey of the car—will be on the 20th. Fancy a line of road about two miles long lined from end to end with sellers of fruits, sweetmeats, baskets, fans, and all manner of native productions, the fans made from the ordinary palm leaf, and selling at a little less than a halfpenny each. From 10,000 to 15,000 people, the vast majority women, were on the road trying to get as near as possible to where the god was bathing. It is in such a scene as this that one is brought face to face with the masses of the people. The bathing was at noon to-day. To-night, I suppose there will be doings of a less pleasant kind on the way home—just such scenes as belong to an English country fair, and perhaps not much worse, save in the immensely larger number of people, who take the wildest licence for one day. The only intellectual feature in the scene consisted of a few quiet little addresses by a Baptist minister belonging to a neighboring college, and several native assistants of his. He evidently was not intruding anything on anyone, but crowds being brought within his reach, he was telling them, I have no doubt, that Juggernaut was no god at all, and that there was One Supreme and Unseen Ruler of men."

GOD'S SO... AN ESSAY... BY THE R... DECK, FR... BRETON... (Pub... That G... according... sinner from... and yet, t... as such, a... and believ... calling the... cilable, and... sult the wo... are equally... That our... eternal pur... electing lov... clearly tau... of the chri... Indeed, a... character o... renders his... of anything... His design... with himse... the saying... nothing ne... revealed, a... sels. "K... from the b... Every t... transpire... eternal an... of Satan—... the truth-... like nation... of human... ous purpo... evil in the... He is the... he desire... self, is the... To say, in... spire, in t... developem... ed, in ord... would be... in the gy... placing hi... The ide... ble from... ever is rev... eternal lo... sought ne... in a way... titude of... Yet, He a... ment of... loved us—... save us... The ma... demption... marvellou... birth. Let us... the sinner... in God's... holy, hap... God, and... munion w... ordinate r... vince of... residence... the hand... trees, pr... supplying... from not... Surely th... ally need... happy s... guilt of... stances?... fruit of... of which... God. P... the Lord... renders... aggravat... terrible... guilty of... kindest o... His cri... died imm... bodily o... deserves... warned... justly es... shalt ca... Man... holy Lav... petuales... heaven... over tim... blessing... tity or