Sabbath School.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Lesson 5.—May 1.

Luke 15: 1-10.

LOST AND FOUND.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. Luke 15: 10.

TOPIC.—A Lesson of Seeking.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, Luke 15: 1-10. Tuesday, Ezek. 34: 11-16. Wednesday, Luke 19: 1-10. Thursday, John, 18: 1-. Friday, Matt. 2: 1, 2; 8-12. Saturday, Prov. 3: 13-18. Saturday, John 20: 1-16.

NOTES BY A. C. KENDRICK, D.D., L.L.D.

The beautiful trilogy of parables contained in this chapter illustrates three different forms the same general idea,—the compassion of God towards lost sinners. The three parables intensify the idea by repitition, while the third, passing into the human sphere, presents more points of contact between the divine pitying love and its parabolic illustration.

Vs. 1,2. *The publicans and sinners* comprising together the chief Jewish disreputable classes, the former because of their unpopular occupation as tax-gatherers, the latter from their licentious life). *Were drawing near* (now; as they often did, and as they always encouraged them to do) to Jesus to hear him. "The publicans and harlots," said Jesus to the Pharisees, "enter into the kingdom of God before yon." The Pharisees and scribes, respectable and self-righteous, uttered their customary murmurs of disapproval at such improper condescension: *He receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.*

Vs. 2, 4,—*What man?* Not *who* but *man* in emphatic antithesis to God. The antithesis is further heightened by the addition of *you:* more exactly, *from among you. Having an hundred sheep.* A definite number gives picturesqueness and individuality to the description *Having lost one.* The lost sheep answers to the exceptional portion who have strayed away from the paths of obedience. He takes but one in order to emphasize the expression of the divine love. It will turn its back on the ninety-nine in its desire to recover the one lost. *In the wilderness:* Desert or uncultured regions, in distinction from tilled and cultivated fields. The sheep are left there, properly guarded and protected, while he goes away after the one that was strayed and lost. He is not indifferent to the others; he does not undervalue them, or care for them less in reality; but his anxiety for the lost one, whether an anxiety of selfishness or compassion, for the time being, absorbs both his interest and his efforts. *Until he find it.* His anxiety is no trifling and transient emotion; it is resolute and persevering until it attains its object.

Vs. 5, 6.—*He placeth it on his shoulders.* The act vividly portrays the interest he feels in it. *Rejoicing.* The recovery of the *one* lost sheep, for the time, awakens more conscious joy than the safety of the entire remaining flock, which had not been in peril. This is the pith of the comparison. The safety of the remaining ninety-nine was proportionably as dear to him as that of the one astray; but this had been lost, and they had not. A sick member of a household, for the time being, absorbs the anxiety of the family. There is more joy over his recovery than over the continued health of all who had not been attacked by disease.

Vs. 7.—He manifests his joy by communicating it to others. He invites his friends and neighbors to share it. *Rejoice with me.* Strong emotions refuse to be pent up within the bosom in which they have birth; they overflow and demand the sympathy of others. The incident, like all of our Lord's parables, is given with dramatic vividness.

Vs. 7.—The application. *So* (Just as the shepherd and his sympathizing neighbors rejoice over the recovered sheep) *joy will be in heaven:* With God who answers to the shepherd, the party primarily interested, and the angels who answer to the friends and neighbors.—*Over one sinner that repenteth.* No matter who that sinner may be, whether one whom the world regards as a sinner or not: one real sinner, that has broken the law of God and become amenable to its penalty.—*More than ever ninty and nine righteous persons, that need no repentance:* that are like the sheep that have not gone astray; that have remained safe in the fold; that have awakened no anxieties for their loss, and no efforts for their recovery. But who are these *righteous persons that need no repentance?* I answer, it is an ideal case, assumed to meet the murmuring objection of the Pharisees. They find fault with Jesus for receiving and welcoming sinners. But it is precisely sinners, not the righteous, whom he came to save: it is precisely the sick, not the well, whom, as the divine physician, he came to heal. If there *are* such, if there are the morally pure, virtuous, and untransgressing; if there are the morally sound and well—they answer to the unstrayed sheep, safe in their fold. They need no anxiety, and their safety gives rise to no special demonstrations of joy. They are cared for, and quietly rejoiced over all the time. The Lord takes an ideal case. The Pharisees suppose themselves not to be sinners. If they are not, if they are what they assume themselves to be, then he may well turn from them, and go to the class for whom his mission into the world was intended. If they were not in fact righteous, and if there are not any such characters among men the principle equally holds good, and the parable loses none of its force. They murmured at him for welcoming sinners; it is precisely this class—not the righteous (the really rihgteous, not the self-righteous)—whom he came to save.

Vs. 8-10.—The same principle is illustrated by the parable of the lost *drachma*, a silver coin worth about sixteen cents. A womau having ten drachmas—a definite number—losing one of them, *lights a lamp*—which adds a picturesque feature to the description—sweeps the house, seeks and finds it, and in like manner calls her friends and neighbors together for sympathy and congratulation. A vivid picture again of divine pity and love equally and perseveringly seeking the lost, and rejoicing, with over-flowing joy, over their recovery. This parable, like the other, sheds light on who are meant by the "righteous." The sheep that remained in the fold were, intrinsically, each as valuable and precious as the one that was lost; the difference was that this *had been lost,* and awakened first all the pity and distress, and then all the joy, which we feel for that which is imperilled and rescued. So the nine remaining drachmas were, each one, intrinsically as precious as the drachma that was lost. But the woman *had lost* it: and her joy for the time surpasses, in its eager demonstrativeness, her joy over all her remaining treasure. *There ariseth*: becometh, when the spectacle is witnessed. *In the presence of the angels.* A Hebraistic expression for joy felt among and by the angels. It is not God's joy in the presence of the angels (though the divine joy is virtually included), but the joy of the angels themselves. *One* sinner that repenteth; and of course proportionally greater joy over a larger number.

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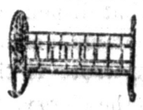
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