

LOST AND FOUND.

LUKE 15: 1-10.

GOLDEN TEXT:—'Likewise I lay unto you, There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.'

Central Truth:—God pities and values lost sinners.

It was but a few weeks before the last Passover, and Jesus was on his last journey from Perea to Jerusalem. As he passed from village to village increasing multitudes thronged about him, among whom were not a few of the despised and degraded. It is said that "all the publicans and sinners drew near unto him." There was good reason for this. Until now the only pretended righteousness which they had seen was proud, distant and contemptuous. But here was a teacher who not only enjoined a righteousness exceeding that of the Scribes and Pharisees, but withal was the sinner's friend. He received them kindly, conversed with them, visited their homes, and sat at their tables. No wonder they heard him gladly.

At all this the self-righteous Pharisees were greatly scandalized. They had no conception of a righteousness which could at once abhor sin and pity the sinner. It was in reproof of their murmurings and in explanation of his conduct that our Saviour spoke the three wonderful parables of this chapter.

These parables are alike in that they are intended to represent the mercy of God to sinners; the first two God's mercy in seeking, and the third, that same mercy in receiving them. It may be that each was intended to depict a distinct class—the first, the stupid; the second, the ignorant; the third, the wilful. But, more likely, each was meant to represent a different side of the same person; for all sin is at once stupid, blind and wilful.

In the two parables for this day's lesson, we see, first, why God is so earnest for the sinner's recovery. It is because he both pities and values him.

The divine pity is depicted in the story of a shepherd seeking a lost sheep. The Saviour is the Shepherd; "I am the good Shepherd;" "all we, like sheep, have gone astray." Great is the wanderer's misery and peril and hopelessness. What a picture of all this is a sheep separated from the flock, wildly running hither and thither, the ready prey of wild beasts, liable to fall into some pit, with no wisdom or strength to find his way back to the fold! As the shepherd pities the sheep, so God pities the unhappy, imperiled, helpless sinner.

The wonderful truth that God also values the sinner is set forth in the other parable. In our Saviour's day the highest coin in common use was of silver; silver thus represents high value, the highest likely to be in one's possession. A lost soul is like a lost piece of silver; now useless, and yet in itself of great worth. So God looks upon the sinner; he bears the divine image, however defaced, and has powers for great and high service. For this reason, as well as in pity for his misery, God desires his salvation.

Then, next, in both parables, we are helped to see how God seeks the recovery of the lost. He goes after them with pains and patience and the wisest adaptation of means. Leaving the ninety and nine in their safe pasture ground, the shepherd pursues the wandering sheep. Nor, mindless of the roughness and difficulties of the way, does he give over until, if it be possible, the lost is found; then, tenderly laying it upon his shoulder, he joyfully bears it home. So, with lighted candle and great over-turnings, does the woman diligently search for the missing coin. Such, we are told, is God's way. With patience and wisdom he seeks the lost, that he may save them from their misery and have them as his own. This he did by the coming and work and death of his Son, and still does by his Word and Spirit and the ministries of his people.

And all this, we are told, he does for one; for one sinner; for him who has wandered farthest, or is most deep in his corruption.

Just who are represented by the ninety and nine who are left is a vexed question, which we need not be greatly anxious to answer. The reference may be to the sinless angels, or to truly righteous men already brought back, or to those who ignorantly count themselves righteous. The great purpose of the parables is to show us the heart of God; and, particularly, that it is the recovery of those who feel themselves sinners which engages his thought and makes his heart glad.

A careless reading of these parables might lead to the inference that man has nothing to do to secure his own salvation; that he has only to wander and to wait; that God does all. But such an inference is distinctly precluded. Repentance is the soul's own act; and our Saviour plainly says that it is over the sinner that repenteth that heaven exults. He must himself consent to God's grace. Then it is that God calls angels and glorified men to unite with him in rejoicings which fill the heavens.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

- 1. None are so far gone in sin that we should not seek their salvation; the seemingly abandoned may be more hopeful than the proudly self-righteous.
2. The way to men's hearts is by an exhibition of friendliness, not by treating sin as a trifle, but by showing that we do not despise the sinner.
3. The opposition and derision of the great and honored of this world did not lessen our Saviour's ardor for souls; it should not hinder ours.
4. How wonderful is the divine condescension and compassion. To save sinners, not excepting the most degrad-

ed, the Saviour came to earth, took our nature, lived in the flesh, and died on the cross; and it is to this same end that he is now abroad by his Spirit, his ministers and his Word. In all this he ministers and his disciples. By it all he appeals to the unsaved to be in earnest for themselves.
5. The true work of the preacher, teacher and disciple in any station is not to consume life in speculation concerning things not revealed, but to speed on the great and good work of human salvation.
6. God looks upon men as lost; and for this reason it is that he is so earnest to save them. It is only as we see them in that same condition and are alarmed for them that we shall be sufficiently in earnest.

7. The divine method is to seek and rescue individuals; to save men one by one. There is no better way.
8. It does not follow that, because the Saviour is so persistent, therefore none will be lost; for after all is done which God can do, it still remains that the sinner must himself repent.
9. How great is the value of a soul for which heaven is so moved; how important is his rescue, over which all the wise and good and blest rejoice!

SOWING AND REAPING.

Howard Simpson and Loraine Bliss, two young men of great intimacy and dissipated habits, were on their way to a gambling saloon, where the night previous they had won considerable, and on passing a church, the doors of which were opened, paused a moment by the steps, peering in out of idle curiosity, just as the minister was giving out the text: "As ye sow, so shall ye reap."

"We are not farmers, so we do not sow anything to reap," said Howard, the elder and most profligate of the two; but Loraine looked thoughtful, and kept silent as they walked along toward the place of their night's debauch. And often during the jubilant gaiety of the revelers that passage, "As ye sow, so shall ye reap," flashed into his mind.

"It is as my good mother tells me," thought he; "we must suffer for evil deeds done in the body, and my deeds are constantly evil. But from this night I will do differently. I will not be caught in this place again."

"What ails you, Bliss? You are as dull as a November hoe," said Gay-bright, one of the ringleaders of the company.

"Guess he's thinking about reaping what he sows," answered Simpson, and then about a dozen rude men burst into a loud fit of laughter.

"What do you mean by that remark?" one of them presently asked.

"He then told them of the text given out by the minister as they were passing the church.

"The minister go to—and he surely will," said Roarion, one of the most blasphemous of the whole gang.

This profane remark, with others no better, grated harshly on the mind of Loraine, for he was really feeling more serious than he ever had felt before; but he made no reply, knowing if he did it would only serve to call forth still harsher language. He left as early as he could, which was not till 1 o'clock, and after he got home crept to his chamber and noiselessly his father, who at times was very harsh to him. Then, for the first time in his life, he offered a sincere prayer to God, beseeching him to give him strength to turn from the evil way into which he had been led.

Meantime, his father having heard him enter the house, was denouncing him in the severest terms. "Do not be harsh with him," pleaded the mother. "I hope he will soon learn to do better; he is young and wild, though not vicious, I trust."

But the old gentleman could see naught but wrong in his boy.

"He shall leave the house! I will disinheritor him if he does not stay at home nights; he is a disgrace to the family. Think of the money I have paid out for him—sent him to college, given him the privilege of studying law with me in my office. But no, he chooses to spend his time carousing with a set of loafers."

"Perhaps if we are gentle with him—" tremblingly whispered his mother.

But the old gentleman did not heed this advice, for the next morning his first salutation to Loraine was:

"Where did you stay so late last night, you young scapegrace? Unless you mend your ways you'll leave these premises for good and all."

Loraine, who had been penitent through the night, resolving to do better in future, now felt his temper rising and his resolution melting away, and he sat down to the table in a sullen mood. But he shortly after made up his mind to go to meeting that evening and return home at 9 or 10 o'clock. Therefore at half-past 7 he started for church, and on meeting three or four of his old associates, told them of his plan.

"Well, come with us first, just for a few minutes to the club rooms," said they.

"No, no, not to-night," he replied. "I have to go home early and I cannot possibly go with you."

But they dragged him along and it was impossible to get away from them; and once there, there was no such thing as leaving, for in the excitement of the place he was induced to drink, and as the liquor was drugged he felt no inclination to move from the charmed spot.

So the hours moved on until late into the night before he went home.

When he reached that place it was 3 o'clock. His mother was at the door; she had not slept a moment, she said, from watching for him, and his father had awakened three or four times, angrily inquiring for him. But he was now asleep, and she wanted Loraine to creep noiselessly to bed, so he might not awaken him. But alas! he did awake, and the scene that ensued was awful.

Meeting the stupefied boy on the stair landing, he ordered him to leave the house at once; he could stay only at the peril of his life. The poor mother begged that he might be allowed to remain until morning; but no, into the street he was driven, with the threat that if he ever entered the house again he should be expelled with still greater harshness. Loraine crept silently to the most convenient shelter, which was the carriage house, and there slept on the carriage cushions till morning. There his mother found him, as she arose before her husband.

"My dear boy" she said, winding her arms about his neck, "it will not answer for your father to find you here, so I will bring you out some breakfast, and some money with which to get out of this town, where you have had so many vile associates; and I hope you will find something to do and become good and steady. After a few days write me where you are, and I will send you a trunk of clothes and another of books. In future shun all evil company, and when you next meet your father let him see one who has entirely reformed, and who will bring him no further dishonor."

"I will, dear mother, do just as you say. I did not mean to get into disgrace last night. I started for church and should have been at home at an early hour, only that I was fairly dragged in another direction by my companions. I think if father had taken a different course with me I would not be where I am now. You know now stern and crabbed he has been, and never since I left college have I felt that I could enter his office and study under his tuition. Had he been kind and gentle like you, dear mother," said Loraine, kissing her tearful cheek, "he might have induced me to do just what he wished; but after this I will endeavor to do right. That text, 'As ye sow, so shall ye reap,' is continually in my mind, and I am going to begin anew and try to do right."

Four years passed, and his name had never been mentioned in his father's household to his hearing. And just four years from the day he left home a Mr. Bliss, from no one knew whither, had an appointment to preach at the Congregational church, which Loraine's parents usually attended. On this occasion the old gentleman said to his wife:

"We must go, I suppose, to hear this Bliss; perhaps he may be some relation of ours; no telling, although I have never known a relative of mine to be a minister."

"Yes, we will go," Mrs. Bliss replied, "and if we learn that he is a relative, it would be very proper to ask him to come home with us and spend the night."

"I do not know that I would have any objections to that," her husband answered.

Somehow he appeared to be in a more melting mood than common; probably he was reminded that it was the anniversary of the fourth year since his son left them; at all events, this evening, on his way to church, he spoke Loraine's name for the first time in his wife's hearing.

"It is four years to-day," he said, "since Loraine went away, isn't it?"

"Yes," she said, mournfully.

"Wonder where he is now? Sometimes, wife, I think I was a little hasty with him."

"Then you would be glad to see him, perhaps."

"If I could be sure he had reformed."

By this time they had reached the church, finding they were a little late, as the minister was giving out the text: "As ye sow, so shall ye reap." Quietly they entered the door, and there for a moment Mr. Bliss speechless stood, and then tremblingly moved along to his seat, where his wife was sitting with her head leaning on the seat ahead of her. Could it be possible, he asked himself, that the long lost one stood before him—that he really beheld him again—not as before but still the same? Yes, it was most assuredly his son, whom he drove as a vagabond from his door, clothed in the garb of holiness, a commissioner from God. And he, listening to him, stood like a guilty wretch, transfixed to the spot. His injustice toward the one now so superior to him rose before him and he felt condemned.

It was observed by the audience that the preacher was becoming deeply affected as he looked in the direction of the old remembered pew, and each moment waxed more and more eloquent as he enlarged upon the subject of his text: "As ye sow, so shall ye reap."

"Yes," thought the old gentleman, "as I sowed, so I have reaped. For the past four years I have lived in constant regret of my unjust treatment, my harsh language to thee, my son. Had I been kind and forbearing with him from the first he would not have been led away to the haunts of dissipation, which came so near

proving his ruin. But by his mother's gentle conduct and the grace of God his feet have been arrested in the slippery downward course he once pursued."

After the service was ended Mr. and Mrs. Bliss remained in their pew until a part of the congregation had left the aisles, and then moved forward to the pulpit to meet their son and pour their tears upon his neck. Then all was forgotten, and he went to their home, never to be turned from their door again.

THE POLITICAL ICE DISSOLVING.

From Forney's Progress.

With the end of winter the foundations of the party that won the Presidential election last November by so narrow a margin, are breaking up into fragments. One of two things is clear from this almost universal dissolution. Either the majorities cast against Hancock were false, or the confidence in Garfield is gone. Certainly the first reason is conclusive, if we recall the terrorized vote in many of the business centres last year, and the present deep and loud discontent in these localities. In Philadelphia, which was the first stone of the column to fall on the first honest succeeding trial, after the declared election of Garfield, it is clear from the recent experiment that nearly enough counterfeit votes were counted for Garfield to make his majority in the whole State. Republican examination boldly pursued has proved that by the aid of bought election officers and forged returns, the voting in the Presidential contest was a flagrant farce, and when we include the organized patronage in the counties, the surmise ripens into fact. The Indiana October election was a proclaimed auction in advance. That State was purchased in open market. The same revelation is true of New York and of other quarters. The proof was not only in the meagre Republican strength in Congress, illustrated by the present degradation of the United States Senate, but in unprecedented Republican defeats in most of the great Republican cities since the Presidential election. The first sign since the Republicans of the Senate have attempted to make a party in that body by an open bargain with a Republican, is the failure of the disruption of the so-called solid South. The Mahone coalition has made the South granite against that organized ingratiate. It has even disgusted the colored vote, and has placed the Northern men of honor who preferred Mr. Gasfield, in that worst of all attitudes, helpless apology. No party can live that is ashamed or afraid to defend itself. This element, added to the proved dishonesty of the Republican rings in most of the great cities, has dissolved whatever coherence there was last November. That coherence in the Republican column was always hollow. It was a forced confidence. It was a combination of fear. The employers feared the employed, and the employed marched forth in manacles and frowningly voted with their despotic masters. And now that these very employers do not hesitate to show their horror of such arrogance as that of Cookling, and such shameless corruption as the bargain with the bullying Republican, Mahone, is it surprising that the men they forced to vote against Hancock should seek the first occasion to return to the Democratic party? There is another ingredient in this dissolution of the Republican party. There are not places for one out of a hundred of the hungry expectants. Reform has seized the cities. It will control the departments. It will force economy upon the bureaus. The first to suffer will be the colored men, and they will be kept more resolutely out in the cold, now that the whites, who are in, will labor with might and main to stay. An army of mercenaries will soon tire of fighting without plunder, and when the gas rings are broken, and the water-rats are made to work, and the street idlers are made to do honest chores, the romance of party loses its gilding, and men come down to the prose of common life.

The fact is, Mr. Garfield's administration will be constrained by the times to obey the best emotions. There is rest from mere party hatred and sectional passion. The wealthy men of the country, headed by the corporations, must of necessity be wary. We have seen that all the organizations against the Republican rings have begun with them. They voted against Hancock, because they honestly believed he would unsettle their tariff. They already see that their worst enemies are the Republican chiefs, and the very meagreness of the Republican majorities in Congress are a warning that they cannot make war on the opposite party. That is growing in good sense and in affluence. The South is getting wiser, more comfortable, and more Democratic. Mahone has given to Virginia a new issue. He appeals to the pride of the whole South, and it is manifest that he will be sunk deeper than plummet ever sounded, as certainly as that his bargain grows more odious every day. The ice of the small, accidental majority will dissolve, and the summer will begin a new departure.

The son of a clergyman was delivering a college valedictory, when, in pulling out his handkerchief, he pulled out a pack of cards. "Hulloa!" he said, "I've got on my father's coat!"

The Burial of the Czar.

George Augusta Sala telegraphs as follows: "I have just been a spectator to one of the most magnificent, most impressive, most pathetic pageants on which, in the course of a lengthened career, accustomed to the pomp and vanities of regality, from royal weddings and feasts to royal funerals, I have ever been privileged to set eyes on. Three cannon fired from the fortress directed the various mourners to get ready to take their places.

"A similar salvo about midday gave the signal to start. When the sable standard, bearing in white the initials of the murdered monarch, was unfurled over the fortress, the artillery began to fire minute guns and all of the bells in the city began to toll. The whole route was lined by troops of the garrison, immediately behind whom the public were permitted to stand. No galleries or platforms were erected, as the householders were only allowed at personal risk and peril to let windows or balconies to strangers.

"There was a clump of banners, the Imperial family banner, the crimson military standard, brodered with the Imperial arms, and the saddle horses of his late Majesty, led by grooms in deep mourning. Next came a long file of peculiarly interesting local ensigns, the standard with the arms of Teboorkal, succeeded by flags bearing cognizances of Armenia, Strararda, Georgia and Cartalinia, each attended by mounted men-at-arms and a groom. Then followed more local flags and more men-at-arms.

"Then came a very curious episode, a long line of officers in full uniform, bearing on variously colored cushions, embroidered with gold, the badges and decorations conferred by foreign monarchs and princes upon the late Czar. Some were simple circlets of plain gold—others diadems literally blazing with brilliant, emeralds and rubies of Kasan.

"After these, in care of functionaries of the second class, came the crowns of the Kingdoms of Georgia, Jauris, Siberia, Poland, Astrakan and Kasan, with the Imperial globe, sceptre and crown, followed by two masters and the grand master of ceremonies; all these order and insignia bearing officials being flanked on either side by a battalion of cadets from St. Paul's military school, marching in single file. Among the noticeable features of the procession was a figure which attracted much attention—the Knight of the Golden Armor, mounted upon a gorgeously harnesses steel, carrying a drawn sword and supposed to symbolize the bright and spotless character of the departed sovereign. After him walked a man at arms in sable armor and a drawn sword. Perhaps the most picturesque feature in the ceremonial were deputations which figured for the first time in Russian history, representing institutions created by the late Emperor the Zemstas, the justices of the peace and a motly group of peasants, with one, at least, of venerable and patriarchal appearance, all attired in their winter garb, some with the colored scarf used to girdle their sheepskin and rough cloth overcoats.

"Not the least striking or solemn portion of the spectacle was a vast, silent crowd, who lined the quays, and indeed covered every spot from which a distant view could be obtained of the procession. There they stood bare-headed and mute, many kneeling and praying for the soul of the Emperor, followed by long lines of priests and acolytes, numbering many hundred, bare-headed and attired in their ecclesiastical robes, the priests bearing tapers. The crowd pressed forward and a deep silence prevailed, broken only by the melodious, but weird-like notes which rose and fell upon the ear.

"Following the priests came the gorgeous catafalque, on which rested the coffin, under a rich canopy of gold, surmounted by rich ostrich plumes. Sala says: We were asking, 'What next, and next?' when the hearse came suddenly in view; and the prodigious mass of humanity rapidly, so to speak, as a flash of lightning, uncovered. It was a most wonderful sight to behold, that black sea of hats and caps transformed into an immense expanse of pale, upturned faces. The funeral car was a bier of ebony and silver, on wheels, with heavily carved silver spokes and a superstructure of black and silver. The whole was canopied by superb material encircling the columns of the bier.

"The coffin of the illustrious deceased was almost hidden by a golden pall, lined with white satin, and was drawn by eight black horses completely shrouded in sable draperies. Four general aides-de-camp stood one at each corner of the catafalque, the polished metal wheels of which glistened in the sunlight. Sixteen general officers held the silken cords of the canopy. Behind the bier of his murdered sire, walked Alexander III., in his Imperial solitude, bearing alone his filial sorrow and his State cares, and symbolizing in this last respect his unique position."

A MINISTER commenced his sermon by observing, "What shadows we are!" and then paused as if to let the thought sink deeply into the minds of the congregation, whereupon two lean spinsters in a front pew guessed they didn't come there to be insulted, and they got up and strode indignantly out.

Bernhardt's Opinion of America.

WHY SHE CAME, WHAT SHE HAS SEEN AND HOW SHE FEELS.

NEW YORK, April 17.—The Herald publishes an interesting interview with Sarah Bernhardt relative to her experiences in this country:

"What first induced you to think of coming to America?" said the reporter.

"Oh! I always wanted to travel. I often thought if I had the money I would go from one part of the world to the other. And, first of all, I wanted to come here."

"Why?"

"Well, you know even intelligent Europeans have queer ideas of America. Now that I have seen it I laugh at my absurd notions. For years I thought of America as New York, Boston, Philadelphia and a place where they killed pigs, in the West, called Chicago, and even those places I thought were quite near each other. I mean that those names were familiar to me. Others I had never heard of."

"And now?"

"And now, indeed. I often said to Mr. Jarrett and Mr. Abbey, 'Is there no end to all this?' For mercy's sake, how much further does the country go? And you know there is San Francisco still beyond."

"Were you more surprised by the extent of the country than by the developments of the cities named?"

"Oh, yes, indeed; but what struck me more forcibly still was the immense number of big towns where wealth and fashion seem to exist. For instance, we would drive through a town where there were no pavements and where the wheels of our conveyance sank in the mire to the very hubs, and I would think, 'Well, I guess we won't do any business in this place,' but at night, in a handsomely appointed 'Academy of Music,' I would find a large, intelligent and elegantly-dressed audience, all glad to see me and appreciative of good points, and to my amazement the receipts would amount to \$2,500 or \$3,000. It seemed as if the people cropped up from the very earth itself."

"Then you found mental stimulants, as well as professional and pecuniary benefit?"

"Yes, indeed. You see I have always been obliged to gain a livelihood—to earn my own living—and it is fortunate for me that I can gratify my passion for travel and pursue my professional calling on the same line. You are quite right in calling it 'mental stimulant.' I don't envy any woman who goes from New York to New Orleans, from Mobile to Montreal, from Philadelphia to Padunk and from Salem to Saint Joe without being impressed with the immensity of the country and the vitality of the people."

"Vitality?"

"Yes. Everybody does something all the time. Everybody works. Even artists work without rest, and in some places work on Sunday night as on all other nights, and at two-mastees besides. The whole people seem to have a coil of springs; push, push, pushing all the time. I like it, but it gives me a fever. I feel the pressure. I feel the excitement. It's all the same wherever I go. I expect to find strength and vigor, of course, but I am simply amazed at the evidences of wealth and culture and all the nicer and finer developments which are the proper outcome from wealth and culture."

Streaks of Luck in Mining.

From the Los Angeles (Cal.) Herald.

Six months ago a middle-aged man, a former resident of Gospel Swamp, had to borrow money to buy a burro to go to Santa Catarina mountains prospecting. He sold, the other day, a mine for \$13,000, and has better mines still for sale. Another former resident of Los Angeles discovered a mine in the Dragoon mountains, and kindly placed a friend in the claim. After a while he was offered \$75,000 for it, and, on finding the other half-owner, discovered he was in an advanced stage of intoxication. The whiskey-eyed individual, who had not put one dollar in the claim, concluded: "Worth a million if it's worth a cent. Won't sell for \$75,000. Our wives will be dressed in silk down in Los Angeles." The result was the parties bought ought the sober partner, and are now engaged in freeing out the would-be millionaire. Another instance and I will leave mining matters. A certain miner here owed a merchant \$110, and on coming to pay his note had only \$100. The merchant tore up the note, remarking "that it was all right. Put me on some claim you discovered." The miner did it, and the claim has since been sold for \$40,000.

LOOK OUT FOR PAINT!—A little boy at Oil City recently came into possession of a miniature printing press. One day he printed a card bearing the legend, "Paint! Look out!" By some means this card became fastened to his sister's hat, and hung just above her left ear, where he who ran could read, and when she went down the street there was a grin extending clear from Pearl avenue to the Exchange; and that night the boy traded off his printing press on a yellow dog and a popgun.

It is not possible for three people to keep the same secret unless two of them are dead.