

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

JESUS TEACHING HOW TO PRAY*

By Rev. Clarence McKinnon, B.D.

Teach us to pray, v. 1. Among the innumerable kinds of fish that sport on the sea is the whale, different in nature and habit from all the rest of the fishy tribes. It is a mammal, and must breathe the air like terrestrial animals. However deep it may descend into the dark abyss of the ocean, and however dependent it is upon the creatures therein for its subsistence, it must ever and anon rise to the surface, to breathe the pure atmosphere, or it will die. Prayer is as universal a spiritual necessity to man as breathing is a physical one to the whale. Except at frequent intervals we rise from the dark depths of our human life to commune with God: our souls will be drowned under the cares and sins of the world. To learn to pray is as needful as to learn to breathe, and out for our original sin it would have been as natural.

When we pray, say, v. 2. The Lord would have us carefully consider of positions when we offer them. In a shop window was once advertised, "Lump Prayers." The advertisement described a kind of prayer book in a certain sort of binding that was flexible, which was for sale within. But it was only too true a description of those incoherent emotional utterances without any backbone of thought, with which the dillatory think fit at times to approach Him who searches the heart. Let our prayers have in them wise and strong requests; and, while the small details of our everyday life are not to be overlooked, let the latter never crowd out of those loftier desires and those far-reaching requests that seek the ennoblement of the whole human race, as well as the special blessing of one individual. It is in this fashion that the Lord has taught us to pray.

Thy will be done, v. 2. If we lay a stick on the ground, and find that the uneven surfaces do not permit them to match one another, we cannot bend the earth to fit the stick. We must bend the stick to fit the earth. So it is with the eternal will of God. Should our wills be in conflict with His, we must not foolishly strive to conform His purposes to our wishes. Rather must we yield our hearts in obedience to His will and say, like the dying Richard Baxter: "When Thou wilt, what Thou wilt, how Thou wilt."

Because of His importunity, v. 8. Yes, the dumb animal pushing his nose in his master's knee until he has attracted that master's attention to his need; the little child throwing her arms around her father's neck, and by kisses and entreaties obtaining the wish of her little heart; the widow's unwearied appearance, before the unjust judge until her suit was tried; the friend's importunate knocking at his neighbor's door until he got the leaves, are all foretold examples of what the Christian may expect from God by frequent and fervent prayer. Luther was so earnest in his prayers that it used to be said, "He will not be denied;" and John Knox's persistent petition, "Give me Scotland, or I die," has found a striking answer in the unique piety of her sons. All things are theirs, whose "eyes are homes of silent prayer."

Ask, seek, knock, v. 9. A young man on a walking tour in Scotland came to a gate, which a young girl quickly shut in front of him. He was surprised at this sudden interception of this path, and was about to offer some money to purchase an admittance, when the girl said, "Oh, no, you have not to pay anything. You have

simply to say, 'I leave down me to go through.' The young man did as directed, and the gate was immediately opened. The other was under the necessity of insisting upon a definite request for admittance, in order to preserve his right of entrance to the grounds. God knows our wants; He does not charge a price for their satisfaction; we do not purchase His gift with our money; but He insists upon one point, that we shall ask personally for them, in order that we may never fail to recognize from whose hand we receive them, and to preserve a becoming gratitude.

Asketh, receiveth, seeketh, findeth, knocketh, openeth, v. 10. A boat is drifting down the river current. The rowers have lost the oars, and are helpless to turn it back, or check its progress. But a man from the bank throws them a tow-line. Ruling on this, they draw the boat to a place of safety. That drifting boat is a picture of many a life that is being carried rapidly downward by the swift stream of temptation. But God throws out the tow-line of prayer. We have but to pull on this with all our strength and we shall be safe.

The Holy Spirit, v. 13. God has many bright and beautiful gifts to bestow upon His own. He gives us talent, food, home, friends, books, music, pictures, playthings, the surrounds us with noble scenery, and places the shining heavens as a beautiful canopy over our heads; and all this wonderful world is stored with treasures for our use. But far greater than all these gifts is His Holy Spirit; for this is Himself. When He gives us His Spirit, it means that God comes Himself into our hearts, makes us wise, loving, good, and gives us something of that pleasure which is in His own nature. Shall we not ask for this priceless Gift?

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

By Rev. James Rose, D.D.

Nothing to set before Him.—It would be difficult to find among us a house without any food in it. But in more than half the houses of Palestine, the same condition of things would be found by any belated traveler today. The terrible exactions of an unscrupulous government and rapacious officials have crushed all enterprise and forethought out of the common people. If you expostulate with the peasants regarding their incident and improvident life, they will answer, "Why should we toil to make and lay by anything? Whenever we get anything, it is known the officials take it from us." And so they are content to live on the barest necessities of life. In the average peasant's house, all that would be found would be a small bagful of barley, a few handfuls of which would have to be ground by the rude hand millstones, sifted and kneaded and baked in the primitive clay oven, which is really a hole in the ground, before there could be any eating in that house. All that would consume a good part of the night, and by that time the guests' hunger would be portentous. It was easier to rap up some better off neighbor and borrow bread from him.

DAILY READINGS.

- M., July 16. Prayer should contain praise. Rev. 4: 8-11.
T., July 17. Intercession in prayer. Ex. 32: 30-35.
W., July 18. Confession in prayer. Lev. 26: 38-42.
T., July 19. Prayer at meals. Mark 8: 6-9.
F., July 20. Prayer in Christ's name. Eph. 5: 14-21.
S., July 21. Earnest prayer. Gen. 32: 24-28.
S., July 22. Topic—Christ's life. VII. How Christ prayed, and how we should pray. Matt. 14: 23; 26; 36-44.

CONCERNING TEMPERANCE.

In all ages, and in all lands intemperance has been the besetting sin of great multitudes, says the *Illustrated Presbyter*. In yielding to it they have brought upon themselves calamities of body and of soul, while sorrow, destitution and crime have been the accompaniments and the results of their self-indulgence. The wise, the good, the philanthropic, everywhere have raised their voices in warning, pleading, in protestation. Something has been done to check the tide of misery. Many of the fallen have been uplifted, and many have been kept from falling.

God's providential dealings with men have done much to point out the dangers and evils of a course of intemperance. His laws in the natural world have been enforced, and men have seen that they could not go on in an unwholesome receiving the penalty for it in their bodies. The bleared eye, the pained nerve, the bloated face, the bloated frame, the feverish stomach and the maddened brain have always been the external marks of the drunkard, and while these have been physical signs testifying against him, the ravages have been going on in his moral and religious nature, and at the same time his business, his home and his loved ones have suffered.

Efforts to repress intemperance have been made everywhere and always. Throughout the whole Word of God are the solemn admonitions against the evil and destructive habits of using strong drink. The book of Proverbs, the prophecy of Isaiah, and, in fact, nearly every book of the Bible contains most earnest admonition and instruction on this subject.

Some people say that intemperance is so deadly today because of the fact that impure and poisonous liquor is used. Let it be understood that there is no pure liquor and that there never has been. Alcohol is the deadly poison that has always been sought for to make men drunk. All the other poisons used along with it are comparatively harmless as compared with this. The losses and degradations over which the prophets and apostles wept and mourned were brought about by "pure" wine and the apostle was led to write that, even under the influence of the pure wines of New Testament times and lands, the one who became a drunkard should not inherit the kingdom of heaven, while, so far as moral character was concerned, he classed him with extortioners and thieves. It is not a little danger, a little vice, or a little crime to form the habits and live the life of the drunkard.

Laws have been made in almost endless variety for the limitations and extermination of this evil. The study of temperance legislation is most interesting from one standpoint while it is alternately encouraging and disheartening. Laws have never entirely abated the evil, while ceaseless vigilance has been necessary for their enforcement and continuance. Education has been continually necessary. Religious motives must be constantly pressed. Temperance societies and leagues and orders have done much. Business men are forceful in demanding temperance and total abstinence in their employees. On the whole advance is being made. The world stands on a higher temperance plane than it did a century ago.

It would seem that there are no persons to raise their voices in favor of strong drink except the manufacturers and dealers, who have sold themselves for money to work iniquity, on the one hand, and on the other the men who are slaves to their stomachs. All men who have regard for the wellbeing of their fellows, from a religious, moral, patriotic, social, philanthropic or economic standpoint, de-

*S.S. Lesson, Luke 11:1-13. Commit to memory vs. 9, 10. Read Luke 10:23, 38-42; 18:1-4. Golden Text—Lord teach us to pray.—Luke 11:1.