

LESSON XI—March 15th, 1896.

Teaching about Prayer. LUKE 11: 1-13.

(Commit to memory verses 9 and 10).

GOLDEN TEXT: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Luke 11: 9.

PROVE THAT—We should pray at all times. Eph. 6: 18.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Quest. 51. *What is forbidden in the second commandment?* A. The second commandment forbiddeth the worshipping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his word.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal*. Nos. 3, 135, 218, 139.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday*. Teaching about Prayer. Luke 11: 1-13. *Tuesday*.

Sincerity in prayer. Matt. 6: 1-15. *Wednesday*. In His name. John 16: 23-33.

Thursday. Ask in faith. 1 John 5: 9-15. *Friday*. Importunity in prayer. Luke

18: 1-8. *Saturday*. Prayer answered. 2 Kings 20: 2-11. *Sabbath*. Testimony of experience. Psalm 34: 1-10. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections*).

HELPS IN STUDYING.

INTRODUCTORY. We cannot tell exactly when the words of our lesson were spoken. It was probably just before Christ's final departure from Galilee to Jerusalem when he began to denounce the hypocrisy of the scribes and pharisees. There are no parallel passages.

LESSON PLAN. I. A Model Prayer. vs. 1-4. II. An Earnest Petitioner. vs. 5-8. III. A Heavenly Father. vs. 9-11.

I. Jesus loved to pray. Sometimes he would rise very early in the morning so as to have a quiet hour or two before other people were stirring and at other times he would go away by himself and remain all night in prayer.¹ Everyone who loves God delights in prayer. It is a sweet communion with our Heavenly Father. The disciples often saw Jesus praying and wished that they could pray like him, so they asked him to teach them. In reply he gave them a model prayer which we call "The Lord's Prayer." You will find it given more fully in Matthew 6: 9-13. In it Jesus teaches us to come to God with the love and confidence of children, and pray that his name may be revered,² his kingdom hastened,³ and his law obeyed;⁴ that his bounty may provide for all our wants;⁵ that our sins may be forgiven;⁶ and that we may not fall before temptation.⁷ We are to acknowledge his right to supreme worship now and forever. Every sentence in the prayer is full of meaning. We ought often to rehearse its very words, and always pray in the spirit which it displays.

II. Jesus not only gave a model prayer but he told the disciples not to be discouraged if God did not answer their prayers at once. To illustrate this he told one of his beautiful stories called a parable. He said that a man was visited one night very late by a friend who wished to borrow three loaves from him in order to make supper for one who had unexpectedly arrived from a journey. The man

and his family had all gone to bed, the lamp was extinguished and the door locked,—it was not pleasant to get up in the dark, light the lamp and search for the loaves at that time, so at first he refused to stir. But the friend at the door wouldn't go away but kept up such a knocking and beseeching that at last to get him to go home and leave him, he did get up and give him what he wanted. Now, Jesus said, if the indolence of a selfish man can be overcome by importunity how much more readily will our bountiful Father yield to our earnest pleading.⁸ The answer may be long in coming but God is not deaf or heedless to his children's cry.

III. If we only ask God in the right way,¹⁰ he will, without fail, give us what is good for us. If any of you asked your father for food when you were hungry he would not vex you by giving you something that you couldn't eat, or that would do you harm. Far less can we suppose that our Heavenly Father will refuse us the good things we ask of him. There are four things, however, that we must remember when we are praying. (1) We must be really sorry for sin (Ps. 66: 18) and ask God's forgiveness for Christ's sake; (2) we must ask everything in the name of Jesus; (3) we must believe that God is able and willing to give us what we ask, but (4) we must leave it to him to decide whether we ought to have it or not.

¹ Mark 1: 35. ² Rom. 8: 15. ³ Ps. 111: 9; Deut. 28: 58. ⁴ Rev. 11: 15; Ps. 2: 8. ⁵ John 5: 30; 6: 38. ⁶ Prov. 30: 8, 9; John 6: 27. ⁷ Matt. 6: 14, 15; 18: 34, 35; Mark 11: 25, 26; Eph. 4: 32; Col. 3: 13; Jas. 1: 13, 14; John 7: 35; Rev. 3: 10; 1 Cor. 10: 13. ⁸ Matt. 7: 7; Mark 11: 24; John 18: 7; Isa. 1: 6; 1 John 3: 22. ¹⁰ John 14: 13; 16: 23; Matt. 21: 22; 26: 39, 42.

LESSONS. 1. We learn to pray by praying. 2. We may well arrange our prayers after the model here given. 3. God does not always answer at once, but bids us continue praying. 4. Some answer, and the best answer, every prayer is sure to receive. 5. We may trust the wisdom and love of our heavenly Father.