

men" instead of the standard of eternal truth. Measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves (such) are without understanding (2 Cor. 10: 12). **Extortioners**—"Rapacious, avaricious, who take away the goods of others by force and violence." (Barnes). **Unjust**—Acting dishonestly and dishonorably. **Adulterers**—Unchastity in thought as well as in act. God was not in his thoughts. It was all "I" which he mentions no less than five times. **12. Fast twice in the week**—(Over-religious, over-zealous in a life of doing, wholly regardless of a life of being. Alive as to the letter, but dead as to the spirit of acceptable service; straining at a gnat, but swallowing a camel (Matt. 23: 24). According to the Mosaic code, there was only one annual fast day appointed; the day of atonement (Lev. 16: 19). Instead of one the pharisee kept one hundred and four fast days in the year. **Give tithes of all that I get** (R. V.)—The law required tithes only of corn, wine, oil and cattle (Deut. 14: 22, 23). The pharisees were scrupulously exact in the matter of tithes, but culpably negligent of weightier things as mercy, judgment, and faith (Matt. 23: 23). The pharisee thought vainly to make God his debtor. "Religion with him was a mere matter of ritualism, and ceremonial observance." "The ministry of Jesus was a protest against a religion of form." **13. Standing afar off**—"Coming in merely and remaining in no studied place or position." "Afar off" from the pharisee, for fear, possibly, of offending him. His whole bearing gave evidence of a spirit of deep humility, reverence, and sincerity. "Not so much a self-consciousness as a God-consciousness. **So much as his eyes**—Conscious of his guilt he was ashamed to lift up his eyes. **Smote upon his breast**—An expression of grief and great distress. **Be merciful**—Under the power of deep conviction, awakened to a sense of his lost and sinful condition he cried aloud for mercy. "There can be no real prayer until that cry. The beginning of all prayer is taking the sinner's place, and the simple appeal to mercy." **A sinner**—"the sinner," or "sinner that I am." "Seeing that I am a sinner have mercy

on me." **14. Justified**—Accepted and approved of God. The pharisee brought his self-righteousness to the temple, and returned under a greater load of guilt and sin. The publican brought his sin and went down from the temple "justified," and with the favor of God. **Exalteth himself**—Self-exaltation always precedes abasement. **Humbleth himself**—Self-abasement always leads to exaltation. **15. Infants**—"Their babes" (R. V.) In all the covenant promises made with Abraham and since then, the children are included. None are too young to bring them to Jesus. **Touch them**—Not to teach them, they were too young for that, but to lay his hands on them and bless them (Matt. 19: 13-15; Mark 10: 13). **Rebuked them**—The parents, likely the mothers, as they thought it an unnecessary and uncalled for interruption. **16. Suffer little children**—Christ's "interest in the little children was real and for their own sake." **Forbid them not**—Do nothing to prevent them, or that may prove a hindrance in the way of their coming to Jesus. The promise is to us and to our seed (Acts 2: 39; 3: 25). **Of such is the kingdom of God**—The little child is represented as a type of the true disciple, in likeness, disposition, and spirit. All true believers irrespective of race, age, sex, or class, are all children in the great family of God (Rom. 8: 16, 17). **17. Receive the kingdom of God**—The kingdom of grace implanted within us by the Holy Spirit. It is a gift, unmerited favor. Cannot be obtained through merit, nor works of righteousness; it is all of grace, and must be received and enjoyed as such. Salvation is all of grace (Eph. 2: 8; Jno. 1: 12, 13). **As a little child**—Child characteristics, (1) Believes the word of the parent without question. (2) Real, says just what is in its mind. (3) Trustfulness, "confides itself and all that it has to its parents, wisdom and love." (4) Powerful imitator, learns more from example than from precept. (5) Grows up in the full enjoyment of the privileges of sonship in the home (Luke 15: 31). **Shall in no wise enter therein**—Wanting in childlikeness and disposition excludes from "the kingdom of God."

## PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. *The duty of prayer is implanted in our nature.* It is a necessity of our being, called forth by our relation as needy, helpless, dependent creatures to that Being to whom we look up and whom we recognize as our creator, preserver and benefactor. The consciousness of this relation and condition of which prayer, in the natural expression, is born with us, and is common to our race. All men in some way and at some time or other pray. All implore the protection or deprecate the wrath of some real or imaginary deity. Prayer is prompted by a deep conviction of our need, a firm conviction that God alone can supply that need.

Prayer is the soul holding converse with God. It is an important duty, an absolute necessity, to our spiritual life because it is necessary to its continuance.

2. *The attributes of acceptable prayer.* They are such as flow from the heart under the influence of the Holy Spirit, who is the Author of all true prayer, viz., adoration, thanksgiving, confession and petition. See how beautifully they are combined in the prayer of the publican. In approaching God the believer is humbled when he compares his nothingness with God's greatness, his folly with God's wisdom, his sinfulness with God's purity; he