

Sunday School Lesson.

Sunday after Ascension-Day. May 10, 1891.

PRAYER: THE LORD'S PRAYER.

We have now finished, for the present, our service of praise (the Creed, which is to be sung or said, being a kind of hymn). We now commence the service of prayer. There is, however, first of all,

I. THE INTRODUCTION. This consists of,

1. *The Salutation.* "The Lord be with you." A. "And with thy spirit." For similar words see Ruth ii. 4. (This was a religious greeting between Boaz and his reapers in the morning, recognizing that their daily work was to be done in God's sight, and asking His blessing upon it). We now do the same in our prayers. The words may also be regarded as an expression of sympathy between ministers and people in their common devotions.

2. *The Invitation to Prayer.* "Let us pray." You will notice that these words are used several times in our service, sometimes as in the Litany, when we have already been praying. We should hear in them a solemn reminder of what we are doing, and of the sacred presence of God among us.

3. *The Lesser Litany*—so called because it is, like the beginning of the Litany, a prayer for mercy to the Three Persons of the Trinity. It is a very ancient form, and is frequently used in the Prayer-Book before the Lord's Prayer (note that at the beginning of the service the Confession takes the place of this shorter form of supplication). It is fitting that we should not use even the words of Christ without an humble confession of our unworthiness to approach the throne of mercy.

II. THE LORD'S PRAYER.

The Lord's Prayer in this place is not to be regarded as a "vain repetition." We used it before as an appropriate beginning of our service; now we say it again as the beginning of what is more particularly the services of prayer. If we wish to give to the words a special meaning, we may use them here with reference to the necessities of the Church for the coming day (or night, if it is the Evening Service). The word "clerks" in the rubric means *choristers*. All are to join, and to join "in a loud voice." (Should the teacher find time to enter more fully into the use of the Lord's Prayer in public worship, further information may be found in Lesson XII.)

III. THE VERSICLES.

This means "little verses," and the answers made by the people are called *responses*. They give variety and brightness to the service, and are a great help to prevent our thoughts from wandering. They contain in a few words what we are going to ask for in the Collects that follow. (The teacher will find on examination that there is such a connection; the first versicles and response having a general similarity with the Collect for the Day, etc.) A word of explanation as to the meaning of these versicles (which are largely adapted from the Psalms. See Ps. lxxxv. 7; xx. 9; cxxxii. 9; xxviii. 9; li. 10, 11.)—"Endue" means *clothe*. The clause "Give us peace," etc., "Because it is Thou only," etc., has been difficult to some. It does not mean that we want peace because we have only God to fight for us, and so we should be beaten if we do fight. We pray that God may fight for us so that we may have peace. All righteous wars are undertaken in the interests of peace. (Compare the Second Collect for Peace.)

A Well-Spent Life.

A minister of the Gospel was asked to visit a poor dying woman. The messenger being ignorant, could give no account of her state, except that she was a very good woman and very happy, and was now at the end of a well-spent life, therefore sure of going to heaven. The minister went, saw she was very ill, and after a few kindly enquiries about her bodily condition, said: "Well I understand you are in a very peaceful state of mind, depending upon a well-spent life." The dying woman looked hard at him and said:

"Yes, I am in the enjoyment of peace. You are quite right; peace, and that from a well-spent

life. But it is the well-spent life of Jesus; not my doings, but His; not my merits, but His blood."

Yes. Only one Man has spent a life that has met all the requirements of God's holy law, and on which we can rest before God.

Sunday after Ascension Day.

OUR LORD IN HEAVEN.

Last Thursday was called Holy Thursday. People don't always keep it, I'm afraid. Shops are open, and business goes on just as usual. But it is really nearly as sacred a day as any Sunday.

You know why. Because it is the day set apart to keep our Lord's going up into Heaven. He went straight from earth to Heaven; from a hill just like one of our grassy hills, up into the presence of God.

How wonderful that seems! We can't help thinking about it, for the Heaven He went to is not a place only set apart for Him, not a palace where He lives only. No, His people will be there with Him. "Where I am, there shall also My servant be." So the Heaven were He went has a good deal to do with every one of us, hasn't it?

Let us go on with the thought of last Sunday. That was, that the great joy of Heaven is not the light and brightness, and the harps, and golden streets, but something much deeper than all these. Being with Jesus Himself.

Now let me ask you a question.

Should you be happy if you went to Heaven now, do you think?

You answer, "No; not if I'm always to be thinking about Christ before I go there."

My dear boy, you needn't be always thinking about Him in order to love Him. You may love Christ dearly without that.

When you are at school you are not always thinking about your father at home. Lessons, games, fun, all the ins and outs of school life fill your mind a great deal. But, after all, underneath the other thoughts, is there not the thought of your father? Lying deep perhaps, but still it is there; and now and then it comes to the top.

For instance, when you are getting on well, and getting up, it flashes into your mind how pleased "father" will be, and how glad to hear you have been praised. Or if you do a little thing that's right, you are reminded of him directly, for he said some words about not waiting for great things, but doing the small ones that come in your way, the very last Sunday evening you were at home.

So thinking of him doesn't take a great deal of time, but it's something like a golden thread running through your other thoughts; it makes them all better and happier, though you hardly know it. But if you were told suddenly one day that your father had come to see you, then the thought that had been underneath would leap right to the top, and you would spring to meet him, very glad and happy.

May it not be something like this with the love of our dear Lord Jesus Christ?

Let it be deep down in your heart. Ah! I do believe it is there.

Why do I say this? Because you do remember His words, and do try to please Him. For doing even a little thing right is pleasing Him, remember that.

You need not talk about it all, but when you get a little time to yourself this Sunday evening, think quietly about a great matter. That is, *living for Jesus here*.

You want to get ready for Heaven, don't you? You want to enjoy Heaven, and enter into its happiness. You want to be at home there.

Well, that is the true way. The light, and the brightness, and the golden streets, and the harps will not be enough to satisfy you. Jesus is better than all. Do you not want to share in that great joy?

Once there were two men in great danger of shipwreck. The ship was filling with water and fast going down, and they knew that in an hour or two their souls would be in the other world. It was a strange feeling, being face to face with death! I don't suppose you can realize it if you haven't felt it. But there was a great difference between the two men. One was white and shaking with fear, and the other was calm and courageous, with actually a smile on his face.

"How is it you are not afraid?" said the trembling man to his friend.

"Because I am going to all I have loved," was the quiet answer.

Just then a lifeboat was put off from shore, and the sailors succeeded in rescuing one; but that one was not the brave man. His body was washed ashore, and the smile was still on his face. He had gone to all he had loved. He had striven and fought nobly for the right, and this had led him to know Jesus, Who is righteousness itself. So could he not help rejoicing that the striving was over, and he was going to his Lord?

Requitals.

"How hast thou dealt with Love, dear maid, And how has Love dealt with thee?"

"I gave him rest in my sheltering breast— He hath broke my heart for me."

"How hast thou dealt with Life, dear maid, And how has Life dealt with thee?"

"I gave him youth and a prayer for truth. But he crushed them both in me."

"How hast thou dealt with Heaven, dear maid, And how has it dealt with thee?"

"I gave it naught, but my soul it sought With a pledge of eternity."

Do Not.

Do not look upon the husband and father as one whose only mission is to pay the bills and lift the big loads. Man's work, the same as woman's, has its own peculiar trials and perplexities, but, unlike her, his work is mostly among the sharp corners and rough edges of the world. Business may be dull—trade slow, and debts pressing—and yet, despite all, some way, some how, out of this unpleasant combination of circumstances he struggles to give to his family such a living as they expect, and such as he would like them to have. An hour of pleasure or recreation is something which he seldom indulges in. "Wife may go, but I cannot leave my work," is too often heard from a business man, and too often the wife thinks this is just what he ought to say, and governs herself accordingly. A true woman will work side by side with her husband—not necessarily lifting as many pounds, or carrying as heavy loads—but doing all she can, in all the ways she can, and when a season of recreation and rest is offered, instead of allowing herself a new supply of pretty gowns and two months at some cool resort, let her insist that both traces be unhitched—both yokes removed and both together take an outing just half as long and just half as expensive as she would have taken alone. Man, as a general thing, is an appreciative creature, and, while he might never propose a thing of the kind, could, nine times out of ten, by a little deft managing on the part of his wife, be decoyed into just such an arrangement as this. An arrangement which each deserves alike, and by which each would alike be benefited.

Do not be unmindful of the comfort of your men folks in the arrangement of your rooms. Avoid being so thoroughly æsthetic and artistic that your husband and son are in constant dread of tearing, crushing, or misplacing something.

Do not forget, in the evening hour, after the work is done, and the chairs are taken on the porch, or in the yard, to take out a nice easy chair for papa, and a cool restful cushion for the son, who prefers to lounge on the grass. Do not appear to think easy seats and pretty cushions are exclusively for the women, and that the men can rest just as comfortably curled upon the step, with back against a post. These little attentions are not only deserving from women as home-makers, but they serve to lessen the crowd at the club room and street corner, and go a long way toward making dark homes bright, and miserable homes happy.

Canon Knox Little.

One of the sights of London, Eng. (writes a correspondent) is certainly Canon Knox Little at St. Paul's. Go there at the luncheon hour, and you will find a great crowd of all sorts and condi-