

like refreshing waters!" Norah felt as if one of the patriarchs had pronounced a blessing. "Amen!" said the father. "The golden geese have done their work well!"—*Jean Boncoeur, in Watchman.*

PRAYING FOR WHAT WE DON'T EXPECT.

I happened once to be staying with a gentleman—a long way from here—a very religious kind of a man he was; and in the morning he began the day with a long family prayer, that we might be kept from sin, and might have a Christ-like spirit, and the mind that was also in Christ Jesus; and that we might have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us. A beautiful prayer it was, and I thought, What a good, kind man you must be. But about an hour after I happened to be coming along the farm, and I heard him hallooing, and scolding, and going on, finding fault with everybody and everything. And when I came into the house with him, he began again. Nothing was right, and he was so impatient and quick tempered. 'Tis very provoking to be annoyed in this way, Daniel. I don't know what servants in these times be good for but to worry and vex one, with their idle, slovenly ways."

I didn't say nothin' for a minute or two. And then I says, "You must be very much disappointed, sir."

"How so, Daniel? Disappointed?" "I thought you were expecting to receive a very valuable present this morning, sir, and I see it hasn't come."

"Present, Daniel?" and he scratched his head, as much as to say, "Whatever can the man be talking about?"

"I certainly heard you speaking of it, sir," I says quite coolly.

"Heard me speak of a valuable present. Why, Daniel, you must be dreaming. I've never thought of such a thing."

"Perhaps not, sir, but you've talked about it; and I hoped it would come whilst I was here, for I should dearly love to see it."

He was getting angry with me now, so I thought I would explain.

"You know, sir, this morning you prayed for a Christ-like spirit, and the mind that was in Jesus, and the love of God shed abroad in your heart."

"Oh, that's what you mean, is it?" and he sponed as if that weren't anything at all.

"Now sir, wouldn't you be rather surprised if your prayer was to be answered? If you were to feel a nice, gentle, loving kind of spirit coming down upon you, all patient, and forgiving, and kind? Why, sir, wouldn't you come to be quite frightened like: and you'd come in and sit down all in a faint, and reckon as you must be a-going to die, because you felt so heavenly-minded?"

"He didn't like it very much," said Daniel, but I delivered my testimony, and learned a lesson for myself too. You're right, Captain Joe, you're right. We should stare very often if the Lord was to answer our prayer."—*Sel.*

"JESUS MET THEM."

BY THE REV. W. T. WYLIE.

There is a proverb which says "A friend in need is a friend indeed." The existence of this adage points to the falseness of many professions which are made in the day of prosperity, but which are forgotten in the day of adversity. The most precious of earthly treasures is a true friend, especially if he be also a tried friend. Such a friend Christ is to all who accept him.

When human wisdom fails to solve our doubts and dispel our darkness, we have only to look to him and our faces are enlightened. In the great truths which relate to God and to our own being, the soul is often perplexed. One very lovely Christian used to say, that her idea of heaven was chiefly that all doubt in regard to truth would be banished. How many souls cry out in perplexity, "Oh, that I knew just what is the truth, or just what is duty!" Then Christ is at hand, as the light, ready to reveal the doctrine, and make plain the duty. When one feels the lack of wisdom, and asks God, who giveth liberally, he will surely get what he seeks. As "Jesus met them," so will he meet us.

When we are weary and worn, faint of heart and sore of foot, ready to fall by the way, then he meets us, and talks with us, as he did with the disciples when he caused their hearts to burn within them. He knew what it was to be weary, and hungry, and bowed down by toil. When his friends are brought to such straits he knows how to help them. We are commanded to consider Christ, lest we be weary and faint in our minds; and when we do look to him, new life flows into our souls. We cannot sink when the everlasting arms are underneath to uphold and around to steady us with their strong embrace. It is indeed a blessed thing to bear any yoke which brings us into fellowship with Christ. We forget the burden when we look to and

lean upon him who takes not only it but us on his arm.

When we are unjustly censured and condemned as evil-doers, then he meets us. None ever suffer so undeservedly as did he. In this experience, to which the godly are often called, there is a peculiar fellowship with Christ. The brow of night is crowned with the evening stars, and as Darkness sweeps in with her train of glittering worlds, we are constrained to cry out, "Blessed are the revelations of the night!" When Christ reveals himself to the soul in its darkness and reproach, he becomes the Evening Star, and he unfolds glories which could never be realized but for their shadows. If Christ meets us, it matters little who may forsake or who may oppose us.—*S. S. Times.*

THE MISER'S HOARD.

It is but a short time since there died a certain man who was the possessor of many millions. He had attained to a ripe old age, and his whole life had been one long success in the getting of gold,—the sole purpose, apparently, of his existence. For the common claims of humanity he cared nothing. He had never appeared to look upon his fellow-men as upon brothers entitled to his assistance, or even sympathy, but simply as prey upon whom he might act the part of the vulture. Each year he had sunk lower and lower, as his lust for gold overpowered and destroyed his affections, and blinded his moral perceptions, until he became lost among the intricacies and entanglements of the bills and bonds and mortgages that represented the desert waste of a life in which not a single flower of affection had been left to bloom and exhale its fragrance. He had spared no time to enjoy his wealth, nor had he learned to use it during his own life either for his or others' happiness, and at death he left it, a bone of contention, a curse instead of a blessing, to a set of spendthrift heirs; confirming the truthfulness of an old writer's remark that "it is far more easy to acquire a fortune like a knave, than to expend it like a gentleman." It were well indeed if this case stood alone, but it does not. There are all over the land, and especially in the great cities, vast heaps of wealth, for the accumulation of which the money-gleaners have worn out their lives, pawned their very souls, and which, when that hour approaches that must surely come to the rich as well as to the poor, they find that they can neither take with them to the other world, nor dispose of satisfactorily in this. As it was with Hassan, the poor cobbler of Bagdad, who had the luck to draw a great beast of an elephant as his prize in a lottery, and was thereby ruined, being neither able to keep nor dispose of it; so it is with the money-getters who have drawn such elephantine prizes in the lottery of life, they find it a plague to themselves while they live, and, as it is generally disposed of, it becomes a nuisance to other folks when they die.

That which costs the possessor nothing is not usually very highly appreciated. When rich men learn better how to use money themselves, and their sons have been taught to understand better its value by practical lessons in the art of earning it, in the workshop, the counting-room, and all the routine of business life, there will not be so many of that class of idle men, sometimes called "dandies or coxcombs," who have been exempted from the necessity of any useful employment because they are the inheritors of lavish riches from money-grubbing fathers.—*S. S. Times.*

HOW TO READ.

Do not lay out in detail a "course of reading." Probably you would not follow it, and the moral effect of making a plan and giving it up is injurious. But there is another reason for my advice. When you become interested in a subject, then is the time to follow it up, and read everything you can get hold of about it. What you read when thus keenly interested you will remember and make your own, and that is the secret of acquiring knowledge: to study a thing when your mind is awake and eager to know more. No matter if it leads you away from the book with which you set out; and if it sends you to another subject so that you never again open the original book, so much the better; you are eager, you are learning, and the object of reading is to learn, not to get through a certain number of books.

"What we read with inclination," said wise old Dr. Johnson, "makes a strong impression. What we read as a task is of little use."

When you read a book that interests you, you naturally wish to know more of its author. That is the time to make his acquaintance. Read his life, or an account of him in an encyclopedia; look over his other writings, and become familiar with him. Then you have really added something to your knowledge. If you fettered yourself with a "course," you could not do this, and before

you finished a book, you would have forgotten the special points which interested you as you went through.

You think that history is dull reading, perhaps. I'm afraid that is because you have a dull way of reading it, not realizing that it is a series of true and wonderful stories of men's lives, beyond comparison more marvellous and interesting than the fictitious lives we read in novels. The first pages are usually dry, I admit, and I advise you not to look at them till you feel a desire to do so; but select some person, and follow out the story of his life, or some event, and read about that, and I assure you, you will find a new life in the old books.

After getting, in this way, a fragmentary acquaintance with a nation, its prominent men and striking events, you will doubtless feel anxious to know its whole story, and then, reading it with interest, you will remember what you read.

But there are other subjects in which you may be interested. You wish first to know about the few great books and authors generally regarded and referred to as the fountain-heads of the world's literature. It is impossible, in a little "talk" like this, to give definite directions for gaining a knowledge of these. Needs vary in almost every case, and a book that might wisely be selected for one girl, might be a very poor choice for another. Almost every one can turn to some judicious relative or friend who, at least, can start her in a good direction. Once started, the way is delightful and easy. There are many entrances into the great temples of literature—you need not go in by all of them.

There are many well-known and often-quoted authors, concerning whom you will wish to be informed, even if you never read their works. You want to know when they lived and what they wrote. The world of books is too large for anyone to know thoroughly; you must select from the wide range what suits your taste, and be contented to have an outside, or title-page, knowledge of the rest.

Above all, in your reading, you want to avoid becoming narrow and one-sided. Read both sides of a question. If you read a eulogistic biography of a person, read also, if possible, one written from an opposite standpoint. You will find that no one is wholly bad, nor wholly good, and you will grow broad in your views.—*Olive Thorn, in St. Nicholas for September.*

DEATH UNLOADS.—A famous wit hearing it said that a certain person had died worth a million, quietly remarked, "What a pretty sum to begin the next world with!" To the thoughtful observer it would seem as if many of the rich men and millionaires of to-day were toiling on with unabated vigor and avidity for no other purpose than to hoard up as much as possible with which to begin the next life. They seem scarcely to remember, in their eager pursuit of gold, that Charon, the grim boatman of the silent river, conveys none of the things of earth to the mystery-wrapped shores beyond; that—

If thou art rich, thou art poor;
For like an ass, whose back with ingots bows,
Thou bear'st thy heavy riches but a journey,
And Death unloads thee.

In their eager rivalry to accumulate the greatest possible pile, they do not appreciate the fact that it is to be valued only so far as it can be made subservient to the comfort and happiness of this world; and, consequently, they fail to use their wealth for the best and only worthy purpose,—to make others and themselves happier and better.—*S. S. Times.*

A NOVEL SUMMER-HOUSE.—Town squares and streets in France are furnished with trees, creepers and greenery of various kinds, in a most wonderful manner. The latest French idea that has been realized is a travelling ivy that can be packed up and carried about, and it will certainly be a convenience to families who change their lodgings frequently. It is in the form of a moveable tent or sunshade,—in fact an umbrella. Stem six feet high. The branches spread out from top in an arching manner 16 feet from the stem all round. It grows in a tub, can be moved from place to place as a summer house, giving opportunity for frequent change of scene. The branches are trained on wires that fold in like the ribs of an umbrella. It can be illuminated by hanging Chinese lanterns from the points of the wires. There is no end to the uses to which it may be applied by the loungee or the artist.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

MATT. 5: 7.

SCHOLAR'S NOTES.

(From the International Lessons for 1876 by Edwin W. Rice, as issued by American Sunday-School Union.)

CONNECTED HISTORY.—Stephen, having spoken of the changes which had been made in God's dealings with the people, in the service of the tabernacle and the temple; in answer to charges made against him (vi. 14), now points out the unbelief and guilt of the Jews in the past, and of those also whom he addressed. This increases their rage, and they finally stone him to death.

LESSON III

OCTOBER 15.]

STEPHEN'S MARTYRDOM. [About 35 A. D.]

READ Acts vii. 51-60. RECITE vs. 57, 60.

DAILY READINGS.—M.—Acts vii. 51-60. T.—Matt. xxi. 33-46. W.—2 Chr. xxxvi. 14-23. Th.—John xv. 7-21. F.—1 Peter iv. 1-19. Sa.—Matt. v. 38-48. S.—Rev. vii. 9-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.—Phil. i. 20.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—"Saints conquer even in death."

NOTES.—Just one, Jesus. See Acts iii. 14. "Your fathers," said Stephen, "persecuted the prophets who foretold the coming of Christ, but ye have now betrayed and murdered the very Messiah himself." See parable of "Wicked Husbandmen," Matt. xxi. 33-45. Stephen's Martyrdom.—Stephen was not formally sentenced; the council does not appear to have given any decision, nor had it any right to put a person to death; the Roman court only could do that. Stephen was therefore murdered by a fanatical mob.—Saul, afterward the apostle Paul, whose life and labors will hereafter be studied.

EXPLANATIONS AND QUESTIONS.

Lesson Topics.—(I.) STEPHEN'S CHARGE. (II.) STEPHEN'S VISION. (III.) STEPHEN'S DEATH.

I. STEPHEN'S CHARGE. (51.) stifflipped, obstinate. Ex. xxxii. 9; uncircumcised in heart. Rom. ii. 28, 29; resist, or "fall upon" as a foe. (52.) Which of the prophets, a strong way of saying they persecuted all the prophets; Just One (see Notes); ye . . . murderers, so Peter had charged the Jews. See Acts ii. 36; iii. 14; iv. 10. (53.) disposition of angels, the Jews received the law as announced by angels.—(Alford.) (54.) cut to the heart. Acts v. 33; gnashed, in their anger and spite. Matt. xxvii. 44.

II. STEPHEN'S VISION. (55.) full of the Holy Ghost. Acts vi. 5; looked up steadfastly. Acts i. 10; glory of God, the brightness of heaven opened. Rev. xxi. 10, 11. (56.) Son of man, so Jesus called himself. Matt. xxvi. 64.

I. Questions.—Of what did Stephen now accuse the Jews? v. 51. In whose steps did they walk? Who had foretold the coming of Christ? How had the Jews treated these prophets? How had they now treated Christ? What had they received to teach them of Christ? How had they received the law? How had they obeyed it? What effect had this charge on the Jews?

III. STEPHEN'S DEATH. (57.) loud voice, so Stephen should not be heard; ran upon, like a mob. (58.) stoned him, before the council had sentenced him; witnesses, as they were to stone him. Deut. xvii. 7; Saul, afterward Paul. (59.) calling upon God, calling upon and saying, "Lord Jesus," etc.—that is, praying to Jesus. (60.) kneeled; loud voice, boldly, for all to hear; lay not, so Jesus prayed on the cross. Luke xxiii. 34; fell asleep, so the death of saints is spoken of: John xi. 11; 1 Cor. xv. 51.

II. Questions.—By whom was Stephen aided in this trial? v. 55. What did he behold in heaven? Who was with God? What did Jesus say of himself when on trial? Matt. xxvi. 64. How did the council and people know that Stephen had such a vision?

III. Questions.—State the three acts of the mob noted in v. 57. Whither did they take Stephen? For what purpose? What young man was present? What did he do for the witnesses? To whom did Stephen pray at his death? State his first request. His second. Who made a similar one at his death? In what words is Stephen's death stated? What facts in this lesson teach us—
(1.) Of unwise zeal for what we think to be the truth?
(2.) Of the firmness of the true Christian?
(3.) Of God's presence in the day of trial?

Illustration.—When one was condemned to be stoned to death, it was common for a orator to go before, calling his name, the crime, and the witnesses. At the place of execution the condemned was bound, taken to some high point (a tower, cliff), the witnesses, laying aside their outer garments, pushed on the convict; if possible so as to make him insensible, then quickly cast stones upon his chest, so as to kill him. Stephen, if so treated, was not killed nor stunned by the fall, and hence fell on his knees, and was killed while praying.

CONNECTED HISTORY.—The great persecution which followed the death of Stephen drove the disciples from Jerusalem. "From the history of the undivided mother-church we now pass to that of its extension through the empire."—(Alexander.) Philip (one of the seven) preaches in Samaria with great success. Simon professes to believe, but proves to be a false professor.

LESSON IV.

OCTOBER 22.]

SIMON THE SORCERER. [About 36 A. D.]

READ Acts viii. 9-25. RECITE vs. 20, 23.

DAILY READINGS.—M.—Acts viii. 9-25. T.—Prov. viii. 1-36. W.—John iii. 1-21. Th.—Dan. ii. 1-28. F.—