

LESSON VI—May 10th, 1896.

Lessons on Prayer. LUKE 18: 9-17.

(Commit to memory verses 15-17).

GOLDEN TEXT: "The publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." Luke 18: 13.

PROVE THAT—We should pray humbly. Eccl. 5: 2.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Quest. 58. *What is required in the fourth commandment?* A. The fourth commandment requireth the keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his word, expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy Sabbath to himself.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal*—Nos. 45, 46, 213, 214.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* Lessons in prayer. Luke 18: 1-8. *Tuesday.* Lessons in prayer. Luke 18: 9-17. *Wednesday.* Unacceptable prayer. Isaiah 1: 10-20. *Thursday.* Penitent prayer. Nehemiah 1. *Friday.* Humility in prayer. Psalm 25: 1-14. *Saturday.* Prayer for pardon. Psalm 51: 1-13. *Sabbath.* As little children. Matt. 18: 1-6. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections*).

HELPS IN STUDYING.

INTRODUCTORY. In the first part of the chapter our Lord impresses upon his disciples the duty of importunate prayer by the parable of the Unjust Judge. But prayer should also be offered in a humble spirit, a spirit of felt unworthiness and penitence. Self-righteousness is offensive to God, but the broken-hearted find mercy.

LESSON PLAN. I. The Pharisee. vs. 9-12. II. The Publican. vs. 13, 14. III. The Children. vs. 15-17.

9. Unto certain—Some of the people, perhaps disciples, in whom the pharisaic spirit displayed itself. **Trusted in themselves**—Had no doubt about their own superior goodness. **Righteous**—They relied upon their own righteousness for acquittal before God (Phil. 3: 4-9; Isa. 64: 6). **Despised others**—R. V. "Set all others at naught." (Rom. 14: 3, 10; Prov. 30: 12; Isa. 65: 5; 16: 15; 15: 2). **10. The temple**—The temple stood on Mt. Moriah. Here the daily sacrifices were offered and the great festivals celebrated. It had become, very naturally, a place of prayer (Matt. 21: 13; Mark 11: 17; Acts 2: 15; 3: 1; 10: 9). **A pharisee**—The pharisees were very particular about their observance of the law. For their true character read Matt. 23: 14; 23: 25; 3: 7; 9: 11-13. **A publican**—or taxgatherer. Since the taxes were tribute to their Roman conquerors no respectable Jew would act as a publican. Those who did so were despised and, probably, deserved to be. But, like others who had no righteousness of their own to boast of, they gladly accepted God's free mercy offered by Christ. **11. Stood**—Standing was the usual posture in prayer but the word here used indicates that he ceremoniously assumed an attitude. **With himself**—It was a silent prayer—or the expression may mean that he stood apart from others while praying. **God, I thank thee**—Better "O God." His prayer is not a thanksgiving but a boast (Rev. 3: 17, 18; Isa. 1: 15; 59: 2). His account of himself may have been quite correct but the spirit of his prayer was vainglorious.

12. Fast twice in the week—This was more than the law required. That prescribed but one fast in the year (Lev. 16: 29). **Give tithes of all that I get** (R. V.)—The law required tithes only of corn, wine, oil and cattle (Deut. 14: 22, 23). He did far more than this (Matt. 23: 23). But he did not repent of sin (Prov. 28: 13; 1 Pet. 5: 5). Inward purity, holiness, was not his standard. **13. Standing**—The word here is not the same as described the pharisee's attitude. **Afar off**—Not presuming to approach close to the Holy Place. He manifested the deepest humility and contrition (Ps. 40: 12; Ezra 9: 6; Jer. 31: 19; Luke 23: 48). **A sinner**—Lit "the sinner," i. e. "sinner that I am." (1 Tim. 1: 15). **14. Justified**—Accepted of God and pardoned. Humility is the road to true honor (Job 22: 29; Luke 14: 11; Jas. 4: 6; 1 Pet. 5: 5, 6). **Infants**—R. V. "their babes." None are too little or too young to come to Christ. **Touch them**—Lay his hands on them and bless them (Matt. 19: 13-15; Mark 10: 13). The disciples thought it an unnecessary and undignified interruption. **16. Called them**—Mark says that Jesus was "much displeased" at the interference of the disciples. **Of such is the kingdom of God**—It is said that children alone of all he saw on earth reminded Jesus of his Home (Matt. 5: 3; 11: 25; 17: 10, 14; 1 Cor. 14: 20; 1 Pet. 2: 1, 2). **17. As a little child**—Never putting forward any claim for it, but receiving it unhesitatingly as the gift of a loving Father.

LESSONS. 1. We should trust not in our own righteousness but in that of Christ. 2. One who is satisfied with his spiritual condition is in a dangerous state. 3. God justifies only those who do not consider themselves deserving of mercy. 4. Jesus claims the children as his own. 5. Only the childlike shall enter heaven.