

The Sunday-School.

SECOND QUARTER.
LESSON V.—May 1.

PRAYER AND PROMISE.

Luke 11: 1-13.

THE LESSON includes Luke 11: 1-13, and the parallels in Matt. 6: 9-13; 7: 7-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find.* Luke 11: 9.

HISTORICAL SETTING.—*Time*.—December, A. D. 29. Not long after the last lesson; soon after the feast of dedication. *Place*.—Somewhere in Perea.

Place in the Life of Christ.—Early in his Perea ministry, near the close of his third year; about four months before his crucifixion.

LEARN BY HEART.—Vs. 9-13.

WITH CHRIST IN THE SCHOOL OF PRAYER.—Vs. 1-4. *And he was praying in a certain place.* In the midst of his busiest days Jesus held communion with his Father. The needed answers came. The example of Christ had its effect, for when he ceased, returning from secret prayer, one of his disciples, probably of the seventy who had heard his Sermon on the Mount, said unto him, *Lord, teach us to pray, for what things with what spirit, in what forms.* As John also taught his disciples. Whether John gave any form of prayer we do not know. *When ye pray, say.* Not always in this form, in these exact words. Jesus prayed in different words from these, but this prayer is a model, rightly used in united worship, but especially a model of the true spirit of prayer.

Our Father.—There is power and comfort in this name for the Almighty God. The first petition is in reference to God, for in reverence toward him all blessings lie. The second is for his kingdom, the reign of his righteousness over all the earth. The third is a longing for our personal righteousness. Heaven on earth is the chief object of the true disciple's prayers. The fourth is for the satisfaction of our personal needs and desires. It recognizes God's care for our bodily as well as spiritual wants. The fifth is for the forgiveness of our sins. All our other blessings are in vain unless this petition be granted. The sixth is for deliverance from temptations and trials, not only by preventing those from assailing us which are too great for us to endure, but also by giving us the victory over them. The seventh is for deliverance from all evil of every kind.

Proofs that Such Prayer is Answered.—Vs. 5-12.

PROOF FROM HUMAN NATURE.—Vs. 5-8. *Shall go unto him at midnight.* A most inconvenient time, yet, according to the laws of Oriental hospitality, one arriving at so late an hour had a right to shelter, though not to food. *Friend, lend me three loaves.* Cakes made of barley dough rolled out to the thickness of about half an inch. *For a friend of mine in his journey.* The host was out of food, but hoped that his friend might have some left over. *Answer.* . . . *Trouble me not.* There were difficulties in the way. *My children are with me in bed.* The house consisted of one room; and the mat-

tresses on which the family slept were spread side by side on the floor. *I cannot rise and give thee.* To do so would disturb the whole family, who would have to get up and bake bread. *Not . . . because he is friend.* Though the higher motives will not avail. *Yet because of his importunity.* Persistence. *He will rise and give him.* It was less trouble to grant his wishes than to endure the importunity. God is not compared with this selfish man. The argument of this parable is: "If selfish man can be won by prayer and importunity to give," "much more certainly shall the bountiful Lord bestow" upon those who wait long and earnestly upon him.

THE PROOF FROM FACTS.—Vs. 9, 10. Jesus now strengthens his argument that our heavenly Father will answer prayer by a universal fact.

1. It is a historical fact, of which the Old Testament history is full, that the way to receive is to ask.

2. It is the natural method, according to God's laws, that the way to receive is to seek.

The Threefold Way of Obtaining.—Ask, . . . seek, . . . knock. These words imply three methods of prayer, and perhaps three degrees of intensity. *Ask*, express your desire, go to God with it. *Seek* by all active efforts, which are acted prayers; use all possible means, as in the parable of the pearl of great price. *Knock* at the door of God's treasure house for the blessings which no seeking can obtain, but which must be given by God.

The Threefold Promise of an Answer.—For every one that asketh receiveth. There is no exception. True asking will combine seeking and knocking. *And every one that seeketh findeth.* Most of the best things must be sought for, as the graces, education, character. For others, as the gift of the Spirit, divine guidance, God's tender love, we must knock at God's door, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

THE PROOF FROM THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.—Vs. 11-13. *If a son shall ask bread of . . . a father, will he give him a stone?* Often found in the shape of their small, flat, round loaf. *If he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?* Which resembles some forms of fish. *Ask an egg . . . offer him a scorpion?* The white scorpion with the tail folded "would not look unlike a small egg. *If ye then, being evil, imperfect, more or less selfish, with many wrong motives and feelings know how to give good gifts unto your children.* Every parent who has not lost his very humanity, desires good for his children, and will take great pains to give them good things. *How much more shall your Heavenly Father, perfect in goodness, infinite in love, far more ready to give than we are to receive, give the Holy Spirit.* The best of all good gifts, the sum and source of all. *To them that ask him.* Dr. Trumbull applies this promise: "We ought always to realize that God is better than men—kinder and more loving to his children than they are to theirs. But do we?"

THE HEART OF THE LESSON.

The Treasure House of Prayer.—Prayer is the door to the divine treasure house which contains supplies for all our needs.

THE THREE WAYS IN WHICH PRAYER IS ANSWERED.

First.—The very act of praying brings us into communion with God, which is the best answer to prayer. The giving and receiving are the means of becoming acquainted with God.

Second.—There are direct answers to prayer, gifts in response to the asking. Dr. Judson testifies,—"I was never deeply interested in any object, I never prayed sincerely and earnestly for anything, but it came; at some time, no matter how distant a day, somehow, in some shape, probably the last I should have devised, it came."

People sometimes refuse the answer when it comes, and impute to God's not answering what was simply their not taking. A man prays for good fruit, and "a garden of weeds is the answer." Is it, really? God sent his answer in the sun, and rain, and fruitful soil, and the laws of growth. And men, neglecting to do their part, simply refused to take the answer God sent.

Third.—Many times the exact thing we ask for, in the form we ask for it, would be the worst thing for us, and what we really do not want.

Therefore, in such cases our heavenly Father gives us not merely a substitute for what we asked, but what we would have asked had we known all things pertaining to it as God knows them.

A WORD FOR PARENTS.

In an article in the April *Delineator* on "Growing Up With One's Children," which is filled with sensible advice to mothers, Mrs. Theodore W. Birney has some excellent remarks about the treatment of children that are grown. Many parents will do well to take to heart the following paragraph:

"There is one thing parents should recognize: that their children are growing up and that their authority as such grows weaker every day, while their influence waxes stronger in proportion as their government has been wise, tender and just. Many a household is discordant because parents insist upon treating their grown sons and daughters as though they were still children. They issue commands, criticize and find fault, forgetting apparently that the season for training is practically ended, and, were it not, such methods would result in more harm than good. I know a family in which are two daughters, both past twenty-five, and a son in his thirties; they seldom, if ever, leave the house without being questioned as to where they are going; when they will return, why they go, why they wear such a garment instead of some other, wouldn't they best take umbrellas, are they warmly or coolly enough dressed, as the case may be, etc., etc. Personal liberty is such a precious possession, and life is so much sweeter and happier in households when there is a mutual confidence and where trivial personal questions are regarded almost as a discourtesy."

THE GRAVING TOOL.

"Don't write there!" said an urchin to a young exquisite scratching with a diamond on the window of a waiting-room. "Why not?" was the startled inquiry. "Because you can't rub it out," was the instant retort. Glass will not give up its inscriptions, nor the onyx stone its seal, nor the cameo its profile; but sooner might they renounce their

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The memory of the past is only worth preserving as a motive to the future.—S. S. Times.

Tearing Down Signals does not delay storms. Opium-laden "medicines" may check coughing, but the cold stays. Do not trifle; when you begin to cough take Allen's Lung Balsam, free from opium, full of healing power.

Obedience to Christian duty is the secret of Christian happiness. Whatever conflicts with Christian duty can only be a source of remorse and distress.

Please bear in mind that what is called a skin disease may be but a symptom of bad blood. In that case, Weaver's Cerate, externally applied, should be supplemented with Weaver's Syrup, taken daily.

The worldly pleasure, so tempting in itself, snatched in defiance or disregard of our duty to Christ, will inevitably prove one of the most painful and regrettable experiences of life.

After Work or Exercise

POND'S EXTRACT

Soothes tired muscles, removes soreness and stiffness and gives the body a feeling of comfort and strength.

Don't take the weak, watery witch hazel preparations represented to be "the same as" Pond's Extract, which easily sour and generally contain "wood alcohol," a deadly poison.