

In The RELIGIOUS WORLD

THE ENEMIES TO FEAR

The International Sunday School Lesson for June 20 is "A Prayer for the Tempted." Psalm 141.

(By William T. Ellis.)

As often, a dual purpose is set by the International Lesson Committee for the present passage. It is a study of a Psalm and a treatment of the temperance question. Close students of the uniform lessons have more than once suspected that the committee is careless in its choice of Scripture for the temperance lesson. Certainly this is so in the present Psalm, which has never before been selected for study by the Sunday schools. The most learned critics confess themselves baffled by this Psalm, one of the most difficult in the psalter. So it is not easy to fathom the mental process of the committee that could offer to the untrained Sunday school teachers and pupils of the world a Scripture portion which is baffling alike to the ordinary reader and to the expert exegetist. If however, the fifth, sixth and seventh verses of the Psalm are omitted, or disregarded, the passage becomes clear and helpful. Here is the Psalm itself:

"Jehovah, I have called upon Thee; make haste unto me; Give ear unto my voice, when I call unto Thee.

"Let my prayer be set forth as incense before Thee; The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

"Set a watch, O Jehovah, before my mouth; Keep the door of my lips.

"Incline not my heart to any evil thing, To practice deeds of wickedness With men that work iniquity; And let me not eat of their dainties.

"Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; And let him reprove me, it shall be as oil upon the head; Let not my head refuse it; For even in their wickedness shall my prayer continue.

"Their judges are thrown down by the sides of the rock; And they shall hear my words; for they are sweet.

"As when one ploweth and cleaveth the earth, Our bones are scattered at the mouth of Sheol.

"For mine eyes are unto Thee, O Jehovah the Lord; In Thee do I take refuge; leave not my soul destitute.

"Keep me from the snare which they have laid for me, And from the gins of the workers of iniquity.

"Let the wicked fall into their own nets, Whilst that I withal escape."

When A Man Needs Help.

What plea did the angels hovering over the sinking Lusitania hear rising from the lips of the doomed? The same cry that is rising hourly from human spirits facing inevitable death, or sorrow worse than death. It is the note that sounds in profoundest literature. It is the theme of all the immortal Psalms, and the opening words of the present one—the call unto Jehovah for help.

In all ultimate hours, man calls upon God. Nobody escapes this need. The spirit of mortals turns toward the Infinite, in times of distress, as a little child cries for its mother. That is the keynote of his lesson. When down, look up, where God waits to help. The Lord of all the universe is not too high to care for the welfare of a single human spirit. God hears and answers prayer. Whatever emergency is great enough to vex the spirit of men is also great enough to claim the attention of God.

When a man breaks a leg, or his house burns down, or his business goes to smash, friends rush to his aid. But in the worse troubles of life, when his heart is burdened and anguished, when his manhood is threatened, when his faith seems blinded, when in desolation of spirit he cries aloud in the silent, lonely hours, then he rarely has a friend to succor him. Indeed, men commonly hide these greater woes beneath smiling countenances.

The real troubles of life are spiritual. Write that down large. The state of the human spirit is of vastly more concern than the condition of material prosperity. We best help the world when we help men in the things of their soul. Iron the lines of anguish out of human spirits and you remedy most of the ills of society. All's well "if your heart keeps right." So the Psalmist's plea is unto Jehovah for succor in spiritual distress.

All over the world, in Christian and non-Christian religions, incense is used as a symbol of prayer. It rises in a cloud like the desires of human hearts. The figure, often employed in the Bible, is a beautiful one, for the fragrance of the burnt incense is represented as well pleasing to God. He who prays offers the sweetest incense before the altar of God.

Everybody's Particular Peril.

A clergyman from the South was visiting the Billy Sunday tabernacle in Philadelphia. Like several thousand others, he remained in the building between the meetings; and while waiting for the evening service to begin, he noticed that the man alongside of him put something into his mouth every ten minutes or so. Clearly it was not tobacco, and at last my friend's curiosity got the better of him, and he said, "Would you mind telling me what you are eating?"

Turning a smiling face to him, the other made answer, "Oh, these are peppermint lozenges. You see, I'm a trail-hitter. I used to be a hard drinker. And peppermint lozenges help take away the appetite for booze. Why, I know one fellow who ate fourteen pounds of peppermint lozenges in two weeks."

That man recognized his own peculiar temptation, and he tried his best to co-operate with God in meeting it. The writer of this Psalm knew that his mouth was his danger point, so he cried,

"Set a watch, O Jehovah, before my mouth; Keep the door of my lips."

There is nothing like being specific in dealing with one's own temptation. A woman once said to Moody, "My Moody, how can I cure myself of the habit of exaggeration?" "Call it lying, madam; call it lying," replied the hard-headed evangelist. Let us pray to be saved from sins definitely named. "O God, deliver me from the love of money." Or, "Help me, Lord, to quit my mean and slanderous gossiping." Or, "Lord, enable me to be polite and considerate in my own home." Or, "Almighty God, clean up my foul mind." Or, "Lord Jesus, save me from the sin of unlovingness." May we not at least be as candid and clear in our praying as the Psalmist of old?

Past Sins a Present Menace.

Every past sin is an ally of present temptation. All the knowledge of evil that the former years have left with us as a heritage, rises up to hinder us in our fight for personal righteousness. The Psalmist prayed that his heart might not be inclined to practice deeds of wickedness. He would like to escape the clutches of the past.

It would mean more to the world than all the Carnegie and Rockefeller benefactions combined if that one tremendous truth could only be driven home to youth. The deeds of folly done today menace us for tomorrow. An appalling number of men are not free to follow the bidding of their best manhood, and fight for truth and patriotism, because they are not free. The devil has a collar and chain on them.

Recently I met a shifty-eyed man who once was nationally discussed. He had had a rare and wonderful opportunity to serve the people. Seldom is a patriot given such a chance. But this man suddenly and mysteriously collapsed. He sat silent when he should have stood up and spoken. His hand was held back in the very act of striking a blow for righteousness. The reason was simple: The man's past was not clean. He was not free. Former offences were held up as a menace. He had lost his power to bear witness to the truth. God pity him for no fellow being can understand the torment of his soul.

Would that the dying words of John B. Gough could resound in the ears of every young person about to make his first serious misstep: "Young man, keep your record clear." There is no asset for a noble life equal to a noble youth. Be clean today if you would conquer tomorrow. In the matter of temperance, it is the man who does not drink at all, and who never has drunk, who has no difficulty or embarrassment in refusing to drink.

Recognizing The Enemy.

A mushy, maudlin type of literature is prevalent in our day, which

recognizes no evil and assures us that everything is lovely, in this world and the next. Strong, sound-thinking persons revolt from this sort of teaching, because it does not square with their own knowledge of actual life. The Psalms ring true. They admit the presence of enemies and of wicked men. Their prayer is to Jehovah against these scheming, plotting, vengeful men. The snares of the wicked were real to David and his felly Psalm writers.

And they are real today. Anybody who has ever incurred the hostility of a corrupt political ring, or of the whiskey crowd, can recite the closing verses of our lesson Psalm with feeling, and give picturesque details. It is unfair to youth to send it forth into the world in the blind assumption that virtue will meet no enemies, but only friends. To be able to recognize our enemies, and to be prepared to meet and do battle with them, is a prime requirement in the tournament of life.

One thing bigger than this, though, was known to the Psalmist. He perceived the presence and wiles of his enemies but he also saw God. His faith in Jehovah was greater than his fear of foes. That faith has been warranted by history. God is greater than all the cohorts of sin and Satan. The ultimate victory is with righteousness. The supreme teaching of the lesson is simple trust in God who answers prayers.

WOMAN'S NEW DAY.

Terse Comments on the Uniform Prayer Meeting Topic of the Young People's Societies—Christian Endeavor, Etc.—For June 20. Christ's Call To The Young Women of Today." Luke 10:38-42.

(By William T. Ellis.)

"New occasions teach new duties." This is often called the woman's era. Certainly the interests and activities and opportunities of women have extended beyond anything our grandmothers ever dreamed. For good or for ill, old limitations are gone, never to return. The place of woman in the economic and social system has tremendously changed. This is one of the great facts about the twentieth century. Possibilities that dazzle the imagination are before young women of this our time. But if they accept only their increased liberties without their increased obligations, this may be a sad development for womanhood. Women who are great enough to lead their sex into their highest heritage are a need of the hour.

As of old, Christ is still calling women to find the fullest possible expression of her life in His fellowship and in His service.

The world is led by its women: blessed is the world when its women follow Christ.

We put our finger on the acute point of the modern women question when we ask ourselves whether womanhood, under the new conditions, is more spiritual or more carnal than formerly. If, as some signs indicate, women have become more restless, more pleasure-loving, more extravagant, more devoted to dress and excitement and appetite and to the day's kaleidoscopic fashions, then the change has been bad. If the lower, lesser ideals engross the awakened womanhood of the world, then all humanity suffers. The bent of woman's mind indicates the course and character of civilization's progress; for now, as ever, woman's work has been the determining of ideals. If, on the other hand, as many women contend, the modern awakening of the sex has made for a higher idealism, a true concern for spiritual values, a more intelligent and devoted domesticity and maternity, then all ages and conditions of men and women have reason to rejoice with great joy. If we may credit those who declare that women are now emerging into a nobler, Christlier sense of human sisterhood and solidarity, and into a solicitude for the higher standards of national and civic and family life, then we can have only words of welcome for the feminist movement. I would not sit in judgment; every woman must answer for herself whether the modern progress is forward or backward. Certainly this test is sure and invariable. Whatever makes women more spiritual and Christlike in their own lives is of God, and for the good of the race.

The call to character echoes in every call to Christ.

Every response to the summons of the Saviour is an ascent.

Woman's oldest and latest work, and forever her highest, is shaping human souls. God has no higher work in all the world for any of His ministers than this.

Up through the farthest lands of light, Glory and power and peace unpriced, His love be with you, to the height of womanhood complete in Christ!

—Mabel Earle.

Once it was woman's sole work to stay by the stuff. Her sphere was her home. The opportunities open to men were denied her. Even under these conditions many women came to greatness of character and service. It remains to be seen whether the

new order will produce so many truly great women. Nevertheless, in this day there are many new doors of opportunity for Christian service open to young women, as teachers, nurses, physicians, deaconesses, social service workers, missionaries. Young Women's Christian Association secretaries, executives, artists and so forth. Any woman of grit and capability who wants a "career" may have it. But a mission is even nobler than a career.

The best things must always be fought for. A woman's spirituality is daily beset by insidious perils. Only by assiduous attention to the inner life, and by a mind alert, like Mary's, to perceive spiritual opportunities, can a woman preserve that "better part" which Jesus praised.

More women have been called by Christ to establish Christian homes, and more women have been honored by Him in this high service, than in any other calling. God made woman to be a helpmeet for man; and God's idea of a career for a woman has not yet been improved upon.

One of the great and eloquent pictures of womanhood is that of Jenny Lind, the peerless singer, sitting by the seaside at sunset, with her Bible on her knee. A friend asked her why she had given up her glorious career as a public singer, in the very zenith of her success. The great-souled woman replied that she found that the life on the stage, the applause and the excitement, was making her careless for this—laying her hand upon the Bible; and for this—pointing to the beautiful sunset. Seeing her spirit in peril, she was brave enough to turn her back upon the world's glamour, and to seek the sweet rewards of the spiritual life.

SEVEN SENTENCE SERMONS.

Our patience will achieve more than our force.—Burke.

Greatness and goodness are not means but ends.—Coleridge.

When all the fruit is gone, it is too late the tree to climb.—Richard Edwards.

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter.—Keats.

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.—Matt. 26:41.

God is seen God In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul and the cloud.—Browning.

He that will not reason is a bigot; he that cannot reason is a fool; and he that dares not reason is a slave.—W. Drummond.

Good Roads and Paint Tell of an Awakening North Carolina.

gathered there will start the rest of them to following the example.

So you see what it means to ride down a Lee county good road and read the riddle of the good road and the paint brush. The two are significant of an awakening North Carolina, not only in one section, but in all sections, and not only today, but tomorrow, for the example is catching the young men, and they are already hatching up schemes to go on still farther down than the old fellows have been planning. Nor must it be supposed that this thing has not already broken out elsewhere. It is showing itself in every section of the State, although here in the Sandhills the virulence seems to be the most pronounced as manifest by the fact that from here are two applications for space at the State fair before any other county gets into the game. Being first counts for a whole lot, you know.

BANQUET FOR CENTENARIANS.

Most Exclusive Business Feast Ever Planned in America.

Philadelphia Public Ledger.

There soon will be the oddest dinner party which Philadelphia has yet seen. It will be far more exclusive than the lord mayor's dinner in London.

Wealth will not bring you an invitation nor will public office, even if you are a governor, President or supreme court judge. Ordinary social prestige will count for naught.

The only thing that weighs at this dinner is age, but even that doesn't amount to anything if it is under a century. It is to be a banquet of the bluest blood in business. No firm less than 100 years old will poke its feet under the table at this dinner, and even then all business is barred which has not come down directly through the male line since before the battle of Waterloo.

There are only about 40 eligibles in the entire United States, and about three-fourths of them are in Philadelphia—a nice testimonial to the stability of trade in this town.