

## THE PRAYER OF THE PENITENT.

COMMENTS ON NEXT SUNDAY'S LESSON,  
BY REV. E. P. ROGERS, D. D.  
From New York Observer.

**GOLDEN TEXT:**—"Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin."—Ps. 51: 2.

**Central Truth:**—A sincere suppliant is a penitent suppliant.

This is one of the most remarkable of all David's writings. Whether we consider the time and circumstances of its composition, the double guilt of which it is the remorseful confession, and the touching, almost heart-broken, repentance which it reveals, it is worthy of the distinguished place which it has always held in these divine lyrics. An ancient writer calls it "the brightest gem in the whole book, and contains instruction so large, and doctrine so precious, that the tongue of angels could not do justice to the full development." Luther says, "There is no psalm which is oftener sung or prayed in the Church."

The occasion of its utterance is familiar to all readers of the Bible. David had been led into the commission of two of the greatest crimes which man can commit either against God, or against his fellow. The faithful rebuke of Nathan the prophet aroused him to a profound consciousness of his sin, and led him to bitter repentance and humble confession. This Psalm, supposed to have been composed shortly after, is the expression of his terrible anguish, profound repentance, and agonizing prayer for pardon.

His case was indeed one of fearful guilt and deep remorse. It is an enigma, or rather it would be one, did we not know that human nature is depraved, and that a man may be induced by appropriate temptation to commit the worst of crimes. Every one who knows "the plague of his own heart" will understand the solution of the mystery.

Much may be said of the character of the age in which David lived; of the power of his temptation; of the despotic authority of Oriental kings; of the absence of the restraints which in our day are around men, and yet which are in many cases even now disregarded. But we do not wish to excuse or extenuate his fault. He did not do so himself. No confession could be more full and hearty; no penitence could be more sincere; no prayer for forgiveness more humble and earnest. Everything was admitted; nothing was spared of self-humiliation and exposure; nothing was extenuated by the remorseful king. He only asked for mercy. He cannot forget his sin; but let us not forget his heart-broken repentance.

### PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Conviction of sin is something more than a dread of punishment.

The great burden on David's heart was that he had sinned against a holy God. This was what broke him down into true contrition, and brought his humble confession. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned," was his agonizing cry. He was not insensible to other aspects of his crime. He felt that he had grievously sinned against Uriah, and had wounded the cause of purity and virtue in his kingdom. But still the heaviest part of his burden was the offence which he had committed against a holy God. Could he hope that God would forgive him, he might again have peace in his soul.

So an ingenious child who has offended a good father feels the sad, grieved look on his father's face more than the punishment of the rod. This was the feeling of the prodigal son. It is a sign always of a true conviction.

2. Regret is not repentance.

Regret is not what David felt. That is a selfish, cold feeling, which graduates guilt only by its consequences, not by its intrinsic evil nature and enormity.

Every wicked man feels sorry that he has committed a crime, when the penalty comes upon him. Saul confessed to David in one of his regretful moments that he had "played the fool" in his treatment of him. But he repeated the folly again and again.

The fear of hell is one thing, and a godly repentance for sin is quite another.

The famous chief of police under Napoleon characterized a certain transaction, thus, "It was worse than a crime, it was a blunder." This is about the character of some men's repentance. It is regret for the blunder, not sorrow for the sin.

3. Human nature is depraved and no man knows how far he may go in sin.

Who would have thought that Abraham and Moses and David would have so yielded to temptation, and been guilty of such grave offences? But these instances only show what a wreck humanity is without the grace of God. There is something in all of us which responds to any temptation. David felt this when he prayed: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me."

4. The Bible is an honest book. It does not conceal the faults of its heroes. Human biographers have little to say about the imperfections of their subjects. And very many religious works of this sort are anything but profitable reading on this very account. The Bible is a consistent book. Its heroes illustrate its doctrines. It calls things by their right names and pre-

sents human character in its true light and correct proportions.

5. God will not refuse to hear the cry of the penitent soul.

David found mercy when he repented and asked God for it. He was a great sinner, but God is a great God and Saviour. And it is his glory that he can forgive the very chief of sinners. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he should turn from his evil way and live.

6. It is a good thing to be forgiven for the past, but it is a better thing to be kept from sin in the future.

David's prayer contemplated this. He prayed: "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit; then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee."

7. When Christians feel most deeply their own sinfulness and weakness they should be more tender and charitable towards the sins of others.

8. When Christians enjoy most of the joy of God's salvation, they will be more earnest about the salvation of others.

"Whenever saints are revived, then sinners will be converted."

9. Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

10. Sin may be forgiven but its evil consequences often remain to our sorrow and shame.

David repented and was forgiven. But the Lord smote his young child; Absalom nearly broke his heart, and a long series of judgments from God made the after part of his life a sad history.

11. Lust and hatred in the heart, in God's sight, are as odious as actual adultery and murder.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life!"

"As he thinketh in his heart, so is he."

### A Bashful Bridegroom.

NOT ABLE TO STAND THE PRESSURE—HE FAILS TO COME TO TIME.

From the Barnstable (O.) Enterprise.

From Goshen township comes the story of the most bashful man of modern times. The young man resides near the village of Hunter, and it appears he struck up a courtship with a very respectable lady of Chestnut Level, but just how he managed to woo and win the affections of the lady with all his bashfulness is a mystery which "no fellow can find out." Last Thursday at 1 o'clock was the time set for the wedding, and the parents of the lady had prepared a sumptuous dinner, a large assembly of friends had gathered to witness the nuptials, and the bride prospective, perhaps, looked her sweetest in her bridal trousseau. One o'clock came, but no bridegroom put in an appearance; 2 o'clock, still he came not; 3, 4 o'clock, and still he tarried. By this time the preacher could stand the smell of the edibles no longer, and, true to his instinct and education, suggested the propriety of eating dinner, lest the victuals should spoil. The suggestion was acted upon, and a brother of the bride was dispatched in quest of the delinquent bridegroom. He found him at his home, sitting before the fire, with his "every-day clothes" on, one side of his face shaved, and seemingly in trouble. He was asked as to his non-appearance, and replied that he attempted to shave himself, but was so scared and nervous that he could not accomplish it. He finally told his brother that if he would finish shaving him and help to trim up he would go and report for duty. The brother kindly assisted, and the two then started for the home of his anxious and much embarrassed intended. When within a short distance of the house, the young man's heart again failed him, and he declared that he could not face the crowd, and offered the brother \$5 with which to pay the minister. The brother refused the offer of the money, and exerted his persuasive powers upon the young man, but all to no avail. No use talking; he could not stand the ordeal, and retraced his steps homeward. The brother went home and reported the result of his investigation, and the preacher, turning to the lady, said: "I'll never marry you to such a man." On the following Saturday the father of the young lady sought an interview with his ought-to-have-been son-in-law, but he was met with the same plea; "I can't stand to face such a crowd; but if you will get a 'Squire and let us get married after night, I will try it again." The old gentleman said nay to this proposition, declaring that the ceremony must be performed in the daytime. So, after being encouraged by his would-be father-in-law, he consented to face the music, and Saturday evening the knot was tied by the minister formerly engaged, who perhaps thought it no harm to break a vow rashly made, when a good supper and a five dollar bill awaited him.

The conduct of this young man reminds us of the old story of the fellow who, when about to get married, burst out crying. His father asked him what was the matter, and the son replied that he was going to get married. His father told him he should not be ashamed, and to brace him up said: "Your mother and I got married." "Yes," replied the son, "but you married mother, and I've got to marry a strange girl!"—boo-hoo-oo!

The Parisians have introduced square umbrellas. They'll be just as bad as the other kind—never round when it rains.

## FRENCH MARRIAGES.

From Harper's Magazine.

Madame Lesmontages was kind enough to give me a description of the wedding of her daughter. When a young man here wishes to become acquainted with a young woman, he mentions it to some friend of the family, who applies to the parent for leave to introduce him. If this is granted, and the parents afterwards conclude that he is not suitable, they tell him not to come any more. When a young man comes to demand a lady in marriage, the parents first interest themselves in the family, whether it is a respectable one, and in the young man himself whether he is sage or well behaved. The young people are never left together without one of the parents being present, even when there is a talk of their being married.

At last the parents of the two young people will meet to plan the marriage, this parliament being held at the house of the young woman, after having had a good dinner, after having well drunk, and talked upon a number of other subjects, the rest of the family will leave the parents together, understanding very well what business is in hand. Then the young man's father will speak in this manner: "We have not come here to do nothing; we have come to speak of the marriage of our children," adding, if he is a rich enough landholder, "I will give 25,000 francs to my son; how much can you give your daughter?" If her parents do not give about as much, the marriage agreement will not be made, and the parties will separate. However, about one time in ten it will be found that the young people are too much attached to each other for the parents to continue their prohibition, and they are allowed to marry. And sometimes it will happen, when the young people are of age, that the parents entirely refuse their consent, that the former will make the three respectful summons, and then they can marry without the parents' consent. Such a case may happen in this commune once in three or four years.

Mme. L. gave her daughter on her own part, and from the father's estate, a vineyard of the value of 18,000 francs, and she is to receive more. The young man's parents gave to him a piece of land worth 20,000 francs, and the young pair occupy two rooms in his parents' home, where they can keep house if they should prefer it. Mme. L. added that the young man's mother gave him a furnished bed, and of sheets, table cloths, towels and napkins, each a dozen; also three dozen shirts of hemp and flax. "I gave my daughter," she added, "two dozen sheets, two dozen napkins and two and a half dozen towels, with a furnished bed, a cupboard, armoire, and a night table. The young man's parents gave him a large bureau, and he bought the rest of the furniture. The young people are well set out, well matched, and both are industrious. He is, besides, a merchant of sabots, buying these shoes from the makers; and he has wood of his own, he employs people to make them, and twice a week he goes to — to sell them."

The only legal marriage in France is that at the mayor's office, and there is a mayor in every commune. Mme. L. tells me that this marriage does not cost anything, but at the mass the cure marries them and puts the ring over the joint of the bride's finger. For this marriage he receives 12 francs. (All the religious and all the fashionable world have this second marriage. Free-thinkers in Paris—I met none in the country—make a merit of opposing it.)

Mme. L. tells me that there were about eighty guests at her daughter's wedding and all these go to mass, coming to dine at the house at noon. She herself did not see the ceremony; she heated the oven while the others were gone, "for somebody must take care of things." There were three women, however, to do the kitchen work, and three to wait upon the table.

The two musicians were paid by the young men guests. Dancing was kept up until about three in the morning, when the party sought a little rest wherever they could get it, some going to the barn, the little children and the hired women went to bed, and Mme. L. got two hours' rest. She added: "On Wednesday we had the breakfast, and then all went away about ten."

Is the Moon Peopled?—An Important Astronomical Work.

A great change is taking place in the views in regard to the moon, and it may be that we are on the eve of discoveries which will make this century an epoch in astronomical history. A Providence astronomer says: "Some American observers saw not long since a crater on the lunar surface in active operation under conditions as reliable as human vision at such a distance can be expected to reach. A French astronomer has made observations on a grander scale, and confidently asserts that the moon is inhabited. M. Camille Flammarion, the present originator of this long-cherished idea, is a scientist of honor and renown, well known for his reputation as an observer and enthusiastic writer.

He has written several articles to prove his position, and has determined to devote his life to this branch of astronomical research. No instruments on the globe are powerful enough to afford a glimpse of our lunar neighbors. M. Flammarion

is not in the least discouraged at this apparently insuperable obstacle in the way of a solution of his problem. He is going to have one made that will exhibit the men in the moon to terrestrial eyes, without a possibility of mistake. He is urgently soliciting contributions to a fund for an immense refracting telescope, whose estimated cost is a million francs, or \$200,000.

This instrument, the astronomer believes, will be effectual in revealing the inhabitants in the moon really existing, according to his sanguine faith. Some of the largest refractors in the world, if used when the air is pure, bear a power of three thousand on the moon; that is, the moon appears as if it were at a distance of eighty miles instead of two hundred and forty thousand. It can thus be seen that an immensely increased power would be required to detect small objects on the surface.

### Robeson the Worst Robber.

Says the Boston Herald, a candid "republican" paper, of George M. Robeson, Secretary of the Navy under the Grant regime: "His record is a very bad one. Of all the men that have from the foundation of the Government until the present hour made it their business to prey upon the Government and rob the Treasury, he appears to be the worst.

"It is within the recollection of men now living that a public officer who was a defaulter lost caste at once, and if he could escape the penitentiary, was glad to sink into oblivion; but here is a man who is proved to have destroyed the United States Navy during his term of office, and robbed the Treasury of millions of dollars while so doing; who by means of his ill-gotten wealth has secured an election to Congress from the district in New Jersey where he resides, and will claim a seat in the House of Representatives of the Forty-Sixth Congress.

"It is sincerely to be hoped that before that Congress assembles there will be found virtue enough in the administration to turn him over to the courts, which can hardly fail, in view of all the facts of his career, to visit upon him the severest penalties of the laws which he has so flagrantly violated."

The Cincinnati Commercial, an emphatic "republican" paper, but anti-Grant, says: "Tenderness toward Secretary Robeson seems to be a republican weakness. During his administration as Secretary of the Navy his department cost the country \$182,496,033, and he left an unlawful indebtedness of \$7,083,503.25. After all this we have no navy worthy the name, and Secretary Thompson found all sorts of rotten contracts and corrupt methods of doing business. Then our Robeson had a great number of ships destroyed and sold the material, giving insiders opportunities to make millions. Still the republicans seem to think it an essential part of their business to vindicate him, especially as he has been elected to Congress, and Grant is supposed to be the conquering hero coming."

### Oh, George!

They were on the ice yesterday afternoon, he in the glory of his new-found love, and she with a bran-new pair of skates on her pretty feet. They were very sweet on each other and skated hand in hand, now forward, now backward, gliding smoothly and gracefully, totally unconscious of the smiles of the spectators and the chaffing of the bad small boys. He was skating backward and had hold of her hand—a strong hold, with just the least more pressure than would have been desirable under other circumstances. He was pulling her along and talking the meanwhile:

"Darling Celeste, shall we always glide together through life as smoothly as we do now?"

"Oh, George, dear, I hope so!" smilingly.

"And shall we ever be each other as dear as we now are?"

"Oh, George, always!"

"And Celeste, shall the clasp of the hand be as warm in the future as it is now?"

"Oh, George, it will!" lovingly.

"Dear Celeste, you are so kind to keep me first in your affec—"

"Oh, George!"

There was a crash before that last exclamation. George was skating backward and they were looking into each other's eyes. His skate caught in a crack in the ice and there was a fall—Celeste on top. A series of mild shrieks, a vision of dimity, and then two skaters left the ice. George had a lump on the back of his head as big as a prize pumpkin, and Celeste's nose looks like a big ripe fig and all skewed around like a mule's jaw. Oh, George!

### Oatmeal Diet.

Undoubtedly one of the most healthful and nourishing articles of diet is oatmeal. When properly cooked and eaten with sugar and cream, it forms a dish which most people relish better than meat for breakfast and it is very much cheaper. Leibig has chemically demonstrated that oatmeal is almost as nutritious as the very best English beef, and that it is richer than wheat bread in the elements that go to bone and muscle. Professor Forbus, of Edinburgh, during some twenty years, measured the breadth and height, and also tested the strength of both arms and loins, of the students of the uni-

versity—a very numerous class and of various nationalities, drawn to Edinburgh by the fame of his teaching. He found that in height, breadth, breadth of chest and shoulders, and strength of arms and loins, the Belgians were at the bottom of the list; a little above them the English, and highest of all the Scotch, and Scotch-Irish from Ulster, who, like the natives of Scotland, are fed in their early years at least one meal a day of good oatmeal porridge. —Scientific American.

### ALASKA.

NOT SUCH A COLD PLACE OF RESIDENCE AS MOST PEOPLE SUPPOSE.

From the Rev. Joseph Cook's Last Lecture.

Alaska, as most of us may have pictured it to ourselves, is so cold that it can have no interest to us, and no importance to the nation. Mr. Dall, of Boston, who has written the standard work on Alaska, tells us that on half of the coast of the territory the thermometer never has been known to fall below zero. He thinks no polar bear ever came within a thousand miles of Sitka. Mr. Sumner was accustomed to cite the experience of navigators who would moor their barks along the Alaskan shore and through the whole winter never find the ice strong enough to make a bridge from their vessels to the land. The isotherm of 50° of average annual temperature runs through Sitka, it passes also through Lake Superior and Quebec. Captain Cook, who one hundred years ago last year saw and named Mt. St. Elias, said that cattle might subsist in Onalaska all the year around without being housed. The mean temperature of winter in Alaska, as estimated by the Smithsonian Institution, is 32.30°, while that of Summer is 53.37°. The Washington winter is 33.57°, and the Washington summer 73.07 degrees. The winters of Alaska do not differ much from those of Washington, although the summers are colder. The winter of Sitka is milder than that of St. Petersburg or Berlin or Boston. On the Upper Yukon, in mid-summer, the thermometer sometimes stands at 112 degrees, and the traveler blesses the transient coolness of the midnight air.

### Pope Leo's Daily Routine.

AN EARLY RISER, A TEMPERATE EATER AND DRINKER AND A ZEALOUS STUDENT.

Pope Leo XIII. rises winter and summer at six o'clock, and generally celebrates Mass in his private chapel. At 7 he takes a cup of coffee or chocolate, with an egg beaten in it. After this he takes a walk, either in the gardens of the Vatican or in the galleries. He looks and comments on everything like a true and subtle observer. Nothing escapes his notice. At 8 he receives his Secretary of State, Cardinal Nina, and the day's business begins. He signs documents and letters, and receives in audience, firstly, the Cardinals, then apostolic congregations, then ecclesiastics who have been granted a special audience, and then he receives secular Catholics. According to the length of the audience the dinner takes place. His dinner is very frugal. It consists of chicken broth, mostly; then the boiled chicken is served. He rarely eats other meats. He likes pears and cheese. He drinks a couple of glasses of red wine. He does not take coffee after the meal. After dinner he sleeps awhile, on his arm chair mostly. He then enters his study and confers with his under-secretaries; writes, signs and reads petitions; gives orders. He then takes another walk, but accompanied this time by a suit of cardinals and other familiars of his court. When tired he sits in the first arm chair or other seats he meets with, and then the walk changes into a conversation or literary lecture. The Pope is very learned in literature, both Italian and French. He speaks elegantly. He has an excellent memory, and sometimes recites verses of Lamartine and Victor Hugo. He does not read many newspapers. On his writing table may always be seen the *Revue des Deux Mondes* and the *Nuova Antologia*, of which he peruses a few pages when he has time. On another table lies open Treves' large Bible, illustrated by Gustave Dore. Occasionally when he rises from his table he casts his eyes on the volume, and sometimes he remains in contemplation before it. After this second walk the Pope returns to his apartments and remains an hour in reading with his Chamber Prelate, and then resumes public business for the last time in the day. During the evening he gives his attention to the interior arrangements of the Vatican. At 10 o'clock he generally retires to his bed room.

### Whales Show a Northwest Passage.

If arctic explorers have not discovered a practical northwest passage whales have, as is shown by the fact that whales have been captured in the North Pacific having harpoons that were thrown into them on the other side of the continent. Captain Baudry of the Helen Mar of San Francisco has taken a whale having in it a large flint harpoon, supposed to have been put in by natives of Cape Bathurst, or the regions beyond the mouth of the Mackenzie river, because the natives living to the westward of that river never use such weapons, but always bone or iron. A more positive evidence is found in the fact that the

Captain of the Adeline Gibbs took a whale in the Arctic with an iron in it which had been thrown the same season in Hudson bay. This is known to be the case, because the iron bore the mark of a ship at the time engaged in whaling in the bay.

### Where the Appropriation Bill is—Indignant Cavalry Officers.

From the Philadelphia Times.

WASHINGTON, February 16.—The army appropriation bill is still in the Senate committee. The sub-committee—Messrs. Blaine, Allison and Withers—have not yet met to consider the bill. The opinion is quite general that the majority of the whole committee are in favor of the Butler amendment allowing railroad companies to operate their lines for the government and for commercial purposes. The Western Union Telegraph Company have a big lobby here and are working hard and spending much money to defeat the Jones bill and also the Butler amendment. Senator Wallace sent to the committee yesterday an important amendment, which provides that hereafter all appointments to West Point shall be made from the enlisted men in the ranks. As enlistments may now be made of recruits at sixteen years of age this is practicable. Its purpose is to improve the morale of the force and give promotion to deserving soldiers.

Some of the officers of the old Third Cavalry Division, which performed many heroic deeds under command of General Custer, are indignant at the reported statements in the testimony of Major Reno before the court at Chicago to the effect that he had no confidence in General Custer as a soldier. These gentlemen characterize the charge as cowardly and unjustifiable, as General Custer's reputation was perfectly established and could not be injured by one on trial on a charge of cowardice.

### A Startling Decision.

From Doylestown Democrat.

Among the cases lately decided by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, is that of Lazear vs. Porter, which enunciates a rather startling principle of law. It was a stated case to test the question of the right of the wife of a bankrupt to her dower interest in the real estate of her husband, when the same has been sold by the assignee. It was held by the Court below that a sale of real estate by an assignee divested the dower interest of the wife and this judgment is reversed by the higher court. This decision of the Supreme Court is the most startling and far reaching in its effects that that body has rendered for many a year. Since the bankrupt law has been in operation there have been millions of dollars' worth of real estate disposed of under it. It has all been sold under the supposition that the wives of the bankrupts had no claim on it. But according to this decision every living wife of a bankrupt, whose estate was thus sold, can claim and recover her third of the property from its present owner. In other words, the title to the property thus innocently bought by the creditors or outside parties is vitiated in their hands to the extent of one-third. And the case may often be worse than that. For the property in many cases has depreciated greatly in the hands of the present owners, who nevertheless may be required to pay back the value of the third, as it was at the time of the purchase. The amount of suffering that this will cause will make most people regret that, if this be the law, it was not discovered earlier, so that while doing justice to bankrupt wives, it should not operate to do equal if not greater injustice to people who never went into bankruptcy.

### Uncle Remus and Sherman.

Atlanta Constitution.

Uncle Remus walked into the office yesterday with a tin bucket on his arm, and tackled the first man he met: "Boss, is Generl Sherman bin roun' here sho nuff?" "Not around here. He has been in town."

"Dat's w'at I'm a drivin' at. I think dem niggers was a ginnin' un me a game outwell I hear Mars Jones readin' it in de paper yistiddy."

"Didn't you call on him?"

"I sorter lingered roun' on de aidges for ter see w'at I could see, but I wish I may be turn loose on de sea coas' widout a nickel of I ketched a glimpse un 'im. Dey tells me dat he's got a powerful stiff 'membunce," continued Uncle Remus, setting his bucket in a corner.

"So they say."

"Dat w'at I hear tell. I'd a like might'y fer to get a little confab wid de Generl."

"Why didn't you go and see him?" "Well, in de day time, boss, I has ter scramble aroun' arter a piece of bacon rine for ter grease my stumuck wid, an' w'en night come I gotter sorter hang roun' an' watch my chicken-coop. De more piousser w'at de niggers git de more closer w'at you gotter keep yo' eye-balls on yo' pullets."

The pedestrian mania has proved that all of woman's strength doesn't lay in her tongue.

The high C's—Chandler, Cameron and Conkling.