

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

From the New York Observer.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON

BY REV. HENRY M. GROUT, D. D.

August 3.—David's Repentance.—
Psalm 51: 1-19.

GOLDEN TEXT.—My sin is ever before me.—Psalm, 51: 3.

The occasion of this Psalm was a great sin by which the King of Israel not only involved himself in deep guilt, but brought reproach upon God's cause and sore judgments on himself and his house. That so devout man should so grievously fall proves, not the insufficiency of divine grace, but the weakness of human nature at its best. It is quite true that the times in which he lived were ruder than our own; and that "no other king of his time would have felt any compunction for having acted as he did"; nevertheless, the scriptures neither make nor allow any excuse for it. It was a terrible fall; full of warning to all such as confide in their own strength, or fail to watch and pray against the beginnings of sin in the heart.

But, if David sinned so greatly, his repentance was sincere, deep and lasting. Men who indulge in derisive jests on account of the sin are wont to forget to speak of the tears, and cries of confession and entreaty which followed. Such scoffers prove that they have no real sympathy with purity and holiness. They exult over the fall of the good, as if it were a justification of their own habitual forgetfulness of God. "Fools make a mock at sin."

1. The Psalm has been called *The sinner's Guide*. And such it is. In it the godly soul, which has fallen away from its fidelity, may see the way of true return. In it the sinner, who has to do his first works of repentance and consecration, may learn by what returning steps he is to find his way to the smile and favor of that God from whom we have all gone astray. Note what, in the case of the Psalmist, these returning steps were.

1. *Confessing his sin, he entreats pardon.*—Mercy is pity and favor to one who merits ill. It is this which David craves. He regards himself as only ill-deserving, and sees that God might justly spurn him from his presence and regard. The psalmist's cry was: "God be merciful to me a sinner"; such is David's.

Then see what is the ground of his courage and hope. It is not at all that he is himself a great king; that he has done so many grand things for Israel; that he is a poet and sweet singer; or that he has been so devout and faithful in the past. No; he mentions none of all these. He thinks only of God's "loving kindness," and "tender mercies." Kings and beggars, the cultured and the vile, the learned and the ignorant, when truly awakened, come with this one hope. "The multitude of God's tender mercies," not the fewness of our sins or the number of our virtues can save us. What he craves first is that his sins may be "blotted out"; erased, cancelled; as from a written record ever staring him in the face. Some disparage the blessing of pardon, as if that were a little matter. The soul sensitive to sin can never do this. He would have the past made right.

Note that all along the Psalmist intermingles prayer for pardon with that for inward renewal and cleansing. The petition "purge me with hyssop" points to the former, as does the ninth verse. The atoning blood and the purifying waters were sprinkled with a branch of hyssop (Ex. 12:22; Numb. 19:18). The objects so purged were accepted as clean. But like every true penitent, David would have the twofold blessing of pardon whereby the record and condemning power of sin should be blotted out and of that inward work of the gracious Spirit whereby the heart is made clean and the spirit right. Pardon alone would be oh how incomplete! Purified affections, a cleansed fountain, this is the returning sinner's crowning desire. This, too, God must work in us. This: "Create in me a clean heart," is the daily, hourly desire and cry of the truly humbled.

Observe the deep humility of his plea. (a) He "acknowledges" all. He speaks in plain words: "Transgressions," "iniquity," "sin." He calls things by their right names. (b) He acknowledges that his sin is his own. "My transgressions," "mine iniquity," "My sin." He palliates nothing. He offers no excuse. He does not say: "It was the temptation, it was my circumstances it was the constitution God gave me, which led me astray." He owns that the sin, the blame is all his own. (c) He sees that his sin is chiefly against God. It was true that he had wronged others and injured himself, but his sense of disobedience and wrong to God included, swallowed up all. This point should be particularly noted. The tendency with men is to view sin chiefly as an injury to ourselves and our fellow men. It is treated as an inexpediency, a

blunder; as great or small according to the pain or loss it produces. True penitence looks deeper and higher. Sin is now seen as a transgression of God's law, a dishonor to His name, a wrong against His kingdom and glory. To forsake it merely because it is against my interests, my health, my good name, my advantage of any sort, is not to forsake it as sin.

2. *Owning a sinful nature he implores renewing grace.*—He looks deeper than the particular act of sin. He goes further back for its first source. He recognizes in himself a tendency to evil with which he was born; a polluted foundation of evil. And however easy it may be to cavil against this, and however disposed men are to deny it, the world of merely speculative and of scientific thought perceives and asserts it. Only it calls it by another name—heredity.

Had the Psalmist been like some others, he might have pleaded this as an excuse. But his conscience saw in it a reason for deeper humility and a more bitter cry. He prays for renewal. "Since I am corrupted in my very nature, and thou canst be satisfied with nothing short of inward sincerity; thou must bestow what thou requirest by imparting to me heavenly wisdom" (5: 6.)

3. *Trusting divine mercy and grace, he makes vows of grateful service.*—There was trust and hope in his entreaties for pardon and renewal. It was because God was seen in his "tender mercy" that the crushed sinner could truly pray at all. But, as the penitent advances with his confession and pleas, his sense of God's mercy deepens. So it is always. And now hope supplants fears. Now he begins to think of himself as already pardoned, already inwardly renewed; and so he comes to grateful consecration. He pledges a life of joyful service.

But his promises or vows are not at all in his own strength. "Restore and uphold me, and I will teach transgressors thy ways"; "deliver me, be to me a God of salvation; open my lips, and I will sing of thy righteousness, and show forth thy praise."

In the sixteenth and seventeenth verses he declares his readiness to give and do whatever costly thing God might require. But sacrifices and burnt offerings could never be a substitute for brokenness of spirit. Of the returning sinner God did not require more of these but the humility and love and service they helped to express. Not that the Old Testament sacrifices are here said to be of no account; for in the nineteenth verse it is declared that, along with the penitence and consecration, they were pleasing to God.

4. *Hoping his prayer is heard he remembers Zion.*—Doubtless he thought of the dishonor and injury his sin had inflicted upon the cause of God. The hill of Zion stood for that. And so now he prays that divine blessings may be poured upon it. This is the last step in a sinner's return. Nor has one returned truly and fully until his thought and longing overflow the walls which enclose his own soul, and go out to all God's people to all who need mercy and grace. Penitence without love is not simply incomplete, it is impossible. In going over to God's side, penitence would take others and all, with itself, to him.

- PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.**
1. See how evil and bitter a thing sin is.
 2. Note the faith which marks the entire prayer of David, as it does all true repentance.
 3. Remorse is not repentance; the one is hopeless, the other is trustful; the one hides from God, the other springs toward him.
 4. All excuses, all self-justifying thoughts, end where true repentance begins.
 5. Observe that true penitents would be washed thoroughly from sin.
 6. See how naturally the true convert begins to serve as well as to sing; longing for the conversion of others is a good sign of one's own conversion.
 7. David's prayer was answered; and yet (as Nathan predicted) the sword never departed from his house. Troubles thickened upon him. It was needful that God should make his abhorrence of sin known. Then the forgiven needs chastisement to the end.

Substitute for Matches.

Countless accidents, as every one knows, arise from the use of matches. To obtain light without employing them and so without the danger of setting things on fire, an ingenious contrivance is now used by the watchmen of Paris in all the magazines where explosive or inflammable materials are kept. Any one may easily make a trial of it. Take an oblong vial of the whitest and clearest glass and put into it a piece of phosphorus about the size of a pea. Pour some olive oil heated to the boiling point upon the phosphorus; fill the vial about one-third full and then cork it tightly. To use, merely remove the cork, allow the air to enter the vial and then recork it. The empty space in the vial will become luminous and the light obtained will be equal to that of a lamp. When the light grows dim its power can be increased by taking out the cork and allowing a fresh supply of air to enter the vial. In winter it is sometimes necessary to heat the vial between the hands in order to increase the fluidity of the oil. The apparatus thus made may be used for six months.

Randall Pleased.

WITH THE WORK OF THE CHICAGO CONVENTION.

(Special to the Pittsburg Post.)

PHILADELPHIA, July 17.—Samuel J. Randall has returned from Wisconsin where he has been since the close of the Chicago Convention, and is now enjoying a needed rest at his summer residence at Berwyn, a short distance from this city. Mr. Randall was found by your correspondent this afternoon seated upon the porch of his country home—a neat but old-fashioned frame building, surrounded by a pretty lawn dotted with tall shade trees. In response to the statement that he had been mentioned for Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, he said:

"I could not take the Chairmanship if it was unanimously tendered to me. I did not push myself for the Presidency," he continued, "as a position not to be sought and not to be declined. I have no disappointments to vex me, as I did not allow myself to become interested in the remote chance any one may have among prominent men who are discussed for the Presidency. Had I cared most for my own interests as a Presidential candidate, I would not have gone to Chicago; but I went there because I was vitally interested in the platform, and I returned more than grateful at the result. The platform is even a more emphatic and enduring vindication of my efforts in Congress for public economy and for the dignity and prosperity of American labor than a Presidential nomination might have been, and I am not only content with the action of the Convention, but I am proud of it—proud of both of its candidates and its clear and patriotic declaration of principles."

Mr. Randall never looked fresher, and never was more genial than to-day when discussing the political situation. He confidently predicted the election of Cleveland. He said: "It will not be a hurrah campaign. A battle for honest government is not made in that way. It will grow in interest, and Cleveland will be strong each day, while the Blaine hurrah will weaken. I look for an honest reform President at last." When the possibilities for Randall, in the event of Cleveland's election, were suggested he answered promptly, and with emphasis: "I have only one ambition in this contest—that is, to be returned to the House to aid a Democratic reform President to consummate the regeneration of public administration that I have so long battled for."

Unprofitable Experience.

The supporters of Mr. Blaine's candidacy base all their arguments in favor of that doubtful individual on the claim that he has had an extended and diversified experience in public affairs. It will readily be admitted that all other things being equal experience is a valuable quality in a public official, but no intelligent person will maintain that it is the essential or even the most important consideration. Experience without integrity unites rather than qualifies a candidate, and that question being raised it is proper to inquire as to the measure of Blaine's services under this test.

Mr. Blaine entered the lower house of congress about 1863. He had previously been a hanger in the lobby. He was the agent who inveigled the government into purchasing the worthless Spencer rifles to arm the troops. His experience in this job pointed out the advantage of a seat on the floor for the purpose of operating the lobby and he accordingly had himself returned as a member at the subsequent election. He at once entered on a protracted and successful system of lobbying for jobs and corporations. Every land pirate found in him a willing instrument, and the Fort Smith affair and similar transactions are monuments of his experience. But it is not the kind of experience that commends.

But leaving the record of Mr. Blaine's shameless venality out of the question, there is another aspect that forces itself on the attention of the public. An experience that fails to discipline the mind and qualify the subject for useful services is worse than no experience. Blaine was smart, when he first entered public life. That is all that can be said in his favor now, after nearly a quarter of a century of public service. That he lacks every element of statesmanship is proved by his worse than silly proposition to collect a hundred millions of dollars annually from the people for no other purpose than to distribute through some other agency. This shows that his experience has failed to give him an understanding of the plain language of the constitution, or else that his convenient conscience permits him to disregard the oath he takes to regard that instrument. In every aspect of the case experience has been wasted on Mr. James Gillespie Blaine. —*Harrisburg Patriot.*

—It is said the overhand throwing this season is disabling all the effective league pitchers. Orris and Dart will please take warning.

Michigan Germans for Cleveland.

From the Detroit Free Press.

"Yes, sir," said Dr. Flintermann on Saturday night, "I will cast my vote for Cleveland and Hendricks, although a have been a republican. The nominations are those of the people in my opinion, and not of a party. Gov. Cleveland is not a politician and not a wire-puller; he is not a demagogue, but a man of the people; and will get many German republican votes. I rejoiced in his nomination, as many of my countrymen of opposite political faith do. There is no disguise about my intentions."

Prof. Niehause said: "I have always been a republican from the time I voted for Abraham Lincoln for president, but this year my vote will be cast for Gov. Cleveland. I have become a democrat from conviction, as many others have; in fact all of our republican acquaintances have concluded to vote for the reform governor, and sincerely hope for his election. The feeling is not only local, but extends all over the country. In Illinois I found on my last visit that the Germans, outside of the office-holders, have largely turned democrats, believing that it is time for a change in the administration of the government. The Illinois Staats Zeitung, the most influential republican paper in the west echoes the feeling of German republicans when it refuses to support Blaine and will work for Cleveland's election. The paper has a very large circulation and its influence is great. Cleveland is the coming man."

J. J. Nostitz said: "I have been a republican, but you can put me down for Governor Cleveland. I shall certainly vote for him in November, because he is a good and pure man, and we want a president like him."

—The Pennsylvania courts have decided that while you mustn't lie about it directly, it is perfectly lawful to keep your mouth shut during a horse trade, and while you must not warrant an animal as perfectly sound in wind and limb when he isn't, you are not compelled to call attention to minor defects.

A fat ladies' ball was given at Baltimore the other night. It was a leap year entertainment, and conducted on the strictest rules governing such affairs. Ladies tipping the beam at 200 pounds and over tripped around as gaily and seemed to enjoy themselves as much as if they only weighed 100. At the entrance scales were stationed, and each lady was given a card certifying to their avordupois. The lightest weight allowed in the promenade was 200 pounds.

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