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REAL TROUBLES OF LIFE ARE SPIRITUAL

All's Well "If Your Heart Keeps Right," Is the Psalmist's Plea Unto Jehovah

WHEN MEN NEED HELP International S. S. Lesson For Sunday 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 temptance question.

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.

"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 men not eat of their dainties.

"Let the righteous smite me, it shall be as proof 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 Shoel.

"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 Lulitania 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 our 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 to this 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 his 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 trailblitzer. 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, "Mr. 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

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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 fellow psalm writers. And they are real to-day. Anybody who has ever incurred the hostility of a corrupt political ring, or of the whisky 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.

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