

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Acting Director of SUNDAY SCHOOL Course of Moody Bible Institute Chicago.)

LESSON FOR JUNE 20

PRAYER FOR THE TEMPTED.

LESSON TEXT—Psalm 141.
GOLDEN TEXT—Keep me from the snare which they have laid for me.—Psalm 141:9.

The style of this psalm closely resembles the known psalms of David in the first part of the psalter. From its structure and character, it is to be credited to David. In it are presented complaint, prayer and confident hope of relief. It is a petition for deliverance from sins to which his afflictions tempted him, and from the enemies who caused his affliction.

I. Prayer. "My prayer directed" (vv. 1, 2). There is good reason for believing David wrote this while going through the experience recorded in I Samuel 24. It is evident he is passing through a time of great stress and was in dire need of help for he urges "haste" in giving heed to his call, (Luke 18:1-8). David looks to Jehovah as his only and sure helper. We are told to omit the first word "unto" in this verse and to read, "I have called thee." Every human help had failed and faith fearlessly turns to God. Can God be urged? Surely we are taught that God respects his "remembrancers" who cry "day and night" (Psalm 40:13; 69:17, 18; 70:5; 71:12; 143:7). To fold the hands weakly and to "bide his time" is usually an evidence of spiritual debility and of a desire to shirk the work involved in a true exercise of prayer. True faith knows but one way of deliverance, that of prayer (Phil. 4:6, 7), and those who call in faith get deliverance (Rom. 10:13). Such prayer, the fruit of heart and lips, is before God "as incense" and its effectiveness does not depend upon its being presented in the tabernacle—it is a "sacrifice" of praise well-pleasing to God. We are to pray to God through his Son and in the Holy Spirit. Such prayer is set forth before him as a sacrifice of sweet smelling savor.

II. Practice. "Incline not my heart to practice wicked works" (v. 4). Such prayer as here suggested demands a preparation of purity. As the "incense" was prepared with great care (Ex. 30:36) and its fragrance was brought out by fire (Rom. 8:26, 27; Eph. 6:18), so likewise there must be a continual practice of prayer and an absence of "wicked works." In no way are we so apt to sin as with our lips, but back of the lips is the heart (Matt. 15:11; Luke 8:45). The tongue can no man tame (James 3:8), yet God is able and his way is to cleanse the fountain. To have the mouth filled first with prayer and praise and then with evil is contrary to reason and to God's commands. David recognized that the heart is the source of "wicked works," and prayed that he be not even "inclined" to them (Matt. 6:13; Jam. 1:13). If he "keeps the door" we have a safe guard (Ps. 127:1).

III. Position. "Let him reprove me" (v. 5). "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." This seems to be the position David desired to occupy, one that would be "a kindness" to him. Such correction is as sweet oil. Oil is healing and soothing and here symbolizes the healing effect of correction. Fools hate reproof, wise men plead for it. David not only welcomed wisdom but (see R. V.) promises to pray for such friends when calamities come upon them and in the time when they are overcome by wickedness. When such are cast down by the rocky roadside "they shall hear my words," says David, and they will be sweet. The psalmist's experience, when hunted as a partridge, taught him how to appreciate the petitions of Jonathan, —his friend, whose words to him were "sweet." A careful reading of verse seven reveals David's dire extremity (see Am. R. V.). Death stared him in the face. His soul was torn as "one ploweth and cleaveth the earth."

IV. Protection. "In thee do I put my trust" (R. V.). Though thus brought low David knew where to turn, and one to whom he could look. The church of Christ needs to look to God, to become like him. It needs the transforming, encouraging, energizing vision. David is now taking his eyes off the difficulties and fixing them on the one who enables him to overcome. "Look unto me and be ye saved." Literally his prayer is "make not my soul naked" or "pour not out my soul."

Whoever else a man harms by his sin he harms himself most. Saloonkeepers and their sons most frequently fill the grave of the drunkard.

Gamblers nearly all lose their easy gains. "They that take the sword perish by the sword." Our only safety is Jehovah.

God is constantly answering this last prayer, and we do see the wicked falling into their own nets (Ps. 7:15-16; 37:14, 15; Ex. 7:10).

This lesson has a strong temptation suggestion and application. (1) Prayers that God will hear; (2) Preparation of the mouth and heart; (3) Petition for reproof to learn thereby; (4) Protection from temptation and trial.

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The Times of Ames, Iowa, wrote: "In the evening Bess Gearhart, Morrison came on for the prelude and the success of the Chautauqua program was assured. She knew more stories than any one whom we had ever heard—funny stories about the Irishman and the monkey which tried to shave him and the like. Stories of mothers and babies and little bits of sentiment that caused the lump to come in the throat and the tears to come into the eyes. Bess Gearhart Morrison is not an eloquent

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RESOURCES.	LIABILITIES.
Loans and Investments.. \$435,762.26	Capital stock paid in....\$ 65,000.00
U. S. Bonds and Premiums 72,231.87	Surplus Fund and Profits... 53,041.96
Real Estate, Furniture, Fix. 62,499.50	Circulation..... 63,800.00
Cash and due from Banks... 79,855.22	Deposits..... 468,506.89
Total Resources... \$650,348.85	Total Liabilities... \$650,348.85

Growth as shown in following statements made to Comptroller of Currency.

ASSETS	
July 15, '08	\$262,014.92
June 23, '09	\$411,680.13
March 7, '11	\$512,574.48
April 4, 1913	\$605,870.82
Mar. 4, '19	\$610,212.34
March 4, '15	\$624,867.35
May 1, 1915	\$659,348.85

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Nathan Thomas, well known in Somerset county died in a Homestead hospital on June 7, of hemorrhages and stomach trouble after a brief illness at the age of about 48 years. His parents Mr. and Mrs. Samuel H. Thomas of Anita and five sisters and one brother, Benjamin Thomas, of Boswell survive.
Be not angry that you cannot make others what you wish them to be, since you cannot make yourself what you wish to be.—Thomas a Kempis.