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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Lesson VIII, Aug. 22, 1920.
A PRAYER FOR PARDON.
Psalm 51:1-17.

COMMENTARY—1. Penitence and confession (vs. 1-6). 1. I have mercy upon me—The psalmist acknowledges his need and makes a direct appeal for divine forbearance. His prayer is not for justice, but for mercy. He makes his plea strictly personal, according to thy loving kindness—As a basis for his petition he pleads God's intensity of love. Note the strength of the word loving kindness as indicated by its composition, multitude of thy tender mercies—David's heart swelled with emotion as he realized the greatness of God's mercy. He seemed unable to find language sufficiently strong to express his idea of the divine compassion, blot out—Remove utterly, my transgressions—The psalmist confesses his sins and makes no attempt to hide them. 2. Wash me—The psalmist in true penitence had asked that his transgressions might be blotted out. He now uses another form of expression in asking for freedom from his guilt. 3. I acknowledge—Literally, "I know." The pronoun is emphatic. His sins have all along been known to God. They are before his eyes. (Psa. 90:8); but now he has come to know them himself; they are unceasingly present to his conscience.—Kirkpatrick.

4. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned—David had sinned against himself, against Bathsheba, against Uriah and against his people. Yet his sin was most of all against God; for all sin is against him. The psalmist had an overwhelming sense of the enormity of his sin against God. that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest—This clause together with the one that follows expresses the thought that God was perfectly justified and clear, righteous and holy, in condemning David for his sins. 5. I was shapen in iniquity—Was born in sin. David would not offer the fact of his having been born sinful as an excuse for his grievous sins, but he rather acknowledges the sinfulness of his nature and bewails his deep fall. 6. Desires truth in the inward part—God looks on the outward conduct and also upon the inward state. He desires that the heart shall be right, for from it will flow right actions; therefore he is able and willing to make the springs of our actions right. 7. Shall make me to know wisdom—The soul that repents is receiving wisdom at the hand of God.

8. Prayer for cleansing (vs. 7-12). 7. Purge me with hyssop—The hyssop branch was used as a sprinkler for the cleansing of the leper or for the purifying of the unclean. The reference is to ceremonial purification, but David's prayer is for inward cleansing. I shall be clean—Divine power avails to cleanse the nature. Human effort alone can not accomplish it. I shall be whiter than snow—Snow is an emblem of whiteness, yet even in it there are impurities and it quickly gathers dust. Perfect purity results from the divine washing. 8. Make me to bear joy and gladness—Joy and gladness are far from the heart of him who is shamed down by sin and guilt. Pardon shall make me to know wisdom—The soul that repents is receiving wisdom at the hand of God.

9. Create in me a clean heart—He has asked for the blotting out of his iniquities, and now he prays for a clean heart. Renew a right spirit within me—Make the whole trend of my motives, words and actions right. Let my attitude toward thee and toward all my fellow men be pleasing to thee. 11. Cast me not away from thy presence—The Spirit of the Lord departs from Saul because of his sin, and David did not desire such a punishment to be visited upon himself. He

longed for the assurance and strength that come from the presence of the Lord. Take not Thy holy spirit from me—The penitent longs for the coming of the Holy Spirit in saving power and the saved soul cherishes his presence, but the wicked fears his approach. 12. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation—The sense of restoration to the divine favor was a gracious boon to the sin-harassed soul, yet the psalmist prays for the joy that he knew accompanied the salvation of the soul.

13. Vows to God (vs. 13-17). 13. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways—The penitent and saved soul at once makes vows to God. David saw his work before him and he vowed that he would declare the ways of the Lord to sinners. sinners shall be converted unto thee—The psalmist's confidence in God was unbounded. He believed that as a result of his faithful ministry sinners would be converted, not to himself, but to God. 14. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness—it would seem that David could not get through with his confessing his sin. There rises before him his sin in causing the death of Uriah, and he prays particularly about it. my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness—He would give thanks to God in his heart, but would not stop there. He would let others hear his songs of praise. 15. Open thou my lips—With David's full restoration to the divine favor there would come the opening of his lips in praise to God for his mercy and power. 16. thou desirest not sacrifice—A literal sacrifice could not meet the case in question, for a mere form was not sufficient. There must be hearty repentance, confession and faith. The penitent must come with all his heart to the Lord and implore his mercy. 17. sacrifices of God are a broken spirit—The sacrifice which God is pleased to have the offerer bring is a penitent, submissive, believing spirit. He delights in those who have broken and contrite hearts.

QUESTIONS.—Who is the author of this psalm? What name is given to it? Under what circumstances was it written? For what was it composed? For what does the psalmist pray? What confessions does he make? What does he promise to do? What is a broken and a contrite heart?

PRACTICAL SURVEY

Topic.—Penitential prayer in personal experience.

I. David's awakening.
1. David's awakening. The initial step in David's restoration is taken by God Himself. "The Lord sent Nathan." So it is always. God commences the work of salvation. The moral impotence of unregenerate nature is complete. There can be no moral return except as inspired and assisted by the Holy Spirit. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." The man who has fallen into the "horrible pit," needs help from without. Into this pit David, by his watch of vigilance had fallen, from a great height; and the greater the elevation, the deeper the descent. None can fall so far as an angel of God. "His moral backbone was broken." He could no longer stand upright before God or his conscience. As in every other case, the first necessity was a soul awakening. Moral sensibility, dulled by indulgence, must be quickened. An overwhelming sense of guilt must be forced upon the guilty king. It was tempered with a hope of pardon, to avert a self-hardening despair of deliverance from the penalty and power of sin. Grace provides for both. God hath sent a greater than the prophet; and in Christ has reconciled himself and made possible the world's reconciliation. He convinces of sin that he may show himself ready to forgive. There is no Old Testament parable to be compared in simplicity, beauty and force to that of the ewe lamb. Skillfully concealing its real purpose, it was intended to rouse the king's slumbering sense of justice, and awaken his indignation against the oppressor. The innocent artifice was successful. Little suspecting the application, and moved with the deepest indignation, he instantly pronounced the severest punishment upon the oppressor, and a four-fold restitution for the oppressed. "Be sure your sin will find you out," is the universal law. "Thou art the man," is the personal application. If the parable was tender, the application was terrific. David for the first time looked his transgressor in the face, and quailed before the terrible accusation.

II. Penitence and pardon. The lesson stands first among what are called the penitential psalms, and is sometimes called the singer's guide. The authorship is unquestionable, and the occasion eminently appropriate. It is directed to the chief musician, and therefore was not written for a private meditation merely, but for a public confession. There is no hint of excuse or extenuation. "I have

sinned against the Lord," exclaimed the smitten king, aghast at his own iniquity. The appeal is to the mercy of God as the only ground of hope. "The confession is broad and deep. The transgression is against God, and forgiveness is implored. He is thunder-struck at the discovery of his inward depravity, and completes the confession by its acknowledgment. The very fountain of the life is polluted. Men are constitutionally depraved, and the tap-roots of sin reach back to the earliest moment of being. God's law demands not only outward virtue but inward purity. Ceremonial sacrifices are ineffectual. A broken spirit and a contrite heart only are acceptable."
W. H. C.



Gen. Sir Hugh Trenchard, who now bears the title of Marshal of the Air Forces and Chief of the Air Staff in the British Ministry of the Air. He was one of the first soldiers in the British army to take up flying.

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MISS LUCY MELI, Secretary of Chas. Ponzi's Securities Exchange Company and manager of the main office in Boston for Ponzi, the wizard who is said to have made all the way from \$5,500,000 to \$16,000,000 in a few months.

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AN ABANDONED CLAIM
The Lawyer—Yes, you have a perfectly good cause of action for breach of promise, and of course, the defendant will have the privilege of appearing in court and making his defence. The Client—If he's goin' to show up there's nothin' doin'. I don't want to show the world what a poor fish I've hooked.

SUNDAY AT HOME

A MAN'S IDEAL
To live as gently as I can;
To be, no matter where a man;
To take what comes of food or ill
And cling to faith and honor still;
To do my best and let that stand,
The record of my brain and hand;
And then should failure come to me,
Still work and hope for victory.
To have no secret place wherein
I stoop unseemingly and sin;
To be the same when I'm alone;
And when my every deed is known;
To live undaunted, unafraid
Of any step that I have made;
To be without pretense or sham;
Exactly what men think I am.

THE ESSENCE OF RELIGION

Jesus continually laid the emphasis on actually doing the will of God. It was a glorification of the tasks of everyday life; it was an uncompromising attitude toward evil; it was open-mindedness, repentance, self-control, self-forgetfulness, mercy, purity, the use of one's talents, social democracy, righteousness, equity, faith in the ultimate triumph of right, self-sacrifice, love, that Jesus continually taught.
In the account of Jesus of the last judgment, men are judged by their lives. It is the fruit by which the tree is judged. It is not the labels but the contents that are to be examined. Who then, can enter the Kingdom of Heaven—the churchman, the evangelist, the orthodox, the philanthropist? Perhaps, but not unless they have done the will of the Father who is in Heaven.
Who is the foolish man? The man who hears and believes, but does not live according to his beliefs. Who is the wise man? The man who hears, believes and lives according to his beliefs.

FRIENDSHIP

Friendship is an elastic word, rather. It may be stretched to almost any length, and it can be contracted until it is unbelievably short and small. Like any rubber band, friendship can, of course, be stretched too far—stretched to the breaking-point. But it's very hard to stretch the best sort of friendship so far.
I once knew of two boys who treasured between them the unbreakable sort of friendship. It began when they were little tots, just out of kindergarten, and went on through the years—through grammar school and high school and college. They had differences of opinion, very often; they had more than one squabble, more than one lapse of intimacy. But even during those squabbles and lapses they were always ready to champion each other against the whole of the outside world; always ready to fight for each other and to face punishment for each other.
The war came when they had been out of college for two years. It was quite as a matter of course that they both enlisted in the same regiment and went to France upon the same transport. The war was an adventure to them—a quest, almost—and it was natural that they should seek the adventure, go upon the quest, together.
They came out of the strife quite miraculously unscathed. They had fought through the blood and powder mist of the Vase; they had known the horror of the Argonne. They came back stronger comrades than ever—buds.

Together, with their discharge chevrons red upon their sleeves, they sought work. And they found it, strangely, in the same office—a branch of a great business. And they worked quite happily under the same chief—just as they had worked in the army under the same captain.
Everything would have gone quite smoothly, as it had always gone, if their chief had not fallen ill a year after their return. Everything would have adjusted itself if their chief had recovered from his illness. But he didn't.

His death left the two friends in charge of their branch of the great business—each a logical successor to a bigger job. Neither one was better qualified to hold it than the other one. And both of them wanted it desperately—they wanted it because every real man with a man's pride wants to make good in his work.
For the first time a feeling of distrust began to grow between the two friends. For the first time they began to work furiously, each at his own task—to avoid confidences. For the first time their eyes failed to meet when they glanced at each other.
And then the president of the great business sent for them one morning. He did not send for them at the same time. He called one into his private office, and then, as that one left, he called in the other one.
When the second man came out of the private office he found the first man waiting for him. As he closed the door behind him, gently their eyes met and the friendship that they had known, the memory of their danger places that they had fought through together, was in the look that passed between them. And then the first one spoke:
"Old Chap," he said, and his tone was a shade husky, for he had really wanted the job, "congratulations! You got the place, didn't you?"
The second man shook his head.
"No," he said, simply, "I didn't."
The first man was startled out of his self-possession. He spoke before he thought.
"Eg," he stammered, "I recommended you for the place!"
The second man smiled, and one, seeing his smile, could not help feeling that friendship might, after all, be the most beautiful thing in the world.

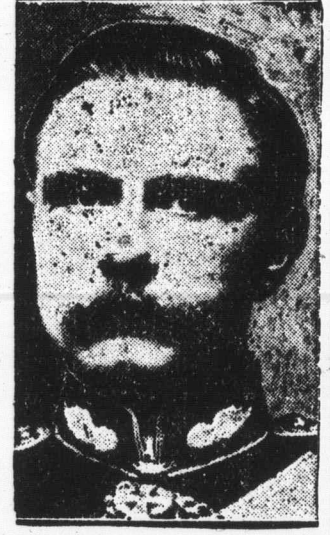
"I know that you did," he said gently. "That's one of the reasons why I just handed in my resignation. The place belongs to you!"
Friendship may be the most elastic



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thing in the world. Some people do not realize the fact, but it can. It can be made to stretch past ambition, and around pride, and over personal vanities. It can be made to lighten the darkest pathway to smooth out the roughest road. It can change almost unchangeable circumstances—it can break almost unbreakable troubles. It can be, after all, one of the most beautiful things in the world.



GENERAL G. F. MILNE, Commander-in-Chief of the British forces operating against the Turks on the Greek frontier.

GROWING PAINS.
They're Misnamed, and a Danger Signal.

The term growing pains formerly means—and still means to many people—a vague aching or pain in the muscles or joints of children, especially those who are growing rapidly, which comes on without apparent cause and continues for an indefinite period. The fact that normal growth is never accompanied by pain, and that pain of any sort in any part of a child's body indicates that something is wrong, often fails to shake the popular belief in this fallacy; nor are people much to blame for it. Not long ago physicians held the same belief.
In a medical treatise that was an authority, and deservedly so, a quarter of a century since, a chapter is devoted to the description of growing pains; and although at that time certain medical men were becoming skeptical of this affection, they were the more advanced of their profession. Many a lame person to-day is a living witness to the prevalence of this belief among the doctors in his childhood, for in the great majority of cases growing pains are an expression of rheumatism, of neuralgia, or of tuberculous disease of the spine or joints.
Rheumatism in childhood is a very serious disease, not so much because of its severity as because of the mildness of its symptoms. The pain is often very slight, and not infrequently it is confined to the muscles of one or more of the extremities and spares the joints entirely. The attack may be of short duration; and when, after a few days of limping or complaint of pains in the arms, the trouble goes away, the mother may congratulate herself that it was nothing but growing pains. But meanwhile the rheumatic poison has been at work internally, and the victim is handicapped for the rest of his life by a crippled heart that was injured at the time the pains were felt.
Sometimes a slight pain is felt in the knee, and the child limps for a day or two. By and by he complains of another brief attack in the knee. After several such attacks, each a little longer and more serious than the preceding, a doctor is called and diagnoses hip disease, of which pain in the knee is one of the most constant symptoms.
Of course, every child has little aches and pains caused by bumps or by overusing his muscles in rough play, from which he soon recovers. But those are not growing pains, for they have a definite cause, entirely apart from the absolutely normal and therefore painless process of growth.

YOUR LONG LIFE.
Scientific Facts That Few People Consider.

How long have you lived? Certainly for untold millions of years. True, the individual that you recognize as yourself came into the world only a short time ago. But the "germ-plasm" which is the essential element of your being, is of a derivation inconceivably ancient.

You began your present career very humbly, as a single cell about 1-125 of an inch in diameter. That cell split into two, the two into four, the four into eight, and so on, this sort of progressive multiplication accomplishing the building, or growth, of your body.
The tiny original cell had a nucleus, the function of which was reproductive—in other words, to multiply. Surrounding the nucleus was the "cell-plasm," which had to do with nutrition.

What could be more simple? And yet such a cell is the most mysterious thing in the world. It holds a secret the revelation of which would solve a puzzle that has up to now defied scientific inquiry—the secret of the principle of life.
Your body is a congeries of cells, the progeny and descendants of the first tiny one, and each one of them contains the same sort of cell-plasm. But the latter did not originate with yourself; it has been handed down to you through innumerable generations, and in turn you pass it along to your children.

Thus, in a very literal sense, we go on living after we are dead. We survive in our descendants, their lives being an extension of our own lives. The cell-plasm itself is a substance, indistinguishable from ordinary protoplasm, but it contains the "chromosomes," which are of all things in this world the most wonderful. For they are the carriers of inheritance traits.
You received from your parents twenty of these inheritance bundles, ten from your mother and ten from your father. To-day every cell of your body contains the same twenty characteristic chromosomes—the same bundles.
They represent the traits of innumerable ancestors, and may be said to stand for your individuality, being accountable for everything that you are, from the shape of your nose and the color of your eyes to the peculiarities of your temperament, disposition and mental equipment.
In a young cell, viewed beneath a high-power microscope, there is seen something that looks like a tangled thread. Later, this thickens and shortens, taking the form of a rod. The rod finally breaks into twenty pieces, which are the inheritance bundles.
Your mother, out of her twenty bundles, could give you only ten; your father likewise. Thus it was purely a matter of chance which ones you got.



Marquis of Queensbury, who died in Johannesburg of pneumonia. He passed through Canada last year, and on his return to England a receiving order was made against him.

"I suppose you have discovered that marriage is a tie," suggested the care-free bachelor. "We discovered that it isn't 'conjugated,'" replied the hem-pocked husband.