

DAVID'S REPENTANCE

"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned."

STORY BY THE "HIGHWAY AND BYWAY" PREACHER

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Scripture Authority:—2 Samuel 12:1-23.

SERMONETTE.

Sin, however great, is as nothing when the forgiving grace of God is taken into account. "Where sin abounds, grace doth much more abound." It is an awful thing to be a great sinner, but there is a more awful thing, and that is for the sinner to know no repentance. David sinned. Oh, so grievously, committing almost every sin in the decalogue, but he repented most gloriously, and herein is to be found the bright side of this dark picture. Out of the depths into which his sin had cast him David looked up into the face of a forgiving God and found help. And notice how his sense of guilt shuts out every one but God. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned." This was not literally true, neither did David mean it so. But what he did mean was that sin when committed is first of all and above all committed against God. Such consciousness of the relation of the soul to God is the evidence of true repentance. To realize that first of all the sin has been committed against God and that it is there that the soul must first come for forgiveness and cleansing prepares and fits the soul for the further steps of true repentance, which are open confession, as complete restoration as is possible to those wronged, and reconciliation with man as well as God. True repentance also means a turning from sin, or as the little girl put it: Feeling bad enough to quit. Yes, David's sin was great, but his repentance was great, also. And herein, I am persuaded, was one of the elements of his character which made him a man "after God's own heart." It was because of his desperate need that he could in faith claim so much of God. As Christ said, in rebuke to the self-righteous Pharisee when the sinful woman came weeping, washing his feet with her tears and wiping them with the hairs of her head: "Her sins which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. If man is a great sinner, God has provided a greater Saviour, whose 'blood cleanseth from ALL sin.' The sum of human guilt is never equal to the sum of the Divine mercy. Paul, the apostle, saw himself the chiefest of sinners, but at the same time he saw that Christ was 'able to save unto the uttermost.' This, then, is ever the bright side of the picture of human guilt: Sin vanishing before the cleansing power of the blood of Christ.

THE STORY.

"Thou art the man!" The words rang out clear and distinct, filling all the great audience room of the palace. With finger pointed in the direction of the startled king the prophet Nathan stood. His stern face and tense bearing betokened the towering moral strength of the man of God in that trying hour. In obedience to the command of God he had come to bring King David face to face with his awful sins. And notwithstanding the possible danger to himself as a result of his unwelcome message, yet he delayed not but boldly entered into the presence of the king and told his parable about the rich man who had taken the one little ewe lamb of his poor neighbor, notwithstanding the rich abundance of flocks and herds with which he had been blessed. And the king had listened with rising wrath. Perhaps the burden of guilt in his own heart made him the less tolerant, and as the prophet ended his story he thundered: "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die." Then it was that the prophet, drawing himself to his full height and pointing his finger at the king, cried,

with intense earnestness: "Thou art the man!" The king recoiled as though struck, his face grew ashen and his form trembled as though he would fall. "The man shall surely die!"—"Thou art the man!" He had pronounced the judgment upon his own head. He grasped the side of the throne to steady himself, and with bowed head and averted face he listened while Nathan reviewed all the black record which he had written against his life. It was all true. He did not seek to deny it or palliate his conduct. He had kept these things hidden in his heart during all these months. He had thought that his secret was safe with the few confidential friends; and he had persuaded himself that it was a closed incident. But he had not reckoned God into the account, and lo and behold the awful record of sin which he had been trying to forget was suddenly spread before him. He sank into his chair and buried his face in his hands. How long he sat thus he knew not, but when he looked up the prophet had gone, and he found himself alone. Alone! No not alone, for where there is sinful heart willing to hear the accusing voice of God, there is God present to deal in love and mercy with that soul. And there God was that day. Not as king but as guilty sinner did David meet God. Stripped of kingly robes and position of state, separated from his riches and power he stood a naked soul before the searching eye of God. Ah, how black now did his sin appear unto him. Ah, who would have thought that the first misstep into the pleasures of sin could have plunged him so low! Was it possible that this was David who had professed so much before his people? Was this the David who only yesterday had carried out his formal obligations before the Lord in the sight of all the people? Was this the David who had established the ark in its place in the tabernacle in Jerusalem, and had then been filled with the ambition to build a temple for the Lord? Upon the ground before his throne he threw himself in his anguish of soul.

"Have mercy upon me, O God," was all he could cry. Was there forgiveness enough in heaven to compass the enormity of his sin? How dark the way seemed? Would God answer? Dare he throw himself utterly upon God and his mercy? He had stolen another man's wife, and then to cover up his sin he had killed that man. He was worthy of death. Dare he let God do with him as justice demanded? Many a man in the kingdom had been judged worthy of death and been killed who had not done as wickedly as he. Why should he ask or expect any less sentence? Yes, and had he not pronounced sentence upon himself when in answer to the prophet Nathan's story he had said: "The man that hath done this thing shall surely die." So the struggle went on in the heart of David as the succession of barriers of the will were broken down and true repentance brought him to the point where he was willing to cast himself utterly upon the mercy and justice of God. True repentance never seeks to make conditions. It seeks not to excuse or palliate the sin. And at last when David had given up utterly and was willing if need be to pay the penalty with his life for his wrong doing, he found peace. It was in this attitude of heart which the prophet Nathan found him late that same afternoon. "I have sinned against the Lord," David cried in broken voice. "Let that be done unto me which is pleasing in the sight of the Lord. And the prophet Nathan came and laid his hand upon the head of David, and said: "The Lord hath put away thy sin. Thou shalt not die." "The Lord hath put away MY sin," repeated David softly to himself. How sweet the words sounded. "According to the multitude of the tender mercies thou hast blotted out my transgressions," he continued to himself. How blessed it was to feel that burden of guilt taken away. What awful months those had been during which he had kept the sin hidden in his heart and had remained unrepentant before God. And now how wonderful it was to feel that he had been brought back to God and that the old fellowship had been restored. And then came the yearning for a nearer walk with God and a share in his service, and he prayed: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me by thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." When a girl screams when the light goes out it shows either that she has a guilty conscience or wants to have.

WEALTH BY BILLIONS

VALUE OF FARM PRODUCTS FOR THE YEAR 1907.

WHAT THE EARTH PRODUCES

Agriculturalists Have It in Their Power to Curtail the Operation of Trusts and Prevent Unequal Distribution of Money.

Farms of the United States in 1907 will produce more wealth than all the gold mines of the world have produced in 20 years. Conservative estimates place the value of all farm products at approximately \$7,000,000,000, or about \$200,000,000 more than their value in 1906. The farmer is the magician, the alchemist, that makes use of nature to enrich the world. The farmers' corn crops alone average a billion dollars a year, and all the other cereals another billion, with cotton, tobacco, hay and flax worth another billion, and the fruits, garden truck and animals a few billions more. Thus it can be seen that the farmer, produces wealth greater than taken from it by the miners for its precious gems and minerals. There is no other foundation for the wealth and business of the world other than the land. Men cannot eat gold; the coal is only useful to him as a means of utilizing what the earth grows; there is nothing in the mineral world that will sustain life, or anything that is necessary unless mortals eat, drink and wear clothes. When there is abundance of agricultural productions, there are prosperous times, and a famine when the opposite occurs. The whole financial fabric, the entire commercial system, is dependent upon the farmer, and his work. One billion dollars is an amount beyond the comprehension of the average man. The life of an individual is not sufficiently long to count it cent by cent should he work ten hours a day, from his tenth year until death. This is the average value of the corn crop alone that the farmers of the United States produce yearly. One would believe that if only a small portion of the vast wealth, which the farmers produce could be only retained in the agricultural communities, there would be a class of rich men greater than in any commercial community. Yet statistics show that for the amount of wealth yearly produced, the farmers are retainers of only a small portion of it. The tendency is toward concentration of wealth in great financial centers. It is in these places, and by the control of this great wealth, that trusts are built up, and the machinery put in operation that systematically draws from the agricultural sections the great wealth produced. Farmers can, if they will, bring about a change by a simple adherence to the home trade principle; by patronage of local business institutions instead of the concerns in the large cities. D. M. CARR.

Beware of Peddlers. It will always be found best to avoid dealing with wanderers through the country who have something to dispose of particularly those who are not known to you as thoroughly honest. For years stoves, furniture, books, and hundreds of articles have been hawked about the country by itinerant agents. Some have more or less merit, but all are sold at enormous profits, far greater than would be required by some home dealer. When money is paid to the come-ago traveler, just so much money is taken away from circulation in a community, and it is going to remain.

A Willing Worker. Deacon Ebony—So you is on de church fair kermittie, is you, Mose? Ah'm powful to yere it. V. had you gwine t' do at de fair? Mistah Mokeby—Ah's t' hab charge ob de crap table.—Puck.

FOR THE HOME TOWN. Be a "booster" for your home town. By patronizing other than local institutions you are using a boomerang that is likely to fly back and do you injury when you least expect it. No one can be an ideal citizen and talk and work against the interests of his home town. So long as you are a resident of a community, do your part towards assisting it to greater progress.

Those who are opposed to the evils of capital concentration, the building up of trusts that work against the interests of the masses, should consider the fact that any and every system of business that depletes a section of the country of the wealth it produces strengthens the system of business and financial concentration. One of the most baneful systems that at the present is working against the interests of the smaller cities and towns, and is the greatest medium of draining wealth from agricultural communities, is the mail-order plan of doing business. From some rural towns

POOR GOODS, CHEAP PREMIUMS.

How Money is Sometimes Squandered in Patronizing Prize-Package Concerns.

The economical housewife is a blessing. She who will watch the pennies and dimes can greatly assist her husband in accumulating money for use during days of adversity. Quite often women through their anxiety to assist in saving, and not having a training along business lines, make foolish expenditures. How often do we find women in the country towns and districts engaged in buying soaps, spices, teas and coffees from some club-order concern with a view of getting cheap premiums that are offered with each lot of goods? There is no economy in this method. Women as well as men should remember that there is never anything of value given without an equitable compensation, and when purchased on the club plan the profits paid are generally enormous. You cannot get something for nothing. If you desire to purchase \$10 or \$20 worth of groceries, the best place to buy them is at some responsible grocery establishment in your own town. You can see what you are getting, and you know that the goods must be good or you can return them. When you get a premium with a lot of soaps or spices or extracts, you will find that while the goods may appear all right, there is a great chance of fraud that you little look for. The bars of soap will be of light weight, poorly dried, made of cheaper materials, and would be dear at your home store at half the price that you are compelled to pay for them. The spices will be half ground bark, and the extracts synthetic, never made from fruit flavors, but out of the dirty-looking coal-tar, a by-product of gas-manufacturing, and even the teas and coffees will be of the poorest kind and doctored up to look well. Then how about the premiums? You will find that they, too, are of the cheapest class, and could be purchased at the local store for half what they are represented to be worth. Women are only doing their duty in trying to assist their husbands, but too often they waste money by patronizing premium and club concerns that operate from distant cities in small towns and rural communities.

SAPS LOCAL WEALTH.

Systems That Draw from Circulation Money That Should Be Kept Home.

That city, town or community from which the major part of the earnings of the people are sent elsewhere is destined to go backward and take a place in the rear of progressive communities. It will never have the full quota of wealth that is due it, and that it should have. It is the profits, the amounts that represent the surplus above cost of production of products, and the earnings of the laborer above his expenses of living, and the legitimate profits of the merchants and others in business that makes a community wealthy. When these earnings are diverted to foreign places their local tax-paying and up-building power is destroyed and the places receiving the money acquire a benefit. If you desire to see the greatest measure of prosperity in your own town, keep every dollar you can in circulation at home. The bank corporation or individual that has its existence elsewhere and has a mortgage on your farm or other property, enjoys a means of making you bear a portion of the burden of taxes of another section than your own. It matters not by what means your money reaches outside your own bailiwick, it results in the same evil. You are helping those who pay none of the cost of maintaining the institution of your own town and county.

Big Seating Capacity. London theaters, music halls and concert halls provide seating accommodation for 327,000 people.

From 40 to 50 per cent. of the trade goes to foreign concerns. If this trade were confined to the home town, its business would be doubled, employment given to twice as many people; the profits accruing from mercantile business would seek local investment, and within a few years the population of the town would be more than doubled, and all living within the district would be benefited.

Every kind and class of goods have a real value, and this value is based upon the cost of the raw material, the price of the labor in producing it, and the cost of distribution. Whenever there are big bargains offered in any line, and goods offered "below value," be careful and see that you are not getting an inferior article.

It is well to be on guard when dealing with itinerant agents, sellers of groceries, carriages, machinery, patent rights, etc. It is a pretty good idea to never take grab-bag chance when you wish to buy an article. See what you are purchasing before paying for it.

Caleb's Faithfulness Rewarded

Sunday School Lesson for Oct. 27, 1907

Specially Prepared for This Paper

LESSON TEXT.—Joshua 14:6-15. Memory verses 7, 8.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things."—Matt. 25:23.

PLACE.—Joshua's capital was at Gilgal; Caleb's inheritance at Hebron, 29 miles south of Jerusalem.

Comment and Suggestive Thought. Caleb.—Family Origin.—"Caleb . . . the Kenezite," the descendant of Kenas, the son of Esau. "The probabilities are that Caleb, or his father, became members of the tribe of Judah by adoption" (Prof. Beecher), like Hobab, Ruth and Heber. "The faith of this family was preeminently the fruit of conviction, and not the accident of heredity. It had a firmer basis than that of most Israelites. It was woven more closely into the texture of their being, and swayed their lives more powerfully. It is pleasing to think that there may have been many such proselytes; that the promise of Abraham may have attracted souls from the east, and the west, and the north, and the south" (a foretaste of the glorious fulfillment yet to come).—Blaikie in Expositor's Bible.

He was born while the Israelites were still in slavery in Egypt, for he was "40 years old . . . when Moses . . . send him from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land" (v. 7).

His Character.—1. Caleb was a great and marked man, but what is often called "a self-made man;" rather, a God-made man. Coming from without the nation, he became a prince, and a power in the nation because of his faith in God and utilization of all that God had given him.

2. Mr. Tuck in his Revelation by Character represents Caleb as "quite an ordinary man . . . no genius," but the message of his life was that "he did commonplace things in an uncommon spirit. The uncommon thing about Caleb was precisely this—his religion was thorough . . . he 'wholly followed the LORD' (v. 8)."

3. On the other hand, Matheson in Representative Men, calls Caleb a leader and explorer, "capable of Pisgah glimpses," his life pitched upon a hill; he could see things afar off; he was the real hero of the exploring expedition. "Was faith to drop her wings at the very gate of Paradise!"

4. By faith and faithfulness were the living heart of Caleb's character. He was sincere to the core. His faith endured 45 years without fading or faltering. "Caleb is one of those men whom we meet with seldom in Bible history, but whenever we do meet them we are the better for the meeting. Bright and brave, strong, modest and cheerful, there is honesty in his face, courage and decision in the very pose of his body, and the calm confidence of faith in his very look and attitude.

5. Caleb met opposition with courage and faith, when "my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt" (v. 8). They could stone him, but, like the prophets of old, he never wavered.

6. Caleb was of a thankful disposition and full of cheer. He did not dwell on his desert trials, or the 45 years' delay, or the opposition of his brethren, or his failure to change their minds; but on what God had done for him on his promises, on his long and healthy life of usefulness, so that even at 85 he could say with Xavier in his dream realized in his life, "And yet more, O Lord, yet more."

7. "The Lord hath kept me alive." As he promised. One promise fulfilled gave the assurance that the other would be. But Caleb's clean, active life was one of the means to this healthful old age. Maclaren in the Sunday School Times warns the young thus:

"The old man of 85 is vigorous and hale as when he tramped through the land nearly half a century ago. The life that is dictated by Christian principle directly contributes to physical health and longevity. Insurance offices find that clergymen live longer than the average. In England some offices have separate tables for total abstainers, whom they insure at a lower rate than others. It is true still that sinners do 'not live out half their days.' In our great cities every year numbers of lads from the country, who have been 'going the pace,' have to drop out of the race.

8. "Yet I am as strong this day as I was." Spoken to give assurance that he could take possession of the land. "This old veteran, whose services would have entitled him to almost any reward he might ask, did not seek for a soft place for his declining years, but authority to do yet more hard fighting."—Prof. Beecher.