

1 - 139 Ps. 1st Mt. (L. M.)

2 - 142 H. (C. M.)

3 - 144 H. (C. M.)

1. 139 Ps. 1st Mt. (L. M.)

2. 433 H. (C. M.)

3. 19th Ps. 2nd Mt. (S. M.)

Oxford 10th Sept. 1871.

Hopewell 29 Oct morning 1871

"Who can understand his errors? Cleanse

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thou me from secret faults." 19th Ps. : 12.

There are two great truths involved in the relations we sustain to God, which we fully recognise when they come before our minds but both of them we are apt to forget. Of both of them, therefore, it is needful we should be reminded. The first of these truths

is that we see only a small part of our sins, (i.e. there are sins in each of us, that we do not know ourselves) while we forget that not one of them escapes the

Knowledge of God. By consequence we are not

so innocent in the sight of God as we are in

our own. Many causes combine to this state of

things. Among them we enumerate

1. Self-love - mistaken Self-Love. Moral Philosophers

mention three impulsive motives & restraints. Selfish-

ness, Self-Love, and Conscience. 1. Under the influence of Selfishness we consult only what we imagine will do us good for the moment in the way of ^{immediate} gratification, without regard to our own ultimate good, and with utter disregard to the interest of others.

2. Self-love is a higher impulse, in that it has respect to the consequences of immediate gratification upon ^{our} highest good ultimate, & therefore counsels us not to go into a temporary & fleeting enjoyment, which may end in a certain future injury. But its failure as a guide consists in its ignoring the consequences of a given course of conduct as they affect the interests of others.

3. Nor are these ^{defective} influences ever corrected save by the authoritative supremacy of an enlightened Conscience echoing the voice of God in the soul. But it is this mistaken self-love which while it is in

a degree higher than selfishness, still looks only to what it considers the best interests of self, that judges only partially and because it is blind to its own faults, and even fails to see the large majority of its own errors. This Self-Love however presents itself in another form and that is in an aversion to search into the heart, and know these faults. There is a timid & unwise dread of lifting the covering of the heart lest the scene there & thus disclosed may shock the sensibilities, and disturb the serenity or peace of a slumbering Conscience. The deceitfulness of the human heart, its desperate wickedness; and the consequent perversion of the understanding, and the weakening of the judgment, give rise to countless delusions and artifices which make us believe much more favorably of ourselves, both as to our character and our

state than we ought to believe, or than there is
any ground to believe. We are thus tempted to
palliate and excuse many glaring imperfec-
tions in ourselves ~~and others~~; and even in
regard to those we do judge to be ^{most} deeply ag-
gravated in their guilt, we fail to bestow
upon them that condemnation which they
deserve. ^{Introduce} Now while Self Love leads us to this
very inadequate estimate of our own errors
we must be reminded that the judgment
of God is according to truth & righteousness; that
in His sight the very Heavens are not clean; that
He "sets our iniquities before Him, our secret sins
in the light of His countenance;" that "there is not
a word in my tongue but lo! O Lord, thou knowest it
altogether;" that "the Lord knoweth the thoughts of man;"

"He has searched us & known us;" that "He knows our
 down sitting and our uprising & understands
our thought afar off;" that "He compasses our
 path and is acquainted with all our ways;"
 hence of Him it is true & of Him alone that
 "He will bring every work into judgment
 with every secret thing, whether it be good,
 or whether it be evil." These things being
 so, I trust the old forgotten truth may
 now be impressed deeply upon every
 mind this day, that "no man is so innocent
 in the sight of God, as he is in his own.

The Second of these truths which need to
 be re impressed is that with regard to
 our Sins it is not only true that we are
 ignorant of the existence of many of them,

but
that we have forgotten very many of those
we once knew; and so the inferential
moral from this very trite truth is
that our remembrance of our sins is
not to be the ground of judgment of their
guilt;— they are recorded in all their
aggravations in God's Book of remembrance.
He forgets nothing— because there is no
past with Him. We do. We are deeply
affected ^{at the time of the commission of} ~~with~~ a crime or fault, or
error, or besetting sin of which we
have been convicted by our own consciences.
Such an occurrence pains us deeply;—
we mourn over it, and regret it, and
then gradually time heals the wound, and
we allow it to pass, almost entirely from the

mind. Even of things occurring years ago of this character we entertain but a feeble impression comparatively. But it is an awful thought that with God we are in full view committing those very sins now, because every thing is present with Him. They are past & over with us, because we are progressive creatures, not lingering a moment on our journey, but going on incessantly towards the throne of Judgment, while all that we call past & present & future are alike but one Now to God. With Him a thousand years are as one day, & one day as a thousand years." "He is the same yesterday, today & forever!"

O could we ^{cast} ~~get~~ a single glance into that dread register which God keeps of our lives

could we go over it chapter by chapter and
verse by verse, and read there sins of thought
& motive which we perhaps have never known,
"secret sins;"— sins of youth & manhood we
had forgotten but of which we are keenly re-
minded now; sins of weakness; sins of want
of moral courage; sins of positive wilfulness;
sins we designed but never accomplished; sins
we both designed & accomplished; how sh^d
we be able to endure the shock which
would visit our souls and agitate our
hearts, awakening our minds "to brood
o'er guilty deeds— long past & perhaps
forgotten by us— but oh, not forgotten of
God, — not forgotten of God!" Then would
you understand & fully enter into David's feelings

in 12^o v. 40^o P. "mine iniquities have taken hold upon me so that I ~~cannot~~ am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head; therefore my heart faileth me."

It is well & wise for us then in the outset of our study of this passage to have impressed upon our minds the two great truths we have been considering, 1^o That there are ^{so} many more sins in us ^{of which} ~~that~~ we ourselves are ignorant that we are not so innocent in the sight of God, as we are in our own. 2^o That we are not to allow our recollection of our sins to guide us in estimating our guilt, but to realize that all of our sins & all of their aggravations are recorded in God's eternal Book of Remembrance, and by that register we are to be judged in a future day.

Now no man can reflect upon this subject without confessing that he has offended God in more forms, & with greater aggravations, than it is in his power to specify, or recall to his recollection. We ask you now to endeavor today to consider a certain number of the more obvious of these forms of sin merely as illustrations of the solemn truth that no man can fully "understand his errors," and that every man needs to be "cleansed from secret faults";

II. Consider the proper Spirit with which we sh^d confess our "errors," & "secret faults";

III. The advantages of this exercise.

I. Among the first and most important of our errors is the neglect of the great concern, our Soul's salvation. This is indeed the foundation of all the rest.

If we lived habitually under a realization of our

eternity; if we trained ourselves to dwell upon the fact that the things of earth are transitory & unsubstantial and passing away, and that these are to be succeeded by a state endless and unchanging; were we at all times conscious within our own hearts that we are lost and ruined by nature and by practice, and that, living thus and dying thus, our eternity will only be hopeless & remediless woe; and if we had a stimulating and inciting conviction that Jesus Christ is the only Savior, and going to Him should be received, welcomed, pardoned, & saved, we should have laid the only foundation that can answer on which to build a hope not only of deliverance from hell, but of deliverance from sin, and hence of preparation for heaven. But alas! this mother of all sin - unbelief - practical infidelity -

influences the majority of us to neglect this grand interest, to despise or treat with contempt, indifference, disobedience, & perversion, all the riches of God's goodness forbearance & long-suffering; careless to know that "the goodness of God is intended to lead us to repentance". Not many realize their aggravated guilt in such indifference - they reason, "I do not mean to treat God with disrespect - I only do not feel my need, &c. Hood; - the very indiff is a crime; - want of regard is an insult - then disobedience; - then Perversion; - "because sentence" &c.

Remember the charge "Israel doth not know" &c.

And the solemn question "How shall we escape?" does derive ~~from~~ its solemnity not ~~dependent upon~~ any overt act but simply from "neglect." This is one of the common errors

of which many are guilty & yet which they do not understand. This is chargeable upon the majority of my hearers! But

Even in regard to those who profess to have sought and found the Savior precious in the pardon of their Sins, there are many errors of which they do not understand the guilt. One of them is

2. The formality of their devotions. We are creatures of habit. What is full of interest to us at first becomes stale by repetition - even prayer and reading the word of God - liable to become a mere task - a talisman - a lifeless form, - without heart - & even knowing this we go on - oh, we greatly need to be stirred up to pray against lifeless prayer, - lifeless reading, - lifeless zeal, - lifeless religion; - who can understand his errors?

3. Another of our errors, not fully recognised by ourselves, is the narrow and selfish scope of our Christian Spirit of Charity - Love. Paul's greatest of the three, seems to be the Smallest in the practice of many. And yet while it is the office of Faith to realize the Invisible, &c - Of Hope to give us well grounded aspirations after future Bliss - it is Love that gives us wings to fly to the Savior - to give up all for him; - to lay ourselves out to serve God & our fellow men, to enable & incline us to love all men with a love of benevolence; to make us willing ^{endure} to ~~make~~ sacrifices ^{in order} to cause joy

to the suffering; to reclaim the wanderer,
 to "turn many to righteousness," "to convert
 one soul from the error of his way - to save
 a soul from death, and hide a multitude
 of sins;" to resemble X^t. in "going about
 continually doing good;" to burn for
 souls; to travail for the increase of
 His Kingdom; to endure hardness as a
 good soldier of J.C.; to seek out
 the suffering & the sorrowful; to rejoice
 with those who rejoice & weep with those
 that weep; to love & honor others who may
 be outside our denominational pale; not
 to denounce any merely because they have not
 entered the Ch. of X^t. by the same door through
 which we entered; not to turn all others but ours

to "the uncovenanted mercies of God;" which really means to no mercies at all - for God has not revealed to us in His word any other class of mercies save those are covenanted; Let all who live at this poor dying, selfish, uncharitable a rate feel that they are indulging errors they surely do not understand, & pray "Cleanse se". But another error

4. Is the want of a submissive spirit under the rod of the Divine affliction. It is not to be expected from the mere man of the world - but Christian. "Whom the Lord loveth"
5. The indulgence of an irritable temper. "Slow to wrath." Consider Him who endured se
6. The indulgence of the license of the tongue.

James 3 Ch.

Take these as samples — add to them your individual besetting sins whatever they are — and you will feel that you have never fully understood your errors & need to pray "Cleansc" etc.

How Confess. I answer negatively

(1) Not as a censure on others — "We all have faults —"

(2) Not vaguely — do not feel what they say — comes from nothing & leads to nothing. But affirmatively —

1. We sh^d Confess with deep conviction before God that we are ourselves are guilty

2. That we are sinning against God only

3. That we have nothing to do with other men's sins — but our own will

be enough to occupy us to study and
"understand" and pray "Cleansing"

4. That we cannot obtain deliverance
except from God. No person can
pronounce absolution - no tears can
wash away guilt - nothing but
the blood of J.C. applied by the
Holy Spirit can wash away
guilt & cleanse from sin, &
reconcile us to God. Go to
God then thro' X^r & cry "Cleansing"
& then continue to "watch and
pray" for "the Spirit indeed may
be willing but the flesh is weak."

III What advantages result from all
this? 1. Our repentance will be renewed

2. We shall feel that we need X^t all along the path - it will en dear his Cross & Grace.
3. It will kill Pride in us.
4. It will kill selfishness
5. It will make us willing to receive reproof - "We are not perfect!"
6. Teach us submission
7. Increase our charitable judgments towards the infirmities of others.
8. It will make us long after Heaven, where we can sin no more -
9. It increase our caution -
10. Enable us to diminish & cut off some of our imperfections, & make some progress in holiness - tho' not perfect

In Conclusion,

The great lesson to be learned from all this is simply that all our errors, secret sins and presumptuous faults arise from the deep inward fountain of Native, Original Depravity &

therefore we must constantly seek for more grace to mortify and crucify & destroy more & more the principle of Sin.

We may cut off shoots & scions but they spring up again. Root.

We must pray God "Create in me a clean heart & renew a right spirit within me!!"