

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

INTRODUCTION. — Perhaps an extract from Spurgeon's "Golden Treasury" may be the fittest introduction we can give, he says: "The great sin of David is not to be excused, but it is well to remark that his case has an exceptional collection of specialities in it. He was a man of very strong passions, a soldier and an Oriental Monarch, having despotic power; no other king of his time would have felt any compunction for having acted as he did, and hence there were not around him those restraints of custom and association which, when broken through, rendered the offence the more nonstrous. He never hints at any form of extenuation, nor do we mention these facts in order to apologize for his sin which was detestable to the last degree \* \* \* When we dwell upon his sin let us remember his penitence and upon the long series of chastisements which rendered the after part of his life such a mournful history."

NOTES AND COMMENTS.—Ver. 1. The Psalm opens with a prayer for mercy, he appeals for this at once before he mentions his sin. "According—loving kindness:" love and kindness sweetly blended in one, an overflow of deep, tender, parental sympathy. "Multitude—tender mercies:" he remembers the mercies of God in the past, and pleads that they may be restored in full measure now. "Blot out:" totally obliterate as writing from a tablet, cancel for ever.

Ver. 2. "Wash:" lit. multiply to wash me, pardon is not enough, he is vile and must be purified, and he asks God to do it for none other can. "Cleanse:" as if he said, by any means take away my defilement; if water-washing will not do it, then try fire, or whatever thou wilt, only rid me of my sin.

Ver. 3. "I acknowledge:" including a willingness to know his sin and a readiness to confess it. "Ever before me:" to an awakened conscience the sense of sin is vivid and constant; it is a living agony.

Ver. 4. "Against thee:" great as the sin was against man yet this is swallowed up, lost, in the sense of its enormity before God; face to face with him the sinner can only think of the offence against the Holy and Great God. "Justified:" when he uttered the condemnation of David's guilt; if the sentence and its execution were put forth the judge would be just.

Ver. 5. "Shapen in iniquity:" he confesses that he is sinful by nature, that the evil was in him and that it only needed the occasion for the manifestation of the sad fact.

Ver. 6. "Truth in the inward or hidden parts:" integrity in his most secret life, both of conscience and of mind. (Ps. 16: 7. "Reins:") there the same thought as "hidden part" here; God asks for sincerity and true holiness in the life seen by no eye but His. A great French pear is called *la bon Chretien*, the good Christian, because they say it is never rotten at the core. "Make me to know:" what David would know, the will of God to give, and his to receive were in harmony.

Ver. 7. "Hyssop:" used on Levitical purifications as after touching a corpse, and more especially for leprosy, the striking type of sin. (Num. 19: 6; Lev. 14: 4-7.) "Whiter than snow:" a strong eastern figure signifying perfect purity. (See Isa. 1: 18.)

Ver. 8. "Hear joy and gladness:" that is, by speaking, my sins forgiven. "Bones that Thou hast broken:" a strong figure, signifying complete prostration, bodily and mental. The thought is not simply of broken bones, but of crushed, bringing the severest suffering. "May rejoice:" the suffering Thou hast inflicted for my sin may be healed, and the consciousness of thy favour bring gladness and rejoicing.

Ver. 9. "Hide thy face" see Psalm 32; 1, sin covered, or as Is. 38: 17. "Cast behind Thy back:" not only to be forgiven, but forgotten. It was ever before himself—vs. 3—but he would that God would hide it. The true

order, the first leads to the second. "All:" not only this sin, but others which the light of an awakened conscience had brought to him.

Ver. 10. But David wants something more than cleansing and purification, he wants a re-creation, a new heart. "Create—clean heart:" just what the awakened sinner of to-day feels his need of and prays for, the whole spiritual nature to be made anew. "A right spirit:" a steadfast spirit resting upon God and so not disquieted by care and fears.

Ver. 11. "Cast me not away:" but let me remain in the favour and blessing of Thy presence which here, as hereafter, means "fulness of joy." "Holy Spirit:" given at his anointing by S. anuel (1 Sam. 16: 13), and which if taken away meant rejection, as with Saul, by God and the people. (1 Sam. 16: 14; 15: 23; 13: 14.)

Ver. 12. "Restore:" what I have lost, "the joy," and that I may keep it "uphold," sustain, preserve me in the right way. I am quite unable to keep myself. "Free spirit:" liberal, generous, opposed to servile, slavish, let it keep me from the slavery of sin.

Ver. 13. Now we have the blessed outcome of God's forgiveness and love. "Then—teach:" the first part of the working of the spirit of forgiveness in the soul to tell others of the great forgiveness. His sin had been great in the occasion that it had given to the enemies of God to blaspheme, no small part of his punishment was in the knowledge of this, so he earnestly longs to be the instrument of healing the breach by telling of the pardoning grace of God.

Ver. 14. "Bloodguiltiness," or "bloods:" the plural is exclusively used to denote bloodshed or murder (so Gen. 4: 10); there was no freedom until this guilt was cancelled. "Sing aloud:" after forgiveness comes praise. *Spurgeon* quaintly says: "A great sinner pardoned makes a great singer." "Thy righteousness:" thy mercy, thy justice. (So 1 John 1: 9.) "Faithful and just:" or righteous.

Ver. 15. "Open—lips:" he had been as it were dumb because of his guilt (see Ps. 37: 2-9); an unforgiven sinner cannot speak the praises, but the forgiveness of sin is the opening of the lips to "show forth" His praise.

Ver. 16, 17. "Desirest not;" why? had not God commanded sacrifice? Yes, and David did offer it again and again; but in the guilt like his that could not be expiated by the blood of bulls and goats, "The sacrifices of God" were deep contrition and repentance, "a broken spirit and a contrite heart:" let us not think that any formal confession will avail without sincere inward sorrow for sin, and a casting of ourselves unreservedly upon the mercy of God.

Ver. 18, 19. "Do good:" he now prays for the city he held and for his people, fearing that he might involve them in the punishment for his sin, as was the case upon another occasion. (2 Tim. 24.) "Build thou" the walls of the city that was at that time in course of erection, and he prays that God would, as it were, take the work into His own hands so that it might be divinely done. Every sin of a professing Christian makes breaches in the walls of Zion, and exposes her to the attacks of her enemies; God alone can repair these.

Ver. 19. While, as as in verse 16, God desires not sacrifice, the sacrifice of unrepentant formalism, yet when sin has been confessed and pardoned, when the manifestations of love have been from the heart, then, with the righteous sacrifice, He will "be pleased;" the sacrifice of atonement and of consecration will be alike acceptable.

#### HINTS TO TEACHERS.

It may be thought by some that this is a lesson that there was no need to bring before our scholars; that the whole of the circumstances surrounding the sin and repentance of David are so far removed from the experiences of to-day that the lesson might have been omitted. Not so: we have to