

Our Story.

TWO WAYS

THE Rev. Walter Cobbett was called to a large and fashionable church in Philadelphia, about twelve years ago. He was a young sickly man, in deadly earnest in his work. In fact, his youth, pallor and fiery zeal gave a force to his words which neither his thoughts nor character possessed; for he was but a shallow thinker and easily led by strong-willed companions.

The committee sent by the Rittenhouse Square Presbyterian church to find a pastor discovered him by some odd chance in a mining village near Potstow, and were greatly impressed by his eloquence. They were all rich, shrewd men, fond of the good things of life, from music to a perfectly cooked dinner.

"But," said Judge Lowe, "we don't want a speculator or *bon vivant*, like poor old Dr. Gray, in the pulpit again. This young fellow is godly and full of zeal; a great orator. He not only knows in what he believes, but he will make us all believe it."

When Mr. Cobbett, with Milly and the baby, came up from Coalton, Mrs. Lowe and the other fashionable women were delighted with the simple, unworldly flavour of their speech and manner. "So like the early Christians," Miss Agnes Lowe said, who was an artist, and, therefore, an authority on all early matters. They were invited to a round of dinners and receptions, and then Mr. Cobbett settled down in earnest to his work.

Young Leidy, one of his college chums, who had just been ordained, spent a week with him, and the two men together tramped through the worst quarters of the city, from Naudain street to St. Mary's. They were both sympathetic, excitable, and unused to the miseries of a great city. They went from the filth and laziness of the quarter given up to "Dagos," to the negro slums, and from them to the vast mills, in which most of the operatives were saucy girls of from twelve to twenty years old. At night they discussed these scenes together.

"Nothing was so terrible to me," said Walter, "as those wretched Italians, content like animals to lie filthy and starving in the sun all day." "The mill women seem to me the more desperate case," said James Leidy, "because they have sloughed off the brute. They are sharp and intelligent. They flout out in the evenings, each with her beaded dress and pinchbeck jewellery, going with 'her gent' to the quarter-dollar sociables or variety theatres. They come so near to respectability and usefulness, and yet are going straight to ruin!"

"My church must go to work at once," said Mr. Cobbett. He spoke with a certain assurance of success. The membership of his church was so large and could number so many millions! Such a great broom would surely soon clean these Augean stables!

Mr. Leidy was silent for a long time. He said then: "Walter, I have almost determined to refuse the call to Pittsburgh, and to give myself up to work among these people. The Board will send me as a missionary."

Mrs. Cobbett, who was present, shook her head. "It is very good in you, Mr. Leidy, but it is impossible. The Board pays its city missionaries only the wages of a labouring man, and you have no idea what it costs to live here! Very different from Coalton."

who looked upon religion as "wimmen's business," beggars whose only trade was trickery, saloon keepers and professional thieves. The hold was often but slight, and led to nothing. But the worst thief or sot usually has some feeling for his son, and a respect for the man who was trying to pull the boy up, especially when the man proved to be a wide-awake, keen fellow, not to be imposed on by them.

The mothers were more easily reached and less easily held. They cried grateful tears when they met the good minister who had made Sam a respectable boy, or kept Joe out of Moyamensing, they came to the Wednesday evening service, and sang the hymns with loud fervour. Sometimes James suspected that they were just as drunk, as slatternly and as vicious in their homes as before. But he had hardened himself against disappointment. In some fashion those people gradually took him and his teaching into their homes and lives. They sent for him to marry them, to get them out of jail, to bury their dead, when the diphtheria raged in Pin Court. "Parson Leidy" was called in before the doctor, he being just at hand and "such a famous nurse." Tom Farrel, when he was sentenced to death, and urged to call in a minister, "reckoned that Leidy was the best of the lot," and the grim Scotch weaver, Sampson, came to him in the dead of the night to tell him, with stern eyes and quivering jaw, of his suspicion that his little Aggy was going to the bad.

"Dear, dear James; this is disheartening," said Mr. Cobbett, when he came down to visit his old chum. "You have been living here like a pauper for a year, and what have you accomplished? But three communicants! No hope yet of building a chapel!"

"I am coming nearer to them every day," said Leidy. "I make myself one with them. I try to drag them up, step by step."

"These little individual efforts, of course, suffer by comparison with great organized work," said Mr. Cobbett, with a slight tone of patronage. "Now, when our church begins her assault upon outside vice, you will find the moral atmosphere in this part of the city clear up very rapidly."

"What are your plans?" "In the first place, organization. I have drilled my people ready to work. We are going to have a sewing school, a mission Sunday school, an industrial school for the boys, a workman's club, a mothers' association, a young girls' guild for mutual improvement, societies for the promotion of temperance and personal purity. These are all to be superintended by the members of the church. It would gratify you, James, to see how zealously the most fashionable matrons and gayest girls take hold of the idea. They are eager to begin."

"And who are the people on whom they are to work?" "Who?" Mr. Cobbett waved his hands widely. "All the thieves, Magdalens, discharged convicts, paupers! None will be turned away. Our machinery is complete. I cannot but believe, James, that the reform which we shall accomplish, under God, will be very great."

"When do you begin, Walter?" "As soon as our church building is completed. It is to cost eighty thousand dollars." "That is a large sum." "The lot cost us thirty thousand. But it was a great bargain. It is in the rear of the church, in the most desirable part of the town. We could sell it now for double that sum. It will be the most complete building for parish work in the country. There will be apart-ments for all the schools, a library, gymnasium, reading rooms, all perfectly equipped. We have fifty thousand subscribers. The remainder comes in slowly. You do not look satisfied, James. I thought you would rejoice in this great movement."

"How are you going to bring the thieves and paupers into your great building?" said Leidy, abruptly. "It stands in the most fashionable quarter. They live miles away from it. The mountains will not go to Mahomet." "We shall see, my dear sir," said Mr. Cobbett, with a complacent laugh. "I am surprised at Leidy," he told his wife afterwards. "He suggested a trifling, practical difficulty as a block to our whole work."

When Mrs. Cobbett heard what it was she said, with an uneasy look, "I had thought of that." A year later Mr. Leidy dined with the Cobbetts, and went to a church meeting afterwards. It appeared to him that the relations between pastor and people were strained. Mr. Cobbett urged vehemently the payment of forty thousand dollars still due on the school building. The women of the church had been working energetically to that end. They had held fairs, strawberry festivals, and bazaars of all nations. They had given concerts and organ recitals. They had gone from house to house soliciting subscriptions.

"Now," said Judge Lowe, "the fact is that they are tired. The building was much more costly than was expected; the whole energy of the church has been directed into paying for this huge structure and for the appliances for teaching the dangerous classes; while, as we all know, the dangerous classes do not come to be taught. My opinion is that we had better sell out the whole concern, pay off the me-

chanics who have liens on it, and give the remainder of the money to foreign missions."

Mr. Cobbett quickly brought up some other subject for discussion. Judge Lowe met him when the conference was over, and laughed as he saw his pinched, anxious face.

"I am sorry I worried you," he said. "But I tell you, Mr. Cobbett, this fad of yours is a dead weight. The church cannot carry it. We have made a mistake somehow," he said, turning to Mr. Leidy. "The wretchedly poor will not come to us. They like the privacy and darkness of their holes, like rats. The classes are filled with the children of well-to-do mechanics, who can afford to have them taught at ordinary schools. The ladies collected a number of mill girls, who came two or three times in fine clothes, and spent their time staring at the hats and gowns of their teachers. As soon as they had displayed their own finery and learned the latest spring fashions, they dropped off. I found six young ladies assembled to teach the sexton's daughter yesterday. The whole thing is a failure."

When the two clergymen were back in the study, Walter turned to his friend. "Why should it be a failure?" he said passionately. "These people need help, and we have it to give. Look, for instance, at the thousands of deceived girls in this city. We are told that there is no way open for them but utter ruin or death. We open ways for them. We are ready to teach them book-keeping, china-painting, cooking—to give them a dozen honest means of support. Our ladies drive through the slums, find these women, give them good advice, and invite them to come. But they will not come."

James Leidy said nothing. But as he walked home he remembered the months in which he had followed poor Aggy Sampson, trying to help her—her father's agony, her mother's tears, the prayers, the struggles, the patience which had been so long unavailing to save that one lost soul. She was safe now, he thanked God, living happily with the old people in Montana.

Mr. Cobbett, meanwhile, sat despondent and thoughtful over his study fire. He could not understand what more than money, a costly building and perfect appliances, and committees of ladies ready to give an hour each week to the good work, was needed to snatch these brands from the burning. He has not yet found an answer to the problem.—*Congregationalist*.

Sabbath School Work.

LESSON HELPS.

LESSON IV, OCTOBER 27, 1889.

SIN, FORGIVENESS, AND PEACE.

Ps. xxxii. 1-11.

COMMIT VERSES 1-2.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.—Rom. v. 1.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

God loves to forgive those who truly repent of their sins and forsake them.

DAILY READINGS.

M. 2 Sam. xi. 1-27.

Th. 2 Sam. xii. 1-23.

W. Ps. li. 1-19.

Th. Ps. xxxii. 1-11.

F. xv. 1-10.

Sa. Luke xv. 11-32.

Su. John iii. 1-17.

TIME.—David's crime was committed about B.C. 1035. Nathan's reproof was probably a year later, and this Psalm soon followed.

PLACE.—Jerusalem. David's palace on Mount Zion.

DAVID.—About 50 years old, having been king for 20 years.

PLACE IN BIBLE HISTORY.—2 Sam. xi. 1-27, xii. 1-23.

DAVID'S SIN.—David committed the double crime of adultery and murder, the latter in order to hide the former. Sins seldom go alone. David was very prosperous. He was perhaps growing luxurious. He stayed home from the war east of the Jordan at Rabbah, and may have been indulging in idleness. He yielded to temptation, and that led to a series of wrongs which he never dreamed of doing when he began. His sin was also against God's cause and the moral state of his kingdom.

DAVID'S CHARACTER.—He was a good man, with many noble qualities, and accomplished a vast amount of good. This double crime was a great blot on his character. But we must remember (1) that the blot seems all the blacker for being in so good a man; (2) that we must judge him in the light of his circumstances, and not by our light. Scarcely any other Oriental monarch would have looked upon the acts as crimes of any great account. (3) We must note David's deep and bitter repentance. This shows the true character of the man.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—1. Blessed: the original is plural, "O the blessednesses of him" etc. The person described is blessed in many ways, in body and in spirit, in himself, and in his relations to others, for time and eternity. Transgression: going into forbidden fields. Sin: missing the mark, falling in duty. Iniquity: iniquity, what is unjust. No guile: the repentance is sincere and true. 3. When I kept silence: did not confess his sin. This verse and the next de-

scribe David's feelings during the year he tried to keep his sin to himself. Bones waxed (grew) old: he was weak, pained, sick in body and soul. Roaring: crying out in his anguish. 4. Thy hand, the emblem of power and activity, of bestowing something. My moisture, the figure is taken from a tree whose sap is dried up, so that all its freshness and power is gone. 5. Slak, i.e. interlude. 6. Floods of great waters, emblem of troubles and punishment. 7. Compass with sons, he found deliverance from troubles and dangers on every side, for which he sang songs of praise. 8. I. i. e. David. Will instruct teach from his experience. Guide thee with mine eye: keep watch over thee, so as to keep thee in the right path. 9. Be not as the horse, be guided by reason and God's Word, and not be forced to do right.

SUBJECTS FOR FURTHER STUDY AND SPECIAL REPORTS.—David's sin.—Nathan's reproof.—David's repentance.—How he proved it to be sincere.—The forgiveness of sin (Ps. xxxii).—The three words used to express sin in vs. 1, 2.—The blessedness of being forgiven.—Meaning of vs. 3, 4.—"I will guide thee with mine eye."—Meaning of v. 9.

QUESTIONS.

REVIEW.—What great religious event was described in Lesson II? What did David then propose to do for the religious welfare of his kingdom? What great blessings were promised him instead?

INTRODUCTION.—How long after these great events was the sad event we study to-day? How old was David? Where did he live? Where is the story recorded?

SUBJECT: SIN, FORGIVENESS, AND PEACE.

I. SIN.—What great sin did David commit? Which of the ten commandments did he break? Did he know them? What great things had God done for him? Was his sin against God as much as against man? (2 Sam. xii. 9, 14; Ps. li. 4.) Did he do a great deal of good? Was David a truly good man? (1 Kings xv. 5.)

How could so good a man fall into sin? Is it right to judge David by his sin alone, without considering his character and his repentance? Why does the Bible record the sins and faults of its good men? Are the sins of good men as really against God as against man?

II. REPENTANCE.—How long did David try to hide his sin? (See Time.) How is his state of mind during this time described? (vs. 3, 4.) What at last led him to repentance and confession? (2 Sam. xii. 1-4.) How was David punished? (2 Sam. xii. 14-23.) What Psalm expresses David's repentance? (Ps. li.) Did all the people know of his sins? How did he make them all know about his repentance?

See title to Psalm li, which means that it was to be sung in public worship.

Did it require great courage and sincerity for a king to thus humble himself before the people? To whom should we confess our sins? Is their true repentance without confession? What are the proofs of true penitence.

III. A SONG OF FORGIVENESS AND PEACE (vs. 1-11).—Who are blessed? What three words express the nature of sin? (vs. 1, 2, 5.) The meaning of each? What three words express forgiveness? What does God's forgiveness do for us? For whose sake will God forgive us? (1 John i. 9; ii. 12.) Why can we not be forgiven without Christ? Describe David's feelings while he refused to confess his sin? (vs. 3, 4.) What blessings came when he confessed his sin? (vs. 5-7, Prov. xviii. 13.) Why will not God forgive without repentance and confession? What is meant by "compass me about with songs of deliverance"? (v. 7.) What advice did David give from his own experience? (vs. 8, 9.) Must we all be governed by brute force, if we will not by reason? What contrast between righteous and wicked? (vs. 10, 11.)

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