

of him who had been called in other days "the man after God's own heart," but relates David's sin and his punishment with far more detail than David's conquests. And his crime, great as it seems to our eyes, and even greater to his own, would not have been deemed gross by another sovereign in the Oriental world, either in that age, or in any age since. It shows the loftiness of the Bible standard of moral purity, that David received for this sin the bold rebuke of the prophet, and a warning of the woe which was destined to follow it. The crime had been committed in private, and few knew the guilty secret. But David's repentance was public and before all the nation. In the deep humiliation of his spirit he penned this psalm, which entered into the literature of the Old Testament, was chanted by priests at the services of worship, and has been "the sinner's guide" to repentance and pardon through all the centuries since. In it we note the clearness with which he saw his own sinfulness, and the humiliation of soul with which he confessed it, claiming no extenuation, but taking all its guilt as his own. We observe how earnest was his pleading, not that the penalty might be remitted, but that its stain might be cleansed away from his own consciousness. From David's psalm we may learn how we, like him in our sinful condition, may with him climb the steps of repentance up to the summit of renewed acceptance with God.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

Verses 1, 2. Mercy . . . loving-kindness . . . tender mercies. Notice the three words which express the grace of God which was David's only hope for pardon. The first means pity toward one who deserves punishment; the second, the love from which that pity springs; the third emphasizes compassion and shows it to be infinite. 1. A sinner's only hope is in the love of God. **Transgressions . . . iniquity . . . sin.** These are the three words expressing David's guilt; the first meaning the passing over a forbidden line; the second, turning out of the right way; the third, in the original meaning, "to miss an aim;" and all these give pictures of wrong-doing in its various aspects. 2. None but the penitent knows the truth about sin's misery. **Blot out . . . wash . . . cleanse.** These are David's three prayers for himself: the first meaning the erasure of the record against him; the second, literally, "multiply to wash me," wash me again and again, until thoroughly pure; the third, a desire for purity of heart, deeper than of life. 3. The true penitent is more alarmed for his sinful condition than for the overhanging penalty.

3. **For.** This word gives the reason, not why he should be forgiven, but why he asks for forgiveness. **I acknowledge.** "I will know;" expressing a clear internal perception of sin. 4. The first step toward salvation is to clearly recognize one's self a sinner. **My transgressions.** Note the plural form; showing that David saw not one, but many sins in his act. **Ever before me.** The guilty con-

sciousness, not the fear of punishment, haunted him constantly.

4. **Against thee, thee only.** True, he had wronged his fellow-man, and had dishonoured his royal estate; but the sin against God cast into shadow every other relation; for in its true essence all sin is against God, and against God only. **That thou mightest be justified.** He admits that God is just, whatever may be the sentence pronounced against him, and bows his head to submit to it.

5. **I was shapen. Born. In iniquity.** He recognizes that since birth he has been a sinner; but this is not in extenuation of his guilt, only an aggravation of it. **Did my mother conceive me.** He does not throw the blame upon his parents, and make heredity an excuse for his condition; but confesses to a tainted nature, to an original birth-depravity. 5. Man belongs to a guilty stock, and grows from a sinful root.

6. **Thou desirest.** He now turns from beholding his own depravity to the contemplation of the divine standard of purity. **Truth. Uprightness, righteousness. Inward part.** Not only the outward right conduct, but the inward integrity of heart and purpose. **Make me to know wisdom.** God makes us to know wisdom by placing in us reverence for himself, which is the beginning of wisdom.

7. **Purge me with hyssop.** This was the formal purification of one who had been a leper. Lev. 14. 4-6. David considered himself in God's sight as a leper who needed cleansing. The hyssop was a plant headed like a broom, and used for sprinkling. **Clean.** 6. He whom God pronounces clean is clean indeed.

8. **Make me. By the assurance of forgiveness. To hear joy and gladness.** The most joyful sound a sinner can hear is the voice which proclaims him forgiven. **Bones which thou hast broken.** The bones, as the framework of the body, are regarded as crushed by the consciousness of guilt. **May rejoice.** 7. He who imparts sorrow for sin can alone give the joy of salvation. Hosea 6. 1.

9. **Hide thy face.** A prayer that God will not only forgive, but forget, his sins. So he has promised to do, saying, "Your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more." But God will hide his face from our sins only when we turn our face toward him. **Blot out.** See note on verse 1.

10. **Create.** The word here used is the strongest in the Hebrew language to express the bringing into being that which was not (as in Gen. 1. 1), and is spoken only of God. David seeks for that which is a creation, and which only God can create. **Clean heart.** The heart is the source of character and life; and David's prayer was for what Christ called the new birth. 8. To change a sinner to a saint is greater and more divine than to speak a world from nothing. **A right spirit.** "A steadfast spirit;" a purpose which will not be fickle, now serving God and then yielding to sin, but thorough and determined in righteousness. 9. We need not