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Homiletics II: The Conquest of Unconscious Sin

Earl Clement Davis

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Loo story of The Golden De 460. n. Han. 2.

Subject: The Conquest of Miconscious sins. Scrifture; Twotthew 5'3-16 and Tout. 7'11-27 Yest: - Psolu 51,10 Create in we a clean heart, W. Sorl; Revew a right of int within we."

On the front of the Post Office Building of the old bottle scored city of duchec there is a loblet worm as he chien I'm", - The golden Dog! Of all the stories and traclitions which are sentered short this favour old sity, the city in which wony of the wort interleting and sometic insidents of the new world for E hoffened, wit one is work interesting or faculting Thou this Laguel of the Folden Dig. In the days when Fruit H was whing in France, doys which were as black and as fore any in French History; doya when hereath the gorgeonswers and Afterdor of the sout life, there was a for luces and corruptues which would wohe us shudden with shawe; Philiput a wow of rank and wealth was degraded to the flave of common stizenship his forfacty was confiscated, and he was sent an exile to new France. Del This funish = hecause he was municing to

while to the degraching influences of the coutlifs, because he won menueling to sell his character and wontovel for his title and wealth. Thilitet The Bourgeois come to hew tiance to serve under new cordibios the country which had stirtowored him. on the source of hime, he brief of a large tracking fort. In this business be accumulated a large forture, and at the some time, so conducted him seef that he become a won of great influence in the offair of hew France, boursed and respected for his great bounty. now while Bougeois Philitet was living his quiet life in Suebec, Bijot, the lost of the French dutendorts, come to bucher, as refresentative of the court of Fouris IIV, as Interchant of her France, Bijot hod to do with collecting revenue for the bovern: tock, and some showed his furfore of using ir office simply as a wears of sufflying himsalf with all luxurios and extrovogout articles of life. He organized the triffere this was simply a company of dissifuted and its week were, who proforced to live in ear and luxury at the enferre of the

forfly, But the Friffore" room come to find that it took a formidable wood in Brugions Philitet, and war not loth to show its feelings, and to worke Roowen that it resented Philiperts Howerty. Philitent, to express his feelings, book flued over the entrance of his Laching store, This toflet of the golden Doch, It consists simply of a lovy lying, quowing a tone, and isexent it are four lines of nere, and Bijot leaved the full meaning of there lines, for as the cloys forsed, Bijots steoling, wo suffed the life of them France, that it fell into the bouch of the English. Bejot fell withit, and were lost to the world tehind the fotol wolls of the Bastile. I formy that he grew to how the free meaning of there has on the tolest of the Golden Doll, Ufter in the lovelines of his cell be must have referted them to him I am the day who grows his bone. I wouch and guow it all alove a live will some which not yet When Ill bit him, by whom I'm bit."

I foury that if the uncoursions since

mithin were fersovore beings, and evel expens thoughts, they would find we better words thou there which we find won the Evolet of the Golden Dog. I am the dog who given his bone, I devich and growit all aline. atime will some which is not yet when Ill bit E him by whom Lin bit," We are construtly threatened by This great donger if the Uniconscious line. There way be in our liver, some influence, which to us seems good and right, but which is in reality an unconscious sin esting slowly the word fibre of our character dt is mechaning us showly, but swely, imferceft obly ferlys, but yet ferristantly. We way not reblige or emplehelice the foren of destruction which is going on within us, but when the him comes to test us we are found worting, our word votine is clestroyed and that which we thought to be our strong word character, Tures out to be only a shell which crumbles and folls in the fore of temptation or two ble. The germ of chierre gets with our body, and slowly underwises our health. Inferceftably it grows at

our flyrical strength upon which we so flick ourselver. When we are collect upon to use that strength, it is now wore, We are forced to stood aside defeated, the must turn away from the world which is not dear trade. In the some way some germ of selfishing gets with our nature, we codelle it and try to think that it is good and ight, but nevertheless it destroys all that is strong and wolle in us.

It way he simply a tendency to cell garrif that is one unconscious six. It is humbers at first feelofs, but it comes to mean only a tendency to see evil of another, only the tendency to see evil in another. In time the goverific must beam that thinks ing of evine, and talking of suil in another nice form but one recet it mise dectory the street in his own should formet in the fibre and filling of the moral water when he found morting, the sheel mise crumble and the world mise he shocked.

The devotion of a business worn to his business involves this some douger. We achieve the strong sensible business wow. He is doing a great work, he is equal sensort of the feath. But yet

when he becomes so en givered in his busines, that he for we time for his fourly, we time to give to his friends. wo time to devote to the interests of the tour in which he liver, we way be sure That he is being destroyed by some unconscions sur. When a real test somes he will ture out to be a where worming getter, a faraint to freeding whom the almords of society. yes, a fermis love for the church which orght to be one of the greatest goods one of the greatest fleasures of his life, true Christian life, way sounder: mire his strength of character, his word votice, that he will awoke one dry to find himself frozing as did the Phaine of All. Well fire. I thank There that I am with as other were are I hot only the work obvious sine wine work one electrication, but also there unconscious sies, which are destroying when we think They are building uf, sin which come to us in the guire of good, destry and break down on word life. There sies olar we went over une, courtirtly we must from heate in we a sleve bent. Ok fool ! Never a right of not within

Ricas

WE."

But even as we are walking this frager me must remember that whether it is answered or not serte walt us. of me towestly and sincerely mean that we wont a clean heart, me must remember that if we wish to receive we must ask; if we wish to have the close ofened withour, we went work; if we wish to find we went seek. The won who fung and expects his fuge. answered without any exerting upon his own fact, does not deserve an ausmen to his frage. The wow who site ichly before a heartiful fainting, lunging to will sit there forever. The only way to understand the ficture is to study to slig into the book gurel and find what was in the faintes muid, Then and only then will the secrets of the ficture be revealed to him, The way who sits idly cheaving see dry long of the great things which he wires du by and by, never accomplishes anything. of te would tore his fuzzer answered, he must be about his work, he must stow by cleed and action that his freger comes from the very defters of his rove. How shiel James Jung?

Diel he was stand idly frozing when the rich were to be healed? Diel Jesus from that the tobler of the women changens in the temple wight be overtured, or did he overture them, did ferre ene from for his own ferrove rofety! The floger of Jesus wor deefer then were words. It was the forger for strugth and some to do the the and ferfect wee of god. devotion, the fuge which followed by action and lober and stunggle, not the furger of the cill cheave but of The active worker. It was the frager of one who sow and undertood the full meaning of the words, - ask audit stoll te given you; seek and ye sholl fund; Rwock, and it should be ofered with you. Just must be our fragers, wit mere ielle words, but string wordy action, a high furfore, and a fixed determin: ation. If our funger are surere and fourt and determined, then we may be arrived that they will be answered and the answer well be realized by our our effets. Une frage to god wie be answered in our own beat. and when we fury best in we a sleve

cheart of Gol! Reven a right spirit within we : we must realize that the forger it meaningles under me first begin to work, to de things that event in we a clear heart, to think the Things That rever a sight spirit within us. We must answer our frozen by good thinking and by good living. In shot our change of destruction by wears: seiour sies con he avoided by our own efforts in answering the frage acott in us a clear heart attirl; Never a right of withing is." The con assure working and by good thinking. If I am o his iver wow, four con I work so as to avoid becoming the victer of some four of selfishiers, of some unconscious sin! hunt I voit attend to my busines; must don't see to it that my business is unducted upon such a boris, as to wire it succes! to all there questions we curve yet" how were he a good to were who does not do his work well and ranguely. He must fut the hest of himself with whitever he close. But added to this effort must be the connicting that in his business

he is not only working for him seef but that he is slowing a sworl fact of the work of the world, He went have the consistion that his business is volumble not because of whotitewobles him to get out of the world, but what he con fut with the world, whithe con elv to woke men better, to woke their hier wicher and were wolle, to wohe them see and feel and hum that there is a great pufore in life besider mere existance. He must feel and reolize that his business is a fact of the great world flue of god, which will be of advertige to were or vot according to four he wer it.

better, furthe for us to the form to the form the form when the way acle some it forms the works the works the forms in the forms to the forms the forms

mysteries of life. The work works in the showch con work, only by redying clearly and foly that he loves and works for the should not for what the thuch is, but for what it does; not round for whot it does for himself as for what it does for other, what it way to in woking life were sotisfoctory, in showing to us the sacrecture of all that is good and two and fine. The were in the church, and the shough thele west confrom to gich furfores. himself frozing the First, I though these that I am not as other were are. as not the eneme of Jenn' Leveling the doing of things that will worke were fue! Do me wit think of ferer, or the were who went about during good. He him seef wor a great volle character, and he work his former and influence securit for the good of weer. He fut his whole life, soul, and devotion who the reolization of goods furforer and floor

Hz bried and died for other. Is not that giving nesself oner to the service of won and of god, Is not that answa: my the fuzer for a clear beat? of me from to hora clein heart and to tove a light ofinit within us, west we not give ourelves over to the realy: otin of Goels furfores? must we vot answer our floger by good and ight: our living? We must fut our selves to the service of weer, to the accomplish = any the two and ferfert will god. Hot is loving god. To fut ourselves with right relations with gods flows. to do something use ful in the world and do it well; to help wohe the world telle; to help worke were lives sicher and freler and were solve = fying, that is the expension of a twee and feefect love for god. We way think of our love for god and our love for men; we very tock of our love for you of our love for god and our love for men, but something. It becomes as of something brown and of tinkling symbol, unless we work to answer it, Uh. There is a sest deep wearing in those words:

the is were weling to give there we are to receive! Everywhere about are courtles offertunities, by which our frozen, healt in me a claim heart afort: Reven a right spirit within us" way be ausweed. Even before one furger is uttered, for good given us the offertunities, and yet we are unwilling to receive. Why do we not reolize that we have to greater minim in life there to weely get Things out of the world, why show we not realize that we orget to for nome -Thing ist the world! Why son we not see that we one it to our feelow wer, that our ferfessed love for good confels us to do something that is worth white? God is were milling to give this we we to receive" Every women't is a fraction of fortunity and yet we work weely for ourches. Let lis fut ourselves black and bouch body and sol with the great flows of good. Let us fut our shoreder to the Ander, and do on fact. Then and only then will our frozen be assumed We way not do a great work. It way seem triviol and uninfortent, but let us go obout it in the spirit of fews

the spirit of sewie, of work for gods
Kingdom. In the town in the work
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to one frozek. Reste in we a
clear beart O. Fool; Never a right sfut
within we!

Thus do we conquer our wecomes

Homiletics II: The Conquest of Unconscious Sins

Earl C. Davis

Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

January 7, 1904¹

Scripture: Matthew 5:13-16 and Matthew 7:21-27

Text: Psalm 51:10 "Create in me a clean heart, O God; Renew a right spirit within me."

On the front of the Post Office Building of the old battle scared City of Quebec there is a tablet known as "Le chien d'Or," "The Golden Dog." Of all the stories and traditions which are centered about this famous old city—the city in which many of the most interesting and romantic incidents of the New World have happened, not one is more interesting or fascinating than this Legend of the Golden Dog.²

In the days when Louis VIV was ruling in France, days which were as black and as foul [as] any in French history; days when beneath the gorgeousness and splendor of the court life, there was as foulness and a corruptness which would make us shudder with shame; Philibert, a man of rank and wealth, was degraded to the plane of common citizenship, the Bourgeois, his property was confiscated, and he was sent on exile to New France. All this punishment, and hardship fell upon him because he was unwilling to submit to the degrading influences of the court life, because he was unwilling to sell his character and manhood for his title and wealth.

¹ This is from a collection of manuscripts—mostly class papers—written while Davis was a student at Harvard Divinity School, 1902-1904. This manuscript is clearly for the Homiletics II class he took during the 1903-04 academic year.

² According to the online Canadian Encyclopedia Canadian author William Kirby (1817-1906) published The Golden Dog (Le Chien d'Or): A Legend of Quebec in 1877. This publication had errors and an "authorized edition," The Golden Dog (Le Chien d'Or): A Romance of the Days of Louis Quinze in Quebec was published in 1897.

Philibert the Bourgeois came to New France to serve under new conditions the country which had dishonored him. In the course of time, he built up a large trading post. In this business he accumulated a large fortune, and at the same time, so conducted himself that he became a man of great influence in the affairs of New France, honored and respected for his great honesty.

Now while Bourgeois Philibert was living his quiet life in Quebec, Bigot, the last of the French Intendants, came to Quebec as representative of the court of Louis XIV. As Intendant of the New France, Bigot had to deal with collecting revenue for the government. He immediately set about his task, and soon showed his purpose of using his office simply as a means of supplying himself with all luxuries and extravagant articles of life. He organized the "Frippone." This was simply a company of dissipated and idle men, who proposed to live in ease and luxury at the expense of the people. But the "Frippone" soon came to find that it had a formidable rival in Bourgeois Philibert, and was not loath to show its feelings, and to make known that it resented Philibert's honesty. Philibert, to express his feelings, had placed over the entrance of his trading store this tablet of the golden dog. It consists simply of a dog lying, gnawing a bone, and beneath it are four lines of verse. And Bigot learned the full meaning of these lines, for as the days passed Bigot's stealing so sapped the life of New France, that it fell into the hands of the English. Bigot fell with it and was lost to the world behind the fatal walls of the Bastille. I fancy that he grew to know the full meaning of those lines on the tablet of the Golden Dog. Often in the loneliness of his cell he must have repeated them to himself.

I am the dog who gnaws his bone.

I crouch and gnaw it all alone.

A time will come which not yet,

When I'll bit him, by whom I'm bit.

I fancy that, if the unconscious sins³ within mere personal beings could express thoughts, they would find no better words than these which we find upon the Tablet of the Golden Dog.

I am the dog who gnaws his bone.

I crouch and gnaw it all alone.

A time will come which not yet,

When I'll bit him, by whom I'm bit.

 $^{^{3}}$ The professor has put an "X" in the margin beside this line.

We are constantly threatened by this great danger of unconscious sins. There may be in our lives some influence, which to us seems good and right, but which is in reality an unconscious sin eating slowly the moral fiber of our character. It is weakening us slowly, but surely, imperceptibly perhaps, but yet persistently. We may not realize or comprehend the process of destruction, which is going on within us, but when the time comes to test us, we are found wanting. Our moral nature is destroyed and that which we thought to be our strong moral character, turns out to be only a shell which crumbles and falls in the face of temptation or trouble. The germ of disease gets into our body, and slowly undermines our health. Imperceptibly it gnaws4 at our physical strength upon which we so pride ourselves. When we are called upon to use that strength, it is no more. We are forced to stand aside defeated. We must turn away from the world which is so dear to us. In the same way some germ of selfishness gets into our nature. We coddle it and try to think that it is good and right, but nevertheless it destroys all that is strong and noble in us.

It may be simply a tendency to idle gossip that is our unconscious sin. It is harmless at first perhaps, but it comes to mean only a tendency to speak evil of another, only the tendency to see evil in another. In time the gossiper must learn that thinking of evil, and talking of evil, in another will have but one result. It will destroy the good in his own character. Sometime when the test of character comes, the fiber and filling of the moral nature will be found wanting, the shell will crumble, and the world will be shocked.

The devotion of a businessman to his business involves this same danger. We admire the strong sensible businessman. He is doing a great work. He is a great servant of the people. But yet when he becomes so engrossed in his business, that he has no time for his family, no time to give to his friends, no time to devote to the interests of the town in which he lives, we may be sure that he is being destroyed by some unconscious sin. When a

⁴ The professor has underlined this word and put a mark in the margin beside the line containing "gnaw."

real test⁵ comes, he will turn out to be a mere money getter, a parasite feeding upon the demands of society.

Yes, a person's love for the church, which ought to be one of the greatest goods, one of the greatest pleasures of his life, may carry him so far from the true Christian life, may so undermine his strength of character, his moral nature, that he will awake one day to find himself praying as did the Pharisee of old, "Oh Lord. I thank thee that I am not as other men are." Not only the more obvious sins will work our destruction, but also these unconscious sins, which are destroying when we think they are building up, sins which come to us in the guise of good, destroy and breakdown our moral life. These sins also we must overcome, constantly we must pray, "Create in me a clean heart. Oh God. Renew a right spirit within me."

But even as we are making this prayer, we must remember that whether it is answered or not rests with us. If we honestly and sincerely mean that we want a clean heart, we must remember that if we wish to receive, we must ask; if we wish to have the door opened unto us, we must knock; if we wish to find, we must seek. The man who prays and expects his prayer answered without any exertion upon his own part, does not deserve an answer to his prayer. The man who sits idly before a beautiful painting, longing to know and understand its meaning, will sit there forever. The only way to understand the picture is to study, to dig into the background9 and find what was in the painter's mind. Then and only then will the secrets of the picture be revealed to him. The man who sits idly dreaming all day long of the great things which he will do by and by, never accomplishes anything. If he would have his prayers answered, he must be about his work, he must show by dead and action that his prayer comes from the very depths of his soul. How did Jesus pray? Did he ever stand idly praying when the sick were to be healed? Did Jesus pray that the tables of the money changers in the Temple might be overturned, or did he overturn them? Did Jesus ever pray for

⁵ The professor has underlined the words "real test" and put a mark in the margin beside the line containing them.

⁶ See Luke 18:11.

⁷ The professor has written, "Recast" in the margin next to this line.

⁸ Psalm 51:10, the text for the sermon.

 $^{^{9}}$ The professor has put a mark in the margin by this line.

his own personal safety? Oh. The Prayer of Jesus was deeper than mere words. It was the prayer for strength and courage and power to do the true and the perfect will of God. It was a prayer of consecration and devotion, the prayer which followed by action and labor and struggle, not the prayer of the idle dreamer but of the active worker. It was the prayer of one who saw and understood the full meaning of the words, "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened."¹⁰

Such must be our prayers, not mere idle words, but strong manly action, a high purpose, and a fixed determination. If our prayers are sincere and honest and determined, then we may be assured that they will be answered, and the answer will be realized by our own efforts. Our prayer to God will be answered in our own heart. And when we pray, "Create in me a clean heart. Oh God. Renew a right spirit within me." we must realize that the prayer is meaningless unless we first begin to work, to do things that create in us a clean heart, to think the things that renew a right spirit within us. We must answer our prayer by good thinking and good living.

In short, our danger of destruction by unconscious sins can be avoided by our own efforts in answering the prayer. "Create in me a clean heart. Oh God. Renew a right spirit within me." We can assume ourselves against this slow-working and unseen enemy only by good living and good thinking.

If I am a businessman, how can I work so as to avoid becoming the victim of some form of selfishness, of some unconscious sin? Must I not attend to my business? Must I not see to it that my business is conducted upon such a basis as to ensure its success? To all these questions we answer, "yes." No man can be a good man who does not do his work well and carefully. He must put the best of himself into whatever he does. But added to this effort must be the conviction that in his business he in not only working for himself but that he is doing a small part of the work of the world. He must have the conviction that his business is valuable, not because of what it enables him to get out of the world, but what he can put into the world, what he can do to make men better, to make their lives richer and more noble, to make them see and feel and know that there is a great

 $^{^{10}}$ Matthew 7:7.

purpose in life besides mere existence. He must feel and realize that his business is a part of the great world plan of God, which will be of advantage to men or not according to how he uses it.

Or take the work of the scholar. No matter how good a life he may lead, no matter how much enjoyment he may get out of life, we cannot, with justice, count him a good man, free from the danger of unconscious sin, unless he labors that he may add something to the Truth, unless his work makes it possible for us to live better, fuller, and more complete lives, unless it helps us to understand a little more clearly the great mysteries of life.

The man who works in the church can assure himself against a selfish work only by realizing clearly and fully that he loves and works for the church, not for what the church is, but for what it does; not so much for what it does for himself as for what it does for others, what it may do in making life more satisfactory, in showing to us the sacredness of all that is good and true and pure. The man in the church, and the church itself, must conform to God's purposes. Unless he does, he may yet find himself praying "Oh Lord. I thank thee that I am not as other men are."

Is not the essence of Jesus' teaching, the doing of things that will make men better, and make their living more pure? Do we not think of Jesus as the man who went about doing good. He himself was a great noble character, and he made his power and influence count for the good of men. He put his whole life, soul, and devotion into the realization of God's purposes and plans. He lived and died for others. Is not that giving oneself over to the service of man and of God? Is not that answering the prayer for a clean heart?

If we pray to have a clean heart and to love a right spirit within us, must we not give ourselves over to the realization of God's purposes? Must we not answer our prayer by good and righteous living? We must put ourselves to the service of men, to the accomplishing [of] the true and the perfect will of God? That is loving God. To put ourselves into right relations with God's plans; to do something useful in the world and to do it well; to help make the world better; to help make men's lives richer and fuller and more satisfying, that is the expression of

a true and perfect love for God. We may think of our love for God and our love for men; we may talk of our love for God and our love for men; we may pray for our love for God and our love for men. But it is all meaningless unless we do something. It becomes as of sounding brass and of tinkling cymbal, unless we work to answer it. Oh. There is a deep meaning in those words: "He is more willing to give than we are to receive." 11 Everywhere about are countless opportunities by which our prayer, "Create in me a clean heart. Oh God. Renew a right spirit within me." may be answered. Even before our prayer is uttered has God given us the opportunities and yet we are unwilling to receive. Why do we not realize that we have a greater mission in life than to merely get things out of the world? Why can we not realize that we ought to put something into the world? Why can we not see that we owe it to our fellow men that our professed love for God compels us to do something that is worthwhile? "God is more willing to give than we are to receive." Every moment is a precious opportunity and yet we work merely for ourselves. Let us put ourselves heart and hand, body and soul, into the great plans of God. Let us put our shoulder to the burden and do our part. Then and only then will our prayer be answered. We may not do a great work. It may seem trivial and unimportant, but let us go about it in the spirit of Jesus, the spirit of service, of work for God's Kingdom. In the home, in the workshop, in the counting room, as servants of the people, let us remember that even the smallest work done for the service of man, is a proof of our love for God, is the answer to our prayer, "Create in me a clean heart. Oh God. Renew a right spirit within me."

Thus, to we conquer our unconscious sins.

¹¹ See Acts 20:35.