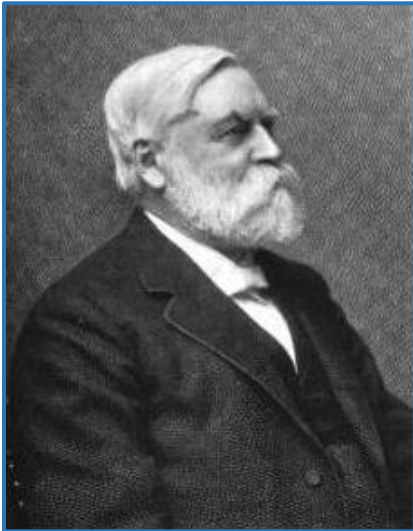


Forgiveness for a Prostitute

Samuel Colgate (1822 – 1897), the founder of the Colgate business empire, was an American manufacturer and philanthropist born in New York City. He became widely known as a soap maker, and the manufactory he built in Jersey City developed into one of the largest establishments of its kind in the world.



For more than 30 years, he was a trustee of Colgate University, and for many years he was president of the New York Baptist Education Society. One of his most noteworthy achievements was the collection of 30,000 volumes of reports comprising the documentary records of the Baptist denomination.

A devout Christian, Colgate told of an incident that took place in the church he attended. During an evangelistic service, an invitation was given at the close of the sermon for all those who wished to turn their lives over to Christ and be forgiven.

One of the first persons to walk down the aisle and kneel at the altar was a well-known prostitute. She knelt in very real repentance, weeping, and asked God to forgive her. Meanwhile, the rest of the congregation looked on approvingly at what she was doing.

Then she stood and testified that she believed God had forgiven her for her past life, and she now wanted to become a member of the church. For a few moments, the silence was deafening.

Finally, Colgate stood up and said, "I guess we blundered when we prayed that the Lord would save sinners. We forgot to specify what kind of sinners. We'd better ask Him to forgive us for this oversight. The Holy Spirit has touched this woman and made her truly repentant, but the Lord apparently doesn't understand that she's not the type we want Him to rescue. We'd better spell it out for Him just which sinners we had in mind."

Immediately, a motion was made and unanimously approved that the woman be accepted into membership in the congregation.

God accepts us as we are. There's not a sin too black, not a deed too awful, not a thought too horrible for Him to forgive. What cuts us off from His forgiveness and the freedom such forgiveness brings is our thinking that we have to justify ourselves. Trusting in our own righteousness does not bring God's verdict of not guilty. Trusting in Christ's righteousness does.

(more)

God knows who we are; He accepts us as we are; but He never leaves us as we are. When God justifies us on the basis of our faith in Him, He also transforms us and makes us better than we are.

Jesus declared:

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter