

THE WEDGE OF GOLD:

OR

ACHAN IN EL DORADO.

———"What is here?

Gold? yellow, glittering, precious gold?

Thus much of this will make black, white; foul, fair;

Wrong, right; base, noble; old, young; coward, valiant.

———Why, this

Will lug your priests and servants from your sides,

Pluck stout men's pillows from below their heads:

This yellow slave

———will place thieves

And give them title, knee and approbation

With Senators on the bench. — TIMON OF ATHENS.

"Gold! gold! gold! gold!

Bright and yellow, hard and cold,

Molten, graven, hammer'd, and roll'd;

Heavy to get and light to hold;

Hoarded, barter'd, bought and sold,

Stolen, borrow'd, squander'd, doled;

Price of many a crime untold;

Gold! gold! gold! gold!" — HOOD.

BY REV. W. A. SCOTT, D. D.

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PREFACE.

THIS little volume is composed of discourses delivered in Calvary Church, in this City, in the regular ministrations of the Divine Word on consecutive Sabbath evenings. They were particularly addressed to young men. They are now published as they were delivered. In them I have tried to do a little to meet the wants of our wishful, restless, expectant and high pressure times. The volume is not as worthy of the cause as I wish it was. But it is the best I can do. *We are not all able for all things.* Yet every man has his hour and his duty. And it is possible that a San Francisco book may find readers, when one from New York or London would not. Local associations or circumstances may give it an interest that does not attach to another. It may be there are some who will listen to a voice on the Pacific, who would not hearken to a better one from the Atlantic. My chief hope in publishing this work is, that it may be read and do good among the sparse and widely scattered population of this State, who dwell not

—“where bells have knoll'd to church,” —

but are remote from the solemn Sabbath assembly. And

not the least of my desires is, that these pages may lead not a few to look up a long neglected Bible, and by an intelligent and prayerful reading thereof decide for themselves whether these things are so. If, on the rancheria, or amidst the cabins of the Sierras, this humble volume shall succeed in producing one good thought and in awakening one conscience, and turning one sinner from the error of his ways, the author will feel more than a thousand fold rewarded for the effort. His object is to try to reach by the press a large population in his adopted State who do not regularly hear the Divine Word from the lips of any of the servants of God. It is only by the truth that our country can be saved from infidelity, profligacy, corruption and anarchy. Public sentiment must be enlightened and the public taste elevated. This can only be done effectively by teaching men to regard the laws of God as the best protectors of their lives and property.

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THE PROLOGUE.

A VERY extensive authorship is now connected with the Bible, and with every book in the Bible. If all the volumes in the large libraries of the world that relate in some considerable degree to the Holy Scriptures were taken out and burned, but few would remain worthy the attention of scholars. The literature of Christianity is the largest as well as the best literature in the world. Happily, we are blest with many valuable literary parallels, expositions, translations, commentaries, illustrations and notes upon the Word of God. I have used such helps as were within my reach, and my own manuscript notes of travel and observation in Bible lands, as freely and as fully as seemed necessary for the explanation of the sacred text, and for impressing its great truths upon the minds of men. I have not, however, followed any one. *Nullius auctoritatem secutus sum.* As far as I know, there is no publication extant like this little one. And as far as I know, all proper acknowledgments and full credits are made in these lectures to the authors from whom I have derived assistance in the exegesis of the text, and

for historical illustrations and facts, and reflections on them. In expounding, however, any ancient writings, and in collating historical statements and illustrations of the sacred Scriptures, I apprehend that but little more originality is to be found than what lies in the arrangement and working up of the materials. This is all I claim. I have used the materials common to students of the Divine Word according to my own taste, and in such a style as seemed to me to give a true view of the scenes and events referred to. It has been my wish to present the history of the unfortunate son of Carmi in such a light as to instruct, admonish and encourage the young to walk in the ways of truth and holiness. The chief value of a publication lies in its utility. Invention and discovery, in the highest sense of these words, belong to an order of genius to which few can aspire. But to be *useful* belongs to every one, however humble. The feeblest light, in an hour of danger at midnight, is of use. There are no times so miserable but a man may be true to himself and his God. If every sailor cannot be a Vasco de Gama, a Columbus or a Cook, still the humble labors of the harbor pilot are not to be despised.

The highest satisfaction a man can have, when he turns aside from the toiling and sin-wearied and worrying world to die, is the consciousness that he leaves more good and more happiness in the world than he found in it. He may lie down joyfully to sweet repose, who feels that all of life's duty is well done.

I have endeavored, in this series of discourses, after the example of the Great Teacher himself, to strike at some of the evils of the times, and remove as far as possible some

of the obstructions that are in the way of salvation in a money-loving age. My earnest wish has been to furnish instruction and warning of such a kind and in such a way as might be most needed. And especially, to *prevent* the young from entering upon the way of vice, or to call them back, if they have fallen on the ways of temptation, and to break the bread of life to those that may be hungering for righteousness amid the great race for riches. The effects of every man's ministry are doubtless real, though not always visible or satisfactory. If I shall not have the satisfaction of presenting all my hearers perfect in holiness, yet do I strive so to manifest the truth of God, commending it to every man's conscience in his sight, that I may present them all before His judgment seat *perfectly warned*. We aim at the conversion of men to God. We are sure that what fashion and money—golden wedges, and quartz jewelry, and flashing garments, and “rich argosies,” and leagues of land,—what commerce and science, legislation and the fine arts, cannot do for the world, *that* the glorious Gospel of Christ can do, is doing and will continue to do. It is the hope of our world. In spite of our millions of gold; in spite of our globe-encircling traffic, our clipper ships and ocean going steamers, and our thousand thousand inventions, mourning, lamentation and woe still fill our ears and ring up and down over our planet. Our world is a deeply troubled habitation. There is no oil but that of the Gospel that can calm its heaving billows. It will never find rest but in obedience to the voice of Him who said to Galilee's waves, “peace, be still,” and there was a great

calm. If conversion to God, then, is the only remedy for the heart's sorrows, it is exceedingly desirable to get the obstacles to conversion out of the way. The worldliness that is in the church is one of the great obstacles that hinders the conversion of sinners. Ministers of the Gospel and church members may not have done all their duty. But still, there can be no conversion to God where there is a complete devotion of the heart to money. Selfishness, hardness of heart, greediness, dishonesty, extravagance and undue attention to business, are fruitful sources of unbelief, and consequently, great hindrances to the elevation of public sentiment, the cultivation of good taste, and the advancement of truth. The love of money and of fashion are great barriers between the heart and the experiences of vital piety. As long as the golden god stands between the Creator and the heart, there can be no true worship. This love of the world must be crucified.

Our religion is vastly comprehensive, and yet marked with solemn speciality. It is characterized by solicitude for man, individually. It works from the depths of the heart outwards. It operates as a "dynamical spirit" upon the masses. It leavens the whole lump—the whole man—and the aggregation of men. It embraces every thing. It penetrates, permeates every thing; but it is not every thing or any thing. It is itself. It cannot be any thing else. Its individuality is as immutable as its fruits. It operates in all the faculties and functions of man as the air does upon his body, yet remains separate, and pure, and powerful. In endeavoring, therefore, to arouse you

to the duties of your day—to convince you that your antecedents, hopes and circumstances call for solemn consecration to the high behests of Providence,—I have hoped to introduce to you the heart-renewing and soul-saving religion of the New Testament. It is adapted to make your studies, your conversation, your business and your example humanize society. It should sit on the bench, and with the jury; and walk the street, and stand behind the counter, and toil with the farmer, the mechanic and the miner. It does take memoranda for the final judgment of the entries of the custom house, and of the balance sheets of Asylums, Hospitals and Banks. As young business men, just coming into the field of vision and just beginning to shine over the horizon, it is important to yourselves and to others that your hearts should be right in the sight of God; that you be well rooted at the centre, for your shade will cover a vast area and travel over a great circumference. Oh! make yourselves trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord; and then your branches will shoot up high and cast a beneficent shade over all the affairs of society, and the fruit thereof shall be for the healing of the nations. Amen.

Life and Times of Arhan.

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LIFE AND TIMES OF ACHAN.

—“Such wind as scatters young men through the world,
To seek their fortunes further than at home,
Where small experience grows.”—*TAMING OF THE SHREW.*

SOME three thousand, three hundred years ago, somewhere in the wilderness of Arabia, “the Stony,” between the Red Sea and the borders of the Land of Promise, it was said to the wife of Carmi, rejoice, thou art the mother of a man child. Carmi was of the great and warlike tribe of Judah, and in a direct line through Jacob, descended from the great old *Puritan* “Pilgrim Father,” of Ur of the Chaldees. Whether the subject of this memoir was born when the winter rains were pouring like water spouts from the leaky clouds of Asia, or in summer’s heat, when the skies are like molten brass; whether when the tribes were encamped in the broad Wady, or skirting the white sand hills, or under the overhanging mountains of granite and porphyry, the old chroniclers have not been careful to inform us. We are scantily

supplied with materials to serve for his early history. How far his parents had become infected with the idolatry of Egypt, or to what extent the sun of the Nile had fired their blood with devotion to Osiris and Apis, we do not know. However piously inclined they may have been, they had but a poor opportunity to bring up their child in the way in which he should go. As in new states and among a wandering people, and in times of war and political disturbances, it is much more difficult to secure such an education for our children as we desire, so it is probable that Carmi and his wife did not do much for their wilderness-born son. They had not such a Sabbath school library as our congregations have; but they were not without the Sabbath and its solemn assemblies, nor without morning and evening prayers. And every day they could point their child to a miraculous proof of Jehovah's presence. There stood before them the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. It was their pillar of light in darkness, and their canopy in the burning noon. No doubt, too, there was much talk among their neighbors and between themselves, of the miracles wrought in the plains of Zoan. Their boy, too, often heard them talk of the wonderful rose colored monoliths; the hieroglyphic covered obelisks, and of the pyramids that were standing in the days of his great grandfathers, Jacob and Abraham. And many were the curious questions he asked them about the splendor

of Egyptian cities, palaces and tombs; the army and chariots of the great and cruel Pharaoh, who was to them what Napoleon was in the early part of this century to our English mothers, "a raw-head-and-bloody-bones," with which they nestled their little ones under cover and frightened them to silence and to sleep. Their daily narratives, too, were frequent and vivid of more recent events. The miracles of the Red Sea, and of the flowing fountain from the flinty rock, and also of the quails and of the manna, and of Mount Sinai. It were difficult,—perhaps it is impossible,—to conceive of happier circumstances for imparting *oral* religious instruction than were enjoyed by Carmi and his wife.

And certainly there is no more important period in human existence than that of early childhood. Then the heart is in the hands of the parents, to mould it for future glory. It is what they say, or are heard to say, and their tones and manners, and the expressions of their countenances, that are embalmed in the little immortal natures that wait at their knee for their form, texture and moral coloring for eternity. The character of manhood is formed out of the influences that operate on childhood. The elements of human greatness and strength are the products of the teachings received in youth, and of the discipline and trials we pass through ourselves, upon the strength of our early training.

The practical results of oral instruction, intentional

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and undesigned, are too often overlooked. In early childhood nothing is more effective than the remarks of a mother, made to her little toddler as he runs in and out asking questions, while she is plying her needle or engaged in domestic avocations. The eccentric question or the blundering word has called out a remark which the little inquirer seems not to care for at the moment; but it has found a lodgment. It has sunk into his memory. He reasons upon it, and the intellectual and moral result has begun its growth for immortality.

It is said that Americans are awkward in society, because they do not cultivate the art of conversation. I partly believe it. I fear we do not value oral instruction as we should. It is a great evil to crowd the mind of a young child with book lessons. Rather let it be taught by pictures and rhymes. Let it be taught orally, and eat as much pure, free air as possible. The first oral lessons of a parent are those that have the strongest influence on life, and will be the last to fade from memory in death.

Great as were the means enjoyed by these Hebrew parents for the oral instruction of their son, we are not able to say how far they improved them. Indeed they may have died when he was a small child. He may have been left without parents or early friends, or teacher to direct his way. His little bark may have been set adrift on the ocean of life, to take its chance among the rude billows and breakers, and

without one friendly hand stretched out to steer or to save it. The very name—*orphan uncared for*—is an apology for very much that is wrong in after life. To be left an orphan, is a hard lot under the most favorable circumstances; but it would have been peculiarly so in the wilderness, and in a time of war and trouble. If Achan's parents were spared to him and if they instructed him as they should have done, then his character is all the more vile and hateful. However this may have been, he turned out very badly. He grew up to be a man in the wilderness. His parents having come up out of Egypt, and having murmured against God and Moses, died; and their carcasses were buried in the way to Canaan. Meanwhile, Achan falls in love, as young men are apt to do, and marries a daughter of one of the tribes, and his tent is filled with sons and daughters. He also became a man of substance. He was quite well to do in the world. He had flocks and herds. And when Joshua arrives at Gilgal with the army and all the people, there Achan and his sons were circumcised, for they had neglected this rite during their forty years sojourning in the wilderness.

After his circumcision, Achan and his sons and daughters were confirmed, and admitted to their first communion, that is, their first Passover. And when Joshua passes over the Jordan and encamps before Jericho, Achan and his family are with the rest of his tribe. He shares in all the trials and

duties preliminary to the fall of that city. But in its fall he disobeys the Lord, and commits a great sin. Joshua, however, is ignorant of this, until his troops sent against Ai are defeated. From this painful event he is confident there was sin upon the people.

Perhaps, indeed, he had become too confident of success after the fall of Jericho, and had been too hasty in sending an expedition against Ai. At least, it does not appear that he had asked counsel of the Lord about this enterprise. Great, however, was his grief at the disgrace that had fallen upon them. Many and fervent were his prayers. The elders and the people also engaged in fasting and prayer. At length the Lord told Joshua that it was sin that had brought all this trouble upon them, and instructed him how to find out the guilty. He tells the people what the Lord has said, and they accordingly sanctify themselves, and cast lots, and Achan is taken. He confesses his sin in the accursed thing. His confession is verified. He is exhorted to repentance, and is sentenced to death, and is executed according to law, and his history has been written by a prophet of old who was commanded to do so by the Lord himself.

The inspired record of his crime is a warning to mankind. But the amount of crime does not always show the criminality of the agent. That can only be known to Him who searcheth the heart, and knoweth

the strength of temptation and the means of resisting it. "Through sin's long labyrinth" Achan soon ran his course, and found the wages thereof were death. The name of Achan

"bears the brand of blasphemy burned in."

It is set as a flaming light on the brow of ruin, to warn off those that come near the dangerous shores on which he was wrecked and sunk into everlasting infamy and sorrow. God grant, if these pages fall into the hands of any who have sinned and desire forgiveness, that they may be as the valley of Achor, for a door of hope, and lead them to the Great Redeemer.

The Crime Committed.

THE CRIME COMMITTED.

JOSHUA vii: 1. But the Children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel.

“Taught by Mammon, men have
Ransacked the centre, and with impious hands
Rifled the bowels of their mother earth,
And digg'd out ribs of gold.”

“Hitherward, winged with speed,
A num'rous brigade hastened; as when bands
Of pioneers, with spade and pickaxe armed,
Forerun the royal camp to trench a field.—**PARADISE LOST.**”

“Earth gets its price for what Earth gives us;
The beggar is taxed for a corner to die in,
The priest hath his fee who comes and shrives us,
We bargain for the graves we lie in.
At the Devil's booth are all things sold;
Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold:
* * * * *

’T is Heaven alone that is given away,
’T is only God may be had for the asking.—**JAMES R. LOWELL.**”

IN his confession Achan tells us how he committed this sin. **VER. 20th.** *And Achan answered Joshua, and said. Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done.* **VER. 21st.** *When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and*

a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them, and behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

From the previous chapter, we learn that the wealthy and powerful city of Jericho, before its fall, was devoted to destruction: the city and every thing in it, except Rahab and the gold, was an "accursed thing." Rahab was saved according to the covenant made with the Hebrew spies. Her deliverance was the reward of her faith and kindness to God's people. So much of the gold and silver of Jericho as had not been employed in making idols, was consecrated to the sanctuary. The law of Moses was very plain as to the precious metals belonging to the heathen gods. In Deut. vii: 25, we read: "The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire; thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein; for it is an abomination to the Lord thy God." And from Numbers xxxi: 54, it is plain that the gold and silver taken from the heathen were not to be appropriated to any private use, but deposited in the tabernacle, where the spoils of the Midianites were laid up. "But now," says the quaint and eloquent Hall, "it is good reason, since God threw down those walls and not they, that both the blood of that wicked city should be spilt to him, not to their own revenge; and that the treasure should be reserved for his use, not for theirs. Who but a miscreant can

grudge that God should serve himself of his own?" Imperfect as our views at present are, still we can see many reasons why the spoils of the rich city of Jericho were not given to the soldiers. In the very beginning of "the wars of the conquest," it was necessary to teach them obedience and self-restraint. It was important to make them feel that they could not conquer in their own strength. By denying them the spoils, they were pointedly reminded that it was not their sword that had won the city. The LORD had given it to them. There is also a military *moral* in the prohibition. The efficiency of many a soldier has been lost by the luxury of victory. Large invading armies have melted away and perished for the want of self-restraint. The victory of Cannæ was lost in the pleasures and riot of Capua, so that it became a proverb *that what Cannæ was to the Romans, Capua was to Hannibal*. If the soldiers had been allowed at the very outset to glut themselves with the spoils, they would have been indisposed and incapacitated for the severe labors that awaited them in the conquest of the land. Besides, Jericho was a sort of first-fruits. And as such, it was offered up to the LORD as a burnt-offering. It was not taken according to the usual rules of war. There was no embankment cast up; no trenches dug; no mines set; no battering ram employed; no regular siege operations; no bombardment and storming; no extraordinary feats of valor on the part of the besiegers.

There was therefore no special plea why they should have the booty. Every one, however, must admire the religious and military discipline of Joshua's army. The wonder is not that there was *one* Achan, but that there were not hundreds. But one instance of disobedience under such circumstances is remarkable.

Joshua, we are told, as commander-in-chief of the Hebrew armies, had, according to Divine instructions, pronounced the doom of Jericho and declared it accursed; and he had even pronounced the man accursed "before the Lord," in the twenty-sixth verse of the preceding chapter, who should rise up and rebuild the city. "He shall lay the foundation thereof in his first born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates thereof." This prophecy was fulfilled about five hundred years afterwards. In the reign of Ahab, a wicked prince, one Hiel of Bethel rebuilt Jericho, and in him was accomplished the threatened doom. His eldest son died when he commenced the work by laying the foundation, others during the progress of the work, and last of all, the youngest died when he finished it by setting up the gates. *He laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son, Segub, according to the word of the LORD which he spake by Joshua, the son of Nun.* I. Kings, xvi: 34. The rebuilder of Jericho was cursed. And the prediction was fulfilled in him.

But this did not prevent the place from becoming a flourishing city afterwards, and for many years. The divine curse did not doom the city to perpetual desolation. The books furnish us with many instances in ancient history, of solemn and awful execrations against those who should rebuild those cities that had been destroyed in war, the revival of whose power was dreaded; especially such cities as were remarkable for oppression, perfidy and insolence, or for having caused great slaughter by their defense. STRABO (lib. xiii.) says that such execrations were common. He says that Agamemnon pronounced a curse on those who should rebuild Troy, as Cræsus did against those who should rebuild Sidena, in which the tyrant Glaucus had taken refuge.* The *Romans* made a decree of execrations against those who should rebuild Carthage. The *Ionians* pronounced the most awful curses on those who should rebuild the temples destroyed by the Persians. They wished them to remain to all coming ages as an ever-enduring monument of the impiety of those barbarians who were so wicked as to make war on the gods themselves. The Greeks generally, according to Isocrates, refused to repair the temples destroyed by the Persian invaders, preferring that their ruins should remain as a perpetual monument of the enmity that should ever subsist between them and the Per-

* For these passages and the originals see Dr. Clarke.

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sians, and as pledges that they never would forget or forgive the insult. Similar imprecations were uttered by the Spanish conquerors of Mexico and Peru, upon such strong places as fell into their hands after a stout resistance to their arms.

I. THE STOLEN GOODS.

They were "a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight." The Hebrew word *shekel* signifies weight, money. It is used to denote money and the weight of any thing, as of iron, hair, spice, etc. It is thought by some that the Hebrews had two kinds of shekels, one for common use and one for the sanctuary, and that the latter was twice as much as the former. This wants proof. There is some difference among learned men as to the value of the shekel. The lowest value of a Hebrew shekel is given at about half-a-dollar of our money. And the shekel of gold is considered as having been worth about nine dollars of our money. The two hundred shekels of silver were then probably worth about one hundred dollars, and the tongue of gold about four hundred and fifty, and the Babylonish garment about five hundred; making the stolen goods in value worth about one thousand and fifty dollars. This sum seems small to us, but money was worth more then than it is now. The sum was not too insignificant to

be connected with a great transgression. Many murders have been committed in this State for a less amount.

The dress of oriental nations is very much the same now that it was three thousand years ago. Their stuffs are made of fine materials. Their best articles of apparel were made of wool, and the hair of goats, camels and even of horses. Coarse sack-cloth was made of the hair of horses, for mourning apparel. That which seems to have been most desired for mourning, was manufactured from the hair of black goats. In Egypt and Syria cloth made of cotton and flax, and of byssus, which was probably Indian muslin, was well known in very remote times. Silks were also manufactured with the choicest colors, and feathered or embroidered with gold. Their cloths were valued according to the fineness of their texture and the brilliancy of their colorings. On public occasions, Jewish nobles and courtiers appeared in scarlet robes; dyed, not as in modern times with madder, cochineal, or some other modern tincture, but with a shrub whose red berries gave an orange tinge to the cloth. Solomon used crimson or vermilion for the temple. The celebrated Tyrian dyes, that were said to take their tincture from the liquor of a shell-fish found in the adjacent sea, are now believed to have been made by the use of cochineal. They probably gave out that they used the murex, or purple fish, as a blind, designing to keep

the use of cochineal as a secret among themselves. The fashions of the people of the East do not change as with us. Their style of dress requires but little sewing. Their loose, flowing robes are more dignified and graceful than our tight fits, and are better adapted to an Asiatic climate. Among them the same clothes will answer for several generations. The same robes can be made to fit, with ease, many different persons. The clothes of the Philistines that Samson slew at Askelon did not require a tailor to make them fit his companions. The same robe that Jonathan wore could be used by David. This explains the frequent references of the Bible to wardrobes, or garments and robes, as a prominent portion of oriental wealth, and as being in readiness for guests at feasts and weddings. This kind of wealth was also easily transported from place to place, and was handed down from father to son through many generations. It is also thought that a peculiar robe, which was highly scented with precious ointment, was kept in the family and presented to the eldest son on the day when he became of age. Hence Jacob said, he smelled the smell of his son's raiment, and it was as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed. Gen. xxvii: 27.

The Hebrew for *a goodly Babylonish garment* is "*addereth Shinar*,"—*a costly or splendid robe of Shinar*. Our translators have rendered it *a garment* because they did not know what kind of a robe it

was, and *Babylonish* because Babylon was situated in Shinar, and was a term better known. Shinar is the old name for Babylonia. A goodly Babylonish garment indicates a rich style of manufacture in the East, and is a proof of considerable luxury and wealth at that early period; and also proof that commerce was then carried on between the Canaanites on the Mediterranean and the inhabitants of the Euphrates. Accordingly, the monuments of Egypt and the discoveries recently made on the Euphrates, prove beyond dispute that the ancients were acquainted with the art of war, the way to conduct an attack and besiege a walled town, and also with the precious metals and with some fine manufactures of hair, silk and linen. For authorities, see Kitto and the books. Josephus says that the Babylonish garment that Achan took was "a royal robe, woven entirely of gold." If so, it belonged to the king of Jericho, and was probably worth a larger sum than I have named. From Jonah iii: 6, and Ezekiel xxiii: 15, it is plain that Nineveh and Babylon were celebrated for their robes. "Girded with girdles upon their loins," saith the prophet, "exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads, all of them princes to look to, after the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldea, the land of their nativity." "The learned Bochart proves by numerous authorities that robes of various colors were made at Babylon, adorned with colored patterns somewhat in the style of Turkey carpets, very rich

and brilliant, and that they were greatly admired in the eastern world." As the Babylonians had the honor of inventing this sort of robes, so they were called after their name. It is in the same way that Cashmere, Paisley and Lowell shawls have their names to this day. And so the world-renowned Damascus blades were called after the place of their manufacture. And in passing, I may say, that the art of making the genuine Damascus blade is said to have been wholly lost. The Babylonish robe is believed to have been of various strong colors. Some think the colors were woven into them. Others, that they were embroidered with the needle, and others that they were painted. Commentators give us ancient authors in support of these various styles of manufacturing robes.*

It is now well known that the ancient Egyptians, Tyrians, Assyrians and Babylonians were remarkable for the brightness and durability of their dyes. "The Assyrians," says Mr. Layard, "were celebrated for the magnificence and luxury of their apparel." *The Assyrian garment* was a proverb among the

***SILIUS ITALICUS** speaks of them as woven.

Vestis spirantes referens subtermine vultus;
Quæ radio cælat Babylon.—**PUNIC**, l. xiv: ver. 657.

MARTIAL says they were embroidered with a needle.

Non ego prætulerim Babylonica picta superbe
Texta, Semiramia quæ variantur acu.—**LIB.** viii: 9. 28. ver. 17.

PLINY and **APULSIUS** speak of them as if painted. "Colores diversos picturæ inter-
ere Babylon maxime celebravit et nomen imposuit." It seems most probable that the
figures were wrought with a needle, with colored thread, after the cloth came from the
loom. See quoted in Dr. Clarke.

Persians and Romans for any thing gaudy, fine and magnificent. "The robes, as portrayed in the sculptures, confirm the traditions of their beauty and costliness. The dress of the king consisted of a long flowing garment, descending to the ankles, and elaborately embroidered and edged with fringes and tassels. It was confined at the waist by a girdle, to which were attached cords with tassels falling down almost to the feet." A similar description of the dress of the Babylonians is given by Herodotus.

Rennell's Geography of Herodotus and Vincent's Commerce of the Ancients, together with all modern travelers and historians, will abundantly sustain the foregoing statements in regard to the arts, commerce and dress of the ancients. And in these facts are found illustrations of many passages of the Holy Scriptures.

It is also an interesting fact, that the conquerors of Peru found many articles in use in that country and many customs established among its inhabitants, that bear a striking resemblance to those of Asia. They tell us of vases richly embossed with figures of serpents, locusts and other animals; "of richly tinted robes of cotton and feathery work, gold sandals; and in one place they met with ten planks or bars (or as the writer of the memoirs of Joshua would have called them, tongues) of solid silver being twenty feet in length, one foot in breadth, and two or three inches thick."—*Prescott's Peru*, vol. 1, p. 524.

Costly robes, turbans, pipes and shawls are still important articles in royal wardrobes in the East. It is not probable, however, that any one living has ever seen just such a robe as this Babylonish garment was. So far as I know, there is not in all the world even a description of such a one by a person who had himself ever seen one. There is no doubt, however, that the robes of their neighbors on the Euphrates were very similar. And of these, Mr. Layard, and the ancient authors just referred to, have given us much interesting information. I think it is altogether probable, that the robe so fatal to Achan was just such as are described as belonging to Babylon in the days of Ezekiel. In Joshua's time the Babylonians must have been more famous than any other of the Assyrian nations. And on this account, any thing belonging to the countries bordering on the east of the Tigris or of the Euphrates was called *Babylonish*. The term was not, then, confined to the country of Babylonia, or the city of Nebuchadnezzar, as it was in the days of Daniel.

II. THE DOOM OF JERICHO NOT VINDICTIVE BUT JUDICIAL.

As to the objection that there was unnecessary cruelty and even vindictiveness in devoting Jericho as an accursed thing to utter destruction, two things may be said in reply: First, that Joshua was now a

military leader, and had to resort to such measures as were justifiable for effecting the conquest of the land. It has been at all times usual with the leaders of invading armies to deal severely with the first town taken by a storm, or with a fortress that has given them a great deal of trouble or cost them a great many lives, in order that terror might seize hold on the rest of the cities and that they might be induced to make an early submission. Joshua, no doubt, meant to make Jericho a monument, showing the doom that awaited all other places that did not submit to him. And, secondly, there was no more severity in the utter destruction of Jericho than there is in the execution of a judicial sentence. Jericho belonged to a nation whose measure of iniquity was filled up. Its guilt was the more enhanced by reason of the amazing display of Almighty power which had been shown in favor of the Hebrews in their journeyings from Egypt, and in crossing the Jordan. But all these things seem only the more to have hardened their hearts. Nothing, therefore, remained to be done but the execution of judgment.

As JEHOVAH, however, never fails to remember his threatenings, so also is he equally faithful in his promises. When he made inquisition for the blood of Egypt's first born, he remembered all his covenant keeping people; and so here, Rahab is not forgotten. Whatever we do for God or his people, because they are his people, shall be fully rewarded.

D

We have now before us the sin committed: one of the Hebrews *committed a trespass against the LORD in the accursed thing*. What, then, are the consequences, as seen in the picture passing before us?

On a hill about twelve miles north-east of Jerusalem and about one mile from Bethel, a place celebrated in the lives of the Patriarchs, the great progenitors of the people now led by Joshua, stands a city of the Amorites. In Genesis, xii: 8, it is called Hai. Josephus calls it Aina, and the Septuagint, Gai. In the text it is called AI. It was, probably, a place of considerable strength, or its inhabitants would not have dared to stand a siege after the fall of Jericho, a neighboring city. In permitting the reconnoitring Hebrews to fall into a delusion, in supposing the place to be more feebly defended than it really was, God mingled mercy with judgment. For no matter how many men had gone to the attack of Ai, they would all have failed. And the larger the force, in all probability, the greater would have been the number slain in their defeat and flight.* The reconnoitre, attack, repulse, flight and slaughter are briefly stated in the following verses:

2 And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth-aven, on the east side of Beth-el, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai.

*"The victories of God go not by strength, but by innocence."—HALL.

3 And they returned unto Joshua and said unto him, Let not all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labor thither, for they are but few.

4 So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men, and they fled before the men of Ai.

5 And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted and became as water.

6 ¶ And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the even-tide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads.

7 And Joshua said, Alas! O Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!

8 O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies?

9 For the Canaanites, and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?

The flight of the Hebrew forces was extraordi-

nary. Flushed with victory; confident of success; yet as soon as the men of Ai came out against them they were panic struck and fled in the utmost confusion. *And the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.* Without supernatural aid, then, how could a people so easily and so utterly discouraged ever have conquered the numerous and warlike tribes of Canaan? Let the deist and the infidel answer.

As a military man, Joshua must have felt this disaster very keenly. It was a stain upon his arms. It was a most painful and dishonorable sight for him to see his host flying with Jehovah's banners humbled before the exulting Canaanite. The moral effects were greatly to be lamented. The whole affair was not more *discouraging* to the Israelites than it was *encouraging* to the heathen. Doubtless there was great rejoicing in Ai and among the neighboring Canaanitish cities, when they saw the Hebrew host flying before the men of Ai. No doubt they shouted, saying, Aha! these are the brave fellows from whose presence the waters of the Jordan ran back, and the walls of Jericho fell down! Their legs are as swift as the Jordan, and their boasting heads fall before us faster than Jericho's walls did before them. And fast and far fled the news of the victory of the men of Ai; and the neighboring Canaanites were greatly encouraged, saying, as Ai has done, so can we do.

Rending one's clothes, as Joshua did, and beating the breast, tearing the hair, putting dust on the head and falling down prostrate, were usual marks of deep affliction and distress in ancient times, in Bible lands, and are so still. These signs of grief are often alluded to in the Bible. Most nations have expressed their sorrow in a similar way. Some of my readers may call to mind a passage in Virgil (Aen. lib. xii. ver. 594,) which illustrates the text. It is a most beautiful and touching description of the distress of the family of king *Latinus*; and the translation by Dryden is not unworthy of the original.

"The queen, who saw the foes invade the town,
And brands on tops of burning houses thrown,
She raves against the gods, she beats her breast,
And tears, with both her hands, her purple vest.
The sad Lavinia rends her yellow hair
And rosy cheeks; the rest her sorrow share.
Latinus tears his garments, as he goes,
Both for his public and his private woes;
With filth his venerable beard besmears,
And sordid dust deforms his silver hairs."

The traveller among the Arabs not unfrequently meets with crowds of people, men, women and children in the street, or between the village and their grave-yard, with hair all torn down, garments pulled to pieces and faces besmeared with mud, uttering the most pitiable cries on account of some bereavement or affliction. At another time he will see some poor object of bereavement, or of some deep bodily affliction, sitting on the ground just as the picture of Job represents him, with eyes fixed thereon, a dirty

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rag around his loins, his arms folded, his jewels laid aside, his hair all dishevelled and covered with ashes, and bitterly bemoaning his condition; and as you come near you will catch the modern sound of the old Hebrew word, *Ah*, of the text, in the oft repeated *Iyo, Iyo, Iyo, alas.*

What a study, this, for an artist! The commander-in-chief of the armies of the living God; the successor of Moses; the conqueror of Jericho; surrounded by all the elders of Israel, prostrate upon their faces and with their faces to the ground, before the ark of the LORD; and with dust upon their heads and clothes all rent, from morn until evening! And as the discomfitted bands come in, and report their disaster, naming over their killed and wounded, Joshua says, *Alas! O, Lord GOD, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies? And what wilt thou do unto thy great name?*

This was not, however, mere acting. The heart was deeply moved. Joshua's grief was natural and proper. His conduct and words on the occasion were but the utterances of nature in distress. He saw the people as water; without spirit, and in no condition to meet their enemies. The repulse of his forces was a sad proof of the divine displeasure. Well did he know that his foe could not have prevailed, unless God had forsaken them; and that God would not have forsaken them unless there was sin lying upon them. And in all this he saw dishonor

reflected on his religion, and the ineffable name of Jehovah blasphemed among the heathen. As Moses before had done, on similar occasions, he shows the deepest concern for the thousands of Israel and for the divine glory. And this is one of the very best evidences he could have given that he was a true Christian. His concern was highly rational. For the cause of all their sorrow was sin. All the Canaanites together could not have driven the detachment of three thousand men from before Ai, unless they had the guilt of transgression on their souls. They had disobeyed God. They had disobeyed the orders of their superior. They had taken what was forbidden. And they were now reaping the fruits of their sin. And the fruits of sin are always evil and bitter. Nor is there but one door now open for them. There is but one course to be taken. *Neither will I be with you any more, saith the LORD, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.* There must be full hearted and speedy repentance and reformation. There must be confession. And there must be a forsaking of sin and a turning unto the Lord. The necessity of repentance is absolute still. It is as urgent upon us as it ever was upon the Hebrews. It is only when we put away the accursed thing that we shall have peace. "It is only when we have risen, and redressed sin, that we may fall down for pardon."—*Hall.* There is no escape from this necessity. All have sinned, and

come short of the glory of God. EXCEPT YE REPENT, saith the Saviour of the world, YE SHALL ALL LIKEWISE PERISH. It is God's command now to all men to repent; to cease to do evil and learn to do well. If we confess and forsake our sins, we shall find mercy. But surely, we cannot expect God to forgive sins that we do not forsake. I fear that many among us have *committed a trespass in the accursed thing*, and therefore it is that we hear so much of "hard times;" such lamentations and wailings over the corruptions, frauds and commercial distress of the day. I fear that many have the wedge of gold and the goodly Babylonish garment hidden away in their tent, and not only the silver under it but their hearts also. Certainly, the love of gold and of fine dressing is the leading passion of California. The world has usurped the heart's affections, and reigns where God alone should be supreme. And many, very many, whose names are enrolled on the church books at home, here keep aloof from the communion of saints and from the house of prayer. And not a few heads of families have worn out their certificates of membership, without ever making themselves known as the followers of the Saviour. They have denied him on the street; they have denied him in public places. They have denied him on the Lord's day by not keeping it holy, and by not assembling with his people, and by not remembering him in the Holy Sacrament.

YOUNG MEN, I would speak a word to you. You are now fairly out upon the troubled sea of life. You have perhaps already weathered out several hard storms. Some of you have already found a life from home not exactly what you expected it to be. A life in California is certainly not all poetry. Though it is a land of flowers, it is not a "flowery bed of ease." California is a place of stern realities. It will soon discover the stuff a man is made of. It is a sea of troubled waters, where only the strongest swimmers and the stoutest hearts can live. And are you, then, just from home, and setting up in business or seeking employment? *Beware of the wedge of gold and the goodly Babylonish garment!* Be honest and diligent, and flee from all extravagance and dissipation. This is a period of peculiar interest to you. It is a time exceedingly critical with you. You have to acquire a knowledge of men and things and the way to do business. And while you are acquiring this knowledge, and before you are aware of it, you will have formed a character that will affect your prospects through life in a greater or less degree. Before you are aware, you will form fixed habits, and before you suppose yourself known, or that you have become the object of attention at all, your every action will have been scrutinized, and business men will have made their estimate of you and observed your horoscope. There may not be a general office, as in the "Mercantile Agency" of

New York, where every merchant's character and means are registered, in which your capacity and habits are written down and from which a transcript of your character can be furnished to order; still, by the unwritten common law of common sense and observation, you are already tried and sentenced on 'change.

"I once visited," says a gentleman, "a large public school. At recess a little fellow came up and spoke to the master; and as he turned to go down the platform, the master said, 'That is a boy I can trust. He never failed me.' I followed him with my eye, and looked at him when he took his seat after recess. He had a fine, open, manly face. I thought a good deal about the master's remark. What character had that little boy earned? He had already got what would be worth to him more than a fortune. It would be a passport to the best office in the city, and what is better, to the confidence of the whole community. I wonder if the boys know how soon they are rated by older people. Every boy in the neighborhood is known, and opinions formed of him; he has a character, either favorable or unfavorable. A boy of whom the master can say, 'I can trust him, for he never failed me,' will never want employment. The fidelity, promptness and industry which he has shown at school, are prized every where. He that is faithless in little will be faithless in much."

An instance came within my own knowledge in another city, that illustrates the point in hand. An old gentleman in failing health, who had amassed a fortune, desired a partner whom he could trust with the management of his business. He gave a party, and invited a number of young men. He ate and enjoyed himself. They drank and made merry, and by various jests and remarks developed their thoughts and principles. There was one of them, however, whom—while he was kind, attentive and social—no persuasion could induce to violate the strictest rules of temperance in his eating and drinking. He betrayed no familiarity with cards, fast horses, or opera rows. The old gentleman tried every expedient consistent with good manners, to induce him to depart from his habits of sobriety; but in vain. His fixedness of purpose was equal to the purity of his character. His companions drank high and had a night of pleasure. But now mark the sequel. The next morning the old gentleman offered a most advantageous partnership to one of his guests the evening before. But did he offer it to the one that could bear the most wine and boast the loudest of a fast horse? Not so. He was a better judge of human nature. He offered his business to the young man whose principles he had tried before that young man knew that he was upon any trial at all. He was satisfied this was the one to be trusted. He had self-denial, and principle, and courage enough to

restrain himself from the wedge of gold and the Babylonish garment.

This ordeal was a severe one, because it was unexpected. And thus it will generally be: the crisis is past before we are aware of it. Some little incident, when you least expect it, will test your principles; and things apparently trifling *will fix your standing for all coming time*. Before you think you are upon trial, little things will have satisfied most of those that know you as to whether you are indeed a gentleman or not; whether your principles and habits are such as may be trusted or not.

There is, perhaps, as little chance for a young man here to pass himself current who is "a sham and a lie," as in any part of the globe. The habits and pursuits of men here lead them to close scrutiny. The crucible here is one of terrible solvents. There is no possibility of passing long under false colors. There is a fearful amount of mental energy operating on these shores for the wedge of gold and the Babylonish robe. O that the intellect expended here for the things that perish in the using thereof were sanctified, and employed in the direction of glory, honor and immortality!

As you, then, value a good character, and as you prize the hope of eternal life, let not the pursuits of the world take you from the Bible and the means of grace. As one withdraws himself from the influence

of religious society, and from the books and places that excite religious thoughts, in the same proportion will his religious feelings decline, and the influence of education and the awful authority of God be lifted from his conscience; and just in the proportion that one gets thus away from the God of his fathers, in the same proportion will the devil advance, and his temptations become more and more dangerous. As the distance from God increases, so the space between the soul thus losing the restraints of truth and the grand adversary diminishes. And as the forces of divine attraction are weakened and broken, so the gravitation to hell increases; until, with a fearful momentum the lost soul drops into the bottomless pit. But is there no hope? Must all who have sinned be lost? By no means. God is merciful. There is forgiveness with him that he may feared. Jesus Christ is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, and to him be glory forever. Amen.

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The Lot---The Arrest.

THE LOT—THE ARREST.

"There's a Divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.
That is most certain."

WE have considered briefly the sin committed, and begun to see its evil effects. A detachment of three thousand men is put to flight before Ai; and Joshua, surrounded by all the elders of Israel, is prostrate on his face in the deepest humiliation, saying:

8 O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies!

9 For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?

10 ¶ And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up: wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?

11 Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and

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have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.

12 Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.

13 Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.

14 In the morning therefore ye shall be brought, according to your tribes: and it shall be that the tribe which the LORD taketh shall come according to the families thereof: and the family which the LORD shall take shall come by households; and the household which the LORD shall take shall come man by man.

15 And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel.

Here we have: 1st, The warrant for the offender's arrest, with directions how to serve it. The LORD tells Joshua that the cause of their shame and defeat before Ai was their sin in transgressing his cove-

nant which he had commanded them. *For they have even taken the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed.*

2nd. As there is sin, so there must be repentance, remission and sanctification. *Up, sanctify the people and say, sanctify yourselves against to-morrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you: neither will I be with you any more except ye destroy the accursed from among you.* Human effort is here called for. God's plan is to work in and with men, and not to save them against their own will. Jehovah commands Joshua to do something. He does not say, Lie still and mourn; but, "Get thee up; Israel hath sinned." The sin must be found out and redressed, and then you may fall down and plead for pardon. It is to no purpose, whatever, to pray against punishment, while the sin continues. If we would be forgiven, we must confess and forsake.

3rd. The allegations of the indictment are plain, positive and awful. The warrant, containing also the sentence ready to be put into execution upon conviction, ran in this style. Jehovah and the Hebrew

people against the offender who has trespassed in the accursed thing. It is addressed to Joshua, as judge and commander-in-chief: "In the morning, therefore, ye shall be brought according to your tribes; and it shall be that the tribe which the LORD taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the LORD shall take shall come by households; and the household which the LORD shall take shall come man by man. And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burned with fire, he and all that he hath, because he hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel."

THE LOT CAST AND THE THIEF TAKEN.

16 So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken.

14 And he brought the family of Judah; and he took the family of the Zarhites; and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man; and Zabdi was taken:

18 And he brought his household man by man; and Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah of the tribe of Judah was taken.

I. LOT-CASTING.

On the subject of casting lots, or of discovering

the divine will on doubtful points, the Hebrews had "many conceits." The most probable methods, from all that is written in the Bible, are two. The first was to consult God by the Urim and Thummim. The breast-plate of the High Priest had a precious stone in it, and as their tribes came before him, this stone, by a change of its lustre, gave intimation of the will of God concerning them. The other method was by casting lots. It was thus the transgressor in the matter of eating honey, in I. Sam. xiv: 40-43, was found out, and the lot fell on Jonathan, David's friend. This mode of determining difficult points is frequently mentioned in the Bible. It was appointed by God himself. In Lev. xvi: 8, the Lord commands Aaron to present "two goats at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats: one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scape goat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD'S lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scape goat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him."

There was great propriety in discovering the guilty in this case by casting lots. No human being had testified against Achan. How then was Joshua ever to find out the guilty? The Omniscient One instructs him how to proceed. The process was extraordinary, and the fixing of the crime upon

the guilty was guaranteed by miraculous or divine interference.

It is of but little importance whether we know how the lot was cast or not. Probably it was done by writing the names of the twelve tribes on tickets, and then putting them in an urn, it being understood that the first ticket drawn should indicate the tribe that contained the guilty person. Then they cast as many tickets as there were ancestral families in that tribe; and then, again, tickets for all the households of the ancestral family whose name was drawn; and lastly, the heads of that household were drawn from the urn; and thus the tribe of Judah was taken and the family of the Zarhites; and of this family, man by man, the lot took Zabdi; and of his family, man by man, Achan was taken. Whether this was the mode of casting lots, or whether it was done in some other way, I am not able positively to determine. It is well known, however, that the decision of points uncertain and the discovery of things hidden, by the lot, was a custom much in use by the Jews and was highly esteemed by them. From several passages of Scripture it is also plain that the heathen had the same custom. This is confirmed by collateral history. It is clear also, from the Bible, that it was sanctioned by the divine will. As used by the Jews and first Christians, lot-casting was a solemn appeal to God. It was a deeply pious manner of submitting to Providence. Pagan superstitions, however,

were soon intermingled with the practice. And it was also sometimes applied to evil purposes, so that the practice became dangerous and criminal, and was discontinued. Since the cessation of miracles and of prophetic and apostolic gifts, and the completion of the canon of Scripture, we are not allowed to resort to lots as a means of knowing the will of God for our salvation. There may be cases, as I shall presently show, when eminently good people may decide a doubtful point by casting lots. It is said that the great Mr. John Wesley was so perplexed between Calvinism and Arminianism as theological systems, that he cast up an English shilling to decide whether he should be a Calvinist or an Arminian.

II. The great principle involved in casting lots lies in the appeal to a source beyond human skill and power for the decision of a doubtful point. This is true in the usual method of drawing lotteries, or of playing dice or cards. Whether the lot consist in drawing at random a ticket from the wheel, or in the position of a die which is thrown after rattling it in the box, or in the distribution of cards after the pack has been shuffled, the principle is the same. In every such action an appeal is made to the Supreme Governor of the world,—the ever living God,—who is the creator and possessor of heaven and earth, and all that in them is. Even the godless Shelley, after Goethe, speaking of the play at the

rouge et noir table, says the ball went spinning round

“in its predestined circle rolled.”

What! men *praying* to God when they are playing cards or rattling dice? Yes, if they are honest. If they are not perjuring themselves, they are making by such acts a solemn appeal to “the Almighty Ruler of the spheres,” to decide in their favor. What else can the meaning be? The die is cast, the wheel is turned and the cards are shuffled for the avowed purpose of preventing collusion. The appeal is then made, directly, to something above and beyond human skill. The reference is not to a human tribunal, but to some superior court. It is absurd to talk of making such an appeal to nothing, or even to *chance*, if by this term is meant that an effect can be produced without a cause. The only sense in which the word *chance* can be properly used is in the sense of something that happens in a manner unforeseen by us, or of which the cause is not yet apparent. What is chance in the sense of infidel philosophers? Is it something, or nothing? If it is nothing, then they teach that sensible effects are produced by no cause at all. “This is pure nonsense.” But if chance is not *nothing*, then it is *something*. And if something, it is a real thing. But what sort of a thing is it? Has it intelligence, life and power? It must have; for the effects ascribed to it imply such attributes. And if chance

have life, intelligence and power, and is the author of all the manifestations of these things that we see in the universe, then it must be infinite in knowledge and power; and what is this, but God? There is no escape from the conviction, that the casting of a lot, in whatever way it may be done, is an appeal to the living, ever-present and omniscient God. This point is argued strongly by the late eminent Dr. Mason, which see.

But it may be said, it is irreverent to suppose that Divine Providence is concerned in any way in such things. How can it be that so glorious a being as the Supreme Creator of the world should take any notice of our amusements or passions? Now it may be there are some who admit that there is a Creator, but not a Governor of the world. Some, who think our planet and its multitudinous inhabitants are all orphans; that the Creator has cast off all the creatures he has made. There are others who admit there is a vast *general* Providence, but deny its application to individuals. All such speculations are as far from true philosophy as they are from the teachings of the Bible.

Sir Isaac Newton has shown that the attraction of the entire mass of the earth is the sum of the several attractions of its component parts. And philosophy tells us that the attraction of a planet is in proportion to the squares of its distance from its central sun. And it is clear in both these cases, that all and every

component part of the earth is included in its aggregate attraction; and that all and every square is a real force in the attraction of a heavenly body.

Every one knows that the *whole* includes all its *parts*. How then is it possible for the Creator to govern *the whole* of his universe, and not govern its *parts*? As the atmosphere surrounds and presses on all our globe, and yet on every part of it without any collision, so does the Creator's knowledge of all things and events come within his perfect wisdom, and is in perfect harmony with all his glorious attributes.

It is no disparagement to the magnitude and glory of the sun, that it shines upon insects as well as elephants; that it gives light, life and joy to the smallest creature as well as to the mightiest planets. It is surely no more unworthy of God to care for and govern his creatures, than it was to create them at first. And how can we make out the doctrine of man's immortality and accountability for the deeds done in his body, if there be not a particular providence watching over him, that will arrest him and bring him finally before the awful Judge of quick and dead? As God is infinite in all his perfections, so his knowledge is perfect. He knows the end from the beginning. To God there is nothing new; nothing old. Nothing can be added to or taken from the stock of divine intelligence. He fills immensity with his presence; eternity with his life-time; and

comprehends in his knowledge every thing, small and great, past, present and to come. He is as wise now as he will be at the end of the world; and no wiser now than when the world was created. All things, just as they are and with all their sequences, lay open and naked to the divine mind from all eternity. A hair of our head is a worthless thing. A sparrow is sold for half a farthing. And yet our blessed Lord tells us, in Matthew x: 29, 30, that the very hairs of our head are all numbered by our Heavenly Father, and not even a sparrow shall fall to the ground without his knowledge. The heavens do rule. The reins of empire are still in the hands of him who created all things. It is possible, then, for him to call men to account for all their deeds, and for every idle word they speak, and for all their oaths and hard speeches against the Gospel.

If sound philosophy teaches that there is not a particle of matter or of space without law, and that not a stone can fall or a plant sprout without the agency of divine power, then surely it should not be thought to be a vain, or foolish, or extravagant thing, to believe that God's eye is upon all the earth, and that his kingdom ruleth over all. *The lot*, saith the Bible, *is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.* It is impossible for common sense to draw a line that shall *throw any thing outside of the divine jurisdiction, without throwing every thing into blank atheism.* The providence of

the Supreme Creator is still over all persons and actions; for if not, then there are some that are not subject to the divine law; and if there are some that are without the jurisdiction of the Supreme Governor, then there are some that are independent of the Creator; and if *some*, then there may be *others*, and even all others; and we have neither Creator, Governor nor final Judge. But this is contrary to common sense, reason and Scripture. It is repulsive to the instincts of humanity, and subversive of all law and morality.

If there be not such a God as the Bible reveals to us, then we are without any guarantee of happiness or immortality. "A God who does not govern the world is no God at all." Nor is there any escape from the doctrine in question by saying, that "fixed, certain laws" govern the physical world. For pray, what are these laws? Who made them? Who vindicates them? What are laws without a government? The fixed, certain laws of the physical world are nothing but expressions of the Creator's will. They are the utterances of his presence and power still in the world. If he had retired from it, they would not be so *fixed* and *certain*. The Creator does operate by second causes, but second causes do not operate without him. The train does not move without the locomotive. The watch does not run without the main-spring. The lungs do not expand without breath. The axe is an agent; a

second cause; but the axe cannot hew without the carpenter's skill and muscles. If I hew a timber with an axe in my hands, it is my act and not another's. If the Blessed Creator gives me a rich harvest in autumn, because I cast the seed into the ground in the best possible manner, is it not his act through physical laws that fills my barn?

Nor is there any objection against the Creator's taking cognizance of the casting of lots, and all games of chance as they are erroneously called, that does not lie with equal force against the taking of a civil oath. The oath is an appeal to God. Is there not as much irreverence in supposing that God condescends to notice an oath administered in a court of justice, as that he is actually an umpire between parties that appeal to him by the lot? It is true, that games involving the same principle are abused, and instead of being intended as acts of religion are acts of daring impiety.

But the Divine laws cannot be repealed or suspended merely for the gratification of wicked men. God will not work a miracle to keep himself from knowing what men do in the gambling saloon. Nor can he fail to have their deeds recorded in his book of remembrance, because they profane his name and abuse his omniscience. On the contrary, he has commissioned his laws to *daguerreotype* every man's character, as well as to preserve his identity. And if the Divine Being can be shut out

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from the casting of lots and from games of hazard, what evidence is there that he is present in our solemn Sabbath assemblies? Why should we pray? If the Supreme Being leaves men to their games and their pastimes, and their sins, without knowing or caring what they do, have we any reason to suppose that he will hear and come to us when we call upon him in the hour of trouble?

Finally, there is no argument against the interposition of God's providence, in the decision by lot, that may not be advanced against all religious worship. And to deny all religious worship is to avow atheism itself. The lot, then, in every form, is an appeal to the living God, and should never be viewed in any other light, than as an act of solemn religious worship; and the decision obtained by it should be regarded as God's decision.

The Scriptural use of the lot confirms this view. Two cases may be named. When Jacob was dying, he foretold the boundaries of the districts of the Land of Promise that should be inhabited by the respective tribes. And yet, Moses ordained that it should be divided by lot; and accordingly, after the conquest under Joshua, it was actually so divided. And in the election of Saul as the first Hebrew king, we read that it was first revealed to Samuel in a special manner who was to be king, and that he accordingly anointed him. The interview between Samuel and Saul was unknown to the people. They

knew nothing of Saul's anointing. But after it was done, Samuel calls the people to Mizpeh; and when he had told them of their folly and wickedness in demanding a king, to be like the heathen, and for having virtually abandoned the theocracy of their fathers, *then* he commands them to choose their king by lot. And the tribes came near. The lot was cast. Saul's tribe is taken, then his family, and then himself. The certainty of the event was known before. Samuel knew who was to be king. He had anointed Saul some time before, as the Lord's anointed over his inheritance; and yet the lot is cast as if nothing had been revealed to Samuel. The result reached, however, conformed exactly to that revelation. *The lot was cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof was of the Lord.* When the lot had fixed upon Saul as their king, Samuel said to the people: *See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen.* And the same thing is true in every case.

III. From the facts and principles set forth in this discussion, it appears that lots may be cast:

First. As an appeal to God; as a prayer for the notice of his particular providence. It is then a memorial of the divine presence, and an expression of our dependence on him. It is a call upon God for his interposition.

Secondly. The lot, like a civil oath, may be used as a last resort, to determine questions among men.

We read in Hebrews vi: 16, that "an oath is the end of all strife;" and in Prov. xviii: 18, "The lot causeth contentions to cease."

The lot may be proper as a means of ending controversy, by putting a limit to human management and research. But it should never be used, except in cases of great importance. God's name is to be used in prayer, and with reverence and humility, but not to be profaned. The lot is not to be resorted to until all other means have failed to settle a difficulty. The appointment of men to a hazardous service, or the selection of victims where all are equally condemned, but through executive clemency some are to be spared, may be made by lot.

Thirdly. The lot then should be cast only as an act of worship. In the Acts of the Apostles we have a beautiful illustration of the way to conduct the casting of the lot. You recollect the Apostles wished some one to fill the place from which Judas by transgression had fallen. They knew that certain qualifications were necessary. Peter mentioned what they were. And then they looked around and selected two whom they supposed to be equally qualified. But now, what shall they do? How shall they know which of these two is most agreeable to the Great Head of the Church? They have gone as far as they could in a matter so difficult and so important, as that of selecting a fellow Apostle to be a founder with them of the Christian Church.

They therefore referred the decision to their ascended Lord. The two candidates were set before him; and then the eleven Apostles prayed, and said, *Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. And they gave forth their lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias: and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles.* And all acquiesced in the decision as being the decision of their Great Master himself.

IV. THE ABUSES OF THE LOT are as serious as they are common.

1. As it is a religious act, it is abused when resorted to in a light and irreverent manner. If it be used without a reverential regard for God, it is, like profane swearing, blasphemy.

2. It is improper, also, to employ the lot as a means of ascertaining what we may know from Revelation. Dr. Mason (see his whole work on this subject,) points out the sinfulness of employing the lot to determine our spiritual state and character as individuals, in three ways, namely: by using "cards with texts of Scripture on one side," the other being blank, and then shuffled; whatever text is found written on the card drawn out is supposed to be a divine message declaring the character or condition

of the person in the sight of God. Sometimes the Bible is opened at random, and the first verse the eye lights upon is read and regarded as a declaration from Heaven, by which to decide whether we are Christians or not. Or, pins are stuck between the leaves of the Bible when shut, and what is found on the pages between which the pin is inserted is taken as God's message. Well may all such methods be called "puerile and absurd superstition." We should beware how we *turn the Bible into a lottery*. We have a sure word of prophecy, teaching us what to believe and what to do that we may inherit eternal life. Our peace with God is to be made by repentance, faith and charity, and not by cutting sentences of pardon from the law and the testimony and placing them at random among the leaves of the Holy Book. Is there not something repulsive to good taste, as well as blasphemous, in the very idea of parcelling out on a back-gammon board the divine promises and threatenings? Who will take the venture of the *rattled dice* as his chance of heaven or hell? Rather let us work out our salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in us to will and to do what is well pleasing in his sight.

3. *The lot is wickedly resorted to in all games of chance.* For they are appeals to the living God and Supreme Ruler of the world in a profane manner, and are a wanton abuse of a divine ordinance. Some think that gaming is a harmless and pleasant

recreation; if there is no appeal to the sordid passions; if money and wine are not used to keep up the competition. There are many who would scorn the use of cards as a source of unlawful gain, who have never thought that there was any irreligious taint about them. There may be,—I think such is the fact,—certain games that are associated in the public mind with some species of gambling, which are not games of chance at all. They are games of human skill. They are played according to rule. There is no more irreverence, that I can see, in a game of chess than there is in a boy's game of marbles. There is no appeal to chance. The victory is solely the reward of human skill and perseverance.

But I am told that if the same principle is involved in gambling that adheres to the casting of lots; then it is right to gamble, for lots have been used by divine authority. I answer to this, that the same plea may be used for profane swearing. The civil oath and praying are appeals to God, and it is the abuse of the principle involved in these acts that constitutes the awful sinfulness of perjury and profane swearing. And it is in no small degree the reason why the consequences of gaming are so dreadful, that it is the abuse of a holy institution. The infamy, dishonor and wretchedness that sooner or later overtake all gamblers, are "the *natural* penalties" by which God vindicates his laws and asserts

his presence to maintain his authority still in the world. "The universe cannot produce an example of a train of miseries, associated in every age, in every country, in every state of society, with any action or set of actions in which there is no abuse of some divine institution. Thus, falsehood, debauchery, covetousness, dishonesty, revenge, and a thousand other vices, will all be found, upon a close examination, to be abuses of God's institutions, and their deplorable effects to be the punishments which he has annexed to them respectively." I refer the reader to Dr. Mason on lots. The curse of gambling is dreadful, because it is a most impious abuse of the doctrine taught by the divine institution of the casting of the lot.

There is then an immorality in games of chance, essential to their *nature* as well as in their *circumstances*. They are a profanation of the sacred lot. They are an irreverent, blasphemous appeal to the Governor of the world and the final Judge of all men. And what shall we say of the *circumstances* of the gambling table? Where is it? Who are about it? When is it resorted to? What are its adjuncts and what its sequences? The circles that surround it—are they not composed of selections of "the baser sort," from low vulgarity to lofty fashion? The refuse of the grog shop, and the accomplished drawing room beau, for a time meet there on a common level. And the conversation of a single evening

spent over cards, if faithfully written down, would crimson many a face with shame. Even the most refined and intelligent who are addicted to such pursuits, find gambling a consuming, intellectual dissipation of the most dreadful character. And what a terrible waste of time, without the least imaginable benefit to any body! Those relaxations that are conducive to health generally carry with them their own restrictions. Weariness or exhaustion summons us to desist, and we are ready to obey. But in games of chance there is a perpetual, increasing excitement. Hour is added to hour. The next time, and the next time, *and still the next time*, the players are all hoping for better luck, and then they will quit. It is temptation, fascination, absorption, with an ever increasing excitement. And when they do cease they are exhausted, nervous and unhappy. The mind, the body and the soul have lost rather than gained.

And, moreover, when once a fondness is acquired for such games, who can tell where it will terminate? The tendency of all such things, in our sinful world, is from bad to worse; with accelerated speed to the fatal precipice. The habits and associations of the gaming table are all averse to mental improvement and moral elevation. They all lead away from refinement and moral goodness. Their tendency is always away from God, and consequently to deterioration of character and to destruction. O what

thousands have been lost at cards on this coast! and who can tell—no angel's tongue can tell—what agony, and how many tears and broken hearts, and what wailing and despair, and even endless perdition, have been produced by gambling?

One of the mysteries of this golden shore—and its whole history is full of wonders—is that so many are idle where there is so much to do, and that so many live without any visible means of support where living costs so much. This phase of society bodes no good. It is among this body of idlers and “loungers upon the town,” we find our most dangerous classes. And all such are, at least, as far from the lofty requirements of the Gospel as they are from good society. How sad, then, is it, for men grown sick of life, or become frantic with their pangs of conscience, or being betrayed, oppressed, disappointed or forsaken, to fly for relief to the fascinations of the gaming table or to the flowing cup! *Dissipation is no remedy for sorrow.* Instead of finding relief in such things, they but add fuel to the flame. And from one folly to another, one step after another, all in the wrong direction, and all in the downward road, some even rush uncalled into the presence of the Eternal Judge. The murderous steel, or ball, or felon's knife, or tempting flood, have been vainly sought as an end of human woe. O! had they only known

“That Scripture is the only cure of woe;
That field of promise, how it flings abroad
Its odor o'er the Christian's thorny road!
The soul, reposing on assured relief,

Feels herself happy amidst all her grief,
 Forgets her labor as she toils along,
 Weeps tears of joy and bursts into a song."—**COWPER.**

And what less can we say of the sinfulness and unprofitableness of taking God's name in vain than of gambling? What possible good does it do any man to vent his rage in oaths and curses? There is no patent of respectability or originality in profane swearing. The lowest and coarsest piece of street humanity can utter as great swelling words and as foul blasphemies as the most supercilious and polished libertine. The chimney-sweep may be as bold in taking the name of God in vain as the honorable senator. And in all the long vocabulary of oaths and curses which one is obliged to hear in our swarming streets, and on our steam vessels, and rail roads, and stage lines, there is not one that is original. The contagion was received by contact with others. Example has created the habit. Vulgar and profane habits are eminently social vices.

If God is then so supreme in providence that his laws reign in the casting of a lot, in the turning of a lottery wheel, or the position of a die, or the shuffling of gaming cards, *how is it possible for any creature to escape from his jurisdiction?*

God did not name the offender, although he was as well known to him before the lot was cast as afterwards. It would have been as easy for God to have told Joshua *who* had sinned, as to tell him that *any one* had sinned. The *name* of the sinner was

as well known to God as his *crime*. But it is the divine plan not to do for us what we can do for ourselves. Joshua is therefore instructed how he may find out the offender. This method also gave the guilty time for reflection and an opportunity to come out with his confession. But he lies as close among the multitude of his countrymen as the wedge of gold lay in his tent, with the silver under it. The same hope of secrecy that he felt when he sinned, now inspired him with confidence that he should escape. Perhaps he thought that others were as guilty as he was, or more so; and that it was not on *his* account but on *their* account that evil had come upon them. He fancied that when the LORD told Joshua that Israel had sinned, some one else was meant. It could not be that his trifling offence was the cause of all this trouble. But meanwhile the casting of the lot begins. His tribe is taken. He begins to start a little. Then his family is taken. Now his countenance begins to change. His household is taken, and he begins to tremble and fear. Ah! "here is the rub." He is himself taken!

It is folly for any man to think that his sins will never be detected. Achan was careful to prevent detection, but all was unavailing. And if men succeed in hiding their sins from their fellow men, they cannot hide them from God. They may, possibly, get all the witnesses out of the way, so far as the jurisdiction of human courts extends; but conscience

still hangs around their neck, and weighs as a millstone around their heart. It is extremely rare, however, that a course of evil doing is not exposed, even in this world. When men fancy themselves safest, God is often bringing forth the means of their conviction, and making them hold a candle to their "own shames." The elements and laws of the physical world are all in a conspiracy against the transgressor. And even if "unwhipt of justice" here, when he lies down and dies his crimes are all known before hand at the judgment seat, and will be exposed when the secrets of all hearts shall be made known by him to whom all things lie naked and open.

Jehovah told Joshua to cast lots, and guaranteed that the lot should take the guilty. And so it was. And it is so still. Every perfection of the Almighty guarantees the immutable law, that the soul that sinneth it shall die, itself or its substitute. The laws of the universe declare that the wages of sin is death. The voice of conscience, and of history, and of human experience, cries: *Beware, and sin not; be ye sure of this, your sins will find you out.* There must then be repentance or ruin, for we are all sinners. Without the forgiveness of sin there is no happiness for sinners. But no pardon can issue till there is penitence and faith.

Think not then to escape the scrutiny of the last day. It is true, there will be a great crowd at the

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judgment seat of Christ, but the eye of the Judge will be as full upon every impenitent sinner as if he stood alone at the judgment. So intense, and searching, and unutterable also will be the splendor of that day, that it is no wonder Christless souls will call—but call in vain—for the rocks and the hills to fall upon them and hide them from the face of him that sitteth on the throne. What a scene is this! The judgment of the great day has come. The dead are raised. All, both small and great, are before God. The books are opened, and the dead are judged out of those things that are written in the books, according to the deeds done in the body, whether they are good or bad. The light shines so intensely that nothing is hidden. The depths of the heart are all now exposed. A dread silence prevails, so that each man may hear the pulsations of his own heart, and if that heart be unregenerated, oh, how it condemns him! Its every pulsation sounds as his death-knell. Nor can there be any reprieve or mutation. There can be no mistake, neither on the plea of wealth or talent. It is found that the point at issue was clearly stated in the Gospel: **HE THAT BELIEVETH AND IS BAPTIZED, SHALL BE SAVED ; AND HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT SHALL BE DAMNED.** Alone before God at the judgment ; and yet in the presence of a vast assembly! But no one in that vast multitude is able to take your place, or afford you any means of escape.

If, then, you now neglect so great a salvation, how can you escape? There will *then* be no possible way of escape; but *now* the door of mercy is open wide. Now the voice of free grace cries, escape to the mountains. *The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.* Amen.

The Confession and Execution.

THE CONFESSION AND EXECUTION.

“And evil men of desperate, lawless life,
By oath of deep damnation leagued to ill ;
Plotting unpardonable deeds of blood,
And villainies of fearful magnitude.”

“But oh, that here the catalogue might close!
For still worse ends men to themselves propose ;
And still worse roads to reach their goals they choose.”

———“when he
Who gives his life to guilt, and laughs at all
The laws that God or man has made, and round
Hedges his seat with power, and shines in wealth —
Lifts up his atheist front to scoff at Heaven,
And celebrates his shame in open day.—
Tuo, in the pride of all his crimes, cutt' st off
The horrible example.”

I HAVE already spoken of Achan's sin, the circumstances under which it was committed, and how the guilt was fastened upon him. The lot cast according to divine instruction took the son of Carmi, of the distinguished tribe of Judah. It is true, then, that the best of families may have their black sheep. Misfortunes sometimes overtake the most watchful. The illustrious tribe of Judah was taken because Achan belonged to it. This tribe was to have the first choice of the promised land. It was, therefore,

the more inexcusable for one belonging to that tribe to covet and appropriate to himself property that God had consecrated.

Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done, hide it not from me.

The criminal is apprehended and brought into court. There is an immense assemblage of people. The judge has taken his seat and the prisoner is commanded to stand up. But let us hear the judge. He is not a man in whom there is any vindictiveness. The law speaks from his lips without partiality or corruption. Mercy is as darling an attribute with the old Hebrew judge as justice. He does not call the prisoner "a thief," "a fool," "a rebel," "a villain," but he said unto Achan, *my son*. He urges him to confess, but he did not put thumb screws upon him, or threaten him with torture if he did not confess. There was no Inquisition in those days, nor Star Chamber. He says to the prisoner, "My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him, and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me." He does not promise him pardon. He does not tell him that his life shall be spared if he confesses. No act is passed to free him from the execution of the sentence if he turns State's evidence. But there is meekness, sincerity and pity in the judge for the

offender. Officers of the law will of course know no man after the flesh. They must govern their own passions. The great Areopagus at Athens deliberated in darkness, that they might not be moved by the sight of the criminal. They allowed no appeal to the passions or sympathies in the pleading of a cause. The wrath of man worketh not righteousness. There is no treatment so likely to bring men to true penitence as kindness. Some men are as strong as a mountain of granite against a world in arms, who are as weak as water when addressed in tones of love. They will surrender at the first summons of disinterested kindness, when all the allied armies could not force them to a capitulation. There is a volume of common sense and philosophy in knowing how to stoop to conquer. Love wins where power fails.

It is said "a man totally depraved is a miracle." And I partly believe it true. Even the murdering banditti wear amulets, or sacred things that have been consecrated by the blessing of such as profess to be God's servants. Masses for their souls are purchased by coin stained with blood. This proves that as the spotless lily is sometimes found lifting up its snow-like and fragrant head from the field of carnage, so even the worst of men may not be wholly lost to shame and freed from all religious impressions, amid their awful course of crime. A few there may be to whose voluptuousness there is

no bottom, and whose "cistern of lust" nothing can fill. But it is only a few who are able to stand with Macbeth, of whom the poet says:

—"not in the legions
Of horrid hell, can come a devil more damned,
In evils, to top Macbeth"—
—"bloody,
Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,
Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin
That has a name."

Sometimes we find expressions of the finest conceptions and combinations of poetical rhythm in the mouths of the vilest of men. Even Caliban can speak in verse.

In the vocabulary of corruption, theft and murder, there is usually some place left for pity. Some idea of the glorious sheen of virtue lingers on the portals of conscience. Some fitful but vivid flashings of moral truth seem to fall at times into the darkest souls. There may yet be left in the gloomy, ferocious, licentious and brutal crew, some relic of what they once were, on which they pride themselves. There is yet, probably, some corner of the heart open to love and persuasion. It is on this relic of the "awful loveliness" of virtue—this ruin of the archangel fallen—in this corner of the heart still open, that we must plant our lever to turn the transgressor to God, and raise him to a glorious immortality.

It is strange that Achan did not see that he must be taken, and either fly or confess before he was

exposed: But his heart was hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and it proved his destruction. It is often so now. The guilty sometimes find the burden of secrecy too great to bear. It is a relief to them to confess and suffer the penalty rather than keep their own awful secret. And often it is astonishing what foolish and short sighted measures are taken by the guilty to conceal their crimes. Every step they take to make their guilt more and more secure from detection, turns out to be the very way to its exposure.

Achan thought his crime would never be known. Why should it? It was committed in the destruction of a heathen city. The times were sadly out of joint. There was a great crowd and much excitement. No one would know that he had taken the tongue of gold. There was no inventory or invoice of it, or of the bars of silver and the goodly Babylonish garment, by which it could ever be known that such things were lost. Or if any one should, after the destruction of the city, speak of the wonderful robe, the conclusion on every one's mind would be that it had perished in the flames. No one would accuse Achan of taking it, unless it was some one in his own family. And just so it was with the unfortunate and wicked Professor Webster. And thus it is with multitudes of transgressors. There is a sort of infatuation or derangement in their plans and speeches that excites suspicion and

leads to their detection, and makes their guilt the more awful.

Joshua's reasons for urging Achan to make a full and honest confession are evident. Thereby, 1st: There would be a demonstration of the correctness of lot-casting. 2: His confession would be a warning to others. 3: It would give some hope of his penitence. 4: It would glorify God. That is, it would show that God was holy and could not connive at sin, or allow the guilty to go forever unpunished. It would prove that he was displeased with sin and was able to detect it. It would be a clear proof that he knoweth the secrets of men, and does not refrain from taking cognizance of all their actions.

In confessing sin we declare our shame, while we glorify God. So the Jews wished the man who had been born blind to *give glory to God* by truly telling who had healed him; for they professed to believe that Jesus was so great a sinner that God could not have wrought such a miracle by him. John ix: 24. When Joshua, therefore, said, "My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel," he meant that he should confess the whole truth, which would verify the truth of the decision of the lot, and vindicate the omniscience, and presence, and truthfulness of God; and might, at the same time, be the means of glorifying the grace of God in his forgiveness. Perhaps, indeed, this was one of the reasons why his guilt was made manifest by the casting of lots,

namely, that he might have time to reflect and an opportunity to confess. But he remained obstinate and silent to the last. Possibly he thought others were as bad as he was and that they would be taken, and that this would satisfy Joshua and he escape. And thus, instead of using the opportunity offered for confession, his heart was hardened through the means intended to do him good.

It is an old trick of the devil to get wicked men to excuse themselves on the plea that others, and even church members, are as bad or even worse than they are. This may sometimes be true; but it is not always so when the allegation is made. Achan, moreover, may have thought there would be some error committed by which he should escape. He did not know how, but still he hoped to escape and would not confess. But when by regular, infallible course, the lot was upon him, his confession is wrung out and it verifies the correctness of the lot-casting.

THE CONFESSION.

20 And Achan answered Joshua, and said. Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done.

21 When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them and took them, and behold, they are hid in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

*H

No sooner does he indulge his sinful propensity, than he begins to find that its fruits are bitter. Now that he has taken the gold, and the silver, and the splendid robe, what will he do with them? Where will he put them? O how different do the objects of temptation appear at different times—just before yielding to them, and after the infatuation has ceased, and when guilt, and apprehension, and punishment follow. Some sins are pleasing in the commission, but bitter in the reflection; sweet to the taste at first, but the cud of after thoughts, oh how bitter! At the last, it biteth like a serpent.

How sadly are they cheated who rob God! *He that swalloweth down riches, saith the Bible, shall vomit them up again.*

THE VERIFICATION.

22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent, and behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it.

23 And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD.

The proof of his guilt was *laid out before the Lord*. The stolen goods were accursed. They must, therefore, be separated from all the property of the children of Israel. They are laid out before the Lord

as an evidence of Achan's guilt and of the innocence of others. The detection of the murderer, or thief, lifts all suspicion from every body else. And by laying the accursed thing before the Lord, was signified also that the divine displeasure was to turn from the people to the criminal, and rest alone upon him. It was but justice, as the people were innocent, so all suspicions should be removed from them.

THE EXECUTION.

24 And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had; and they brought them unto the valley of Achor.

25 And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.

26 And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger; wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day.

1. The sentence of condemnation is short. "Why hast thou troubled us? The LORD shall trouble thee, this day." From the eighteenth verse of the

sixth chapter, we learn that Joshua had told the people that if any of them should take of the accursed things, it would make "the camp of Israel a curse and trouble it." So here, the ground of his sentence is, that as Achan had made the camp of Israel a curse and had greatly troubled it, so now, therefore, "the LORD shall greatly trouble thee this day." There is to be no reprieve nor delay. The judgment is righteous. It must be executed at once.

From the words *this day*, in the sentence pronounced upon him, some Jewish doctors infer that Achan's penitence was sincere, and that he was forgiven and saved. Dr. Clarke takes this view of his case. His judgment, however, as an interpreter, is not as good as his memory. His opinions of Cain, Saul and Judas are so favorable to their salvation, that we are afraid to trust him as an interpreter of sacred laws. Possibly the Hebrew text may admit such an interpretation, but it does not seem to us to be its probable meaning.

It is, without doubt, the province of Jehovah to take vengeance on all that trouble his people and obey not his gospel. As a lawgiver, it is his right to maintain the integrity of his government by inflicting righteous penalties upon transgressors. In an extraordinary manner Achan's guilt has been clearly brought to light. There remains not a doubt of his guilt. There were in his case no shadows of doubt leaning to the side of mercy. It was also the

express divine commandment that he should be put to death at once. Accordingly, he was taken to a place far enough from their encampment not to defile it, or unnecessarily disturb it, and there "all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones."

2. *The place of execution.* "And they brought them unto the valley of Achor." This valley was in a lovely spot overlooking the plains of Jericho, and was filled with all manner of beautiful trees. The olive, the oleander, the acacia and the terebinth were there. The name of this valley has given some trouble to commentators. In the history, the son of Carmi is called *Achan* five times, but the valley is called *Achor*. In I. Chron. ii: 7, both in the text and all the versions, he is called *Achor*. In the twenty-fifth verse, in the Hebrew, there is a reference or allusion to the meaning of his name. *Why hast thou troubled us?* The Hebrew is *meh Acartanu?* Those acquainted with the Hebrew alphabet know that a slight elongation of the Hebrew *n* at the top and a slight shortening of it at the bottom would make it *r*. According to Boothroyd, Hoobigant and others, the true name is *Achor*, and the *n* was written by mistake.

It is at least probable that Achan is the same as Achor, and that it is owing to the mere fancy of the writers that the name is sometimes spelled with a final *n* and sometimes with a final *r*. It is no doubt

significant, as is usual with oriental names. The word *Achor*, in Hebrew, means trouble. But why such a name was given to this man by his parents, we know not. It may have been because of some calamity that befel them in the wilderness at the time of his birth. It was singularly prophetic of his doom. The valley between Ai and Jericho was known as the valley of Achor down to the fourth century, or to the time of Jerome. The name was a perpetual brand of infamy on Achan, and a monument of the disgrace he brought upon Israel. It was a solemn warning against all disobedience. And forasmuch as by the execution of Achan in this valley, the anger of the Lord was turned away from the people, so the *valley of Achor*—that is, of trouble—became a *door of hope*. And this was used among the people as a proverb. Hosea ii: 15; Ezra x: 2.

This valley was like the pillar of cloud and of fire at the Red Sea. It had two sides: one, radiant with light and promise; the other, dark and threatening. It was a memorial of the wrath of God upon them on account of the accursed thing; and as it was there that the accursed thing was put away, so there the Lord turned from his fierce anger, and a door of hope was opened. All God's dealings with us and all the means of grace bestowed upon us have two sides to them: they are a savor of life or death, as they are improved or abused.

3. *His monument.* “And they raised over him a

great heap of stones unto this day." So also the Israelites raised a great heap of stones over the king of Ai and over Absalom. See Joshua viii: 29; II. Sam. xviii: 17. A distinct, abiding, palpable record of Achan's crime and execution was made. The name of the place becomes proverbial. The divine displeasure upon this unfortunate Hebrew, and the record which we have to this day, and before us this very moment, in these ends of the earth, is a solemn warning against avarice, and covetousness, and all unlawful desires.

In the text we have—if not the origin—yet certainly proof of the existence at a very remote period of the "mounds" which are found on this continent, and of the pyramids of Egypt, and the cairns of Scotland and northern Europe. Tumuli are found from Japan across Europe to America. They are not only in the Troad and on the plains of Marathon, but scattered over the American continent. In the western part of Massachusetts, upon a conspicuous mountain, there is a heap of stones, which formerly no Indian of the State ever passed without throwing a stone upon the heap; for here, tradition says, was buried an enemy who had greatly troubled their nation.* History informs us that the burial places both of heroes and of famous culprits, were distinguished by mounds or monuments of stone.

*See comprehensive commentary.

Throughout Asia Minor and Arabia the modern traveller sees *great heaps of stones unto this day*, raised up just as in ancient times and for a purpose similar to that of the text. In the Peninsula of Mt. Sinai and in Edom and Turkey, I have seen heaps of unhewn stone near the pathway, which every passer by increased by throwing an additional one to them. Once our caravan stopped, and our Arab guides and servants, each taking a stone in his hand, turned a little aside from our course and laid them with others that began to be distinguished as a heap. On inquiry I found that a year or two before an Arab and his camel had perished in the Wady which we were then crossing, and which, though dry when we were there, is sometimes swollen by the winter rains and becomes dangerous. The Arab's grave was indicated by the gathering heap of stones. It is a remnant of the same custom with us, when we throw a clod upon the coffin of a friend, or the crape from our arms into his vault. These are our contributions to his monument—our pillars to his memory. It is doubtless from the same original that crosses are erected in Roman Catholic countries where a murder has been committed, or some casualty has happened.

4. *The persons engaged in the execution.* “And Joshua and all Israel with him: and all Israel stoned him with stones.” That is, they all consented to his execution. They were convinced of his guilt, and

of the propriety and duty of putting him to death. And as many as could, took an active part in executing the divine sentence. By this they showed their submission to Joshua as their chief magistrate, and their dread of God's displeasure, and their detestation of the crime that had brought shame upon them and such dishonor upon their religion.

Magistrates, and judges, and juries, should "pace slowly and surely to the sentence of death." The conviction should rest upon facts, and not upon presumptions. There is less evil in sparing the guilty than in punishing the innocent. The ready concurrence of the people in putting Achan to death, is no sanction to mob law, and no authority for Judge Lynch's court. For they acted in every particular according to law. They were scrupulously obedient to their commander and chief magistrate. They were not led blindly by excitement or malice, or a feeling of revenge. They were, however,—as good citizens ought always to be—interested in maintaining law and order.

Constitutional liberty and wise and benign laws are among the treasures of our glorious patrimony. It is, therefore, the duty of every citizen to aid the magistrate in the suppression of vice and profaneness, and in discovering and bringing to justice the workers of iniquity. There is danger, however, of having too many laws, and of legislating where legislation will only aggravate the evil. Laws are dead without a vigorous public sentiment.

5. *The extent of the execution.* Achan, and his substance, and his children, and cattle of all kinds, were brought into the valley of Achor. Verily, this man perished not alone in his iniquity! Who ever did? All that was in contact with this wicked man, or that touched the goods he had gotten by sacrilege, theft and blasphemy, were defiled and accursed with him.

There is a fable, which tells us of an eagle that stole flesh from an altar, and brought home with her a coal of fire that burnt her nest. This fable is very like the words of certain old Hebrew prophets. "Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil. But the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it." Habakkuk ii: 9, 10. "This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on this side, according to it; and every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on that side, according to it. I will bring it forth, saith the LORD of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof." Zechariah v: 3, 4.

According to Hebrew law we know that the fathers could not be put to death for the children nor children for their fathers: "every man shall be put to death for

his own sin." See Deut. xxiv: 16, and Ezek. xviii: 20. In all those cases, then, where we find children put to death with their parents, we conclude that they were accessory to the crime. No mention is here made of Achan's wife, while his goods and children are expressly named. If she were alive, she must have been wholly ignorant of her husband's sin, and is not therefore a partaker in his guilt. Watson says (but where is his proof?) that his family were all stoned, for that they were privy to his crime and partakers of its guilt. It is universally conceded, I think, that if Achan's children were put to death with him they were of age, and abettors of his iniquity. In like manner we read that Daniel's persecutors were destroyed and their families. And the houses and goods of Korah and his companions in guilt were swallowed up together.

It was, and still is, a custom in the East, to punish an entire household for the crime of its head. And we are told that the wives and families of all the Imperial officers of the Japanese empire are compelled to reside at the capital as hostages for their good faith; and in the event of malfeasance in office the entire family of the offender is punished.* In Christian Europe treason attaints the blood.

Dr. Clarke thinks that Achan, and his cattle, and

*See Mr. H. H. Doty's letter on Japan, and the Report of a commercial venture to Japan by our fellow citizens, Messrs. Reed & Dougherty, under the Treaty of Commodore Perry.

all his substance were consumed; but that his sons and his daughters were brought unto the place of his death—not to be put to death with him—but “to witness the judgments of God inflicted on their disobedient parent.” In the text it says, “And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.” The text then does not say positively that his sons and daughters were stoned to death and burned. The Targum is the same as the text. The Arabic version says the children as well as the father were stoned and burned; but all the other ancient versions confine the stoning and burning to Achan and his goods and cattle. This is the sense of the passage in the Vulgate, Septuagint and Syriac versions: for which, see the commentaries.

After all that has been written on the subject, the point is left doubtful. The general opinion, I believe, is that Achan’s family all perished with him. If so, their punishment was no doubt just. They had either assisted in committing the theft and sacrilege, or in carrying away and hiding the stolen goods. They could hardly have remained ignorant of their father’s *hiding them in the earth under his tent*. And if they did not oppose him, nor make known the transaction to the elders, they were held as partakers in his crime. Those who knowingly conceal stolen goods are partakers with the thief, and are to be treated accordingly.

There is something peculiar in the use of "*him*," "*them*" and "*them*," in the text, and in the double punishment. Achan was stoned and then burned, and his ill-gotten riches were burned with him. This double punishment denotes the intenseness of the divine displeasure at his sin, and may have indicated that, to the impenitent, there is a wrath that pursues beyond death, and casts both body and soul into hell after it hath killed the body. It is certainly clear from the history, *that according to divine law mere penitence and confession do not release a sinner from punishment.* Nor is it so in human courts. Confession and penitence do not take the criminal out of the hands of justice. The great question in law is, Is he guilty? not whether he is penitent or hard-hearted, but are the proofs of his guilt clear? Then he must bear the consequences.

Joshua's urgency for Achan's confession shows that he wished him to make a clean breast of it—to confess all his guilt, that he might obtain forgiveness; although he was to suffer for what he had done. In his case it was not, confess and go free, but *confess and die.* Joshua's earnestness seems to say to him: "unhappy man, since your life is now forfeit to the law, there is great need of penitence before your Maker; that, peradventure, through his pardoning grace your soul may be saved."

It is common for our judges, in sentencing criminals to be executed, to exhort them to confess their

sins to the omniscient Judge, and seek his pardon. It is certainly a great blessing to a convict's soul to have true repentance; but the court can take no notice of his penitence. The *man* on the bench may weep for sympathy with the wretch who hath brought such folly upon himself, while the *judge* is wholly unable to find in his penitent sorrow any arrest of judgment or procuring cause of pardon. It is, then, a matter of fact, that men do now and among us suffer the consequences of sins of which they have heartily repented, and for which there is reason to believe they have obtained divine forgiveness.

It is certainly possible for a young man greatly to injure his health and reputation, and blast his prospects in the world, and even bring himself to an early grave by dissipation; and yet, like the prodigal son in the Gospel, through sovereign grace, he may be pardoned and his soul saved. He suffers great loss. It is a great misfortune thus to disappoint the hopes and prayers of his pious parents, and defraud the church and the world of the services which God had designed him to perform in his universe; yet it is a great mercy that through abounding grace there is hope for the eternal salvation of the most wicked, who by repentance seek the pardon of their sins.

I enter not here upon the question of capital punishment. We have a case clearly before us in which the death penalty was inflicted by express divine commandment. The wisdom of all ages and of all

sorts of governments has, moreover, sanctioned the law of the Bible on this point. It is believed that the punishment of some kinds of offenders by death is proper for the welfare of society. It may not produce penitence in the criminal himself, for him to be sentenced to death, but it sometimes does; and it is sometimes a warning that deters others from similar offences. It will not be denied, but that the Supreme Ruler and final Judge of all men may appoint the death penalty. In point of fact, we know that he has appointed it to every living thing on earth. And sometimes he executes the sentence in a wholesale and terrible manner. In pestilence and earthquakes the godly and ungodly are alike in the cause and external manner of their dying. In all such cases the ungodly deserve death, and a worse punishment than death temporal; and to the pious, death in whatever form is a friend to call them home to the skies. The Judge of all the earth may, then, do what he will with his own.

i. In the case before us we have a great sin committed. Achan was guilty of disobedience, theft and sacrilege. It was not in the direction of cruelty that he sinned. There is no evidence that any thing atrocious towards those who were devoted to death was laid to his charge. It was avarice that appropriated to himself what had been most solemnly forbidden. And in this he committed sacrilege. And

a still higher crime in the sight of God was his *unfaithfulness* to the divine commission with which, as one of the army of the faithful, he was entrusted. In this particular he resembled Saul, in his disobedience in the war against the Amalakites.

Achan's sin, then, was an aggravated act of rebellion against God. It combined theft, dissimulation, lying, disobedience and unfaithfulness to his God and to his countrymen. His two-fold punishment, we have seen, was remarkably emphatic. Some think that he was guilty of blasphemy in addition to his other sins, for that his sacrilege was committed on the Sabbath day. This is probably correct, for Jericho was taken on the Sabbath. And as he was a blasphemer he was stoned according to law, and then his dead body was burned as an accursed thing, so that there should be nothing of it left. Oh! what an awful thing is sin! Every sin is like sacrilege; it blasts, and wastes, and burns all its gains; and if not repented of and forgiven, will burn to the lowest hell!

II. Let us not despise the memory of our pious ancestors. There is a blessing in the bones of the pious dead. Many of the ungodly have been made to live by coming in contact with the godly. The companions and relations of a man of God are blessed by being made partakers in the divine favors shown to him. It was thus with Lot. He lost nothing by keeping company with his holy uncle, but he ran

great risks by living in Sodom. And on the other hand, we see how it is that the companions of the wicked perish. Achan was "a representative man." He did not go with the three thousand to take Ai, but his guilt went with them. His sin was imputed to his nation. As a small leak will sink a ship, and one rotten spoke spoil a wheel, so did Achan's trespass afflict all Israel. "The actor does not smart alone for his sacrilege. All that concerns him is enwrapped in the judgment."—*Hall*.

Achan was no doubt a widower. His wife was probably buried in the wilderness. No mention is made of her in the record. If he had been blessed with a prudent, godly wife, I have no idea that he would ever have committed this awful sin. And this is not the last time men have made Achans of themselves for the want of the counsel and society of their pious wives. Many of the scalding tears that have been shed in California, and many of the broken hearts that have gone down sorrowing prematurely to the grave had been saved, if men's wives and daughters had come with them to the Golden State. If men's families were with them they would shrink from many of the deeds that now fill our daily chronicles of crime. If cheerful hearth-stones were their nightly resort, the country would not resemble so much a community of outlaws, and unscrupulous bankrupts and murderers. Nor is there longer any reason why our farmers and miners should not have

their families with them. No greater hardships or inconveniences are now to be experienced in coming to California and in living among the mines—not as great, indeed—as in going to and settling in any of the new western States east of the Rocky Mountains. Whoever comes to California now, should bring his wife with him.

In conclusion, before we leave the place of Achan's execution, and while his confession is yet in our ears, and his awful death is still before our eyes, let us strive:—1. *To feel how dangerous are the beginnings of evil.* Sad consequences often follow the walking after one's eyes. We must make a covenant with them, and not allow them to wander like the fool's to the ends of the earth. Achan and our mother Eve allowed Satan to enter through the eye. His sin entered by his eye, corrupted his heart, moved his hand and advised dissimulation, but was overtaken and exposed. Like Macbeth, he allowed his eye to wink at his hand, and his hand to do that which his eyes feared to look upon when it was done. *Look not, says the Bible, upon the wine when it is red. Woe to them that tarry long at the wine.* And look not thou upon the woman that is fair but frail. Her ways are the ways of the going down to hell. Her house is destruction.

2. *What a troublesome thing did Achan's sin turn out to be!* It was a trouble to the army and to the nation. It was a trouble to himself, from its concep-

tion to its sad termination in death in the valley of trouble.

Sin is always a troublesome thing. The good old Vicar had not a place for his family picture, but that was not thought of till it was brought home. Evil doing is always a trouble to the sinner and to all that are connected with him. It brings agony, disgrace and punishment. The fruit of every sin is bitter. So the Bible says. So history proves, and so the lessons of our streets and of all human experience demonstrate. Sin brought death and all our woe. As a righteous judge, the Lord will most certainly recompense tribulation to all the workers of iniquity.

What a poor, miserable prize did Achan draw! What a loser by his gain! It was just as the Bible says; "He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house." He thought for a moment, what a fortune have I! But conscience smote him. The very birds of the air cried that evening in his ears, *guilty!* He sowed to the wind and reaped the whirlwind. Perhaps, when he saw the bright colors and the fine golden fringe, he said to himself: "What a pity such a valuable thing should be burned! It will hurt nobody if I take it. It will serve me for many years." And as he was extravagantly fond of dress, so he wanted change also. And he said, "As I am in for it, I may as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb." And he took a little silver, and then a

little gold; and what was the end? Shame and death. When the lot fell upon him he might have said of his sins; hast thou, O mine enemy, found me out?

3. *We see the effect of obedience.* As soon as the accursed thing was put away, the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger. When the cause is removed, the effect ceases. If repentance and reformation are the only means of escape from sin, so are they a sure and effectual way to escape from the wrath to come. It is madness to think of running away from the punishment of sin by flying from one continent to another, or by burrowing in the dark haunts of a city, or wandering in the vast solitudes of the wilderness. Men may change climates and nationality, without sloughing their old spotted conscience. All the floods of great Neptune's oceans are not sufficient to wash away the guilt of sin. There is but one way to escape the punishment of sin, and that way is to behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.

By punishing this wicked man according to divine instruction, Joshua established the character of God in the sight of all Israel, as a lawgiver that was omniscient and faithful in both his promises and threatenings. And thus in their entering upon the Land of Promise, they were reminded of the provisos and limitations of the grant by which they held it. They were clearly told that their possession

depended upon their obedience. So now, in the preaching of the Gospel, salvation is freely offered; but only those who believe shall be saved.

NOTE TO PAGE 88th.—To give glory to God is equivalent in several Scriptures to an adjuration to repentance of every kind. True repentance is in the highest sense a taking of shame to ourselves and a giving of glory only to God. 1. Sam. vi: 5; Jer. xiii: 16; Rev. xvi: 9. Even Seneca speaks eloquently and truthfully of giving glory to God, as the great work of every man. "Primus est Deorum cultus, Deos credere: deinde reddere illis magistatem suam, reddere bonitatem, sine qua nulla majestas est."—Ep. 95.

J

Facts and Principles.

FACTS AND PRINCIPLES.

—— "Past hours,
If not by guilt, yet wound us by their flight,
If folly bounds our prospect by the grave,
All feeling of futurity benumbed;
All godlike passion for eternals quench'd,
In sense dark prisoned all that ought to soar;
Prone to the centre; crawling in the dust;
Dismounted every great and glorious aim;
Embruted every faculty divine:
Heart buried in the rubbish of the world,
The world — that gulf of souls, immortal souls,
Souls elevate, angelic, wing'd with fire
To reach the distant skies, and triumph there
On thrones."— *YOUNG*.

"BUT rebel not against the LORD, nor rebel against us, in building you an altar beside the altar of the LORD our God. Did not Achan, the son of Zerah, commit a trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? and that man perished not alone in his iniquity." Joshua xxii: 19, 20.

I. The divine government of intelligent creatures and of planetary worlds is conducted upon unvarying laws. Plain decisions and palpable results, therefore, reached in past ages, have settled

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the principles upon which like cases must be decided in all coming time. Achan's conviction was just in itself and it was made to appear just. His guilt was beyond dispute. His punishment, though severe, was just and necessary. The defeat and disgrace of the detachment of three thousand men before Ai, showed that there was guilt upon Israel. Divine instructions are given by which to find out the offender. The lot is cast, and Achan is taken as the guilty man who has caused all the trouble. When taken, he confesses the accuracy and justice of the conviction fixed upon him by the lot. And at the command of Joshua, men ran to Achan's tent, and found the spoils just as he had said. Divine fear has fallen upon the people. They are in haste to have the guilty found out, and the cause of the curse removed. So they brought all his goods and laid them out before the LORD, that all the people might see that there could be no doubt of his guilt and be made to feel that God's judgments are strict, and be afraid to offend against him.

No doubt Achan had promised himself perfect secrecy. He forgot that God could see him. He overlooked altogether the fact that the divine knowledge, which "ponders all events, battles and realms," had already weighed and marked all the precious metals in the city, and had taken an account of all the splendid robes in the royal apartments. He was sadly disappointed, therefore, when he found out that

what he had taken was missed ; and worse still, that he himself was convicted of the offence. And so it is with transgressors still. It is only a question of time. They will all be found out. They will all be exposed, and, without repentance, punished. With God there is no darkness at all. His unsleeping eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. His omniscience should then, every where, be a powerful argument against sin. Well may the holy psalmist say—

“Within thy circling power I stand,
On every side I find thy hand ;
Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,
I am surrounded still with God.
Oh! may these thoughts possess my breast
Where'er I rove, where'er I rest ;
Nor let my weaker passions dare
Consent to sin, for God is there.”

II. The history of this unfortunate Hebrew is a monumental pile to this day of *the deceitfulness of sin, of the certainty of its exposure, and of the awfulness of its reward*. But who lays to heart the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and remembers that though its first commission may promise happiness, yet the end thereof is death?

What multitudes from all countries hastened hitherward, winged with speed, when the cry of “gold, gold!” was first heard from these shores! It was only equalled by the rush of the Crusaders against the Turks. Thousands gave up home and kindred, and submitted to every species of hardship by land and water, that they might dig for gold. The sons

of strangers from afar and the sons of Christian sires have swept our seas, and ransacked our shores, and rivers, and creeks, and islands; and all for gold. Led on by the cursed lust for money, multitudes have lost purity of character and happiness here and hereafter. Nothing seems to be too heaven-defying and cruel—nothing that men will not try to do, for the sake of making themselves rich in a short time. It is in this hastening to be rich that we find the frauds, falsehoods, thefts, forgeries, violations of confidence, robberies, assassinations and murders that do so exceedingly prevail in our day.

III. This history shows us, then, that *sinners against God are bad citizens*. They are “the dangerous classes” in society. One sinner destroyeth much good. The companion of fools shall perish. *Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people*. Every transgressor of God’s law is not only doing his own soul an injury, but is an enemy to his country.

Achan’s covetousness brought defeat upon Israel’s army and death to himself; nor would the LORD turn away his anger till the offender was detected and punished. And so it is now; the covetousness of one, the profanity of another, the pride, envy and malice of a third, the Sabbath-breaking, drunkenness and uncleanness of a fourth, the corruption, fraud, violence and lying of a fifth, and the impenitence,

unbelief and ungodliness of a multitude more, are all chains of attraction pulling down the wrath of heaven upon the land; and were it not for the churches,—the assemblies of the pious,—whose prayers act as lightning rods to conduct the fury of the skies harmless to the ground, we should have been swept away as Sodom.

As patriots, then, let every one examine himself, and see how nearly his sufferings are the counterpart or rebound of his own forgetfulness of God, or of his public or private transgressions of his laws. How is it with you? Is your Maker's face turned towards you or against you?

iv. We are, fellow citizens, happy in having a written constitution. We are governed by wise and salutary laws. We have the "habeas corpus" and "trial by jury," and for these rights we should thank God every day of our lives. We are not bowed down to any autocrat or monarch. Yet multitudes among us are very devout, even abject, in their worship of King Mammon,

———"The least erected Spirit that fell
From Heaven; for e'en in Heaven his looks and thoughts
Were always downward bent, admiring more
The riches of Heaven's pavement, trodden gold,
Than aught divine or holy else enjoyed
In vision beatific."

His service is hard, but his subjects are loyal. They are groaning beneath their burden, and yet daily striving to add to its weight. A thirst for gain burns

with such ardor in our day, that all who would escape its snares must take heed to their ways according to God's word.

Nor are the fatal effects of this raging appetite always confined to those who indulge it. Its desolating surges sometimes submerge the innocent with the guilty. The burning lust of gain may be so cherished and brooded over in the heart and at the desk of mammon-serving men, until it leads to indiscretion, speculation, dishonesty and ruin; or until it bursts forth in some other way with a power which they themselves did not expect and cannot control; and "shoots like a fiery meteor through the city's helpless population, leaving behind it a hideous trail of hopes disappointed and hearts broken"—character blasted—orphans naked and uneducated, and widows in want of bread.

All vices are akin. So the Scriptures teach in a great many places. He that offendeth in one point is guilty of the whole law. He that presumptuously gathered sticks on the Sabbath was worthy of death. The principle is the same. The law knows no difference between those guilty of theft for one pound or a thousand pounds. Forgery for an eagle is forgery as certainly as if it were for a million of dollars. The gentleman of fashion who has fallen into some vice, or committed an offence against the law, must take his stand with vulgar offenders. And there is sound philosophy in this rule of law. For there is

a real similarity of nature between all vices. The Bible, therefore, associates the names of several sins together, not only because they are found near together, but are in their very nature similar.

The sin of covetousness, which led Achan to his awful death, is all the more dangerous that it lies in the direction of what is lawful and good, and, at the same time, consists in the unlawful direction and acting out of desires that are in themselves and in their proper degrees both lawful and necessary. Here is the strength of this temptation. It is lawful to labor—to get gain and to be rich; and yet it is just with such an agency as this that the demon of covetousness slides in and steals the heart from God, and cheats the soul of an immortality of bliss. A man must ply his handicraft, or prosecute his merchandise. He must build houses, sell exchange, and turn his commissions, to support his family and have something to give to the church. This is all right. But who shall tell the moment when the god of this world sets all this well oiled and polished machinery to work for himself. Who may be able to tell how far this industrious, prosperous farmer, merchant, miner or mechanic is pleasing God in his industry and in his gains? May not the banner of industry still float aloft on the flag-staff long after the castle has been surrendered to Mammon? Does not the great enemy always conduct his operations in the heart with promises fair, or under cover of a con-

summate hypocrisy? It may not be possible for us to analyze the life of a man, and fix a mark at the precise point where his industry and pursuit of the world ceased to be right, and the love of God was supplanted; yet such a point there is, and it will be clearly seen in eternity. The affections and energies of many young men who started in a virtuous course of life to win their daily bread and gain an honorable position in society have been insensibly turned aside, until they have become sordid, avaricious or profligate. So insidious are the advances of sin. Emotions and energies that are in themselves innocent, and that may be innocently put forth on lawful objects, are secretly turned aside; and without any change of appearances are possessed by an unclean spirit, and wasted on low efforts which degrade and torment and finally plunge the soul into perdition.

The progress of sin—especially of covetousness—is seen in the fearful history before us. Unlawful gratifications grow by what they feed upon. The progress of sordid lusts is a picture often drawn, and often to be seen in every city. The growth of sinful desires, however, when indulged, is not confined to cities. It has been shown in Great Britain that the mining and agricultural districts are quite as immoral as the manufacturing. Human nature is essentially and every where the same. The great laws of our being are every where uniform. And

one of these laws is, that when lust has conceived it bringeth forth sin. If Achan had been asked in the morning, when the army was called by the trumpet to go up against Jericho, whether he was going to bring disgrace upon his countrymen, and shame, and suffering and death to himself, he would have spurned the question. Yet this is the man who, by gratifying his sordid avarice with a few bars of silver, a tongue of gold and a goodly Babylonish garment, sharpened the sword of the men of Ai against his brethren, and made their hearts to faint and become as water, and involved his own soul with the guilt of the blood of those slain in the battle. It was true then—it has been so from the foundation of the world and it is so still—that the consequences of individual sin fall not only upon the offender, but, in some cases and in some degree, chiefly upon the society to which he belongs. This is sometimes true of incendiaries.

When David numbered the people, they were made the victims. There are many other cases given in the Bible. We see such every day. The frequent connexion between the guilt of a transgressor and the suffering of those who are innocent of his offence, may be permitted—among other beneficent ends, to make us more vigilant over ourselves and over the welfare of others. It may be intended to teach us that our own happiness consists in a great degree, in trying to make others happy.

IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE.
It must be so,

——“since good, the more
Communicated, more abundant grows,
The author not impaired, but honored more.”

Happy the youth who can truly say, in the language
of the poet :

“I live for those who love me,
Whose hearts are kind and true ;
For the heaven that smiles above me,
And awaits my spirit too :
For all human ties that bind me ;
For the task by God assigned me ;
For the bright hopes left behind me,
And the good that I can do.

“I live for those who love me,
For those who know me true ;
For the heaven that smiles above me,
And awaits my spirit too :
For the cause that lacks assistance ;
For the wrong that needs resistance ;
For the future in the distance,
And the good that I can do.”

If it be urged as an objection to Christianity that children, constituents and subjects are involved in suffering by the acts of their parents, representatives and governors, it may be answered that the objection lies against Deism quite as strong as against the Bible. The history of our streets, and still more painfully, the unwritten biography of many bleeding hearts, furnishes us with such cases. There is no escape from them. Whole families are plunged into ruin and disgrace, and are made broken hearted, through the dissipation, or recklessness, or misdeeds of a father or a brother. Now the Bible is not

responsible for these cases. They are sad realities and not fictions. But what can we do with them? Is the blood of an English nobleman attainted by treason? Does his son lose his estates and title for his father's offence? Does the debauchee entail a life of wretchedness upon his children? Are men's sins constantly going before them to the judgment, and *following after them* in a fiery train? And how will the follower of natural religion, or the disciples of Reason, so called, dispose of such cases? The disciples of Paine and Rousseau are more responsible for a satisfactory explanation of these things than the believers in Revelation are.

The Bible, common sense and reason, and the actual lessons of humanity in the streets all agree. The Bible comes to our relief, however, by telling us why these things are just as we find them, and by prescribing a remedy. There is, then, such a thing as the actual imputation of sin; at least, so far and in such a sense that the punishment thereof is transferred in whole or in part from one person to another; and there is also such a thing as the entailing of suffering upon children by their parents. And it is true that I may do by another what I can do by myself, and that I am bound by the act of my attorney in fact.

But the children of Israel, or one of them, committed a trespass in appropriating to himself and for his own use, gold and silver, and a costly robe that had

either been devoted to destruction or set apart to sacred uses. Sin always, sooner or later, brings disgrace and ruin upon all connected with it. Societies often suffer for the sins of individuals. The flagrant misdeeds of a few individuals give character to a whole city and an entire state.

“Only one Achan troubles the peace, and his sin is imputed to Israel. The innocence of so many thousand Israelites is not so forcible to excuse his one sin, as his one sin is to taint all Israel.” “So venomous is sin, that one drachm of it is able to infect the whole mass of Israel.”—*Hall*.

Achan's sin and its fearful consequences show that the malignity of a sin is not to be measured by the material dimensions of the things with and in or of which it consists. Sin is a vitiating flow, that taints, and corrupts, and wholly destroys what otherwise might have been a glorious performance. It is the dead fly in the pot of ointment.

v. *The history of Achan shows that transgressors are usually surrounded by strong incitements to sin. They are under strong temptations. They are in a passion, or under the influence of strong drink. Or they plead that the times are sadly out of joint, and something must be allowed to their temperaments and circumstances. But is it not true, that all who can in their own opinion make good excuses serve for committing one sin, are soon so hardened as to*

commit many more sins? The beginning of an evil course is as when one openeth a flood gate. One sin is like the flowing of a body of water over a sandy soil: every ripple washes the channel deeper and wider, until a mighty torrent sweeps through it. Every transgression of the laws of our Creator is marked with a prohibition. Every sinful act is branded as an accursed thing. But every sinner is not guilty of all sins. This is impossible. For some vices are contrary to one another. Their ingredients are inconsistent. There are some sins so incongruous in their own nature, that they cannot flourish together in the same heart. The indulgence of one shuts a person out from the pursuit of another. When once a man has chosen his course of sinning, there are some kindred lusts that feed and strengthen each other; but in the choice of his course he is compelled to depart from other courses that only converge again into the one he takes at death. There is but one way to life, while there are many ways to death. And though these many ways start from the same place, and all lead in the same general direction, and all meet at last at death, yet they are sometimes far apart.

Some, for instance, instead of believing in Christ, depend upon their morality for heaven; and others give way to all manner of irregular and vicious habits. Both are in fatal error, but they are not equal. Their roads are not on the same level. One

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avoids *dissipation* but falls into *covetousness*. They keep not company by the way; but both serve the same master, and travel to the same end. The bloated libertine in his haunts, and the cold, formal, precise worldling, in his cushioned pew, are far apart from each other. They do not travel in company. Their two paths, however, are converging every day, and will meet in the grave.

It is evident, then, that many persons are not guilty of certain sinful pursuits, not because they love holiness, but because they are absorbed in certain other sinful courses that are incongruous with them. The prodigal son is not guilty of covetousness, because his passion, lust or enjoyment, lies in another direction. The drunkard may not be a knave or a murderer; and yet, no drunkard can inherit the kingdom of God. Many "compound for sins they are inclined to, by damning those they have no mind to."

Again, it is evident that there is a practical urgency in the dividing of the word of God, so as to give to each one a word in season. The same kind of preaching does not suit all classes nor all places; the same rebuke will not meet the case of all wanderers from God. While it is true that all vices are in their nature closely allied, it is equally true that many irreligious and vicious persons are by position far asunder. Their *status* in society is on a different platform, yet their eternal destiny is alike unhappy

as to its certainty, though not in the degree of punishment. Hence it is the duty of the preacher of righteousness, at one time to teach the people the first table of the law, and at another time the second table of the commandments. At one time he must declare the word of Jehovah against avarice; at another time against dissipation, or the violation of the Sabbath, or some other commandment. The commandments of God are broad and deep, and in the keeping of them there is great reward.

God says, "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

"Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

"Thou shalt not kill.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery.

"Thou shalt not steal.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.

"Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and mind and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself."

It is in this style our Creator speaks to us. When, therefore, temptation is strong and seductive, we may not plead its attractions as an excuse for yielding. The commandment of God not to do a thing, is the handwriting like that upon the walls of Belsazzar's palace, that foretells our doom if we disobey. It is because of disobedience that the wrath of God cometh upon the children of men. They reap as they have sown. Well-circumstanced sins, therefore, like the transgression of Achan, are none the less ruinous. If Achan had plead—which, however, he does not seem to have done—that he was under very great temptation—that his feeling or desire to steal was so strong that he could not resist it, would not Joshua have said unto him: “My son, the reasons you give for committing this great trespass only enhance your guilt. You were already so depraved, that it was but writing out the awful cipher of your indwelling corruption. And, moreover, did you not know that Jehovah had made Jericho a desolate ruin; that its cup was full; the divine patience was exhausted; that its inhabitants had abused the long suffering of God until his wrath was kindled against them? And did you not know, also, how in the history of your fathers, and all the way through the wilderness, Jehovah had vindicated the glory of his name, and made known his justice and holiness by fulfilling all his promises and all his threatenings? And did not your own conscience

and sense of duty demur at the inception of such a felonious intent? Were you not aware that every Israelite was warned to keep himself from the accursed thing? And yet, in spite of all the traditions of your nation, and while yet the terrors of divine justice were in your ears and before your eyes, in the sounding trumpets, and crashing walls, and smouldering ruins of Jericho; in despite of all this solemn warning as you went through the city—yourself a sworn constable and commissioned to execute the decree of God—you were so depraved and so blinded and hardened through your depravity, that you were overcome, and committed sacrilege. A few shekels of silver and of gold, and a splendid robe embroidered in the looms of Babylon, were more in your eyes than all the history of Israel and all the promises made to them: more than the word and testimony of conscience and of Jehovah.”

Temptations to sin, then, do not excuse offenders. If so, there could be no conviction and punishment. EVE was not held innocent because the serpent tempted her. It may, indeed, be true in part, as Milton says, that our first parents found mercy, because they were seduced, while the fallen angels found none because they were self-seduced. Achan was in a perilous situation; but he was not acquitted because he was placed amid the spoils. Excitements, great trials or peculiar circumstances may palliate the malignity of a crime; but it is a crime

still. Some sins are peculiarly aggravating, but every sin is an evil, and bitter and awful thing. And no measure or degree of temptation can justify us in the sight of God; for while we are free to fall, we are able to stand. It is spitting against the wind that brings it back again into our own face, to plead our constitution, and urge the way that God has made us, as an excuse for rebelling against him. The only way to escape, is to "resist the devil, and he will flee from us." Resistance, prompt, bold and full-hearted, is the way to victory.

My young friends,— the devil desires to sift every one of you, as he did Peter. In what form or shape he will come to you, I do not know. We have read of him as an angel of light; as a fiend; as "the Lady of Winbeck;" and in the shape of a cormorant, of a slimy toad, a serpent and a dragon. His appearance is doubtless always in a garb suited to the times. His costume is *a la mode*.

—"T is strange,
That oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truth:
Win us with honest trifles, to destroy us
In deepest consequences."

The forbidden fruit which the tempter shows you may be fine dressing, extravagant living, a sparkling cup, a dalliance saloon, a nugget of gold or a gambling table. He always promises secrecy and immunity, but he is not good at keeping promises. How then can you believe him? He is

a liar and the father of lies. You must not parley, but resist. Temptations are powerful just so far as they are listened to, and no farther.

Temptation may be likened to a spider's web. When this little insect would throw its web across a forest pathway, it crawls to an outside branch, and spins a single thread of sufficient length to span the road. At first, this tiny thread descends towards the ground. But, it is soon borne up by the air, higher and higher, until it waves horizontally to and fro. Presently it touches an opposite branch. This is the insect's triumph. Lightly it steals across upon the slender thread, and fastens it to the bough. Then crossing and recrossing, it adds fibre to fibre, until a bridge of web-work is formed.* Just so it is that Satan seeks to build his suspension bridges into the human soul. First he throws an impure or sinful thought into the mind. He presents a forbidden object and keeps it before the imagination. There it floats up and down like the spider's web. It stirs the feelings and awakens desire. If the mind turn away instantly, it is neither stained nor weakened by it. But if there be any delay in rejecting the thought—if the temptation finds a moment's lodgment, that moment it begins to pollute and weaken, and fasten itself. And Satan now may come in. He

* This illustration of the spider's web is borrowed, but from whom, the author does not know. It is too striking and truth-telling to be omitted.

has thrown a bridge across the avenue. And he will make it stronger and stronger, and resistance will be weaker and weaker, and at last altogether cease. And conscience will grow fainter and fainter, and at last cease to be heard at all, except on great occasions, when she will make a sort of spasmodic and dying effort. Meanwhile a whole troupe of unclean and vile thoughts come in, passion triumphs, and the arch-fiend has the poor victim at his feet. The secret of victory, my friend, is in resistance, early and boldly. Fight your great enemy as Christ did with texts from God's great armory. And here it is the proof texts and answers of your mother's catechism will serve you as a sharp short sword. Instead of blotting your register with broken resolutions, you may fill it up with the records of victory. Your great persecutor cannot yet foreclose a mortgage on any of you. Nor has he a bill of sale for any of your precious souls. It is only necessary for you to resolve to go to Jesus—to arise and go to your father's house—you may yet be saved. **RESIST THE DEVIL, AND HE WILL FLEE FROM YOU.**

In youth, life is pleasant and full of hope. Your anticipations are bright, and your prospects fair, and your visions lovely and gay. Dangers and temptations lie in your path, it is true, but Christian principle and Christian conduct will bring you in honor and safety to your journey's end. The snares of the wicked one are harmless against all who make

God, their father's God, their friend, by serving him with a perfect heart and a willing mind. It is only by sinning against God that any of you can make yourselves miserable outcasts of darkness and of death.

What so sweet and becoming to the young heart as prayer and praise! The Supreme Ruler and Mighty God may be thus addressed as your friend and Father. He says: "Seek ye my face." "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." These are great and gracious promises. They are as sure and steadfast as they are sweet and encouraging. They that seek the Lord with a sincere and contrite heart shall always find him ready to forgive and bless. "The Lord will not forsake me—I know He will not," said a little girl as she went about her daily toil, which was far above her wasted strength to accomplish. And she was right. Her hopes were not disappointed. She had strength given her until she was sweetly released, and called up to her Father's kingdom. "Oh, that I was pure as that brook," said another youthful soul, as he contemplated the stream which fell in sheets of liquid silver at his feet, and it was but a short time, before he was in the Paradise of God. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

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PRAYER IN AFFLICTION.

*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest.—JESUS CHRIST.*

“ Oh! child of sorrow, raise thine eyes,
And hear thy Saviour's blissful call,
When care and bitter sorrows rise,—
The ills that feeble life appal.

“ Lament no more — thy gracious Lord,
Within the mansions of the blest,
Has promised in his holy word
The weary, heavy laden, rest.

“ Arise, arise — 'tis mercy's voice,
The weary and the worn to cheer ;
He bids the burdened heart rejoice,
And wipes from sorrow's cheek the tear.”

Achan's History Teaching.

ACHAN'S HISTORY TEACHING.

"There is a history in all men's lives."—**KING HENRY IV.**

———"In the streets
Merchants assembling, spoke of trying times,
Of bankruptcies, and markets glutton full."

"Ruins of years ——
A ruin — yet what ruin?
Chaos of ruins! Who can trace the void
O'er the dim fragments?"

19 **AND** Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the **LORD** God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done, hide *it* not from me.

20 And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the **LORD** God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done.

21 When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them, and behold, they *are* hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

24 And Joshua, and **all** Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the

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garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor.

25 And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.

26 And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger: wherefore the name of that place was called, the Valley of Achor, unto this day.
— Jos. vii.

The great Swiss preacher and philosopher, the late ALEXANDER VINET, has said that "A life may as well serve for the text of a sermon as a passage of Scripture."* Surely then the life of such a man as Achan may well receive our attention. His history abounds in lessons, principles, and warnings, which it is neither pious nor wise to neglect. Every thing recorded in the Bible is for our instruction, warning or consolation. Every thing pertaining to Bible characters deserves our consideration. The Bible is God's history teaching the philosophy of the DIVINE WILL concerning men by examples. I trust the truth of the sacred narrative has been

*See his work on Pastoral Theology, translated by Rev. Dr. Skinner, and published in New York. A work of profound thought, fervent piety, and of rare merit. It should be studied by every clergyman.

made manifest by references to collateral histories, as well as by an explanation of its contents. Profane history and the customs and manners of the East, as given by old authors and recent travelers, have aided us in vindicating the punishment of Achan. Now as we are coming home from his execution, let us meditate on some of the *lessons* taught by his melancholy history.

"So bad a death, argues a monstros life," — KING HENRY VI.

I. From Joshua's conduct and the corresponding action of the Israelites, *we see how rulers and their people or constituents may be co-workers in promoting the public welfare.* Joshua, though uniting in himself the two offices of supreme magistrate in civil affairs and of commander-in-chief of the army, and being under God also the head of the church, rent his clothes and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD, he and the elders of Israel, from morning till evening. And Joshua prayed, and said, Alas! O Lord God, what wilt thou do unto thy great name? And the people prayed with him, and were in readiness to follow all his directions. At his command they ran to Achan's tent, and verified his confession, and laid the goods out before the Lord. They did not dare to bring forth a false invoice, nor think of embezzlement. And when the conviction was perfect, and sentence past, the people stoned him with stones.

Here we have a dispassionate, incorruptible judge, and a sympathizing, pure minded people, acting together in maintaining law and justice. Joshua's grief and prayer show us that the mercy of God is not to be invoked without regard to his justice—that zeal for the divine glory must be through the maintenance of the divine holiness. His example teaches us that sincere grief on account of sin, and fervent prayer for the mercy of God must be joined with an earnest zeal for his glory. If we are truly penitent we shall be jealous for the holiness of God as well as afraid of his wrath. Our hearts will be broken on account of sin, and broken from sin.

As the ministers of the gospel now, so the seers of God in olden times had a sorrowful, unthankful office. It was their mission to warn the people of coming judgments, unless they repented. There is great propriety therefore in calling their message, as is often done in the Bible, *the burden of the word of the Lord*. Repentance was their great theme. It was in the same style that John the Baptist and our Lord himself began their public ministry. If another man had seen from Mount Carmel a cloud of a handbreath, it would have been of little concern to him. He could not have told Ahab, that there was going to be "a great rain." And just so it is now, God's servants, by their acquaintance with his word,—with his law and the proceedings of his Providence, *foresee* from their watch towers the punishment of

incorrigible sinners. But because they warn us to flee from the wrath to come, they are called "hell-fire preachers," and when they are striving to preach home to our consciences to save us from the dominion of sin, we are ready to think they are cruel and hard-hearted men, who delight in terrible denunciations. We are often ready to look upon them as too earnest and urgent and uncharitable,—as bearers of evil tidings, who have come "to torment us before our time." But not only is it the duty of ministers of the gospel, but also of mayors, governors and heads of the people to sympathize with the people in their afflictions, and do all they can to alleviate their sufferings.

Joshua acted in his civil and military character, as well as in his ecclesiastical, when he prayed and interceded for the people. His grief was the sincere gushing out of his public spirit, and of his enlarged benevolence as a ruler. It was proof also of his tenderness and piety as a man. We have no need to unite church and state. It is better they remain distinct as they are. Let Cæsar have his own, but let God be worshipped according to the dictates of conscience, without pains or penalties. We are not accountable to our fellow men for our religious sentiments. But the perfect freedom of the church from the sword and treasury of the state does not release our public men from the duty of being moral and pious. Our rulers deserve our prayers and

support in maintaining law and order. They are put in trust with honors and emoluments in order that they may care for the prosperity of the people. They are leaders for the people. They are to be an example in every thing that is excellent, lovely and of good report. They are bound by the moral of their oath of office to contribute all they can to the promotion of good morals and the advancement of public education and of public happiness. Nor is it the whole of the duty of judges, juries, and magistrates to bring offenders to justice. *A prior and a greater duty is to prevent crime by moral and religious influences, and to reform the guilty, if possible.* It is therefore the high duty of electors to choose such men for office as are qualified, and possess correct and noble principles, — men who are known to have such integrity and virtue as our youth may always imitate. Our salvation as a nation depends on the INDEPENDENCE and PURITY of the ballot-box. If the voice of free and enlightened citizens rewards vice, then we invite the punishment of vice to fall on our heads. There is a fearful moral responsibility attached to us as electors. For our votes we must give an account to posterity and at the judgment of the great day.

Public fasts and days of national humiliation and prayer are sanctioned by the usages of all Christian nations, in all past ages as well as in our own day. Such observances are recommended to us by the ex-

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ample of our pious forefathers, and by the authority of the Bible. Government is of God, though the form of it may be of man. Rulers are his officers. By divine law they are appointed to be a terror to evil-doers, and a shield to them that do well. Promotion to office is not the work of chance. It cometh from the Lord. It is right then for magistrates and people to acknowledge God in their corporate and national capacity. Jehovah is still a great king. His heavens do rule as truly as in the days of Joshua and of Daniel. Our public prayers as well as our private devotions must be with sincere penitence and with an humble trust in the mercy of God through his son Jesus Christ. It is only when there is a rending of the heart as well as of garments, on account of sin, and a tearing away from sin, and every idol is driven out, that we have a right to expect the divine blessing. Joshua's example, therefore, in grief and prayer for the sins of the people, and his exertions to sanctify the people, that by their repentance the wrath of God might be turned away from them, teaches us our duty as citizens, as magistrates, and as patriots, and as heads of families and of business houses.

II. The history of this unfortunate Hebrew teaches us that **ALL UNDUE FAMILIARITY WITH FORBIDDEN THINGS IS EXCEEDINGLY DANGEROUS.** One cannot touch pitch without being smutted. The

driven snow is soiled by contact with the cleanest fingers. "I saw," says the poor culprit, "among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold." His sin began as with a thousand others since, *in his eyes*. It had been better for him if he had been born blind. Better for him to have had his eyes plucked out, than for him to have fallen by his eyes into perdition. His eye betrayed his heart, and his heart moved his hand. The enemy's attack in our day is very similar. The general patented style of the confession of the glutton, the thief, the drunkard and the whore-monger is, *I saw, I coveted, I took*. The process of the temptation with our great mother Eve was similar. According to Milton, and as appears also from the inspired record, it was by much speech and gesture and suggestion, the false arch-angel prevailed over the angels, and with our first parents. He infused "bad influence into th' unwary breast of his associates." And in the garden, he entered into conversation with the woman. He corrupted her mind by his insinuations, and then induced her to *look* at the fruit. And "she saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make "one wise." And then, "she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat."

Two remarks are called for here. 1st. According

to the history, Eve was *sincere* in believing her sense of right. She saw that the tree was good, and was pleasant to the eyes, and to be desired to make one wise. That is, she thought it was good and pleasant and in every way to be desired. And she thought wisdom was a good to be desired. She was sincere in her belief; but she erred. Her estimate of the testimony of her senses was not correct. If she had followed the testimony of faith, she should have been saved. Faith taught her to believe God. This was what she ought to have done. And the same law prevails now. It is safer to follow the testimony of faith in God than to follow our senses. The senses are clouded mediums. They are affected by passion, appetite and prejudice. The only safe rule is the **DIVINE WORD**.

2d. It appears from the temptation of Eve and of Achan, that proximity to evil—familiarity with the wicked is dangerous. *Evil communications corrupt good manners*. It requires effort to live in Sodom and not partake of its iniquity. It will cost an effort to pass through strong temptations like Joseph and Daniel, and like the Israelites in the streets of Jericho, amid its spoils, and remain unscathed. It requires nerve and courage, and communion with high sentiments to be a partaker of flesh and blood,—with such appetites and passions as belong to youth—live amidst the allurements of the world, and keep one's self spotless. To parley with sin is

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to yield. The evidences of the senses are not to be trusted. Temptations are always bright. They are captivating like the forbidden fruit—like the wedge of gold and the goodly Babylonish garment. But successful, they appear in a very different light. Macbeth's confession is the true one: "For now the devil that told me—I did well, says that this deed is chronicled in hell."

Achan believed in his eyes and not in the divine prohibition. He followed his own evil desires, and not the orders of Joshua, and the result was pain, shame and death. The eye is the great inlet to the heart. Job tells us his safety required him to make a covenant with his eyes, that he might not admit evil desires through them to pollute his soul. David prayed: "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken me in thy way." Great is the danger of the eyes. Some eyes are killing in more senses than one. They are like guns that kill both by their missiles and by their recoil. All our senses must be kept under due restraint, if we would be happy. But the eye is the great highway to the territory of the heart. And along this highway there is a telegraph line always in active operation. And the greater is the necessity of having this line of communication completely under our own control, because if for the nonce it falls into the hand of our enemy, such is the deceitfulness of sin, that while the eyes are open wide to gaze upon the exterior

attractions of an accursed thing, they are at the same time by some mysterious mechanism applied by the enemy of all righteousness, closed to virtue; and what greatly adds to the peril, the ear is also at the same time closed to the rebukes of conscience and the denunciations of God's laws.

The history of all iniquity, like the roll in Ezekiel's visions, is written within and without, with lamentation and sorrowing and woe. Lust conceived, bringeth forth sin, and sin finished is death. The law of cause and effect is certain. *I saw*, says Achan, *I coveted, I took*, and lo! here are the consequences. How much more heroic, if he could have said as the immortal Roman: *I came, I saw, and I conquered*, or if he had shut his eyes, and said to his coveting heart: *How can I sin against God, and do this great wickedness in his sight?*

Beware, young friend, of the wiles which the enchanter throws over you. If you already begin to feel a drowsiness growing over your conscience; if your moral sensibilities are beginning to grow callous or blunt, it is high time you should break the spell. The Philistines are upon you. It is only now, before their green withes are firmly bound upon you, that you can disperse them. Realize at once your danger, and the presence still of God to help you. Sleep not another moment under the incantation, or you perish. Satan may contrive to promise secrecy, impunity, pleasure. But how can you be-

lieve him? He has never kept his promises. He did not keep them with Eve, nor with Cain, nor with Achan. Avoid then such persons, places, amusements, pictures and books as lead you into temptation. They are more dangerous than poison.

Through Achan's eyes unlawful desires were awakened. Improper admiration led to covetousness. Learn then to guard well your thoughts as well as your eyes. According to our Lord's teaching, murder may be in the enmity of the spirit, and adultery in the impurity of the heart. If sinful desires be lodged within, they will soon from simple entertainment get to rioting and feasting. The entrance of unhallowed thoughts is polluting. Nor can there be a greater curse than a polluted imagination. We are surrounded with danger. We are beset with enemies within and without. Our world is sadly astray. Our nature is fallen. And our great adversary, the devil, goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers. We must take unto ourselves, therefore, the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand in the evil day. The whole of a good life is a conflict. The flesh warring against the spirit. The house of Saul against the house of David, but as David waxes stronger, Saul grows weaker.

SELFISHNESS is the tyrant foe to our happiness. And it is no use to disguise the truth, SELF must be

crucified. Right acting and benevolent feeling are the only sources of happiness. It may not be an easy thing to take the child of our cherished sinful desires, as Abraham took his son, and offer it upon the altar of a divine command. Our unholy affections and worldly pleasures may not lie patiently upon the wood and beneath the knife, as Isaac did; but they must be crucified. Sinful habits will resist, remonstrate, plead. But no indulgence can be granted. No bounds neither of the State, nor of prison walls can be given—no bonds taken. The sentence must be immediately executed. As soon as the right eye is condemned, it must be plucked out, lest the whole body be cast into hell. If the least spark may enkindle a conflagration that will lay the whole city in ruins, so may the first impure desire, if indulged, grow into a remorseless tyrant of most gigantic strength. *Do not then undervalue the force of your enemy.* It is folly to deny the strength of temptation. Every young man has a fierce conflict to meet. When he enters upon business or goes out into the world, he is obliged to make a "Cerro Gordo" charge—to maintain an up hill battle, till he gains the day and spikes his enemy's guns, and makes him know that he is master of the field.

Temptations that sweep others away may be despised by us at first, and yet afterwards carry us into the same ruin. Temptations that seem feeble, and altogether within our power to resist, when once

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yielded to may become invincible. A thousand difficulties are then discovered — powerful batteries masked before are now opened, and the way of retreat that seemed before perfectly safe, now seems to be the open avenue of death, by compelling us to retreat under the range of all the enemy's guns. Peter's danger was imminent the moment he thought it impossible for him to deny his master. Samson's greatest peril was in his going to sleep in all his strength in Delilah's lap. Beware then of Peter's boasting. Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. The least temptation is sufficient to lead to our fall, if we are left to our own strength. The feeblest arrows of Satan, if we have no other armor than our own self-sufficiency, is deadly enough to destroy us forever. Let no man boast in his own strength or righteousness. "Is thy servant a dog, cried Hazaël, that he should do this thing?" and yet as an old writer says, "the dog did do that very thing." Fish swim deep, but a hook may bring them up. The eagle flies high towards heaven, but the fowler's arrow may bring him down. But the human heart, who can fathom it? It is desperately wicked and deceitful above all things; and who can know it? Nothing but the grace of God can renew and save it. It is out of the heart that all evil thoughts proceed. It is in the heart we find the seeds of mischief and sorrow. Christian young men must therefore keep their hearts with all diligence.

It is not enough that they restrain the stream of evil from rushing out, it must be dried up in the fountain. So shall the words of their mouth and the meditation of their heart be acceptable to God.

III. In listening to this wretched man's confession we are made to *see how terribly rapid and certain, if not resisted, is the progress of sin.*

The fruits of Achan's covetousness were sacrilege, blasphemy, dissimulation, falsehood and theft. He was resolved to make a display. He loved gold, and his heart was set on fine dressing. He may have been orthodox in his creed. If so, his memory was so short that it did not carry his catechism to his heart. It was sadly astray. He did not resist an opportunity of making himself rich. His wish to become *suddenly* rich led him into temptation. An opportunity is never long wanting when there is a disposition to sin. For the proverb says: "Where there is a will, there is a way." It was not long before he came to the pit, and stumbled and fell. There is a world of meaning in another old proverb, which says, that if you name a distinguished personage, he always presents himself. The *gradus* descending of Achan's fall is not more palpable than in many other cases. The general rule is, that men do not rush all at once into vicious practices. They glide along until, before they are aware, they are so far in the downward course, that to retrace

their steps is difficult, and yet to advance is certain ruin.

The great poet tells us that Satan passed the sentinels of heaven as an angel of light, professing to wish to know more of the works of God, and that he listened to the conversation of our first parents while he sat as a cormorant on the tree of life itself. At another time, he sat—

"Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve,
 Assaying by his dev'lish art to reach
 The organs of her fancy, and with them forge
 Illusions as he list, phantasms and dreams—
 — thence raise
 At least distemper'd, disconnected thoughts,
 Vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires."

And at last he made his triumphant attack as a serpent, the most subtle of all the beasts of the field which God had made. His advances were all well timed and well circumstanced, and successful. And such is "the method of his madness" still. He does not ask young men to set out with the avowed purpose of going to hell. He does not expect them to avow their design to act unjustly, or become dishonest. His plans are all laid with a view of getting them into such positions as will make them familiar with crime, and dally with such sights, principles, ideas and associates as weaken a sense of justice and honor. But is there not imminent danger in handling sharp edged tools, or in playing with fire in a magazine? Who can take fire into his bosom and not be burned? When once a man finds himself in

a wrong position, then he discovers that the meshes of the net are already around him. Until he begins to exert himself to regain his liberty, he is ignorant of the snare into which he has fallen. The poor Mamelukes supposed themselves invited to a feast of honor and good will, until they found themselves enclosed within the walls of the citadel of Grand Cairo, from which there was no possible escape. It was a feast, but the feast of death.

Suppose a case on this wise. A merchant is pressed for money. An opening seems at hand. The property or credit of others is within his reach, perhaps in his keeping. Why may he not use it for a few days? Resolved, however, that he will most sacredly replace the amount and make it all right, he throws for a glittering prize. He fails. The snare has succeeded. The poison begins to work. Now he fears exposure. He looks around for a chance to make enough to cover all his losses, and secure his friends. His mind is now at fever heat. His measures must be more nervous and bold. He soon becomes less scrupulous. He is now prepared to do what he could not have even thought of before without shuddering. The bird is now struggling and dashing itself to pieces in the cage. The fowler now sure of his victim, begins to lay off his disguise and with Sardonian smiles to scowl upon him. The hallucinations of the senses are gone. The wretchedness of awful realities has come. Oh! the deep agonies

of pecuniary embarrassment, and the fatal mistake of flying to secret drunkenness or dishonesty for relief! It is true, as the Bible says, they that will be rich fall into divers temptations, and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition. When the victim is once in the snare, then the devil can devour him at his leisure. He can torture him, gnaw at him and torment him as he pleases.

The lusts that accompany the worship of gold are many, foolish and pernicious. They do not terminate upon themselves. Their indulgence but aggravates the case. Evil-doing as an escape from suffering is a balsam which, instead of soothing the wound, deepens it, and fixes the poison more and more deeply in the flesh. Every plunge in dissipation as a remedy for sorrow is like the floundering and surging of a loaded camel in the slime pits of the Dead Sea, which instead of extricating it, only causes it to sink deeper and deeper, until all is lost. How often in commercial panics do we see strong men out at sea, striving to reach the shore, some upon rafts of broken spars, and some by clinging to each other—but instead of helping each other, like drowning men, they each make their ruin the more certain and wide-spread.

The devices of men for evil-doing are numerous. They need not here be given in detail. The only rule that can be given that comprehends the line of duty

every where and under all pressures, is the strict and happy one of UNSWERVING HONESTY. If the desire not to be cheated or over-reached or imposed upon is proper and general, then let the desire not to cheat or over-reach be equally as universal. Let there be no calling of things by specious but wrong names. Let there be no adulteration of what is good—no lying, no deceiving. The line of duty is short and simple and easily followed.

I can sympathize with a young man who finds himself wedged in between the terrible alternative of cheating to please his employer or of giving up his situation for the sake of his soul. He is a stranger it may be. He is poor and far from home. But which is best to obey God or man? Which is safest, to follow our own short sight, or to believe in God? Eve and Achan believed their senses, and you know the result. *Them that honor me*, says God, *I will honor*. In keeping of the divine commandments, there is great reward. God says, seek my kingdom and righteousness *first*, and all things needful shall be added unto you. Still I can sympathize with the difficulties of an honest man, who says, I have a family to support. The competition is sharp. I see not how I can succeed in my business, unless I carry it on just as my neighbors do, and to do this, I must swerve, sometimes, from the strict rules of justice. I can sympathize with the father and husband whose household depends upon his daily gains for their

bread and raiment, when he sees that trade is about to go past his shop door, unless he avail himself of the same unscrupulous practices resorted to by others; but I can only sympathize with him, and encourage him to hold out amidst a perverse and crooked generation. *For the Bible will not allow of any compromise with honesty.* It teaches us to trust in God, who loveth righteousness. It tells us to stay our hearts upon him. It records the testimony of one who declares that he had been young, and was old, and yet he had never seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread. If the alternative is pressed upon you, that your business must fall off, or you must resort to dishonest steps or violate the sanctity of the Sabbath, to keep it, why then, make short work of it. Keep a good conscience, and cast yourself on heaven for your daily bread. If you must sit down in want, keep the flag of a heart, true to God and to yourself, flying. If you must sink under the waves, go down with your colors all set and untarnished. But you shall not fail. "Trust in the LORD, and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed and thou shalt dwell in the land." And in thus trusting providence there is the highest heroism. The man who for conscience's sake runs the risk of bringing want upon his family has as great a soul as those champions who have gone up bravely to the scaffold for truth and righteousness, and sealed their confession with their blood. It is generally in the humbler

walks of life, that we find the hardest tasks performed for Christ, and the greatest sacrifices made for his cause. As continual dropping wears away the granite, so there is more courage in nobly bearing the ills of life, and patiently performing its duties than in storming a castle. The man, therefore, who shuts up the avenues of business rather than sin against God, or do what he believes to be wrong, displays the staunch heroism of a martyr.

IV. WE SEE HOW DISTRESSING SIN IS TO OUR PIOUS FRIENDS, AND TO ALL GOOD PEOPLE, AND IN FACT TO EVERY HOLY BEING IN THE UNIVERSE.

Joshua rent his clothes and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord, until the eventide, he and all the elders of Israel, and put dust on their heads.

The wages of sin are not only death, but both before and after death, sorrow and shame. Evil-doing is dishonorable as well as painful. Sin is the most dishonorable thing in the universe. And it is as cowardly as it is dishonorable. It fills the heart of parents and friends with agony. It covers them with keen mortification. DAVID says: Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because Israel kept not the law of the Lord. JEREMIAH wished that his head were a fountain of waters that he might weep day and night over the slain of the daughters of his people. PAUL says that his heart's desire and prayer

to God for Israel was that they might be saved. And again, speaking of the false teachers of Philippi: "Many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." It is a great grief to the virtuous and good to see their fellow men pursuing vicious courses, and following after the ways of iniquity. And is it nothing to you, my young friend, that you are the object of so much anxiety? Is it nothing to have the expostulations of Christian friends, the prayers and tears of your godly parents, and of brothers and sisters pleading with you not to walk in the path of destruction? Will it not add to the guilt of Jerusalem in the day of judgment to have the tears of Jesus on their impenitence? Will it not greatly add to your guilt to dishonor the faith of your parents, and set at nought all the pious training you had in the distant home of your youth? Will it not fearfully enhance your condemnation, if after all you have seen and felt, and been taught about religious things, you continue obstinate in your rebellion against God, and treat with contempt the mercy offered in the Gospel? But if any of you have been overcome of temptation—if any of you have fallen in an evil hour, remember there is forgiveness with God, that he may be feared. If we confess and forsake our sins, we shall find mercy. If we confess our sins, God is just and willing to forgive us our sins. *The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.*

There is joy in heaven and among the angels of God, as well as upon earth with parents and all pious people, when a sinner repents. But the fatted calf will never be killed in honor of your return to God, unless you renounce your sins, and flee from them. It is vain to pray, if we continue to sin. It is wicked and presumptuous to ask God to help us, while we refuse to help ourselves. While we seek divine aid, we must exert ourselves. *God helps only those that help themselves.* As long as we regard iniquity in our hearts, so long our prayers will not be heard. While we are to strive, and pray, and use all the means of grace, within our power, we must depend upon the merits of Christ as the only ground of pardon and justification in the sight of God. We are wholly dependent on God, yet we must not receive his grace in vain. It is given to us that we may maintain good works. Our agency is never overlooked. It is preserved unimpaired. "Work out," says the Apostle, "your own salvation, with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his own good pleasure." The whole matter is here happily set forth. God enables: man works, and SALVATION is the result. It cannot be otherwise. Salvation is of God. It is wholly of free grace. Yet it must be accepted. The heart must acquiesce. We must choose the service of God, before we can possibly be happy in his presence.

The Conclusion.

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" Before him bowed the distant isles, with fruits
And spices rare : the South her treasures brought ;
The East and West sent ; and the frigid North
Came with her offering of glossy furs.
Musicians soothed his ear with airs select,
Beauty held out her arms : —— Yet
He died. — Died of what ? Of wretchedness :
Proof this, beyond all lingering doubt
That not with natural or mental wealth
Was God delighted, or his peace secured.
Attempt how monstrous ——

—— With aught but God
To satisfy and fill the immortal soul !
Attempt, vain inconceivably ! attempt,
To satisfy the ocean with a drop ;
To marry Immortality to Death ;
And with the unsubstantial shade of Time,
To fill the embrace of all Eternity ! " — POLLOK.

The voice of Achan's execution still cries with a loud voice: *stand in awe and sin not*. In a mere temporal point of view, his folly was only surpassed by his guilt. He did not make the most of this world, and assuredly had a poor chance for the world to come. In all his calculations of impunity, secrecy or enjoyment in his sin, he was mistaken, fearfully mistaken. It is greatly to be desired that we may

carry home with us from the execution the principles, lessons and warnings, which it teaches. And the better to secure this end, let us look at it a few moments longer.

I. This heap of ashes and stones with their sad story, tells us that *sin is unprofitable*. Achan's investment in gold and fine robes was an exceedingly unfortunate one. Sadly was he disappointed. No doubt, he thought this was the way to make his family rich in a short time; but it ruined both him and his family. It is always so in the end with ill-gotten gains. At last they sting like a serpent. It is as short-sighted as it is wicked to get rich at the expense of character and conscience. The little that a righteous man hath is better than the abundance of the wicked, especially if that abundance is in any way the wages of dishonesty or of iniquity. Even if ill-gotten gains are retained, there is no happiness in their possession, for there is wanting a good conscience, without which no man can be happy. The pleasures of sin are like the apples of Sodom. They are fair to look upon, but are nothing but ashes within. Achan's enjoyment was exceedingly brief. With him suspicion and agony were co-eval with his crime. And swiftly followed the terrible wages of his sin. His folly was extraordinary. He ought to have known that he could not wear the Babylonish garment, nor turn it into money without being detected,

nor spend the shekel of silver, nor adorn himself with the gold without proclaiming guilt.

Supposing Achan's motives to have been to provide for his children, how sadly was he disappointed! As a general rule, it is admitted that parents are naturally capable of making the best choice for their children. But so depraved is man, and so darkened his understanding, that often he errs, in regard to points that even parental animal instinct would be a safer guide. It is certainly not always a blessing to leave a large estate to one's children.

II. How suddenly and wholly do our views sometimes change in regard to things that our minds have been much and sinfully set upon! Achan's ideas of the value of his prize began materially to change as soon as he gained it. What to do with it troubled him. And when he found that his crime was going to be investigated, and that the people were all assembled, and the lots were casting, and his tribe, even the great tribe of Judah was taken, he began to regret that he had not obeyed orders on the dreadful day of Jericho's fall. Now the hope of secrecy with which he lulled his soul to sleep in its guilt began to fail him. But the last lots are cast; and, behold Zabdi is taken, and yet again, and ACHAN the son of Carmi is taken, and made to stand out from among the thousands of Israel as the guilty one, — pointed out by the unerring finger of God, as the

man who had troubled Israel by taking the accursed thing. At what now does he value the wedge of gold? What estimate does he now put upon that splendid robe from the looms of Babylon? And so it was with another covetous man. GEHAZI, the servant of a great prophet of Jehovah thought the talents and the rich garments of the Syrian lord very beautiful, and when he had taken them and stored them away in his house, Oh! how his eyes danced over them with joy. But the value of these things soon changed. When the prophet's voice sounded in his ears the evidence of his guilt, and he went from the presence of the man of God, "a leper as white as snow," then these goods appeared to him worthless. They were now memorials of his guilt. And how pleasant were the thoughts of Ananias and Sapphira in gaining a reputation for charity by fraud? They thought their success complete. They had enjoyed the *eclat* and show of having done something handsome for the faithful. They came boldly before the apostles. But when they fell dead at their feet, the value of their money perished with them. What will the wretched miser think of his gold and silver, when

" From his prison house, slowly and sad
As if unsatisfied with holding near
Communion with the earth, he draws
His carcase forth, gnashes his teeth, and howls,
Unsolaced " —

What will all his treasure be to him, when he appears before the awful Judge of quick and dead?

III. The history of Achan is a DEMONSTRATION THAT MONEY AND EXTRAVAGANCE IN DRESS AND EQUIPAGE MAY BE VALUED AT MORE THAN THEY ARE WORTH.

The root of human sorrow lies in valuing earthly things at more than they are worth. The depth of human depravity is seen in the creature's love for itself and its fellow creatures rather than for the blessed Creator. Multitudes "value the pomp and glorious circumstance" of wealth at far more than they are worth. Many of our commercial difficulties, and not a few cases of bribery, forgery, fraud, murder and insanity have resulted from an over wrought estimation of wealth. The high value at which money is held makes the race hard. If a false reckoning endangers the noblest vessel, so does a false estimate of the value of wealth put in peril the conscience and the soul. The over estimation of wealth excites to improper means to secure it. It throws the mind into a fever, when things are not seen in their true colors and bearings. It is in the street and in the realities of every day life, and not in "poor Richard's Almanac," that *we* see too much paid for the whistle. It is not without significance that in Hebrew the word for riches means "heavy — weight of a burden." Thus, where we read that Abraham was very rich in

cattle, in silver, and in gold, the original for rich is *heavy*. Riches are heavy, for there is a *burden* of care in getting them, a burden of fear in taking care of them, and keeping them from thieves; a burden of temptation in using them; a burden of sorrow in losing them, and a great burden of account to render for them at the last day. Consider what money costs. Is it worth the sacrifice? Does it pay for the time and skill, and toil of your hands and of your mind, and the wear of your heart? If you succeed in accumulating gold, how long can you keep it? The banks are very insecure depositories. Loans on bond and mortgage are not always certain guarantees for the return of your money. If you bury it in your cabin as Achan did his spoils, or on the mountain side, it is not insured from the depredations of thieves and coyotes.* You can not carry it in large masses about your person. And if you put it into trade, you may make a bad bargain and lose it all. And if you retain it till death, then you must leave it. You may indeed have it put into the coffin with you, as the ancient Egyptians buried a fac similie of themselves as embalmed with the mummy, or as some savages still bury their weapons and a portion of their worldly gear with their body; but what good

* In the mines, instances have occurred in which bags of gold dust have been dug out from their burying places by the coyotes, for the sake of the leather, and the dust scattered over the hills, as the coyotes pulled and fought over the bag, like hogs for a precious morsel.

will gold and highly wrought robes do you in the grave? They will not keep away corruption and the worm. They will give no light in the cold vault, nor afford any consolation in entering upon the realities of eternity.

IV. This history is a warning against **EXTRAVAGANCE AND MONEY-LOVING**. The language of the whole story is, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness, which is idolatry." "The love of money is the root of all evil." The growth of the American people in all the elements of national greatness is truly astonishing. It is natural that the love of money should grow with our growth and strengthen with our strength. In many respects a man has more reasons to love money in this country than in any other. It is of more value to him. As we have no aristocracy of garters, ribbons and stars, so we make an aristocracy of dollars and cents. The blood of the Nevilles, the Howards, the Somersets, and of all the royal families of Eve that flows in our veins is so profuse that it is undistinguishable. We must therefore prove our noble blood by deeds of land and evidences of stocks and of hoarded treasure. Be the causes and the means of our devotion to wealth what they may, the danger of this intense money-loving is very great. It is not denied but that young as we are, our elections are often materially controlled by money. Our precincts may not yet equal the

rotten boroughs of Great Britain, but they are foul enough. They are often the very sinks of corruption. And even in our religious assemblies, it is not a strange thing for the man with the gold ring and goodly apparel to be estimated at an enormous percentage above his value, while his hard-fisted, homespun, well-behaved neighbor is set down at more than five hundred per cent. below his real worth. Associates for our children, and leaders of society are too often selected because of their real or supposed connection with wealth. A profane rich man, a drunken rich man, a licentious brute of a rich man is preferred before an honest, hard-working man. The same things of dishonesty done by both are spoken of in a very different style in our law reports and in our morning papers. Money, like charity, but in a different way, covers a multitude of faults. Gold wedges and flashing dresses patch over many damned spots of our moral escutcheon.

Repeatedly has it been declared from this pulpit that true religion is not a declaration of war against wealth, refinement or elegance of taste and manners. Repeatedly have we shown that riches are in themselves blessings. Money is a good thing. A man may be very rich, and yet be a saint. The power to get riches according to the Bible is God's gift. Christianity does not therefore authorize any crusade against rich men. But both the Bible and common sense teach that the responsibilities of riches are

great—that it is a great sin to abuse wealth, or any thing that providence has given us for our own happiness and the well-being of our fellow-men. Gold in its place is indeed a precious thing. *It was made for man, and not man for it.* The golden wedge must not therefore be converted into a golden calf, to be worshipped. Nor must it be a magnet to draw the young from virtue, nor a huge mill-stone around the neck of the aged to drown them in the depths of perdition. But after all the warnings we have had, and all the excuses that are offered for our devotion to wealth, we cannot escape from the conviction that money-loving is the idolatry of our country and age. The vial of science is made to fill the horn of plenty, not so much to feed the starving, as to increase commissions and per cents. The whole soul is fixed upon ships and cargoes, store-houses, rents and lands. Dull brute power binds the inner, immortality-seeking spirit as a captive. Intellect is fettered and put in the stocks and shut up in the midnight of ignorance, or put into a chain-gang, and sent to tread on the wheel of the mill, or the office, or to dig in the mines. The heaven-born soul made for communion with God and angels is left to faint and perish away for the want of knowledge—for the want of things congenial — things beautiful, lovely, and good. What can be expected of a soul made in the image and after the likeness of the ineffable Creator, if it is “cribb’d, cabin’d and confined” to the horizon of a

bill of exchange—has no sun-light but the glimmerings of shining dust? Will it not wilt and lose its heavenly complexion, like plants shut up in dark cellars? O! it is cruel, it is monstrous tyranny—tyranny over immortal affections and an ever upward aspiring soul, to keep man's higher nature forever struggling, dust-worn and soiled, with the things that perish in the using! It is a tyranny that might well make angels weep to see how the earth-born giant of money-loving chains the immortal mind to numbering box and bale-marks and reading ware-house receipts and amounts of sales. The creed, liturgy and litany of many of "the lords of the mill," and of leagues of broad acres, are sadly marked with materialism. They are of the earth, earthy. *Practically*, their creed is, there is no power, but money. Their liturgy is, great is Mammon of the Americans. Their litany is, O good Lord, give us white kids and save us from work and poverty. And their whole confession of faith with their catechism, is: The practice that will pay the best—the quickest way to the largest pile.

Ah! but has it never been seen that money confers a patent of nobility in society—that young men and clerks are measured by their *means*, or by their capacity to make money, and not by their industry and morals? And do we never see men and women falling victims to overtaken hands and brains? Do we not see vicious habits induced and formed through

the neglect of parents and employers of youth to provide for their social and intellectual entertainments? How often has the *young man from home* fallen, for the want of a word of encouragement, advice and kindness? Have we not often followed the mortal remains of some mother's son—of some father's once flaxen-headed boy, from the dark neglected chamber, where there was no one to sooth the dying pillow, but the nurse that waited merely for the love of gold, to the silent vault or the nameless, letterless, unnumbered grave, in a land that knew not the dust of his fathers? And around that bier there were none to weep. The pressure of business scarcely allowed the employer or fellow clerks to follow him to his last home.

The worship of the Almighty dollar has also led to almost every species of gambling. As in the conquest of Mexico and Peru, so here, the sudden influx of wealth has been followed by unexampled recklessness. Wealth in the form of solid bars of gold, and so easy of transportation, and in the hands of adventurers who were unaccustomed to the possession of money, and without the taste or the means to enjoy their wealth in more elevating pursuits or in the gratification of more refined desires, only the more readily supplies them with the means of gambling. In a single day, sometimes in an hour, fortunes have been won or lost. The hard earnings of many a month's labor has been squandered

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in a single night. Our own day reminds us of the history of a Spanish cavalier, in Peru, whose share of the booty was the image of the sun, which was raised on a plate of burnished gold. This rich prize he lost in a single night; whence it came to be a proverb in Spain, "*Juega el sol antes que amanezca.*" "Play away the sun before sun-rise." — *Prescott's Peru*, 1 vol., p. 526.

The danger to our country from the rapid increase of wealth is in a great degree neutralized by the rapidity with which it changes hands. Hitherto, and there is no reason known why it may not continue to be so for many years to come, the history of this country has recorded a great commercial crisis about every ten or fifteen years. These crises are brought on by over-trading, and though in themselves undesirable, and to many honest people a great calamity; still they are a blessing. They are checks to the cupidity of men, stimulated by constant success. Effeminacy, dissipation, luxury and crime would know no bounds, if there were no checks upon the accumulation of wealth. And next, without these commercial panics, property is scarcely abiding for a life-time. So "uncertain" are riches, that even if they are held till death, there being no law of primogeniture and perpetual entail, they are soon scattered to the winds. But if the rich become poor, the poor may become rich. As intellect and character seldom descend beyond the grand-child, so but few families

remain uncorrupted by wealth through three generations.

If our desires for this world's goods were limited to things necessary and useful, then we should escape from many of the cares that crush us. What more do we want than food and raiment? What will it avail on our death bed, whether we leave a few thousand dollars more or less, perhaps, to unthankful heirs, or greedy lawyers? What will be the difference a few years hence whether we die worth a thousand or a hundred thousand dollars? Our life consisteth not in the abundance of our wealth. A man's life is not a beast's. His soul is formed for knowledge and the enjoyment of the Creator. Riches do not prolong life, nor are they essential to our rational enjoyments. Nor do they tend to work out the salvation of the soul, but rather its perdition. If we love the world, or allow the love of money to become a controlling power, we have not the love of God in us. We cannot serve two masters at the same time. If we strive to serve both, we shall please neither. If we are striving to gain both worlds, we shall lose both. It is unworthy of our origin and heritage to serve the money-king. But money may be made to serve us, and to serve God through our means. "Money is like fire, a good servant, but a bad master." We are told that it is an easy matter for a man when he falls into deep water to preserve his life, if he would only permit

his whole body to lie beneath the surface, except so much of his mouth and nostrils as is necessary for the admission of air. "It is the instinctive, but unwise effort to raise portions of the body above the water, that sinks the whole beneath it." It is by a similar law in the province of morals that avarice destroys the life of the soul. The whole amount of money that a man obtains for the purpose of using, and actually does legitimately use, does no harm to the interests of the soul." It may be great or small, while it is kept beneath the surface — kept as a servant — used as an instrument for legitimate objects. But when some portion of it is raised above the line — when a surplus is sought, not for use, but for its own sake — when the love of money begins — when the affections are set upon it, then it begins to press the soul down, and without relief, it will sink it into spiritual death. It is this lust for money that drowns the soul in perdition.

As a remedy for the evils of this greedy haste to be rich, we must strive to create a taste for refined society and for the beautiful in art and nature. Painting and statuary, books and reading rooms, and intercourse with the pure and the good are calculated to wean the young from the inordinate pursuit of things that are low, and material, and to elevate and refine their taste. Sir John Herschel has declared, "that if he were to pray for a taste that should stand him in stead under every variety of circum-

stances, and be a source of happiness and cheerfulness to him through life, and a shield against its ills, however things might go amiss, and the world frown upon him, it would be taste for reading."

If a young man has acquired such a taste, and has the means of gratifying it, he has the power of making himself always happy. He then has an introduction to the society of those *whose mind is their kingdom*, whose daily bread is manna ethereal, such as angels use, and "whose raiment is the drapery folds of heaven-ascended seers and robes of God-descended angels — men rich in mind, great in intellect and full of moral goodness, without whom earth were a desert." I pity the man growing old in years and growing rich, who has not acquired a taste for literature in his youth. If the thunderings of machinery, and the vista of long-stretching rivers and iron roads and wandering waves of ocean and lake, crowded with straining canvas, are his only *open visions*; what enjoyment can he take in the treasured wisdom of sages, who have enriched the nations, and gone up "in their singing robes," to dwell with God? — what to him are the charms of music, "the soother of care — the tuner of the dark discordant heart-strings?" To the man of wealth, whose taste for good books and the fine arts has not grown with his material substance, the poem, the picture, the statue, that might enrapture the angelic chorus — the brightest creations of genius, and the holiest offerings of

sanctified intellect, are nothing but baubles. The manuscripts of Homer or of Milton, of Newton or Bancroft would be more to him, if they were invoices of shipments from the custom house. As men sow, so they must reap. If they are sensual and money-loving, then their reward is in kind what they have sown. They may be rich in this world's goods but miserably poor in mind, and outcasts from the refinements and wealth of the affections in communion with the holy and the good. It is the mind "that makes the body rich"—that linketh us to spirits unseen. Wherever we find a taste for reading, there is in some measure dignity, self-respect, regard for human rights, consolation and hope. Then let the hard-handed men of the field, the miner in the field, the weaver at the loom, the drayman in the street, the clerk in the office, the senator in his library, and the student "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," in his "pensive citadel," thank God for the art of printing and for the good books that are put into their hands, and strive to imitate the sublime examples of benevolence and holy heroism. "Give a man a taste for reading and the means of enjoying it, and you rescue him from the worst enemies which his nature has to combat." With a love for reading, join a wise and firm resolve to do something worthy of your antecedents, circumstances and expectations. Prepare yourself for honorable activity in whatever place providence may cast your lot. Take a lively

interest in your neighborhood and in the welfare of the society in which you mingle, and of the country where you live. Never allow yourself to sink down into despondency. Never let it be said you are a drone or a misanthrope. Aim high. Make yourself "the balm of your age." You were "born to bestow benefits." Your commission in the world is to do good, and in doing good to make yourself honorable and happy. Some one has said, that the true man, God sent into our world, is like a pillar of fire, leading to God and the promised land. Or rather let us say, he is like the sculpture of a beautiful alabaster vase, only seen to perfection when lighted up from within by the fire of love to God and love to man. Instead, therefore, of "framing your manners to the times," frame them to your duty. Let your habits be according to the principles of eternal rectitude, to which all times and latitudes and longitudes are alike.

It is a terrible delusion, to fall into the idea that sin may be indulged with impunity. It is never true, and least of all, of the sins of one's youth. They are like the little book of Saint John, which he ate, sweet as honey in the mouth, but bitter as gall in the belly. *Be ye sure of this*, say all the laws of the Creator, *your sin will find you out*. If not before, they will most assuredly be found out in the great day of the wrath of the Almighty. Then every secret thing will be revealed. The deep places of

the heart will lie open as the unclouded sun. Before God, there is "no darkness neither shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves." What will it then profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? What will it avail that we have lived in style and fared sumptuously every day, if the lot of condemnation falls upon us at the judgment and we are overwhelmed with the guilt of a life of rebellion against God? We are told that the pursuers of Abner stood still, when they saw the bloody body of Asahel in the pathway before them. If then, any of you are unfortunately thinking of making a venture, or have already entered upon the dark and downward course of transgression, pause, I beseech you, at this heap of stones and let the example of this poor lost Hebrew admonish you. He that covereth his sins shall not prosper but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall find mercy. God hath set forth his son as a propitiation for our sins. There yet is compassion for you. There is yet room in your Father's heart and arms for you. Cast yourselves therefore upon his tender mercies. Cling to the cross of the Great Redeemer. He is exalted at the right hand of the Father Almighty as a Prince and Saviour to give repentance unto Israel and remission of sins through faith in his name. His spirit can create within you a new heart, and renew within you a right spirit. If then you are now pausing at the monumental heap

of stones in the valley of Achor, look up this way, my young friend. There is a plain road from the mountain of guilt to Calvary. Blessed as you are — having received a Christian education, and the voice of “free grace” now crying in your ears, you cannot avoid going to eternity without slighting the cross of Christ. Ponder well, then, the momentous question. How can you escape, if you neglect so great a salvation, and wade as it were through a Saviour’s precious blood, and over his dead body down to perdition!

I know that in the buoyancy of youth, and the excitements attendant upon your starting forth into the world, and your first attempts to make a fortune, your heart feels stout and independent. It is natural to man in his present state to trust too much to his own strength. We are all in danger of forgetting the hand from which all good is bestowed. This danger is greatly augmented in the day of prosperity. If you are successful in business, remember that riches are uncertain. They often take to themselves wings and fly away as an eagle towards heaven. If then you are in the enjoyment of the world’s richest blessings, be thankful, and watch and pray that you may be kept from vanity, and from the lusts that so easily beset the rich and youthful. Friends may prove to be false, or mistaken. But if fortunate in your friends, still even in prosperity, there is no friend like God. And in the dark days of adversity, there

is no voice that speaks such comfort to the soul, as that of confiding prayer. If then the stern, heartless gaze of "iron-faced strangers" is fastened upon you — if the cold hand of poverty presses heavily upon your heart, accompanied it may be by sickness and pain, and disappointment — if blow after blow has fallen on you — if friends have proved false — if your confidence has been misplaced — your affections abused — your hopes thus far blasted — if enemies have risen up on every side — *then remember there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother* — a friend almighty, ever near, ever wakeful, all-merciful all-gracious, who has a complete knowledge of your course of life — who knows all you have ever done, and all you have ever suffered — and knows just what you need. This friend now waits but to be asked, and he will bestow upon you a blessing. Trust in him. Give your heart, all mangled and broken, pierced and sorrowing, and sinful as it may be, to him. He will take you just as you are. He casts out none that come to him. COME TO JESUS. He will heal your sorrows, and prepare you for mansions of bliss, beyond the grave, where sorrow shall never come.

- " In opening youth's unclouded day,
With every earthly gift supplied,
Oh! keep me, Lord, in wisdom's way,
With Thee for ever to abide.
- " Oh! give me, Lord, an humble heart,
Though rich in goods, in spirit poor;
Oh! to my trembling soul impart
Thy strengthening grace and mercy sure.
- " Oh! grant that all the glittering toys
That sparkle on my devious path,
May be despised for surer joys —
The joys that triumph over death.
- " Teach me to give what Thou hast given,
With willing hand and active care;
Let all my treasure be in heaven,
For Thou, my gracious Lord, art there.
- " Teach me to soothe the bed of pain,
To cheer the heart of poverty,
And point beyond this earthly scene,
To bliss and immortality.
- " Born to command my kindred dust,
Oh! keep me holy, calm, and mild;
The souls committed to my trust,
To guide amidst this earthly wild.
- " Oh! keep me, keep me, blessed Lord,
From sin and from temptation free;
My stay, my hope, thy blessed Word —
Lord, keep me, for I trust in Thee! "