

fortress on the road from Shechem to Bethshan, twelve miles east of Samaria.

**TWO TALENTS**—Calculated by weight and the price of silver now, this sum would have been about \$4,000, but estimated by the purchasing power of money then, it was more. A horse in the time of Solomon cost 150 shekels of silver, now it costs say \$150, so that the shekel was equal to our dollar. As

a talent is 3,000 shekels the hill Samaria cost \$6,000 or \$75 an acre, not counting the steep, sloping sides. From a strategic point of view it was a splendid investment. The hill rises sharply from the valley all round, and in many a long siege it proved that it could never be taken by assault, by the methods of ancient warfare. In a rare degree it "combined strength, beauty and fertility."

### APPLICATION

*Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the Lord, v. 25.* The life of a man is made up of a great many words and acts. But there is a certain

tone and temper to the life that is characteristic of the whole.

**God's Judgment of a Man** It is an improbable supposition that everything that Omri did as king of Israel was bad. That would be to make him a moral monster. But the effect of his life was evil in its sum total in the sight of the Lord. It is quite likely that the testimony which might be borne of him by many of his subjects would not be of this sort. He must have been a man of considerable strength of character or he could not have gained or retained the kingdom. But whatever bravery he might be credited with, there was a judgment being passed upon him by God, and that was that his life was evil. And a final judgment must be passed on every one's life. Let us be careful lest this thing that was said of Omri may be said of us.

*Did worse than all that were before him, v. 25.* There are depths in wickedness even as there are heights of righteousness. There may be an evil pre-eminence, and Omri attained to it. What an awful verdict it is to pass on any man's life when it can be said of him that he did wickedly above all that were before him.

*Ahab his son reigned in his stead, v. 28.* Even as our lives were influenced by those who are older than we or by men and women who died ere we came into the world, so will our lives have effect upon a generation which will succeed ours. Omri died and Ahab succeeded him. If the father was bad, the son was to be worse; but the father was in large measure responsible for the conduct of

the son. Not only parents, but all who are older should think often and earnestly on the effect that their lives and example are likely to have upon the younger people. We should strive to set such an example that the way of righteousness shall be made easy to them, and the way of evil-doing hard.

*And Ahab the son of Omri did evil . . . above all that were before him, v. 30.* Of the father it was said that he was worse than any who

**The Fall of the Great** preceded him, and the son surpassed his father's record. Ahab, like Omri, was a man of great gifts and the story of his bravery as told us in 1 Kgs., ch. 20, is such that it cannot be read without a thrill of admiration for his splendid courage. And yet the very possibility for good that existed in him makes the record more sad. Sin in a weaker man than he would have been more excusable. The most pitiable wreck of all is the wreck of splendid genius or strength.

*He took to wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, v. 31.* There is nothing in life which more strongly affects us than the alliances which we form, whether it be such an alliance as that of marriage, the closest and most enduring of all the human relationships which are within our choice, or the friendships that we make. It is an old saying that has been verified again and again, that a man is judged by the company he keeps; and justly so, for those with whom we come closely in contact are sure to have an influence upon our thinking and character. The young king never committed greater folly than when he married this Zidonian princess. Closely allied with the record of his marriage is the statement that he went and served Baal. How often young people enter into the mar-

**An Awful Verdict**

**Those That Come After**

**The Company we Keep**