

ININQUITY FINISHED.

Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

James i: 15.

[We shall occasionally give the outlines of sermons by some of the remarkable preachers of a former generation. It is wise to study the methods of the fathers, both as to sermonizing and preaching—especially those distinguished by special traits of excellence. Few of the preachers of the first half of this century were more worthy of study and comparison than the Rev. DANIEL A. CLARK. Although less known, he was the equal of Dr. Lyman Beecher, in vigor and robustness of intellect, and strikingly resembled him as a preacher, in many particulars. There was little adornment in his sermons. He despised the arts of the mere rhetorician. He used great plainness of speech. His sentences were short; his style, clear, crisp and vigorous; his art of sermonizing, well-nigh perfect. Like Paul, and Edwards, and Beecher, and Finney, he "reasoned," and reasoned with masterly force. He grappled with the sinner's conscience, and held it fast as in a vise. There was no resisting the torrent of logic and searching appeal that swept down on his audience. Several volumes of his sermons were published in 1836, but they are scarcely known by the preachers of this generation. His sermon entitled "The Church Safe," is one of the most remarkable in the English language, and was published in tract form by the American Tract Society. The two following brief outlines are fair specimens of this preacher's sermons.—EDITOR.]

Nothing here reaches maturity in a moment. Things begin to be, they grow, they ripen. It is so in nature, and so in character, and so in the moral world. Sin is a growth; it matures, and then its fruit is death. "The wages of sin is death." The growth of sin may be slow at first, but it ripens fast as the time of harvest draws nigh. Let me illustrate the subject.

I. The game of chance finds its maturity in the abandoned gambler.

II. Indulgence in the cup is matured in the sot.

III. Covetousness finds its maturity in the swindler, the thief, the robber.

IV. Lasciviousness has its maturity in the pollutions and obscenities of the brothel.

V. Profanity, too, has its maturity in those unrestrained blasphemies which have sometimes been uttered at the very juncture when life was going out.

VI. So the Sabbath-breaker matures his sin by degrees.

Think not to trifle with iniquity and come off without harm. If you begin a wrong practice, remember it may ripen into an obstinate and deadly habit. Oh! say not: I mean to indulge my sins at present, but do not mean to become an abandoned transgressor. "The heart is deceitful above all things;" and it may be that, in the very hour of self-security, your steps are just about to slide. May a merciful God save you!

VII. So the growth of infidelity may be traced from its low beginnings to the same destructive maturity.

VIII. So we might trace the sin of lying, from the first instance of prevarication on to the fixed habit of dauntless and deliberate perjury.

Finally, let me sum the whole up in one case: These sins sometimes all meet in the same man, and grow to maturity together. The gambler becomes profane, and false, and fraudulent, and intemperate, and lewd, breaks the Sabbath, and derides the Bible.

REMARKS.

I. How may we know when sin has approached nigh to maturity?

1. Maturity in sin stuns the sensibility of conscience.

2. Maturity in sin progressively excludes shame.

II. The subject addresses itself to parents.

1. We should be careful not to corrupt our children by example or precept.

2. If we love our children we shall be careful and watchful that others do not corrupt or lead them astray.

3. In view of this subject, be warned not to let any sin ripen in your hearts.

The Four Lepers.

Why sit ye here until ye die?—2 Kings: 7-3.

THIS was the despairing cry of a company of lepers at the gate of Samaria. There were only three courses open to them.

1. They might *return to the city*. But famine was raging there, and they were sure to die.

2. They might *stay where they were*.

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