

went into the *sanctum sanctorum*, seeing no images there, as they used to have in their idolatrous temples, said, in a jeer, that the Jews worshipped the clouds. And thus, because the pleasures of righteousness and holiness are not so gross as to come under the cognizance of the world's carnal senses, as their brutish ones do, therefore they laugh at the saints, as if their joy was but the child of fancy; . . . but let such know that they carry in their bosom what will help them to think the pleasures of a holy life more real, and . . . that there are incomparable delights and pleasures peculiar to the holy life which the gracious soul finds in the way of righteousness.—*Spencer*.

2. AN IDOL MADE, vers. 3-4. (1) *A sacrifice demanded*. AARON. Admitting that the temptation to which Aaron was exposed was one of extraordinary power, nevertheless his sin is wholly inexcusable. Deut. ix. 20. He studied not duty, but expediency. God's strength could have been obtained for the asking. 1 Chron. xvi. 11; xxix. 12; Psa. lxxviii. 35; James i. 5. BREAK OFF . . . BRING. The request appealed to two of the strongest passions of the soul—covetousness, and love of the soul. EARRINGS. These were of large size. SONS. As it was not customary for Egyptian young men to wear ear-rings, possibly the term may refer to the *foreigners* who came out of Egypt with the Hebrews, and whose influence was corrupting. Exod. xii. 38. (2) *A sacrifice made*. BROUGHT. Cheerfully given what is needed for their object. Spiritual worshippers may here learn a lesson of sacrifice. See Exod. xxxv. 21-29. (3) *The idol of gold*. Costly. GRAVING-TOOL. Probably the idol was of wood, overlaid with plates of gold. Isa. xl. 19. There were skillful workmen among the people. (4) *Form of the idol*. A . . . CALF. Fashioned after the chief Egyptian god Apis. Apis was a bull, which was regarded as the visible incarnation of the god Osiris.

3. AN IDOL WORSHIPPED, vers. 5, 6. (1) *The Altar of Sacrifice*. The people proposed to worship Jehovah, yet they did it in the grossest, most sensual mode, still employing some of the usual forms of their purer worship. (2) *The sacrilegious feast*. PROCLAMATION. Made by AARON—who goes on from bad to worse at every step. TO-MORROW. Doubtless several days elapsed between the inception and the completion of these idolatrous services. Ample time for change of purpose. Eccl. viii. 11. EARLY. Showing their eagerness and zeal. BURNT-OFFERINGS. Offerings entirely con-

sumed on the altar. PEACE-OFFERINGS. Such as were partly consumed and partly eaten by those that offered them. TO EAT AND . . . DRINK. Not with prayer and thanksgiving, but with impious glee. Psa. cvi. 21. TO PLAY. Wantonly, in imitation of heathen orgies. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." James i. 15; Psa. ix. 17.

4. AN IDOL DESTROYED, vers. 19, 20 (1) *The Anger of Moses*. Read verses 7-18. CALF AND . . . DANCING. Two symbols of a sensual, worldly Church. Idolatry and lewdness. WAXED HOT. While Christianity demands the broadest love for the sinner, it equally demands deepest indignation against sin. Piety not only makes us benevolent and charitable, but it imparts *strength* and *zeal* to resist Satan and all his hosts. Amos vi. 1; Psa. lxxix. 9; cxix. 139; John ii. 14-17; Acts xvii. 16; James iv. 7; 2 Peter ii. 8. CAST . . . BREAK. Like all the other passions, even a "righteous indignation" may be unwisely exercised. The controlling grace of the Holy Spirit must be constantly sought. The TABLES were sacred, and Moses seems to have been blamable; yet it is significant that he records no penitence for this act, nor does God rebuke him. See Deut. ix. 15-20. (2) *Courage of Moses*. TOOK . . . CALF . . . BURNT. "The meekest man" may be the most firm and courageous. Six hundred thousand men seem paralyzed before this one man, who stands boldly up for God's cause. Deut. xxxii. 30. (3) *Sin's bitter dregs*. WATER. "The brook . . . of the mount." Deut. ix. 21. MADE . . . DRINK. No other water of which to drink. Sin curses our blessing. Mal. ii. 2. "About three thousand" of the most rebellious were slain "that day," verses 25-28. Sin's wages—death. Rom. vi. 23; Heb. ii. 3. Christ, the sinner's only refuge.

Look, as one drop of ink colors a whole glass of water, so one gross sin, one shameful action, one hour's compliance with antichrist, will color and stain all the great things . . . that ever you have performed; it will stain and color all the good prayers that ever you have made, and all the good sermons that ever you have heard, and all the good books that ever you have read, and all . . . the good works that ever you have done; and therefore, whatever you do keep off from sin, and keep off from all sinful compliances, as you would keep off from sin itself.—*Brooks*.