

The prayers are hurried, sometimes almost agonized, sometimes cold as ice,—but the agony is for money, the ice for spiritual blessing. The sanctuary itself is haunted with 'visions of duns and protests, and there are people in the church whom one is ashamed to meet. Is there no wrong in all of this? Does the soul get no damage from it. Is it any wonder that religious experience is shorn of its brightness and glory? The children of Israel never travelled through a more desolate wilderness.

But this is not all. The shifts and evasions to which men in such straits feel themselves compelled to resort have a large tincture of falsehood and fraud in them; they are sins against God—sins punished by deadness of conscience; sins punished by more embarrassing entanglements, until the man who at first only kept back the truth can tell a downright lie—can lie to gain a day's time, and perhaps for the same reason rush with open eyes into the crime of forgery. Is it any wonder the soul is at times torn with an agony of remorse—that the Church of God is deserted—that nothing but rum and gambling with its seathing excitement can give a momentary relief? And even this is not all. A spotted or broken reputation throws one much in the way of doubtful company, and to the same extent cuts one clear of the company and influences most needed to steady the soul. I find that when people are most in need of a kind word they are least disposed to give one a chance to speak it. I do not say that such things in every instance utterly damn the soul, but I do say that they often entangle a man in habits and associations which blacken his reputation, blast his prospects, and destroy his constitution—that they throw the soul into an awful lethargy, from which it may waken only on the brink of eternity, and the poor man dies, trusting feebly in God's infinite mercy, but crying sadly over a mis-spent life.

But, perhaps, you think this is scarcely a "little fox." It is more like sowing the wind and reaping the whirlwind. True, and yet all this wreck and misery had its beginning in small things. It seems a small thing, a thing in which there is no serious harm to pinch a little for the sake of appearances. One does not like to dress more meanly or live more closely than their neighbors who are no better off than themselves. But what is at the bottom of all this? We call it a desire to be respectable—far too often it is senseless pride, and pride is the spawn of hell. If you are a Christian, you must check the first motions and flutterings of this wicked spirit. You must bend your spirit to the limits of your income, whether that be large or small. You must try to be satisfied with