

any thing in wrath. This is the case often in regard to riches; and then, instead of yielding happiness, they are altogether useless, or even become the means of distracting and destroying the unhappy individuals on whom they have been bestowed.

Another way in which men make haste to be rich, and fall into temptation is, by indulging the spirit of monopoly; and, therefore, strike out into many different lines of business, or multiply shops and stations in one and the same business. I have been surprised to see not only men of the world pursue this line of conduct, but even professing christians. One, whom I well knew, had many branches of business, they lay so remote from each other, and involved him in so much care and anxiety, that early and late he was all bustle; he was running from Dan to Beersheba to borrow money, or to procure discounts; he broke his promises to his friends; was so irritable in his family, that his wife and children could scarcely procure a kind or a civil answer; and, in the midst of all this eager pursuit to amass wealth, he was snatched away by death, and left his affairs in so disorganized a state, that it required no little time and sagacity to disentangle them; and thus after having given his eyes little slumber, and his hands and feet no rest, and after working harder than any of his own dependants, instead of having amassed, as some thought, a good fortune, it appeared that his family were left with but a scanty support, and were of course painfully disappointed.

Wherever I see this disposition to engross an undue share of the public favour, I think I see one who is "making haste to be rich." It has been said, that "a covetous man can scarcely be an honest man." One person, and he a great talker about religion, not long ago openly declared himself in language that seemed to intimate, that he should rejoice in the ruin of all those who were of his own profession in that neighbourhood. What can be the issue of such a temper of mind but disappointment and disgrace on the one hand, or, if successful in amassing riches on the other, must these not be embittered by shame at the recollection of the means by which they have been procured? How often have we seen the wealth of some men so weigh them down with remorse and despair, that they would have parted with the last farthing if they could have procured sleep for their eyes and peace for their consciences! How true the words of Solomon—"There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches, kept for the owners thereof to their hurt."

Some make haste to be rich by downright fraud. They have a variety of tricks to set off their goods and induce the purchaser to take them; and when they have carried their point, they glory in the success of their iniquitous manœuvres.

There are many ways in which this may be done. One way is, by giving an appearance to an article

which is altogether fictitious and delusive. Another is, by concealing some defect, which, if seen, would inevitably lead the purchaser to decline the article, or take it at an inferior price.

Others cheat the purchaser by false measures, false weights, &c. Solomon has delivered many interesting lessons of instruction upon these evil practices; the injurious effect of which generally falls most heavily on the poor—to rob whom is one of the greatest abominations in the sight of God. "Rob not the poor, because he is poor; neither oppress the afflicted in the gate; for the Lord will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them."

Some make haste to be rich by an unjustifiable withholding from others what is their due; they cheat their families of what is rightfully due to them for the comfortable supply of their personal wants, and the maintenance of their respectability in society. They are often pinched in their food, in their clothes, and other domestic comforts, and so stinted in pecuniary supplies, that they are seldom or never able to indulge the best feelings of human nature, in imparting assistance to the poor and afflicted.

They exact from their servants and labourers an undue portion of service, without cause diminish their wages, and withhold what is due to the tradesman, that they may take advantage of any speculation that may seem to promise an increase of their gain. To such the apostle James says, "Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rest of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers, who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth."

Others make haste to be rich by absolute robbery. They rob God, the church, and the poor. That proportion which they subscribe to their clergy, for their support, they for a short time pay, but they do even this grudgingly; and when applied to for some charitable contribution, either to objects of distress, or for religious purposes, they never fail to talk of the provision made for both by the government or parliament, and how cheerfully they contribute; than which nothing can be farther from the truth. It was to men of this class that God said, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me."

All the wealth which God bestows upon a man is to be considered as a talent, given to him in trust. He is a steward, and must give an account to God. The responsibility of rich persons is therefore very great, and it is so solemnly stated in the parable of the talents, Matthew 25, 15—30, that I take the liberty of urging a close attention to it upon all rich persons, but especially upon rich professors, and most of all upon those professors whose wealth is still increasing.