

God; and shall we throw away this royal dignity, this glorious destiny, for the mere counterfeit of joy—for pleasures which glitter for a moment and then fade into the ghastliness and misery of eternal death?

III. *Extravagance.*—Extravagance has many forms. Sometimes it is seen in the effort to keep a finer house, a larger number of servants, and a more expensive style of living than is warranted by one's income and actual position. This form of extravagance is one to which women are peculiarly tempted. The house is their domain, and they don't like to be cast in the shade by ambitious neighbors. I have known women to make perfect slaves of themselves and worry themselves to death for the sake of keeping up appearances. And for what? Only to keep a footing somewhere on the outer edge of what they call society. To get their sons and daughters eligibly settled. With what result? The children's heads are stuffed with vanity, their hearts with pride. They cannot be mechanics or servants, but must be ladies and gentlemen, and the city is filled with ambitious but discontented clerks and sewing girls, who live from hand to mouth, when with a little less pride and the same amount of labor they might be comparatively happy and independent in those very walks of life which they so heartily despise.

Another form of extravagance is, trying to do a larger business than the actual capital warrants. We see it in large showy buildings, heavy unpaid-for stocks, and the deceptive appearance of a large business. That is the outside; the inside looks rather different. Heavy bills coming due with very little to meet them;—renewals at the bank;—endorsing for other people to get similar favors in return, thus enormously increasing the risk;—debts running up;—creditors put off with promises which are only make-shifts to gain time;—weary days and restless nights, crowned at last with the shame of bankruptcy, or scarcely less disgraceful compromise,—accompanied, perhaps preceded, by efforts to escape the pinch of poverty and to save a little from the wreck by making over something to be held in the wife's name. This process which I have now pictured is not squeezed into a few months, but sometimes runs through years. Do these things look like secular topics more fit for a week night lecture? That is because we have only looked at the secular side. Let us now turn to the other. Even if there were nothing worse than the hurry and fret, the case would be sufficiently serious. The load of debt, the incessant planning and scheming to make ends meet,—these fill the heart and cast out all thought of God. The mind is in such a ferment that it cannot settle down to the quiet study of the word of life.