

2. Defeat at Ai (7:1-26)

“Jericho was now in ruins, and Israel must press on to other victories. Had Jericho been the capital of the land, its fall would have been the signal for a wide submission. But Canaan was broken up into many petty kingdoms, and Jericho with its suburbs was but one of these. So the conquest of Jericho was not final; it left other cities unsubdued; and the first to oppose the march of Israel was the little highland town of Ai.... But if Jericho, which seemed impregnable, had fallen, Ai, which looked an easy capture, stood fast.” [*The Sermon Bible II*, p. 245]

“The story of this chapter begins with a *but*. *The Lord was with Joshua, and his fame was noised through all that country*, so the foregoing chapter ends, and it left no room to doubt but that he would go on as he had begun *conquering and to conquer*. He did right, and observed his orders in every thing. *But the children of Israel committed a trespass*, and so set God against them; and then even Joshua's name and fame, his wisdom and courage, could do them no service. If we lose our God, we lose our friends, who cannot help us unless God be for us.” [*Matthew Henry's Commentary II*, p. 28]

“When the walls of Jericho were fallen, Joshua charged the Israelites but with two precepts; of sparing Rahab's house and of abstaining from that treasure which was anathematized to God; and one of them is broken.... They needed no command to spare no living thing in Jericho; but to spare the treasure, no command was enough...because we are more prone to covet for ourselves, than to pity others.” [Hall I, p. 249]

“Every single soldier in all Israel had heard Joshua's proclamation about Jericho: both what his men were to do till the walls fell, and how they were to demean themselves after the city had been given by God into their hands. But war is war; and the best of commanders cannot make war a silken work, not can he hold down the devil in the hearts of all his men.” [Whyte, *Bible Characters I*, p. 172]

“...Only one, Achan, troubles the peace, and his sin is imputed to Israel. The innocence of so many thousand Israelites is not so forcible to excuse his one sin, as his one sin is to taint all Israel.... Who would not have hoped that the same God which for ten righteous men would have spared the five wicked cities, should not have been content to drown one sin, in the obedience of so many righteous? But so venomous is sin, especially when it lights among God's people, that one dram of it is able to infect the whole mass of Israel.” [Hall I, p. 249-250]

“As at Jericho God had shown Himself merciful to Israel, so now at Ai, because of Achan's sin, He manifests His justice.” [Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 175]

a. **The Sin of Achan** (7:1) Cf. Malachi 3:8-12

“The sin is here said to be *taking of the accursed thing*, in disobedience to the command and in defiance of the threatening, Joshua 6:18. In the sacking of Jericho orders were given that they should neither spare any lives nor take any treasure to themselves; we read not of the breach of the former prohibition (there were none to whom they showed any mercy), but of the latter: compassion was put off and yielded to the law, but covetousness was indulged. The love of the world is that root of bitterness which of all others is most hardly rooted up. Yet the history of Achan is a plain intimation that he of all the thousands of Israel was the only delinquent in this matter.... It is strange there were no more. The temptation was strong. It was easy to suggest what a pity it was that so many things of value should be burnt; to what purpose is this waste? In plundering cities, every man reckons himself entitled to what he can lay his hands on. It was easy to promise themselves secrecy and impunity. Yet by the grace of God such impressions were made upon the minds of the Israelites by the ordinances of God, circumcision and the passover, which they had lately been partakers of, and by the providences of God which had been concerning them, that they stood in awe of the divine precept and judgment, and generously denied themselves in obedience to their God. And yet, though it was a single person that sinned,

the children of Israel are said *to commit the trespass*, because one of their body did it, and he was not as yet separated from them, nor disowned by them” [Matthew Henry’s Commentary II, p. 28]

"How mean was the sin of Achan! He saw the Babylonish garment, and all the soldier in him withered up and he became a sneaking thief." [D. L. Moody, *Notes From My Bible*, (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1895), p. 47-48]

"The story of Ananias is to the book of Acts what the story of Achan is to the book of Joshua. In both narratives an act of deceit interrupts the victorious progress of the people of God.... When...(the author) says that Ananias 'kept back' part of the price (v.2), he uses the same Greek word as is used in the Septuagint of Josh. 7:1 where it is said that the children of Israel (in the person of Achan) 'committed a trespass' by retaining for private use property that had been devoted to God." [F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of Acts*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1954), p. 110]

"In Sierra Leone, the white ants will sometimes occupy a house and eat their way into all the woodwork until every article in the house is hollow so that it will collapse into dust directly it is touched. It is so with this deceitful character, so honeycombed and eaten through, that though for years it may maintain its plausible appearance in the world, few people even suspecting the extent of the inward decay, on a sudden the end will come; there will be one touch of the finger of God, and the whole ill-compacted, worm-devoured thing will crumble into matchwood." [R. F. Horton in *Gray & Adams Bible Commentary I*, p. 574]

"Achan was, I suppose, the pioneer of the 'victimless crime.' Who would be the wiser if he made a little hay from a military campaign? What harm in squirreling away the spoils of a city slated for destruction anyway — a little cloak from Shinar, a few shekels of silver, a bar of gold?" [Andree Seu, "Significance of a little folly," *World*, (May 29, 2004), p. 47]

"When once a man has involved himself deeply in guilt he has no safe ground to stand upon. Everything is unsound and rotten under his feet. He may be hurried, when he least intends it, into enormities of which he once thought himself utterly incapable." [Bishop Porteus in *Gray & Adams Bible Commentary I*, p. 574]

"...You can never sin so privately but that the two witnesses, God and conscience, are always by." [Thomas Watson, *The Lord's Prayer*, (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1692), p. 316]

"When I touch what the Lord bids me not to touch, and keep what He forbids my keeping, and seek after what He would have me avoid, I am as water before my foes, and all my power is emptiness. O my God, every day let me remember Ai." [Amos R. Wells, *The Living Bible: Chapter by Chapter*, (Boston: W. A. Wilde Company, 1955), p. 61]

"The slave who digs in the mine or labors at the oar, can rejoice at the prospect of laying down his burden together with his life; but to the slave of guilt there arises no hope from death." [Blair in *Gray & Adams Bible Commentary I*, p. 574]

b. The Defeat of Israel (7:2-5)

"Men are not merely aggregated together like a pile of cannon balls, but are knit together like the myriad lives in a coral rock. Put a drop of poison anywhere, and it runs by a thousand branching veins through the mass and tints and taints it all." [The Sermon Bible II, p. 246]

"...The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel; he saw the offence, though they did not, and takes a course to make them see it; for one way or other, sooner or later, secret sins will be brought to light; and, if men enquire not after them, God will, and with his enquiries will awaken theirs." [Matthew Henry’s Commentary II, p. 28]

"Joshua sends a detachment to seize upon the next city that was in their way, and that was Ai. Only 3000 men were sent, advice being brought him by his spies that the place was inconsiderable, and needed no greater force for the reduction of it, v. 2, 3." [Matthew Henry’s Commentary II, p. 28]

"There is no experience in the Christian life so full of peril as the hour when we are flushed with recent victory.... We never so need to observe the injunction to 'watch and pray' as when the foe is flying before us." [Meyer, *Joshua*, p. 86]

“It is a true maxim, He finds his enemy strong at a dear rate, who contemns him as weak.” [*The Works of Thomas Brooks II*, (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1861-67), p. 402 n.1]

“Though your enemy is the size of an ant, regard him as an elephant.” [Danish Proverb in *A World Treasury of folk Wisdom* compiled and edited by Reynold Feldman and Cynthia A. Voelke, (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), p. 63]

“Depending on past victories is a good way to guarantee future defeats.” [Wiersbe, *With the Word*, p. 230]

“Never send a battalion to take a hill if you’ve got a division.” [General Dwight D. Eisenhower, 34th US President recalled by Eisenhower biographer Stephen E. Ambrose *New Yorker* 9 Oct 95 in *Simpson’s Contemporary Quotations The Most Notable Quotes Since 1950* edited by James B. Simpson, (HarperCollins Publishers, 1997), #2415]

“**but few**, pop. About 12,000, and therefore could hardly muster 3,000 warriors.” [*Gray & Adams Bible Commentary I*, p. 574]

“With God the means can never be too weak; without him, never strong enough.” [Hall I, p. 251]

“...When the three thousand or thereabouts were repulsed, it was only a just recompense for their confidence and sloth. The Holy Spirit, however, declares that fewness of numbers was not the cause of the discomfiture, and ought not to bear the blame of it. The true cause was the secret counsel of God, who meant to show a sign of his anger, but allowed the number to be small in order that the loss might be less serious. And it was certainly a rare display of mercy to chastise the people gently and without any great overthrow, with the view of arousing them to seek an instant remedy for the evil.” [*Calvin’s Commentaries IV*, p. 105]

““It was not the fewness of their assailants that overthrew them, but the sin that lay lurking at home. If all the host of Israel had set upon this poor village of Ai, they had all been equally discomfited: the wedge of Achan did more fight against them, than all the swords of the Canaanites. The victories of God go not by strength, but by innocence.” [Hall I, p. 251]

“In their retreat they had about thirty-six men cut off: no great loss indeed out of such a number, but a dreadful surprise to those who had no reason to expect any other in any attack than clear, cheap, and certain victory.... *The hearts of the people melted*, not so much for the loss as for the disappointment. Joshua had assured them that *the living God would without fail drive out the Canaanites from before them*, Joshua 3:10. How can this event be reconciled to that promise?” [*Matthew Henry’s Commentary II*, p. 28]

c. **The Prayer of Joshua** (7:6-9)

“He *rent his clothes* (v. 6), in token of great sorrow for this public disaster, and especially a dread of God’s displeasure, which was certainly the cause of it.... The elders of Israel, being interested in the cause and influenced by his example, prostrated themselves with him, and, in token of deep humiliation, *put dust upon their heads*, not only as mourners, but as penitents; not doubting but it was for some sin or other that God did thus contend with them (though they knew not what it was), they *humbled themselves* before God, and thus deprecated the progress of his wrath. This they continued *until even-tide*, to show that it was not the result of a sudden feeling, but proceeded from a deep conviction of their misery and danger if God were any way provoked to depart from them.” [*Matthew Henry’s Commentary II*, p. 29]

“Thus Joshua almost throws the blame on God. He seems to have no idea that it may lie in quite another quarter. And very strangely, he adopts the very tone and almost the language of the ten spies, against which he had protested so vehemently at the time: ‘Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt, or would God we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our ‘wives and our children should be a prey?’ What has become of all your courage, Joshua, on that memorable day? Is this the man to whom God said so lately, ‘Be strong, and of good courage; as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. I will not fail thee nor forsake thee?’ Like Peter on the waters, and like so many of ourselves, he

begins to sink when the wind is contrary, and his cry is the querulous Wail of a frightened child! After all he is but flesh and blood.” [Blaikie, p. 675]

“The first rule of holes: when you're in one, stop digging.” [Molly Ivins in *Reader's Digest*, (August 1993), p. 7]

“When you are about to be swept off your feet, simply slip down on your knees.” [*Pulpit Helps*, (June 2002), p. 11]

“He speaks as one quite at a loss concerning the meaning of this event (v. 8): ‘*What shall I say...when Israel, thy own people, for whom thou hast lately done such great things and to whom thou hast promised the full possession of this land, when they turn their backs before their enemies...when they not only flee before them, but fall before them, and become a prey to them? What shall we think of the divine power? Is the Lord's arm shortened? Of the divine promise? Is his word yea and nay? Of what God has done for us? Shall this be all undone again and prove in vain?*’...

“He pleads the danger Israel was now in of being ruined. He gives up all for lost: ‘*The Canaanites will environ us round, concluding that now our defense having departed, and the scales being turned in their favor, we shall soon be as contemptible as ever we were formidable, and they will cut off our name from the earth.*’ v. 9...

“He pleads the reproach that would be cast on God, and that if Israel were ruined his glory would suffer by it. They will *cut off our name*, says he, yet...it is no great matter ...what becomes of our little name...but *what wilt thou do for thy great name?* this he looks upon and laments as the great aggravation of the calamity. He feared it would reflect on God, his wisdom and power, his goodness and faithfulness; what would the Egyptians say?... *Father, glorify thy name.*” [*Matthew Henry's Commentary II*, p. 29]

“We are in danger of forgetting that we cannot do what God does, and that God will not do what we can do.” [Oswald Chambers in *Awakening-Reach Newsletter*, (October 2003), p. 4]

d. **The Answer of God** (7:10-15)

"We learn little from victory, much from defeat." [Japanese Proverb in *A World Treasury of Folk Wisdom*, p. 136]

“Now it is God’s turn to speak... Why do you turn on Me as if I had suddenly changed, and become forgetful of My promise?.. No wonder if God speak sharply to Joshua, and to us if we go in Joshua’s steps. No wonder if He refuse to be pleased with our prostration, our wringing of our hands and sobbing, and calls us to change our attitude. ‘Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?’

“Then comes the true explanation — “Israel hath sinned.”” [Blaikie, p. 675]

“The answer came immediately, *while he was yet speaking*... God encourages Joshua against...the black and melancholy apprehensions he had of the present posture of Israel's affairs (v. 10): ‘*Get thee up, suffer not thy spirits to droop and sink thus; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?*’... Joshua must get up because he has other work to do than to lie there; the accursed thing must be discovered and cast out... He informs him of the true and only cause of this disaster, and shows him wherefore he contended with them (v. 11): *Israel hath sinned*. ‘Think not that God's mind is changed, his arm shortened, or his promise about to fail; no, it is sin, it is sin, that great mischief-maker, that has stopped the current of divine favors and has made this breach upon you.’ The sinner is not named, though the sin is described” [*Matthew Henry's Commentary II*, p. 30]

“**they were accursed**, as threatened, Jos. vi.18.” [*Gray & Adams Bible Commentary I*, p. 575]

“God almost rebukes Joshua for praying. He gives him back his own ‘wherefore’ in the question that sounds so harsh.” [*The Speaker's Bible I*, p. 247]

“When we have risen, and redressed sin, then ma we fall down for pardon.” [Hall I, p. 252]

"*Get thee up.*" It was time for searching out people's sins, not for suspecting Divine faithfulness.

“No rush to battle atones for sin in the tent.” [G. Campbell Morgan in Moody, *One Thousand and One Thoughts from My Library*, p. 46]

“There were times when God interrupted the prayers of Moses and of Gideon, and in effect said to them, ‘Don’t speak to me about these matters; go and speak to the children of Israel.’ It was not a time for prayer but for action.” [David A. Seamands, *Putting Away Childish Things*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1982), p. 85]

“1. *God’s Indictment* — ‘Israel hath sinned’ (7:11). They have taken that garment which should have been destroyed. They have stolen the silver and gold which was for the Lord. They have dissembled, and hidden the stuff to conceal their sin (Prov. 28:13).

2. *God’s Requirements* — ‘Take away the accursed thing’ (7:13).

A. Full confession was necessary (7:19)

B. Full restitution must be made (7:22-23).

C. Full retribution must be meted out (7:25)

3. *The Sinner’s Confession* ‘I have sinned against the Lord’ (7:20). ‘I saw’... ‘I coveted’... ‘I took!’” [A. Naismith, *2,400 Scripture Outlines, Anecdotes, Notes, & Quotes*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1967), p. 31]

“...Achan never discovering himself till the lot discovered him evidenced the hardness of his heart, and therefore he found no mercy.” [Matthew Henry’s *Commentary* II, p. 31]

“Sin advances by degrees; it seems modest at first: just omit, then it grows bold and bids you commit, and so from omission to commission, until at last the man becomes a man of sin and a son of perdition, a hopeless, desperate, lost and undone man.” [Ralph Venning, *The Plague of Plagues: A Treatise on Sin*, (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1669), p. 249-250]

“The Lord’s outing of Achan is a study in pedagogy: All Israel is gathered together; then a tribe is singled out from the tribes; a clan is singled out from the clans; a family is singled out from the families — till the excruciating threshing lands all eyes on the solitary knee-knocking offender, just a speck in the sea, but a troubler of all Israel. And the lesson of the day is thereby upper-cased and underscored: the unbearable significance of the ‘one.’” [Andree Seu, “Significance of a little folly,” *World*, (May 29, 2004), p. 47]

“The same hope of secrecy, which moved him to sin, moved him to confidence in his sin: but now, when he saw the lot fall upon his tribe, he began to start a little; when upon his family, he began to change countenance; when upon his household, to tremble and fear; when upon his person, to be utterly confounded in himself.” [Hall I, p. 253]

“When a sinner is dying, he becomes aware that this individualizing process is about to take place, and hence the fear which he often feels. He is no longer among the multitude, death is putting him by himself, and God is coming to deal with him by himself. If he could only be hid in the crowd it would not matter, but that searching eye of God — who can stand before it? What will all the excuses or disguises or glosses he can devise avail before Him who ‘sets our iniquities before Him, our secret sins in the light of His countenance’? ‘Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight; for all things are naked, and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.’ Happy, in that hour, they who have found the Divine covering for sin: ‘Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.’” [Blaikie, p. 675-676]

“Be sure as God is in heaven, that He has His eyes upon you, and that your sin will find you out. You think that the darkness will cover you. Wait till you see! Go on sowing as you have begun, and come and tell us when the harvest is reaped how it threshes out and how it tastes.” [Whyte, *Bible Characters* I, p. 175]

“**Be sure your sin will find you out.**” (Numbers 13:23)

e. **The Wages of Sin** (7:16-26)

“And Joshua rose up early in the morning and brought Israel by their tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken; and he brought the family of Judah, and he took the family of Zarhites; and he took the family of the Zarhites, man by man, and Achan of the tribe of Judah was taken. My son, said Joshua, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession to Him; and tell me what thou hast done; hide it not from me.” [Whyte, *Bible Characters* I, p. 172-173]

“...The guilty person was at length fastened upon, and the language of the lot was, *Thou art the man*, v. 18.” [Matthew Henry’s Commentary II, p. 32]

“There was infinite kindness in that word ‘my son.’ It reminds us of that other Joshua, the Jesus of the New Testament, so tender to sinners, so full of love even for those who had been steeped in guilt. It brings before us the Great High Priest, who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, seeing He was in all things tempted like as we are, yet without sin....

“But not only did Joshua speak kindly to Achan, he confronted him with God, and called on him to think how He was concerned in this matter. ‘Give glory to the Lord God of Israel.’ Vindicate Him from the charge which I and others have virtually been bringing against Him, of proving forgetful of His covenant. Clear Him of all blame, declare His Glory, declare that He is unsullied in His perfections, and show that He has had good cause to leave us to the mercy of our enemies.... No man as yet knew what Achan had done. He might have been guilty of some act of idolatry, or of some unhallowed sensuality like that which had lately taken place at Baal-peor; in order that the transaction might carry its lesson, it was necessary that the precise offence should be known. Joshua’s kindly address and his solemn appeal to Achan to clear the character of God had the desired effect.” [Blaikie, p. 677] (Cf. Proverbs 28:13; Psalm 32:3-5)

“Everybody who reads the best books will have long had by heart Thomas à Kempis’s famous description of the successive steps of a successful temptation. There is first the bare thought of the sin. Then, upon that, there is a picture of the sin formed and hung up on the secret screen of the imagination. A strange sweetness from that picture is then let down drop by drop into the heart; and then that secret sweetness soon secures the consent of the whole soul, and the thing is done. That is true, and it is powerful enough. But Achan’s confession to Joshua is much simpler, and much closer to the truth. ‘I saw the goodly Babylonish garment, I coveted it, I took it, and I hid it in my tent.’” [Whyte, *Bible Characters* I, p. 173] Cf. Exodus 20:17; Romans 7:7-13; James 4:1-5; Hebrews 13:5

“*The Progress of Sin*. — I. It enters by the eye. II. It sinks into the heart. III. It actuates the hand. IV. It leads to secrecy and dissimulation.... Thus saith James: ‘When lust (evil desire) is conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and when sin is finished, it bringeth forth death.’” [Clarke in *Gray & Adams Bible Commentary* I, p. 575]

“See the *deceitfulness of sin*; that which is pleasing in the commission is bitter in the reflection; at the last it bites like a serpent. Particularly, see what comes of ill-gotten goods, and how those will be cheated that rob God. Job 20:15, *He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again.*” [Matthew Henry’s Commentary II, p. 33]

“It would appear...that Achan’s family must have been accomplices in his sin; for the stolen spoil could hardly have been concealed in his tent without their being privy thereto. — *Bib. Com.* in *Gray & Adams Bible Commentary* I, p. 575]

“God had convicted him by the lot; he had convicted himself by his own confession; but, that no room might be left for the most discontented Israelite to object against the process, Joshua has him further convicted by the searching of his tent, in which the goods were found which he confessed to. Particular notice is taken of the haste which the messengers made that were sent to search: They *ran to the tent* (v. 22...to show how uneasy they were till the camp was cleared of the accursed thing, that they might regain the divine favor.” [Matthew Henry’s Commentary II, p. 33]

“...By confession justice may be glorified, but not satisfied.” [The Complete Works of Thomas Manton IV, p. 457]

“Achan’s sin has found him out, and he suffers its bitter doom. All his visions of comfort and enjoyment to be derived from his unlawful gain are rudely shattered. The pictures he has been drawing of what he will do with the silver and the gold and the garment are forever dispersed. He has brought disaster on the nation, and shame and ruin on himself and his house. In all coming time, he must stand in the pillory of history as the man who stole the forbidden spoil of Jericho. That disgraceful deed is the only thing that will ever be known of him. Further, he has sacrificed

his life. Young though he is, his life will be cut short, and all that he has hoped for of enjoyment and honor will be exchanged for a horrible death and an execrable memory. O sin, thou art a hard master! Thou draggest thy slaves, often through a short and rapid career, to misery and to infamy!" [Blaikie, p. 678]

"Joshua passes sentence upon him (v. 25): *Why hast thou troubled us?*... He refers to what was said when the warning was given not to meddle with the accursed thing (Joshua 6:18), *lest you make the camp of Israel a curse and trouble it*... See why Achan was so severely dealt with, not only because he had robbed God, but because he had troubled Israel... This therefore is his doom: *God shall trouble thee*." [Matthew Henry's Commentary II, p. 33]

"Why hast thou troubled us? Demanded Joshua of Achan. The Lord shall trouble thee this day. The Lord troubled Achan in judgment that day..." [Whyte, *Bible Characters* I, p. 176]

"**valley of Achor**, *trouble*, now Wady-el-Kelt." [Gray & Adams Bible Commentary I, p. 575]

"It is the day of judgment, and the great white throne is set in the Valley of Achor before its proper time." [Whyte, *Bible Characters* I, p. 175]

"...Joshua had no choice.... Joshua was a man under authority. And Achan had to die. But the point and the proper end of the whole story to us is this: that a greater than Joshua is here. Joshua bore a Name greater than his own, but that only brings out all the better the blessed contrast between Achan and you. Make a clean breast of it, then. Go home to your tent tonight, take up the accursed thing out of its hiding-place, and lay it out before Joshua... Lay it out and say, — Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done. And if you do not know what more to say, if you are speechless beside that accursed thing, try this; say this. Ask and say, Is thy Name indeed Jesus? Dost thou indeed save found-out men from their sins? Art thou still set forth to be a propitiation? Art thou truly able to save to the uttermost? For I am the chief of sinners.... And then say this, —

The dying thief rejoiced to see
That Fountain in his day —

And see what the true Joshua will stand over you and say to you." [Whyte, *Biblical Characters* I, p. 176]

"It seemed appropriate that poor Achan should suffer at the very place where others had suffered on his account. It is subsequently referred to three times in Scripture. Later in this book it is given as part of the northern boundary of the tribe of Judah (Joshua 15:7); in Isaiah (Isaiah 45:10) it is referred to on account of its fertility; and in Hosea (Hosea 2:15) it is introduced in the beautiful allegory of the restored wife, who has been brought into the wilderness, and made to feel her poverty and misery, but of whom God says, 'I will give her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope.' The reference seems to be to the evil repute into which that valley fell by the sin of Achan, when it became the valley of trouble. For, by Achan's sin, what had appeared likely to prove the door of access for Israel into the land was shut; a double trouble came on the people — partly because of their defeat, and partly because their entrance into the land appeared to be blocked. In Hosea's picture of Israel penitent and restored, the valley is again turned to its natural use, and instead of a scene of trouble it again becomes a door of hope, a door by which they may hope to enter their inheritance. It is a door of hope for the penitent wife, a door by which she may return to her lost happiness. The underlying truth is, that when we get into a right relation to God, what were formerly evils become blessings, hindrances are turned into helps. Sin deranges everything, and brings trouble everywhere. The ground was cursed on account of Adam: not literally, but indirectly, inasmuch as it needed hard and exhausting toil, it needed the sweat of his face to make it yield him a maintenance. 'We know,' says the Apostle, 'that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.' 'For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered out of the bondage of corruption into the

glorious liberty of the children of God.’ No man can tell all the ‘trouble’ that has come into the world by reason of sin. As little can we know the full extent of that deliverance that shall take place when sin comes to an end. If we would know anything of this we must go to those passages which picture to us the new heavens and the new earth: ‘in the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.’” [Blaikie, p. 679-680]

“Look at your Bible again, and see. ‘And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the Valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for the people that have sought Me.’ And again, — ‘And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the Valley of Achor for a door of hope; and she shall sing there, as in the day of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.’” [Whyte, *Bible Characters* I, p. 176-177]