"Some men's sins are manifest, going before to judgment: And some men they follow after."

1 Timothy V. 24.

The special intention of St. Paul in these and the foregoing words, was to guide Timothy in the high and dangerous work of obtaining pastors for the flock of Christ. But we are not always on the context in which we read them: for they illustrate a great law in God's kingdom, and describe an awful fact in the administration of His perfect justice. Some men are open and proclaim sinners. They stand in the face of the Church, and in the sight of God, self-acquitted, condescend, and blunder. Their sins go before them, as heralds, appraisers, and witnesses carrying the whole history of guilt, with all its circumstances and evidence, before the judgment seat of Christ. The whole life of an open sinner is the
justiciable proceeding of a high criminal to the
far. It has the prowess and solemnity of
death about it. The Church casts him forth
from her Altars and from her tribunals.
Iniquitous deeds against him by a common
injustice. Even before the sentence of formal
excommunication, he is visibly cut off from
the mystical body of the Lord Jesus. And
what is bound on Earth is bound in heaven.
It is the fiercer and visible symbol of the
last great award. Such were the deeds of
apostates and of presumpfuous sinners in the
flesh or spirit, and of the authors of heresies
and schisms. The whole history of the Church
is marked by a line of open and bipersed
offenders, who have lifted up their heel against
the Lord, and crucified their souls unto
themselves. In the great conflict of good
and evil, they seem to bear a special
office: so that the manifestation of their is the
of the collateral mysteries of the regeneration
and perfection of Saints.
Moreover as we see it of old, the visible Church
holds still within its outward pale thousands
whose lives are their own condemnation; as in
Philip. — "For many walk, of whom I have told you often (and now tell youweepingly) that they
are enemies of the Cross of Christ." These are
they whose "Sins are manifest"; they need us
judging them, not only as a process of conviction.
Their Sins go before to judgment; sent forward
to prepare a place on the left hand of the
Judge in that great day.
"And some men they follow after." That is to
say, these are seen all fair without, but within
full of disguised and deadly evil. Though
in their life they be nearer yet to Heaven,
yet in the sight of God whose eyes are as a
flame of fire, they are haunted and beset
with guilt. Secret lusts long cherished,
Often indulged, stealthily偷换 charge upon, deep
subtle intentions, pursued under a cloak of
some high profession, pretense, and Complete
thus, is mixed up with the deluge of common
life as to escape detection. But it does not
apply only to those grosser forms of lies.
There are men who pass for faithful Christians,
this have free access to the Societies of the
Church; to its offices of worship, its sacra-
ments and benefactions. They unite in the
fellowship of the absent and present; they
kneel at the altar; they join in acts of
highest Communion. They seem fair and
harmless; there is no stain, not so much
as a spot visible upon them. To our eyes
they are not "far from the kingdom of God."
As they grow old, they grow in reputation.
They are in honor, and are in high estima-
tion among the faithful. They go to meet their
Judge; but their "trains follow after." All
Through life there has followed these unseen and
strong of sins, concealed, unrepealed, or forgotten. The sins of childhood, boyhood, youth,
and manhood, follow on, gathering in number,
guilt, intensity; every age bringing in its own
measure of characteristic sins; every year its
transgressions, every day its provocations;
Sins of need and thought, of desire and imagina-
tion, of casual self-indulgence and rational
neglect; sins against conscience and light,
against pleadings of grace, and stirrings of
the Spirit; breaches of resolutions; contradictions
of solemn confession before God; relapses
after partial repentance; all these mounting
up till from their bulk they spread beyond
the field of sight, and from their magnitude
become invisible. This perhaps, may seem
to be an extreme case. Would to God it were
so. But it be believed that this is no incident
from distance, not only in people this life
without God in the world, but also in those whose character is in many ways religious. Every one confesses it to be true of hypocrites or clandestine sinners; but we are now speaking of higher and more hopeful cases. What I have described will, on being analyzed, be found to be more or less the case of multitudes. For instance, this is really the state of thousands who have never suspected the possibility of their being in such a condition. They have fallen into it, because they never suspected it to be possible. There is nothing we are more apt to take for granted, than the theory of our acceptance before God. It is disagreeable to think ill of ourselves, the are evidences of God's intentions; we feel to desire the highest and holiest state. It is both fearful and painful to us; after having our conscience as well as our pride is
Lest, and we comfort ourselves as soon as we can, by thoughts of repentance, and by turning to the better side of our character. In this way people get into a habit of covering themselves. They shrink from sincere and deeper truths; throw all high standards; keep aloof from the light; and never suspect—as, indeed how—can they?—the evidence of the evil of which they are unconscious. They believe themselves to be what they know they are not. What they are able to discern, they take to be their whole state before God. Although at times particular faults distress them, yet their habitual consciousness is of the favourable interpretation which men put upon their outward life. What they are in God's sight they have never suspected, because they have no standard to ascertain, no tests to detect it.

Or, to take another example. This is also the state of those who have never, since they came
to the full power of reflection, made a real examination of their past life. The sins of our early years are but imperfectly perceived at the time. It is only by retrospect, and in the fuller light of a matured conscience, that their true character is duly estimated.

The infirmities of the soul exist not only in the specific vice of each particular act, but in the whole of our case before God; in our relation to Him. His holiness, compassion, and long-suffering; in His dealings with us, and our ingratitude, coldness, insensibility to return. Truly to know what we are before God, we must take our whole life, with its context, and read it in the light of God's love and providential care. Guilt is a complex thing; a balance of many particulars in God's part and our ours. It is our sins multiplied by His Mercies; our transgressions by His gifts of light and grace.
As another example, we may take those who are without daily self-examination. It is impossible for such persons to escape self-deception. They become simply and sincerely ignorant of themselves. It is perfectly impossible to carry in mind the long unbalance, sustained account of many years, or even of one year alone. It is true in every thing, that neglect in detail is confusion in the whole. Such that are not noted at the time slip out of sight; they pass behind each other. Said two are upon another, and become foreshortened, so as to hide all but the last of the whole chain. A lesson in which is nearer will hide that greater if they be farther off; a thousand will hide his hundred and. The whole retrospect of a life becomes narrowed and shrunk up with the recollection of a few months or days. All that is past goes for nothing; it is as if it had not existed. Yea, were it if it were really
so before God; if our forgetfulness could but the
debt of His remembrance, if what we cease to
remember were forgotten before the Judge of Quick
And dead.
Now of all such as these, St. Paul says that their
sins "follow after." Let us see what it means.
I. It means that all sins have their proper
chastisement; which however long delayed
and seemingly deserted, will, as a general,
Law, sooner or later, overtake the sinner.
I say all sins because chastisement follows
often even before sins that are repented of, as
in the case of David; and I say also as a
general law, because it seems sometimes
that God in His tender compassion, to induce
Cases, does hold back the chastisement of
Hisрод only ways y pecu lar oversight produces
make perfect the humiliation of particular patients.
It is certain that there are such exceptions.
No doubt they have their portion of the Cross.
in other and inestimable ways, which make the scales weigh even. In them, the Cross does the work of the Law.

Nevertheless these exceptions are more breach the general rule, than the translation of Jacob and Joseph repeats the sentence of death on Sin. Our sins follow us by the rod of chastisement. Meat. As the sins of the fathers upon the children, so the sins of childhood upon youth, and youth are after years. How little did we know what we were laying up for ourselves. How little did we think at that day, in the hour of our transgression: This will find me out when I am at middle life, or in my old age. Though it carry leisure so long, it will come at last. And how few, when they are visited, lay it to heart and say: This is the rod of this sickness is the first chastisement following upon the sins of my life past. These are the scourges of God, which have
followed me afar off, and now have overtake
t me. "Thou wilt conceit things against me,
and wilt continue evil for the sins of thy
youth."  
2. Again, past sins follow after sinners in the
active power by which they still keep a hold
on their present state of heart.
It is one of the worst effects of sin, that, after
conversion, it clings to the soul. Every
sine leaves some deposit in the spiritual
nature. It quickens the original root of
evil; it multiplies and unfoils its manifold
corruption. And worst of all, it brings
on a deadness, and an insensibility of the
spiritual nature. The most dangerous
part of sin is its deceitfulness. Sin
can hide itself from the conscience. It
is most concealed at its highest pitch
of strength. When at this worst, it is least
perceived. Death deals like mortifying wounds

1 Sam. XIII. 26
Save little sensible pain. The cause of most
besetting sins, and of most sinful inclinations
in after life is the indulgence of particular
desires in youth or childhood. Pride, Vanity,
Selfishness, Contempt, Wrath, Ego, Stupid-
ness, and other base sins, are the consequence
of the following of early transgressions. They
follow us in their moral deterioration. It is
so also with the coldness, insensibility, indiffer-
tion, of which people complain. Some sin is for-
ed or forgotten, and because forgotten, there
are unrepeated, lies festering in the dark;
and the whole character suffers in all its parts
and powers. It is this that obstructs the
whole spiritual life; thrusts itself between the
Soul and the presence of God; bars up the door
of grace; turns the bread of life into a stone;
makes the tree wither, seem to be a dead
branch; and the Communion of Christ's Saints
to be cold and destitute. It is cold to us
And we think it cold in itself. Fire has no heat to the dead. Christ and we mightily work among the unbelieving. Our Early this of self-willfulness, irreligence, self-worship, have followed us. As shadows they fell upon our path, And darken our hearts, though the light about us "be resplendent as the light of seven days". Temptations cast us down, because within us they have somewhat that is in secret league with them. The world处处ures us, because, in times past we have wandered after it and worshipped it. Our present falls, infirmities, Spiritual Struggles, affections, and dangerous inclinations, are for the most part the sins of our past life, following us in chastisement, and clearing us of diseases and temptations.

3. And further, whether or no this follow in chastisement now, they will surely
Overtake us in the judgment. "And thou, 
Know ye, 
That your sin shall overtake you." This is 
The inflexible destiny of sinners. Secret as 
They may be in this life, all shall be laid 
Open before men and angels in the great 
Account. Hidden things shall come forth 
To confound the hypocrite, despised line to 
condemn the impenitent. The long quest of 
Sin pursuing, the guilty shall be judged 
before the great white throne. All earth 
Shall be torn off from all faces there; and we shall 
Be seen not as we show ourselves, but as 
We are. It will be a fearful meeting between 
A sinner and his holy self; when his true 
Self shall confront his false; and the malice 
Of his sins shall clamour in every side. 
Such must our day be the doom of the 
Most successful hypocrite of the fairest 
And least suspected sinner.

So likewise with the self ignorant, neglectful,

I Numbers xxxii. 23.
self-deceiving. Sin is they have so forgotten, as never truly to repent of, shall be their gathered in array. This is the chief sign of Spiritual Laziness. Slothful Christians never really grapple with their sins. They take refuge in the generalities of infirmity, and in set forms of prayer. All their faults may be softened, but no one temper is really mortified. The moral deterioration as fast as they acquiesce in an insubstantial and believe to be beyond all cure in this life, trusting that God will somehow cleanse them. Their whole inward being is entangled and clouded; no convictions are fully formed, no truths fully recognized; they are neither cold nor hot, neither holy nor unholy, perfect nor imperfect; but in that fearful middle state for which judgment and eternity have no middle above.
This can say what is the burden of sin which rests upon the forgetful, neglectful, complacent, unremedial soul? What a crowd of forgotten sins shall follow the unwary Christian to the judgment! The great mass of Christians are neither diligent, nor deliberate, nor useful; and in that mass how much insincerity, how much false confidence, how much self-deceit! "Strangers have assailed his strength, and he knew it not; yea, gray hairs also are spread abroad upon his ruin, and he is ignorant of it." ¹ "Go to you that are wealthy in Sion," ² "Some men's sins are manifest, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after." ³ Some men go down unwillingly to the grave; and "his house shall be filled with the treasures of his youth, and they shall sleep with kine in the dust." ³

What sign then, have we to show that our sins are not following close upon us until used? These are only two conditions on which

¹ Dece. vii. 9. ² Amos vi. 1. ³ Acts xxii.
we can be set free from this fearful pursuit of sin.

Better that we have never fallen from our filial obedience, since God, in Holy Baptism, made us to be His children; or that having fallen, we have, by a conscious and sincere repentance, aright and cast ourselves at the foot of the Cross. Who is there that will say, that since Baptism he has not fallen if there be any, blessed and holy and they joys of the first resurrection, or there the second death hath no power, neither of they purpose, ever shall have.

But where are they? Then, if we cannot hear their voices, can we say that we have, by a deliberate course of self-examination and Confession, entered upon a life of repentance? It was our money, for the sake of those who after Baptism fell into deadly sin, that the Lord Jesus Christ left in His Church the power
of reconciliation.

1. The first great end of this power was, openly to restore to peace both with God and the Church, those who had fallen from the peace openly and publicly given to them in their regeneration. And thus the Church of England every year declares in the communion service for so we declare it truly, but openly testify our desire that it may, for the health of souls, be restored.

This power of spiritual discipline bestowed on the Church by our Lord Jesus Christ, is inalienable. However bound down by worldly bonds, and entangled by the course of our secular state, so as to be for a time suspend from acting, there must ever rest an imperishable power of judging and chastening sinners now in this life, that their souls “may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” It is indeed meet to be ordered that this power...
discipline of repentance were restored. Thousands who, in days of civil war and more living faith, would have been chastised into penitents, now hide the corruptions which fester inwardly, and die in their sins. It is the flock that perishes when the shepherd's staff is broken.
In this luxurious time of unchasteness fancied, it is to be feared that multitudes "lie in the hell like sheep," and "death gnaweth upon them," for lack of the loving severity and the sincere tenderness of discipline.

2. But though the first need of this power of absolution be the public reconciliation of sinners, yet there is another equally important, equally, Nay more, if possible, more blessed, and full of Divine compassion upon fallen Christians, and that is the private absolution to which the Church, in the name of Christ, invites all who cannot quit their own conscience before God.
The unbelief and unkindness of the world may succeed outward discipline, but the inward consolations of repenting Christians are beyond its reach. It cannot direct itself between repentant souls and the pastor who bears the sacred key.

In days when there was more power in faith, more fire in love, more holiness in repentance, many of us who pass to God for unwatched would have earnestly prayed to receive the yoke of a voluntary penance. How do you know that your lives may be following you now? Many are hemmed in by these and know it not. Guilt hangs upon them keen they are not aware. Forgotten sins, though slow, are sure of foot. How have you assured yourselves that the seeds of childhood, youth, or of your loose self-indulgence, and carefree manhood, are just away? They do not trouble you. But security is no sign of safety. Your conscience is not hardened.
But that does not show that they are taken away. Forgotten sins cannot burden us. This easily seen in the twilight of a dull heart give little trouble. Insensibility is proof against disagi : unconsciousness leaves no room for confession. To be free from blame is no sign of true repentance. There cannot be lesser dignity than these. It may be you will desire upon a death-bed, or in the foresight of death, approaching, something more than your own self-absolution. To assure you there is no train of sins still following you to judgment. Are you so sure that you can make this mistake to this? And what if you be insincere? What if at your passing hour, you wake up under the flood of eternal light, and see yourself all soiled and spotted with forgotten unrepented sins? We can make this mistake but once: and what a doom hangs upon that once! It better
the thousandfold is all humiliation, all bitterness, all shame, a whole life of persecution, a whole age of sorrow in this present time, that to recur into so much as a shadow of peril, lest death should first reveal to us their one eternal mistake.

Now for wiser in their generations are the children of this world! Who dressed his own wounds, or plays the physician to his own fevered pulse? Who is his own pleased in a charge of life or death? Who conceal his himself even in the vilest matters?

And yet for the healing of the soul, and for the judgment after death, we are all supremely valued. Glad for us! If a mistake can be

Her twin, here is one upon the threshold; a mistake fraught with eternal perils; the for trying it may be of that mistake which is everlasting. It is in pity and tenderness to the infirmities of ignorance and fear, that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed to His pastors the keys of His heavenly kingdom. He has by
The Spirit gives His pastors to the church that they may be the guides of sinners, and safeguards against self deceit. It is a design and losing appointment of the Good Shepherd, for after He has marked us for His own, we may still perish by our own self-guidance. Happy are they who from early childhood have been under a pastor’s care; who have been closely restrained from the blind and deadly wanderings of sin. What makes men so unwilling to accuse themselves before God, in the hearing of His servants, but that long years of self-guidance or rather of self-deceit have heaped up a multitude of sins before which their hearts are away for fear and shame? The longer they keep silence, the harder it will be to speak at last. Happy they whom early guidance has kept from the shame by keeping them from sin. But happy only in the next degree are they to whom God
in His love gives grace to break the proud or hardy silence of their hearts by a full confession.

Now what are the pleas that people make for keeping aloof from the office of mercy? They are only two. One is to say, "My conscience is not burdened." But how do you know your conscience ought not to be burdened? Are you the best, the most discerning, the most impartial judge? May not this very feeling be your own eternal mistake.

The other plea is, "Repeat, and all sins are forgiven to a penitent." Yes, but their touched the very quick. Are you so sure you do repent? Is it so easy to be a penitent, that you can forego the office of grace especially obtained for penitents? Are you so sure that your repentance is not the repentance of fear, that it is perfect in its extent, that it is perfect in its spirit: that it is the sorrow of pure love; that you have made restitution?
in kind and in measure; that your confessions are without speculations, and your self-accusation without self-interest? Are you sure of all this? Then you have one great reason to distrust yourself; I mean, because you are so sure. If you were less satisfied, you might be surer; because you are so sure you have most reason for mistrusting.

Why leave any room for danger in a relic so great? Make all doubly sure. Act if you please to know yourself, and to lay yourself open with a full and true confession. Make the revelation of your sin, which, after all, must come upon the unwilling at the last day, to be now your free and penitential choice. Anticipate a shadow of the confusion which must cover all faces when all hidden things shall be brought to light before men and angels. Let us
not deceive ourselves because we are not our
selves, let us not be too secure. "Some men's
laws are manifest, going before to judgment
And some men they follow after." Healthily
and surely, like weaknesses, cleaving to the whole
man—wearing as we wear—dwellings where
we abide—mysterious and inscrutable.
Let us never believe ourselves to be secure
till we have washed the feet that were bound
for us with the tears of a loving, purifying
sorrow. Let us make haste to accuse ourselves
at the foot of the Cross. Neither our lives cannot
follow us. There only can we be safe from
this pursuit. But let us not cheat ourselves
by an imaginary conversion or by a work
repentance. If you touch the Cross it will leave
its mark upon you. If you bear no fruit of the
Cross, be sure that you have never touched it yet.
Sorrow, humility, self-reliance, a tender conscience,
and spirit of love these are the fruits of the Cross.
Sins, "the print of the nails, and the pledges of our pardon. Slack not your repentance, till you have made these your own."