



The Seven Deadly Sins

Rev. James Stalker D.D.

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The Seven Deadly Sins was written by The Rev. James Stalker, D.D., Professor of Church History, United Free College, Aberdeen. This book was published in London in 1902. (172 pages)

The Publisher has copy-edited this book to improve the formatting, style and accuracy of the text to make it readable. This did not involve changing the substance of the text.

Preface:

.....As the subject of this book may, by its novelty in Protestant religious literature, attract the attention of preachers desirous of leading their flocks to fresh fields and pastures new, it may be mentioned that its history, as a theological topic, is given in ZÖCKLER'S *Das Lehrstück von den Sieben Hauptsünden*, and that each of the seven sins is discussed with great acuteness and comprehensiveness in AQUINAS' *Summa (Secunda Secundæ)*. The order varies in different writers; I have adopted that of the scholastic catchword SALIGIA, composed of the initial letters of the words Superbia, Avaritia, Luxuria, Invidia, Gula, Ira, Accidia.

JAMES STALKER.

GLASGOW, March 1901.

Contents:

Chapter 1 Pride, Chapter 2 Avarice, Chapter 3 Luxury, Chapter 4 Envy, Chapter 5 Appetite, Chapter 6 Anger, Chapter 7 Sloth.

Excerpts:

.....It may not seem obvious that pride is the primary sin; but this has been the pretty unanimous conclusion of those who have investigated the subject most deeply; and it will reward any one to think out for himself the reasons why they have come to this conclusion. It will be remembered that this was the first sin of which we have any knowledge, for it was pride through which the angels fell; and the outstanding feature of the character of the leader of the angels in that tragic drama, as Milton has depicted it, is arrogance. 'Better,' he cries, 'to reign in hell than serve in heaven.' In like manner, the sin of our first parents, which has brought woe to all their descendants, was pride; for the tempter whispered to them, 'Ye shall be as gods.' Besides, if any one reflect, he will perceive that in no other sin is the very essence of all sin so concentrated. The essence of sin is selfishness, and pride is the inordinate assertion of self; it would annihilate others, and it disdains to be prescribed to even by God.

.....The Latin name for pride, superbia, means aiming at what is above, and Chaucer says that the proud man is he who will always be swimming aloft. But the mere desire of what is above us is not pride. Not to desire what is above us would be not to desire any kind of improvement. Those, indeed, who aim at excellence will always be exposed to the charge of pride, but the accusation may be groundless. A learned man cannot help being aware that he knows many things which an ignorant man does not; and by the latter it may be supposed that he must be proud on this account: but the increase of knowledge may, on the contrary, be making him every day more humble. In a promiscuous company, if a woman refuses to join in an uncomely

game, she will be reproached as proud; but her maidenly modesty is really beautiful and virtuous. It is impossible to display any constancy or zeal in religion without being accused of pride, as if one considered oneself better than one's neighbors; indeed, there are those who call every one who will not join with them in riot and excess a Pharisee and a hypocrite, without more ado: but God himself has said, 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate.' There is such a thing as proper pride; and, when an accusation of pride is brought, the accuser requires to be judged as well as the accused.

.....In pride, justly so called, there is always an element of falsehood. It is a claim to merits which are not possessed; or, if we possess them at all, we deceive ourselves and attempt to deceive others as to the degree in which we possess them. We deny and ignore the claims of others, in order that our own may be pre-eminent.

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