

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

ARTICLE II.

ADDITION TO THE SUM OF REVELATION, FOUND
IN THE BOOK OF ESTHER.BY PROFESSOR GEORGE O. LITTLE, D.D.,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

IN his "Seven Puzzling Bible Books," Dr. Gladden, commenting on the Book of Esther, quotes approvingly the words of "the learned, judicious Professor Sanday": "It has often been pointed out that it does not even mention the name of God and *it adds nothing to the sum of revelation.*" Professor Paton¹ says: "The book is so conspicuously lacking in religion, that it never should have been included in the Canon of the Old Testament. The author believes that there is a God, but he has no consciousness of his nearness. He alone of all writers in the Old Testament ascribes deliverance to men." Against these and similar negative views, I wish to present a positive one, putting the word *something* in the place of Professor Sanday's *nothing*, and to affirm that it adds to the sum of revelation *something* most practical and helpful, both in what is taught and in the unique way of teaching it. If I succeed in upholding this positive view, I feel sure that it will also become apparent, that the omission of even the name of God is so in accord with, and essential to, the purpose and plan of the book, that it is to be commended and not condemned.

Professor Moulton, in his "Literary Study of the Bible"

¹L. B. Paton, art. "Esther" in A Standard Bible Dictionary; see also his volume on Esther in International Critical Commentary.

(p. 236), says in his opening sentence about Esther, that it is "the most elaborate of these Epic Histories." "This, in addition to every other element of interest, has what may be called a double plot: two distinct trains of events, centring around Esther herself and Mordecai respectively, are woven together into a complex story."

I fully agree in the idea of the *double plot*, so generally overlooked, for it coincides with an interpretation which I had given many years ago, but I disagree in regard to the two persons named. Instead of Esther and Mordecai, I put Haman and Mordecai.

In the first two chapters, we have a graphic portrayal of King Ahasuerus, and of Esther the cousin of a certain Jew Mordecai, by whom she had been brought up, who was made queen in the place of the deposed Queen Vashti, and who, in obedience to Mordecai, had not made known her people or her kindred. The complex story of this epic begins with the third chapter. We see, first, Haman suddenly promoted and advanced to a seat above all the princes, and all the king's servants commanded to bow down unto him and to do him reverence. We see, next, the Jew Mordecai, alone of all, refusing to do this, not only at the first, but persisting daily in the refusal, in spite of the warning of the king's servants, seemingly as conscientious in his actions as was Daniel in praying with windows open toward Jerusalem, and as regardless of results, for so doing. The wrathful Haman, when told of it, "thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone"; but "sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai."

This brings us to the *acts of Haman*. These and the *counter acts of Mordecai* constitute the two crucial points in the

unique narrative, which resemble the two foci of an ellipse, from which the sum of the distances is always a constant. Haman betrays no doubt about his getting the royal decree, but, being superstitious, he is in doubt about the certainty of desired results from the decree, when gotten; and he is so superstitious, that *even before he goes to the king to ask for the decree*, he wants to be made sure about the lucky day of the month, and the lucky month of the year, for the issue and execution of the decree, when he gets it. To find out this lucky day and month, he appeals to what he believes to be a supernatural power, namely *LUCK*, by having cast before him in the first month, which is the month Nisan, Pur, that is the lot, from day to day and month to month, to the twelfth month, Adar. In this appeal, the lot indicated the thirteenth day and the twelfth month. Haman went to the king, and obtained the royal decree for the destruction of all Jews of every age and sex, and on the thirteenth day of the *first month*, had the king's scribes put it in writing, and sent by posts unto all the king's provinces, to be executed on the thirteenth day of the *twelfth month*. Had he not been superstitious, he could have named an early day for its execution, before anything could have been done to defeat it; but as a believer in *LUCK*, as a supernatural power, he had let the casting of Pur, the lot, decide it, and in obedience to its decision, he is obliged to *wait* eleven long months, and so to *await* whatever may transpire in those eleven months to defeat it.

This view of the matter is taken by Professor Moulton in his "Modern Reader's Bible" (p. 1560) in his comments on iii. 7: "This is an artistic touch in the construction of the narrative which should not be overlooked. Haman is a fatalist; and this makes the swinging round of destiny against

him more emphatic." And again (p. 1383) he says, in the closing sentence of his Introduction of the Book of Esther: "The story concludes picturesquely in the 'Feast of Lots,' in which will be ever commemorated how Providence disposed where the Chance of the lot had proposed, and used as its providential instrument the fidelity of Mordecai and the girlish beauty of Esther."

Dr. Gladden treats the matter as one of no special importance. After stating that the "king yielded to Haman's prayer and the fatal decree was issued to take effect eleven months from date," he adds, "The date of massacre was fixed by lots," just as if the casting of the lot had followed and not preceded the obtaining of the decree, and so was only an afterthought, to fix the date of the execution and not also of the issue of the decree. Later on he makes the statement, "This is said to be the origin of the Feast of Purim."

Professor Paton comments on the casting of Pur, that is, the lot, "It is unlikely that the *trivial circumstance* of the way in which Haman determined the day of destruction should give its name to the day of deliverance." I maintain that Haman's act in having Pur, that is, the lot, cast before him, from day to day and from month to month, in the first month, which is the month Nisan, is placed *first and foremost* as *fundamental* to the understanding of the plan and purpose of the book. Professor Paton in his characterization of the act as a *trivial circumstance* makes it merely *incidental*. I hold that to do this is to lose sight of one of the two distinct trains of events, centering around Haman and Mordecai, that are woven together in this complex story, and so to fail to grasp the plan and purpose of the book. Mordecai's giving, in the twelfth month, the name Purim to the

glorious victory of the Jews and the annual feast in celebration of it, in satirical reference to the defeat of Pur, on which Haman relied in his appeal to Luck, shows marked unity of design.

As the name which Mordecai gives to the feast at the end portrays the gladness of the joyful outcome, his first action in the beginning portrays his dread for the fearful outlook. Let us look now at the counter acts of Mordecai. As Haman had gone to the king to obtain the decree, Mordecai naturally turns to the queen as the only one through whom he can hope to secure a reversal of it. He parades in sackcloth and ashes before the king's gate. When this was told to Esther she called for her chamberlain Hathach, and "charged him to go to Mordecai to know what this was, and why it was." Mordecai gives him a copy of the decree to show to the queen, and "to charge her to go in unto the king and to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him, for her people." She returns answer, showing that it will be almost certain death for her to go in unto the king uncalled, especially as she had not "been called to come in unto the king these thirty days." In Mordecai's second message to Esther, he shows his courage of conviction in his outreaching faith in a superior rival supernatural power, upon which he stakes all, as strongly and firmly as Haman did on *Luck*, namely, *Providence*. There is no uncertain sound in his assurance to Queen Esther, for, after warning her "not to think she will escape in the king's house more than all the Jews," he affirms and asserts: "FOR if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then will relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place" (iv. 13, 14). However uncertain he is about the means to be used, the final result is to him a fixed

certainty. But still holding to the belief that it will be attained through her, he puts the solemn question, "Who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Dr. Gladden thus comments: "By one of Mordecai's remarks — 'Who knoweth whether thou are not come to the kingdom for such a time as this' — a belief in Providence is suggested." It seems to me a very shallow and superficial insight into the terrible crisis, and intense solemnity of the occasion, when life and death hung in the balance upon her decision, not only for the two actors in the drama, but for the whole Jewish people, that Mordecai's soul-searching question should be *minimized* as an aside *remark*, and its meaning *dwarfed* as a passing *suggestion*. Professor Paton comments thus: "Here, as elsewhere, the author goes out of his way to avoid mentioning the name of God, and Esther's reply, 'I will go in unto the king, which is not according to law, and if I perish, I perish,' is a despairing expression of resignation to the inevitable. No religious enthusiasm lights up Esther's resolve, she goes as one would submit to an operation, because there is a chance to escape death that way." I agree with Professor Paton that here, as elsewhere, the author goes out of his way not to mention the name of God; but I hold that he has his satisfactory reasons for so doing, and that this and other like omissions are essential to the purpose and plan of the book, and so are worthy of commendation instead of condemnation.

Mordecai takes Haman's appeal to the supernatural power of *LUCK* as a challenge, which he accepts and makes a like appeal to another and to him superior supernatural power, namely Providence. And when he makes Esther understand this, by his assurance of his belief in relief and deliverance

that will certainly arise from another place if she altogether holdest her peace, and by his personal question to her as to her responsible part in it, she at once falls in with it, for the good of her people, even if she perish in the effort. Never again in the story does she hold back in word or deed, but she enters into it with her whole heart. It seems to be overlooked that the acceptance of a challenge to a trial test between rival supernatural powers prevented either Mordecai or Esther from bringing in God as a person, either by mention of his name or by a recorded prayer to him. Haman had no person to speak of or to pray to in his appeal to Luck, and Mordecai must meet him on a like ground. Hence, the mention of the name of God by Mordecai or Esther, or the recorded offering up of prayer to God, would have been a breach of honor and would have destroyed the unity of the book.

If Haman had secured the royal decree without *first* having had cast Pur, that is, the lot, before him from day to day and month to month to the twelfth month, to decide upon a date for the issue and execution of the decree that would secure success, there would have been no reason why Mordecai should not have said to Esther, "If thou altogether holdest thy peace this time, *God* will send relief and deliverance from another place." But when he matches Haman's appeal to Luck, with a counter appeal to Providence, he does not thereby necessarily show a personal disbelief in the *God* of Providence. If Abraham had answered Isaac's question "Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" by saying that a lamb *will be provided*, instead of saying, as he did, that God will provide, he would not by that answer have denied his belief in God. Again, there is no mention in the record that Abraham prayed to God in the interim of three days be-

tween the command to offer up Isaac for a burnt offering at the beginning and his obedience to the command at the end. In the same way there is no mention of David's offering a prayer when he went to fight Goliath. The failure to mention that prayer was offered by either or by both is no proof that they did not pray. Mordecai had a reason, as Abraham had not, for omitting God's name in connection with his assurance that relief and deliverance would be provided. This reason would also explain why later, prayer to God either by himself or by Esther is not mentioned in the record. Esther says: "Go, gather together all the Jews, . . . fast ye for me. . . . I also and my maidens will fast in like manner." Fasting did not exclude prayer either by Mordecai or Esther, but the plan of the author forbids the mention of it. Professor Moulton, in his admirable work "The Moral System of Shakespeare," says: "A plot is the reduction of all the details of a book to a unity of design. It is in fiction what Providence is in the world of reality, that is, in fact." Hence whether you take the Book of Esther as a plot in fiction, that is, a story, or as a Providence in fact, that is, a history, then the trial test between the supernatural powers, championed severally by Haman and Mordecai, must, in accordance with the plot, be confined to the working out of these *powers* without mention of or reference to a person. The Book of Esther is not a story or history with a single plot, presented as a circle with the supernatural power of Providence as its center, with all details equidistant from it; but rather it is a story or history with a double plot, presented as an ellipse with two rival supernatural powers as foci, where the sum of the distances of all details is a constant.

Notice, further, there is not a record of a miracle in Esther,

as there is in other books of the Bible, performed and used as a means in securing the wonderful providential relief and deliverance herein recorded, which both for kind or degree are unmatched in other Bible stories that are based on miracles. Such a record would be out of place in Esther, because miracles necessitate the recognition and mention of the person of God who works them. This book is *sui generis* in respect to the omission of the name of God or of a prayer to or miracle by him, and so is misunderstood and misrepresented because of the failure to see the logical necessity for these omissions in the plan and purpose of the book. When understood, it teaches an overruling Providence, as a supernatural power, overthrowing another credulously believed in supernatural power of Luck, which Haman had audaciously put forward by the casting of Pur, the lot. If Haman had gotten the royal decree without casting Pur, the lot, and so made no appeal to Luck, then I believe Mordecai could and would have said to Esther, *God* will send relief and deliverance to the Jews, thus connecting Providence with God, just as President Lincoln did in 1864, in an interview with Rev. J. S. Duryea, in his statement about his personal belief in and dependence upon Divine Providence, which is unequalled in any other statement I ever read of or heard: "If it were not for my firm belief in an overruling Providence, it would be difficult for me, in the midst of such complication of affairs, to keep my reason on its seat; but I am confident that the Almighty has His plans and will work them out. I have always taken counsel of Him and referred to Him my plans, and have never adopted a course of proceeding without being assured, as far as can be, of his approbation."

The commentators on the Book of Esther who find taught therein only the single truth of divine providence, have no

adequate explanation for Mordecai's not using God's name, and not ascribing relief and deliverance directly to him. Professor Moulton is the only writer on Esther that I have found who recognizes a double *versus* a single plot. In the double plot, centering around Haman and Mordecai, as I understand it, we have, wrought out in a continued story or history, the brief statement of the inspired proverb, "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of Jehovah" (Prov. xvi. 33), which is condensed into the antithetic saying of Thomas à Kempis, "Man proposes, but God disposes." This, I hold, is the addition to the sum of revelation, found in the Book of Esther and found nowhere else in the Scriptures. I maintain not only that it is a worthy companion picture of the scene on Mount Carmel, that portrays the trial test between God and Baal, but that, of the two, it is more helpful to-day for three pregnant reasons:—

1. That on Mount Carmel was settled by a miracle, that is, something that God did then but is not doing now, since the days of miracles are past. This in the Book of Esther is settled by acts of Providence, such as God is now working and ever will work. It is like David's victory over Goliath, won by a providence and not by a miracle.

2. The working out of Providence, as a product of a protracted process, is more helpful to us than the momentary act of a miracle. The momentary lesson is soon forgotten, the extended experience leaves an indelible impression.

3. The scene on Mount Carmel was a trial test between Jehovah and Baal, as to which one was God, and it is the exception to-day to find any such conflict. But the conflict presented in Esther between Chance, Luck, and Providence is world-wide, and is ever present as a living issue.

Mr. Lyman, author of the book "Columbia River," in sus-

taining his assertion that "Our national destiny hung in the balance upon Commodore Gray's entrance into the mouth of this river May 11, 1792," calls attention to "the *singular fatality* which had baffled all explorers, Dutch, French, Portuguese, Spanish and English, in the struggle for the possession of the river," and asserts that "the manner in which our country, weak and discordant as its different members were, when just emerging from Revolutionary war, entered the lists, and by a *marvelous allotment of fortune* or the *design of providence*, slipped in between the greater nations, and secured the prize of Oregon, is one of the epics of history."

It seems to me a strange coincidence that the author of "Columbia River" should ascribe America's gain or loss of its Western coast a century ago to one or the other of the same two rival supernatural powers that the author of the Book of Esther many centuries ago makes determine the destruction or deliverance of the Jewish people; and, further, that both Mr. Lyman and Professor Moulton should describe these similar modern and ancient struggles between rival powers as marked epics of history, thus coupling together the same controversy of the past and of the present. It shows that this world-wide question, which to believe in and trust to, the chance of impersonal Luck or the design of personal Providence, is still unsettled in men's minds. There is no other Scripture to which we can turn that gives an authentic solution of this question, by a concrete example of an extended conflict of months' duration, when Luck had every advantage in *prospect*, at the beginning, in the *outlook* of the first month, and Providence at every point in *retrospect*, at the end, in the *outcome* of the twelfth month, when God fulfilled a promise to his people, which Mordecai may have had

in mind, found in Lev. xxvi. 44-45: "And yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them; for I am Jehovah their God; but I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors."

Let us now briefly consider the providential events that led to the glorious outcome of the protracted conflict between the two supernatural powers — the one Luck, championed by Haman, who has the royal decree and is backed up by the king with unlimited resources; the other Providence, championed by Mordecai, who has one unrewarded act of service to the king, recorded in the Chronicles of Kings, and is backed by the queen with limited resources. What a striking contrast of advantages for the one, and of disadvantages for the other, in the outlook at the beginning!

ACT I.

Esther, obeying the charge given her by Mordecai, and keeping the promise she had given him, in royal apparel, stands unbidden in the inner court of the king's house. She obtains favor, as the king holds out to her the golden scepter and asks her request, with promise of granting it to half of his kingdom. She asks, in reply, "Let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for them." Professor Paton comments: "That Esther should postpone her request when the king was in good humor is psychologically improbable. Why Haman should be invited with the king, is hard to see. Such an invitation would only raise suspicion, and his presence might counteract all of Esther's influence." The king and Haman come to the banquet without delay. The king asks Esther her pe-

tition and request. She answers, "Let the king and Haman come to the banquet, that I shall prepare for them, and I will do to-morrow as the king hath said." Professor Paton again comments: "The second delay, in presenting the petition, is even more unlikely than her previous unwillingness to tell the king what she wanted. Whatever reasons may then have caused her to wait, existed no longer, and a second banquet could be no more favorable than the first." I think the same objections, or stronger ones, might have been raised against David's going into conflict with Goliath, taking only a staff in his hand; but he then, as Esther later, was under the direction of an invisible, inscrutable, mysterious Providence, whose ways can be explained and revealed only by the results; and the more unlikely and improbable the outlook in both cases, the more remarkable is the successful outcome. David's victory was instantaneous, Esther's unfolds slowly. Haman, in high glee, tells his wife Zeresh and friends, of the honor of an invitation to a second banquet; but, in deep mortification, also tells of Mordecai's not standing up and honoring him. Zeresh and friends, wrought up to a high pitch of excitement, by the contrasted honor and dishonor, are swept off their feet. They advise and secure the building that night of a gallows fifty cubits high, and Haman's going early in the morning to the king to get the decree for hanging Mordecai on it.

But while this is going on, through the tininess of turnings on which great issues hang, the king that night of all nights could not sleep; and when everything else fails, he orders, as a last resort, the records of the Chronicles of the Kings to be brought and read to him. Professor Paton comments: "This is not a natural way for a King to pass a sleepless night." But Divine Providence is not confined to natural ways, as

human judgment would be; and, however unnatural was the reading of the Chronicles to the king, the result of the startling denouement was that the king's attention is called to his aforesaid deliverance from assassination by Mordecai; and, with characteristic impulsiveness, he asks his first question, "What honor and dignity hath been bestowed on Mordecai for this?" They answer, "There is nothing done for him." In the silence that follows this answer, the king hears an unusual noise in the court so early in the morning and asks his second question, "Who is in the court?" The answer is, Haman. On Haman's entrance at his command, he asks his third question, "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor?" Haman, thinking of himself as the lucky one that the king is thinking of, and never questioning that it may be another, especially his enemy Mordecai, puts into his answer all the possible honors he can imagine, even verging on disloyalty in the usurpation of royal dignities, viz. in apparel the king useth, on horse the king rideth upon, with the king's crown on his head, and the king's most noble prince going before him, proclaiming to all, "Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor." How high up in imagination is Haman! How low down in the actual fall, when he hears the king's words, "Do even so to Mordecai: let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken." Haman, having obeyed, hastened to his home, mourning, with head covered, and recounts to his wife and friends every thing that has befallen him. Then the wise men and Zeresh his wife, who, in their superstition, believe in bad luck, as well as in good luck, foretell him: "If Mordecai, before whom thou hast begun to fall, be of the seed of the Jews, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shall surely fall before him." Was a credulous trust in luck ever so de-

feated, degraded, and disgraced? Was a warranted trust in Providence ever so vindicated, through the culmination of circumstances, all of which, up to the last moment, were seemingly favorable to and prophetic of the success of the one who trusted in luck? How it verifies the lesson taught both by observation and experience that, Credulity is human weakness, while Faith is superhuman strength!

ACT II.

All had gathered at the second banquet on the morrow, when Queen Esther had promised to do as the king had said. Haman humiliated, the king, worn out with a restless night's experience, astounded by the early morning's inexplicable happenings, stirred up by curiosity to discover the clue for the queen's withholding and postponement of her request, in far different frame of mind than at the first banquet, asks Esther what is her petition and request. There is no hesitation or holding back in Esther now, no lack of emotion or religious enthusiasm in her purpose and plan, but, like a thunder clap out of a clear sky, comes her startling reply, "Let *my life* be given me at *my petition*, and *my people* at *my request*: for we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish." The king burst out, "Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?" Esther answers, "An adversary, an enemy, even this wicked Haman." Esther's cunning in preparing two banquets, with consequent postponement of request, flashes upon the king; the mystery is cleared up; his own part in giving the decree for the destruction of the people that included his own wife is revealed. Nearly collapsing under the shock, overcome by wrath, undecided what to say or do, he finds himself, in a dazed condition, in the palace

garden. Haman, equally upset, in haste to make request for his life while the king is absent, rushes to the queen and unconsciously falls on the couch where Esther was, just as the king reenters. The king, gladly finding a pretext for condemnation of his favorite courtier, exclaims, "Will he even force the queen before me in the house?" Unbidden, they covered Haman's face. Harbonah, the chamberlain, calls attention to "the gallows fifty cubits high which Haman hath made for Mordecai, who spake good for the king." The king said, "Hang him thereon." With this done, the king's wrath is pacified. On that day, we read the king gave the house of Haman, the Jews' enemy, to Esther. Mordecai is called in, and Esther sets him over the house of Haman. Esther now seizing the auspicious moment came a second time, unbidden, to the king's house, "and besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman, and his device that he had devised against the Jews." The king again holds out the golden scepter to Esther. She arises and requests that it be written to reverse the letter devised by Haman. The king answers her and Mordecai, who with his new honors has been admitted to royal presence, "The writing which is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's ring can no man reverse." "Write ye also to the Jews, as it pleaseth you, in the king's name." They wrote a new decree and sent it out broadcast, that granted the Jews on that fatal thirteenth day of the twelfth month, "to gather themselves together, to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, their little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey."

Thus in fact, stranger than in fiction, the two rival supernatural powers of Luck and Providence, that in the begin-

ning stood opposed to each other, in *their champions* Haman and Mordecai, now stand opposed, for the remaining time, in the *two royal decrees* written by the two champions, to be finally settled on the fatal day, neither by champions nor by decrees, but by *two peoples* arrayed against each other, the one authorized to assault, the other authorized to repel assault. The day comes at last, the tables are completely turned, the assaulted are the victors. Could there be conceived in imagination a fuller realization in fact, of the truth of the proverb, "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of Jehovah's"! To sum up in one pregnant word the eleven months' conflict between Luck and Providence, and the *glad outcome* at the end, in such striking contrast with the *sad outlook* at the beginning, Mordecai called these days, and the annual feast in celebration of them, *Purim*, in satirical reference to the lot, Pur, which Haman had used in his appeal to Luck, by casting Pur, before he had asked the king for the decree for the destruction of Mordecai's people.

Can we, with this retrospective review of the book, at all agree with Professor Paton's dictum, "It is unlikely that the *trivial circumstance of the way* in which Haman determined the day of destruction, should give its name to the day of deliverance"? Look at other transformations of names in Scripture. When Sarah overheard the promise of the Angel of Jehovah, that she should bear a son, she laughed within herself; and when Jehovah asked her why she laughed, she denied it. But when the son was born, Sarah said, "God hath made me to laugh; every one that heareth will laugh with me"; and she named the son Laughter, that is, Isaac. Again at Antioch, the followers of Christ were first called Christians as a name of reproach; and the name of Christian

is found but three other times in the New Testament and always in the same dishonorable sense. And yet, in the rapid growth of Christ's kingdom, the name for the followers of Christ, used by the New Testament writers, that is saints, is replaced by the enemy's name of reproach, Christians, which has become the most honored name in the world. Another remarkable transformation in names is that of the instrument on which Jesus hung, in his shameful death which the hating Jews demanded of the unwilling Pilate, namely, the cross. It has become the prized ornament of the person, the emblem and symbol of universal world-wide spiritual rule, on the spire of every church. And the song of songs of the church is,

"In the cross of Christ I glory,"—

which words, the friends of the author have engraved upon his tomb. Where, in the revelation of the other thirty-eight Old Testament books, is there any extended narrative, with a unique double plot where two distinct trains of events, centering around two persons, who are champions of two rival supernatural powers, are woven together into a complex story happily styled "the most elaborate of epic histories" that *vividly portrays*, on the one hand, the *foolish weakness of blind credulity*, as shown, in superstitious trust in the claimed supernatural power of Luck, which is unwarranted and unsupported either by reason or evidence; and on the other hand, in striking contrast, the *wise strength of an out-reaching faith*, as shown, in a divinely taught trust in the supernatural power of Providence, which is warranted and supported by the fullest and most impartial investigation of the history of the past, and the universal experience and observation of the present? Where else in the Scriptures is there recorded a relief and a deliverance of a whole peo-

ple, held captive by a powerful nation, that is so marvelous in its wonderful overcoming of the strong, possessed of every advantage, by the helpless weak, which is wrought out through a period of months in the mysterious ways of Providence unaccompanied and unaided by a single miraculous interposition of divine power? The necessarily negative answers that must be given to these pertinent questions show plainly the *unique addition to the sum of revelation* found portrayed, both in matter and manner, *in the Book of Esther.*