

Cleansing Fires.

Let thy gold be cast in the furnace,
Thy red gold, precious and bright;
Do not fear the hungry fire,
With its caverns of burning light;
And thy gold shall return more precious,
Free from every spot and stain;
For gold must be tried by fire,
As a heart must be tried by pain!
In the cruel fire of sorrow
Cast thy heart, do not faint or fail,
Let thy hand be firm and steady,
Do not let thy spirit quail;
But wait till the trial is over,
And take thy heart again;
Shine bright, strong golden chain;
And bless the cleansing fire,
And the furnace of living pain!
—Adelaide A. Proctor.

The Moral Character of Mistakes.

"Only a mistake—not a fault," is a common saying. Indeed, most people seem to have a complacent feeling that no moral responsibility attaches to mistakes. If they deliberately go wrong, that is a sin, and they expect to be punished for it, somehow and somewhere. But if they fall into the wrong course, as it were by chance, or if they unwittingly misuse opportunities, and so fail to accomplish what they otherwise might, they have made a mistake, forsooth, and are blameless.

Now this is pernicious reasoning—or rather lack of reasoning. It assumes that a mistake is a kind of negative virtue; not, indeed, a virtue which a man should cultivate, but nevertheless one which falls rather upon the credit than the debit side, in the balance of character. "I know that I have made a great many mistakes," says some worthy Christian, as he sums up his life in retrospect; "but then, that is not my fault. I couldn't help it. God knows I have done the best I could. I have lived [up] to my light." And so this aged servant of the Lord, looking back down the pathway of life, and seeing where he has turned astray hither and thither, like a child chasing a will-o-the-wisp, is almost minded to take a little extra credit to himself because he has reached the shore of peace, over against the gates of gold, in spite of so many wanderings! And it is indeed well for him that he stands opposite the beautiful city—not by reason of, nor in spite of, his mistakes, but by the wonderful, the unspeakable grace of God!

Mistakes have a moral value. All must admit this much. Their value is not a plus value on the side of right. This is equally clear. Then mistakes must have a plus value on the opposite side—the side of wrong. Therefore mistakes are sins.

1. Mistakes create the environment of life. A man is what his previous experiences have made him. This is no fatalistic doctrine, for every man by his own volition determines the current of his experience. To change the figure: Mistakes create a moral atmosphere, and that atmosphere is miasmatic. Miasm-breathing character is sickly and feeble. A young man makes a mistake, we will say, with respect to his calling in life. After spending the allotted years in preparation, he enters upon his work whatever it is, and finds at once that he is a round man in a square hole. What is the effect of such a mistake as this? Bad, every time. Life immediately resolves itself into discouraging and temptation—the discouraging of being out of place, the temptation to break away and be a meteor man instead of a starman—a man without a law and without an orbit. Few men in such circumstances, have the courage to go back and begin over again. They have made a mistake, and they abide by it. Their life-work is either erratic or halfhearted, and character loses its fibre.

Is there no moral character, then, in the mistake which creates a false environment for a man's whole life? What of the energy of thought, what of the prayerful uplook, what of the keen, persistent study of adaptabilities, what of the humble seeking of wise advice, what of the preliminary study and observation that should have preceded that vital choice? Have they preceded it? In nine wasted lives out of ten—no! The choice has been hasty, born of visions. The environment has been woven out of dream-stuff. The man is morally responsible for his failure.

2. Mistakes affect the lives of others. In this world no man standeth or falleth unto himself. Character and influence are moral contagions. The man who makes mistakes helps others to make mistakes also. There never was so shadowy or contemptible a figure that somebody was not treading

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in its footsteps. And when a man does a foolish and unwise thing, there is not only the fact to be considered that his individual and personal example is infectious, but also the fact that he has opened a way out of right into wrong, which will always remain as a pernicious suggestion to scores who may not be under his immediate influence. Mistake-makers are pioneers into pestilential swamps; and the more unique and peculiar the wrong environment which a man creates for himself by his mistakes, the more likely are others to stumble into the same failures. It is a sophism to say that men learn wisdom from the mistakes of others. Far likelier are they to gravitate toward the same pitfalls. There is a strange fatality about moral, as well as physical, danger. If a man knows where it is, he is very likely to plunge into it.

Our mistakes lead others astray; therefore they are sins.

A brief and practical word on how to avoid mistakes: Do nothing hastily. Nine-tenths of the things which men live to repent have been done at the beck of impulse. There are two golden mottoes for impulsive people. The first and best is, "Stop and think." The second is, "Don't." In the majority of cases the first motto simply endorses the second, but not always. It is always better to stop and think about a proposed action than to reject it without thought; but if you cannot spare the time, or haven't the brains or energy to think, then refrain from taking every doubtful step. It is better to stand still than to go over a precipice.

Secondly, do not believe a thing simply because somebody says it. Nothing under heaven is easier than to postulate, yet with some men it counts as the law and the prophets. How many of us can date our saddest mistakes from reposing a blind confidence in something that we have heard—some fallacy, perhaps some designed deception. Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good.

Finally, avoid mistakes by correcting them. This may sound paradoxical, but a good many logical paradoxes work like a charm in practice. A large share of our mistakes may be nullified by correcting them as soon as we discover that they are mistakes. It is lingering in the wrong that is fatal. That strange inertia of the soul—what a devil's spell it is! Throw it off—redeem yourself while you can! Christians, remember that you are just as liable to make mistakes as anybody else, and your mistakes are more harmful because you are Christians. Very likely God will not hold us as strictly to account for our mistakes as for our deliberate sins, but He will never remit their moral value, and certainly He will never credit them to us as negative virtues.—Herald.

The Morality of Sin.

One of the most common delusions among men is that now and then a great wrong can succeed. There is, if we look at sin in full face, something in its nature which condemns it to certain death. The vitality is a thing of years only, and sometimes of days. We are misled by the apparent stability of a bad cause. There are multitudes who imagine that because intemperance still rules its millions, and holds them with an iron grasp, the bad cause must endure for ages to come. Not so. No Supreme Court is so long lived as a righteous cause. They are poor arithmeticians who base their calculations on the long life of many an enormous wrong. Sooner than we know it the hour strikes the death of a monster vice and none were more surprised than they who fought for only its gradual overthrow.

The history of Poland furnishes a singular illustration of the way in which nations imagine that a crime can be committed with impunity. That country was once the mightiest in Eastern Europe. Its kings were heroes who died with the bravest champions of all ages in their deeds of daring and devotion to country. Its John Sobieski led the combined Christian forces of the Continent. It had been one of the few countries in Europe which has exhibited any touch of sympathy with the Jews. Now Russia, Prussia, and Austria deliberately sat down and divided that kingdom among themselves. They blotted the country out of existence. It cannot be found to-day on the map of Europe. The crime is unsurpassed for downright royal iniquity in modern times. It is just such a thing as Nero could have done and smiled over it. But many an evil has sprung out of that Partition of Poland. All three of the countries have ever since been compelled to use special measures against the insurrection of their Polish subjects. The Poles still expect deliverance. The time may yet come when the crime against them will

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be avenged, and their kingdom restored.

Several factors which determine the mortality of all sin must be considered. One of these is, that the character of the men who represent it and fight for its permanence is bad. The world never loves a man who is really impure. The sin and the man who fights for it belong in the same category. Take Thomas Paine as an illustration. He labored steadily to propagate a disbelief in Christianity. He wrote books against the Bible. He was infatuated with the spirit and daring of Voltaire and the worst infidels of France at the time of the Revolution of 1789. He did much good for the cause of our national independence; but his labors against the Christian religion weakened his strong political position. What was the result? Who were his friends at last? He died in neglect, poverty, intemperance. What had he achieved? People pitied him, but the millions continued to read the Bible, to pray, and to sacrifice for the expansion of the Redeemer's kingdom.

There must always be a character corresponding to and in harmony with the cause for which it combats. All eyes must see this harmony. John Huss preached and labored for the Reformation in Bohemia. He was absorbed in his cause. When he was burned at Constance the world could see that the man and his cause were identical. Hence he lived on. His persecutors had good reason to fear him dead even more than living. When a bad cause has its representative, the man is measured by his principles. The cause may for the moment appear to triumph, but in due time the forces of good will come into ascendancy. The man himself cannot win love. He and his object go down into oblivion together.

But the most decisive quality in the mortality of evil is that God is against it. He watches every movement with His all-seeing eye. He often gives a large measure of success to the wrongdoer. He lets him organize his force, surprise by an ambush, and now and then carry off a trophy. Paul had nearly reached Damascus, and thus had ample time to mature his plans of blood and persecution, before he was arrested by the power of God. "No one can tell just when God is preparing His instrument to put a death blow to some great wrong. The British slave-traders thought they had matters quite to their liking. They grew rich by buying slaves cheap in Africa and selling them for a high price in the West Indies; but there was a little group which met frequently in a quiet house in Clapham Common, with Wilberforce, Zachary Macaulay, Clarkson, and others as leading spirits. They determined on the extinction of the crime. They did not win in a day, but they did win at last. God was against the crime, and he prepared His human instruments for its suppression. Our safest course always is to find out the real quality of a cause or a principle—whether it is one which God loves. Then that must be chosen as ours. Not only is this the only safe course for our adoption, but it is the course which will win.

No sense of gloom or discouragement should ever come on good people at the slow victory over a public sin, over its apparent triumph, or over the public consent of the men who combat it. God often works slowly to our judgment. But the very tardiness of a victory over sin is sometimes a needful discipline. We are not always prepared for a success. We would often not know how to handle it if we had it. We should be too much elevated, like a boy tickled by a sharp instrument which he has not the skill to use. Qualities of mind need to be acquired—patience, wisdom, charity, many a good quality—in order to use aright the victory when it comes. God is very merciful in giving us our triumphs singly, and then enforcing long intervals between them. The Reformation was not the work of a year or of a decade. When it did come it was almost too great an achievement to manage wisely and humbly. The Reformers of Germany fell into controversy, and actually lost by angry discussion much which they had won. God does not give us the whole heathen world in a century, or in several. What would be done with five hundred million of heathen if they were suddenly thrust upon us? He gives us converts as rapidly as we can educate them and build them up into a pure and noble Christian life.

If, therefore, we are ever disposed to repine over the slowness of a moral triumph, let us ask: Would we be ready to use it aright if God should place it in our hands? In the meantime let us cultivate all the virtues which we need for the safe management of our victories. It will come not an hour later than we are worthy of it and able to cultivate it, and build noble structures on its granite blocks.—Chris. Advocate.

WONDER WORKING K. D. C.

Do you sing at Home?

There is perhaps no pleasanter occupation in the family circle than sacred song. Many a home where there is little of beauty, or ease, or luxury, is made pleasant by "thanksgiving and the voice of melody." If there be joy in the heart and music on the tongue, many rough places in life are smoothed and plain, many dark spots are brightened and made cheerful. Those families who know nothing of sacred song miss some of the purest pleasures that fall to the lot of mortals. Family prayer is a duty and a privilege, but family praise is none the less so, and there is nothing that binds heart more closely to the home than those "songs which mother sang;" and old tunes in which the voices of parents and brothers and sisters join from a bond of union which unites hearts when mountains rise and oceans roll between them. Sometimes the wayward son, wandering in far-off land, hears the songs his mother sang, and is charmed by its music to know and serve his mother's God. Careful and melodious singing in the home fits persons for singing elsewhere, especially if persons are taught to sing correctly, gently and tenderly, and without much instrumental accompaniment. Then the hymns learned by the young linger on in memory, a precious heritage against days of darkness and sorrow. Let parents set the example of song, and the children will be sure to follow. Take time now and then, and enjoy an evening of sacred song. Let the voice of rejoicing be heard in the tabernacle of the righteous and prayer and praise ascend to the throne of God. Let each child have his hymn-book, and he will learn to prize it next to the Bible, and will from it gather many precious truths which will go with him to life's latest hour. Whoso offereth praise glorifieth God. Let us have more praising and less murmuring, more song and fewer complaints. Instead of fretting because of evil doers, let us pray; instead of repining at our lot, let us leave our burden at the cross, "and bear a song away."—The Common People.

Preaching to the Children.

If prevention is better than cure, why are not more sermons preached to children. They are certainly not as fully recognized in the public services as they ought to be. They are scarcely regarded as a part of the congregation. No doubt, one reason why so few sermons are preached to children is, because it requires both special adaptation and special preparation to preach successfully to children. The essentials of sermons suitable for children are these: Language, simple and colloquial; illustrations, drawn from every-day experience; style, homely and sympathetic; matter, intensely practical. It seems this neglect of the children in pulpit teaching is very wide-spread. The correspondent of an English exchange complains in the following vigorous fashion: "Why are the children so thoroughly and cruelly neglected in the churches? Is it not one of the most trite utterances of the pulpit that England's hope lies with the future mothers and fathers of England, the children of to-day? that twigs are so easily bent? and so forth. And yet the ministers of this country systematically neglect to act out their teaching in this respect. It is urged in excuse that so very few ministers have the talent for preaching to the young. More shame to them that they have never made any attempt to cultivate it. Years are devoted to theological training at college, etc. I ask was one hour's training ever dreamt of to fit them for this all-important work? It is not worth while to appoint a 'Chair' for this object, or to take some trouble to qualify young ministers for 'feeding the lambs?' We think no one considers this matter, in all its relations, can fail to come to the conclusion, that some share of the pulpit instructions should be given to the children.—Guardians.

A Son of God.

Henry M. Stanley tells that once in the heart of dark Africa a native was dragged before him by some of his followers for stealing a gun. Stanley looked at the gun; it clearly belonged to his expedition. The poor man who had it was frightened at the mention of Stanley's name, and could hardly find his voice or say a word only, "I am a son of God; I would not steal!" This he repeated again and again. It was all he could say.

Stanley was interested, and it dawned on him that this man was probably one of the converts of some of the missionaries laboring in that region, and he accordingly gave him the gun, and allowed him to go, while they pursued their way.

At the next station where they stopped they found the gun waiting

for them. It appeared that the gun had probably been lost. This man had found it, and when he was set free he at once went with it to the missionary for instructions, and by his direction it was sent where Stanley would get it.

But what a light must have touched that darkened son of Africa, who, though brought up in all villainy and theft and sin, had come to realize the glorious dignity of a divine paternity, and say, "I am a son of God; I would not steal."—The Christian.

Random Readings.

Doing good is the only certainly happy action of a man's life.—Sir P. Sidney.

The happiness of your life depends upon the character of your thoughts.—M. Aurelius.

Learn how to differ with others without giving them just cause for being angry with you.

Kindness and envy are inconsistent; they can no more abide together than light and darkness.

"The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

A contemporary says that walking with God is not walking in a circle. It means getting ahead.

Do well the little things now, so shall great things come to thee by-and-by asking to be done.—Persian Proverb.

Temptations are the common lot of man. It depends upon the individual, if he will destroy or cultivate them.

The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants; and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.—Psa. xcix. 22.

We might as well attempt to bring pleasure out of pain, as to unite indulgence in sin with the enjoyment of happiness.—Hodge.

Look upon the success and sweetness of thy duties as very much depending upon the keeping of thy heart closely with God, in them.—Flavel.

I want to feel a holy aptitude to give my heart to God, and to walk in his ways; I do believe I shall go to heaven if I have heaven in my heart.—Paul Pastnor.

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.—2. Corinthians, ix. 8.

It is not our rock, Jesus Christ, which ebbs and flows, but the sea of our own unsatisfied, restless lives. We can trust Christ that we shall always find him the same, in his fixed purpose to save, to protect, to bless.

God brings no man into the conflicts of life to desert him. Every man has a friend in heaven whose resources are unlimited; and on him he may call at any hour and find sympathy and assistance.

The growth of grace is like the polishing of metals. There is first an opaque surface; by-and-by you see a spark darting out, then a strong light, till at length it sends back a perfect image of the sun that shines upon it.

Every one who lives in this world is more or less a tax upon the industry of others; and hence everyone should, at the very least, seek to contribute to the world as much as it takes to get him through it. If he does less than this he dies at last in debt to mankind.

Minard's Liniment cures Dandruff.

My friend, look here! you know how weak and nervous your wife is, and you know that Carter's Iron Pills will relieve her, now why not be fair about it and buy her a box?

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THE Grand Trunk system differs from the human system in that the same remedies are not needed. For all diseases of the human system there is no tonic purifier, renovator and strengthener as good as Burdock Blood Bitters. A weak system can be built up by B. B. B.

D. Sullivan, Malcolm, Ontario, writes:—"I have been selling Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil for some years, and have no hesitation in saying that it has given better satisfaction than any other medicine I have ever sold. I consider it the only patent medicine that cures more than it is recommended to cure."

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MINING NEWS.

Mining experts note that cholera never attacks the bowels of the earth, but humanity in general find it necessary to use Dr. Fowler's Extract of Wild strawberry for bowel complaints, dysentery, diarrhoea, etc. It is a sure cure.

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On and after MONDAY, 24th Nov., 1890, the trains of this Railway will run daily (Sunday excepted), as follows:—

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Accommodation for Point du Chene 10.40
Fast Express for Halifax 13.30
Express for Sussex 16.30
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A parlor car runs each way on express trains leaving St. John at 7.10 o'clock, and Halifax at 7.15. Passengers from St. John for Quebec and Montreal leave St. John at 16.55 and take sleeping car at Moncton.

The train leaving St. John for Quebec and Montreal on Saturday at 16.55 o'clock will run to destination, arriving at Montreal at 18.05 Sunday evening.

TRAINS WILL ARRIVE AT ST. JOHN.

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Fast express from Quebec and Montreal (Monday excepted) 9.35
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D. POTTINGER,
Chief Superintendent
Railway Office, Moncton, N. B.
20th Nov., 1890.

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Eastern Standard Time.

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7.10 A. M.—Express for Fredericton Junction, St. John, and intermediate points. Vancorbo, Bangor, Portland, Boston, and points West; St. Stephen, St. Andrews, Houlton, Woodstock and points north.
10.40 A. M.—For Fredericton Junction, St. John and points east.
4.20 P. M.—For Fredericton Junction, St. John, St. Stephen, Houlton, and Woodstock. No connection with St. John on Monday by this train.

RETURNING TO FREDERICTON.

From St. John 6.25, 8.30, A. M.; 4.30 P. M.; Fredericton Junction, 8.15, A. M.; 12.10, 5.55 P. M.; McAdam Junction, 7.00, 10.50 A. M.; Vancorbo, 10.25 A. M.; St. Stephen, 5.45, 7.45 A. M.; St. Andrews, 7.20 A. M., except Mondays and Wednesdays, at 5.15 A. M.

ARRIVING IN FREDERICTON.

9.15 A. M., 1.20, 6.40 P. M.

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6.55 A. M.—Mixed for Woodstock and points north.

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