

"THE FRUIT OF THEIR THOUGHTS"

(Jer. 6:19)

"Sow a thought, and reap a desire;  
Sow a desire, and reap an act;  
Sow an act, and reap a habit;  
Sow a habit, and reap a character;  
Sow a character, and reap a destiny."

Thoughts bridge the way for good or bad deeds. "They are the seeds of action," and they are "parent to the deed." "Bad thoughts quickly ripen into bad actions." "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he."

As we see the great army of criminals as they crowd our jails and prisons, we only behold the products of evil thoughts. As we hear vile oaths, slanders and lies, and see all types of sins and sinners, by tracing them back to their origin, we find they were born in an evil mind, and push themselves out through the actions of individuals.

The only safe way is to first make the fountain pure, then the stream will be pure. "A stream takes on the coloring of the soil over which it flows." A clean heart sends out clean thoughts, and clean thoughts produce clean actions. Paul's admonition as to how we should think, says, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things,"—Phil. 4:8.

The Burning Bush gives the following timely comment in this subject:

"That thoughts produce action, and actions form habits, and habits make characters, we all know. We learned this aphorism years ago and we have seen the working of the principle in human nature. It is that great law of cause and effect which is working all around us every day. That great English deist, Spencer, said that robbed of its many high technical terms, it is the most simple and common law of the universe. This seems to be so. A little analysis of our ordinary actions throws great light upon this apparently recondite but common law of nature.

"God has laws for the spiritual world, too. They work with the same accuracy and certainly as do those natural laws. Were this not true there would be no need of our placing stress on Christian training, care of the youth, Christian family life, etc. It is because of the good seed that is sown in early life, that we expect to reap characters that will consistently take the image of the Lord.

"The fruit of their thoughts.' Israel first turned aside in the closet of prayer. She first hankered after the old life, in the secret recesses of the heart. She obtained divorce; then wandered, strayed, fell into by-paths. It all started back in the heart. No wonder the wise man, Solomon told us to 'keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.' A man backslides in heart long before he commits the outbreking sin.

"What are your 'thought-seeds?' What is your mind sowing? Be sure my friend, it will have its harvest. Sudden and surprising events are very often traced way back to small beginnings. The seed once sown, according to God's laws, will germinate and produce. What are you planting in the field of your mind?

"Remember that the first strata or stage in this law of cause and effect, with relation to our thoughts, connects up with a still

more binding element in the chain—habits.

"The 'wild-oats thoughts' sown too often will produce those wrong actions too often; then comes a bad habit. The prophet seems to get this picture of the children of Israel. Playing the debauched fabric in their national heart, so much so that they formed the habit of backsliding. 'As a backsliding heifer,' Hosea paints them. It is nothing more or less than a working of that law superimposed on the thoughts of their heart.

"It seems to us that this should make each one very careful that his thoughts are in the right direction. Nothing is more pitiful than a rotted will. Like a sick runner in a race, his chances are slim. If God has done something for you, don't be foolish and think God will build a wall around you. That is your business. God wants you to form good habits. These will act as a fence around your little 'vineyard.' This gives rise to evenness. It helps you over those places where, like Carvosso and Hezekiah, you are left alone for a space to see all that is in thine heart. Even Jesus suffered this trial of faith.

"We turn the picture over. The great law remains the same. Be aggressive. Train your mind to think about good thoughts. Fill your mind with good verses of Scripture, hymns of praise, thanksgiving and prayer. Build, build, build! By and by, just as in the case of the converse according to this law, you will have habits that will be a breastwork to you in the time of trial. Like John Wesley, though small in stature, you will have a 'backbone of steel' when it comes to moral issues. 'The fruit of their thoughts.' Watch out, dear reader, you are sowing something every day. What is it? May God bless us."—Church Herald and Holiness Banner

SOME DEFINITIONS

In the definitions given below, an effort has been made to be practical. Unusual meanings are disregarded and no nice distinctions are attempted.

A *theist* is a believer in God. (This word comes from the Greek "theos," which means god.) However in general usage a "theist" not only believes in the existence of deity, but also believes in revelation. That is, he holds that the Bible is God's Word. Catholics, Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists and most of the other well-known denominations are theistic.

A *deist* also is a believer in a god. (This word comes from the Latin "deus," which means god.) So far as its derivation is concerned, deist should mean the same as theist. However, in practical usage it is very different. The deist while admitting the existence of a god denies that He has given any revelation to the world, and he rejects the Christian religion.

An *atheist* is one who denies the existence of a god. ("A" stands for privation. It here means without.)

An *infidel* is a rejecter of the Christian religion. Practically, an atheist and an infidel are the same, though perhaps an atheist is more dogmatic or positive in statement.

An *agnostic* is one who professes to know nothing about God and the supernatural. He is the "know-nothing" in the field of religion. He usually holds that the Creator is unknowable.

A *polytheist* is one who believes in the existence of and worships many gods ("poly" means many). Most of the heathen religions of Africa, also Taoism of China, Hinduism of India and various other systems are polytheistic.

LOVE

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."—Galatians 5:2.

Love is that which sees something in you after other eyes interested have grown dim with the strain, and blinded by the obstacles. Love is that which finds the precious after all others have grown weary of searching.

Love is that which holds on after others have let you go, and still follows you after you have succeeded in tearing yourself away.

Love is that which answers the discordant for the hundredth time with the same harmony, only with more sweetness than at the first.

Love is that which gives more after it seems to have emptied all treasures and exhausted all resources.

Love is that which in correcting encourages, in reproving gives hope.

Love is that which, though superior to all, graces the occasion by humble serving.

Love is that which sings to the key, and keeps the harmony when all others are discordant.

Love is that which after being reprov'd, buffeted and contradicted, comes back with an armful of flowers and fragrance that would grace a rose.

Love is that which being testified against, puts the best construction on the action of its opponent.

Love is that which gives its possessor a disposition that makes him pleasant and delightful to live with.

Love is that which though being crucified prays, "Father, forgive them."

Love is that which lifts you and makes you feel worthy of its companionship.

Love is the secret cause of all joy, peace and happiness, and of life itself.

Love is not known by any certain song it sings, or any particular garb it wears, but it is revealed and manifested in every ramification of life, and leaves its footprints on every road it traverses.

"Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked; but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth."—I. Cor. 14:4-8.—Sel.

REAL PRAYER

It is said of John Bradford that he had a peculiar art in prayer. When asked his secret he said: "When I know what I want, I always stop on that prayer until I feel that I have pleaded it with God and until God and I have had dealings with each other upon it. I never go on to another petition until I have gone through the first."

To the same point Mr. Spurgeon said: "Do not try to put two arrows on the string at once—they will both miss. He that would load his gun with two charges cannot expect to be successful. Plead once with God and prevail and then plead again. Get the first mercy and then go after the second."

Certain it is that too often we rattle off our petitions and leave the place of prayer conscious of no real dealings with God. Far better would it be to know what our real needs are and then concentrate our earnest supplications upon those definite objects, taking them thoughtfully one at a time.—Selected.