

YOUR BESETTING SIN

By Rev. E. E. Shelhamer

Let us lay aside every weight, and THE sin which doth so easily beset us" (Heb. 12:1).

Every man has at least one besetting sin or weakness which, unless laid aside, may cause his defeat in the heavenly race. The Catholics speak of seven cardinal sins, namely, Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Anger, Gluttony, Envy and Sloth. Offsetting these are seven cardinal virtues, i.e., Humility, Liberality, Chastity, Meekness, Temperance, Brotherly-love and Diligence. There are general sins and virtues. But there are also bosom and secret sins which God alone beholds. We will let you, dear reader, name yours.

Remember, all outward sin first begins in Thought. "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he." A man is no better than his thoughts. It is impossible to sin on any line until one first harbors thoughts along that line.

"If you think you may look,  
If you look you may think;  
Take this first little step,  
Then plunge over the brink."

Now let us see if we can locate your hidden foe.

1. The sin your thoughts run upon most.
2. The sin you do not like reprov'd.
3. The sin that causes remorse of conscience.
4. The sin that most easily leads you captive.
5. The sin that most often beclouds your sky.
6. The sin you dislike to look at and denounce.
7. The sin that causes doubts of your acceptance with God.
8. The sin you try to believe is only an infirmity.
9. The sin you are most unwilling to acknowledge you possess.
10. The sin that is as near and dear as your right hand must be laid aside, yea, must be cut off with one stroke lest it finally damn you.

God help you, then, not to play with or spare this subtle, slimy, treacherous serpent—Sin. King Saul spared Agag (a type of carnality) and lost his throne and his soul. But old Samuel took the sword and "hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord." You say this was barbaric; but this is the method God wants you to employ in going after your sly, besetting sin. Will you do it? God help you!

WHEN GOD WAS DEFIED

A Christian physician was once obliged to take refuge from an approaching storm in a grocery store which also contained a grog shop. Two drunken men were present, and as the lightning flashed, they poured forth such a volley of fearful oaths that finally the storekeeper said, "Gentlemen, I am no Christian, but I want to say that your awful cursing is too much for me. God will strike you dead right here with a stroke of lightning if you do not hush your blasphemous oaths." The leader of the two rolled up his sleeves, went to the door, cursed God, and defied Him. At that moment a blinding flash of lightning descended with a flame of fire. Quickly the light was gone, and only smoke remained. In a moment that, too, had disappeared, and there lay God's defier in a heap, just as an empty garment when let loose would fall. The physician helped to lay the man out, and he said he did not believe there was a bone two inches long left unbroken in his body.—From the Gospel Herald.

It is the nature of a brave and resolute mind not to be disquieted in difficult matters.—Cicero.

THE UNFAILING REMEDY

An American bishop was one day walking through the streets of a city, when he met one of its prominent physicians who offered him a seat in his car.

The physician was an infidel. After a while the conversation turned upon religion.

"I am surprised," said the infidel doctor, "that such an intelligent man as you are, should believe such an old fable as that."

The bishop made no immediate reply, but some time afterwards said, "Doctor, suppose that years ago some one had recommended to you a prescription for pulmonary consumption, and given you directions concerning it, and you had procured the medicine and taken it as directed, and had been cured of that terrible disease. Suppose that you had used that prescription in your practice ever since and had never known it to fail when taken according to directions, what would you say to the man who could not believe in, and would not try your prescription?"

"I should say he was a fool," replied the physician.

"Twenty-five years ago," said the bishop, "I tried the power of God's grace. It made a different man of me. All these years I have preached salvation to others, and wherever it has been accepted I have never known it to fail. I have seen it make the proud man humble, the drunken man temperate, the profane man pure of speech, the dishonest true. The rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned, the old and the young have alike been healed of their diseases."

"You have caught me fairly, bishop, I have been a fool," said the physician.

And that is not the end of it. That infidel doctor became the superintendent of a prosperous Sunday School.—Sel. from Living Waters.

SERVICE

Thank God that when a man does a bit of service, however, little it may be, of that, too, he can never trace the consequences. Thank God that that which in some better moment, in some nobler inspiration, you did ten years ago to make your brothers' faith a little more strong to let your shop-boy confirm and not doubt the confidence in man which he had brought into his business, to establish the purity of a soul instead of staining and shaking it, thank God, in this quick, electric atmosphere in which we live, that, too, wins forth.—Phillips Brooks.

He lives long who lives well.  
Fair-weather faith is no faith.  
One's view depends upon one's point of view.  
Difficulty is but another name for discipline.  
Face life with courage, confidence, and humility.

There is no toil like that of trying to mend things.

There is not a little heroism in doing lowly tasks.

A noble nature can alone attract the noble and retain them.

One must give more than a cheer in order to be a cheerful giver.

World peace in the long run depends upon a universal will to peace.

Extraordinary afflictions are sometimes the trial of extraordinary grace.

The doubter afflictions are sometimes the trial of extraordinary grace.

Those who fight the battles of the Lord are sustained and aided by forces unseen.

The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith; and the beginning of true faith the end of anxiety.—Selected.

GOODNESS

With a quickened eyesight, go on discovering much good on the worse side, remembering that the same process should proportionably magnify and demonstrate to you the much more good on the better side.—Robert Browning.

PRIDE

It seems rather extraordinary that pride which is constantly struggling and often imposing on itself to gain some little preeminence, should so seldom hint to us the only certain as well as laudable way of setting ourselves above another man and that is by becoming his benefactor.—Sel.

FAITH

The faith which has no difficulties is scarcely worthy of the name of faith at all. It is the faith in the blue sky while all around are storm and ruin that counts—the faith of the young bird in the sunny land to the south which it has never seen, but toward which it flies with the first signs of winter.—Selected.

GOLDEN DAYS

There are two golden days in the week upon which and about which I never worry—carefree days from fear and apprehension. One of these days is yesterday—yesterday, with its cares and frets and all its pains and aches. And the other day that I do not worry about is tomorrow—tomorrow with all its possible adversities, its burdens, its perils.—Robert J. Burdette.

LIVING WELL

To live well in one's place in the world, adorning one's calling, however lowly, doing one's most prosaic work, diligently and honestly, and dwelling in love and unselfishness with all men, is to live grandly. To fight well the battle with one's own lusts and tempers and to be victorious in the midst of the temptations and provocations of daily life, is to be a Christian hero.—J. R. Miller.

HUMILITY

Of all trees, I observe, God has chosen the vine, a low plant that creeps upon the helpful wall; of all beasts, the soft and patient lamb; of all fowls, the mild and guileless dove.

Christ is the Rose of the field, and the Lily of the valley. When God appeared to Moses, it was not in the lofty cedar, nor the sturdy oak, nor the spreading palm,—but in a bush, an humble, slender, abject shrub; as if He would, by these elections, check the conceited arrogance of man.—Owen Feltham.

"THE TEST OF THE HEART"

'Tis easy enough to be pleasant  
When life flows by like a song.  
But the one worth while  
Is the one who can smile  
When everything goes dead wrong.

For the test of the heart is trouble,  
And that always comes with years,  
And the smile that is worth  
All the praises of earth  
Is the smile that smiles through tears.

—Anon.

Dr. Charles Mayo: "You can get along with a wooden leg, but you cannot get along with a wooden head. It is the brain that counts. In order that your brain may be kept clear you must keep your body fit. That cannot be done when one drinks liquor."—Sel.