

Let us see, then, what lessons this wise saying has for us. The bed may be taken for the basis on which our religion rests; and the covering may as suitably stand for the outcome of religion in daily life. The one represents faith, the other, practice. These are the two spiritual factors in a religious life. Character is built upon a substratum of thought and feeling; and in proportion as the creed is generous and true, will a noble and sincere life be found as its outgrowth. So that it is a matter of infinite consequence on what kind of religious opinions any one is resting. An ill-conditioned creed will yield an ill-conditioned course of conduct. As a good bed has an important part to play in human life, so has a good creed. The late Dr. Hall, in his treatise on "Sleep," has dwelt a great deal on the former point. So large a portion of our existence is spent in rest, that it should be a matter of concern, and plan, and endeavor to secure that our beds and bedrooms should be adapted to yield us healthful sleep. The posture in rest, he shows, ought to be attended to. There must be room enough on which one can stretch to his full length, the head and chest being kept in line with the body. A curved position is not good, as it interferes with the free play of the lungs, the heart, and other internal organs. So that, as a matter of fact, it is unfortunate when one is so situated that his bed is shorter than that he can stretch himself on it; his rest will be broken, and his health will ultimately suffer.

The same may be affirmed of every religious system that does not draw out all the faculties of our minds and the affections of our hearts. They leave human nature undeveloped. They check the religious growth.

This is conspicuously seen when you go outside Christianity and its mother system of Judaism. The religions of nature all came vastly short of the requirements of the human spirit. Instead of ministering to minds diseased, or correcting the corrupt tendencies of men's hearts, they became the embodiment of human crazes—vain imaginations controlled men, and their darkened hearts suggested all manner of foulness and superstitions, in the shape of religion. As a short and cramped bed will in time lead to the deformity of the person who has not room to stretch himself on it, and yet is necessitated to lie on it, such as it is, for seven or eight hours out of every twenty-four; so these ill-devised, crude, corrupt religious systems led to the debasement of men's spiritual life, and the contraction of their intellectual powers.