

If he leaves the stamp of his personality upon all he touches we say, "He is a man of character."

This truly greatest thing in the world is a something that works from within, and though to some extent influenced by circumstances, it yet manifests a power to withstand the shock of circumstance and to shape its own course independently of all opposing forces.

Character is therefore the centre and core of personal life. It is a mysterious, invisible something that is creeping outward from its wrappings of flesh and sense, like the opening petals of a flower, ever displaying in its progress more and more its unique structure; growing more and more distinct from father, mother, home and friends, and developing into that wonderful thing we call personality.

And how does it grow? By judgments, choices and acts. Every circumstance, however trivial, demands a decision, and that decision adds something to the structure; it strengthens a bent, determines a current, or builds up a sentiment, and thus creates character. Without the necessity for a decision the character would be shapeless. Thus we see that every opinion, every word, every action which involves a decision is forming character.

Now the choosing faculty—the will—always acts from motives. The judgment, laying hold upon the various theories and objects that are presented to it, formulates beliefs, and these beliefs furnish all the motives under the impulse of which the will is brought into exercise. This process is repeated day after day, month after month and year after year, each choice being to some degree influenced by previous choices. This continuous action of the will, with the ever increasing weight of all former decisions behind it, gives it direction, and this bent, this fixity, towards which the determining power is constantly tending is termed character. We conclude therefore that character, which is really worthy of the name, must be based upon correct doctrine. In the light of these truths how erroneous does the statement appear which is so current in our day, that it is of no importance what a man believes so long as his life is right. The life which is simply the expression of the character cannot be right until the motives are right and the motives cannot be right until the beliefs accord with truth.