

Our Young People

The Noblest Conquest.

Topic for March 19: "Self-Mastery."—Cor. 9: 24-27.

The Godlike Will.

By Rev. John E. Pounds, D.D.

He who knows how to master himself has the best possible education; he who does so has triumphed gloriously—for "he that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." He who rules his own spirit reigns as king more truly than does the monarch who is ruled by it.

The source of self-mastery is the will. A man's lower nature is made subject to it. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from thee," is the great declaration of human independence. To the man who says, "There shall be no Alps!" there will be none.

The will has power over the body, so great as even to conquer death for a time. To conquer spiritual death is still more within its power. The man who sets his will unalterably to go to heaven may begin to sing the song of triumph; for to him who knocketh at the gates of heaven they shall be opened.

The will is the most Godlike faculty man has. He can almost create with it; character, success, he can create. The will is given for our self-control.

The loss of self-mastery comes through the weakening of the will and the strengthening of the passions. The will, like all other human faculties, grows stronger by exercise and weaker by neglect. The hand can be opened and shut at pleasure, but if left shut for two or three years it will remain shut forever. And he who thinks he can drag down his will from its place on the throne of his life—where it reigns by divine right—trample it under his feet for a score of years, and then re-instate it, has made a fatal error.

God made man's will stronger than his passions. But when he has cultivated his appetites until they are stronger than the enfeebled will, then he is helpless, so far as his own strength is concerned. The dead line is where the will and the passions pass. Only the power and grace of God can save the man who has permitted this. The sin of being mastered by the lower self is very great. We condemn the saloon-keeper in the strongest terms, and rightly so. But the drunkard is a guilty man also. He has spent for liquor the money which the Lord gave him for his children's bread and education. He has tainted his son's blood with death and his daughter's with

passion. He gave his wife his name, and then made it a reproach and disgrace. He took her from the safety of her father's home, swearing before God and men that he would love and honor and cherish until death—and then he led her into the lowest valley of humiliation and chained her there for the vile to scoff at. The early graves of his parents are monuments to his guilt as a son. He has proved a traitor to the highest interests of his native land, for if all were drunkards, every city would be a Sodom, and the fire would destroy it, and the country about it.

But he excuses it all by saying that he is helpless now and cannot quit, for his appetite masters him. This is only a confession that he has also destroyed his manhood, his God-given power of self-control. He has sinfully wasted his years of opportunity for cultivation of the powers which were given for his self-mastery, and guiltily stimulated his appetite until it has enslaved him. God's just sentence of death awaits him—nay, it has been almost executed. May God save each of us from a worse punishment in the next world than the slave of appetite knows in this!

Every Endeavorer should be an imitator of Paul, who, by force of will and by divine strength, kept his body under and brought it into subjection. — Christian Endeavor World.

Self-Mastery.

Be thine own soul's law learn to live,
And if men thwart thee take no heed,
And if men hate thee have no care;
Sing thou thy song, and do thy deed,
Hone thou thy bone, and pray thy prayer,
And claim no crown they will not give,
Nor boys they grudge thee for thy hair.

Keep thou thy soul-sworn steadfast oath,
And to thy heart be true the heart;
What thy soul teaches learn to know,
And play out thine appointed part;
And thou shalt reap as thou shalt sow,
Nor helped nor hindered in thy growth,
To thy full stature thou shalt grow.

Fix on the future's goal thy face,
And let thy feet be lured to stray
Nowhither, but be swift to run,
And nowhere tarry by the way,
Until at last the end is won,
And then must look back from thy place
And see thy long day's journey done.
Pakenham Beatty.

He who would avoid sin must not stand at the door of temptation.—Anon.

A Firm Hold.

Three travellers and twelve guides were climbing Mont Blanc. They reached a slope covered with newly fallen snow. Up, up, they were going, when suddenly the snow beneath their feet began to slide. Down they all went, sliding toward a horrible gulf. Some of them went over the brink. There were those who had a bewildering, exciting roll down the slope, going down, down, but on the very edge of the precipice their descent was stopped. One man, both nimble and strong, seized his long staff and ran it down into the oldest, firmest bed below. That held him. That saved him from the fall that all the others had, some of these finally plunging down into a deep grave in the mountain snow.

Oh, when temptation comes to you, threatening to carry you away into the sad disaster of sin, take hold of the Rock lower down! Get a firm hold on the foot of the cross, and temptation's avalanche will sweep harmlessly by you!

For Daily Reading.

Monday, March 13.—The Nazarite vow.—Num. 6: 1-8.
Tuesday, March 14.—Daniel's purpose.—Dan. 1: 8-16.
Wednesday, March 15.—The Rechabite's obedience.—Jer. 35: 1-11.
Thursday, March 16.—Enduring temptation.—Jas. 1: 12-15.
Friday, March 17.—Be strong in the Lord.—Eph. 6: 10-18.
Saturday, March 18.—To him that overcometh.—Rev. 2: 8-11.
Sunday, March 19.—Topic. Self-mastery.—Cor. 9: 24-27. (A temperance meeting.)

Be Strong—and Helpful.

If you are free from an acquired appetite for alcohol or from an inherited predisposition toward it, thank God with all your soul, but don't indulge in a grain of pride. Let your thanksgiving take the form of sympathy for the other fellow who has both inherited predisposition and acquired appetite. While you lift him up with one hand, knock the stumbling-blocks of open drinking-places out of his way with the other, using the ballot of an American sovereign.—J. F. C.

Self-mastery is the basis of sanity. To rule our own spirits, to hold every thought, desire, and passion in us to its responsibility before reason and conscience, is the only way to maintain that mental and spiritual soundness which gives us the right to be at large as free and responsible beings.—Sunday School Times.

I venture to say that the full recognition of all that is meant by consecration of the body would have a decisive effect in altering the relation of many Christians to drink, to drugs and to tobacco. By the use of such things men have turned the body which was meant to be a house of prayer into a den of thieves.—Rev. G. H. C. Macgregor.