

full of contagion. It is dangerous to be most of one's time in the camp of the enemy. We unconsciously begin to think that the enemy after all is not so far wrong, and begin to imitate their example. Sin, like the smallpox, is a communicable disease, and every one is more or less liable to catch the infection. The most difficult part of Samson's work was to avoid temptation while doing his duty. Indeed, this is more or less the case with us—who is there but must face temptation in the discharge of daily duty! What are our Christian principles for, but to fortify us against the attacks of evil! Still it is often much easier to flee from temptation than to face it. Guthrie says, "Abjure every scene, abstain from every pleasure, abandon every pursuit which tends to sin, which dulls the fine edge of conscience, unfits for religious duties, indisposes for religious enjoyments, sends you prayerless to bed or drowsy to prayer." Samson was strong in maintaining the cause of Israel, but weak in constantly exposing himself to evil influences.

LIABILITY TO SIN.

The tendency of the human heart is by nature toward evil. It is through the grace of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit that this tendency is overcome, and sin is overpowered. Even in the Christian there are possibilities of evil, which, if given away, will wreck all his good. Whatever good one has, he owes it to God, and continuance in well-doing is secured by the constant help of God; so that if the help of God be withdrawn, one is liable to be thrown over, as a child would be before a strong wind, when out of the grasp of his father's hand. This is illustrated in the personal history of Noah, Lot, Jacob, David, Solomon, and others. And how sadly Samson stands as an example of the same thing! Instead of silencing the voice of the tempter, he listened, and was persuaded; instead of overcoming, he was overcome. By the help of God, he could have resisted every solicitation, and remained faithful to the divine truth, which he had accepted, and loyal to the cause which he had espoused. But, no! He was strong in muscle, but weak in will. Moral courage is always greater than mere bodily strength.

INEVITABLE PUNISHMENT.

The hero who had never lost a battle for twenty years was at last delivered up into the hands of his enemies, as a wounded lion succumbs to a pack of yelping hounds. Not only was he fettered and imprisoned and mocked, but his eyes were put out, and he was made hopelessly blind. Note the greatness of his folly, in having broken his vow of consecration to the Lord, in having made friends with his enemies, in having been guilty repeatedly of fragrant sin like the heathen, notwithstanding his sacred position as the appointed deliverer of Israel. Great Samson fell! From strength to weakness; from hill-top to the deepest valley; from freedom to slavery; from glory to shame; from the brightest prospects to the darkest gloom! The man who gave liberty to Israel now grinds at the mill! He was strong in securing the freedom of others, but was weak in falling into sin and losing his own liberty.

SCINTILLATIONS.

1. Avoid over-confidence. The enemy attacks the weakest point.
2. Prosperity is a dangerous thing. Pray more when prosperity increases.
3. Don't play with your enemy's power magazine; it may explode when you least expect it.
4. Avoid the very appearance of evil. Satan can make a dark crime look like a holy thing.

5. It is almost always those points of character where one is especially liable to fall into some sin, that Satan attacks. We must watch and pray lest we enter into temptation, and take the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand in the evil day.

POINTS FOR THE PRESIDENT.

Give this topic a practical turn. Have some one, in a brief paper or address, open the discussion of the subject: "Weak points in our Epworth League," and then have the members present state their views. It is a great gain to be conscious of our points of weakness. And knowing them, let us take immediate steps to correct them. Have the topic considered, however, from the spiritual point of view first.

JULY 28.—"MISSIONS: TRUE PHILANTHROPY."

Gal. 5, 1-10.

HOME READINGS.

- Mon., July 23. Missions defined. Mark 13, 10; Isa. 55, 10-13
 Tues., July 23. Benevolence vs. beneficence. Jas. 2, 15-17; Matt. 25, 41-45
 Wed., July 24. Blessing ourselves. Ps. 41, 1-3; Acts 20, 35
 Thu. July 25. Obeying the Master. . . . Luke 10, 39-57
 Fri. July 26. Galia for the kingdom. Acts 4, 31-37; 11, 19-21; 16, 10-15
 Sat. July 27. Jesus' type of philanthropy. Matt. 13, 30-36

"With sympathies large enough to enfold
 All men as brothers, is better than
 gold."

Philanthropy means friendship for man. And by man is meant not only the members of our own family, the inhabitants of our own community, the citizens of our own country, but all humanity whom we reach and bless. Our Saviour summing up all of his commandments, declared as one of the second part of the decalogue, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." And by neighbor he explained to mean, any one in need of help. The Christian, therefore, is called upon to have love for his kind, a love that will prompt him to deeds of mercy and kindness.

HOW TO LOOK AT IT!

It will be profitable to regard our subject not only in its application to missions, as suggested by Lefroy, but in a general sense of doing good to all men.

1. A precious thing—opportunity. People about making time for this or that purpose. The time is really made for us, but we are often too idle or too careless to use it for the proper end. Opportunities of usefulness are almost of incessant occurrence. Chances of doing good are presented every day. And what a blessing each one might be in this old world if he would only seize and worthily use the opportunities that come and go—a blessing to others in the distribution of sympathy and deeds of love; a blessing to himself, for good deeds performed for others return to enrich the giver's bosom.

2. One's whole life—an opportunity. There is such a thing as a useful life, a noble life, though all lives must needs contain many neglected opportunities. And every one must join in the mournful cadences of the poet:

"Of all sad words of pen or tongue,
 The saddest are these—it might have been."

As a series of opportunities, every life is woefully imperfect. But as one great opportunity, the Christian's life is not utterly unworthy of the example of Christ. Let every one have a golden thread of right intention running through his life. Let every young Christian have a constant design to love humanity, an active purpose for philanthropy in its

broadest sense, and daily openings for its exercise shall not be wanting. The continuous opportunity of life must be utilized, if the particular opportunities of doing good in a practical way are to be turned to the best account.

3. The field of philanthropy is wide. Wherever men are found it is possible to do them good. We may touch only a few persons, but each of these in contact with others, and a holy influence emanating from one individual may result in the blessing of thousands. To do great things with great powers is easy enough; but things so done may be undone so. The glory of Christianity has always been that it does great things with small powers, or powers that men regard as small. Good work done by many hands is better than the extended philanthropy of an individual; for what is this but the effort of one man to make amends for the neglect of a thousand? The "pray, study, give" plan, with which all our Leagues should be familiar, is admirably adapted to use the ability of every follower of Christ to extend the kingdom of God in the world—each one praying, each one studying, each one giving, that the Gospel may be taken to the regions beyond and to the neglected fields at home.

4. Some have a special claim to our philanthropy. Though it is true that all men have a claim on our Christian philanthropy, yet some are entitled to first consideration. A man does not become a better citizen when he spurns his own family and neglects the duties nearest him. On the contrary, the noblest philanthropist is the most affectionate father, the most attentive brother or sister. He who loves most widely in the world, loves most intensely in his own home. So it will be with the true believer in his outlook for good in the world. He will begin with those who are called by the common name and worship the common Lord, and from these he will go on with his good work, but refreshed, to the great mass of humanity. This was exactly the spirit of our Lord's commission to his disciples: "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." Jerusalem, first at home; Judea, then a widening of the field; Samaria, still a wider sphere; uttermost parts, earth's remotest borders.

A HELPFUL OUTLINE.

Subject: Well-doing.

1. It should be fruitful. It is possible to have a clear idea of Christian truth, and to talk well, and yet be idle and useless.

2. It must have the right standard. It is easy to do as others are doing; but are they doing well. Practice must be guided by holy precept.

3. It must have the right motive. Many are desirous of doing what is literally the right thing, but they do it with improper motives. The proper motives are: (a) Love. 2 Cor. 5, 14. (b) Gratitude. Ps. 116, 12. (c) Compassion. 2 Cor. 5, 11. (d) Desire to imitate Christ. 1 Peter 2, 21.

SPARKS FROM ANOTHER ANVIL.

We sow money, and we reap lives.
 We sow prayers, and we reap conversions.

We sow Bibles, and we reap churches.
 We sow tracts, and we reap tears of penitence.

We sow hospitals, and we reap hosannas.

We sow missionary volunteers, and we reap an army of the Lord.

Grief over the sin of others is one of the best safeguards against sin in one's self.