

From Presumptuous Sins.

There is a good old prayer in the Bible to be kept from presumptuous sins. It is well for men in business to repeat it when the temptations to run hazardous risks are so abundant. The most disgraceful fall I ever witnessed in a prominent church member arose from his own presumption that he could safely use a small part of a trust fund committed to him, and would certainly replace it. Instead of replacing it, he took more, and he soon found himself on a toboggan slide that carried him down to destruction. Venturing on God may be a noble act of faith; venturing on self is often an act of fatal folly. A good rule is never to do what we cannot conscientiously ask God to prosper—and never to go where we cannot ask our Master to go with us.—The Evangelist.

The New Year.

Father, let me dedicate
All this year to Thee,
In whatever worldly state
Thou wilt have me be.
Not from sorrow, pain or care,
Freedom dare I claim;
This alone shall be my prayer,
Glorify Thy name.

If in mercy Thou wilt spare
Joys that yet are mine;
If on life serene and fair,
Brighter rays may shine,
Let my glad heart, while it sings,
These in all proclaim,
And, whatever the future brings,
Glorify Thy name.

"Righteous Abel."

Abel was no orator. What he said we do not know; but we know how he lived. It is not a man's talk that is easiest to survive; it is fidelity that conains the inherent promise of immortality. Yet, as a man speaks out of the abundance of his heart, we may be sure that Abel's words were a sure index of his character, and that if any of them had been preserved, they would be worthy. The words which express a faithful life have abiding influence, even though the words themselves are forgotten. Character is immortal.

Dr Spencer tells us that, out of two hundred and thirty-five hopeful converts in his church, one hundred and thirty-eight were under twenty, only four had passed their fiftieth year. I have been permitted during my ministry to receive nearly one thousand persons into the church on confession of their faith, and not one dozen of these had outgrown their fiftieth year. I did indeed once baptize a veteran of eighty-five, but the case was so remarkable that it excited the talk and wonder of the town. Such late repentances are too much like what the blunt, dying soldier called "flinging the fag-end of one's life into the face of the Almighty."—T. L. Cuyler, D. D.

What is your most influential organ? Your tongue. What commandment is most frequently broken? The ninth. (It's against false witness—but you ought to know.) Probably not oftener than once a year will it be necessary or helpful for you to say anything depreciatory of any one else. For the rest of the time, if you can't say something good of men, don't talk about them at all. Talk about automobiles.

Influence is as inseparable from character as the fragrance is from the flower, or the shadow from the substance.—W. M. Taylor, D. D.

Our Young People

Abiding Influence,*

The Echo of Our Lives

BY ARTHUR W. KELLY.

It was an old idea, not altogether left behind even yet, that the stars have a strange power to sway our lives. Stronger forces that shape our course come from the beings of this world. But many of these seem almost as far away in time as the stars are distant in space. The words of the great and the deeds of the good in all the past may be focused on us now so as to affect us powerfully.

But it does not concern us so much, perhaps, now to note what others' lives are doing for us as to think of the part that our lives will likewise have in shaping others. It is not left for us to settle whether or not they shall do this. A grain of musk does not have to do anything, and does not seem to part with any of itself, to leave behind it a scent that will cling for years and will tell where it has been. Actions that smell sweet leave a lingering odor like that from the broken alabaster which has filled the world as once it filled the room; and this result follows without regard to the design of the one that does the act.

Each man's life is thus in some measure echoed by every one that comes within his reach, and so is passed on to others. This is true not only of the conscious or unconscious influence of the life as a whole. Not simply what one is, but what one says, what one does has its effect. A single false step may be all that some will ever know of us, and it may be enough to turn their feet into the wrong path. How can any one avoid leading others into the wrong road except by keeping close to the Guide?

Do not Forget.

The permanency of influence is the most solemn fact of eternity. There is nothing sadder than that evil influences never die, and nothing gladder than that the good lives and grows on forever.

Why, then, should we weaken men when we should help them to be eternally strong? Why advise the reading of a worthless book when there are so many good ones? Why soil our lips and the memory of our hearers with unclean speech or hurtful gossip when chaste and worthy words abound? Why do an eternal wrong of any kind, when the time for doing immortal good is so short?

The dearest and vainest hope of the bad man should be that his influence might be buried with his bones; but the righteous man knows that the good as well as the evil that men do lives after them.

For Daily Reading.

- Mon., Jan. 14.—Purified by the word.
John 15: 1-5
- Tues., Jan. 15.—Generating influence.
Ps. 51: 6-13
- Wed., Jan. 16.—Right and wrong influences.
2 Kings 21: 1-9 2 Chron. 9: 1-7
- Thurs., Jan. 17.—The influence of the cross.
John 12: 27-32
- Fri., Jan. 18.—The influence of Jesus.
2 Cor 4: 5-11
- Sat., Jan. 19.—Influence with God.
Gen. 32: 24-29
- Sun., Jan. 20.—Topic. Abiding influence.
Heb. 11: 4; Matt. 26: 13

*Topic for January 29.—Scripture reference; Heb. 11: 4; Matt. 26: 13.

Hints for Talks And Testimonies.

Why ought one seek to gain influence?
How can one's influence be strengthened?
What are some of the ways in which persons are most easily influenced?

Why is unconscious influence often the strongest?

How far can we control our influence?
Why are opportunities for influence especially great in this age of the world?

Why are some opportunities for influence especially open to the young?

When one's influence has been bad, what can be done to change it?

Why may influence be expected to abide when used for Christ than when sought for self?

Give an illustration of a lasting influence for good.

The Importance of Self-Control.

Among the minor virtues probably the habit of self control in speech holds the most important place in the life of a woman. The acquirement of this habit must begin early or it will never be attained save with great difficulty. It must be formed in girlhood if it is not well started in childhood. I have seen the happiness of many a fair life ruined by the want of power to suppress the word of bitterness, contempt and anger, even under what might be called "reasonable provocation." There are times when one's only duty is to keep from talking. There are times when keeping still is wisdom, love Christianity.

How to Backslide.

A writer in the Evangel gives certain inflexible rules for backsliding. He says that just listening to preachers, and scarcely bowing the head when others pray, will no more nourish the soul than watching a train speed by will carry one across the country. If you want to backslide, he says, follow these rules:

1. Be careless in prayer.
2. Hear the sermon but do not live it.
3. Aimlessly read the Bible.
4. Seek much amusement.
5. Neglect the means of grace.
6. Be too busy to take time to be holy.
7. Have no noble purpose and aim.
8. Yield to selfishness.
9. Criticise the sermon and the service.
10. Stand idle in God's vineyard.
11. Have loose views about sin.
12. Do not keep the fourth commandment.—Selected.

Prayer is not merely the cry of the suppliant for mercy; it is the highest forth-putting of his will by man, knowing himself to be of divine origin, created for and capable of being, in king like liberty, the executor of the counsels of the Eternal.—Andrew Murray.

There is no sort of wrong deed of which a man can bear the punishment alone; you can't isolate yourself, and say that the evil which is in you shall not spread.—George Eliot.

The serene, silent beauty of a holy life is the most powerful influence in the world, next to the might of God.—Pascal.