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Turned Aside Quickly

By Rev. M. MacGillivray, D.D.

The story is given with utmost dramatic vividness in the thirty-second chapter of Exodus. Moses was absent getting the law, and the people were left to themselves for a little while. Apostasy and degeneration were rapid. The "calf" was set up in the midst of the camp. Degeneration always is rapid. When anything begins to spoil, whether in the pantry or in the soul, it spoils quickly. The branch cut from the vine soon withers. Growth is slow, decay and destruction are rapid. I can break a large chunk of coal with one blow of the ax, and burn the pieces in the grate in a few minutes; but that same chunk was tens of thousands of years in the making at God's hands.

It is easy to spoil anything, to destroy anything. A fool can injure, derange, ruin the work of many wise men during a long period of time. It requires time and skill and devotion to produce things; even a little misadventure or carelessness may seriously affect them. The large lens of a modern telescope may require years in the manufacture of it; the rubbing of one's thumb on the surface of the finished glass will injure it. A man spends a life-time in building up a business; but one false step, one rash speculation may lay it in ruins.

Of all things, character is the most easily injured, and injury comes from within rather than from without. Human character is so complex and delicate, the latest, the noblest addition the Creator has made to life in the world. Therefore we must not allow anything to imperil so sacred a treasure as the intellectual and moral life of ourselves and others. Life growth, organic growth,

is slow; dissolution, organic dissolution, is rapid. Moral growth is slow; deterioration is rapid. With heavy, cumbrous, leaden feet we climb the steep road which leads to the upper places. With the utmost ease we slip into the wrong way. It is down-grade, and every additional step accelerates the speed.

Even the strongest man is walking by the edge of his own grave. A false step, one sin, one blunder, may lead to irreparable losses. Every life is a continual peril, and can be sustained only by unceasing prayer. Therefore, "pray without ceasing", "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe".

Kingston, Ont.

Created, not Manufactured

By Rev. Professor R. E. Welsh, D.D.

The Christlike character, with its rich graces in flower and fruit, is not a manufacture, not made by rules and regulations, "not of works"; but is a creation, is born of grace, springs out of an inspiration is breathed into life by love and hope.

It has been said, that the merely moral man is the legal document, formulated and dry; the Christian soul is the poem, the lyric, "built to music", built to love and the lofty inspirations of the Christian vision. It is an echo of another's words to say that saintliness is the poetry of character. For this reason there should always be a certain charm and afflatus about the Christian life. Referring to the sweet-faced children, Longfellow has said:

"Ye are better than all the poems
That ever were written or read,
For ye are living poems,
And all the rest are dead."