

ON PLAIN SPEAKING

WHEN OUTSPOKEN CHARACTERIZATION OF A THING IS BEST.

"FOOLS MAKE A MOCK AT SIN."

Solemn Words For Those Who Daily With Evil Indulgence, Make a Mock of Danger, and Are Headless of Admonition Until It Is Too Late—The Moral of Foolhardy.

Entered according to Act of Parliament of Canada, in the year 1902, by William Baily, of Toronto, at the Dept. of Agriculture, Ottawa.

Chicago, April 19.—In this sermon the preacher draws a realistic picture of the numerous class that dally with evil indulgence, making a mock of danger and heedless of admonition until it is too late. The text is Proverbs xiv, 9, "Fools make a mock at sin."

There are times when hints and delicate phraseology are inadequate for useful purpose, and when the kindest and wisest course is to use plain, outspoken characterization shot forth on arrows of denunciation and exhortation. So in my text Solomon says plainly that the man who mocks at sin is a fool. When the human body is slowly but surely being eaten up by a cancer, it is time to use the surgeon's knife. The gangrened limb needs amputation, not balm or plasters or poultices or fragrant ointments. And when men and women, with wide open eyes deliberately place themselves in a position where they may inhale the fetid atmosphere, reeking with the deadly germs of that contagious and fatal plague called sin, it is high time that some one should be bold enough to stigmatize them by an appropriate name. They are not misguided children who are merely lost in the crooked byways of life's journey. They can see the evil results of sin everywhere they go if they will only look as they are capable of looking. They are not mental weaklings who have been confined behind the iron bars of a lunatic asylum. They can think, and clearly think, if they will and do what they ought to do. Such men and women are displaying suicidal folly, and the only appropriate name for them is that which Solomon applies to them; they are fools.

The same kind of warning against sin Hugh Latimer gave when he sent to Henry VIII, the king, the present of a New Testament, with these pungent words written in plain letters upon the fly leaf: "For this ye know that no unclean person hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." The same kind of warning against sin in high places John Knox used to give when as court preacher he would look down from his pulpit and denounce the sins of his ruler until the beautiful Mary, Queen of Scots, would grit her teeth and turn pale and clutch her tiny fists in paroxysms of rage. Let me show you why the mockers at sin are fools; also why men and women in the daily walks of life should kneel every morning and evening and ask the Heavenly Father to protect and guide and save them from the evil temptations which beset them everywhere they go.

Evil temptations invariably are introduced to their victim in a seemingly harmless way. They seek your companionship at first as friends, and not as enemies. They do not approach you glaring and convulsively working their claws and leap at you, as the man eating monster might try to get at your throat when in all his fury he is caged in the zoological gardens of Calcutta. But temptations come to you at first with the soft fur and the purring salutation of the little kitten which might nestle in your lap. They come insidiously, as the cholera might reach you wrapped in the beautiful garment which is sent to you from far-off India. They come with all the fragrance of the poisonous leaf which brings death to every creature that touches it. Dr. Cuyler once gave a wonderful description of one of the poisonous trees, aptly called the Judas tree. He said that the blossoms of this tree are of a brilliant red. From far and near the fatal beauty of those flowers attracts the insects. Every bee wandering in search of honey, that alights upon the blossoms imbibes a fatal opiate and drops to the earth. Beneath this enticing tree the earth is strewn with the victims of its fatal fascination. That fatal plant is a vivid symbol of the way that sin first appeals to its victims. Sin in the beginning fascinates the eyes as with the brightest of floral colors. It fascinates the ear as with the sweetest of harmonies. It soothes the sense of touch as with the velvety softness of a tiger's paw, while beneath it is concealed the sharp claw. It first woos its victim to pillow his head upon the lap of a beautiful Delilah, and while the sinner sleeps his lips are parted in a smile as he dreams the happiest of dreams.

"Sin is a sweet poison," once wrote Anthony Burgess. "It tickleth while it stabbeth. The first thing it does is to bewitch, then to put out the eyes, then to take away the sense of feeling." It is when the temptation is concealed and hidden, among the attractive surroundings that it has the greatest danger. The mighty furred brute of the Rocky mountains is not caught by the steel trap lying unconcealed in the open pathway. He shambles along, sniffs it, pushes it aside with his paw, moves round it or leaps over it, but when that trap is concealed under the green grass a short distance from the tempting meat then the mountain bear has need for fear. No sooner is the great paw placed upon the harmless looking covering than the steel teeth of that trap spring shut. The massive limb is held in a vise, and the great beast is as helpless as a murderer about to be executed in the prison yard.

Evil temptations should not be de-

ried. They assail a man at his weakest points of character. They do not try to assault his impregnable citadel or attack him at those points of his nature that are protected by massive walls, so high and thick that the heaviest of battering rams can only make the slightest indentations, but they try to destroy their victims by strategy, by throwing them off their guard; wounding Achilles not through the breastplate, but in the heel; conquering Alexander the Great not with the sword, but with the wine cup; making Thomas Cranmer sign his recantation not by the power of argument, but by the power of fear. It only needs a comparatively light blow between the eyes to stun the most powerful animal which was ever driven into the Chicago slaughter houses. It only needs one small sinful temptation to appeal to us in the right way to destroy any man unless he is upheld by a divine panoply.

Evil temptations always assail their victims at their weakest points. Is there any man foolish enough to think that his character is so perfectly formed that there is no weak point in his moral armor? A constructor who would not try to strengthen his sagging girder is a criminal. A wall that is the catastrophe when a few years ago a great bridge across the river Seine broke under the feet of the multitudes merely because one of the iron links snapped. Poor is the general who would not be vigilant about the weakest part of his fortifications. And can it be that with all your brain and force and past experience you do not realize there is some helplessness. Some weakness, in your nature? Have you never been tempted in the past and overthrown? Can you not realize that you may be tempted again in the future and overthrown in the same way?

By being aware of and trying to strengthen our weaknesses we are able to supplement our strength. A well known and thrilling story is told that the engineer of the Holland dikes was one night invited to a party. That afternoon an awful storm arose. As the hour drew near for the festival the engineer wavered, but at last he said: "No; I will go to the dikes, where my duty calls. My services may be needed there." When he arrived upon the dikes, he found that under the ceaseless bombardment of the sea some of the stones in one place had become loosened and a little water was beginning to trickle through. That little stream was gradually growing larger. Over the walls the engineer went. He tried to stop that hole first with stones. Then he took off his coat and jammed it into the loosened rocks. "More clothes!" And he made his men take off their garments, and at last the dikes were saved. Had that water been allowed to trickle on and had not the weak part of the wall been strengthened all the dikes would have been swept away, and thousands of men, women and children would have been drowned.

Solomon well said that when a man with his moral weaknesses scoffs at sin he is a fool. I heard the reformer John Gough, after he had been forty years a teetotaler, say: "Rather than eat a piece of mince pie flavored with brandy I would cut off my right arm. I would no more touch it, knowing my physical and moral weakness for drink than I would be willing to touch a lighted match to a keg of gunpowder." It is sometimes more manly to run from sin than it is to fight sin. God gave us two feet as well as two fists. That means there are certain times when we should flee from temptation; that we should never allow ourselves to be placed in a position where we may be tempted. Temptation always seditiously strikes its victim at his weakest point. Therefore "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Evil indulgences should not be derided. They dull the moral sensibilities. Their sinful effects cannot be seen so much in the wasting away of the moral tissues, as Bright's disease might wreck the kidneys or tuberculosis might eat away the lungs. But evil indulgences have a hardening or a dulling effect, as cirrhosis hardens the liver or as paresis affects the cell tissues of the brain. It is said that when a man's right side is benumbed through the effect of a paralytic stroke the doctor can take a pin and drive it into his limb and the patient is oblivious to the sense of pain. So when a human being is suffering under the paralyzing effect of sin he loses his moral sensibilities. What appeared to him once as wrong now appears to be right, and what was once right now does not appear to have any special significance in his life.

The gradual dulling or the paralyzing of the moral sensibilities by the touch of sin may be seen in the life of a country boy who has come to live in our large cities. When that young man left home, he was as pure as his sister or his mother. He had a delicate, spiritual touch. He could distinguish right from wrong as readily as a trained artist's eye can tell the harmony of colors or a musician's ear can be shocked at the slightest discord. But after awhile that young man allows himself to be led into questionable enjoyments. When he first saw enchanting sin, a fiery blush mantled his cheek. But after awhile his perceptions are dulled; evil is no longer repulsive to him; he begins to believe that the theatre may have a beneficial influence. He can argue for it with a clear eye and a steady heartbeat. After awhile he can go and with absolute no qualms or upbraidings of conscience can sit and listen to the vilest of talks which are being uttered upon the stage; sit there, with a young girl by his side who is no more ashamed of what she sees and hears than is her masculine escort. The fact that the young man is able to argue with you and that he sees no wrong in watching a sinful play proves beyond a doubt that he has cirrhosis of the soul, a hardening of

the moral sensibilities, an inability to spiritually distinguish right from wrong.

Within the walls of my own church I have seen this paralyzing of the moral sensibilities by sin. I have seen a man who once led a noble woman to the marriage altar not only sacrifice himself, but sell his own child into sin for the gratification of quenching a drunkard's thirst. My brother and sister, with such examples before you of the metamorphosing power of sin, can you afford to run the risk of scoffing at sin? Are you not afraid that, as in Cleopatra's palace, you may be changed into the form of a human brute? Are you not afraid that by the touch of sin your constitution may become so hardened that you shall have no moral sensibilities left?

Evil temptations should not be derided. The depths of human misery into which they can fling their victims this side of the grave are unfathomable. It is upon the dark side of the results of sin I would speak. The trouble with many of our so-called Christian teachers is that we put a halo over sin. We picture temptation as a creature of beauty seated upon a silver cloud lined with gold. She comes in a hand some pack of cards and in the other a goblet of wine. The color of her cheek, the flowers caught in the folds of her garment, clinging about her lithe form, make her look so innocent one cannot help loving her, even though she may be bad. But I would show you a crouching demon whose only music is the agonizing cry of those whom he has got in his clutches, whose only joy is in tantalizing those whom he is destroying, and whose frightened, pleading eyes have no more effect upon his stony heart than the cry of the helpless fawn upon the boa constrictor who is wrapping his coils about the trembling body for the fatal hug.

The first steps to moral destruction may wind through a garden, but that floral pathway soon changes into the hilly road covered with jagged rocks and running by the side of yawning precipices. The bracelets of gold are soon changed into the handcuffs of steel. The merry-making will soon hear the echoes of their laughter in the shrieks of the doomed and lost. There is no permanent happiness in sin. Mark that, my brother—no real happiness in sin! Tell me, O husband, that you are happy? No, no! Any one who has heard John B. Gough describe the miseries of his past life knows that no drunkard is happy. Tell me that the libertine is happy when, by his crimes he lost the respect of all good men and women. Tell me that the gambler is happy? No, no! When he sat at the gaming table, he not only lost his honor, but his home, his business, his all. He cannot even buy a pair of shoes for his feet or a coat for his back. Let no man consent to be a mocking fool by supposing that an evil life ever brings happiness this side of the grave.

But how much more awful must be the evil results of sin on the other side of the grave! Can a tiger change his striped fur? Can a wolf change his hair? Can a man born in sin, reared in sin and living in sin and dying in sin be emancipated from sin merely because his body sleeps for a little while in the tomb? Oh, no! The soul that sin stains is the soul that must suffer the results of its sin unless Christ forgives those sins and washes them clean in the blood of the Lamb. And whenever there is sin, whether in this world or the next, there is agony. I do not care whether you call the pains of eternal punishment a "lake of fire and brimstone," a great, heaving, molten sea of burning lava, a dungeon or the haunting caverns of memory. The sinner dying unrepentant must suffer and suffer and suffer forever. The Bible declares it. We must believe it.

My brothers and sisters, who have heretofore been mocking at sin as I have been painting for you a picture, with the dark background of warning, will you not let me paint in the bright foreground the sweet, living light? Will you not let me describe for you the Christ who is ready to stand between you and all future temptation, the Christ who will not only forgive the past, but by his power will keep you in the future? Who is he? The Unchanging Rock, the Lily of the Valley, the Bright and Morning Star, the One who is altogether lovely, the One who is now standing by your side. Will you receive him? Will you not let Christ come into your heart? Ye mockers at sin, I would plead with you also. Come to the fountain of which if one drink he shall never thirst again. I would plead as I have never pleaded before. Why? Because I know that under your sneers and laughter you have a breaking heart. I know that you are at heart weary of your sin and dread its punishment. Come, then, and let Christ save you. Do not be kept back by the thought that you are too bad to be saved. You are invited and Christ assures you that none that come to him shall be cast out. I tell you this invitation is for all. Yes, it is for all. It is for you just as it was for that poor drunken loafer who crawled up to the altar in Pittsburgh many years ago. What is the good of trying to save him? Let him come to Christ. Let him say, "No good," answered Murphy, "for me to try to save him, but it is good to let God try." And God did save. He put his divine, loving, forgiving arm about Captain Barbour and the mocker at sin became a changed child in the King's palace. Oh, my sinful, sorrowing friends, will you cease to follow sin? Will you here and now surrender your life, your broken life, into the hands of the Divine Master? Then, at that glad moment, all the bad things which will ring out the tidings that an immortal is born again!

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an excess of oxygen, while life to an animal, is deadly to vegetable matter. This fact seems a provision of nature to protect man against germs.

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These are some of the known germ diseases. The cause of these troubles is germs, and germs only, and these germs must be killed before the trouble is ended. Medicine sometimes cures these troubles by helping Nature to overcome the germs, but the results are indirect and uncertain. Ozone always kills the germs, and the results are direct and sure. The best physicians and the largest hospitals now employ Ozone—not medicine—for germ troubles.

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Oh, deem not they are blessed alone Whose lives a peaceful tenor keep; The Power who pities man has shown A blessing for the eyes that weep.

The light of smiles shall fill again The lids that overflow with tears; And weary hours of woe and pain Are promises of happier years.

There is a day of sunny rest For every dark and troubled night; And grief may bide an evening guest, But joy shall come with early light.

And thou who o'er thy friend's low bier Shedd'st the bitter drops like rain, Hope that a brighter, happier sphere Will give him to thy arms again.

Nor let the good man's trust depart, Though life its common gifts deny— Tho' with a pierced and bleeding heart, And surned of men he goes to die.

For God has marked each sorrowing day And numbered every secret tear, And heaven's long age of bliss shall pay For all his children suffer here.

The carpenter doesn't use his level To make sure of a plum(b) pudding. Some men never make any mistakes because they never make any moves.

Mrs. Muggins—"He is so agreeable." Mrs. Buggins—"Yes, he never has any opinions of his own."

THE CLEVER BOYS

Artie's such a clever boy; He takes an egg, and you Behold him make a pass or two Before you in the air— A simple movement of the wrist, A sudden turn, a little twist— The egg is gone—but where? Yes, Artie's such a clever boy; His tricks are truly great; He draws nine dollars weekly; oh, You can't keep genius down! You know He might be getting eight.

Tommy's such a clever boy; His dancing's something fine; The girls make haste to get in line When he goes to the ball. So anxious are they not to miss The rollicking in dreamy bliss With him around the hall. Yes, Tommy's such a clever boy; His dancing's grand, they say; He's at the bundle counter, where He's been since '98, but there Must be a change some day.

Freddy's such a clever boy, Or so the girls declare; His wit is very rich and rare; His antics are immense. It's fun to hear the songs he sings And sit and hear him saying things Too cute for any sense. Yes, Freddy's such a clever boy Among the girls, but at The office where he draws his pay They give him eight a week and say He isn't earning that.

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