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A MAN NOT BETTER THAN HIS THOUGHTS.

A man can never be better than his thoughts. Motives and desires are the moral qualities of our actions. He who thinks basely is base. It is in this light that our Saviour in his sermon on the mount interprets obedience to the moral law. Man breaks the law by the desire of his heart as well as by his conduct. It is the evil wish as well as the vicious act that constitutes moral transgression. Evil in the thoughts corrupts the whole moral being. Disease in the blood is disease in the whole body. With impurities circulating in the blood, no one can be healthy, even though sores and blotches do not break out on the skin. Impure thinking engenders moral corruption, whether it break out into the sores of evil habits or not. When the currents of thought carry poison in them, the whole system must feel its pernicious effects. Of course, in employing this figure, we should not overlook the difference between temporary and chronic diseases. Leprosy is a very different thing from small pox. A man by long continuance in vice may have so permanently corrupted himself that he has contracted moral leprosy. That disease so thoroughly impregnating the whole being is incurable except by a miracle. But many a man contracts a temporary moral infection, which, like fever or small pox, requires only proper treatment for purification. For all such cases, prevention is better than cure. Let us avoid the causes of moral infection. When, however, we have really been stricken down, and the

stream of impure thoughts courses through our hearts, our only cure is with the great Physician. We should apply to Him at once, as David did, saying: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

There is a great deal of moral disease that never comes to the surface. The poison of evil thoughts works secretly, insidiously, slowly. Fruit good to look upon is often unpalatable, and sometimes poisonous to eat. In fact the character of the fruit is determined, not so much by the odour it emits, or the appearance it presents, as by the juices it secretes. A friend from the West Indies has given me an illustration on this point. He speaks in rapturous language about the sunny skies and luxuriant vegetation of these tropical isles. The rare and luscious fruits for which we pay so high may be found there, growing plentifully enough in the forests. Bad as well as good fruit, however, abounds. What would poison often looks better than what would nourish. There is a tall tree, with rich green foliage, that grows in fertile spots down in the valleys or up on the hillsides. It is often laden with the most delicious looking fruit, somewhat resembling our apple called golden pippin. The blossoms, bark and leaves shed a very fragrant odour all around it; but to eat of that fruit is certain death. To let a single drop of the juice fall on any part of the skin will produce a painful blister. That tree, however, is rarely found growing alone. Beside it is generally found the scraggy looking fig tree, with scanty foliage and uninviting like fruit.