

So goes the mighty St. Lawrence, never losing its way or changing its direction, for the thousand streams that fall into it on the right hand and on the left, but only using them to increase its current, and bearing them onward in its resistless course.

In the fashioning of character, as well as in the erection of buildings, an all-important point is the *foundation*. With multitudes the failure is just here. The foundation is bad, and, as a necessary consequence, the whole structure is insecure. There are some who build on *sensuality*. So did the prodigal, of whom we read in the gospel; but it brought him at last to herd with swine, and starve in the "far country." Some build on *covetousness*, and sacrifice conscience and self-respect to the greed of gold. So did the young man who came to Christ saying, "What shall I do that I may have eternal life?" and then, when Christ said, "Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven," "went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." So did the rich fool, who said, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years," but that very night he died a spiritual bankrupt. So did Judas, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, and the sad and hopeless end of a suicide proved the madness of his choice. Some, again, build on *ambition*. So did Alexander. He swept on his path of victory till the earth was subdued before him, and then wept because he had no more worlds to conquer. At last he set fire to a city, and died in a scene of debauchery. So did Cæsar; and yet having conquered 800 cities, and dyed his garments in the blood of one million of his foes, he was assassinated by his most intimate friends in the very place that had been the scene of his triumphs. So did Napoleon; but after being the scourge of Europe, and the desolator of his country, he died in captivity, unfriended and almost alone.

A few there are who build upon a firmer basis. Believing that existence is not bounded by the horizon of the present life, they choose *truth* for their foundation, and build for an eternal future. Setting before them an object worthy the dignity of redeemed manhood, they work at it with unfaltering hand. Out of the toil and the strife comes a character that is at once symmetrical and strong, and a life is developed the influence of which shall never die out of the world. Let us take heed, then, what we build and how we build it, for the structure when finished is to be the dwelling-place of the soul forever. Character is eternal, and he whose life has been a failure or a mistake, cannot return when life is ended to try again, or to rectify the mistakes he has made; for it has been settled by authority which none may dispute, that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

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THOUGH good works may be our Jacob's staff to walk with on earth, yet they cannot be our Jacob's ladder to climb to heaven with. To lay the salve of our services upon the wound of our sins is as if a man who is stung by a wasp should wipe his face with a nettle; or as if a person should busy himself in supporting a tottering fabric with a burning fire-brand.—*Secker*.