

THE BROAD STREET WORKER.

DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF BROAD ST. BAPTIST CHURCH, SUNDAY SCHOOL AND CAUSE OF CHRIST IN GENERAL.

VOL. II. No. 4.

WINSTON, N. C., JANUARY, 1894.

PRICE 5 CENTS.

Broad Street Pulpit.

ABUSK OF THE TONGUE.

FROM THE SEASIDE SERIES, BY REV. H. C. MOORE.

"Full of Deadly Poison" James 3:8.

The tongue is the vehicle of social enjoyment and the channel of useful information. It is a powerful instrument. It has affected more than the munitions of war. Its force has been recognized from the earliest times. David called it "a sharp sword." Jeremiah compares it to "an arrow;" James terms it "a fire, a world of iniquity;" Solomon declares, "Life and death are in the power of the tongue;" and Jesus Christ hangs upon it the destiny of the immortal soul; "By thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

Read its record in the pages of history. Aaron and Moses plead in the court of Pharaoh. The seers of Israel bewail Jewish declension. Jonah cries on the streets of Nineveh. Paul appears before Agrippa, on Mars' Hill and in Rome. There was Demosthenes in Greece. Cicero thundering from the Italian forum, Peter the Hermit preaching the crusades, Mirabeau in France, Burke in England, Webster in America. Every cause has its advocates. Liberty had its Patrick Henry. Temperance had its John B. Gough. Missions had its William Carey. Reformation had its Martin Luther. The pulpit had its Wesley, Whitfield and Spurgeon. Wonderful record! This little member has ushered in the sweetest eras of public and private prosperity. The most dreadful wars have been prefaced with the battle of tongues. Tongues have cursed nations and overthrown empires, and tongues have built up kingdoms, advanced civilization and established Christianity.

Thus the tongue is clothed with vast possibilities. It may be a messenger of peace on the herald of hatred and strife. It may be the flower of purity or the fang of venom. Too often is the latter the case! Too often is the tongue "full of deadly poison."

I FLATTERY. Said a certain famous writer: "Flattery is a sort of bad money to which our vanity gives currency." Johnson declared, "Of all wild beasts preserve me from a flatterer." The wisest have been seriously abused by flatterers. They are the worst kind of traitors. They strengthen imperfections, encourage evils, paint folly as virtue. They are base, creeping, cowardly. A flatterer is said to be a beast that biteth smiling, and David desired every flattering tongue to be cut out and destroyed.

"Smooth talk proves often sweet poison. Flattery is the very spring and mother of all iniquity; it blows the trumpet and draws poor souls into rebellion against God, as Sheba drew Israel against David; it put our first parents upon tasting the forbidden fruit; it put Absalom upon dethroning his father; it put Haman upon plotting the ruin of the Jews; it put Korah, Dathan and Abiram upon rebelling against Moses; it makes men call evil good, darkness light and light darkness. It puts men upon abusing God, slighting Christ and vexing the Spirit.

It unmans a man and makes him change pearls for pebbles, gold for counter. It makes a man judge himself wise when foolish; knowing, when he is ignorant; holy, when he is profane; free, when he is a prisoner; rich, when he is poor; high, when he is low; full, when he is empty; happy, when he is miserable." Let the flatterer curb his tongue and the flattered guard his footsteps.

II CRITICISM. While some tongues drop poisonous flattery, others emit venomous criticism. The flatterer is at one extreme and the cynic at the other. The cynic sees nothing good in anything or anybody. Nothing escapes his hypercritical allusions. His views are pessimistic from rind to core. No cloud for him has a silver lining. No aspiration is holy; no hope unpolluted. He attends church—the house, the people, the preacher, the prayer the sermon, the choir—everything is criticised. He goes to a political gathering, nothing escapes him. So it is in the social circle. In the "business world" he brands everything as reeking with the horrid filth of vicious corruption. The life-work of this critical-misanthrope is to magnify vice and ignore virtue.

Beecher draws this vivid pen picture of the cynic: "He is the human owl, vigilant in darkness and blind to light, mousing for vermin and never seeing noble game. He puts all human action into only two classes: Openly bad and secretly bad. His criticisms fall indiscriminately upon every lovely thing, like frost upon flowers. If a man is said to be chaste and pure, he will answer, 'Yes, in the daytime.' If a woman is pronounced virtuous, he will reply: 'Yes, as yet.' Mr A is a religious man: 'Yes on Sundays.' Mr B has just joined the church: 'Certainly, elections are coming on.' The minister is called an example of diligence: 'It is his trade.' Such a man is generous: 'Of other men's money.' This man is obliging: 'To lull suspicion and cheat you.' That man is upright: 'Because he is great.' Thus his eye strains out every good quality and takes in only the bad; to him religion is hypocrisy, honesty a preparation for fraud, and virtue only want of opportunity. The livelong day he will sit with sneering lips, uttering sharp speeches, in the quietest manner, and in polished phrase transfixing every character which is presented. 'His words are softer than oil, yet they are drawn swords!'"

The cynic is the pot calling the kettle of mankind black. He is covered with putrefying eezema laughing at a fever-blister on another man. He is swollen and blotched with leprosy, yet he grins at a wart. With a huge beam in his own eye he spends his life plucking at the mote in other people's eyes. Base example for youth! Poor ideal of character! Then abandon the morbid aspirations of the cynic, or "cease to call yourself a man."

III TALE-BEARING. The tale-bearer is one of the most devoted servants of the devil. He is the devil's packhorse. Satan loads him with a lot of lies concerning the character and reputation of a neighbor, and he goes here and there faithfully carrying out the orders of his satanic majesty. He is a vessel, with a demon at the helm, bearing calumny and hate and blown by the breezes of hollow rumor. He is a serpent, lurking in the weeds along human pathways, coiled, and ready to spring upon his victim. A bane to his family, a curse to society, a

terror to his associates, a mystery to himself, he strides the earth to defame the fairest record and scorch the noblest character and wither the loftiest reputation.

The tale-bearer can gain no comfort from a perusal of Scripture. The Law expressly said: "Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer; I am the Lord." Solomon denominates him as a revealer of secrets and the cause of wounds.

Paul expresses his contempt for such characters. The ancients used to say that the teller and bearer of false stories ought to equally be hanged—but one by the tongue and the other by the ears. Sanity and Scripture unite in branding the tale-bearer as one of the foulest pests and plagues of decent society. Sheridan spoke in his "day" about a set "of malicious, prating, prudent gossips, both male and female, who murder characters to kill time; and will rob a young fellow of his good name before he has years to know the value of it." Such men and women are moral incendiaries. As Nero set Rome on fire to see the conflagration, so some execrable fiends in human shape delight to circulate slanderous reports which kindle heart-burnings and generate flames of wrath that may sometimes destroy families, courts, cities and kingdoms. They are diabolical gluttons to "gulp down slander and calumny as if they were dainty and delicious viands." They store up as necessary provisions for morbid appetites, every cargo brought in by rumor in order that they may fatten and grow on the desperation of human character. They are thieves to flech from a neighbor his good name and wither a lovely reputation and blast brilliant prospects. They are felonious brutes to thus know at the vilest of the race and crush its best interests. The forked lightning, the howling cyclone, the thunderous earthquakes, the raging flood, the belching volcano, may leave a track of awful desolation, but these horrors are tame and their terrors are petty compared with the ruinous effects of the infamous back biter and tale-bearing busy-body. Let Christian tongues bear a nobler message or be doomed to eternal silence.

IV FRIVOLITY. Many a tongue is consecrated to downright foolishness. Solid thought is foreign to its existence. It never conveys anything that would feed and nourish the mind or soul of man. It revels in the field of joke and jest, wit and humor. Its mission is to undermine the fabric of intellectual fertility with heartless jocularity. It indicates a loose mind, a thin soul, and a flimsy character.

Now, I do not condemn mirthfulness. Its existence in a purified state is conducive to cheerful living and good morals. Often a flash of humor will accomplish more in a sick room than a cart load of medicine. It may sometimes bear a truce into hearts untouched by a thousand sermons. God never intended for man to live in painful seclusion, sad, morose and melancholy. We are social creatures, and the cultivation of this instinct should take place in the open air and sunshine of hearty good cheer. "It lightens labor, makes the very face of care to shine, diffuses cheerfulness among men, multiplies the sources of harmless enjoyment, gilds the dark things of life and heightens the lustre of the brightest."

But in the abyss of cheap wit has been buried the usefulness of many a brilliant intellect. In the caldron of silly jokes many souls have been

ruined. Many a noble vessel of character has gone down in the waves of mirthful folly. Wit has made its wounds and slain its heroes. The aspiring jester sells his soul for a heartless joke. His witticisms are leveled at idleness and industry; his batteries are turned upon lawyer, doctor, politician, preacher, farmer, instructor and author. The whims of society and the greenness of back-woodsmen are treated to his foolishness. His whole time is given to the invention and rehearsal of puns, quibbles, catches, feeble witticisms and threadbare stories. He and his circle of ten gather and giggle while they near perdition almost enveloped in its trifling smoke. Yet some church members prefer the fame of the wit to that of the Christian. They would rather tell a joke than quote a passage from God's word. They would rather hear a humorous anecdote than a Christian experience. They court folly and despise wisdom. They carry out the prediction of Isaiah: "Ye shall conceive chaff and bring forth stubble."

V VULGARITY. The tongue is oftentimes the outlet of a licentious mind. It is the channel of the foulest impurities. It is a wastepipe bearing horrid filth from an unclean heart. Some brains are the source and center of vulgarity. Some fondle and cherish obscenity as the miser hugs his gold or the heathen adores his idols. The hyena grabs out dead bodies from their graves for his food, and the vulgar man has for his meat and drink the rottenest vices of mankind. Vultures gnaw at corpses; he sucks the bone of obscenity. The hyena and vulture as scavengers fulfil the law of God; the vulgar man degrades himself to perform the work of devils. He is the herald of lewdness and unchastity. He is the figure-head of low filth and base indecency. His tongue is an eating cancer, his talk a social sore.

Such a man is unwelcome to the privileges of decent company. His imaginations are full of lust and licentiousness. The pictures in his pockets foster unchaste thoughts. The vulgar novel claims his undivided attention. His tongue wags on the lowest level. He who indulges in vulgarity disgraces society, undermines Christianity and dishonors God. The penalty should be social ostracism, swift and certain; and it will lead in the end to banishment from the presence of God. Down with obscenity and up with chastity! Down with vulgarity and up with decency!

VI LYING. It is unnecessary to comment on the folly and sinfulness of this common abuse of the tongue. The liar is recognized in human law as a disgraceful pest to human society. The man who can deliberately tell a bare-faced lie is either cursed with satanic brass or emboldened by idiotic knavery. Falsehoods are alarmingly frequent; some are silly enough to believe that their success in business must be sustained by trifling untruths. Others think a few little lies will remove the stones of difficulty from their pathway; still others do the devil's work for him without charging him a cent for services—just lie out of love for the wily old serpent! Yet he pays them, alas! in unwelcome coin. If truthfulness is rewarded, lying will not be unnoticed. The father if lies will gather his devoted adherents in the end to feed them on the fruit of their own devices. "All

[Continued on Second Page.]