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A. T. HUDSON, D. D., Cor. Editor

## AN IMPORTANT NOTICE.

Members of the Annual Conference, Clerical or Lay, who do not expect to attend the approaching session will please write me immediately.

E. A. YATES.

For the ADVOCATE.

## EARS AND EYES.

BY REV. DR. C. F. DEEMS.

There is a point of ethics connected with the use of the ears which is important in that particular connection and valuable on account of the general principle involved. When articulate utterances are made within hearing distance we can avoid the entrance of the sounds into our ears only by an effort. The hearing in that case is the product of a law of Nature. A man is not responsible for having heard under these circumstances, provided he has not placed himself where he supposed he would hear these utterances. It is the voluntary giving of our ears to the voice of the speaker which makes us responsible for the moral effect of his language upon our character.

This distinction, we think, is not ordinarily kept in mind in the usual employment of the English words "to hear;" but it is distinctly marked by a careful employment of the verbs "to hear" and "to listen." To hear always signifies the reception of the articulate sound; but to listen implies not only that, but also a desire and an effort to receive the sound. Whenever we use the word "hear," meaning to listen, we give it a kind of emphasis. "Hear my words," is uttered in a tonesignifying that we desire the hearer to be a careful listener.

Now, listening is a very important matter. Our intellects and our whole character are greatly influenced by what we hear, and that influence is intensified and perpetuated by any voluntary attention which we may give to him that speaks. This may be illustrated by the address of our Heavenly Father to Adam after his transgression. "Because thou hast hearkened into the voice of thy wife and hast eaten of the tree." It was not simply the eating, nor Adam's hearing the voice of his wife, but it was because he intelligently put himself in the way of the evil. He hearkened, or listened. In Proverbs i. 27, it is written, "Cease my son, to hear the instruction that causes to err from the words of knowledge." In this passage, in the original Hebrew, the verb "hear," is the same as the verb "heathen" in Genesis iii. 17. It is the sin of listening to the tempter. It is the sin of hearing anything against God.

In this day of excessive freedom it behooves us to give this subject some attentive consideration. Young men are recommended to go everywhere and hear everything. They are charged with being bigoted if they refuse to hear radical and infidel addresses in which attacks are made upon the faith in which they have been reared. It is represented as being indicative of narrowness and a want of sympathy with free thought and free speech when men decline to hear addresses which attack their faith. This is one of the devices of the enemy.

Certainly some things ought to be considered settled. Certainly there must be some sanctity in the relations of the members of the human race to one another, and to God. Surely a girl is not to be considered narrow and not open to the truth because she is not willing to go into a public assembly to hear her father abused. Certainly a son is not to be respected who voluntarily attends an assembly to hear what can be said against the chastity of his mother. Why then should young people allow themselves to be driven into places where they hear something said against God; His word ridiculed; His government criticised; His name blasphemed? So far from its not being right to avoid putting oneself in this position, it is really a sin to listen to the tempter voluntarily for one moment. The instruction which causes us to err from the words of knowledge is something systematically delivered. In passing a school in which there is such teaching one may accidentally hear that which gives him an idea of what is taught. If his instincts be clean he will at once resist what he has heard. The sin begins when he begins to listen. Adam should have closed his ear the very moment he began to perceive that Eve was talking

against God, in that she was saying something which would cause him to err from the word of knowledge.

And we must keep in perpetual remembrance that what is true of the ear is true of the eye. One may incidentally look upon a bad picture or a bad page. The moment that he has an intimation that it is contrary to good morals and the teaching of the Holy Scripture he will turn away. The moment he begins to gaze at the picture, or to peruse the page, that very moment he is voluntarily putting himself under the power of the tempter. The tempter's responsibility began when he commenced to draw that picture or write that page; and ours commences when we begin voluntarily to look at it. From every man or woman that disparages, and from every picture or book that is intended to disparage my father or my mother, my God or my Bible I am bound to turn with dislike. The more one cultivates the love of the truth, the more one will hate error; and one of the most alarming things to any man ought to be that he loves the error because it is pleasant; as one should feel himself in danger when he discovers that he is tasting poison because it is sweet.

For the ADVOCATE.

REV. JOSEPH E. DOUGLAS, D. D.

In Memoriam.

Rev. Joseph E. Douglas, D. D., whose death is announced in the *Advocate* of Nov. 1st, as having occurred October 24th, was a member of the N. Mississippi Conference. As I was associated with him in that Conference several years and for two years pastor of his family, perhaps I am as well prepared to speak of him as any one in our Conference.

Dr. Douglas joined the Tennessee Conference in 1834, and traveled two years as junior preacher on Duck River and Franklin Circuits. He then located for the purpose of entering LaGrange College, then under the Presidency of Dr. R. Paine. He pursued his studies successfully and graduated. Subsequently he entered the itinerancy; but spent most of his life as an educator. The instruction of girls was his chosen department in this important work. He sustained himself well in it. Having secured as his wife a lady of very superior qualifications, he managed for quite a number of years the affairs of Franklin Female College, Holly Springs, Miss. Then was President several years of Marshall Female Institute, Miss. Having resigned that, he removed to Iuka, Miss., and took charge of the Female College at that place. Here in 1872 or 1873 his wife died. She was almost idolized by him, and never a man felt more seriously such a loss than Dr. Douglas. This greatly depressed him and led him in about two years to give up teaching and take pastoral work. He was appointed in 1876 to Clarksdale, and in 1877 to Cherry Hill, small pleasant stations, but both in the Mississippi Bottom, so called. That section is regarded unhealthy. He was never robust. The country was not healthful for him. He was so enfeebled that at the ensuing Conference he took a superannuated relation. This he sustained with constantly declining strength till his death. He was a nephew of the late distinguished Thos. Logan Douglas. Dr. D. was a man of great purity of character, a devout Christian, a catholic man in spirit; an earnest preacher, who always in preaching came near the Cross and its hallowed memories. He was a successful educator. He did a great work for the women of Mississippi and Tennessee, hundreds of whom he returned to their homes well instructed in science, literature and religion. He seemed never to think his work done till he had led them to the knowledge of the truth in Christ. Doubtless he now rests with the loved ones gone before. N. Mississippi Conference during the year; has, like our own been called to mourn the death of four of its venerable and venerated members. Loudly are we called to be in duty and readiness to depart.

THOS. S. CAMPBELL.

There is a mountain pass in Switzerland over which the traveler is conducted blindfold. He might lose his footing if he caught but one bewildering glimpse of the chasm below. In like manner a wise love conceals from us those circumstances that might distract our attention from the immediate line of duty, withholds the knowledge that might occasion bewilderment and a fall.—*Chorist Stanford.*

## UNCHARITABLE CRITICISM.

BY R. T. NABORS.

Fault-finding is a strong evidence of human depravity. There are those who are ever on the lookout for the weaknesses and frailties of men. True manly virtues are overlooked by these critics of our race, or, if not overlooked, weigh as straws over against imperfections, in the balances of their judgment. There are insects in the natural world called flies, that will buzz all about your hand until they find a sore spot, and there they congregate and call attention to the fact. There are also certain birds that feed solely on carrion. Over the most beautiful landscapes, over smiling meadows, and over gardens blossoming with redolent flowers, they will fly without detecting a hue of beauty or an atom of fragrance, but the moment their olfactories are touched by the odor of a decaying carcass, they hasten to alight and revel with delight upon the banquet of putrefaction. So in society there are men and women like these flies and buzzards, seeking the sore spots and the carcasses of human characters, and when discovered, they feast upon them as upon a sweet morsel. Tale-bearers and busy-bodies they are in social circles. What is worst of all, these fault-finders find listening ears among those who 'profess and call themselves Christians.' We boast loudly in this present age of our Christian civilization and of the refined morality of Christian society; but how few are the Christian households in which there are no slaughter pens full of the carcasses of slaughtered character. Some persons might, with propriety, be called the "devil's mail bag," distributing his letters of slander and criticisms from house to house, and, strange to say, these letters are read with great delight. These fault-finders are nothing more than moral scavengers, gathering up all the garbage in the spiritual sewerages of the social world and emptying it at our doors, frequently without a word of remonstrance on our part.

Especially is this true among persons engaged in similar callings in life. If a lawyer begins to rise above his fellows in prominence and distinction, at once dark suspicions are put into circulation as to his character. Let a man announce himself a candidate for an important office, and these flies of the social world begin to search for the sore spots in his past career. Where can we find a distinguished politician who has not been forced to defend his reputation, however stainless may have been its lofty escutcheon. We rejoice in the proud prerogative of "An American Free Press," which in many instances means only freedom to damn with impunity an honest man before the bar of public opinion. One-half the secular journals of our country are nothing more than mud-slingers, covering with slime and filth the reputation of those men who do not chance to be their special pets and champions.

The church and the ministry are not altogether free from this uncharitable criticism, and this spirit of fault finding. Many a Dorcas Sewing Society has stuck the needle of criticism into some weak sister's character with more delight than it has used its maternal needles in making garments for the worthy poor. We have known instances of brethren in the house of God, waiting for a prayer-meeting to begin, to spend the time in dissecting the imperfections of a frail member, rather than in prayer to God for his spiritual growth and perfection. At the sessions of our annual conferences, how often do we hear a group of preachers discussing the weaknesses and suggesting the possible flaws in the life of some brother who happens to be a little more popular than themselves?

Now, we lay down this proposition: No man or woman has the right to dive down into the experiences of other men and women, and drag up their faults for public observation, unless from a benevolent motive. Criticism, simply for the sake of criticism, is a sin against God and man.

"But," says one, "I only tell the truth." That may be; but no man has the right to tell a damaging truth against another man, unless silence would be an injury to the church or to society. Besides this, these fault-finders do not tell the whole truth. They exaggerate weaknesses, and magnify strong elements of character. Such men are both ignorant and idle; ignorant, be-

cause if their minds were crowded with knowledge they would have no room to store away for discussion the faults of men. And they are idle, because a busy man never has time to go about hunting for the sore spots of humanity. It was Dr. Chalmers, if we mistake not, who once said: "The more I see of human nature, the more profoundly I am impressed with its weakness; and the longer I contemplate the tides against which it has to contend, the more deeply do I sympathize with its struggle, and the more inclined I am to cover its faults with the broad mantle of Christian charity." Noble words are these, worthy of being inscribed in letters of gold over the doorway of every Christian heart. Many a man, like Peter, falls under the pressure of temptation; and while his fault-finding brethren are feasting at the banquet of his misfortune, like Peter, he is out under the stars, looking up toward a forgiving God, through bitter tears of repentance, and praying for future strength.

"Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"—*Texas Christian Advocate.*

## THE CONQUEST OF KINDNESS.

Not twenty years ago a city pastor in Western New York was appealed to for advice by an almost heart-broken, sorrow-stricken wife, who had been suffering a series of long-continued and aggravating wrongs from the ungoverned temper of a rude and abusive husband. The appeal came to the pastor in his study at an early morning hour. The conversation (here very considerably condensed and abbreviated) was substantially as follows:

*Woman.* "I come to you with a sad message, but you will forgive me when I tell you that my suffering has been so long and so severe that my nervous system is breaking down under it, and my life is becoming one of terrible despair." All this was said with a look of misery inexpressible in mere words; and, as she added, half hesitatingly, a few sentences descriptive of the abuse she daily received, her intense emotion found vent in tears and sobs.

*Pastor.* "Has your husband always been unkind to you?"

*W.* "O, no; at first, and for two or three years, he was sufficiently, or at least passably, kind."

*P.* "May I ask you to give me the cause or causes of the change?"

*W.* "Reverses in business, poverty and sickness, and general discouragement. The world went ill with us, and my husband couldn't bear it."

*P.* "And how did you bear it?"

*W.* "I tried to be heroic and patient under the burdens, and kept up until hard words were used."

*P.* "And then?"

*W.* "I chafed under them, and as they grew worse and worse my patience became exhausted, and our home a place of sadness."

*P.* "Did you describe your troubles to others?"

*W.* "Never; I would not do that; but I have shut myself up in the wretchedness of my condition, and suffered on until I cannot endure it longer. You are the first one to whom I have described our home griefs."

*P.* "My dear woman, I think there is help for you."

*W.* "Help! Help for me?"

*P.* "And possible a cure for your home troubles?"

*W.* "Where? How?"

*P.* "The remedy is simple—the simplest possible—and within your reach. If it should succeed, and I think it will, it will not only bring you present relief, but also transform your home into one of peace and happiness. Return to your now sad and suffering home with the purpose and with the prayer for Divine help, which will surely be given you, to meet your husband with a smile, and respond to him only with words and acts of extraordinary kindness. He may not deserve them, but surprise him in that way, and however difficult it may be, keep it up for the next six weeks, and then come and tell me the result."

With a courteous, grateful, and half hopeful "Thank you, sir—I will try it—and may Heaven help me!" the woman retired.

In just six weeks, and at the corresponding early morning hour, the bell of the pastor's study rang again. "I have won him! With God's help I have conquered myself, and our home is lovely!" were the joyous words which greeted the pastor's salutation. The story was soon told—"kindness did it." Two weeks later the husband was a member of the same Church with his wife, and with the new home and new Church life came a better business and a prosperous future. *Kindness did it.*

## A GOAT AT CHURCH.

There are some good anecdotes connected with the history of Cumberland Street Church, one of which I will narrate. It is connected with the second church building, and dates back something less than fifty years. A flight of granite steps led up from the pavement below to a large open vestibule, through which the churchgoers entered. A venerable "Billy Goat" frequented the sidewalk in front of the building. He was an old *habitué*; and, from his ordinarily good behavior was generally respected by the churchgoers, and by the community living adjacent to the sanctuary. He had stout horns, very firm legs, shaggy hair, and long gray beard. Sometimes he made a decided stand against any one who contested the right of way with him, or who attempted to push him from the sidewalk. He was not vicious, but firmly asserted his rights, which, for obviously prudent reasons, were generally conceded by men, women, and children without controversy. He chewed his cud, nodded his head, maintained his accustomed gravity, and frequently saluted his old acquaintances with his characteristic *b-b-bah!* Not unfrequently on Sunday mornings he entered the open gate to the church, ascended the granite steps and took his stand on one of the abutments; and, in a very dignified way for his goatship, welcomed all who came to the house of worship. On the occasion to which I now refer, "Old Billy" had taken his position on the abutment, in an out-of-the-way space, obstructing no one entering the church. The congregation, which was very large, had assembled, Rev. Wm. A. Smith, then a young man, of magnificent physique and commanding presence, was then pastor of the church. He had arisen, and was reading, *ore rotundo*, the opening hymn, commencing

"Jesus, the name high over all"

He had proceeded through two or three stanzas, when "Old Billy" entered the front door, and started deliberately up the centre aisle, chewing his cud, nodding his head, swaying his gray beard, and looking this way and that, until, just as the Doctor was reading the last stanza, he reached the front of the chancel, where he paused, and looked up at the preacher; and just as the last line of the hymn fell from the Doctor's lips, which reads,

"Behold, behold the Lamb!"

"Old Billy" responded, "*b-b-bah!*" An awkward pause ensued. A suppressed titter ran through the congregation. Whereupon one of the Stewards of the church—not a strong, stout man, with more of valor than discretion, took it on himself to eject the intruder. "Old Billy" stubbornly maintained his rights, and resented the indignity offered him. The steward took him by his strong, annulated horns to lead him out. "Old Billy" was insulted, and, in violation of the proprieties of religious worship, he made a vigorous push and toss of his horns, and lifted the steward over the pew, to the consternation of the ladies. Reinforcements were called into requisition, and a ter very ridiculous scuffle, the goat was put out from among the sheep, and the services proceeded, but not without a serious disturbance of the gravity of the worshippers. The redeeming quality of this anecdote is that it is true. Dr. Smith never forgot it till the day of his death.—*Dr. J. E. Edwards in S. C. Advocate.*

The Colored M. E. Church in America makes the following showing: Bishops, 4; preachers, 1,729; members, 125,000; Sunday schools, 1,457; Sunday school teachers, 3,773; Sunday school scholars, 42,254.

The New York Book Concern of the Methodist Episcopal Church is doing an immense business. The net profits of the past year are \$70,000. The sales have been so great, that notwithstanding the presses have been run to their full capacity, the stock in hand is \$28,000 less than a year ago.