A WHOLESOME TONGUE.

Sermon preached in the Fredericton Baptist church, Oct. 11th, 1896, by Rev. J. H. Freeman, and requested for publication by many hearers.

"A wholesome tongue is a tree of life."—Proverbs 15: 4.

The condition of the tongue is an index to the condition of the body. "Show me your tongue," says the physician to the clinic, and it will help me form a judgment concerning the nature of your disease. The condition of the tongue is also an index to the condition of the soul. Show me your tongue, and I'll not need the help of X rays to discover what sort of a heart you have. If your tongue is wholesome, I know that your whole moral system glows with health. For, "If any man stumbleth not in word, the same is a perfect man." But if your tongue is diseased, it is an evidence that your entire moral nature is out of tone. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," whether it speak good or evil.

Let us consider, then,

I. What Constitutes a Wholesome Tongue.

(a) A wholesome tongue is a *clean* tongue.

One of the most pestilential conditions existent in social life today, is the prevalence of filthy talk. Young man, have you an unclean tongue? You are a disgrace to the community. We can excuse you for being dudish; we can excuse you for being conceited; we can excuse you for being bumptious; but for low, senseless, beastish vulgarity, we cannot excuse you. But the young are not the only offenders. Gray-haired men, and men with no hair on their heads, men who ought to have had sense forty years ago, but will never get it now, assemble on the street corners and regale (?) themselves upon choice selections which they have grubbed with muck-rakes from the garbage heap of accumulated obscenity. Shame! Shame! Shame! Fortunate would it be for society if this thing were confined to the men. One hates to say it, but 'tis true, nevertheless, that the distemper has spread among the women; and if there is anything that ill becomes a woman, anything that destroys the charm, the dignity, the sanctity of womanhood, it is the ownership of a filthy tongue.

The fact is, this disease is epidemic. It is hereditary, infectious, contagious and spontaneous. Our town needs sewerage. Taxes are high but money saved by leaving the town undrained of its filth is blood money. Every autumn we have a crop of typhoid and diphtheria, imperilling precious life. But the sewerage most needed is moral sewerage. Typhoid and diphtheria kill the body, but obscenity kills the soul. Let us pray God to lance a thousand tongues with the sharp point of the sword of the Spirit, and drain their filth away and give us a clean town.

(b) A wholesome tongue is a tongue that is *guiltless of profanity*.

Philologists tell us that no language in the world lends itself so readily to profanity as the English language, and travellers say that no people in the world are such habitual, profane swearers as the English-speaking people. What a commentary upon our Anglo-Saxon civilisation?

I lived for a year or two in a community where the French outnumbered the English, and though the French were exceedingly tenacious of their language, I noticed they always swore in English. They reserved their knowledge of our tongue and consecrated it to that diabolical use. Men, let us try to wipe this disgrace away! Profanity is folly. What an absurd thing it is to make the angry utterance of the name of the Deity a channel for the vent of wicked wrath. And if it is foolish to indulge in profanity when in anger, how much more foolish to do it unprovoked. It seems natural to most men to make use of expletives when shocked or offended. It is foolish enough to give expression to some inelegancy of speech when the stove that you are moving slips and smashes your toe, or when the hammer shies and takes the nail in your finger instead of the nail in the wall. It may be some slight mitigation of a man's folly, if, when the fourteenth attempt to get the joints of a refractory stove-pipe fitted together ends in failure or catastrophe, a man says something that bears no striking resemblance to the doxology; but to sprinkle ordinary, unimpassioned conversation with blasphemous oaths, is the blankest, boldest, emptiest, most ridiculous and inexcusable folly conceivable. And the sin of it! To take that name that is above every name, that name associated with everything you hold most sacred, that name in which you hope and expect to be saved, to take that name and prostitute it to basest uses—man, that is a fearful sin. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

(c) A wholesome tongue is a *true* tongue.

Much has been said and sung in praise of truth. It was old Plato who said, "Truth is the source of every good to Gods and men." Jean Paul Richter said, "Truthfulness is the blossom, nay the pollen of the whole moral growth." Emerson wrote, "Truth is the summit of being. Froude declares, "Truth only smells sweet forever, and illusions however innocent they appear are deadly as the canker worm." Locke affirmed, "To love Truth for truth's sake is the principal part of perfection in this world, and the seed-plot of all other virtues." Lowell sang,

"Get but the truth once uttered, and 'tis like
A star new-born that drops into its place,
And which once circling in its placid round,
Not all the tumult of the earth can shake."

But though so much has been said and sung in praise of truth, the world loves lies. And there are so many ways of lying. Some people lie with their tongues, others lie with the whites of their eyes. Others smile their lies. Others lie by keeping silence. And there are so many kinds of lies. There is the braggart's lie, and there is the coward's lie, and there is the slanderer's lie. And do you know the most dangerous kind of a lie? It is the lie that associates itself with a portion of truth. A lie will come up out of its birth place in the pit of hell, circle about the earth and return to its source without accomplishing its mission, unless it can find a set of innocent circumstances somewhere that will act as legs to carry it. To stuff a lie into the heart of an innocent set of circumstances and leave the victim to pluck it out, is as devilish a business as this world knows anything about. And yet unwholesome tongues have been doing that from the dawn of history to the present day. A wholesome tongue is a true tongue.

(d) A wholesome tongue is a tongue that *minds its own business*.

The story is told of a physician who was greatly annoyed by a woman, who constantly fancied herself ill. One day after repeated requests he reluctantly called. He felt her pulse, looked her over, and remarked, somewhat gruffly, "You're all right." "But oh, doctor," she said, "you don't know. I really am exceedingly ill. You haven't examined my tongue yet. Please, doctor, do look at my tongue." He looked. "Well, madam," he said, "now that I have looked at your tongue, I do find it to be in a bad way. The fact is, it has been overworked. I prescribe for it a long season of uninterrupted rest."

A celebrated Scottish minister was considerably troubled by a fastidious parishoner who was greatly given to fussy and impertinent criticisms. It was a great distress to the parishoner's soul that the ends of the minister's cravat exceeded by an inch or two the regulation length. "Parson," said he, "with your kind permission, I'll take the scissors and clip the ends of your cravat." The deed was done. "Now," said the minister, "there's something about you a little longer than it ought to be, and with your kind permission, I'll take the scissors and clip it. Put out your tongue"!

Ah, these loose, unguarded, meddlesome tongues, what endless misery they make; what a ferment they breed in social life. Many people go upon the assumption that they have a right to say what they please, so long as they are not chargeable with direct, intentional falsehood. You have no such right. It may be true that you heard so and so, but if what you heard is likely to injure anyone, you have no right to spread it. There is just one of two right courses open to you in such a case. Either go directly to the party likely to be injured by the rumor and tell him, or else let the mischievous rumor die within you as a spark is extinguished when it falls into the sea. The gossiper prepares the way for the slanderer, as the little thief crawls in through the hole in the wall and unbolts the doors for his accomplices. We can all stand a good deal of letting alone, and so long as we behave ourselves, we have a right to demand it. It is the sacred birthright of all free citizens. If every gossip-monger, every idle busybody in other people's matters would only hear and heed the voice of God saying in thunder tones "mind your own business," life would be sweeter than it is today.

(e) The tongue that is altogether wholesome, the tongue that is in the pink of condition is a *kind* tongue.

It is as much our duty to have a kind tongue as it is to have a clean tongue. We are not only to speak the truth, but to speak the truth in love. A kind tongue will make these three rules for its governance. It will always place the best possible construction upon an act; it will leave all evil, the knowledge of which is not essential to others' welfare, unspoken; (if the wrong needs to be exposed, out with it no matter who dies); it will delight to say all the good that can truthfully be said. Such tongues there are and they are the salt of the earth. If it were not for them, social life would rot. Covet a kind tongue, my brother! It is the crown of a graceful life. It is not enough to have love in the heart; we need to look to its expression. "In the bare, jagged trees that stand like naked skeletons in the early spring days, there are thousands of intentions of leaf and fruit, but they are folded up and hidden away in unopened buds." So there are in many lives thoughts of love which might remain unspoken. Speak them. "Let love be without dissimulation." Don't pretend not to love when you do love. A wholesome tongue is a kind thought.

II. Examine some samples of the Fruits which grow upon this "Tree of Life."

(a) The fruit of Purity.

Check the flow of impure talk and we stop the spread of moral contagion. Could a single generation of children grow up without having their souls polluted with foul talk, we should be far on the way to the regeneration of society. Pure speech, like the chaste, white snow creates an atmosphere in which infection dies.

(b) The fruit of Peace.

Heal all unruly, meddlesome, unkind, untruthful tongues and nine-tenths of the world's strife would cease. The tongue is the 'storm-centre' of society. The tongue is a fire. "It setteth on fire the wheel of nature and is set on fire by hell." "A soft answer turneth away wrath; but a grievous word stirreth up anger." Do we believe in peace, then it is worth our while to cultivate this tree, that from it we may pluck the olive branch and wear it amid all the jarrings and warrings of the world.

Still another fruit that grows upon this tree is,

(c) Friendship.

"Friendship's the wine of life."

"O Friendship, flavor of flowers! O lively sprite of life!
O Sacred bond of blissful peace
The stalwart staunch of strife."

Mr. Emerson once said: "the highest compact we can make with our fellow is,—let there be truth between us two forevermore. It is sublime to feel and say of another, I need never meet him, or speak to him, or write to him; we need not reinforce ourselves or send tokens of remembrance; I rely on him as on myself. If he did thus or thus, I know it was right.

Such friendships are immortal.

"Fasts a the rolling seasons bring
The hour of fate to those we love,
Each pearl that leaves the broken string
Is set in Friendship's crown above.
As narrower grows the earthly chain,
The circle widens in the sky;
These are our treasures that remain
But those are stars that beam on high."

But such friendships, it scarcely need be said, can only exist between those who have wholesome tongues. A bitter tongue, like a sharp knife, cuts the bonds of friendship and disintegrates society.

I saw two birds in a room the other day, which reminded me of human characters. They were in striking contrast to each other,—a crow and a canary. The one, robed in blackness, like a "thing of evil," "wandering from the nightly shore," croaked and cawed and fed on carrion. I want no crows about my home. But the other, what a cheerful creature it was. With plumage steeped in light, it seemed a living jet of flame, a sprightly bit of incarnate sunshine. And while the crow was croaking hoarsely in his corner, the canary was pouring forth a flow of melody as though it would burst with song. I'm looking for someone who has a singing canary to sell. My brother, which bird would be your emblem, the carrion-crow, or the canary? You may not have an eloquent tongue; your speech may not flash with wit, or glow with beauty; it may not march in stately sentences to the drum-beat of mighty thoughts; but you may have a wholesome tongue; you may speak kind words; words that will echo and re-echo like cheerful songs in other hearts and make music on the earth after you have gone.

III. In Conclusion, a word Concerning the Cure of the Unwholesome Tongue.

As I said at the beginning, an unwholesome tongue indicates deep-seated spiritual disease. The complaint is not local but constitutional, and calls for radical treatment. A mouth-wash is of little service here. It might allay the fever for a moment, but could not touch the roots of the disease. It is heart-cleansing that is needed, and we know but one specific: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin."

Who among us can claim to have an altogether wholesome tongue? We may have tried to keep our words pure, reverent, truthful, quiet, kind, and yet we dare not claim the crystal-radiancy of unstained speech. So then, let us all apply to Christ once more for cleansing. Let him pour the tide of his own divine life into our souls. It will scour all filth and bitterness and falsehood away. And that tide of life welling up within us, will break forth from our lips in streams of pure, sweet, truthful, kindly speech, speech that will flash like silver in the sunlight and carry gladness to the hearts and homes of men.

The Lord grant that all our tongues may be trees of life, and when they have dropped their last ripe fruit in righteousness and peace upon the earth, we shall go forth to eat of the tree of life that grows beside the crystal river, in the midst of the street of the Paradise of God.

THE BEAUTIES OF THE BIBLE.

Perhaps you have not been down into the depths of the book of God to see its beauties yet. A few years ago, in passing through Virginia I spent a day in the beautiful little town of Luray. Of course I wished to see its caverns. I ventured with my guide through an opening in the earth and passed down into darkness, the guide leading the way. "It is very dark," said I. "Fear nothing and follow me," he replied. In a moment more he had reached up and pressed the electric button and the whole cavern was flooded with brilliant light. Stalagmite flashed to stalactite, while rocky wall and vaulted dome shone out in brilliant corruscating scintillations. "Grand! grand! grand!" I was forced to exclaim. "Come on," said he, and I followed on. At length we came to a little hollow in the cavern's floor that was filled with water. "Reach in your hand" said my guide, "and see what you find." "A flat stone," said I. "Move it," said he. I moved the stone and found within my grasp a pebble, white, and fashioned like an egg. "It is the bird's nest," said he, "and when originally discovered held two pebble eggs instead of one." "Wonderful formation!" said I.

We then passed on and soon the sound of rippling, gushing water could be heard. Again we stopped, and reaching back behind the rocky ledge, the guide procured a cup that I might drink, and pleasant was the draught. We journeyed on and then he pointed down behind a rock and asked me what I saw. "A human bone," I said—there in the limestone floor, secured as by the hand of ages. And again we passed on.

Then blocking up our path two mighty pillars lay. The one beneath had been at some time a giant stalactite, depending from the roof, but falling through some convulsion of nature, it lay helpless and supine, while from its place another, large as itself, had formed, lengthened, touched its predecessor, split, and clasped it in a close but cold embrace. When the earth was without form and void, that work was going on.

And filled yet with the awe these sights had wrought within my soul we passed a little further on. "Stand there," said he, and going to another spot he reached behind a shelving rock and found a wand. Before him stretched a graded scale of stalactites. He struck one with the wand, and then another, and the notes of a good old hymn rolled up the cavern's mouth, clear as an organ peal.

And often since I have thought how like that cavern is the Word of God! At first it seems all darkness and all doubt, but a gentle voice soon says, "I am the way," and the Divine Guide, searcher and revealer of the truths of God, touches the electric button, and the "light shineth in darkness." God puts no premium on laziness. "If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hidden treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God." (Prov. 2: 4).

In it are many strange and wonderful things. "The bird's nest and its eggs called to my mind the words of the Hero of the book, "The birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay his head." As I drank the gushing water I thought of the Water of Life, which should be a well of water springing up within the caverns of the heart, of which, if a man drink, he shall thirst no more. As I stooped and gazed at the bones of some poor traveller of ages past, I thought of the bones of those that strewed the wilderness—*because of unbelief*. As I gazed on those grand, stupendous pillars, I thought again, "How are the mighty fallen," and of Saul and his sons, taller by an head and shoulders than those about him, and yet laid low because he turned from God. And when I heard the notes of music pealing forth as from an organ; then I said, "How like the book!" The spirit takes the wand, and from the very rocks such sweet, celestial music bursts upon the enraptured ear as only those attuned to heavenly song can know.

Have you been down in this cavern of beauty, this mine of wealth?

"There's many a nugget hidden there,
Of silver and of gold,
"There's many a nugget hidden there,
Of silver and of gold,

Who is so wise he can say, "There is nothing in the Bible for me?" The wisest men of earth have lingered among its sacred pages and delighted in its study. Its history is valuable, its biography instructive and entertaining, its characters as varied as the heart of man. Its poetry is unsurpassed, its morality unexcelled.

What is it you love—the study of literature? The Bible is filled with beautiful literature, passages of wild and burning eloquence, or sweet, like mothers' lullaby to still her restless babe. 'Tis here the business man finds the sweetest counsel. 'Tis here the geologist may study the Rock of Ages; the naturalist may find "The Lion of the Tribe of Judah," or the dove that abode upon him. Here for the astronomer shines the "Bright and Morning Star," while all things centre and revolve about the "Sun of Righteousness." Music here holds her sway—from the plaintive, dirge like wail of Jeremiah, "the weeping prophet," to the grand, impassioned strains of Isaiah, till it seems as if every pipe and reed in God's great organ responds to the soft notes of David's tuneful harp.

It is not strange that man should be uninterested in this book and fail to believe its teachings?

Influence of the Holy Spirit.

All service is both easy and delightful, because Christ dwelleth in me by the Holy Spirit, and thus service is simply the outpouring of himself. Dr. Gordon says, in that most helpful book, "The Ministry of the Spirit": "Imagine one without genius, and devoid of the artist's training, sitting down before Raphael's famous picture of the transfiguration, and attempting to reproduce it. How crude and mechanical and lifeless his work would be! But if such a thing were possible that the spirit of Raphael should enter into the man, and obtain the mastery of his mind, and eye and hand, it would be entirely possible that he should reproduce this masterpiece. For it would simply be Raphael reproducing Raphael." For this purpose we have been filled with the Spirit of God, that we might do the very things which he would do if he were here. "The works that I do shall ye do also, and greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto my Father."

TIME ABOUT UP SO HE THOUGHT

Takes on Time Dodd's Kidney Pills Save a Life Once More

THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH

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Barrie, Oct. 29.—(Special)—Your correspondent had no difficulty in locating Mr. Frederick Stokes, of this town, as he is well known and enjoys the confidence of all who know him. The particulars of his recovery still excite enthusiasm as marvellous cures everywhere do. When found at his business he said:

"It was about a year and a half ago that I began to suffer with lameness of the back. I soon began to run down rapidly in flesh, becoming in a short time also very weak.

In misery, and unable to work, one of the best doctors in town when consulted told me that my trouble was diabetes. Meanwhile I had lost forty-five pounds in weight, and his medicine was doing me no good.

I thought my time was about up until a friend told me that he knew of several cures of cases similar to mine by using Dodd's Kidney Pills.

This gave me hope though I felt ashamed to let the doctor know that I had changed my medicine, however I was encouraged by the help I got from the first box and so kept on.

"To shorten the story; all I have to say is that four boxes have completely restored my strength and I have recovered my lost weight with something added. In short I feel better than for years and perfectly cured.

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With such power to cure in extreme cases, can it be doubted that the small beginnings of these diseases will yield promptly to the virtues of Dodd's Kidney Pills?

Heaven is. Already its atmosphere touches this lower firmament; already the heavenly-minded breathe its air. The same love throbs in their hearts that stirs in the souls of those who have passed on beyond all mortal hindrances. A little while, and the realities in which they both live will be fully unveiled.—Lucy Larcom.

The love of the Spirit visits the loneliest and least, comforting all wretchedness with an assurance that suffices for life and death. It is love that recognises love. Without love one cannot comprehend the love of God. The more loving the soul is, the more strong the sense of the Divine affection.—Mozoomdar.

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ASPIRATION.

O Holy Ghost do thou possess
My body, soul, my all,
And cleanse me of each hateful thing
Which doth my life enthral.

This temple, so defiled and dark,
So marred and spoiled by sin,
O purify, and sanctify;
And come and dwell within.

Come, fill my soul with holy love
And teach me to obey,
My will to Thee I now do give;
Now have in me Thy way.

Reveal to me the Son of God,
And let me see His face.
Inspire me with His loveliness
And clothe me in His grace.

Alex. B. McLeod.

It is easy enough to praise God and tell what He has done for us in the presence of others who are praising Him; but it is another thing to speak his praises among the heathen—not the heathen in the sense in which we usually speak of them, but those who do not know Christ. That is where the being "ashamed of Him before men" comes in with most of us. Let us remember that there is need of confession in the parlor as well as in the prayer-meeting.

Lasting Effects.

Rev. Hy. Carter, Maddock, Springfield, P. E. I., wrote the following under date June, 1895,—"It is impossible for my wife to find words to praise your K. D. C. for what it has done for her. She suffered with water brash and awful distress, in fact, she was in misery all last winter, so much so, that she could not bear to have her clothes on, so I thought I would get her some K. D. C. Each dose seemed to tell, and long before she took two bottles she was cured, and can now eat anything."

This letter shows the great merit of K. D. C. and the following shows that its effects are lasting. Mr. Carter writes us July 31st, 1896, more than a year later. "Some time ago I sent you a letter testifying to the value of your wonderful K. D. C. to my wife. She is still enjoying good health, with no signs of her old trouble." Try it, sufferers. K. D. C. Pills are splendid for the liver and bowels.

If our faith in God is not the veriest sham, it demands, and will produce, the abandonment sometimes, the subordination always, of external helps and material good.—Alexander Maclaren.

And let us for our sakes be sure to speak before the hearts which they might gladden have gone beyond the veil that hides them from our earthly love and care.—Mary H. Perkins.

Is there any spot on earth so common or so wild that it has not been transformed by love? Are there any places in our thought so beautiful as those where we keep tryst with those that are dearer than life? To Jesus . . . put a fair face on death, so that it becometh but His dark disguise as He returneth to receive us home.—John Watson.

The present time—youngest born of eternity, child and heir of all the past times with their good and evil, and parent of all the future—is ever a "new era" to the thinking man. . . . To know it, and what it bids us do, is ever the sum of knowledge for all of us.—Thomas Carlyle.

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Ripans Tabules cure bad breath.
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