

Guard the tongue.—“Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.” (Psalm 34:13, 14.)

THE POISON TONGUE.

Old-time doctors invariably asked, when called to see a sick person, to see the tongue, and by its condition they diagnosed the disease. It is easy for the spiritual physician also to arrive at a conclusion as to one's trouble by the condition of the tongue. It is well known that the physical disease does not lie in the tongue, but the tongue often indicates the location and character of the disease. Neither does the moral disease locate itself in the tongue, but the tongue is a pretty good index not only of the disease, but also of its location. Too often people speak as though the trouble was in the tongue. They say, “Oh, she talks too much.” “He has an unruly tongue,” and the apostle James declared, “And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity, * * it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. * * * But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

But the disease lies far deeper than the tongue. The tongue is but the index of the character of the heart, the seat of the moral nature. The Lord Jesus located the trouble exactly when He said, “That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evils come from within, and defile the man.”

A religion that does not so change the heart as to stop the tongue from evil speaking and from giving personal abuse to others is not the religion of Christ. If the tongue continues its slanderous work and its misrepresentation of other people, it is evident that the heart has not been changed, whatever the profession may be. Christ's religion is kind and gentle and does not delight in hurting any one. James describes it exactly in this language: “But the wisdom (true religion) that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

If the tongue is not controlled so that it indicates a heart filled with love to God and to man there is something radically and seriously wrong. There are those who imagine that religion has nothing to do with everyday life, and although they profess a high state of grace, they keep the same company, go to the same places, use the same kind of language, dress in the same manner, get angry as quickly, are just as ready for a “tongue scrap” with someone, as they were before they claimed to be saved.

True religion, the kind provided by the atonement of Christ, first changes the heart and this changes the whole life. The change is manifest in the speech, the

temper, the associations, the dress, the habits, the spirit, and, in fact, in everything. Formerly he was governed by a corrupt heart; now by a renewed heart. The fruit growing from these two hearts is entirely different in character and in appearance. It is so unlike that it is easily distinguishable. The fruit of the Spirit, the renewed heart, is: “Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” (Gal. 5:22, 23). How unlike the fruit of the corrupt heart—evil speaking, faultfinding, jealousy, bickering, strife, division, selfishness, etc.

The unbridled tongue has been the occasion of more trouble in the family, in the church, in the neighborhood, than anything else. It has separated husbands and wives, parents and children, friends and neighbors, and resulted in hatred, divisions, feuds, loss of property and frequently loss of life. In fact, it has been a disturber of peace and a wrecker of homes, and it has blasphemed God and cursed humanity ever since the fall in Eden. The carnal heart leads people toward perdition, and only by obtaining a new heart can any one please God here and live with Him forever.

Nothing except the grace of God can change these hearts of ours and make them the habitation of God through the Spirit. Every other plan for delivering men results in failure. The Lord declared, through the prophet Ezekiel, “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them” (Ezk. 36:25-27). The prophet evidently believed in a clear-cut and radical change being wrought in the heart by the power of God.

This is what constitutes being a “new creature,” as emphasized and described so definitely in the New Testament. Paul wrote: “Therefore, if any man be in Christ (be a Christian), he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). “If so be that ye have heard Him (Christ), and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus; that ye put off concerning the former conversation (life) the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:21-24). “Let all bitterness and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you” (Eph. 4:31, 32). “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye

are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God” (Col. 3:1-3.)

“Love worketh no ill to his neighbor,” is an assertion made by Paul that is true everywhere and all the time. real Christian would rather suffer himself than to cause another to suffer. A hypocrite has no regard for the feelings or for the reputation of some one with whom he is displeased. No character is too holy to be exempt from the misrepresentations of his unruly tongue. And the pity of it is that such persons will imagine themselves pretty pious and on the way to heaven while engaged in this kind of work. If any of our readers know of such individuals pray for them that they may be awakened to their lost condition before it is too late.—The Free Methodist.

SMOKING IN PUBLIC EATING PLACES.

Perhaps it is a result of the slump in morals and manners incident to the war; perhaps it is indicative that very few gentlemen remain in America; perhaps it is simply the result of not having any attention called to the shame of it; but, whatever the explanation may be, it is very evident that men who should know better and act differently are taking the liberty of smoking a pipe, a cigar or a cigarette at the dining table of a public eating house regardless of the presence of ladies and the amenities of the place and doing it to a most surprising extent. It is difficult to find a restaurant or hotel dining room nowadays where one can eat a meal without being compelled to inhale second hand smoke and having one's clothes saturated with the odor of tobacco. It is not pleasant to make complaint to the management of public eating places but it may do some good toward stopping this indecent practice. City laws could stop it, we suppose. But it is largely up to the management of restaurants and dining rooms, and if they will be brave enough to prohibit it they will not lose money by it nor will they be without the praise of all thoughtful people.—Christian Witness.

WHAT GOD HATH PROMISED.

God hath not promised
Skies always blue,
Flower-strewn pathways
All our lives through;
God hath not promised
Sun without rain,
Joy without sorrow,
Peace without pain.

But God hath promised
Strength for the day,
Rest for the day,
Light for the way,
Grace for the trials,
Help from above,
Unfailing sympathy,
Undying love.

When there is a meeting, such as at Bethany, between a weeping Jesus and a sorrowful man or woman, only one thing can happen, and that is comfort to the sorrowing one.