

THE SIN THAT MOST PEOPLE COMMIT.

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John Wesley spoke of "the universal sin of the world"—evil speaking. He said it was almost impossible to enter any home and converse half an hour without either hearing or saying something that reflected on an absent person.

A sad fact! But back of this wicked thing is the cause—prejudice, pre-judging; judging before both sides have been heard. Few if any are free from it. Our nationality, our early teaching, pride of opinion, yea, our religion itself, have biased our minds more or less against others. Of course it is right we should be orthodox, but this should not estrange us from those with whom we differ. Personally the writer confesses with shame that in the past he heard or read something about another, and as a result placed too low an estimate upon him. Later when we became better acquainted I found I had not only silently injured him, but myself as well. For in some respects he could have enlarged and enriched me but for the barrier I had unconsciously erected. We were both the poorer! What a pity!

Dear friend, is it possible that you are now secretly prejudiced to your own hurt and yet unaware of it? Has your belief affected your attitude more or less toward another? So that though you show courtesy outwardly, yet inwardly you permit a coolness and reserve which retards true fellowship? Yes, the other party may hold strange views, and yet on some lines may honor God as much or more than you. Sad, then, that you should fail to be, or receive, a blessing. "Let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbor; and love no false oath (report), for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord."

Not only does prejudice exist between nations and creeds, but between the best of individuals. One speaker or singer is biased against another. Yea, sometimes the very one who is not fellowshipped might have been a greater blessing than the most esteemed friend. Thus we stunt our own growth because of this subtle, refined demon.

Akin to prejudice, perhaps its off-spring, is sectarianism, and in return this begets bigotry. While it is right to be loyal to a church, there are but few who are big enough to recognize and fellowship "other sheep" which are not of their brand. I have known great and good men in various denominations who were mightily used of God. They should have been heard by multitudes far and near. How sad that they were unknown, except by their own little crowd.

But sectarianism held them fast, narrowed their vision, curtailed their usefulness, and souls will be forever lost who might have been saved but for a false view of "loyalty."

If there could be such a thing as sadness in heaven, methinks I should feel sad if I were to meet one there against whom I had been prejudiced, or had dropped a word which biased others.

As a result, doors were closed against him and the precious work of God retarded instead of advanced.

And now I perceived he occupied a higher rank in heaven than myself.

Yes, I should want to apologize.

God help me, then, heartily embrace all whom He doth endorse, and exclude only

such as would produce a discord in heaven. "I said, I will take heed to my ways that I sin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle."

A BOY'S REMARKABLE DREAM

I read of a boy who had a remarkable dream. He thought that the richest man in town came to him and said, "I am tired of my house and grounds; come, take care of them, and I will give them to you." Then came an honored judge and said, "I want you to take my place; I am weary of going to court day after day; I will give you my seat on the bench if you will do my work." Then the doctor proposed that he take his extensive practice, and let him rest, and so on. At last, up shambled Old Tommy and said, "I am wanted to fill a drunkard's grave. I have come to see if you will take my place in these public houses and on the streets."

This is a dream which is not all a dream. For every boy in this land today who lives to grow up, some position is waiting, just as surely as if a rich man, judge, doctor or drunkard stood ready to hand over his place at once. Which will you choose, boys? There are pulpits to be filled by God-fearing ministers, and thousands of honorable places; but there are also prison cells and drunkards' graves. Which will you choose?—Texas Christian Advocate.

THE MAKING OF A BISHOP

While Dr. James H. Franklin, who was long in charge of the foreign missionary work of the Baptist Church, was travelling across the continent a few years ago, he noticed the porter on his car had seven gold stripes on the sleeve of his jacket. "What's the meaning of all these gold stripes?" Dr. Franklin inquired.

"Them's not stripes, boss, them's bars," the old negro answered. "They mean Ah've been servin' this road thirty-five years."

For a while the old man kept at his work, but presently he came back and asked, "Say, boss, is you a preachah?"

"Yes, how did you guess that?"

"Oh, Ah just saw a book in your seat, and Ah thought you must be a preachah. Ah was almost a preachah myself once."

"Why did you give it up?"

"Well, sah, Ah's got a young brother, and when Ah told him Ah wanted to be a preachah, why, he'd been converted and preached himself, boss. Well, sah, we talked it ovah and decided he'd go ahead to college and be a preachah, and Ah'r come back on the road and work, so Ah did, boss; every month Ah sent him money and he went to college."

"And did he finally become a preacher?"

"Yes, sah, in Africy. They call him Bishop Scott."

"Bishop Scott!" Dr. Franklin gazed with amazement at the noble figure before him. Bishop Scott is said to be the first colored preacher whom the Methodist Episcopal Church made a bishop. Dr. Franklin had often read of his heroic life among his people in Africa.

Later when Dr. Franklin was in a little town in Georgia, he heard a man say, "Bishop Scott's in town." Remembering the incident, Dr. Franklin determined to meet Bishop Scott. He went to hear him preach, went up and shook hands with him. "Have you a brother who is a porter on a sleeping car,

Bishop?" he asked him. Then he related the incident in the train.

"Yes," said the Bishop, "he's my brother, and may God bless him. I owe everything to him."—Youth's Companion.

FINNEY ON DRESS

"Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 43:10).

"Every Christian makes an impression by his conduct, and witnesses either for one side or the other. His looks, dress, whole demeanor, make a constant impression on one side or the other. He cannot help testifying for or against religion. He is either gathering with Christ or scattering abroad. Every step you take, you tread on cords which will vibrate to all eternity. Every time you move, you touch keys whose sound will re-echo over all the hills and dales of heaven and through all the dark caverns and vaults of hell.

"Every movement of your lives you are exerting a tremendous influence which will tell on the immortal interests of souls all around you. Are you asleep while all your conduct is exerting such an influence?"

"Are you going to walk in the street? Take care how you dress. What is that on your head? What does that gaudy ribbon and those ornaments upon your dress say to everyone who meets you? It makes the impression that you wish to be thought pretty. Take care! You might just as well write on your clothes, 'No truth in religion.' It says, 'Give me dress, give me fashion, give me flattery, and I am happy.' The world understands this testimony as you walk the streets. You are 'living epistles, known and read of all men.'

"If you show pride, levity, bad temper, and the like, it is like tearing open the wounds of the Saviour. How Christ might weep to see professors of religion going about hanging up His cause to contempt at the corners of streets! Only 'let the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with brodered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works'; only let them act consistently, and their conduct will tell on the world, heaven will rejoice, and hell groan at their influence.

"But oh, let them display vanity, try to be pretty, bow down to the goddess of fashion, fill their ears with ornaments and their fingers with rings. Let them put feathers in their hats and clasps upon their arms—lace themselves up till they can hardly breathe. Let them put on their 'round tires and walk mincing as they go,' and their influence is reversed. Heaven puts on the robes of mourning, and hell may hold a jubilee.

"Your spirit and deportment produce an influence on the world against religion. How shall the world believe religion when the witnesses are not agreed among themselves, and the sum of their whole testimony is, There is no need of being pious?"

"Oh, how guilty! Perhaps hundreds of souls will meet you in the judgment, and curse you (if they are allowed to speak) for leading them to hell by practically denying the truth of the gospel."—The Free Methodist.

"What has repeal meant to us in the Mission (Bowery)? In the face of general and economic recovery it has increased our work by twenty per cent. It has made every condition of vice and degradation we have to fight worse than it's ever been."—Barton Braley.