

THE SIN OF GOSSIPING

There are three reasons for gossiping. One is the pleasure derived from the attention of others to our tale. If the truth of our story is not sufficiently arresting, we color it a bit for the sheer satisfaction of watching the eager interest in the eyes of our listeners.

The second reason is even less honorable. While we are telling our tale, our own failures are temporarily hidden. It is almost an infallible rule that the evil we decry in others, mirrors the secret battle we fight in ourselves. If we honestly watch the trend of our own criticism, we will discover that it is an attempt to throw a smokescreen about our own breakdown.

The third reason is almost too ugly to mention—it is the deliberate purpose to ruin the one who has wounded our personal pride. The disposition to "get even" is the most dangerous thing in the human soul.

But whatever the cause, gossip is one of the blackest of social sins. A group of people will meet together regularly, with the opening question for discussion something like this (at least in their minds):

"Well, who shall we talk about tonight?" Thereupon the vultures pounce upon the quivering flesh of some unsuspecting person, tearing him limb-from-limb and leaving him dying upon the scrap-heap of life—helpless, broken. No one dares to miss a meeting for the sheer fate of what might happen to him.

Many a person has sensed a coldness among friends, and has heard whisperings behind their back, and watched in heart-breaking dismay the crumbling of all their influence because of gossip. The life work of many a good minister has been hopelessly blighted because someone gossiped. More people with broken hearts have gone to an early grave because of the tongue of a gossip than perhaps any other cause.

No word should be spoken about another until it can be spoken with all the sympathetic kindness that we would want to characterize the conversation of others about us. Things are not always as they seem on the surface. Before I criticize my brother for acts I do not understand, I must be sure my own deportment is so perfect that no one could misjudge. Some day the gossip will be the subject of another careless conversation. What then? If we could understand the motive that prompts our brother's acts; if we could see through his eyes, and act through his understanding, how differently we would judge him!

In our parents' home, we heard no breath of gossip, nor any criticism of anyone, be they neighbors or church folk. I am sure there were scamps and hypocrites in both groups; I am confident that we were badly treated on occasion, but any hint of resentment from us children was hushed instantly. As a consequence, we children retained a confidence in the church and in its ministers which all the adolescent reactions of mental and spiritual adjustments cannot break. * * * The influence of broken confidence cannot be recalled at will. Just set at liberty a question concerning someone, and something happens that forever breaks the sacred bond of influence. Can this be the reason we have so little influence upon the godless youth for whom we now almost weep our eyes out?

God will require of us an accounting for the words we have spoken about others. Every time our tongue slips, someone goes to hell. Every time we indulge in any form of gossip someone is murdered! Every time we tamper

with some good minister's influence we lose someone to the Church and to God, and usually that someone is one whom we dearly love.

Can God lightly estimate the eternal damage to His kingdom through gossip? We take upon ourselves, as did the crucifiers of Jesus, the blood of our children and children's children, when we gossip; nor does calling it another name lessen the responsibility. We must therefore take with that responsibility the eternal punishment that is justly due.

Brother, sister, or whoever you may be, consider seriously the thing you do when you talk about your brother. Let him that is without fault cast the first stone.—Exchange.

DEATH COULD NOT KEEP ITS PREY!

Rev. H. E. Jessop, D.D.

Every year, as the Easter season dawns, this magnificent line from that fine old Resurrection hymn is voiced by jubilant worshippers in every land, and the words never fail to thrill us as we sing:

"Death cannot keep his prey —
Jesus my Saviour!
He tore the bars away—
Jesus my Lord."

They thrill us, because they register a great spiritual fact in which we rejoice. It was through death that our conquering Lord set in motion the machinery for dealing with him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and from that moment he has been a conquered foe.

How Audacious Was Satan's Aspiration.

His hope was to slay the Son of God and hold Him in death's dark chains. The slaying was actually accomplished, yet with what different results from those anticipated. That Christ should enter death's chilly portals must have been the cause for tremendous celebration throughout the regions of darkness. During His entire earthly ministry His steps were viciously tracked by Satanic powers, and finally through Satanically inspired men He was driven to the Cross. At last He was in the cold dark tomb, sealed up by Roman authority and guarded by Roman might. Satan surely made an audacious bid and apparently won out. The Son of God was dead and in the power of the grave.

How Amazing Had Been Christ's Assertion.

He had said, "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:17-18).

Did the devil hear this and other similar declarations? He certainly did; but so keen was his hatred for the Son of God as to blind him to their implications, hence his mad attack and seeming temporary victory. Peter's words, "ye . . . killed the Prince of life," is one of the most staggering statements in all literature. That the Prince of life could be killed is mystery indeed, hence Wesley sings:

"'Tis mystery all! the Immortal dies!
Who can explore his strange design?
In vain the first-born seraph tries
To sound the depth of love divine;
'Tis mércy all! let earth adore:
And angels minds enquire no more."

He said He had power to lay it down and to take it again, and the hellish fiend certainly put Him to the test. No more hopeless situation could be imagined than that which con-

fronted His disciples between Good Friday and Easter Day.

How Awe Inspiring Was the Final Action.

He waited not for Satan's permission but asserted His superiority over the tomb and the power of death and the devil by bursting the bands that held Him and walking triumphantly out:

"Up from the grave He arose,
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes;
He arose, a Victor from the dark domain,
And He lives forever with His saints to reign.
He arose! He arose!
Hallelujah! Christ arose!"

And so we celebrate Easter. It is more than a calendar date; it is a perpetual testimony to a divinely wrought victory, the final outworking of which will enthrone the exalted Son of God at the center of a redeemed universe with every foe beneath His feet. The time is fast hastening when at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

A LETTER OF APPRECIATION

To the Church assembled in the Carleton St. Reformed Baptist Church, St. John, N. B.

"Greetings" in Jesus' own faithful and worthy name. May His rich grace be upon and abide with you all. I can hardly find words to express on paper my thankfulness and sincere appreciation to God, and the faithfulness of the blessed Holy Spirit in calling me out of nature's darkness and human rebellion against right and truth Friday night, March 24th, 1893, in your church. Fifty years in His body would compose a book of marvelous experiences in walking with Jesus, my Lord and Saviour, knowing His comforting presence, His counselling power, His precious companionship, and wonderful privilege of ministering the blessed gospel to thousands and seeing many turn to God and salvation, His gracious Spirit proving His almighty power to save from all sins committed, and cleanse from all sin inherited. Amen.

With the many signs of Christ's soon returning to take us to Himself, and out of the Great Tribulation which is so shortly to transpire, I can't wish you 50 years more of earth's history. But I do exhort you, one and all, to a greater diligence in occupying till He comes. Reading understandingly I. Peter 1-13, "Hope to end for the grace to be sent unto you. At the revelation of Jesus Christ. Gird up the loins of your mind, etc."

His glory holds. My testimony today, March 24th, 1943: It is better farther on.

Yours in like precious faith,

R. H. WHITMAN

Note: The Saint John Church welcomes the above letter and would be glad to hear from others who have been saved and sanctified in its services.

BIBLE STUDY

All sermons and addresses, all Bible readings and classes, all religious magazines and books, can never take the place of our own quiet study of God's Word. We may measure our growth in grace by the growth of our love for private Bible study. And we may be sure there is something seriously wrong when we lose our appetite for private Bible study. The Bible seldom speaks, and certainly never its deepest, sweetest words, to those who always read it in a hurry.—Dr. F. B. Meyer.