

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S SUBSTITUTE FOR Gossip and Evil Speaking

Many years ago the Lord gave me a blessed revival in a little village in which nearly every soul in the place, as well as farmers from the surrounding country, was converted. One result was that they now had no time for gossip and doubtful talk about their neighbors. They were all talking about religion and rejoicing in the things of the Lord. If they met each other on the street, they praised the Lord, and encouraged each other to press on in the heavenly way. If they met a sinner, they tenderly besought him to be reconciled to God, give up his sins, "flee from the wrath to come," and start at once for heaven. If they met in each other's houses, they gathered around the organ or the piano and sang hymns and songs, and did not part till they had united in prayer.

There was no criticizing of their neighbors, no grumbling and complaining about the weather, no faultfinding with their lot in life, or their daily surroundings and circumstances. Their conversation was cheerful, joyous, and helpful to one another. Nor was it forced and out of place, but rather it was the natural, spontaneous outflow of loving, humble, glad hearts filled with the Spirit, in union with Jesus, and in love and sympathy with their fellowmen.

And this, I think, is our Heavenly Father's ideal of social and spiritual intercourse for His children on earth. He would not have us separate ourselves from each other and shut ourselves up in convents and monasteries in austere asceticism on the one hand, nor would He have us light and foolish, or faultfinding and censorious on the other hand, but sociable, cheerful, and full of tender, considerate love.

"WORDS THAT HELP AND HEAL"

On the day of Pentecost, when those in the Upper Room were all filled with the Holy Ghost and a multitude were converted, we read that "they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people" (Acts 2:46, 47a). This is a sample of the brotherly love and unity which our Heavenly Father would have throughout the whole earth; but how the breath of gossip and evilspeaking would have marred this heavenly fellowship and separated these "chief friends!"

Lord, subdue our selfish will;
Each to you our tempers suit
By Thy modulating skill,
Heart to heart, as lute to lute.

Let no one suppose, however, that the Holy Spirit accomplishes this heavenly work by some overwhelming baptism which does away with the need of our co-operation. He does not override us, but works with us; and we must intelligently and determinedly work with Him in this matter. People often fall into idle and hurtful gossip and evil-speaking, not so much from ill will as from old habit, as a waggon falls into a rut. Or they drift into it with the current of conversation about them. Or they are beguiled into it by a desire to say something, and be pleasant and entertaining. But when the Holy Ghost comes, He lifts us out of the old ruts; and we must follow Him with care lest we fall into them again, possibly

never more to escape. He gives us life and power to stem the adverse currents about us, but we must exercise ourselves not to be swept downward by them. He does not destroy the desire to please, but He subordinates it to the desire to help and bless; and we must stir ourselves up to do this.

"TAKE MY LIPS . . ."

When Miss Havergal was asked to sing and play before a worldly company, she sang a sweet song about Jesus, and, without displeasing anybody, greatly blessed the company. At a breakfast party John Fletcher told his experience so sweetly and naturally that all hearts were stirred, the Holy Ghost fell upon the company, and they ended with a glorious prayer meeting. At meals William Bramwell used to steadily and persistently turn the conversation into spiritual channels to the blessing of all who were present, so that they had two meals—one for the body and one for the soul.

To do this wisely and helpfully requires thought and prayer and a fixed purpose, and a tender, loving heart filled with the Holy Spirit. I know a mother who seeks to have a brief season of prayer and a text of Scripture before going to dinner, to prepare her heart to guide the conversation along spiritual highways.

Are you careful and have you victory in this matter, my comrade? If not, seek it just now in simple trustful prayer; and the Lord who loves you will surely answer, and will be your Helper from this time forth. He surely will. Believe just now, and henceforth "let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ."—Commissioner S. L. Brengle.

TRUE GREATNESS

The teacher had asked the students to write an essay on "True Greatness." A little girl of twelve wrote the following: "A person can never get true greatness by trying for it. You can get it when you are not looking for it. It is nice to have good clothes; it makes it a lot easier to act decent. But it is a sign of true greatness to act when you have not got them just as good as if you had. One time when Ma was a little girl they had a bird in their house that was called Bill. When Bill broke his leg they thought they would have to kill him, but next morning they found him propped up sort of sideways, on his good leg, singing.

"Once there was a woman who had done a big washing and hung it on the line. The line broke and let it down in the mud. She didn't say a word, only did it all over again. This time she spread it on the grass where it could not fall. But that night a dog with dirty feet ran over it. When she saw what was done she sat down and did cry a bit. All she said was, 'Ain't it queer he didn't miss nothing?' That was true greatness, but it's only people who have done washing who know it."

Some of the finest things ever done in the world have been done by people "propped up sort of sideways," limited in means, in health, in opportunities, perhaps cumbered with infirmity, and have blest the world more on one "good leg" than many others have on two.—"The Chaplain," quoted from Free Methodist.

PULL DOWN YOUR BANNER OF PROFESSION

If your faith has subsided;
If your heart is cold;
If you pray perfunctorily;
If you testify formally;
If you are stingy in your giving;
If you have no private prayer life;
If you see and magnify the faults and failings of others;

If you are always complaining about how you are abused;

If you are dishonest in anything;

If you get mad, lose your temper, talk back, or act ugly;

If you look at yourself through the little end of the telescope, and at others through the big end;

If you can see your brother's "mote" so clearly that it hides the "beam" that belongs to you;

If you can talk pretentiously about full salvation, and practice it infinitesimally;

If you can give advice which would upset you if you took it yourself;

If you are a spiritual quitter;

If you have a fair exterior, but within are full of uncleanness;

If you have no genuine salvation;

If any of these is the matter with you, make a quick run for the place of prayer, and pray through to the real thing, so that you will not need to feel ashamed of yourself, and can meet the Judgment Day with peace.—From Heart and Life.

HOW REVIVAL CAME

A minister says that for many years he had pleaded with God for revival, but no revival had come. Finally, in despair, he gathered his church around him, and rolled the burden of his anxiety upon them saying: "I have done all I can. It is now for you to consider your attitude toward God."

Then there rose up in the church a gray-haired elder, much respected. He said, "Pastor, I do not wonder that there is no revival in this church; there never will be as long as brother Jones and I do not speak to each other;" and before all the people the old man went down the aisle to where his brother sat, and said: "Brother Jones, forgive me; for ten years we have not spoken. Let us bury the hatchet." They made peace and he came back to his seat, bowing his hoary head between his hands.

In the great silence that was on the people, another officer of the church rose and said: "Pastor, I think there will not be any revival in this church as long as I continue saying fair things to your face and mean things behind your back. Will you forgive me?" The Pastor forgave him. He says that for twenty minutes, in the awful stillness of the place, men and women rose and went to square up old accounts, and those with whom they were at feud; and then the Spirit of God came down like the sound of a mighty rushing wind.—Selected.