

the race track, but it has been reserved to us to witness of late years the inauguration of the use of slang in our church pulpits and religious assemblies. We have become indulgent or indifferent to such matters as these, and as they are only matters of taste we can hold our peace with regard to them. But when people trifle with the meanings and uses of words, then are graver issues at stake than matters of mere taste, and the gravity of the situation consists in that we are in the main unconscious of what mischiefs are wrought in consequence of words being so misused as to lead to mistaken or wrongful belief and action. We are unconscious of the evil results because, as hinted at the outset, the causes are constantly operating in our presence. Observation and reflection will, however, convince us of the reality of these mischiefs. The equivocal use of language has had the effect of practically abolishing oral contracts between men of business. Commercial undertakings are required in practice to be not only put into working but often into very guardedly drawn documents. To speak of a man's word being as good as his bond, in our day conveys the impression that such a man has outlived his age and generation. Just as one would expect under such conditions, people come to take risks as to the lengths to which they may go in reckless assertion and, the pernicious practice being common, we find as a consequence that, though perjury is committed every few days in our courts, but little attention is paid to the fact. The offenders are rarely prosecuted and almost never convicted.

Again, to take a wider range of observation, it may be asked: What is it but an unworthy juggling with the meaning of the word money that is at the present moment convulsing the commercial life of a great nation on this continent, a nation too whose people are ever wont to boast of their cleverness in mercantile pursuits? To illustrate, again: We are ourselves in the midst of a dangerous agitation in favor of relaxing the legal consequences of publishing false statements in newspapers, and our ears are filled with the argument that it is in harmony with the spirit of liberty to allow people to say whatever they choose. It is not to be forgotten that it is no answer to give to one who has been ruined pecuniarily or otherwise by the publication of some perhaps apparently insignificant paragraph, for the publisher to say, "I had no malice against you, I don't even know you. I must sell papers for my living, and if I don't print all sorts of trash people will not buy my paper."

It is well that all of us, and especially teachers and preachers,