

ambition, here condemned, springs from pride and selfishness. For, he says, ye ought to know that we teachers (he modestly and in a conciliatory spirit, includes himself), incur a heavier responsibility if we abuse our position, seek it or hold it in a vain, self-exalting spirit. Think not of the honour but of the responsibility and be moderate in your desires. It is this selfish spirit and contention in office that leads to clamouring and bitter words. This leads the apostle to his main point here—the power of the tongue.

He shews us—
 1. *What the tongue is able to do.* We all stumble, trip up, err in many things. This liability to stumble in speech is so great that if any man has learnt to control his tongue, he must be able to control all the members of his body. The tongue moves so readily and promptly, the tendency to speak without thinking is so strong, the temptations to speak are so continually provoking us, and the force of habit is so strong that it becomes most difficult to govern the tongue. Moreover a well-governed tongue will do much towards complete self-government. By our minds we give scope to, or hold the rein upon passion. As the bit controls the horse, and the helm the great ship, so the tongue has a power to arouse or to hold in check the evil within. A hasty word of Herod the king made him what he never meant to be—the murderer of John the Baptist. The careless speech of Peter brought him to do that which he had declared he never would do, namely, deny his Lord. A boy tells an untruth. But he does not stop there. Having turned in a false direction he seems to be driven on farther and farther, till he finds himself where he never meant to go. A girl makes an idle remark. Companions chime in and approve, and she goes on till she has chattered such folly as she never thought to be led to. On the other hand, let a boy or girl once boldly speak what is true and wise and right, and they will find that one word has given them a powerful impetus in the direction they ought to take.

2. *What evil the tongue often does.* Ungoverned, it has a terrible power for mischief. It is a little member, but it talks great things and puts on lofty airs. The most terrible consequences flow from idle or passionate words, just as by a little spark a whole "forest" is wrapped in flames. What a picture of the evil a thoughtless or a lawless word has often done. It fires up the passions, and it is itself fired up as it were by the very flames of hell. The whole body is defiled by the evil which it stirs up. "The wheel of nature," that is, either the whole course of nature or the whole course of man's life, is inflamed by means of it, through the wrath, malice, lust, which it excites. How important then to control the tongue, but how difficult. "Every kind, rather every natural disposition of beasts &c., have been tamed. But the tongue is untameable and insatiate, a wild animal, bringing danger and terror wherever it comes. This is not a merely thoughtless, but a wicked, tongue—the tongue that stirs up malice, that deceives, defiles and slanders.

3. *What inconsistency the tongue is constantly guilty of.* There is a spring of water. You have tasted it once and found it fresh and good. You go a second time. It is salt. You are disappointed, and cannot account for such a thing. For indeed it is contrary to nature, as for a fig tree to bear olives, or a pine figs. Were such a spring to be found, who could ever depend on it? Yet such a fountain is the tongue—uttering one moment words of prayer and praise, and another moment scolding and complaining and wrangling.

The apostle is writing to professing Christians in his own day. Could these things be true of them? Yes; and true of professing Christians now. But the question arises: Can those of whom such things be said really be the children of God? Do not their tongues condemn them? Are they not condemned by their words?

Against three sins of the tongue should a special warning be uttered—profanity, lying and slander.

II. The Wisdom from Above: verses 13-18.

These Jews quarrelling for pre-eminence and laying claim to superior wisdom, shewed their lack of all that to which they made pretensions. This worldly wisdom which produced bitter emulation and strife are not from above but from beneath. It is "earthly," having only this life in view: sensual, "having for its object the gratification of the animal propensities, and "demoniacal," inspired by evil spirits. To boast of wisdom, when they possessed only the shameful counterfeit was to lie against the truth of the Gospel. The truly wise man will show his wisdom "by his good life, his works in meekness of wisdom." (revised version.)

The use of knowledge is to guide and elevate the life; it is to be embodied in a noble and beautiful manner of living. True wisdom is from above; it came from God and can be obtained by prayer, Jas. 1-

5. It is "first pure." This is its first effect upon the man. It makes him clean and clear. This brings peace of heart and conscience. It makes him gentle, considerate of others, not tenacious of his own rights, easy to be entreated, open to correction, ready to receive light and to act up to it; full of mercy and good fruits, seeking the happiness of others; without partiality, that is, without selfish respect of persons, very kind and gentle to all, or it might be, without variation, not wavering or vacillating, Jas. ii. 6: 2-4; and without hypocrisy, sincere, genuine, without pretence or affectation. The truly wise tongue will be full of purity, peace, gentleness, kindness, fairness, and truth. One more picture the apostle gives us, a sower scattering good seed which will spring up in fruits of righteousness and peace. This is what the tongue ought to be. He whose tongue brings forth such fruits is a Christian indeed, "justified by his words."

"The fruit of righteousness," that is, the fruit which consists of righteousness, "is sown in peace by those that make peace." This is the blessedness of the peace makers, the perpetuity and fruitfulness of their work.

How can a boy or a girl realize this picture, and escape likeness to the others? The tongue, so powerful for good or evil, must be under wise and mighty control—a "bit" directed by a skilful rider, a "helm" grasped by a trusty pilot. It must be guided and ruled "from above;" given into the hand of Christ, who is the "power of God and the wisdom of God," 1 Cor. 1. 24.

CATECHISM LESSON.

OBEDIENCE.—"And thirdly, that I shall keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of my life."

Obedience is inseparably bound up with the whole Christian life, in its root, its growth, and its fruit.

1. *Obedience is the root of True Religion.* "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God" (1 Cor. vi. 19). No mere observance of outward ordinance pleases God (Isai. i. 10-14, v. 21-22), but the doing of His will (1 Sam. xv. 22; Ps. li. 16, 17). But what is the will of God, the work which He gives us to do, the commandment we are to keep? That we should believe on Him whom He hath sent, His Son Jesus Christ (John vi. 29, 1 John iii. 23). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). "By grace are ye saved, through faith . . . not of works" (Eph. ii. 8, 9). The very nature of this faith which renounces self and works is simple, unhesitating obedience to God's will and word. Hence it is "the obedience of faith" (Rom. 1. 5, xvi. 26). Unbelief is disobedience, which obeys not the Gospel (1 Peter iv. 17). The same word which is translated "obey not" in 1 Peter iv. 17 and Rom. ii. 8, is translated "believe not" in John iii. 36, Acts xix. 9, Heb. iii. 18. And the word translated "disobedience" in Eph. ii. 2, v. 6, Col. iii. 6, is unbelief in Heb. iv. 6, 11.

2. *Obedience is the condition of progress in religion.* "In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, or uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. v. 6). Faith is active, urgent, obedient. It works, constrained and sustained by the love on which it rests, in which it is centered. Again, our Lord says (John vii. 17), "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." Literally it is, "If any man wills to do His will." It is the complete surrender of ourselves to God, entire, complete, trustful obedience. Only when we come to God in this spirit will He teach us; only as we act up to the light we have will we obtain more light. "The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way" (Ps. xxv. 9).

3. *Obedience is the fruit of true religion.* Obedience includes everything which it is God's will we should do and be, everything of which Jesus hath given us an example. These good works are expressively called "fruits" (Gal. v. 22; Eph. v. 9). Now fruit is the result of life. There are dead works, such as may be wrought by men apart from the faith of Jesus and the love of God, but they are not fruit. You may, at some festal season, take a tree cut from the forest and deck it with all manner of beautiful things, but they are not the fruit of the tree, did not grow from it, have no connection with it except a merely outward one. But a living tree brings forth fruits, which are a part of itself, the necessary and certain outgrowth of its life. So a man may commence from without; by reformation and conformity to rules and precepts he may make "a fair show in the flesh." But these outward works have no connection with his heart or his life. The gift of God is life, and this life is in Jesus (John x. 10; Rom. vi. 23). We must first then come to him, and believe in Him, and have life in Him. And from this life forth fruit (John xv. 4) to the glory of God (Phil. i. 11.)

God's purpose in our regeneration is that we should walk in good works (Eph. ii. 10.)

Culture, too, is necessary to fruitfulness. God is the Husbandman (John xv. 1.) And in this husbandry we may be co-workers together with Him (1 Cor. iii. 9,) working out our own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. ii. 12, 13.)

BOOK REVIEWS.

SIMPLICITY IN PREACHING, by Dr. Ryle, Bishop of Liverpool. Wm. Hunt & Co., London; Willard Tract Depository, Toronto. This is a most excellent little book written by one who is a master of clear, telling Anglo-Saxon, and who can speak authoritatively. The student will find many useful hints; expressed in the plain pungent style of the writer, who is himself an example of what he lays down.

OUR MINISTRY: HOW IT TOUCHES THE QUESTIONS OF THE AGE.—His address before the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, 1883, by the Rev. Dr. Horatius Bonar, Edinburgh: MacNiven & Wallace, Toronto: The Willard Tract Depository. These stimulating words have a scope and application far beyond the audience to which they were originally addressed. No minister can read them without being greatly encouraged and strengthened. The first is retrospective, shewing what kind of preaching has been the real power in the Church during the last forty years, and pointing out the dangers and weakness of externalism, whether mere formalism, or sacerdotalism or sensationalism. The second address describes the ministry of faith, its place and power, its relationship to freedom of thought and the creeds; and its bearing upon various controversies of the day.

PICTURESQUE CANADA.—Parts 25 and 26 of this serial conduct us through Central Ontario and Muskoka, and contains some beautiful pieces of landscape and picturesque scenes amidst the Northern Lakes. Toronto: The Art Publishing Co.

LIFE IN A LOOK.—A BREAK IN THE OCEAN CABLE.—We are glad to learn that Dawson Brothers have issued new and tasteful editions of these two excellent little books by the Right Rev. Dr. Baldwin, Bishop of Huron. They are written in a very clear, forcible and fervent style, and unfold with great simplicity and plainness, the answer of the Gospel to the anxious question, "What must I do to be saved?" We will refer to them again, and in the meantime warmly commend them to our readers.

VICK'S FLORAL GUIDE for 1884 is an elegant book of 150 pages, three colored plates of flowers and vegetables, and more than 1000 illustrations of the choicest flowers, plants and vegetables, and directions for growing. The typography is beautiful, the catalogue very complete and the prices exceedingly reasonable. Published by James Vick, Rochester, N.Y.

THE BIBLIOTHECA SACRA for January. This valuable review enters upon its 41st volume under new management and with rich promise of success. Its articles are of permanent value to the theologian. The new number opens with an article of Professor Curtiss, on "Sketches of Pentateuch Criticism," which is the first of a series of six articles. It is followed by a paper by Dr. Weddell on "Essential Christianity," a paper by Professor Bixby, on "Science and Immortality;" the concluding article of Professor Bissell's series on the "Pentateuch;" a "Critique of Max Muller's 'Origin of Religions,'" by Professor Kellogg. "Martin Luther," by Professor Judson Smith, and "The Uses of Church History," by Professor De Witt. A department containing a digest of the important articles in the current theological reviews of the United States, of England, of France, and of Germany is begun; and the department of book reviews, which concludes this well-freighted number, is exceedingly full and valuable.

THE BIBLICAL EXPOSITOR AND PEOPLE'S COMMENTARY. By Professor Hirschfelder. Parts 1 to 12. Toronto, Rowsell and Hutchinson. Every effort to popularize sound Biblical learning and make it accessible to those who are not professional theologians is a noble service. We wish Professor Hirschfelder every success in this enterprise. The history of Hebrew literature is specially noteworthy. The extreme cheapness of the work and its intrinsic worth ought to secure for it a large sale.

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