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"The Five Pests"

We once read that these were the five worst aggravations that a man could experience—

A balky horse—a blunt razor—a fractious child—a jealous wife—and a watch that wouldn't go.

We do not all own horses, and neither are we perpetually shaving. We can even get temporary leave of absence from the other two, but we can never get away from the annoyance of an unreliable watch.

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Sunday School Lesson

HEW DOWN THE CORRUPT TREE

Oct. 31.

(Matt. 7:13-29.)

"Every tree that bringeth forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."—Matthew 7:19.

—Golden Text

When Jesus warned his disciples against false teachers, how did he describe them? Although they looked as innocent as lambs, there was one test which always found them out: what was it? By their fruits ye shall know them: what this means? Jesus explained it by the question: Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

What an absurd question it seems," says the Rev. J. D. Jones in "The Game of Life." "Of course men do not gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles, they seem to expect to gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles. All people for the most part get from thorns are scratches: and as for thistles, they seem to serve no purpose except to worry the heart of the poor farmer in whose field they spring up! And yet Jesus Christ seems to hint that there were people expecting this absurd and impossible thing, expecting to gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles. That is to say, there were people who thought they could be one thing and do another. And indeed, for the matter of that, I think there are such people alive still."

"You never gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles, and you never gather love from the tree of selfishness, or success from the tree of laziness, or brave deeds from the tree of cowardice. It is only unselfishness that wins affection, it is only toil that achieves success, it is only the courageous heart that does brave deeds."

The corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. What is a corrupt thing? Something that is rotten, poisonous, utterly bad. Most things have at least a little good in them, but Jesus says there are some things which have not. How may we know whether an evil thing is a good thing gone wrong or a thing that is bad from root to twig? By its fruit, the evil which it does. Take a bad habit like the drink habit, as we call it. The doctors, the police courts, the hospitals, say it does nothing but harm. Then that is a corrupt tree. Take envy, jealousy, bad temper, what good do they do? Again, none. These bring forth wrong and misery, and often lead to crime. Then they are corrupt things. They cannot bring forth good fruit.

What are we to do with corrupt things? Let them alone, try to improve them, build fences about them so that they cannot do much evil. All these things have been tried and are still being tried. But Jesus gives a different method. He says, Get rid of them, exterminate them, hew them down and fling them into the fire,—that is all they are good for, to make a bonfire.

The gentle Christ can be very stern when dealing with the thing that is utterly bad. With what is this to be done? Jesus says the corrupt tree is to be hewn down, and this suggests the axe. A shining steel axe is not much use against the drink habit. Carrie Nation tried that long ago. She went about with a hatchet and attempted to destroy saloons, but she only succeeded in getting into trouble herself. Another axe, the legislative axe, has been used with success in America. The Congress passed a law that no intoxicating liquor could be manufactured or sold in the United States if the States agreed, and then the State Senators and Representatives approved, and this good axe closed all the saloons in the United States.

Once upon a time there was an ass who got into a lion's skin and, for a time, all the other beasts thought that he was really a lion. But as soon as he began to bray they knew him for an ass, for his voice betrayed him.

Once upon a time, there was a wolf who dressed himself in a sheep's skin, and so got into the fold as one of the flock. The next day the shepherd having occasion to choose one of the animals to be killed for food, chose the wolf, believing him to be a sheep. He soon, however, discovered his mistake, and hanged the wolf on a tree.

These are two very old stories, but they teach us the usefulness and the folly of pretending to be that which we are not, for we are sure to be found out, sooner or later.

My Master does not say, "Do men expect to gather grapes from thorns?" for he knew well that strange as it seems, that is exactly what thousands do expect. His question is, "Do they ever succeed in finding them?" The thorn-bushes of dishonesty, treachery, drinking, self-indulgent vice, and other sorts are planted thick in their hearts; and they calculated confidently on seeing sweet fruit hanging on them ere long. They do not call them thorns. They give them some other and finer names, which hide their real character. In the new catalogues of moral horticulturists the plants are vaunted as not being the old hurtful sorts, but shrubs entirely different.—G. H. Knight, in "The Master's Questions to the Disciples."

You all know Richmond P. Hobson as the man who ran an old collier, manned with volunteers, under the guns of Santiago and sank her to bottle up the Spanish fleet. He declares that when you consider efficiency there is no such thing as temperate drinking. And he proves it by giving "a bill of particulars."

The Swedish Government investigated drink as regards efficiency in its army. A test was held. A squad of Swedish infantrymen were sent on the range for rifle practice. Out of a hundred shots they made thirty perfect hits. Then each man smacked a quart of light beer, which he drank leisurely. A half hour later, the same marksmen were called upon to shoot again. All the men felt refreshed from the beer. They were confident of making a better record. This time they made only four out of a hundred shots. That day, that squad of riflemen shot liquor out of the Swedish army. Also, it is being shot out of the armies in the world, slowly but surely. And for one purpose: efficiency.

Japan prohibits liquor in her army and navy. When Admiral Togo was in this country, an American officer asked him how he accounted for the remarkable success of the Japanese over the Russians. Admiral Togo replied: "The cause is not hard to find. They drink vodka; we drink tea."

The world's greatest conflagration is supposed to be the San Francisco catastrophe of 1906, when earthquake and flames destroyed \$350,000,000 worth of property. That sum is little more than half of the annual fire loss in the United States from burning tobacco in cigars, cigarettes and pipes. On this greater destruction there is no insurance.

About 40,000,000 cigars and cigarettes were smoked in the United States in one year, additional to pipe smoking. More than one hundred billions of matches and stumps fired billions of matches and stumps must have been thrown down by smokers, and many billions of them unextinguished. Juvenile smokers and those drunken or careless are a constant menace around stables, store-houses, dock buildings, lumber yards, in mines and forests and on the prairie. The smoker naturally tries to conceal or disprove his responsibility for a conflagration, but he sometimes falls in this attempt. The Indiana fire marshal in one year gave as the cause of 130 fires, "Careless smoker."

"No Smoking" signs almost everywhere attest the charge that all smokers are fire hazards. A cigarette is more dangerous than a cigar or a pipe, because, when once lit, it usually burns to the wet portion of the stub, whether it is in the user's mouth or thrown into combustible waste on the factory floor. Many an unsolved fire tragedy at sea, or in a mine, or in a munition factory, probably is the cause of a smoke, with disregard for the safety of property and lives.

"While I am no friend of the cigar or the pipe," writes Hudson Maxim, "and believe that the use of tobacco in these forms is but a lesser evil, I hold that the cigarette fits in a class by itself and its evil effects are not those common to the use of tobacco in other forms. The smoker of the pipe and cigar while the nicotine of the cigarette finds his injury in the nicotine, is far less virulent than the deadly carbonic oxide and other products of its poisonous combustion. The cigarette burns poisonously.

Owing to the loose structure of the cigarette, its combustion is modified and destructive distillation proceeds with combustion, and owing to the incompleteness of oxidation, carbonic oxide is largely produced instead of carbonic acid. This carbonic oxide when inhaled in small quantities, produces faintness, dizziness, palpitation of the heart, and a feeling of great heaviness in the feet and legs. These are exactly the effects of the cigarette, and the depression and nervousness which follow as a reaction make the victim crave some balm or tonic for his "malaise." He is led to consume the drug in ever increasing quantities.

"The wreath of cigarette smoke which curls around the head of the growing lad holds his brain in an iron grip which prevents it from growing and his mind from developing just as surely as the iron shoes does the foot of the Chinese girl."

"If all boys could be made to know that with every breath of cigarette smoke they inhale imbecility and exhale manhood; that they are tapping their arteries as surely and letting their life's blood out as truly as though their veins and arteries were severed; and that the criminal and fool—not men—it ought to deter them. The yellow finger stain is an emblem of deeper degradation and enslavement than the ball and chain."

Lachute, Que. 25th, 1918. Minard's Liniment Co., Limited.

Gentlemen,—Ever since coming home from the Boer war I have been bothered with running fever sores on my legs. I tried many salves and liniments, also doctor-ed continually for the sores, but got no permanent relief, till last winter when my mother got me to try MINARD'S LINIMENT. The effect of which was almost magical. After two bottles the sores completely disappeared and I have worked every working day since.

Yours gratefully,
JOHN WALSH.

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