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THREE SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS
by L. S. Boardman

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- (1) God's Attitude Toward Lying
- (2) The Terrible Plague of Lying
- (3) Slander, The Most Cruel of All Lying

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AN EXPLANATION

Please understand that this study on the subject of "Lying" is divided into three lessons, of which this one is the first. For that reason this lesson will cover only a small portion of the subject with a very few of the many scriptures which subsequent lessons, hopefully, will employ -- L.S.B.

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LESSON 1
GOD'S ATTITUDE TOWARD LYING

Devotional Reading: Eph. Chapter 4

GOLDEN TEXT

"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour ..." -- Eph. 4:25

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON

Job 6:28; John 8:44; James 3:5,6,8; Amos 2:4; Ps. 52:2-5; Rev. 21:27, Rev. 21:8-b.

Job 6:28 -- Now therefore be content, look upon me; for it is evident unto you if I lie.

John 8:44 -- Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

James 3:5;6,8 -- Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! 6. And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body) and setteth on fire the course of nature and it is set on fire of hell. 8. But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

Amos 2:4-b ... and their lies caused them to err, after the which their fathers have walked.

Psalms 52:2-5 -- Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor working deceitfully. v.3. Thou lovest evil more than good, and lying rather than to speak righteousness. v.4. Thou lovest all devouring words. O thou deceitful tongue. v.5. God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living.

Rev. 21:27 -- And there shall in no wise enter into it [heaven] anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Rev. 21:8-b ... and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday -- Satan Lied -- Gen. 3:4-5

Tuesday -- Gehazi lied -- 2 Kings 5:20-27

Wednesday -- Cain lied -- Gen. 4:9

Thursday -- Isaac lied -- Gen. 26:7-10

Friday -- Rebekah lied -- Gen. 27:6-24, 46

Saturday -- Potipher's wife lied -- Gen. 39:14-17

Sunday -- Rahab lied -- Josh. 2:4-6

THE LESSON EXPOSITION

Introduction

Lying is as prevalent these days as it has always been -- perhaps more so because there are more people in the world; society is more complex, and the devil is doubling up his efforts; "having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time (Rev. 12:12). Lying works its fiendish way into every situation and condition. To whom do most people lie? They lie to anybody and everybody as circumstances allow. They lie to their friends, to their foes, to their business partners and kin folk. Children lie to parents, parents to children, wives to husbands and husbands to wives. Professed Christians and church members lie to each other. They lie to the boss where they work and to the other workers. They lie to the government when they make out their income tax report. They lie to God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They lie at home, at church, on the job, and in the court room, under oath. They lie to their face, and they lie behind their back. They wouldn't stop lying, until they became addicted, and couldn't stop. Finally they became so callused to it that they didn't care, and stopped trying to stop. They lied premeditatedly, impulsively, naturally, habitually, deliberately. They lied about the goods they handled and the hours they worked. They lied from babyhood with the first few words they could speak. "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies" (Ps. 58:3). They lied through childhood, to parents, to teachers and play mates. They lied through their adolescent years, through maturity and on into old age. When stooped and tottering, and even bedridden -- and finally, even on their death bed -- from the cradle to the grave, unless they had taken God's offered cure -- and were heart-washed in the precious blood of Christ and filled with the Holy Ghost.

Job. 6:28. In this passage Job was saying, "As you question me, and cross-question me, and accuse me falsely, you study my eyes, my overt facial muscles, and my poise in general, and you will know if I am not telling the truth. It is tremendously important to keep an open face, with nothing to hide. Poise is difficult to maintain, when being pointedly questioned, and when someone is trying to find an inconsistency in your story. Only a slight blush, or an evasive glance of the eye, or a temporary lapse of memory, make it almost impossible to maintain perfect poise, and a feeling of ease and confidence when one is not telling the truth. There is nothing to be nervous about or evasive when one is being entirely truthful. Any evidence of confusion, or nervousness will usually show up in one's eyes or facial expression if one is trying to make a falsehood appear as the truth. That is the reason Job said to his agitators, "... look upon me; for it is evident unto you if I lie."

When I was a small child, my father would sometimes ask me if I had done a certain thing which was forbidden. When he felt uncertain as to my telling the truth he would say, "Now, look me right in the eye and tell me the truth." That makes lying very difficult for a small boy.

John 8:44 -- The longer one serves the devil, the more like his deceitful nature one will become. The devil saturates the minds and hearts of his dupes with his lying nature. He paints rosy pictures to deceive young and old, and they, by his wicked influence will do the same to one another. He will make them believe they are better off serving him instead of God, so they work the same lying tactics on their friends and acquaintances. He will promise them almost unlimited freedom, but that which looks like freedom always turn out to be slavery at its worst. The devil would never gain a following by telling the truth, so he lies to them. Satan tells people that resorting to lies will place them in a position of great advantage in the business and social world, but everything he says will, sooner or later, turn out just the opposite. If he knew you would die

tomorrow, he would tell you that you had many more years to live. One can't listen to that mean old Satan at all without being lied to. If he can get you to tell just one little "white lie" (falsely so called), he is already pulling you into his net. He wants to take you with him when he goes into eternity, not because he loves you, but because he hates God and the only way he can hurt God, is to defeat God's plan and purpose in the lives of His dear children for time and eternity.

James 3:5,6,8 -- The natural, carnal tongue is terribly destructive. It destroys homes, churches and nations, as well as the eternity-bound souls Of men, women and young people. As a very small spark can destroy a large forest of valuable timber, so can the tongue, though one: of the smaller members, destroy friendships, break confidences and raise havoc; damaging or destroying whatever it lights upon. No human tongue can be trusted to always tell the truth unless it is under the direct supervision of the Holy Spirit. Many of the most destructive fires that have ever burned in this world have been kindled by lies from the tongues of influential people who were under the control of Satan and sin. However, when God purifies the heart which controls the tongue, then the tongue, which formerly had the lying habit, can be depended upon to speak the truth. The tongues which have proclaimed the truth of God with power have many times burned with holy fire with such intensity that the devil was not able, with all of his crafty designs, to extinguish their flame, and millions of human souls, red hot for God and true holiness have been swept out of Satan's reach into God's eternal home forever, Praise God!

The reason no man can tame the tongue is obvious. It is because every word that comes off the tongue comes from the heart, and only God can cleanse the heart. There is, however, a cure for a lying tongue. Peter found the cure. He repented to the bottom of his heart, wept bitterly and was forgiven. Shortly after that he underwent the spiritual heart surgery experience of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. From that day on, there is no record of Peter stepping aside from speaking the absolute truth, regardless of the consequences. He would, rather die a martyr, (and he did), but he would never again deny his Master or make any other false statement.

Amos 2:4 -- "Like father, like son," is a faithful saying and so very often proves to be true. Lying parents tend to produce lying children. Infants from their earliest habits largely by imitating their parents. The children are much more apt to do what their parents do than what they advise. Some parents actually, teach their children to lie. Many years ago my Aunt Mabel was a book agent. At one home a little girl about four years old opened the door. She was asked, "May I speak to your mother?" In silence the child, leaving the door open, left for another room. She soon returned and said, "My mother is not at home today." My Aunt then asked the child: "Who told you to say that?" -- to which the child sheepishly replied, "My mother."

Children from their earliest age form their habits largely by imitation. They will imitate their parents, and form their basic habits long before they are exposed to the outside world. For that reason parents should always be strictly truthful and insist on the same from their children. Rebekah taught her son, Jacob, to lie to his father, Isaac (Gen. 27;6-24) and deceitfulness followed Jacob for years. Both he and his mother reaped a fearful harvest for the lies they concocted. If one should plant a field of thistles, he will not reap a crop of golden wheat. This adage applies just as truly to: the soil of the heart as it would to a field on the farm. If he plants lying, he will not reap a harvest of truth.

"No written word or spoken plea
Can teach young hearts what they should be;
Nor all the books upon the shelves,
But what the parents are themselves."

--Anon --

Ps. 52:2-5 -- God is the sovereign of the universe, and. there is a sense in which He determines who will be saved and who will be lost. He has decreed, for example, that all liars who don't cease the practice of lying will be eternally lost in hell, but He leaves it up to each one of us, as Individuals as to whether or not we WILL to continue the practice of lying, or stop the practice forever, because, all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death (Rev. 21:8). In the final analysis, it is the deceitful heart that causes the tongue to lie. Were the tongue to be removed surgically, it would not solve the problem of the deceitful heart. It is the heart that is deceitful and desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9). The time will come when there won't be one single person in the whole universe, outside of hell, guilty of lying, or for any reason deceiving anyone in any way. All desire or inclination to deceive will be taken away forever. There will be no fraud, duplicity, trickery, hypocrisy, double-dealing, craftiness, guile, sham, beguilement, treachery, delusion, cheating., misleading, betrayal or dishonesty. God will finally get all of the above moral malignancy wiped out of His universe forever. If any of us are not entirely cured of all of it, we will be placed where we will never again get a chance to contaminate God's habitation forever.

Rev. 21:27 -- Why heaven is a restricted place: The first lie that was ever told was told in heaven. Lucifer (now Satan) lied to the angels and one third of them listened to him, allied themselves with him against God, and were banished from God's home forever. Satan's tactic has always been that of lying. He lied to the first couple in the Garden of Eden. He lied to Christ in the temptation in the wilderness. He has lied to every human soul that has been morally accountable by age and intelligence. It is little wonder that heaven is totally restricted against all liars. That element will never again be permitted in any place within God's realm. Every soul which is finally and forever lost in hell will be there because they listened to the devil's lies. In fact, all lying and all liars will be confined in the only place in the universe where lying will still be known and allowed -- in hell, the final destiny of the damned.

Rev. 21:8-b -- "and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." This eternal punishment is awaiting every soul whose lying habits are not repented of, forgiven and abandoned for time and eternity. The deceitful root must be extracted from the heart by the convicting power of the Holy Ghost; the heart washed in the precious blood of Christ, and the purging, refining fire of the Holy Ghost doing its cleansing work in the heart. Hell is not preached much In the popular churches these days, but by. the time the great throngs of sinful, worldly, rebellious people get there, they will find it to be as real and as hot and as eternal as Jesus said it was. He said, concerning those wretched souls who go there, that they would be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Rev. 20:10). The bottom line for us is pardon and purging -- or eternal punishments.

COMMENTS ON THE GOLDEN TEXT

"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor." When one discovers he or she has cancer, the first question in the patient's mind is this: Can it be gotten rid of? The patient knows that he or she must become entirely relieved of it, or it will prove fatal. The same is true with the perilous plague of lying. It MUST be gotten rid of or it will prove fatal to the well-being of the soul. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" -- and lying is a horrible sin. If allowed to continue) it will undermine the very foundations of one's character. It will destroy trustworthiness and reliability. It will make people unsure of you, if you thus indulge. Paul; the great apostle said, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor." But one might ask, "Who is my neighbor?" The telephone company is your neighbor if you have learned the trick of making long distance calls without paying for them, and practice it. The car dealer is your neighbor if you buy a new car from him and disconnect the odometer to make the guarantee last longer than the agreement calls for. The filling station man is your neighbor, if you run up a bill, and instead of paying it, you switch to a different station. Your employer is your neighbor if you loaf when he is not looking, or take things home at the end of the shift which do not belong to you. If we are going to serve God successfully, and hope to make heaven our eternal home, we must so live, with an open face, so that we can look every person in the eye, with nothing to be ashamed of, and nothing to hide.

A LESSON IN SPEAKING THE TRUTH

When the father of the great Emmanuel Kant was an old man he made a perilous journey through the forests of Poland to his native country of Silesia. On the way he encountered a band of robbers who demanded all his valuables, finally asking: "Have you given all?" and only letting him go when he answered, "All." When safely out of their sight his hand touched something hard in the hem of his robe. It was his gold, sewn there for safety and quite forgotten by him in his fear and confusion. At once he hurried back to find the robbers, and having found them, he said meekly: "I have told you what was not true; it was unintentional. I was too terrified to think. Here, take the gold in my robe." Then to the old man's astonishment nobody offered to take his gold. Presently one went and brought back his purse. Another restored his book of prayer, while still another led his horse toward him and helped him to mount. They then unitedly entreated his blessing, and watched him slowly ride away. -- J. A. Clark -- Encyclopedia of 7700 illustrations

FOOD FOR THOUGHT -- SERIOUS THOUGHT!

1. If you should find yourself in the same dilemma that old father Kant did, and if you had every reason to believe the robbers would take your gold if they knew about it, would you go back as he did and correct your mistake?

2. Have you got it settled for time and eternity, that, regardless of the circumstances, you mean never knowingly tell a lie, but you will stick strictly to the truth, and, if someone pries in where they shouldn't, you will politely excuse yourself from answering the question, instead of lying about it?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Is lying more prevalent these days than it used to be: (see the Introduction to this lesson).
2. Does Satan ever tell the whole truth when he is trying to get people to follow him.
Explain.
3. Why is God so hard on lying, with several hundred verses in the Bible relating to this subject?
4. How many lies did Gehazi tell in connection with Naaman's leprosy experience?
5. In what sense does God decide who will be saved and who will be lost? (See comment under Ps. 52:2-5).

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LESSON 2 THE TERRIBLE PLAGUE OF LYING

Devotional Reading: Matthew Chapter 5

GOLDEN TEXT

"He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight" (Ps. 101:7).

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Col. 3:9-10: "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."

Hosea 4:1-3: "Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel: for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. 2. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery ... they break out and blood toucheth blood. 3. Therefore [because of their awful sins] shall the land mourn [Crop failure] and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish ... [famine]."

Eph. 4:22: "That you put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts ..."

Psalms 58:3: "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies."

Jer. 9:3,5,6: "And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth ... for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the Lord. 5. And they will deceive every one his neighbor, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongues to

speaking lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity. 6. Thine habitation is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the Lord."

Isa. 59:3b, 4): "... your lips: have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness. None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth; they trust in vanity and speak lies..."

Proverbs 14:5, 8, 25: "A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies. 8. The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit. 25. A true witness delivereth souls: but a deceitful witness speaketh lies.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday -- Ehud lied -- Judges 3:16-23

Tuesday -- King Saul lied -- I Sam. 15:12-14

Wednesday -- Michael lied -- I Sam. 19:12-17

Thursday -- Stephen's accusers lied -- Acts 6:11-14

Friday -- Jeroboam's wife lied -- I Kings 14:2-6.

Saturday -- Jezebel, Ahab's wife lied -- I Kings 21:7-13

Sunday -- Gehazi lied -- 2 Kings 5:22

THE LESSON EXPOSITION

Introduction

Why do sinners tell lies? The list of reasons is almost endless, but, basically, they lie because the devil is running their lives and he has corrupted their hearts with the fallen, depraved nature, which makes deceitfulness about as natural as breathing for the average sinner. Every responsible person either resists their inborn tendency to lie, or gives in to it, until such time as they receive the cure through the regenerating (new birth) power of God operating in their hearts. It is highly possible that more lies are told in the world every day than any other single sin. But it does not pay -- ever!

When death comes to take one,
Whether sovereign or knave,
Who lied in this lifetime
Now lies in the grave.

-- Paraphrased from Byron --

Col. 3:9,10:

All lying originated with the devil -- Satan. As long as anyone tells lies, he is controlled by Satan. He is patterning after Satan instead of God. Jesus said to the Pharisees: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it." (John 8:44).

The gift of conversation (being able to talk to people) can be one of the greatest blessings God ever gave to the human race. But when that marvelous gift turns sour it can result in one of the greatest curses. When one becomes addicted to lying he puts himself in league with the devil, in his war against God, and turns God's greatest blessing into a curse. Anyone who resorts to lying or cursing does not deserve the gift of speech.

Before one can become the kind of a Christian God will allow in heaven, everything false, and deceitful in his nature must be cleansed away. All deceitful roots in the carnal nature of man (Eph. 4:22), will destroy the soul in hell forever if it is not removed by the combined power of God and the human will.

Someone has very wisely said, "There are three important things about lying: 1. You can stop if you will. 2. You will go to hell if you don't. 3. The devil desires for you to continue lying and go to hell with him, but Christ wishes for you to stop lying and prepare to be in heaven with Him forever." It is your choice.

Once when the famous Bishop Warren A. Candler was preaching to a large audience, he used as his text the story of Annanias and Sapphira, who told a lie to God and were struck dead. The old bishop roared: "God doesn't strike people dead for lying like He used to. If He did, where would I be?" When his audience snickered a bit he roared back, "I tell you where I would be. I would be right here preaching to an empty house (Optimist Magazine).

Hosea 4:1-3

Where would we be if God should take away all of our food supply because of our sins? Deceitfulness became so bad in Old Israel that the prophet, Hosea, declared that there was no truth in the land. One could not depend upon the truthfulness of anything he might hear. Hosea listed lying along with killing and committing adultery. Most of us certainly can be happy that we have never murdered anyone, and never destroyed a marriage, but the prophet believed that lying, when all of its evil effects are considered, is equally as bad. He associates lying with the worst of corruptions, which provoke the wrath of God and many threatened punishments. Right knowledge and wrong practices on our part will destroy our last hope of heaven unless corrected. The deceitful heart is so offensive to God that He will not grant it entrance into His holy heaven. All lying is disastrous, and it must be stopped from its source -- the heart. Unless the heart gets it stopped the tongue cannot.

Lying in our day has worked its way into every strata of human society, and all of the awful sins which Hosea listed on a level with lying are with us all over the world today. The word "therefore" (verse 3) relates the terrible punishments from God because of the equally terrible sins of the people. Jesus warned us that in the last days there would be famines and pestilences. The

sins of the world which were on a small scale in Jesus' day, are on a gigantic scale today -- so are the punishments, and both will continue to get worse until Jesus returns. Lord Jesus come quickly. Amen!

Eph. 4:22:

Lying is an indication of heart-corruption, and carnal lusts. Lying is a very stupid practice. If one should speak the truth a thousand times, it may be scarcely noticed by those who esteemed him most highly. His truthfulness is taken for granted. But if he gets caught in one premeditated lie, with an evil motive, his closest friends may find it impossible to erase it from their minds throughout the remaining years of life.

If you, a professed Christian, knowingly, or intentionally, tell a falsehood, it is many times worse than for a sinner to do it because of your influence and the harm you will do the cause of Christ. Also, if a husband lies to his wife, and she finds it out, she probably will never be quite so sure of him again. This is especially true if he is professing to be a Christian at the same time. Such an one is terribly disappointing. One lie will put something so sad into the minds of those who loved you and believed in you, that they may never get entirely over the grief. Therefore, we conclude that lying is a very stupid practice. It puts the one who lies in a position of grave disadvantage. Its awful detriments far outweigh its meager benefits. The spiritual and moral damage makes lying a very unprofitable business. Lying is so harmful, both to the one who lies and to the one lied to, that it never pays -- not even as a last resort.

My friend, is strict truthfulness a real conviction with us, or merely a preference? We would not deny and blaspheme Christ at gun-point to save our life. We would rather die a thousand deaths if need be. How about lying at gun-point then, if we knew one lie would save our life, when speaking the truth would end our life in this world? Do we have it settled once and for all, that we would tell the truth regardless of the outcome? If we knew it meant life or death, would it not be far better, providing we are saved and sanctified and ready to meet God, to tell the truth, and pay the price, than to live on a few years and drift into the fog spiritually, which so many do, and miss heaven forever? Would it not be far better to die sooner? than to come down to old age like an old man who one time said to me: "I had a better experience seventy years ago than I have today." How pathetic! Seventy years of drifting, and now, hopelessly in the fog. Remember, the martyrs of the past, did not lie to save their lives -- nor should we, if it comes to that. The ones that backed down and denied Christ are in hell today. Surely, they would give the world, if they could go back to the spot where they missed it and do it over again, and do it right.

"The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies" (Psalm 58:3).

Opportunities for lying come up every day, and sometimes more often than that. Every person who wants to serve God acceptably must always resist the temptation to lie, and the weakness, which causes so many to break down and fail. Many people will sometimes lie to get an illegitimate dollar, sometimes to win an argument; sometimes, simply to entertain their friends, or to cover up something embarrassing in their lives. Some lie to put themselves in a good light when they don't deserve it. Sometimes they have to tell several lies to cover up the first one. Basically,

all liars lie because they have a deceitful heart, a twisted nature, a sinful life, and because they are of their father the devil (John 8:44). Hypocrites will lie about their Christian experience when they testify in church. They will say they are saved and sanctified when they know it is not the truth. Like King Saul who told Samuel he had obeyed the Lord, when he knew very well he had not (I Sam. 15:13). Some have been known to say they had made all of their restitutions, when they had made only a few of the smaller ones and let the big ones go undone.

The truth would have been embarrassing, so they lied. There were facts involved which they did not want revealed, so they lied. They lied to the insurance company and received money which they were not entitled to. They lied to keep from paying an honest debt. They lied about the goods they handled and the hours they worked. They lied because Satan had filled their hearts with deceitfulness (Acts 5:3). A deceitful heart cannot entirely stop lying. Jeremiah said the heart was deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked (17:9).

Jer. 9:3,5,6:

Those who are not "valiant for truth" do not believe that truth is absolutely necessary under all circumstances. Verse 3 says that those who are not "valiant for truth" possess evil hearts, and they know not God. They progress from one stage of evil to another, ever becoming worse. To be valiant for truth means they would die for it before they would deny it or betray it. They will not accept that challenge. For them, absolute truthfulness is not all-important. That is why they tell lies when it seems convenient to do so. When they tell lies (v.5) they think it doesn't really matter much. "How can it matter?" they reason, "when they feel that strict truthfulness is not all-important. Verse six says they refuse to know God. One cannot reject truth without rejecting God at the same time, -- thus breaking away from His fellowship and eternal benefits.

It boils down to this:-- One who will resort to lying does not know the God of heaven and truth personally. For one to resort to falsehood, is to reject God, and everything He stands for, including Christ and His Blood; the ministry of the Holy Spirit; vital Christian experience, and heaven at last. One who thinks he can resort to lies and still have Christ in his heart is sadly mistaken, and he will discover that fact when he crosses over into eternity, only to learn that he has been a child of the devil all along. If you, my friend, are in league with Satan, then do not plan on heaven, for you are as lost as Satan is. The only difference is that you could, right now, repent and pray your way back to God, if you would; but Satan cannot. You may be a backslider, but Satan is an apostate. However, if you stay too long serving Satan in a present backslidden condition, you will eventually be as hopelessly lost as he is.

Isa. 59:3b, 4:

Would you bother to carry a watch which had the bad habit of not telling the truth? Where is the airplane pilot who would take a plane off the ground if he knew some of the instruments on its panel were not telling the truth? If you should find yourself in a dense forest, late in the day, with a storm brewing, would you not want your compass to tell you the truth?

If you should ask directions of someone when you were on a long journey, and you were hurrying to an important engagement, and time was at a premium, would you not hope the man you asked direction of, would tell you the truth?

Nobody likes a liar. Even an inveterate liar would rather do business with a truthful person, than with one like himself. Would we not be happy if all of the politicians could always be depended upon to tell the truth? and all professed Christians, also? Even when an old hen comes off her nest, cackling, we want her to be telling the truth. We want her to be laying and not lying! When we stand before God we all will wish we had always had deep convictions against lying, because the Bible says, "... all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8). Lying, in the long run, always does a whole lot more harm than good.

Lying and cheating often dwell together in the same heart. The story is told of a black man who had been delivering coal to customers. His boss called him in the office and said, "Sam, I am going to let you go. You are just too dumb to work here. In fact, you are so dumb that you can't learn anything." To this charge the black man replied: "Boss, I did learn one thing while I worked for you." "What did you learn?" his boss wanted to know. Without hesitation the old man replied: "I learned that a ton of coal weighs 1800 pounds."

Prov, 14:5,8,25:

A person's conversational habits reveal his true character. If his lips are given to lying, his very nature must be corrupt and sinful. A clean heart will not knowingly make a false statement.

Would it not be the greatest calamity that could possibly happen to you, to step into eternity and suddenly discover that the minister whom you trusted and followed, had not told you the truth, and you were eternally lost, when you thought by the way he preached, that you would be eternally saved? Truthfulness always has its benefits -- lying has consequences. The former has rewards -- the latter, punishments.

God will not forgive you for lying until you are sorry enough to stop it. One who thinks he can tell lie and God won't take note of it is lying to himself. One single lie, in itself, may not seem so very important, but the heart condition which caused it cannot be overlooked or underestimated.

Some people have gotten into such a habit of telling lies that they will tell a lie when the truth would serve better. The truth in a court room always is better than a falsehood, because the judge on the bench has had so much experience listening to testimonies, and studying personalities, that he can usually tell the minute a person begins to answer questions, whether he is telling the truth or not. And when there is any question as to one's truthfulness, he is immediately put to a disadvantage. His testimony is greatly weakened.

It is very easy to get into the habit of saying things that are not true. If one has this awful habit of lying, the best way to cure oneself is to stop right in the middle of a statement -- back up -- and correct the past that was not exactly correct. One thus addicted to lying, should practice this

remedy every time he starts to say something which is not true, until his bad habit of lying is conquered. When truth controls us, lying becomes impossible, and the only way to avoid hell for lies already told in the past, is to repent, receive forgiveness of God, and then stop the practice forever.

THE LEAST SERIOUS FALSEHOOD, AND HOW TO HANDLE IT: The least serious falsehoods are those slight inaccuracies which slip out unintentionally in an unguarded moment. It is so easy to repeat something just a little differently than we heard it, with no intention at all of misrepresenting it. Such slips of the tongue or memory can hardly be classified as lies when they are caused by human error rather than deceitful motives. One must be honest, however, and not take advantage of this explanation.

What is the best thing for one to do when things like this happen? The best thing, always, when one realizes that an inaccuracy has slipped into his remarks, is to stop at once and correct it. That policy will help anyone to be more careful in the future. It will also cause the listener to have greater confidence in the one who is talking. Many people are embarrassed to back up like this, but they'd better do it, or their problem will get worse.

The Psalmist had it exactly right when he asked a most serious question, and then answered it, thus: "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who, shall dwell in thy holy hill?.. He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart ... He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not" (Ps. 15:1,2,4).

COMMENTS ON THE GOLDEN TEXT

"He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight" (Ps. 101:7). This verse makes lying a lot more serious a matter than most folk realize. No one who tells lies has any place in God's kingdom, because lying is one of the things that God will not tolerate in us.

Lying rocked heaven before this world was created. Lucifer, heaven's most beautiful angel, lied to all of his followers and they listened to him. and were expelled. The same personage, now called Satan, or devil, lied to Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, and when they yielded. it threw all of God's marvelous creation into a dismal, depression of depravity. The same rebellious spirit that caused war in heaven, was planted in the human blood stream by the same deceitful person who had hoped to rule heaven and destroy God.

Therefore, every one of us, if we desire to reach heaven, **MUST** settle the matter once and for all, that we will take the Calvary cure for all forms of deceitfulness in our hearts, which relate to our fellow men, or reflect on God's pure holiness. All lying is designed to influence another for no one ever tells a lie unless someone is listening.

None of us like to be lied to -- then we must not lie to someone else. We don't even want our eyes and ears to lie to us. J. Eadie brought this up in his own words:-- "If you should see a deadly rattlesnake, at close range, coiled and about to strike, do you think your eyes would lie to your feet?" (Biblical Illustrator: Eph. 4:25; p. 435.)

ILLUSTRATIONS ABOUT LYING

A few years ago I stood in a paint store while the manager was explaining to a lady customer. He said: "I am as sorry as I can be for the delay in receiving this order. I have phoned Chicago twice and will phone them again this afternoon, and see if I can find out why the delay. I assure you I will do my very best to find out why that order is not coming through." The lady had barely closed the door when I heard him say, "She would kill me if she knew I had forgotten to place that order." Business people, to avoid embarrassment, or to cover up their mistakes, are terribly inclined to lie their way out of tight places, but they aren't the only ones who do it!

Years ago a lady member of my church, worked in the produce department of one of the supermarkets in our city. She said to me one day, "If you will come in Friday evening just before closing I can sell you all of the damaged and overripe produce that has accumulated through the day for 25 cents. When I arrived as agreed she apologized, saying, "We have not had a single bit of damaged produce all day." She showed me the empty box under the counter where she would keep all such as that. I knew she had to be lying -- all day, on a busy Friday -- and nothing! A few minutes after reaching home another lady in my church phoned and said, "I just got a huge box of produce at the market from Darlene for a quarter, and if you will come over I will give you half of it." Darlene's husband was the man who bought a new car and drove it from New York to Florida and back with the odometer disconnected so that the miles they traveled would not be registered: and the guarantee on the new car would last longer. Most folks who will lie will also cheat.

Years ago in a revival meeting several teenage girls were at the altar, praying. Suddenly one got up and went into a Sunday School class room where gold stars were pasted on a chart opposite her name, indicating that she had studied her lesson every week. When she came back she told us that she had removed every star opposite her name, and confessed that she had not studied her lesson one time. When she said that, every one of those other girls made the same confession and went in and peeled off all of their gold stars also.

QUOTABLES FROM NOTABLES

1. "Show me a liar and I will show you a thief" -- Prudenum.
2. "What among men is both good and bad? the tongue" -- Anacharsis.
3. "A slip of the foot may be soon recovered; but that of the tongue, perhaps never. -- Thomas Fuller.
4. "The tongue is the rudder of our ship" -- Thomas Fuller.
5. "Speak the truth and shame the devil" -- Cois Babelais.
6. "But liars, we can never trust" -- Isaac Watts.
7. "Equivocation is half way to lying, as lying is half way to hell" -- Wm. Penn

8. "The mouth that lies slays the soul" -- John Ray
9. "One falsehood treads on the heels of another" -- Anon.
10. "A good memory is needed after one has lied" -- Corneille.
11. "There is nothing so pathetic as a forgetful liar" -- F.M. Knowles
12. "When they [liars] speak the truth they are not believed" -- Aristotle
13. "None speak false when there is none to hear" -- James Watts
14. "It is the nature of a scoundrel to deceive by lying" -- Cicero
15. "Every violation of truth is not only a sort of suicide in a liar, but is a stab at the health of human society" -- Emerson
16. "Dare to be truthful; nothing can need a lie" -- George Herbert
17. "Sin has many tools, but a lie is a handle that fits them all" -- O. W. Holmes
18. "MEN WHO LIE LACK COURAGE TO TELL THE TRUTH" -- Joaquin Miller (Lying is cowardly).
19. "It is easy to tell one lie, but hard to tell only one." -- Anon
20. "Another good thing about telling the truth is you don't have to remember what you said" --
21. "A dog has many friends because he wags his tail instead of his tongue" -- W.B.K.
22. Someone has said: There are two things that are never deceitful -- a baby's smile and the wag of a dog's tail.
23. "Those who tell white lies soon become color blind."

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Do you have truthfulness so completely settled in your heart, that you would much rather be a martyr than run the risk of becoming an apostate?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the main reason sinners tell lies?

2. What is the least serious falsehood and what should one do about it?
3. Why are some people undeserving of the gift of speech?
4. Are little white lies excusable in God's children?

* * * * *

LESSON 3 SLANDER, THE MOST CRUEL OF ALL LYING

DEVOTIONAL READING

Psalms 3:-- "A Psalm of David when his son, Absalom was using slander to destroy David's life and usurp his throne.

GOLDEN TEXT

"An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbor."

MEANING OF THE WORD "SLANDER" -- 1. speaking falsely of someone of something for the purpose of inflicting injury; 2. the utterance of false charges or misrepresentations which defame and damage another's reputation (Webster); 3. false statements meant to do harm (Thorndike); 4. A verdict of guilty pronounced in the absence of the accused, with closed doors, without defense or appeal (J. Roux).

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Num. 14:36; Jer. 6:28,30; Psa. 50:20; Psa. 31:13; I Tim. 3:11; Psa. 101:5; Prov. 10:18; Rom. 3:8.

Num. 14:36 ... and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up slander upon the land.

Jer. 6:28:30. They are all grievous revolters, walking with slanders ... they are all corrupters ... Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them.

Psa. 50:20: Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son.

Psa. 31:13: For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.

I Tim. 3:11: Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.

Psa. 101:5: Whoso privily slandereth his neighbor, him will I cut off...

Prov. 10:18: He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool.

Rom. 3:8: And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil that good may come? whose damnation is just.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Monday -- Potiphar's wife slandered Joseph. -- Gen. 39:14-20

Tuesday -- Satan slandered God. -- Gen. 3:4-5

Wednesday -- Jezebel slandered Naboth. -- I Kings 21:9-14

Thursday -- The Jews slandered Jeremiah. -- Jer. 18:18

Friday -- The mob slandered Paul. -- Acts 21:33,34

Saturday -- Satan slandered Job. -- Job 1:11

Sunday -- The Jewish mob slandered Jesus. -- John 8:48,52

THE LESSON EXPOSITION

Introduction

This is the last of three lessons which have been prepared specifically of the subject of lying. The first two were concerned with the terrible plague of lying and God's attitude toward lying. This lesson has to do with the problem of "slander" which is the cruelest of all forms of lying. The several passages of Scripture on this subject have been carefully examined and expounded, hoping that this material will be thought-provoking, character-building and challenging to a holy life and heaven at last.

Numbers 14:36:

The children of Israel, when slandering the Land of Canaan, were indirectly slandering God. God was so angry with them that He would not allow them to enter that good land, even after they decided to do it without His help, and they failed miserably. When people talk down anything which God institutes, feeling it is not important, they are slandering God, and leaving the impression that they believe their judgment is better than His. All of the murmuring of the children of Israel against God was slander. When they created the golden calf and said the calf was the god that brought them out of Egypt, they were slandering God. When God allows us to make any accomplishment in life, and we take the credit and boast of what we did, we are slandering God, because we could not make a success of anything, even to drawing our next breath, without His mercy and help. Those Israelites also slandered Moses, accusing him of wrong motives for leading them out of Egypt (Ex. 16:2). Many a true, honest, Spirit-filled pastor has been slandered out of the

ministry by people who refused to walk in the light of their preaching. They started a slander-campaign -- and got rid of them. Many such ministers with their wives and children have been heartlessly slandered out of the ministry and into the street with no money saved, and no place to go. The ones who did such a deed, or were a party to it, will regret it when God's books are opened (Rev. 20:12). Someone has rightly said: "Slander has a way of keeping bleeding sores, bleeding; hurt feelings hurting, and sick churches dying. In Hebrews 3:10-12 the writer warns us not to reject the experience of holiness, as the Israelites rejected the Land of Canaan, for if we do, it will be the same as "departing from the living God," and slandering both God and His Holiness.

Jer. 6:28,30:

All who form affinities with slanderers until they become such themselves, are referred to in verse 30 as "revolters and corrupters." All slanderers are grievous revolters against God and His true saints. They are not pure silver, but are called "reprobate" to be rejected when God puts, them to the final test. Sad indeed when false professors flunk their finals before God. Sad indeed, when one can no longer feel sorry, or even frightened, when he has not passed the "holiness test" and is rejected of God. The counterfeit coin, made of lead instead of silver will fall like a "dead thud" instead of a true ring. That is why some prayers and testimonies sound like a dead thud, while others ring like a bell. The great "Refiner and Purifier of silver" (Mal. 3:3) will accept only the pure metal of Christian testimony which rings true, but nothing from a counterfeit heart. Slanderers are the most ruthless and heartless of all liars. They are sometimes found in the ranks of the Holy. They are cheap metal -- silver plated. They will never stand the test from the God who can't be fooled.

Slander, like all of our greatest problems, usually starts so small that it hardly seems important enough to take seriously, but like a prairie fire in tall, dry grass, driven by a strong wind, it may start from a tiny spark, but Oh! what devastation is wrought before it can be brought under control. It is said of a slanderer, who is always hurting the cause, that he will never tell a lie when the truth will do more damage. Therefore, it is not the lie, itself, that he loves, it is the harm it does and the sadness and sorrow it inflicts. If he had God in his heart he would not be that way.

Julian the Apostate believed: "No savage beasts were so cruel against one another as the Christians" (Biblical Illustrator, Gal. 5:15). Julian was mistaken. True Christians are not that way at all. They love one another (I John 4:7-8). The grievous revolters, slanderers, corrupters, and reprobates which Jeremiah mentions, and which the "Lord hath rejected," are like Julian said, but not the true saints. Julian must have been, as Jeremiah said, "walking with slanderers." He apparently had his eyes on the wrong people. That is an easy, and yet a very dangerous thing to do. Slander is brutish behaviour -- far beneath any bloodwashed saint of God to indulge.

Psa. 50:20:

A true account: Years ago a woman with an evil motive told a terrible story on her pastor, involving herself. This devastating story was noised around until the poor man's influence and ministry were ruined. She stuck to her story, and the pastor had no choice but to turn in his ministerial credentials and leave the ministry. When he had become an old man, and the woman lay dying, she confessed that she had lied, and there was not a word of truth in what she had accused

him. Just think of the fearful responsibility of facing the Judge of all the earth at the Great White Throne, and a bottomless hell, and an endless eternity with the blood of this good man's ministry on her hands. No wonder she was frightened when the doctor told her she would not get well.

Oh, how terribly serious it is for one to mar or destroy the influence or ministry of a godly man or woman by spreading slanderous tales which were designed in a heart of hatred, to ruin a person whom the Holy Ghost had called to the sacred ministry. "Plant a seed of slander and you reap a harvest of regret." "The ultimate issue is always the same, forgiveness or eternal punishment."

When we hurt anyone intentionally, with a slanderous remark, we hurt ourselves more. The pastor in the above story lived all his life under the awful heartbreaking stigma, and suffered his lost ministry, simply because of the slander which that wicked woman concocted against him. But his suffering could never be compared with the eternal suffering of the woman who told that hateful falsehood. She waited so long to tell the truth that she could never make amends for the damage she had done. If she could receive forgiveness of God at that late hour in life, after so many years of concealing the truth, and destroying a God-called man, with no way of making wrongs right, God only knows. Dr. Coxon said, "You can't persecute God's people without destroying yourself."

Psa. 31:13:

Any and every form of slander, according to this Scripture is murder. Slander by "innuendo" is often employed by the most crafty of villains. People who will employ slander need to be feared because they can never be trusted. Innuendo is a stealthy, indirect hinting or suggestion, or insinuation -- a veiled reflection against one's character or reputation.

Years ago a camp meeting board was about to choose an evangelist for the next year. One, whom they had recently heard preach (but who otherwise was a stranger to the members of the board) was suggested. They all were enthusiastic in his favor -- all but one man who had a personal dislike for this evangelist. While the others were speaking very favorably as to this evangelist's being chosen, the dissenting brother kept silent until time to pass the ballots. It was apparent that everyone present would vote for this brother which one man didn't want. At the crucial moment he spoke up and said, "Brethren, before we vote on this man as our speaker for next year, don't you think we should investigate as to what became of his wife's first husband?" That did it! It put a strong suspicion in all minds present. It created a false impression that the evangelist's wife must have been married previously, and her first husband must still be living. They immediately went into a huddle. No one else on the board had ever met this evangelist before, and such a question had never crossed their minds. But they immediately felt, because of the question that had been raised, that he might be a bad risk, so they dropped his name and voted in favor of another. In less than twenty minutes after the business meeting closed someone in the camp, who had known this evangelist as close friends for many years, convinced the inquirer that the man's wife was now living with the only husband she had ever had. The dissenting voter had employed the "innuendo scheme," to get what he wanted, and it worked! But who would want to stand in his shoes when he stands before the judge of all the earth on that awful day when slander -- (defaming one's image and reputation, intentionally) will be dealt with as one of the worst sins a person could possibly commit against another, and not actually take his life.

Here is how slander and innuendo work together: One, wanting to leave a strong question mark about a good person, who, for some reason he wants to hurt, will say, "If you knew what I know about that man! I'm not going to say, but I know a plenty." Facts are there was no foundation for it at all, except a hateful desire on the part of the speaker to hurt the man he was talking about, and shutting the door of opportunity in his face for a personal, selfish reason. It is possible through innuendo to put prejudice in someone's mind about another person that might never go away.

Also, one can use the "innuendo trick" by a mere inflection of the voice, or a wise, meaningful look, and thereby quote someone exactly right (word for word), and yet completely misrepresent what the person quoted had in mind.

I Timothy 3:11:

This verse is a very solemn warning to all Christian women. All slander comes from Satan through the channel of the carnal hearts of men and women. It never comes out of the heart and lips of true Christians. It is spawned of hatred and malicious motives, of which true Christians are never guilty. It is very significant that Paul, herein, specifically warns the wives against slander. The church which Timothy pastored may have had some such problem, or Paul might not have felt that this warning was important enough to mention. Women always have had tremendous influence on all levels of the affairs of the world. It is said, and truthfully so, "Behind every great man is a great woman." Women do have tremendous influence both directly and indirectly, for better or worse. With a man's noble wife in the background, praying, guiding and boosting, she can wield a tremendous influence in pulling her husband through the hardest spots in life. On the other hand, if she is controlled by the devil, she can destroy him. Remember how King Ahab had no solution for his problem when Naboth refused to let him have his vineyard, except to pout and nurse his own hurt feelings. But his wicked wife, Jezebel, with the use of deep-cutting, murderous slander, eliminated Naboth and was thereby able to secure for Ahab the coveted vineyard. This malicious plot brought the wrath and curse of God down on both Ahab and his crafty wife (I Kings 21:1-16). Jezebel thought she had solved a big problem, but actually she created a far greater problem, both for herself and for her husband, because God was incensed over what she had done to Naboth. God immediately planned their punishment. Slander never brings a good solution for any problem. Alfred Lord Tennyson said it: "Slander, meanest spawn of hell, and women's slander is the worst." Whether Tennyson was right or wrong, the fact remains that the sex difference is not of prime importance in this connection, for regardless of its source, slander always grieves God, hurts His cause, damns souls, and makes the devil happy. Slander always creates new problems and aggravates the old ones. Certain gossip may be entirely true, but slander is always false. Shakespeare said, "There is no slander, sir, which is truth."

Psa. 101:5:

Slander, especially when premeditated, and with an evil design is in for the severe and eternal punishment of God. This verse should frighten every soul in the world that has ever been guilty of committing slander or having it in his heart. "Malignity," which Paul mentions in Rom. 1:29, relating it to twenty-one other sins of the very worst sort, is very closely related to slander. Slander is INFLICTING pain or injury on another with a wicked tongue, while malignity is

WISHING such injury and distress on another. Malignity is bitterness and hate within the heart -- slander is when the bitterness breaks loose and starts to do its worst. Slander starts in the carnal heart with malignity. That cannot happen to a genuinely saved person. The purest heart in the world can be hated, broken and crushed, but it will not hate in return. It may grieve deeply, but not hate.

Satan is very much inclined to suggest wrong feelings when one is spitefully injured, but a true Christian will resist the devil (Jas. 4:7) and will not give in to Satan's proposals. All slander starts in the thought life. Satan has no other access to the human heart. There in one's thought life all battles are lost or won. Satan's strategy for capturing a human soul, is first, to capture and control his thoughts. True Christians cannot give in to Satan's suggestion to slander anyone, for any reason whatsoever. There is never any excuse for anyone to tell anything about another person which is not true. Someone has truthfully said, "To slander one of God's dear children, is to slander Christ. Paul said, "But when ye sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ" (I Cor. 8:12). To do so would be worse than to have a millstone tied about one's neck and be cast into the sea (Luke 17:2). Slander is self-destructive. Again, Paul put it very graphically: "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (Gal. 5:15),

Remember Pharaoh's dream in Gen. 41. The biting and devouring was done by the sickly and undernourished, and not by the healthy one, and, as always, the healthy were the victims. Slander within the church of God always weakens the strong, but never strengthens the weak. When slander is allowed to have its way within the body of Christ, nothing but sickness and death can result. How long can one be a bosom friend of slanderers and not become one himself? If he is what he ought to be, he won't be comfortable in such company because only "Birds of a feather flock together," and "We become like what we love."

"If you would keep down strife,
Five things observe with care:
Of whom you speak; to whom you speak;
And why, and when, and where."

-- Anon --

Prov. 10:18:

Anyone who employs any kind of slander against another, hoping to solve any kind of problem is acting very foolishly. Probably the most elusive form of slander is silence, when one for conscience sake, should speak up. When slanderers are hurling false accusations for the purpose of martyring an innocent person, any silent office-holder or bystander who has true knowledge of the situation, and proof of the innocence of the accused, but who withholds his knowledge and draws back in silence, is definitely a party to the false accusations as well as the unfair punishment which results. His hands shed innocent blood (Prov. 6:17). For one to commit this crime of silence would be devising evil against an innocent person -- a thing which God flatly condemns (Prov. 3:29). Millions of people throughout history have lied without saying a word, letting the false allegations live and the accused person die. Many an innocent person has been executed for a crime which he did not commit, while certain ones who could have produced

evidence which would have acquitted him, but they didn't want to become involved. That is "silent slander." Silent lifted eyebrows and facial expression, on the other hand, can help to condemn an innocent person who is being falsely accused. Silence can speak volumes sometimes. Someone very wisely said, "One look is worth a thousand words." It is possible for a person to quote someone and quote correctly, word-for-word, but with a different inflection of the voice and thus totally misconstrue the true meaning of the speaker. This is another living example of malicious slander. Lord Chesterfield told the world: "If I tell a malicious lie, in order to affect any man's fortune or character, I may indeed injure him for some time; but I shall be sure to be the greater sufferer myself at last." How can a heart be pure when the tongue is vile? It can't! Rom. 3:8:

It is a dangerous thing to hurt the influence, and mar the image of one of God's anointed preachers by misrepresenting and falsifying what he has preached under the inspiration of God.

Some corrupters in the Christian ranks of Paul's day slandered the apostles, misrepresenting their teaching, saying, that Paul taught that it was alright to do evil that good might come. Paul said in this verse that all who stooped to such slander -- their damnation was just. If those slanderers follow and obey Satan, what can they expect but the same punishment which Satan shall receive in eternity?

There are those who will say things which are false and reflective against God's sanctified saints, slanderously, but when confronted will deceitfully and evasively declare: "I've got an appointment in just a few minutes and I've got to leave." So he will excuse himself, hurry away, and hopes folk will forget and let the matter drop. He takes no chances of being questioned as to what he had slanderously and treacherously said and done. This trick is the guilty slanderer's escape route. Sometimes, when such an one knows what is coming, when he is summoned for questioning, he will avoid it by saying: "I have a lot of things I must tend to, and I can't talk to you now." He then will sometimes inject a brief, false statement, and then hurry away. However, such cover-up tricks as these will never stand the test of the Judgment. No one, facing the Judge of all the earth, will make a false statement, under the pretense of having something to tend to, which is so important it won't wait, (which is entirely untrue). and then hastily leave to prevent further questioning concerning the sins he is afraid to face. All persons who operate by falsehoods, tricks and schemes will miss heaven unless they repent, forsake their evil ways, and get their wicked heart washed. Otherwise, they have nothing but a false hope of eternal life. A wise person who wishes to keep the smile of God must maintain his integrity and sacred honor. He would rather be slandered a thousand times than to slander once. Edwin Markham said it: "We have committed the Golden Rule to memory: let us now commit it to life." And Uncle Ben says, "Scandal is like an egg -- when hatched it has wings" (P. 178).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Can you explain the connection between rejecters of holiness in Hebrews chapter 3 and the Israelites rejecting the Land of Canaan in Numbers 14:36?
2. What is "reprobate silver" and how can it relate to our Christian lives?
3. What is meant by the word "innuendo" and what is bad about it?

4. What is the main difference between gossip and slander?
5. Can you explain the similarity and difference between slander and malignity?
6. What does the writer of this lesson believe is the most elusive form of slander?
7. Why is slander the worst of all of the sins of the tongue?
8. How should Christians react when they are slandered? (Matt. 5:11,12)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

1. Slander is the first sin that ever came into this world. Satan used it, slandering God, when he was enticing Eve to sin.

2. Imagine what this world might be like if slander had never been heard of, and never been used. Heaven will be that way. Praise God forever!

COMMENTS ON THE GOLDEN TEXT:

"An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbor" (Prov. 11:9). Eight times in the New Testament we are told to love our neighbor as ourselves. The prophet, Zechariah warns us not to even imagine evil in our hearts against our neighbor (8:17). If we strictly obey the nine injunctions herein referred to we would never try to harm anyone by a slanderous remark, regardless of what one might have done or said.

O, GUARD MY LIPS!

Forgive me, Lord, for words I spoke
That day while under stress.
I somehow can't forget them now,
Although I did confess.

O help me, Lord, to weigh my words,
No matter what the trial,
Lest I hurt Thee, Your sheep, Your lambs;
Rob someone of their smile!

O guard my lips, and guard my words
Reflect your loving voice.
And if listening is best,
Let silence be my choice.

O let no unkind words escape
From these clay lips of mine.

Forgive me, Lord, and guard my lips
Until the end of time!

-- Alice Mortenson --

* * * * *

THE END