

Leaves Of Hope #9

Family Devotion written by C.M. Gullerud

Let me be thine forever,
Thou faithful God and Lord;
Let me forsake thee never
Nor wander from thy Word.
Lord, do not let me waver,
But give me steadfastness,
And for such grace forever
Thy holy name I'll bless. L.H. 334:1

Ecclesiastes 5:2-5

Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few. As a dream comes when there are many cares, so the speech of a fool when there are many words. When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools, fulfill your vow. It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it.

Years ago the Saturday Evening Post published a series of stories by Octavius Roy Cohen portraying people of the South. They were not only humorous, but they also contained a good bit of homespun philosophy. Among other characters was a certain man named Florian Slappy who ever so often found it necessary

to say to his companion: *“You speak words but they don’t convey no sensibility to me.”* No doubt Mr. Cohen knew people who were guilty of letting loose with a flow of words which conveyed no message or at least no message that had any sense or meaning. *“A fool’s voice is known by his many words . . . in the multitude of dreams and many words there is also vanity.”* What a waste of words and also what a waste of natural talent. There is another use of words that is vain and disastrous, and that is when a man opens his mouth to make a solemn pledge or promise and then does not keep it. It is serious when a promise is made to men and then not kept. It is doubly serious when vows are made to God and then broken.

When someone promises to pay a certain sum of money and then does not pay it, acting even as if the promise had never been made, how disgusting this is – how wrong! Even the world has no time for such a person who is called a “dead-beat”, one who cannot be trusted. But what are we to think of someone who will stand before God and make vows which are merely a mouthing of words, vows given and just as quickly broken? Our text says: *“When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; for he has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed. It is*

better not to vow than to vow and not pay. Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin.”

As we think of our confirmation day, it is fitting and proper that we give thought to that solemn moment when we stood before the altar of God and made a public confession of faith, and promised with the help of God to renounce the devil and all his works and ways and to remain faithful until the day of our death. How have we kept that vow? Where do we stand today? Have we turned our back upon the faith that we once professed? Would people recognize us as the same person who so solemnly bowed to receive the Lord’s blessing on the day of our confirmation? If not, then it had been better that we had not made such vows.

We realize that the devil is ever working to lead us astray. He does not want us to seek the Lord where he may be found. The devil does not want us to serve the Lord as his witnesses. He draws us to slip into his service and walk in his ways. When we are thus tempted let us take to heart the word of verse seven of the fifth chapter: “Fear God.” Thus we say in our Catechism: “We should fear and love God that we do not despise preaching and his Word, but gladly hear and learn it.” We do not fear God slavishly, but we are to love him and dread nothing more than to

offend him. Think of the great burden that he bore for us when he went to the cross and there suffered all hell's torment that we might be forgiven and set free from the bondage of sin and the devil.

Jesus, grant that balm and healing

In thy holy wounds I find,

Every hour that I am feeling

Pains of body and of mind.

Should some evil thought within

Tempt my treacherous heart to sin,

Show the peril, and from sinning

Keep me ere its first beginning. L.H. 144:1