

"FLIES IN THE OINTMENT"**Introduction**

1. The Bible is given to search our hearts
2. It turns the spotlight on our weaknesses
3. For this reason sinners do not read it – but we are too wise to reject correction.

1. IT IS A GOOD THING TO HAVE A GOOD NAME

- 1) The TEXT speaks of "reputation" = known for good reputation as a man/woman of God.
- 2) What "reputation" is this?
 - (i) not the bad reputation of prejudiced people:
See the way even Christ was miscalled – and the Apostles – and so many of the best saints
 - (ii) not the good reputation of prejudiced people:
This may spring from party-spirit – or from fear-of-man – or from an unregenerate heart
- 3) BUT here "reputation" means a fair judgement:
 - (i) for wisdom: about the Word of God (Bible knowledge) – about moral issues (what to praise/blame) – conduct at home + in one's family – in the place of work
 - (ii) and honour: respected for what we profess
APPLICATION: A good name is very precious.

2. A LITTLE FOLLY SPOILS THIS GOOD NAME

- 1) A good name can be spoiled: **Illustration**: ointment
OBSERVE: Take good care of your reputation – and also take good care of other people's reputations.
- 2) The Ninth Commandment: "false witness" – we need to be careful how we speak/think.

- 3) What this TEXT does not teach:
 - (i) Being ashamed of Christ: for Christ's sake we are to lose our good name if necessary.
ILLUSTRATION: The Apostle Paul with the Jews
 - (ii) Compromising the Word of God to keep in with weak people:
Illustration: Spurgeon + "Downgrade"
- 4) What the "folly" here referred to is: SIN
DOCTRINE: A state of grace is one of imperfection
ILLUSTRATION: Moses / Samson / David / Solomon / Peter
- 5) The "folly" here is behaviour inconsistent with our profession of Christ.
OBSERVE: Every Christian is guilty up to a point
- 6) The sad truth is that we all have many weaknesses:
 - (i) some too soft
 - (ii) some too angry
 - (iii) some careless in talk
 - (iv) some proud...

LESSONS

1. To be very kind + forgiving to one another
2. To be more ready to see the beam in our own eye than the speck in others
3. To bless God that our folly cannot cut us off from God's love in Christ

3. WE ALL HAVE THINGS TO REPENT OF IN THIS LIGHT

- 1) Obviously this text is written to help us all.
- 2) Clear lessons must be:
 - (i) to "watch and pray" against all forms of Indwelling Sin
 - (ii) to bewail our imperfect state of soul, as Paul does. "O wretched man" (Details)
 - (iii) to guard against despair when we do go wrong:
ILLUSTRATION: Peter was pardoned – so can we be

3) To show love to one another whenever we go wrong, i.e. to rebuke in love and then to help one another up with all kindness.

DOCTRINE: We must always forgive those whom God forgives = all His dear people.

CONCLUSION

Are you keeping the flies out of the ointment?

PSALM
17: 1 – 5
141: 1 – 5
19: 11 – 14