

# AN ATTRACTIVE ENEMY

I was traveling by train in the West Country in October, and noticed in the fields for several miles, almost every tree separating one field from another was dead.

At first I thought they might be elms stricken by disease, but a second look confirmed that they were not elms, and that the cause of their dead state was ivy.

Now I think that ivy is a very attractive plant. It keeps its colour all year, thus brightening many a dull day. It has various colours in its leaves, thus providing change from monotony. It is beautiful, **but deadly**.

Something I know to be sinful comes across my path, I think, well I know it's wrong but it's beautiful and there's so little of it, it couldn't do any harm. That is just like looking upon the young branch of ivy as it climbs on the bark of a tree, its leaves shining, perhaps variegated.

"Surely there cannot be any harm in that," I say, "indeed it makes the scene more bright!"

That is what sin does. It looks attractive. It makes the world more "pretty" and it is introduced in such small quantities at first that I may think it quite harmless and want some more of it.

There is plenty more of it, my friend. Its supplier, Satan, has tremendous resources and, being the enemy of our souls, he tempts us by giving us a small, attractive amount at a time, but he builds up the dosage as soon as he can so that eventually, like the trees, we are completely overcome by sin.

Hebrews 12:1 speaks of the "sin which so easily entangles us;" so easily indeed that we may not notice how we are being enslaved. Satan is so crafty that he offers us what is attractive and varied and, alas, so often we are deceived by him.

How then am I to be saved from this power? Peter called out "Lord, save me" (Matthew 14:30). That is a very short prayer, but it was sincere and it was answered immediately. Ask the Saviour to help you. He will not fail you. He can give you pleasures that are attractive, that are varied, that brighten a dull day, and His pleasures are forever and preserve us in a happy life.

If you keep near to Jesus you can say to Him, quite simply, "Lord, is this pleasure offered me for my good?" He will answer you, and by His Spirit He will make you sensitive so that you will quickly discern when Satan is trying to entrap you. In our own power we are not a match for Satan, but all the power of the glorious Man who has overcome Satan is available to us and thus we can be preserved, useful and living, for God's praise and glory.

For those trees that I saw there is now no hope. For you and me there is glorious, unfailing hope, and it is in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Let us commit ourselves more to Him, for His Name's sake.

By R.B.

Acknowledgement: Number 7 "THE GOSPEL WITNESS"

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