

Holy Wisdom in Soul Saving

By D. S. Warner

"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore as wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matt. 10:16)

In this text Christ directs attention to two qualifications essential to usefulness; namely, wisdom and harmlessness. The Lord help us to urge upon all, the great importance of that holy wisdom that cometh from above. Oh, what disastrous work is made in attempts to preach and teach without the "gentleness of Christ"! Some have fallen into a harsh, grating, vindictive spirit of raillery. Such cast up and renounce the corruption of the present-day fallen sects in a tantalizing manner, and more because of that eccentricity which takes pleasure in making people angry, than from a warm heart of love and concern for the souls that are thereby being ruined. Such teachers become cold, lose the joy of the Lord, chill and repel, more than draw to Christ.

But such may be sincere. They see in the Word of God that "the daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor, and it is time to thresh her," and they think that they are doing God's service by simply casting hailstones, not with "fire mingled with blood." How often we have gone into a community where Bible anti-sect holiness had thus been preached. A few had been convicted by the real truth and had come out of the sects, but all the rest of the country had been soured. Prejudices were so great that the Spirit of God could not get at the hearts of the people. Though the truth had saved a few souls, the

manner of its presentation had hedged up the way for the salvation of many more.

Babylon must be rebuked, and is rebuked by all God's true prophets; but unless the rebukes are the outflow of a warm heart of love and are seasoned with much grace, the preacher's attempted good will only be evil spoken of, and no real good will ensue. The same words may be used by two persons and have different effects. One has a wide and deep knowledge of the ruinous effects of the modern sects, and with a heart bleeding in love for souls that are being slaughtered, he speaks out the awful denunciations that the Spirit of God gives him. Another person, not feeling the force of the evil nor possessing the same fervent love for souls, attempts to imitate him, but only stirs the ill will of the people. O my brethren, be sure that all you say flows from a heart of love! Whether exhortation to sinners or correction of religious abuse, whatever cometh not of love is as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals and will do no good. Especially when it comes to threshing Babylon, be sure you are inspired only by love for God and love for perishing souls, or refrain.

It is not becoming for young disciples to make themselves too conspicuous in strong speech against sectarians. The truth regarding sectarianism will not be so readily received from them as from older saints. Christ did not commission his preachers to irritate and make men angry, but to be instruments of salvation. True, some people will become enraged when the Word of God is preached in all love and humility, because of their idols;

but we should not try to make men angry,
but try in all earnestness to save their souls.

The people are indeed in great darkness, and need our pity, and before we try to demolish their sectish religion, which is all they know, we ought to show them something better. Or rather "speak the truth in love," and that will itself root up error. We know that sectarians can scarcely endure the "sincere milk of the Word," much less meat. Now, if you humbly and kindly teach the pure word, some will be offended, but the effect of their opposition will be to drive more to love the truth. Whereas if you begin to cut and slash at once upon the evils of sect religion, without having patiently taught the people the way of the Lord more perfectly, you create the impression that you are sour and have nothing better than the persons you have preached against. Nothing is gained by trying to make men angry. I repeat this thought that if you, in a humble, loving manner, show the people just what is necessary for one to do in order to enjoy salvation and to enter heaven, and men foam out against your teaching, many will be driven thereby to take the side of the truth, and good will be effected. But if you by railing speeches stir up a mob spirit, what profit will you have when buffeted for your faults? Almost any graceless person can soon "make the devil mad" and "sectarians howl," etc. But "the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30).

We saw a company of young disciples that went out to hold meetings. In the service, one, we fear, had more brass than grace, who was young in years and inexperienced in

gospel work, began with a discourse on "false teachers." What was the effect? Was some hungry soul fed? Was someone led to consecrate? No; the sermon "stirred the devil, and caused him to get very bold." Better preach salvation: that will destroy the works of the devil, and bruise him under foot, rather than make him bold.

We have lived long enough in this world to find out that men will credit us as having a better religion than others around us only when they see superior fruits. If they see that you have the real joy of the Lord in your soul and a deep love for poor lost men; above all, when they see that you are actually used of God to "pull souls out of the fire" who are far gone in sin and wretchedness; when they see men who were wont to swear and abuse their families, now praising God and kindly caring for their families, they will acknowledge that God is with you.

The best sign of a good store and that which attracts customers more than all lettered boards and newspaper advertisements is a large display of the goods. For instance, if a person in a city wishes to buy fruit, he will go straight to that place where he sees the largest profusion of fruit exposed to view. Likewise the best convincer that we are "the seed whom the Lord hath blessed," is the actual fruit of salvation, the real deliverance of men from the power of sin, and the manifestation of the virtues of a holy life. Aim directly at getting men and women saved. When you shall have been used of God in the salvation of souls yourself, you can, with more authority and consistency, reprove sectarian fruitlessness.

"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom" James 3:13. "Show your works," brethren; get souls saved, and they will testify of God's blessing through your labors, and this will stop the mouths of gainsayers, especially at new places, where your efforts will be watched. The real virtues of your labors, your practical success in winning souls to God, will decide whether you have anything better to offer than the sects have. Much holy wisdom is needed.

"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon" (1 Cor. 3:10). "The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools. Wisdom is better than weapons of war; but one sinner destroyeth much good" (Eccl. 9:17, 18). "One sinner destroyeth much good," especially if he is a puffed-up preacher, destitute of the wisdom of the Spirit of God. One such person will prevent more souls coming to God than ten holy, humble men of God can be the instrument of saving.

No reward, or expression of divine approval, is pronounced upon men who simply stir up anger and hatred in carnal hearts. But "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever" (Dan. 12:3). Thus heavenly wisdom is associated with turning men to righteousness. Therefore "get wisdom, get understanding; forget it not; neither decline from the words

of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her: and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding" (Prov. 4:6-7).

"The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom" (Ps. 37:30). But when men show a lack of the wisdom that "cometh from above," it is because they lack the real possession. Some think because they feel joy in their graceless onslaughts, which drive men away in disgust, they are blessed of God in the same. But "folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom" (Prov. 15:21). So self-conceited folly may be happy over a harangue which God is not in and whose effects are evil rather than good.

Christ says, "I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist" (Luke 21:15). Some people seem to have plenty of mouth, but little or no wisdom. Better have less mouth, than the reverse.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16). "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Col. 4:5, 6).

Oh, how important these directions! The word of Christ is what all workers need to be filled with. Sectarians generally, cannot endure sound doctrine, even the Word of God; but when the pure word is given to the people in the Spirit of God, no harm will result.

But when even the Bible itself is given in the spirit of raillery, and still more when men employ coarse and abusive speeches of their own, the effect is chilling and repelling. Oh, for wisdom "toward them that are without" and for "speech seasoned with salt," the Spirit of God! No other wisdom is sufficient but that of the Spirit of God. And now, dearly beloved, learn this one thing, that the Spirit of God never uses coarse, unseemly speeches and comparisons. Such are repulsive to good manners.

Thus it is recorded of Paul and Barnabas, "And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed" (Acts 14:1). Here is a hint of the wisdom the Spirit of God gives the true saints. The apostles had both Jews and Gentiles before them, a vast contrariety of minds. What wisdom was necessary for that occasion! What would tend to draw one class would naturally repel the other, but they "so spake that a great multitude, both of the Jews and also of the Greeks, believed." Now, had they spoken some other way or selected some other subject for the occasion, the result would have been different.

The Lord help all the saints to consider this Holy Spirit wisdom! For Jesus' sake do not blunder out whatever the spirit of wit and conceit may suggest to your mind. Oh! do, for God's sake, get filled with love and pity for the lost, and especially with humbleness of mind and much heavenly wisdom.

“But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile (2 Cor. 12:16). This guile was nothing but holy prudence and discretion in the presentation of the Word, the careful consideration of the state of a congregation and the presentation of just that part of divine truth that would draw the greatest number to Christ.

Take heed how you pour out a lot of vinegar, just because you think it smart: rather hold the minds of the people to the love of Christ and the "beauties of holiness," and then some souls may be saved, instead of many being soured. Keep to the point of the salvation of souls. And whenever you see and feel that the rebuking of Babylon is necessary to the salvation of souls, and the Spirit puts this duty upon you, God will bless the message and good will result. But to cast up her mire and stir up her foul spirits just because you can is not wisdom.

In most places Babylon is destitute of anything but chaff, and in such places surely no person can thresh any wheat out of her: hence it does not pay to keep flailing her. In every place the vials of God's wrath must be poured out upon her; but there comes a time when God is glorified in her being utterly ignored. The saints should then preach and proceed just as if she did not exist.

Keep to the positive doctrine of salvation. Be witnesses of the power of God, and extol the virtues of the precious blood of Christ. Let the special business of all workers be to have their own souls abound in the glory of God; and to labor for the advancement of all others in the sublime life of God. To properly live in the Spirit there must be much

praying. If two or more brethren meet, it were better seriously to inquire into each other's case and spend some time in prayer to God for a greater measure of meekness, love, and power, than to consume the precious moments rehearsing the well-known fact that Babylon is fallen and become a habitation of devils.

This exhortation is designed more especially for young workers, particularly those working in new territories. You should pray much for the "wisdom that cometh from above." Manifest much patience in teaching the true way of the Lord before dealing out the sharp rebukes of the Word upon the false and deceptive ways of error. This is a good motto: "He that winneth souls is wise."

Even the "sons of Sceva"—vagabond Jews, exorcists—could "stir up the devil" and get a good flogging for it. So to report souls turned to righteousness is a far better indication "that ye are born of God" than simply the report that the "devil was stirred," etc. Oh, may God make you fishers of men!

—Reprint from a Tract

Who Will Meet Me There?

Here we meet and part in Jesus,
But our spirits never part;
Love, undying love, so precious,
Holds you sacred in our heart.

Grace hath robed your souls in beauty,
Molded you in love divine;
May your lives reflect her virtue
To the glorious end of time.

As we meet in sweet devotion,
Blest in song and owned in prayer,
Comes the tho't in deep emotion,
"Who will meet me over there ?"

O our God in sovereign mercy,
Guide us o'er life's tossing sea;
At thy throne we'll meet to praise
Thee,
Endless as eternity.

God be with you, O my brethren,
Till our work on earth is o'er;
Soon in sacred bliss we'll gather
Where the ransomed part no more.

—D. S. Warner

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