

THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN

THE NOTE OF URGENCY.

(By Rev. W. H. Sedgwick, M.A.)

All true preaching and teaching has in it the note of urgency. No one who reads the Book of the Acts can fail to observe that this is the characteristic note of apostolic preaching. Every word in the apostles' preaching seems scorched with the holy fire of a desperate urgency. The very name by which they preferred to style themselves — "The Way"—breathes a spirit of urgency growing even into a holy intolerance. There was no easy-going religion, whose false liberalism had robbed it of all keenness of edge. With the fine frenzy of a fearless faith they declared,—“In none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other Name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.”

We cannot be mistaken in tracing to this quality in their preaching—this logic on fire—the wonderful success of those early heralds. “I go into the pulpit and preach, and think nothing of it,” said a man to Spurgeon once. “That’s just what the people think of it,” retorted the great preacher. But the apostles arrested the people; they turned the world upside down. Under the passion of their preaching, “there arose no small stir concerning the Way.” For they preached under an awful sense of the issues at stake. The apostles did not steal about with a whisper. They had heard a voice say, “Cry,” and they cried. God gave to them “a perpetual sense of glad, wonderful surprise” at their own salvation, and they preached, as Brownlow North was sometimes said to preach,—like one who had just escaped from a sacked and burning city, his ear still stung with the yell of the dying and the roar of the flame, his heart full of gratitude at the thought of his own wonderful escape.

Passion is at a discount today. Correct preaching must be dignified, cultured, with a literary finish. Correct teaching must be interesting and entertaining. Too many of us, when we get into the pulpit or before our classes, are as men that dream. There is no note of urgency sounding its appeal through our speech. Little wonder then that we toil all year and take nothing! It is not enough to have the right message; we must have also the right way of delivering it. And the right way is the way of the “Cry”—not a hysterical shriek, but a passionate, earnest, reasonable appeal in which the note of urgency is clearly distinguished. It ought never to be possible for those who sit at our feet to go away feeling that we have been dealing with matters of secondary importance. They ought not to be able to withstand the spirit and conviction with which we speak. We ought to send them away seized with a sense of the solitary and supreme greatness of the things we have handled. All true teaching has in it the note of urgency.

Hamilton, Ont.

A LESSON IN SILVER.

Nannie had a bright silver dollar given her. She asked her papa to change it into dimes.

“What is that for, dear?” he asked. “So that I can get the Lord’s part out of it.” And when she got it into smaller coins, she laid out one of the ten. “There,” she said, “I will keep that until Sunday.” And when Sunday came, she went to the box of offerings in the church vestibule and dropped in two dimes.

“Why,” said her father as he heard the last one jingle in, “I thought you gave one-tenth to the Lord.”

“I said one-tenth belongs to him, and I can’t give him what is his own; so if I give him anything, I have to give him what is mine.”—Selected.

CHRIST’S VALUE OF WORDS.

In the first chapter of his new book, “The christology of Jesus,” Dr. Stalker says:—“There is nothing which to the ordinary man appears more trivial than a word. What is it? A breath converted into a sound; out it goes on the air, and is carried away on the wind; and there is an end of it. No, said Jesus, it does not end there, and it does not end ever; when once it is called into existence by the creative force of the will, it becomes a living thing separate from our control—it goes ranging through time and space, doing good or evil, and it will confront us again the last day. ‘Every idle word that men shall speak they shall give an account thereof at the day of judgment.’ At that solemn crisis the influence of our words on our destiny will be extraordinary; for ‘by thy words thou shalt be condemned.’ There is nothing of which the average man is more surely convinced than that his tongue is his own, and that he can at will make it utter words either good or evil. Very different was Christ’s estimate; words are inevitable; if the speaker be good, then they are good; but if he be evil, then they are inevitably evil; for as much control as he seems to have over them he cannot alter their character unless he first alter his own; for ‘out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.’”

FOR THANKFULNESS.

By Anna Burnham Bryant.

Joy came to sit in neighbor-wise
Beside my hearth to-day;
I bade her welcome, though her eyes
Made sign she could not stay.
“I bring you half a loaf,” she said;
“It will be better than no bread.”
Time was, I know, in sullen pet
I might have turned away
Resentfully—and yet—and yet
It is not so to-day;
Thankful, I gather up the crumbs
From any guest of God that comes.
Or crumb or loaf, full well I know
That my desert is less;
I say receive, as on I go,
Enough for thankfulness.
My half-a-loaf, Lord, let me take;
Sweet is the bread that thou dost break.

A PRAYING CHURCH.

A prosperous church is a church which prays. It is written: “My house shall be called a house of prayer.” We must never lose faith in prayer. We must never abandon prayer. We must never lose the spirit of prayer. A church can get on for a considerable time without singing, and can go on indefinitely with indifferent singing. A church may do well with poor preaching, and even without preaching of any kind. But a church without prayer is no church at all. We might as well expect a man to live without breathing as to expect a church to live without praying.

Pray for the minister. Pray for the sick and afflicted. Pray for the children. Pray for the lost. Pray for the community. Pray for one another. “Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest.” “Pray without ceasing.” Pray everywhere. Let the church be characterized by prayer, filled with the atmosphere of prayer, and crowded with the trophies of prayer.—Selected.

God may delay to come in the guise of his providence. There was delay ere Sennacherib’s host lay like withered leaves around the Holy City. There was delay ere Jesus came walking on the sea in the early dawn, or hastened to raise Lazarus. There was delay ere the angel sped to Peter’s side on the night before his appointed martyrdom. He stays long enough to test patience of faith, but not a moment behind the extreme hour of need.—Meyer.

TEMPERANCE ORGANIZATIONS.*

Some Bible Hints.

Never take it upon you to test a man’s ability to withstand temptation until the Lord tells you to do it, as He told Jeremiah! (v. 2.)

Jonadab was wise in his commands. A father should not leave such a matter to his children’s judgment, but should reinforce their wills with his authority (v. 6).

The Rechabites adopted the only safety,—no wine; not moderate drinking, or drinking when they “felt in need of a stimulant” (v. 8).

Temperance families do not run out; and they transmit their fine qualities, as any observer may see (v. 19).

The Temperance Organizations.

The Independent Order of Rechabites was established in 1835 in Salford, England, in imitation of the ancient children of Jonadab. It not only requires total abstinence, but it provides a fund for sickness and death.

The National Temperance Society had its origin in a convention held in 1855 at Saratoga. It publishes temperance periodicals for young people and adults, and a very large number of temperance books and tracts.

The Woman’s Christian Temperance Union has been called “the sober second thought” of the wonderful Woman’s Crusade of December, 1873, and the first half of 1874. The organization was effected in a convention held at Cleveland in November of 1874. It now has branches for the young women and the children, and has extended everywhere, exerting an enormous influence for good. It has departments for the spread of temperance education, social purity, and many other noble causes.

The Independent Order of Good Templars, originating in 1851, received a national organization in May, 1855, in a convention at Cleveland. It admits women on an equality with men. Its pledge requires life-long total abstinence.

The Prohibition Party, after many State campaigns, participated first in a national Presidential election in 1872. Its candidates have been Black, Smith, Dow, St. John, Fleck, Bidwell, Levering, Woolley, and Swallow. It holds that intemperance is a national issue, not to be settled by local efforts.

The Sons of Temperance arose in 1842, from the famous Washingtonian movement. It is a total abstinence association, with charitable and benefit features.

The Catholic Total Abstinence Union of America was founded on Washington’s birthday, 1872, in Baltimore, and it is doing a fine and aggressive work.

The first Band of Hope was formed in Leeds, England, in 1847, and it soon became a popular name for temperance organizations, especially among the young.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.

M., Nov. 9.—The Nazaretes. Amos 2: 11, 12.
T., Nov. 10.—The anti-treating league. Hab. 2: 15.
W., Nov. 11.—The wise men. Prov. 23: 19-21.
Th., Nov. 12.—A divine proclamation. Isa. 61: 17-23.
F., Nov. 13.—Paul’s doctrine. Rom. 14: 12-23.
S., Nov. 14.—A woe upon drink. Isa. 28: 1-2.
Sun., Nov. 15.—Topic: Temperance meeting. A study of temperance organizations. Jer. 50: 1-19.

*Y.P. Topic—A study of temperance organizations. Jer. 35: 1-19.