

Preach The Gospel In Love

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Frequently one hears: "Preach the gospel in love, and let those who differ with you alone." I do wonder just what is meant by such advice, and who would be pleased if one followed it.

I am told that forty years ago those who were contented to be Christians only, refusing to become members of sectarian bodies or in any way affiliate with sectarian bodies, were bold in condemning all human creeds and rules of discipline made by men to be used in religious services. It is affirmed that they were not backward in reading from the Methodist "Discipline," Baptist "Manual," Presbyterian "Confession of Faith," and other human creeds, and pointing out the places where they contradict the Bible. In many instances the church which subscribed to the human creeds resented such a course—not that they objected to one reading their creeds, but they were not pleased when they were adversely criticized. Often they were provoked to debates by such criticisms.

"Times have changed." Forty years ago we did not have the means of transportation now at our command, nor did we have some of the latest ways of communication now used. There has been a marked change in the dress of women—and, too, men's clothes have different lines. It is affirmed by some that law observance is not what it was forty years ago. Though there were some desperadoes then, there are many more now; and that even among those who think lightly of and disregard some of the laws in our statute books. It seems that there is the spirit of disregarding the law spread throughout the land, and the very spirit leads one to have no respect for the law of God.

In some places if the preacher brings to the attention of the audience the teachings of the Methodists, or others who believe in infant baptism, and then shows that such doctrine is not found in the Bible, some member of the church or a number of members take him to task, insisting that he should "preach the gospel in love" and "let other people alone." It is brought to his attention that some of the members had with them, by invitation, people who believe it is

right to baptize infants, and it is not treating them right to invite them to our services and then have them subjected to the humiliation of hearing what they believe criticized.

It is a question with me: "How can I preach the gospel and let other people alone?" I am certain I know how to "preach the gospel in love," but how to preach the gospel and "let other people alone" gives me no little concern—if I am obligated to let them "alone." I do wonder how I can condemn sin and "let other people alone"? In my audience is a man who occasionally gets drunk, another person who gambles, another who is profane, and another who is living in adultery. Can I do my duty as a preacher and make no reference to such sins?

If I insist that one *must* repent to be saved, I run counter to the teaching of the Presbyterians and Primitive Baptists, for they insist that salvation is independent of any conditions—that one repents after he is saved! I cannot preach that repentance is necessary to salvation and let the Presbyterians and Primitive Baptists alone. If I teach that we do not have apostles on earth, active in the church, teaching and preaching, the Mormons declare that I am wrong—that there are apostles now in the church teaching as in the days of Paul. How can I preach that we do not have apostles now, that all who profess to be apostles are impostors, and "let other people alone," seeing the Mormons declare they have apostles now? How can I preach that Jesus is the Christ and "let other people alone," seeing the Jew declares that Jesus was an impostor? If I preach that water, water alone, water unmixed with some other element, was never by God's authority sprinkled or poured on any man for anything, can I let the Methodists and Presby-

terians alone?

If you take careful notice, you will find that in the audience you seldom see a Roman Catholic or Mormon; and the preacher is not taken to task though he make reference by name to what these people teach and offer adverse criticisms of their teaching and practice. I am unable to see how they are benefited if they do not hear what is said.

I am told by some brother who has never preached a sermon in all his life that I should teach the truth—that is, teach people what they should do, and make no reference to what others teach, or to what is false in teachings and practices of others. I do wonder if there is a parent in all the land who has not warned his children against the things he should *not* do—have you spent all your time telling the children what they should do, with never a reference to the things they should not do? Do we find in the Bible that God has taught only what we *should* do, with never a reference to what we should not do? Did Jesus call sects by name and condemn their teaching?

I am disgusted with the maudlin spirit rife throughout the land. Some man is guilty of a certain offense against God and society—he has flaunted the law of the land. Finally he is in the clutches of the law, and punishment is meted out to him. Then some man is to the fore declaring that the punishment is too severe, that mercy should be extended, that he should not be forced to suffer such severe punishment. So also there are those who profess to be Christians who are not willing that sin be condemned, false doctrine exposed, if by so doing some personal friend is humiliated.

The command runs: "Preach the gospel." Brother, do not try to pull the sting from any statement of Jehovah. When people do not do what God commands, it is because they do not believe in him; and unless they believe in him they cannot be saved.

—in *The Gospel Advocate*

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