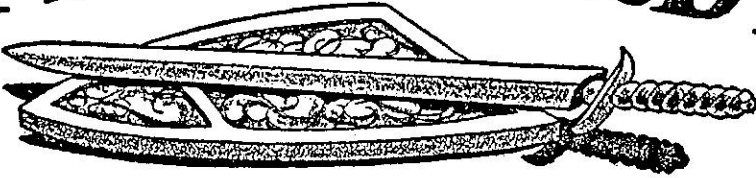


The GOSPEL GUARDIAN



Dedicated to the Propagation and Defense of New Testament Christianity

VOLUME 12

DECEMBER 22, 1960

NUMBER 33

"PREACH THE WORD"

George W. Tyler, San Diego, California

"I charge thee in the sight of God, and Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: **PREACH THE WORD.**" (2 Tim. 4:1, 2)

This phrase has always meant much to the church. The purity of the gospel preaching depends upon following Paul's admonition to Timothy. It was necessary to "**preach the word**" in its purity and simplicity in the first century of the history of the church to get results and it is just as necessary to preach it today if we are to obtain Pauline results.

Politicians, business men and promoters of all kinds of schemes and enterprises capitalize and thrive on slogans. These three words would make a fine one; but Paul never intended for Timothy or any one else to use them in such a sacrilegious manner. Slogans can become dangerous things. They can be, and often are, used to express feelings rather than thoughts, desires rather than reality and aspiration rather than duty. "**Preach The Word**" was not used by Paul as a slogan and should never be so used today.

In his letters to Timothy Paul wrote as an apostle of Jesus Christ highly conscious of his call and commission to be an apostle. He wrote the words of our text in the most solemn manner possible for one to pen.

Peter's command "to repent and be baptized" was not prefaced by solemn words as these. The command that Jesus gave, "this do in remembrance of me" was not prefaced by any such charge. Paul was not merely giving advice to his son in the gospel: he was laboring under the power of the Holy Spirit in directing not only Timothy but all other gospel preachers down through the ages to come. This charge was given in the sight of God and in the name of Jesus Christ the Son of the Most High. He was not manufacturing a catch phrase; he was placing fellow gospel preachers and teachers under an inescapable obligation to preach the unadulterated Word.

When one decides to become a gospel preacher or teacher he takes upon himself a pledge of faithfulness to God and the obligation to "**preach the word**" or be lost; for Paul said, "Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. 4:16) What a man preaches is not something he can decide to do or not to do. It is not a matter of self decision any more than baptism, observing the Lord's Supper or keeping the commands of moral law. To "preach the word" is a definite, imperative, positive command. The real Christian is a herald of the word and if he refuses or neglects to do his plain duty he jeopardizes his right to wear the name.

In this charge Paul binds Timothy to the obligation to "**preach the word.**" It was given in the presence of God and Christ; the words "appearing" and "kingdom" being in the accusative case convey the idea of swearing; hence, the preacher or teacher in under oath to God and his Son to "**preach the word.**" If these words have any meaning to any one besides Timothy, they have a meaning for the whole church. This solemn charge was not given to Timothy because of suspected unfaithfulness, but to show Paul's desire to see the true doctrine and prosperity of the church preserved in their purity, as well as enjoining all preachers and teachers of the future ages to be faithful and diligent in preaching the gospel and protecting Christ's bride, the church, from pollution by those who would make merchandise of her. "For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables." (2 Tim. 4:3) In 1 Tim. 6:20 he gives Timothy another admonition in somewhat similar language; "O Timothy, guard that which is committed unto thee, turning away from profane babblings and oppositions of the knowledge which is falsely so called; which some professing have erred concerning the faith."

(Continued on page twelve)

"PREACH THE WORD" — — —

(Continued from page one)

Preaching, contrary to what many have come to believe, is not the sole prerogative of a chosen few. It is the personal testimony of every believer. It is the universal obligation of all who wear the name of Christ. It is the duty and privilege of every Christian to carry the message of salvation from sin through obedience to the gospel and the blood of Christ to all the people he knows who do not recognize the Lord Jesus Christ as "King of kings and Lord of lords." Releasing a man from the necessity of earning his living gives him a greater opportunity to preach; but, this does not discharge any individual from his or her obligation to speak to others in behalf of Christ. To the hurt of the church, preaching is rapidly becoming the vocation of a favored few who are making a profession of it. In the New Testament times the apostles and their assistants were not the sole preachers of the gospel. After the persecution arose at Jerusalem "They were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.....They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word." (Acts 8:1, 4) These "scattered abroad" were not a "chosen few" sent out from Jerusalem. Again, "But Paul and Barnabas tarried in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others." (Acts 15:35) These men preached at every opportunity. Crowds or just individuals made no difference to them, because they felt the urge to preach just as strongly as Paul when he penned the words, "Necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." (1 Cor. 9:16) In 2 Cor. 5:14 he gives the impelling reason for feeling this "necessity," "For the love of Christ constraineth us." The church today needs thousands of men and women who are moved by the same reason to enter the fields now white for the harvest. Many of these people supported themselves yet were valiant laborers in the kingdom of Christ. Much of the successful work during the early years of the Restoration was done by those working at trades or on their farms.

"Preach the Word" today means to restore preaching to its proper place. We cannot say that we have fully restored the church of the first century until we restore the kind of preaching done during the apostolic age and get like results. Preaching is more than repeating sermons, ideas and points, great as they were, used by our great grandfathers a hundred and twenty-five years ago. We must go back to the days of the apostles, study their methods and hold strictly to them. Results are not being obtained today because we have departed from the "old paths." It is not new methods of reaching people that is needed; but, rather a return to the use of the methods developed by the apostles under direction of the Holy Spirit and used by them in building the church of the first century.

The preachers needed now are as numerous as the

membership of the church. We may call them "personal workers," "personal evangelists" or "visitation evangelists" or whatever we will, the facts are they apply to the same thing. So long as a single Christian is not proclaiming the gospel in public or in private the church has not recovered its preaching power. In the early church every Christian considered himself or herself a messenger of "good news." These people had learned the "good news." They had to tell others about it. They were so full of it they just could not keep their mouths shut even though they faced death for preaching Jesus. Today it is difficult to get people to invite their neighbors to attend church services much less talk with them about the welfare of their souls.

Preaching is still preaching regardless of whether done in a tent or a private house, at lunch time, on the way to work or riding along the highway as Philip did. It involves a revival of our feeling of personal responsibility for preaching the gospel to the unsaved souls. It is going back to the apostolic methods of preaching and teaching and when this is done we will see the resumption of apostolic results. Brethren, "Preach the Word" with renewed fervor and vigor.

THE HUNTON — HARDEMAN INTER-

VIEW (I) — — —

(Continued from page nine)

heard him preach on the Ethiopian Nobleman several times and although it was essentially the same each time—yet I enjoyed it and knew it would be NEW to many of his auditors and maybe some sectarian would learn and obey the truth. He has had great influence in Nashville as well as elsewhere.

Had he stood firm for the all-sufficiency of the blood bought church of the Lord as against the current human institutions and wisdom, he could do now what D. Lipscomb did in the other apostasy. And even now, there would be a different story to record.

That mighty talent for founding, building and growing in any one, when ill directed has still an equal potential for destruction.

MIRACULOUS DIVINE HEALING

By Roy E. Cogdill

A 38 page tract that sets forth the New Testament teaching on the subject in clear and positive language

25c each

\$2.50 per dozen

THE GOSPEL GUARDIAN COMPANY

P. O. Box 980 ... Lufkin, Texas
