

Preach The Word

*..... James W. Adams, Truth In Love, April, 1947

"Preach the word." This solemn charge from heaven's throne comes echoing down the long corridor of nineteen hundred years, laying upon every individual who "names the name of Christ" an awful and fearful responsibility. A more solemn charge, a more important charge, bringing with it a more tremendous responsibility has never been received by mortal man. That these facts may be appreciated by the reader, your attention is invited to:

THE SOLEMNITY OF THE CHARGE

May it be noted that it was given by the Spirit-filled apostle Paul in his last letter to the young preacher Timothy whom the aged apostle loved perhaps above all of earth's companions. He solemnly wrote it as he sat in chains at Rome, awaiting martyrdom for Christ. The duty which the charge imposed upon Timothy and by extension upon every soul would follow him in the way of the Lord was to Paul the supremely important obligation and the most solemn responsibility of the child of God. Note the language in which it is couched, "I charge thee in the sight of God, and of 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 (ASV). No man can ignore this charge and the responsibility which it brings and be true to

God, Christ, or His kingdom nor can he face Christ's second coming and its attendant judgment with ought but apprehension. Upon the faithful discharging of this responsibility depends the favor of God, the blessings of Christ, joy in Christ's coming again, and acceptableness at the judgment. Its solemnity is undeniable. This solemn charge, however, is not arbitrarily imposed upon us. Its solemnity is conclusively established and indelibly impressed upon the mind and heart by its importance, hence note:

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CHARGE

II Why preach? Every cause must have its advocates if it is to prosper among men. It must have its preachers. God made man, hence God knows the constitution of man. God has, therefore, adapted his scheme of redemption to man as he made him. He does not seek to deal with man at variance with the fundamental laws of his constitution. By reason of this fact, preaching was selected by the Creator as his appointed means through which the mind and heart of man might be reached and redeemed. Hence it is that we read, "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21), and "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord

shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom. 10:13-15). The history of two thousand years vindicates the wisdom of God in this respect.

III Why preach THE WORD? What is meant by the Word? The expressions "words, word of God, word of truth, and gospel" are used synonymously in the New Testament. Paul preached the word (Acts 14:25); he preached the word of God (Acts 13:5); he preached the word of the Lord (Acts 16:32); he preached the gospel (Gal. 1:6-9); he calls the word of truth "the gospel of your salvation" (Eph. 1:13,14). To preach the word is to preach the gospel.

IV Why PREACH THE GOSPEL? It is the power of God to save, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). The truth or the gospel frees men from sin, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). The word saves, "Receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your soul" (Jas. 1:21). It converts, "The law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul" (Ps. 19:7). Preach the gospel because it is God's ordained agency to touch, tender, and move the heart to faith, obedience, and salvation.

The preaching of that word, therefore, becomes the most challenging work and the gravest responsibility confronting the child of God.

THE RESPONSIBILITY WHICH THE CHARGE IMPOSES UPON THE CHRISTIAN

Man is lost. The gospel is God's power to save. The preaching of the gospel is the God ordained means of reaching the human heart with God's saving power. The church of our Lord, the aggregate body of Christians, is that institution created by God to discharge this obligation and to perform this work. It becomes, then, the imperative obligation of every Christian to urge the pure gospel of Christ upon every responsible heart within the scope of his influence. The salvation of eternal souls depends upon it. When we consider God's estimate of the value of a soul, "worth more than all the world", and his love and concern for its salvation, expressed in "giving his only begotten Son", the consciousness of our grave responsibility to preach the word must impress itself upon us. Shall we defeat the plan and purpose of the ages by unconcern, and will God hold those guiltless who do so?

SOME DANGEROUS TRENDS WITH RESPECT TO THIS SOLEMN CHARGE

Indifference. In many localities churches and Christians are wholly devoid of evangelistic fervor. Like many of the decadent sects of our day many professed churches of the Lord depends for perpetuity up on natu-

ral generation. There is no passionate ardor for souls. The word is preached within and not without. The gospel saves by contact; it must be preached to the lost.

Sermonizing. Textuary preaching, denominational sermonizing, has become the order of the day in many quarters. Human wisdom and philosophy have become poor substitutes for Divine wisdom. The "social gospel" has displaced the gospel of Christ. The world needs, the church needs, the lost needs **preaching of the word.** Clear, simple, positive exposition of the Scriptures constitute preaching the gospel. God forbid that we should ever become theological in our preaching, brethren! The world needs gospel truth, not theology!

Compromise. The prosperity of the church with its attendant recognition by denominationalism tends to breed compromise. Evidence is not lacking in proof of this affirmation. We live in an age of so called "tolerance". A distinctive plea in religion is taboo. A positive gospel antagonizes good taste. A tendency to compromise is the result. We cannot dilute the gospel without vitiating it! Forearmed is forewarned, brethren. Let us **preach the word.** May all of us be, content to glory in the simple, positive preaching of age old truths made Divine by heavenly birth and sanctified by blood of martyrs that we may indeed and in truth "save ourselves and them that hear us". **PREACH THE WORD!**

Contending For The Faith

*..... Virgil Bradford, The Life Line, January, 1947.

Jude was a bondservant of Jesus Christ who wrote to those who are called by the gospel, beloved of God and kept for Jesus Christ. Hence, a faithful servant of God writes to Christians everywhere, exhorting them to "contend for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints."

Common Salvation. Jude had intended to write of the common salvation, reviewing things which Christians already knew. It is often necessary to refresh our

minds on those things whereby we were once saved. This Paul did in Rom. 6:3,4, saying "are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was risen from the dead—we also might walk in newness of life." Likewise, Peter wrote to "stir up your sincere mind by putting you in remembrance." So Jude would have reviewed many things with them, but as he meditated upon these things the Spirit