

Zion's Landmarks.

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EDITORIAL.

CALL TO THE MINISTRY—QUALIFICATIONS.

There is an impression on my mind to make some observations on the great subject of a call to preach, and the conduct of preachers. Being hedged about with the fear of not expressing the truth—I timidly approach the subject:

A divine call to preach a revealed religion is necessary, while such a call is derided by those that preach what is not revealed. In my youthful days I, in common with some others, held such a Ministry in dread. It was not at all in my thoughts to ever be a preacher for I was not at all disposed to be with such people. When the impression began to enter my mind it was the most humbling thing possible to my pride in every sense conceivable. I abhorred the idea of being a preacher: how could I meet my old companions? how could I give up my pet desires to be a lawyer? I was ashamed to think of falling so low and felt degraded.—After that when a deeper view of my own vileness was opened to me, with a view of the holiness of the God of heaven, and the holy calling to preach the glorious gospel of Christ, there was a strong conviction of my unfitness. But a woe was on me; outward circumstances and affliction even unto threatened death began to shut me in, and an inward impression to preach, embarrassed by a consciousness of unworthiness and a fear that it was not a true call of God, attended me and involved me in such uncertainty and doubt that I knew not what to do.—This perplexity has often humbled and weakened me since. If it is a call to preach why not plainer? if it is not a call to preach why should it trouble me so? Have not I forced these feelings on myself? No! I must say, once it was utterly foreign to my feelings—abhorrent to them to preach. Then again the trial would come in this way: If you had never met with trouble produced by your own misconduct would you ever have thought of preaching? The call if one has come so strangely, the corruption of my nature seeming too so much to cross it, that the very inability to determine whether I was called has weakened and humbled me. Well what is my call to preach? Answer—It is an abiding desire to preach Jesus in his divine beauties as the way of salvation. What is the hindrance?—an inward sense of unfitness coupled with the fear I am not called of God. What text ever comforted me? This one among others: "Lo! I am with you alway even unto the end," was once applied to me with force and sweetness. What is my re-

ward? peace of conscience and mind in endeavoring to preach Jesus, and joy in seeing any evidences of the divine approbation. What would cause me to willingly labor in this sweet work unto the end? The Spiritual evidence that I am called of God to this labor of feeding the flock, and that the labor is accepted in Jesus who is so perfectly suited to lost sinners that my desire is to preach him to them.

To understand and follow the instruction of Paul to Timothy on this subject would be profitable. Let us comment thereon briefly.

1 Tim. 3: 1, 9. "This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a Bishop he desireth a good work."—That is if he has the Spiritual desire, such as the Holy Ghost imparts and which causes him to feed the flock of God, not for filthy lucre but of a ready mind, he desireth a good work. Now what are the evidences of such a Spiritual desire? "A Bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach."

That is he must himself set such an example as the flock should follow. It is vain for a man to condemn in others that which he allows in himself. The preacher must wear a clean garment himself. He must be such a pattern of good works that he will be enabled to declare the whole counsel of God with boldness and authority. To be without blame and unrebukable is indispensable to feasible teaching. Who can rebuke another with authority that is himself guilty of wrong? Men will despise one who attempts it. No shining gifts can supply the lack of a blameless character.

"The husband of one wife."—No plurality of wives is authorized in the word of God. Some Saints mentioned in the Bible had more than one but such is not approved in that book. From the beginning it was *one wife*. The preacher should not teach more than one doctrine either, but his preaching should be the same, one doctrine—one bride—all the time. For to teach one thing here or now, and a different one then or there to please different people or ages would be as having more than one wife. He should ever be watchful of the flock and its good, and take heed to himself and the Ministry which he has received in the Lord that he fulfill it. There can be no higher call than to feed the flock which would justify him in leaving that Ministry of the word to go to any worldly business.

"Sober."—How necessary that such a servant should be sober. What if his Lord comes and finds him drunken and surfeited with worldly cares? What a shame for him to be drunken of liquor. He should be sober in all things—not drunken with the desire to make money, nor in any other excess of corruption.

"Of good behavior."—Some preach-

ers seem not to think of good manners or behavior, not much caring if they give offence. A preacher should be gentle, courteous and kind in his behavior.

"Given to hospitality."—Not only should he be ready to entertain visitors to his own house or home if he has one, but in the Church of God he like a good steward should feed the sheep by bringing out the treasures of heavenly provisions for the poor strangers who cannot feed on the husks of worldly doctrines. Happy is that Bishop who has many hungry souls to feed, for his bread and water shall be sure, the bread of heaven sent to such poor souls and the preacher need not trouble himself to find some new dainty dish for these hungry souls for they desire the same things over and over again. Let him be given to the hospitality of entertaining these real guests for it is the king's table and at the king's expense where they can eat and drink abundantly. This bread is Jesus crucified the staff of life.

"Apt to teach."—One of the best evidences that one is called of God to preach is that he is apt to teach.—does preach. God gives this aptness, hence where it is wanting we may know that something is wrong. It is perhaps too common with some to make excuses in preaching. Do the best you can and if you fail take the humiliation. Excuses are not preaching. Again there may be an improper boasting: As if one should not study the word of God, and state that the Lord gives him all he says, &c., when it is manifest to an instructed mind that the boasting speaker is perverting, misquoting and misapplying the scriptures. To suppose that a preacher cannot be wrong in any of his statements is to claim inspiration which no humble man would do knowingly. Christ is revealed in and to a gospel preacher and the plan of salvation is revealed to him, but he is to study the word of God or the written letter to get its teachings, arguments and proper connections in order that his preaching in the letter of it may be conformed to the Spirit of truth. It is a shame for a preacher to boast of his not reading the Bible and that he cannot make mistakes when at that very time he may be doing so. We are to preach the word. Preach Christ who is represented truly in the word of God so far as language can represent him, and hence we are to study the Bible to be in the spirit of its arguments and language. Here he will find rebukes for the offending, admonition to the heedless, exhortation to the halting, warning to the wicked, encouragement to the fainting, and rich promises to the hungry.

"Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient, not a brawler, not covetous."

"Not given to wine."—How often the scriptures warn us against wine and drunkenness. When so many are debasing themselves with immod-

erate drinking is it not the duty of preachers and other christians to set an example of sobriety? *It is not wrong to abstain* from drinking? If it had been a common thing in Paul's day for preachers to drink wine why should Paul have said to Timothy, "Take a little wine," &c? It was instructing Timothy as an infirm feeble man to do what was not then common for well men to do. To be temperate does not mean to use some or even a little of every thing, but it means a moderate use of good things, or useful necessary things, as that we should be temperate in eating. If a man must use some of every thing to be temperate he must use some profane language to be temperate.—If one needs a little wine let him take it. We are opposed to human organizations to restrain men under vows from doing that which they wish to do. The principles of Christ will regulate us if we love and follow him.

"No striker."—A preacher should not be violent, disposed to fighting. The fewer fighting preachers the better. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal. The vile passions of human nature are not to have place in the bosom of a publisher of peace.

"Not greedy of filthy lucre."—This is a controlling lust of man. Paul knew that greivous wolves would come in not sparing the flock. Even now it is common for men to ask a living by preaching—not among true Baptists however, but elsewhere and everywhere else. Money is an incentive with them which anyone can see. Paul himself coveted no man's gold or silver or apparel, and sets before the elders his example—Acts 20: 17, 36.

[To be continued.]

DISCIPLINE.

There are two kinds of offences—public and private, requiring somewhat different discipline. We shall now notice public ones and their treatment. This word is used in church relation to express the manner of regulating the conduct of church members. Its rules are drawn from the Bible, and its authority is the Spirit of Christ in his people.

It should save life, but cut off dead branches or offences. Brethren should watch over each other for good and not for evil, but faithfulness becomes the house of God. If one brother knows of improper conduct in another brother he should not smuggle or hide it, but endeavor in the proper spirit to correct it and save the offending member. A busybody repeating frivolous matters is quite objectionable, but if one brother knows of wrong conduct persisted in by another he should take the proper steps to remove this.

Some think that it matters not how bad the public offence may be—still if the offending party confesses it he should be forgiven: If a brother should be overtaken in a public fault upon confession he should be forgiven, as if unintentionally he should do that which he abhors, al-