

DON'T REPROVE HIM

E. E. Shelhamer

"He that hateth reproof is brutish." (Proverbs 12:1).

Here we are told that a man who disregards reproof is like a brute. Some brutes, by proper training, can be taught to do wise and very helpful things. Others are unteachable and vicious. So with men. Again we read: "He that refuseth correction, despiseth his own soul." How sad that anyone should despise his own progress and happiness! It would seem that none but a fool could act thus. Yet we see not only bad, but sometimes good men retaliate when reminded of a grievous fault.

It seems that this is the most sadly lacking thing among Christians,—"gentleness", when crossed and contradicted. In fact, Wesley makes this the test of heart purity. Hear him,—

"You have not what I call perfection; if others will call it so, they may. As an instance, you resist evil instead of turning the other cheek. You do not receive reproach with gentleness; no nor even reproof. Nay, you are not able to bear contradiction without the appearance, at least, of resentment. If you are reprov'd, though mildly you do not take it well. You behave with more distance and reserve than you did before. If you are reprov'd or contradicted harshly you answer with harshness; with a loud voice or with an angry tone, or in a sharp, surly manner. You speak sharply or roughly when you reprove others, and behave roughly to your inferiors."

I have learned, to my sorrow, not to reprove certain types of men; especially those who are "set in their ways",—the backslider in heart. He is very active, hence unaware that he has lost the grace of God. He is set in his own way of praying, singing, and conducting services. No need to suggest to him how to improve, for he knows how to do it just right.

Now, there are two ways of treating such: say nothing to him about it; or, try in a nice way to help him correct some of his manners and methods. It will require great grace and wisdom. I confess I have failed more than once. I was either premature, or tactless, or, perhaps the case was about hopeless.

The good bishop and stationing committee delegated me to speak to a brother and explain why he was not in demand. I think others could have succeeded better. But after much prayer, I ventured to inform the grieved brother why he was not given the better appointment. Instead of taking it well, he turned against me, and ever after I could not get real close to him. How sad! He had gotten into a rut, and could not and would not get out. It is hard to get out of a deep rut. A quick turn is likely to cause a stall or break a wheel. So it is with one who is "filled with his own ways."

I tried, and failed again, just lately in Sydney, when I suggested quietly and kindly to a deacon that it might be courtesy on his part to visiting ministers if he let them pray first, as we stood around the table in the vestry just before going into the pulpit. He was invariably the first, and his prayers were so long and dry that no one followed. But, he took offense, because he had "been there for thirty-five years." This in itself was a calamity, to be in the saddle so long.

Oh, that men could see the value of reproofs, even supposing they are uncalled for. No doubt we shall see at the judgment (if not before) the foolishness of our tears over what we considered unjust criticism and reproofs. Had we escaped these, we might have been eternally lost. Reader, welcome them, rather than pull off from reproof

or reprov'er. "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil which shall not (utterly) break my head."—The Church Herald.

REVOLUTIONARY FORCES AT WORK

As we understand the theories of government in their broadest scope, the great dividing line is not between capitalism on the one hand and socialism on the other. At first it may seem that this is the logical demarcation, but the facts are that even in such a country as Russia, the outstanding socialistic experiment, there is a great deal of capitalism, that is, property owned and used for personal use or profit.

The great division is between constitutional government and dictatorial government; between a rule of law or of men; between a rule that recognizes the rational freedom of the individual under the law, and a rule that makes the individual citizen the slave of the state. Communism, socialism, fascism, natzism—all these experiments in autocracy are alike in that the people of none of these countries have a national constitution respected and obeyed by their rulers.

Having disposed of parliament, or a congress, with its constitutional balance of government and delegation of authority, the next step in a dictatorship is to establish a totalitarian state, then out goes religious freedom, with all others of the great liberties that make life worth living in the light of this country. One of the most revealing facts of the recent national election in America is the tremendous inroads that have been made here by these various forces of destruction. Many people think that America by some kindly and all pervading common sense will never see within its borders such killings and such uprisings as Spain now suffers. Ah, indeed, let us hope and pray that this may be so, but the indications are that we are in for a long period of trouble with these various types of radicalism. These fomenters of trouble and foes of our constitution are all here, just as the writer whose words we quote says they are in Great Britain, and whose warnings are equally applicable to America. He says:

"The most important fact Englishmen have to reckon with is that within the borders of our own shores there is to be found every element of anti-religious propaganda seen upon the Continent, and that it only needs the political revolution to put into power forces which would do in this country that which has been done in Russia, Germany, Mexico and Spain.

"The same widespread irreligion among the masses, the same disrespect for sacred ideals, the same pagan philosophy, the same industrial discontent, the same extreme nationalism, are to be seen here as in other European countries. What has not yet come to Britain is the collapse of constitutional Government and the rise of a Hitler, a Mussolini, or a Satan. —Wesleyan Methodist.

TWILIGHT

The sunset burns across the sky;
Upon the air its warning cry
The curfew tolls, from tower to tower,
O children, 'tis the last, last hour!
The work that centuries might have done
Must crowd the hour of setting sun
And through all lands the save Name
Ye must in fervent haste proclaim.

—Author Unknown

AN IMPORTANT TESTIMONY TO
INSPIRATION

The late Professor Robert Dick Wilson, who was undoubtedly one of the greatest scholars in the field of Biblical history of the century, and who possessed a working knowledge of forty-five languages and dialects, says concerning the inspiration of the Old Testament:

"For forty-five years continuously I have devoted myself to the one great study of the Old Testament in all its languages, in all its archaeology, in all its translations, and, so far as possible, everything bearing upon its text and history. . . . The evidence in our possession has convinced me that 'at sundry times and in divers manners God spake unto our fathers through the prophets,' and that the Old Testament in Hebrew, 'being immediately inspired by God,' has 'by His singular care and providence been kept pure in all ages.'"

CEPHAS SLOAN ON PRAYER

By Granville H. Montgomery
From Uniontown and Center Hill

Church dignitaries came,
To sit in class and formulate
A plan fer proper prayin'.
Now fur and wide in our district
These good men were well known,
Exceptin' one old seedy gink
By name o' Cephas Sloan.

Sech Wisdom seldom congregates—
Jest once in a great while;
You're travelin' some before you find
More brains in any pile.
And so, we kind o' calcalates
That when they've boiled things down,
We'll know jest what fer prayers it takes
To shove the mountains round.

Well, Elder Purdy has his say,
And then rose Deacon Green;
But Rever'nd Glossy smoothed 'em off
The slickest ever seen.
He showed 'em how to fold their hands,
And how to lift their eyes;
And how their voice must modulate
To call up Paradise.

I guess the Revvie had it down
Jest nearly perfect pat;
But how to pray the way he showed
Was purty tough at that.
Why, our wee Bill would have to know
A fair to middlin' heap
To even venture on his, "Now
I lay me down to sleep."

Well, Cephas Sloan was lookin' square
While Rever'nd pantomimed,
Then up he jumped and sez, "See here!
Let's bring this down to time.
Now what you say does fairly well
Fer puttin' on a show;
But fer communion pure and sweet—
Well, it jest ain't a go.

"Jest try them stunts on grocery clerks,
And see what you have got!
D've spose thart Abra'am looked like that
When savin' Brother Lot?
I'll tell you what I think o' prayer—
As on your knees you bend,
Jest take your troubles to the Lord,
And talk as friend with Friend!"

—Pentecostal Herald.