

SEASONING SENTIMENT WITH SENSE

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This month brings us Mother's Day which will call forth many beautiful sentiments. How impoverished our lives would be without proper sentiment; but how ridiculous we are made to appear if our sentiments are not seasoned with sound sense. Senseless sentiment is like those who sob profusely and make a great display of concern over a criminal, but appears utterly indifferent to the rights of those whom he has outraged. They campaign for the release of criminals with a known trend toward crime. They are like the fickle ones who, on Palm Sunday, cried, "Hosannah!" and within the week also cried, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" They were very sentimental, but their sentiment was devoid of sound sense. They would cuddle a criminal but crucify the Saviour. They would support error but strangle the truth. Look at the tragedy which followed their unwise conduct!

Today brings us the fresh challenge to keep our sentiment seasoned with sound sense. We must recognize that life cannot be always glorious sunrises and beautiful sunsets, or sweet symphonies and starry expanses. There are storms which shut out the light and bring blackness at mid-day. We have our responsibilities and reverses, and it is up to us to carry on regardless of the obstacles we encounter.

It is true that "Sentiment is the poetry of imagination;" but when we see how extreme some are in their sentiments, we wish that they were less imaginative, or less poetic. True sentiment clarifies and elevates life; but carried to excess it spoils what would have been beautiful.

Excess sentiment makes millionaires of clowns; while it allows the scholar, whose researches enriched all life to struggle for an existence on a mere pittance. It gives its prize fighters more fame and glory than it gives college teachers. It appears to give the self-seeker more honor than it gives the self-denying servant of all. Beware lest your sentiment becomes debauched and your life wrecked. Many have been so swayed by sentiment that they have united their lives unworthily, only to suffer what was worse than death would have been. Many useful leaders have been beguiled by sentiment and have allowed their usefulness to be seriously crippled.

After dinner one evening a small boy looked up and said, "Mother, I love you a million worlds full." She beamed with gratitude and answered, "Thank you, dear. I know that since you love me that much, you will be glad to help me with the dinner dishes." The glow left the child's face, and a puzzled look came in its stead, as he replied: "Oh, Mother! You can think of so many ways to spoil a fellow's fun!"

Smile if you will! But is that not a great deal like some of our experiences? We have declared our love for something. But when we found what its practical application involved, it was a joy killer. We wanted all sunrise and beauty, we wanted moonlight and roses; and would let someone else wash our soiled dishes!

Who among us has not at some time, under some circumstances, become the unsuspecting victim of some one who appealed to our sentiment instead of our sense? Who of us has not

when approached by a master of sentiment asking some special favor? Yet, many of us are "taken in" by these "pan-handlers" again and again. We desire to help what we imagine to be a needy case so that we stifle sense and give sentiment full rein.

The schemer is there with his platitudes, the salesman with his pressure; the promoter and publicist are there with their arguments which sound somewhat plausible, but their strength lies in the appeal to sentiment. Many have lost life's earnings by listening to such appeals; only to repent in tears. Often one is disgusted at finding that one whom he looked upon as a "friend" used him as a mere tool to secure his ends; or as a front to advance his pet scheme; or to give weight to what was looked upon as a lost cause. Thus he became the unwitting agent of division when he wished to be the means of healing a breach; or he was put in a false position when the truth which he did not know at that time came to light. He found that he was influenced more by the sentiments of those who appealed to him than he was by the sanctity of their cause. Often a sentimental appeal is used to conceal a weak argument, and a sob story has often thwarted justice. Beware, lest you be beguiled in this matter.

In local churches and larger bodies we have seen progress hindered because of unwise moves which were more sentimental than sensible. Often sentiment has weighed more heavily than sense in filling responsible offices. Sometimes it happens that talented people who could have co-operated in the advancement of a worthy work have appointed themselves of new movements and have gone out to compete with others who were doing identical work. These new leaders and movements were supported more by appeals to sentiment than by the necessity for their projects.

How often we have zealously sung, "I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord." Then, when the Lord showed us an open door which we could enter and a duty which we could perform; we looked it over and recognized it as an opportunity, but we also saw that it looked like hard work and something that would require sacrifice on our part. So we marched on elsewhere, singing "I'll go where you want me to go . . ."; but all the time conscience was smiting and saying, "Your song is not consistent with your actions." In our sentiment we were looking for an opportunity to do something great and worthy, but we proved ourselves weak and visionless by not mixing sense with our sentiment. Often this sentiment without the seasoning of sound sense makes a misfit of a person who would otherwise be a great success. We mourn the lack of inspiration when we need to see that it might come with perspiration from undertaking a hard job.

Are we desiring the glorious and the glittering instead of the genuine; are we chasing will-o-the-wisps instead of realities? Often we allow our debt to abiding realities to go unpaid while we sing the praises of something transitory. We often boost a mediocre thing because it is popular, but allow a better thing to die for lack of support merely because it is unpopular or because its sponsor is not so bold to advertise self, or so willing to allow the true achievements to be "blown up" beyond the limits of reality. Thus we help to maintain the superficial while we unwittingly destroy

the real. We excuse major faults in those who loom large on the public horizon of popularity, while we condemn lesser things in someone nearer us and more worthy of confidence than those whose praises we sing.

Many are greatly agitated over the spiritual condition of people across the seas, but they are not concerned about those across the railroad tracks. Our sentiment is unbalanced if we give liberally of our dollars to support missionary work but have no time or effort for the salvation of the ones who do our laundry, or run the fruit and grocery stores, and sell our clothes to us.

Often some of our people liberally support causes which teach directly the opposite of what we believe and teach. If our own institutions could have the support that goes to these, we could be doing what they are doing; and we would not be scattering error while we do it. Many who feel that they have done their full duty in paying exactly their budget for the various benevolences, give enough extra to other groups to make our work as large and vital as these. We are not objecting to supporting others which are worthy. But it seems as if our sentiment is not mixed with wisdom when we support something which opposes our fundamental doctrines. We are not narrow and sectarian, for that means opposition, in which we will not indulge; but we are for greater loyalty to, love of, and support for, the truth. We are distressed at the rising tide of independence which draws its support from church people, yet feels at liberty to attack the churches and to build an organization which competes with the churches which are doing exactly what these new ones say they are doing. Often these movements center about one individual who gets the publicity for the accomplishments, and "loves to have it so."

Remember, that on yon distant hill the house whose windows seem made of gold, when the sinking sun gilds them with its dying rays, may not be as attractive as your own if you could stand there and view your own house from the vantage ground.

Therefore, let us not be swayed by sentiment unmixed with sound sense. Let us look behind the scenes and see if the reason sentiment is so often the instrument used by many may not be due to the fact that their arguments are too weak to carry point without this superficial appeal. Beware of anything that thrives better on an appeal to sentiment than an appeal to sense.—Wesleyan Methodist.

PRAYER PROVERBS

"Life in prayer brings death to care." Fretting never goes with faith.

"Strength is better than length in prayer."

"You cannot wrestle with God and wrangle with your neighbor."

"See the face of God before you see the face of man." A mere formal sentence or two of hurried supplication is not seeing the face of God.

"Empty your bucket before you draw from the well." God fills the empty. Most people are too full of self to get much from the Lord.

"Prayer should be pillared on promises and pinnacled with praises." —Christian Standard

The Christian that does not believe in foreign missions does not believe that verse so often quoted, John 3:16. Repeat it and see.