

TEMPERED TRUTHS

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"And He said unto her, for this saying go thy way, the devil is gone out of thy daughter." Mark 7:29.

A woman wins her case with the Son of God. A sick daughter, possessed with a devil, was the burden of her plea. I suppose one must be acquainted with oriental customs and speech to understand why Jesus dealt with this woman as He did. At best, however, His answer was both discriminating and discouraging. "I have other matters to attend to now, besides it is not proper to take food belonging to children and cast it to dogs." This was the content of Christ's words. Yet this woman stands up under the rebuke, and, seeing in the figure Jesus used grounds to press her claims, did so. "Truth, Lord," was her answer, "yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." Christ could not deny the answer. "Call me a dog, if you will; all I'm asking is a dog's share." Jesus responded immediately, and the daughter was healed.

There is more to this story, however, than merely stating how a woman won out in an argument. We expect that. The excellencies here, rest not in her argument, but in her attitude. Christ read in her answer an utter absence of things He so recently had condemned, and the fulness of qualities He so much admires.

First, He saw wise, parental concern. "My daughter." Her burden was as natural as her breathing. Christ made woman in the beginning. He placed in her instincts parental. The preservation of her own; the protection of her off-spring, were interests of first place. Christ could no more deny this God-implemented, this normal emotion, than He could deny her existence. He encountered that day powers of His own creating arising out of a mother's heart—a mother who knew that the devil was having too great an influence in the life of her daughter.

What the world owes to mothers like the mother of our text cannot be measured by our poor, human, yardsticks. They have implanted more noble principle, defeated more devils, and salvaged more of human life than we have any way of knowing. Too bad the facts of our day would not permit a dropping of the subject here. But how can we? When we see mothers who have destroyed, or lost from their hearts, those lovely instincts so natural to motherhood, we cannot but realize the price the world will have to pay for that loss. We know of mothers today, even in small towns and villages, who are setting a pace for their daughters that can only be matched in "red-light" districts. Cigarettes, whisky, men and mush, make up their weekly diet. They walk the streets shameless, brazen and practically bare.

Their way of life has robbed them of all practical decency. They are mean, sly, deceitful, and many of them incurably diseased. If they were finding any profit in their vain way of life that might compensate even a little for the things they have sacrificed, their blame might be lessened somewhat, but these are among the most miserable of earth. Can they expect anything different of their daughters? Can they expect anything different for their daughters? What a blessing it would be to society in general, and to their families in particular, if these mothers would reform.

We have in our country, the "Youth for Christ" crusade. If we accomplish much in the saving of our youth, we will need to get them out of the arms of smoking, beer-drinking, jitter-bugging mothers, before their course in life is set.

The mother that Jesus encountered was different than these last named. She cried, "Come, and save my daughter." Let this be the cry of mothers everywhere.

Secondly, Jesus saw in this mother humility, and genuine honesty. This woman could kneel. This woman could know. The manifestations of sin in her daughter were neither smart nor clever to her. Unwholesome friendships, and premature notions, were humiliating and alarming to this mother. She knew the age-old disease of man. She knew its power and its course. She knew that back of all this dizzy foolishness was a master-power working for the ruin and misery of her child. But when an opportunity presented itself offering hope, she acted upon it, and was rewarded for her faith.

This age is an age of challenge to motherhood. It presents more ways to ruin than any previous age. Selfish, sinful men have improvised more methods and means of damning our youth than a world can stand up under for long. The crying need is for mothers—kneeling mothers, prevailing with Christ for the preservation and salvation of their children. Others must do their part, but if mothers fail our society is doomed.

AFLAME

It is said that the great David Livingstone during one of very infrequent visits to the homeland, Scotland, was speaking to a small gathering of friends and neighbors. He was describing the great darkness, suffering and need of the Africans. Especially pathetic was his recital of the terrible sin of the slave trade. That description of the awful abuses of human liberty must have been both dramatic and impassioned, for among the listeners was a twelve-year-old boy who, listening, was moved as few Scottish lads ever are. The story goes that when Livingstone had finished his missionary message, the young lad stepped to the front and, taking off his jacket and rolling up his sleeves, said something like this:

"When I am no longer a wee boy, and big enough to go down there, by the grace of God I will help put an end to that sinful business." That boy became the famous Arnot of Africa.

After Livingstone had ceased from his labors, after his voice was no longer heard among his beloved Africans, and after his footsteps had ceased to tread those wide expanses and dreary wastes of Africa in quest of souls, Arnot took up the trail and carried on the noble work of his predecessor. That heart-passion kindled in the breast of that boy burned and flamed until he, too, dropped in the holy war. When we were in Africa a few years ago, I was called to conduct a revival in a church pastored by the son of a missionary—Arnot, the man who had extended the trail of Livingstone to the deepest jungle. Moreover, we were entertained in the home of the widowed mother of the young preacher. They were beautiful in their hospitality. It was a fine Christian home. But that is not the entire story. Every day we were there we were entertained both by reminders through conversations with the

mother and son of the famous missionary, and by many tokens, books and mementoes, of the long, strenuous life of a missionary. That passion was engendered in the heart of a boy, by a man of God who poured out his soul like water for lost and enslaved men. What soul-stirring recitals of exploits for Christ in the heart of Africa! What inspiring conversations with that godly widow and son! It was benedictory!

That is the way it should ever be. Heart-burning and yearning for lost men, instead of being but a flickering, dying flame, should burn on every mission field and in every church in the homeland. With a thousand million waiting to hear the grandest story ever told, with great numbers of young, well-equipped volunteers waiting to go, is any church that has no missionary program worth the name? We wonder.

Is it asking too much to say that missionary workers and missionaries who claim to have a divinely appointed task, should be flames of fire?

Stammering lips may be forgiven, for any group that has any sympathetic cord at all will gladly overlook physical limitations; but mute lips call for no condolence. Incurable awkwardness on the part of any worker is no sin; but suave frigidity is soul criminality. If the heart is right, and the soul is on fire, erroneous verbal accentuation is far better any day than dead pan monotony. At any rate, if we have no soul passion, the hearers will never be moved. If we live, love, and yearn for the souls of men, there will be some sign that even sinners will see. If missionaries put the major emphasis on the winning of pagan men and women to Christ, there will be fruit. It is the way that Christ pointed out. It is the way to win men. If I were on the field, and had nothing in me in the way of burning to bring men into the kingdom, I would do one of two things: I would either pack my luggage and come home to escape the curse of pretending, or I would get on my knees and cry to the God Most High until my soul blazed first with its own transformation, and then burned for the lost souls on my field.

Dear friend, take your choice—but you had best be sure that you do not choose wrongly.—G. A. Hodgin in "Call to Prayer."

THE REVIVAL THAT STARTED WRONG

Its converts do not look happy.

There were no children among its converts.

The one which made none more generous with their means.

The one that filled the church with unconverted people.

Left the prayer-meeting with no more attendants than at the start.

Did not give the people a greater love for the study of the Bible.

Closed with no one concerned about the sinner's salvation.

Made more ado over the human talent than over the grace of God.

Did not get those who are at "outs" reconciled with each other.

Did not get some of the leaders nearer the front than the back seats.

Never stopped those who attended the services from continuing to visit the places of worldly amusement.

Left hungry souls wondering what they must do to be saved.—Sel.