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Dropping a Word.

BY CHAS. BAXTER HEIMSTREET.

As on through life we singly go, Oh, let us speak a word, That they we meet shall surely know Our Saviour and our Lord.

Not in a loud or worldly way The hope that doth us fill; But gently, sweetly as we may, Yet let us speak it still.

It may be long before the seed Shall blossom into life, Above this world of measur'd meed, Beyond this scene of strife,

We'll leave to him the watchful care, Till in the harvest land The souls thus saved shall glory there, Through Christ's own mission band.

The Schools of the Prophets.

BY REV. J. E. HOPPER.

2 Kings 4: 38-44.

The schools of the prophets were established by Samuel. The purpose for which he established them was that they might conserve and perpetuate the reforms which he had inaugurated. There had been many sad departures from the way of the Lord since the days of Moses and Joshua. The times of the Judges were seasons of lamentable declension. Samuel appeared in these days with the spirit and preaching power of a John the Baptist. "The house of Israel lamented after the Lord." He instructed them in the way of godliness. He built an altar unto Jehovah in his native town Ramah, and there he began holding his court for dispensing justice to his brethren. This great work of reform grew upon his hands, until other centres of religious teaching, and the administration of justice had to be provided. Samuel elevated the nation from a state of semi-lawlessness to a position where justice was systematically and honestly administered. He brought them from a state of ignorance to a position of intelligence and culture. This was no easy work, but Samuel, like a wise reformer, laid his plans for the enlightenment of the masses. He established schools at Ramah, and others, following his example, established them at Jericho, Gilgal, Bethel, and probably other places. These became great centres of knowledge, not only upon religious subjects, but truth generally. Here the leaven was manufactured out of the raw material, afforded by God, for the leavening or enlightening of the whole people.

I. Some general features of these schools. They were presided over by one great Prophet, Master, or Father—Samuel, Elijah, Elisha. The students were young men of promise, with varied spiritual endowments. Some, it would seem, were simply learners of whatever knowledge was to be obtained. Others seemed to be called of God to teach others, and the schools were to help them prepare for their great work. Others again were under a special divine influence, and uttered the messages that God gave them for the people. The very meaning of the word prophecy indicates that. When it refers to real prophetic utterance, a given form of the verb is used (Niphal), and when it does not have this signification, a different form is used (Hitpael). Real and false prophecy are never confounded in the Hebrew. For instance, in Amos 3: 8, we read: "The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy." We read, on the

other hand, of Saul's prophesying, of Balaam's prophesying, and in Jer. 14: 14, "The prophets prophesy lies in my name," i.e., they play the prophet. The particular form of the verb prophesy shows the true and the false in every instance. To the Hebrew listener there could be no mistake. But very few of the sons of the prophets at any time were the mouthpieces of Jehovah in uttering special communications from him.

The young gathered together in the schools of the prophets studied principally reading, writing, composition in prose and sacred poetry, music, both vocal and instrumental, and perhaps medicine. To all of these studies there is reference made in the Bible in this connection. Their education was essentially religious, whatever branch of knowledge they investigated. Samuel and Elisha aimed to prepare men to expound and promulgate the law as contained in revelation. To the priests still pertained the setting forth of the law in its symbols, but to the prophets, from Samuel's day on, as by common consent, was yielded the oral law, to be set forth unto the people. For this purpose it would seem they had weekly and monthly services, for the husband of the Shunamite woman, whose son was dead, says, to the request to send for Elisha, "Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day? It is neither new moon nor Sabbath." The word of God gives us oftentimes only hints of truth and methods of work.

These schools gave the groundwork of that extended musical culture of which we read in David's day. He says, "4000 praised the Lord with the instruments which I made to praise therewith." The combined performances of such a number must have been transcendently sublime. They were doubtless very largely made up of the sons of the prophets, for they were a numerous class. We read in several places of hundreds being associated together.

It is highly probable, also, that a large portion of the sacred hymns used in Jehovah's service in the temple, were the production of these sons of the prophets. In the writings of some of them, as preserved in the sacred volume, we find sacred songs, as in Jonah 2: 29; Isah. 12; Hab. 3; 2, and others.

II. The utility of these schools.

(1) They were civilizers. The Israelites had well nigh reached barbarism, in the days of the Judges, and largely through these schools, they attained the eminence of the age of Solomon, the golden age of Israelitish culture. Music and poetry have ever exercised everywhere a refining influence on men. To a barbarous people they occupy much the same relation to civilization as the newspaper of to-day. The bard of olden times was the medium of intelligence and the historian of the nation, and the multiplication of them tended to diffuse whatever knowledge they possessed. Their songs, worthy ones, inspired the heart to noble deeds, and chastened their severity.

Whatever of higher education was known to the age, they, the sons of the prophets, labored to disseminate it. Nor did they labor in vain, as the rapid advancement of the nation proved. It quickly became renowned for wisdom, morality, and good government. The levers raising it to this eminence were largely the prophetic schools.

(2) As the proverb truthfully says,

"Righteousness exalteth a nation," and these schools contributed to this end. By them the laws of God became more generally known, and their spiritual import better comprehended. The prophets sounded forth the truth, "To obey is better than sacrifice." They were the preachers of righteousness of the age. The priests as a class had become sadly deficient in duty. God shows that he is not shut up to them only to make known his will. To others he gives the inward call, and prepares them for his service. The prophets had only this claim, and it was enough. They preached as they were bidden, and God blessed it. Idolatry was driven out of the land. Many altars were built unto Jehovah, and worshippers were multiplied on every hand.

III. The degeneracy of these schools.

They had subserved a good end, and should have continued to be the salt of the earth, but alas! a false ritualism ate out their vital godliness. They fell from their high estate. The sons of the prophets began to forget God, to love the world, power, praise and money. Jeremiah (5: 31) lamented that "prophets prophecy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and my people love to have it so." Again, (14: 14), "prophets prophecy lies in my name," says God. I sent them not neither have I commanded them; neither spake unto them; they prophecy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of naught and the deceit of their own heart." Yet again, (23: 15) says the Lord of Hosts, "harken not unto the words of the prophets that prophecy unto you, they make you vain; they speak a vision of your own heart and not out of the mouth of the Lord." These scriptures show very conclusively how the fine gold had become dim, and even brass was substituted in its place. We must bear in mind, however, that it was the uninspired prophets that had fallen. The true servants of God, the inspired prophets, lifted up their voices like a trumpet against these corruptions. Men who had been simply educated in prophetic schools and had no prophetic message from God to deliver, debased themselves, and led the people astray by assuming to speak for God. Micah, (3: 11) says they judge for reward, "The prophets teach for money," and Ezekiel (13: 17) is told, by Jehovah, to "set his face against the daughters of his people which prophecy out of their own heart, and prophecy thou against them." The original Hebrew word for prophecy shows the first to be a mere sham; the latter true prophecy.

We close with a word in relation to the maintenance of these schools in the day when they were doing the work of the Lord. The scripture upon which these reflections are based, shows that God frequently provided miraculously for them,—as in the case of the pottage made from poisonous gourds and that of the 20 barley loaves and the ears of corn miraculously multiplied; but this was done in days of famine, and was supernatural. Some provision was made regularly, so as not to necessitate such intervention, as a rule. The charity of godly men, no doubt, was the largest source of income. Help to young men deservng it, while receiving education, is an exceedingly old custom in the East, in Europe, and in this country. The benefited clergy in England, in reign of Edward VI, and Elizabeth, were required to

maintain one student at Oxford or Cambridge University, for every hundred pounds of annual income. Whoever reads the early history of student life in Harvard or Brown in this country, will not need to be reminded of the struggles of godly young men to acquire an education, and be told of the noble benevolence of the men and women, who of their poverty, helped the sons of the prophets, through their college training. The gifts of the people, however, did not do away with the necessity for struggle even in the early days. Elisha and the sons of the prophets, when their buildings were too small, with axes in hand, went forth and procured the necessary lumber to enlarge their institutions. Some of the prophets had wealth; Elisha had a farm. Amos had his fruit garden and cattle. Jeremiah had money to buy his uncle's farm at Anathoth, and so had others; but doubtless many, like Paul, labored with their own hands. God took care of his schools of the prophets, by raising them up friends in the days of plenty, and by miracle, when all help beside failed. The days of miracles have passed away, and God now comes to us who have the means and says, "remember the schools of the prophets, not simply with money; but with prayer—the first that his servants in need may be fed and clothed. The second, that the savor of vital godliness may never forsake them. Without God's blessing all comes to naught. Ichabod will be written over the best of our appliances for furthering God's cause unless we honor the Master, and seek the leading of His Spirit.

Jehovah usually worked through the schools of the prophets for the good of his people. He was not, however, shut up to them, as the calling, to pre-eminence, of Elisha from the plough, and Amos from his sycamore garden, shows. So now, God generally finds his leaders in religious enterprises in our modern schools of the prophets, but he is not shut up to them, as facts now testify. Our benevolence should follow the lines of divine approbation, and the favor of the Lord has certainly rested upon our colleges and seminaries.

There is soon to be made an appeal to our people to add \$50,000 to the endowment of Acadia College as a jubilee offering. There is also a beginning made in the erection of suitable buildings at St. Martins to accommodate our Baptist Seminary, and already \$16,000 are subscribed for the purpose. These schools of the prophets are needed for the growth of Christ's kingdom in the Maritime Provinces, and our people who have funds to invest for the Lord will find them most worthy objects, and large dividends may confidently be expected in the increased spiritual welfare as well as intellectual enlightenment of our people.

The Damnation Army.

Much has been said in favor of, and in opposition to, the Salvation Army. Its ways, means and methods have been criticised with more or less severity, and much fault has been found with the things done and with the manner of doing them. Members of the Salvation Army have frequently been mobbed and arrested, and sometimes fined and imprisoned, while their parades and performances have often been discountenanced and forbidden.

While we do not feel obliged to approve or disapprove of all that the Salvation Army has done, we would call attention to another army which

does not attract as much notice as its importance demands. It is the Damnation Army, whose organization is more ancient, whose forces are much larger, and whose operations are much more widely extended than those of the Salvation Army. It has more recruits, more soldiers, more officers, more money, and more men, than the Salvation Army can ever expect to have. It does more marching; not always in straight lines; makes more noise, more tumult, more hubbalooboo than the Salvation Army ever thought of making. It has filled more prisons, hospitals, alm-houses and asylums with its shattered wrecks than the Salvation Army could fill if its entire force was quartered in those institutions.

The organization of the Damnation Army is very complete. It has hundreds of thousands of recruiting officers and drill-rooms. Its officers stand behind the bar, well-fed, ruddy-nosed, portly, and self-possessed. The rank and file are in front of the bar, in every condition of preservation and dilapidation, from the high-toned swell, the proud aristocrat, the inheritor of millions, and the rising politician, down to the little boy, the wan-faced girl, and the seedy-looking tatterdemalions, poverty-stricken, wretched, helpless, noisy, abusive, unreasonable, riotous, violent, criminal, degraded, diseased and insane.

It would be quite impossible for any tongue to tell the woes and miseries caused by and endured in this Damnation Army, and yet it has seemed to attract comparative little notice or attention. It gathers its recruits, young, bright, intelligent, gay, witty and brilliant; and it turns out its veterans, bold, brazen degraded, debauched, diseased, ruined and lost. It marches its solid columns down the dark gorges of intemperance and crime until they stream over the awful precipices of perdition, and melt into the blackness of darkness forever! The Damnation Army brings its recruits from the homes of joy and peace and love; it sends its veterans away into sorrow, misery and destruction, from which they never return.

The Damnation Army has its barracks, its camps, its outposts everywhere. Every drinking saloon is a recruiting office, every gambling den, every brothel, every haunt of sinful pleasure is an outpost or a fortress of this army.

The Damnation Army has its reserves in every prison, and its invalids in every hospital, anxiously waiting till they can rejoin their regiments; while every almshouse is a refuge for the disabled veterans. It has its foragers in the shape of beggars and tramps at every back door or front door in the land where there is a chance to get cold victuals, or hot victuals, old clothes, or new clothes. This army forages liberally, and lives in the country where it is quartered. You and I temperate and industrious as we may be, do many a hard day's work to feed and clothe and protect this all-devouring host.

What shall be done with the Damnation Army? Suppose we turn our attention to it, investigate its origin, examine its forces, scan its roster, see who is commander-in-chief, and who are its aiders, abettors, sympathizers, and supporters; inquire into its aims, scrutinize its record, and inspect the work it does. Having done this, perhaps we shall be prepared to act.

The Damnation Army means rebellion, treason, murder, desolation and perdition. It makes war on home,

happiness, life, health and peace. Shall not every man, and every woman rally to resist the progress of this army, and to turn back its myriads from the paths of sin to the ways of peace? Shall we not also pray to God, the loving and mighty one, whose arm alone can work deliverance and bring salvation, to turn the feet of the wayward and sinful into the paths of righteousness, and gather the multitudes who are away from God into the ranks of those who are redeemed by blood and saved by grace divine?—Christian Arm.

Dr. Ashmore's Address.

The following extract from Dr. Ashmore's address at Mr. Moody's College Students' meeting for Bible Study is worth reading. Speaking of mission work he said:

Now comes the question, Who will go? Once that question was asked in heaven on our behalf. Christ answered it, "Here am I, send me." Once it was put to the Lord's prophets. Isaiah answered, "Here am I, send me." Now an ascended Christ is concerned. Who will respond, "Here Lord am I, send me; even to the ends of the earth will I go at thy command? Some of you have decided already. The Lord make you strong in a holy purpose. The field needs you. One thing of special importance I would say to you. Satisfy yourselves fully of the inspiration of the scriptures. Don't go to war with a quiver full of arrows the shafts of which are partly hickory and partly mullen stocks. If a missionary believes the scriptures are inspired only in patches the heathen will trip up his heels as easily as if he were standing on ice. When you point to them the stupid cosmogony of their sacred books and from thence argue their unreliability as religious guides they will retort, "But you say there are scientific errors in your Bible, and that the word of your God is contained in your scriptures along with some rubbish. Now you know how to sympathize with us. The divine truths of our religion are contained in our shastras. Unfortunately our writers did not know everything, as you say yours did not, and some rubbish has crept in ours, too." And so brethren be fully persuaded in your own minds. If you have any lame and halting, then keep them at home. You can bolster up their weakness better than we can. We want strong and able-bodied men who know what they believe, and why they believe it, and are ready to assert it with vigor.

Moreover, brethren, begin your foreign mission work now, as soon as you go back to your homes among your fellow-students, among your Christian neighbors, and even among the ministers. You will encounter many an icicle. Many a well-to-do man has a bucket of cold water. But keep at it. Study up missions yourselves and make other people attend to them. Be courageous. Courage is contagious, just as cowardice is. When David slew Goliath it had effect not only to deliver Israel, but it set up other people to go and do the same thing. Giant hunting became popular. One day a man named Elhanan, son of a man named Jaishan, and not of a conspicuous family either—went out and brought down a giant. Then Jonathan, a nephew of David, went out and he also got a giant and a six-fingered and six-toed one at that. Heroes increased so that there were not giants enough to go around, and all that the effect of one man's good example.