

A. Last Convictions

Acts 13:10 L. A. Walk

you become much disturbed if you lose your purse or your ration book. But there are other losses much more serious. For example -

1. your health
2. your character
3. your good name
4. your convictions - This is serious

I am using the text of the evening because it represents a moment of stress - emotional stress, when the apostle found it necessary to break away from the more polite forms of speech and express his real convictions -

Paul and Barnabas were in the island of Cyprus on a preaching mission. Crowds were hearing them and many were becoming believers. A Roman proconsul learned of the work of Paul and wanted to learn more about it. Paul accepted his invitation and told him about the Risen Christ and of his own conversion - Sergius Paulus expressed the desire to become a disciple of Jesus.

Listen, you let a thing like that happen - Some influential person about to join the church, and all hell will turn loose.

It happened here - Elymas a sorcerer a religious faker saw Sergius falling for Christianity - He realized that if such happened he would likely lose his position in the procurator's court - so he began to dissuade Sergius - Sergius began to waver - His purpose was shaken - The end came was in doubt -

Paul seeing what was about to happen did not utter words - He did not suppress his convictions but fixed his gaze on the sorcerer - It is said that Paul's eyes blazing with wrath, his voice vibrating with anger said to the sorcerer -

"you son of the devil you enemy of all good - full of all craft and cunning, will you never stop - diverting the straight paths of the Lord - The Lord's hand shall fall on you and you shall be blind" and it was so - and Sergius believed (P. 100) (P. 100)

It is not safe for any one through selfishness, hate, jealousy, or any other creature to get in the way of God's Kingdom - It may mean being ground to powder -

Now - I wonder if such conviction as Paul had and expressed is not a lost one to-day -

Paul's language sounds severe to modern ears and striking the man blind is a bit unusual in debate these days -

3) If Paul had lived to-day his language would likely have been -

"Elymas - my friend let us understand each other - There is good in all religions in yours as well as mine - The fundamentals are likely the same - Let us submit our differences to a fact finding committee - Let us pool our interests and synchronize our efforts let us not get it cold - Let us sing a song and they sing

"The more we get to-gether the happier we'll be
For your friends are my friends
and my friends are your friends
The more we get to-gether the happier we'll be

Let us keep cool -

We seem to have lost our capacity for righteous indignation - A speaker at the Edison Electric Institute said "The People of the U.S. are becoming refrigerator minded" - The institute took as its slogan "Beat the heat" "Keep America Cool" a certain movie house advertises "Cool inside" a freight car was marked "assigned to ice service" then we are building air conditioned homes where it is never hot nor cold - In fact it has become bad form to manifest any warmth of feeling - D.D. + a woman shawling - D.D. jumps out of his seat.

we are to keep our emotions under control and if we have convictions we are to keep them to ourselves. Be non resisting -

Modern attitude - See nothing -
Say nothing -
Do nothing -
Be nothing

Candidates have a hard time along
this line - Talk against Delta in
the hills - against hills in the Delta

one was running for office away up
in a new England town - He was
dodging every controversial issue
when some asked out "what about the
new school house?" He replied -

"That is a plain question and I will give
you a plain answer - my friends if
the proposed building is a good thing
I am for it if it is a bad thing I
am against it."

One Candidate had the qualifications
that he was born in Kansas and
reared on milk and molasses.

Like Guinness characterizes so many
people to day - no convictions - no
opinions - follow the crowd - pussy
foots - not steppers - we have for
gotten the fate of the donkey who
found himself between two hay stacks
and refused to turn toward either
for fear he would offend the
other and died of starvation -
He died of indecision as do
most donkeys do.

One of Bernard Shaw's literary
friends said to him - "Shaw if
you keep on the way you are

going you will not have a
friend in the world."

shaw replied

"If you keep on the way you are
going you won't have an enemy
in the world and that's a
blank right move" and I thought
of the scripture verse -

"was not you whom all men
speak well of you"; and of that
other verse -

"Because thou art lukewarm
and neither cold nor hot I will
spue thee out of my mouth."

There come times when ven.
trialty has to cease. and when
that time comes it is better
to be mistakenly wrong than
willfully weak. (Poem Page 101)

We are told that we need more
light and less heat - that is a
half truth - we have heat without
light but no light without heat -

Heat is the driving power. Jeans
tells us that the blazing sun pours
250,000,000 tons of energy into the
universe every minute.

Joan of Arc saw her beloved France
over run - the people cowed - the King
complacent - army helpless and
leaders in despair -

led by deep moral passion - and a
strong conviction she said

"I will lead them"

"They will not follow you" said
the commander -

"I will not look back to see if
any one is following me - my
sword is sacred I found it be-
hind the altar in the Holy Church
of St. Catherine where God had
laid it for me"

placing herself at the head of the
troops - waving her banner before
her, looking not back but for-
ward, the intrepid maid of
only 17 swept everything be-
fore her - the soldiers followed
and France was saved -

"you son of the devil, you enemy of
all good free of all craft and cur-
ring - since you never stop di-
verting the straight paths of the Lord
the hand of the Lord shall fall on you
and you shall be blind"

* Lawrence of Arabia in his "Seven Pillars of Wisdom" relates a strange incident which reveals man's hunger for something more fundamental than represented by man's own craftsmanship.

We rode with an Arab friend far out to the ruins of an ancient palace, which had been erected by a Roman ruler for his queen.

Tradition had it that the mortar was not kneaded with water but with the essential oil of glowers - each room different - roses, violet, jasmine etc. after they had enjoyed the fragrance for a spell the Arab said, "Come now and smell the best fragrance of all." They stood by a broken window and smelled the clean air off the desert. It had come hundreds of miles from the Euphrates river after vast expanses of desert untouched by human hands. It came lazily - lazily it too whispered among the grasses of oases and played with the sands until it possessed within its self the essence of the good earth.



close - 212