

## **"WISE AS SERPENTS – HARMLESS AS DOVES"**

### MATTHEW 10:16.

PRESUMABLY all of the Lord's people remember the Master's words quoted in the title. Yet apparently very few have appreciated them; for otherwise they would surely be putting this advice into practice – seeking to do the Lord's will. When we think of blundering mistakes which others make and which we ourselves have made in presenting Divine truths to others, we are silent. The consolation we seem to find is in the further word of Jesus, that God is sometimes praised by the prattling of the mouths of babes. As children of God we have a period of infancy, of childhood.

St. Paul refers to this, saying, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things." (I Cor. 13:11.) So we all need to exercise ourselves to some extent in order to counteract the results of the childishness and the mistakes of our earlier experiences in the family of the Lord. Let us not be content to remain children long. Let us rapidly grow in grace and knowledge and love. Let us take such earnest heed to the Master's words, that we may speedily become acceptable and profitable ambassadors for the King Eternal.

How often we have advised the dear readers of this journal not to choke Christian brethren who, so far as knowledge of God and His Word are concerned, are merest babes, no matter if their consecration dates twenty or thirty years back! When such come into our midst, their presence implies that they are hungering for spiritual food. Shall we stuff them to nausea? Shall we feed them strong meat of Divine Truth which they cannot appreciate and which will choke them? Or shall we act more wisely and give them meat in due season – spiritual food adapted to their condition?

Some dear friends, full of zeal and greatly appreciated both by the Lord and by ourself, are so unwise that they would probably do the Cause more good if they never attempted to expound the Heavenly things to others – if they would content themselves with merely saying, "I will give you something to read which will make that subject very clear to you." On the contrary, there is danger that, when good meetings have been held for the public, and earnest souls are seeking the Lord, hungering and thirsting for the Truth, they may be injured by those whose hearts are the very best, but whose judgments are poor.

### **THE POINT ILLUSTRATED**

An illustration of this is before us in a letter. A friend writes, "I took friends to our regular meetings several times – people who have read some and manifested some interest. With one accord all of our Class began, after the meeting, to acquaint them with all kinds of information, chiefly about the materialization of evil spirits and about Christ's presence, etc., with the result that they were so confused that they did not care to go again. Sometimes the leader of the Class, discerning the visitor, will leave the regular lesson and go into dissertations which seem unwise for the newcomers and unprofitable to the Class.

"The newcomers would have understood and appreciated our Berean Lesson, if the item specially intended for them had been omitted. I was discouraged about taking outsiders with us any more. When no strangers are with us, our Berean Lessons are good and instructive, because we stick closely to them. The tiresome rambling occurs *when visitors come*. So I am just keeping still and not inviting my friends, believing that it will do them more good to read thoroughly before attending our Class under existing conditions."

This is an exact illustration of a point which we are making and which we have tried to make several times. We do not wish to discourage the dear friends from preaching the Truth. We are merely urging the words of the Master, "Be ye wise as serpents and harmless

as doves." Obedience to the Master should control whatever wayward and excitable tendencies may be ours naturally.

