

APOLOGIA

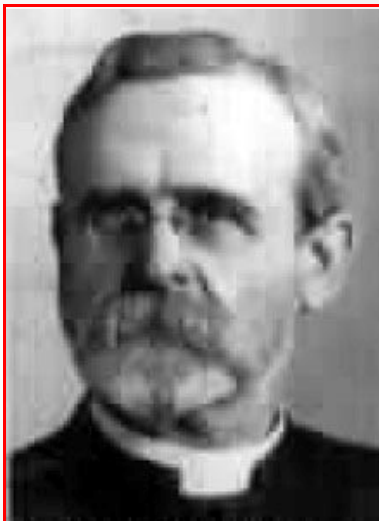
... always be ready to give a defense [Greek, *apologia*]
to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you ... 1 PETER 3:15

Salt on the light, please! CONTROVERSY – WITH COURTESY

Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

COLOSSIANS 4:5, 6

The world of iniquity among our members is the tongue, which defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire by Gehenna. JAMES 3:6



W.H. Griffith Thomas

“It is at least suggestive, and it may be significant, that there is an almost entire absence of appeal in St. Paul’s Epistles to evangelise ...”

**Lightfoot, Calvin, Ironside, FF Bruce
on the awesome power of the tongue!**

Our Christian responsibility – and responsibilities – according to Paul’s admonition to the Colossians

4:5,6 Although we receive **NO** exhortation to evangelize -- as usual in Paul’s epistles -- what awesome responsibility do **ALL** Christians have? (Eccl.5:1-7; 1 Pet.3:15)

[4:5] It is at least suggestive, and it may be significant, that there is an almost entire absence of appeal in St. Paul’s Epistles to evangelise, only one such exhortation being found (2 Tim. 4:5). But there is a constant emphasis on the Christian life of holiness and the necessity of realising our full privileges in Christ. There may be some connection between the absence of the appeal and the presence of the emphasis, for if the inner life is right, soul-winning and evangelism will be the natural and necessary outcome. [Thomas 118]

F.W. Grant has well said, “Our Lord has no stereotyped method of dealing with souls.” ... He did not talk to the woman at the well in the same way as He addressed Nicodemus ... He probed the depths of each heart and ministered according to the need. [Paul]... was made all things to all men if by any means he might save some. In the Jewish synagogue he reasoned out the Scriptures like the most able rabbi or doctor of the law. When he stood on Mars Hill among the Athenian philosophers he was a master of rhetoric and showed full acquaintance with Greek thought and literature Addressing the idolaters of Lycaonia he met them on their own ground, and appealed from nature to nature’s God, seeking to turn them from their vanities and draw their hearts to the Creator ... How different in all this was both the Master and servant to many who to-day seem to pride themselves on their outspokenness and indifference to the views and opinions of others. Is it any wonder that men turn from them in disgust and refuse to listen to what seems to

them but the dogmatic utterances of self-centred egotists.

[**Ironside** 174,175]

[4:6] This could be taken to mean “witty” since salt had this significance in pagan usage ... or “winsome,” so that the Colossians’ speaking was to exercise a wholesome influence in conversation which might otherwise become debated or crude.

[**O’Brien** 243]

[4:6] If they practise grace of speech, it will not desert them when they find themselves suddenly confronted by the necessity of defending their Christians belief. Nor will their speech be acceptable if it is insipid. Those who are the salt of the earth may reasonably be expected to have some savour about their language. [**Bruce** 299]

[4:6] He assumes that every convert would covet *to be* thus an “apologist”; an expounder and vindicator of the truth, of the Lord, whom he had found. His life would mark him out for enquiry, so different would he be from his old self. [**Moule** 258]

Walk wisely ... nothing is more ready to occur, than that unbelievers are driven from bad to worse through our imprudence, and their minds are wounded, so that they hold religion more and more in abhorrence. [Calvin 225]

Your speech ... He requires suavity of speech, such as may allure the hearers by its profitableness, for he does not merely condemn communications that are openly wicked or impious, but also such as are worthless and idle.. [Calvin 225]

That ye may know how. The man who has accustomed himself to caution in his communications will not fall into many absurdities, into which talkative and prating persons fall into from time to time, but, by constant practice, will acquire for himself expertness in making proper and suitable replies; as, on the other hand, it must necessarily happen, that silly talkers expose

themselves to derision whenever they are interrogated as to anything; and in this they pay the just punishment of their silly talkativeness. [Calvin 226]

[*in wisdom*] i.e. ‘Behave with tact toward non-Christians’; cf, I Thess. 4:12. St Paul probably has in mind the difference between bold, uncompromising witness to the Christian allegiance when the occasion offers, and a harsh, unloving, tactless obtruding of it at the wrong time. [CFD Moule 133]

[*to each one*] ... according, namely, to the character, purpose, spirit, etc., of the inquirer. Compare the apostle’s description of his own behaviour, I Cor. 9:22 [become all things to all people] ... His discourses and answers at Athens, and before Felix, Festus, and the Jews at Rome, supply the best illustrations. [Abbott 298]

[*salt*] The salt has a twofold purpose. (1) It gives a flavour to the discourse and recommends it to the palate, cf. Job 6:6) ... (2) It preserves from corruption and renders wholesome ... It may be inferred that this secondary application of the metaphor was present to the Apostle’s mind here ... [cf.] Eph. 4:29 ... [Lightfoot 232]

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