

fluence is evil we will bring defeat and disaster to ourselves, and possibly to others

Every one of us has a work to do, and we are responsible for that work. We may not receive honor in this world, but if we do our duty we have done all that is required. If we fail our lives will be useless. In the parable that Jesus told of the servants who were given the talents, there is a great lesson for us. The men who did not shirk their responsibilities received great honor and riches, but the man who shirked was disgraced and punished.

Let us not neglect our responsibilities, but let us face them like men and women. Let us seize every opportunity to do good and make ourselves useful to our Maker during 1934. If we do this, at the end of the year we will not feel ashamed of the page on which we have written.

#### PAUL AT HIS BEST

(Continued from last issue)

"I have learned in whatsoever state I am in therewith to be content." Is that not too passive? Too easy going? Too ready to take government relief? Too ready to settle down and just let things slide along? There is a species of contentment that may be all this, but that was not Paul's kind.

There is a kind of contentment that is willing to be ignorant when it might be well-informed, thinking that there is virtue in ignorance and even glorying in the same. The highest credential that some preachers have to prove the apostolic character of their ministry, is their ignorance of book knowledge. One such publicly thanked God for his ignorance when a brother told him he had an awful lot to be thankful for. Mr. Wesley was a most spiritual man, but one of the essential qualifications for the Christian ministry, he regarded, was a love for good books and a keen desire for knowledge. He called himself a man of one book, but he was an omniverous reader in many fields of literature, the most of which he did on horseback.

But the thing Paul and Wesley condemned was the ever learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the TRUTH—the truth as it is in Jesus. And he would say today, in the face of the evolutionary humbug and scientific knowledge as well, that has written its creed indelibly in nature's laws—"Everything after ITS kind," I am content to know what God has revealed.

The most brilliant and progressive of all devout students have been willing to confess the meagreness of their knowledge and to be content with the fact they could only gain a little of all there was to learn.

Again: There is a contentment that is too willing to be materially poverty-stricken when a competence might be gained by industry, economy and ordinary common sense. Of course opposite this is the feverish desire for wealth that is never satisfied—"the love of money" which Paul said was the root of all evil." But how Paul emphasized industry both in man and woman! There are men who are content to see the weeds grow and choke their crops while they talk their theories of running the government, in the neighboring grocery store. No man should be content to have a poor crop of potatoes until he has done all he possibly can do to make the crop good. That was why Billy Bray could shout over little potatoes, for he had done all he could to make them better, but an over-ruling power chose to make them small. Billy could be content with that.

There is a too easy contentment with wifeable health when the violation of physical law has brought it on, and the continued violation of law maintains it. That brother who said fresh pork and pancakes about killed him when he ate them, but went right on eating them just the same, offered an inconsistent prayer to God to preserve his health, when he himself aggravated his own stomach. No wonder he had to carry a little apothecary shop around with him. He got grace to carry his infirmities and was contented to battle with them. He might have had a less burden on this line and more strength to help somebody else bear theirs.

Again, there may be a too easy contentment with things as they are. What the Frenchman calls the *Leiszez Faire* attitude—that is the disposition to ignore the whole thing and let it alone. "DEUS VOLENTE, "God wills it," the old crusader shouted as he rode to battle. Many things happen that God never willed. The old theory of the Church was, God had created the heathen and he would have to save them. But William Carey showed the blind people of his day that God was expecting his church to do something. Every reform and transformation in society has been because men have stirred themselves to co-operate with God for the overthrow of those evils.

But on the other hand a person may become obsessed with the fear of existing evils and worry and fret so much about them, doing all he can to remedy the evils and seeing so little accomplished that they fall back into discouragement and even despair. They may throw up the whole thing and lose their faith in God because they were too anxious for a change. They wanted it too quick. Happy is the person who ever remembers "the government is upon His shoulders," and who can labor and fight and pray in the face of awful odds and can laugh and sing and shout: "God is still on the Throne. I am content to have things as they are till we can see better conditions." That is the way we must feel about prohibition and many other things.

Yes, we can be too indifferent to the progress of God's kingdom and feel too little concern for it. This is the more prevalent condition, especially as it relates to our own spiritual experience and progress.

Many have lost all the joy of the first work of grace because they became either indifferent or antagonistic to the second work of grace. They felt contented to live in the wilderness rather than go over into Canaan. They soon fell by the way. On the other hand a person may become so enthusiastic for orthodoxy, so aggressive for the second blessing, so impatient with all opposition to the theory that he loses all the joy of the first blessing in fighting for the second.

How Paul shines in this connection! And this is all relevant to this spirit of sweet contentment. The judeizers were undermining his work and preaching false doctrine. Paul heard of it and seeing that he had done all he could in the matter he as much as said, "Well, praise the Lord, I'm not going to backslide over this thing. So whether in pretence or truth Christ is preached I rejoice, yea, and I will rejoice." He said this with double emphasis. So you and I have to come to the place when we say: "I don't have to worry or fret. In the face of all error and gainsaying I'll shout the victory. I will keep sweet in my soul."

Finally: Brother, sister, you may be enclosed by the prison-walls of inactivity due to lack of work; you may be shut in by the walls of physical disability; you may be apparently hemmed in by other adverse things. You need the same kind of an experience that Paul had. Nothing else is any good. When you are sure that as far as possible, you have done your part, and still no door opens to take you to the mission field, or into the ministry, or out in any other line of usefulness, learn to trust God and wait his time in patience. "In your patience possess ye your souls." We may have the spirit of sweet contentment while expecting and working for better things in state, church, home and our own hearts. If you have not yet received the Baptism with the Holy Ghost, that kills the carnal mind, don't be content to live without it in the life and light of the Spirit's presence you may have as clear-cut and as wonderful victory as Paul had. You shall have learned the secret of sweet contentment in the will of God and will be taking post-graduate lessons till the end of life. This is the only way of living at our best.

W. E. SMITH

#### IN SPITE OF ITS FRIENDS

If the Church had not been immortal its friends would have killed it long ago. But it continues to live on in spite of its friends. No other institution on earth could grow and increase in value while being so constantly discounted by those who are a part of it. It must be permanent, or its friends would have uprooted it long ago.

Jesus spoke truly when He said that the children of the world are wiser than the children of light. There is no business firm anywhere that would permit such statements about its interests or its individual members as we freely make concerning the church. Imagine a merchant advertising: "My trade is falling off, my goods are shopworn and fewer customers come in each day; but I am still here and hope you will come in." Or suppose the doctor should say: "Most of my patients die; but I do the best I can and hope you will call me when you get sick." Both cases are absolutely impossible, but the Church is full of just such advertising.

We major on its defects instead of its merits. We tell of all the people who do not come to church, and say nothing of those who do. We whisper about ministers and members who are inconsistent, and forget to extol the consistencies of the majority. We talk of members who do nothing and too often fail to mention the thousands who are sacrificing that the work of the Church may go on.

Why not quit talking about "What's Wrong with the Church" and begin to tell all comers "What's Right with the Church." No other organization ever knocks itself. The Church has ten virtues for every defect, and achieves ten victories for every defeat. Let us tell the world about these. Nobody will put money in or give service to an institution in the receiver's hands.

J. F. GREGORY.

A man who does not wish to be holy stands about as much chance of getting to heaven as he does of flying to the moon.

—The Christian Witness of 1892

"If salvation had been more difficult, Jesus Himself could not have done it. It was the last blow which opened the fountain. It couldn't have cost more."—Rev. J. B. Chapman.