

-Editorial-

MISERY NOT TO PREACH

The King James version says, "Yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." (1 Cor. 9:16). The new English Bible makes St. Paul's declaration even more effective by saying, "It would be misery to me not to preach."

Misery not to preach! Such a statement suggests the mighty compulsion that was within the heart of Paul, the secret to the relentless thrust of his ministry among men. There was a sense of urgency about this kind of ministry. Preaching the word and witnessing to men was not an optional occupation with Paul. It was not something to be done, or not done, depending upon personal convenience or satisfactory remuneration. Not on your life, says Paul. "Then what is my pay? The satisfaction of preaching the Gospel without expense to anyone; in other words, of waiving the rights which my preaching gives me. I am a free man and own no master; but I have made myself every man's servant, to win over as many as possible" (1 Cor. 9:18-20, New English Bible.)

We are only kidding ourselves, as preachers of the Gospel, if we think we can be successful in the work of the Lord apart from such an inner compulsion and sense of urgency. The flesh is always with us and we are altogether too prone to fall into the rut of mere professionalism, making our ministry but a bread ticket through life. God Forbid! When we reach that point let us be honest with ourselves and with those to whom we minister, and turn our pulpit over to someone under the power of Holy Ghost anointing.

For the day in which we live calls for men with a message, men with a "Thus saith the Lord" upon their lips, men with burning hearts. And yes, men who find it misery not to preach.

BEWARE OF AN UNFORGIVING SPIRIT

One cause of the leakage of divine power is allowing a root of bitterness to spring up in our hearts because of a wrong inflicted upon us. An unforgiving spirit will blight spiritual fruit, and also cause a deep shadow to come between us and our Lord.

Our reaction to the incident or source of conflict matters much more than the incident itself. The incident will soon pass away, but the effect upon our spiritual life does not. May God keep us from all resentment, and preserve a sweet spirit within us. May He enable us to genuinely love those who have wronged us.—James Stewart.

FREEDOM TO SPEAK

"The Christian can draw no line between what is God's business and what is beyond His concern. We claim the whole world for Christ, and we shall maintain our freedom to speak on any question that has anything to do with the spiritual, mental or physical life of people."

—Bishop Gerald Kennedy, Los Angeles

A CHUNK OF CLOUD

"Multitudes of church members today are being offered a chunk of cloud bank buttered with the night wind instead of Christianity's vital, life-giving bread. There is no gospel if the atoning blood of Christ is omitted, if the virgin birth is denied, if Christ's resurrection is eliminated, if justification by faith is not preached."

—Dr. Robert G. Lee

Beauty and the Day's Work

There was once a young man who took an unusual view of work. He was given a job in a stone quarry, facing with chisel and hammer the rough blocks that were to form the foundation for a temple.

"You must face ten of these blocks each day," said the foreman, "but you need not be too careful about how they look, since they are to be buried in the earth."

When the young man had finished the first day's work he stood for a while and looked down on what he had done. The stones were roughly square, to be sure, but every one was ugly and uneven. The youth, loving beauty seized his hammer and chisel and went to work again, smoothing the rough places and running a straight line along each edge.

Every morning and evening the youth spent an extra hour or two adding form to blocks that he well knew were to be buried deep in the earth.

Now it happened that the chief architect came one day to the quarry. His trained eye noted the beauty in the pile of foundation stones, and he said to the youth, "I suppose you know that these stones will never be seen again by the eyes of men?"

The youth hung his head, for he thought the great man was angry with him. At last he raised his eyes and said, "The extra work has cost my master nothing. I have done it on my own time and for my own pleasure."

The next day the architect came again and sat where he could look down into the quarry without being seen. An hour before the other men arrived, the youth came and the ring of his hammer sounded fresh and clear in the crisp dawn. The architect smiled. "Here is a labor of love in the cause of beauty," he said to himself. "The boy is of a noble nature. This day shall he drop his chisel and come with me as an apprentice in the sacred task of temple building."

Years later, when the youth of the stone quarry was fashioning a great amphitheater in a far-distant city, a young man came to him and said, "Sir, what must I do to succeed? I am about ready to begin my life's work."

The boy of the stone quarry smiled "There is no recipe for success," he said, "but I can open for you the door to happiness. Add beauty to your day's work, whatever that may happen to be!"

—Friendly Chats

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