

A DEAD END ROAD

In this morning's paper there was a picture of two street signs which appeared to be on the same post. The front sign read, "Easy Street." The other one said, "Dead End Road." By trick photography, the reporter provided us with a vivid lesson: "Easy Street" is a "dead end road,"

It is quite obvious that one can't get very far in life if he always takes the course that's easy. The nature of things demands diligence before success. People who are content to always take the easy road will find it seldom leads to success.

In religion there is often a tendency to take the easy way. This is apparent when we find so many people who do not study God's word for themselves. It is less trouble for them to just let a preacher study for them. Then once a week he can give them a short digest of what he has learned, which they lazily accept without ever investigating for themselves. This modern easy way is very much different from the ancient Bereans who "searched the Scriptures daily" to learn the truth for themselves. Acts 17: 11

There are those who want religion so easy that it never interferes with anything else. That's the religion of convenience. Don't let it demand much of their time, or money. Don't make it too hard so far as day-to-day conduct is concerned. Don't expect too much participation. And, as regarding suffering for the cause of Christ, that's out of the question! Yes, there are many who want an easy religion.

Will you consider how different this is to the attitude of Peter and Paul, and other New Testament Christians? Their life for Christ was not easy and they never asked that it be. When they were scattered abroad by persecution, they went every where preaching the word. (Acts 8:4) To serve Jesus, Paul said he suffered the loss of all things. (Philippians 3:8) He urged Timothy to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." (II Timothy 2:3) After the apostles had been tried and threatened for preaching the gospel, they did not complain that God expected too much. Instead, they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for His name. Acts 5:41

The Bible is clear that God never intended that life in His service be easy, in the sense that the world wants it to be. Peter wrote, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure. ..." II Peter 1 :10

Near the end of his life, Paul reflected: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. ..." (I Timothy 4:7-8) It had not been an easy life. He had suffered much. In the end, however, he knew it was worth it all.

But, my friends, those who take an easy street in religion will find it a dead end road.