



FOR even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. ¹¹ For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. ¹² Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. (2 Thess 3:10-12)

THE sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing. (Prov 20:4)

The Ants and the Grasshopper

The ants were spending a fine winter's day drying grain collected in the summertime. A Grasshopper, perishing with famine, passed by and earnestly begged for a little food. The Ants inquired of him, "Why did you not treasure up food during the summer?" He replied, "I had not leisure enough. I passed the days in singing." They then said in derision: "If you were foolish enough to sing all the summer, you must dance supperless to bed in the winter." Translated by George Fyler Townsend. Aesop's Fables (p. 17).

All wisdom comes from God – even the ancient wisdom of fables and philosophers, as long as it is truth. We all are familiar with the story of the busy ants and the slothful grasshopper. That was told anciently, but it is perhaps more apropos today than when it was first uttered. I wonder why such wisdom is no longer common fare in our public schools of today? (don't answer, we know the reason) That fable reflects the wisdom of God revealed, long before such fables were imagined, in Holy Scripture. In fact, we get the first hint of the need to labor in the Garden at Eden. Even before Adam's Fall, he was given labor to perform in the Garden: "And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." (Gen 2:15)

After Adam's transgression, the Lord multiplied his labors. "17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. (Gen 3:17-19) If Adam desired food to satisfy his hunger, he must work for it. The principle is a Godly one and holds true today.

Sluggards are not an extinct species – in fact, they have multiplied in our day like mushrooms following a spring rain. They are most prolific in democracies where their whines and murmurings can be satisfied by greedy politicians out of desire for votes to the detriment of the nation. You may ask, "Did our forefathers miscalculate that human tendency to vote themselves largesse from the public treasury?" The answer, of course, is NO! The Founders intended to give us a Republic which they hoped would be maintained by an informed and vibrant citizenry. The principles of a Republic derive from ancient Rome and especially the counsel of Marcus Cicero – an early proponent of Republican government that predates the time of Christ.

In a Republican form of government the laws are conceived to be equally applicable, without exception, to every citizen. It follows that taxation would, as well, be equally apportioned at a level rate from the citizenry. Too often we hear even learned men refer to the United States as a democracy. That it may have become through corrupt politics, but it was not so conceived to be.

James Madison, who is rightly known as the "Father of the Constitution," wrote in *The Federalist*, No. 10: "*democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security, or the rights of property; and have in general been as short in their lives as they are violent in their deaths.*" *The Federalist Papers*, recall, were written during the time of the ratification debate to encourage the citizens of New York to support the new Constitution.

New York's Alexander Hamilton, in a 21 June 1788 speech urging ratification of the Constitution in his state, thundered: "*It has been observed that a pure democracy if it were practicable would be the most perfect government. Experience has proved that no position is more false than this. The ancient democracies in which the people themselves deliberated never possessed one good feature of government. Their very character was tyranny; their figure deformity.*" Earlier, at the Constitutional Convention, Hamilton stated: "*We are a Republican Government. Real liberty is never found in despotism or in the extremes of Democracy.*"

John McManus

A Mrs. Powel of Philadelphia asked Benjamin Franklin, "Well, Doctor, what have we got, a republic or a monarchy?" With no hesitation whatsoever, Franklin responded, "A republic, if you can keep it."

But what of a democracy. Isn't the public vote always the best arbiter of fairness in government? No, it is not. As former Senator Barry Goldwater has said, "In a totalitarian rule, what difference whether it is a single dictator or the people themselves who hold the chain with which you are made servile." Read a description of a democracy:

"A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the people discover they can vote themselves largess out of the public treasury. From that moment on,

the majority always votes for the candidate promising the most benefits from the public treasury, with the result that democracy always collapses over a loose fiscal policy--to be followed by a dictatorship."

— Alexander Fraser Tytler Woodhouselee

What has this to do with the sluggard. Why, it is the sluggard upon which socialist governments thrive. We even have voters in America who could not care less about the public debt, but will vote for a despot on the promise of a free cell phone.

I wrote a short devotion many years ago about the sluggard of Psalms 58:8 which is a snail. *"As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away: like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun."* (Psalm 58:8) Why does God use this illustration of the slug when addressing the wicked? It is because they wish to live on the labors of others. The snail loves the darkest hours to plunder the labors of the gardener. He eats, but he labors not in planting. At the first rays of morning, he moves sluggishly to find a rock under which he can hide from the view of the Sun. All sinners hate light, that is why the majority of crime happens during the hours of darkness. A snail melts when exposed to salt or light.

There are two things that the snail hates, and so do corrupt democracies – salt and light. If we are called to be the salt of the earth, that means we are to proclaim the truth of the Gospel principles. If we are Light, we are to shed light on every dark space. Increasingly in the government of the United States, political intrigue is carried on behind closed doors. Large amounts of money pass from those eager for favors to those who can enact the legislation to satisfy those desires. We have, before the very eyes of my generation, devolved into a democracy and left our Republican principles on the altar of greed.

Cicero wrote, *"The budget should be balanced, the Treasury should be refilled, public debt should be reduced, the arrogance of officialdom should be tempered and controlled, and the assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed lest Rome become bankrupt. People must again learn to work, instead of living on public assistance."* — Cicero, 55 BC. Does this not more accurately relate to the principles upon which this nation was founded rather than the socialist tendencies that are the rule for our times?

The French Parliamentarian, Frederick Bastiat wrote in 1848: *"Socialism, like the ancient ideas from which it springs, confuses the distinction between government and society. As a result of this, every time we object to a thing being done by government, the socialists conclude that we object to its being done at all. We disapprove of state education. Then the socialists say that we are opposed to any education. We object to a state religion. Then the socialists say that we want no religion at all. We object to a state-enforced equality. Then they say that we are against equality. And so on, and so on. It is as if the socialists were to accuse us of not wanting persons to eat because we do not want the state to raise grain."* — Frederic Bastiat, The Law

Many Christians, and even supposed ministers, hide behind the veil of a so-called separation of church and state, and will not lift a finger, or utter a dissenting warning against governmental encroachment on God-given rights of the people. Christian influence is more needed today than ever in the American government. There is no such thing as separation of church and state unless it be called a voluntary surrender of individual rights on the part of men who should know better.

America has descended into an abyss of ruin and growing stagnation. If the righteous voices are hushed, who will remain to set the course straight? Not the politician

– not the sluggard – and not the false prophets that proliferate among us. YOU must stand up at last.

1st Amendment (Bill of Rights (abbrev): *“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof”* The Constitution does not prohibit school prayer, Bible reading, or public expressions of religion. If it did, it would contradict itself. Did Congress ever make such a law? No. If not, what law was the Supreme Court interpreting as unconstitutional? Think about it.