

## January 25

*Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Matthew 6:34*

OUR Lord assures us that if the main thought of our hearts is His service and the

### R2488 "QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question.—(1) To what extent should the Lord's people take literally the statement, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment?"—Matt. 6:25-34...

Answer.—(1) The words of our Lord which you quote must be interpreted in harmony with other declarations of the inspired Word. They must not be interpreted so as to conflict with other statements. Other Scriptures instruct the Lord's people to labor with their hands, that they may have to give to those that have need (Eph. 4:28), and this implies forethought and provision in the way of laying up of money earned. Again, the Scriptures declare, "The children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children" (2 Cor. 12:14)—implying some reasonable forethought and provision on the part of the parents for those whom they have brought into being. Again, the Apostle implies that the Christian who is fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, will not be slothful in any business (Rom. 12:11), and declares that "If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."—1 Tim. 5:8.

Interpreting our Lord's words in harmony with these other Scriptures, their sense would be that the Christian is not to take anxious care respecting the future, in matters beyond his control. He is, however, to take thought for every matter that is subject to his control. He is to seek to order his life so that it shall be useful to himself and to others. He is to remember the Scriptural injunction, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise," and is to follow the ant's custom of laying up provision in advance of necessity. This lesson is taught by all of our Lord's providences; for instance, the plowing and the sowing are to be done bountifully and in faith, not doubtfully and fearfully. So also the cultivation is to be done with patience, waiting for the harvest: and when the harvest comes the lesson of nature is that the reaper shall not merely reap what he wishes to eat, and let the next day look out for itself, but that he shall gather into barns, making provision for the winter and for the next seedtime. Our Lord's remark that the fowls of the air do not gather grain into barns, and yet are fed, nor do lilies spin, yet are clothed, was not intended to teach that his followers should adopt the method of the fowls respecting their food, nor expect to be clothed as the lilies. It was intended to teach confidence in God as our care-taker, and thus permit his faithful children to plow and sow in faith, to labor in faith, and to reap with faith, to lay up in store with faith, and to use with faith; recognizing every good gift as of the Lord (through the sun and rain, by plowing and reaping), the same who provides for the birds, tho in a different manner. The Christian is ever to remember that man shall not

promotion of righteousness and an attainment of the Kingdom which God has promised to them that love Him, then we need carry no anxious cares respecting the future. As His disciples we will have trials and tribulations enough, day by day, and will

live by bread alone: that he is not wholly dependent upon his own energies; that his affairs are in the Lord's hands for supervision, and that the promise is, "Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." Putting this confidence in God's supervision of his affairs, while making a true Christian restful in mind, will not make him slovenly, careless or idle in doing with his might what his hands find to do, as unto the Lord.

F572-577 "Take No Thought for the Morrow"—Matt. 6:34,19,20—

Our Lord's declaration quoted above, and his other declaration, "Lay not up for yourselves treasure upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven," have, we think, been seriously misunderstood by many of his earnest and well-meaning followers. Some have concluded that the Lord meant that they should live "from hand to mouth," and be utterly regardless of the future. We see, on the contrary that our heavenly Father has set us no such example; that he continually takes thought for us, and has arranged the seasons, the grains, vegetables and fruits in their order. We see also that he has intended that we should recognize similar principles, and has so arranged nature that it is necessary for us to plant if we would subsequently eat, and to weave if we would have wearing apparel, and to prepare in advance the oil which would give light in the night. This same principle applies to all of life's affairs, and we should reject the thought that our Lord Jesus intended to contradict or overthrow this divine arrangement, as shown in all nature.

What, then, did our Lord mean? We answer that in the original of the first text the thought is, "Take no anxious [burdensome] care for the morrow"; "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." The Lord's people are not to be *anxious* about the future. They are to be, "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." While planting and sowing and weeding and hoeing, they are by faith to recognize that all of their affairs are subject to divine supervision, and that God has promised that all things shall work together for good to them that love him. They should so thoroughly apply the precious promises of divine care that their hearts would be entirely free from anxiety.

We should recognize a wide difference between carelessness and anxious care. Had our Lord been careless, extravagant, wasteful, thoughtless, respecting the morrow, he would not have told his disciples to gather up the fragments that remained after the feeding of the multitudes; but he did illustrate in that very incident the propriety of taking thought for the next meal, for the next day. But it was not an anxious thought that he commended. The disciples were to use that which had been put into their hands, and not to waste any of it. But if their sup-

ply were exhausted through no fault of theirs, and if they had no means of replenishing it, they should trust the Lord so implicitly as to shut out anxiety, though not to remit their energy. This same thought is illustrated in the case of Joseph in Egypt, where, under divine direction, he laid up treasures of wheat during seven plentiful years, and thus made provision for the following seven years of famine.

Neither does the second text imply carelessness in respect to the daily affairs of life—the interests of the present life, proper provision for our families, etc. What, then, does it signify? It means that nothing of an earthly kind should become our *treasure*—that we should esteem above all others the heavenly treasure. Upon it our hearts should be centered, and upon it we should continually feast our minds; thus rich, we should have the spiritual rest by faith, trusting the divine promises. The world knows none of these exceeding great and precious things which the New Creatures have by faith. And, as the hymn expresses it,

"Each heart will seek and love its own;  
My goal is Christ, and Christ alone."

In choosing Christ we are choosing not only the glory, honor and immortality promised to those who are his, but we are choosing also the sufferings of this present time, the special trials and testings and experiences promised to those who walk in his footsteps, as a necessary education and preparation for the glories to come. Moreover, all who are thus seeking Christ, all who have thus made full consecration of themselves to the Lord, have nothing of an earthly kind that they should call their own. When they were of the earth, earthy, they counted their earthly interests as personal possessions; but when they became the Lord's they gave themselves, with all that they possessed, to him. Houses, lands, children, husband, wife, brothers, sisters—all were devoted, consecrated to the Lord. None of these therefore, can now be the treasures of the New Creation...

It is God's will that we should recognize...mortgages, and that we should day by day meet their requirements in a reasonable manner—not forgetting that we are expected not to be wasteful of the Lord's means, but to seek to turn as much as possible of it into such channels as would be specially useful in the promotion of religious truth—the spread of the good tidings of great joy—as representing our highest conception of good things for the groaning creation. The point we make is that the care of the wife and children, or aged parents or others properly dependent upon us, is recognized of the Lord as a proper use of a portion of what we have consecrated to him. But we are not to permit extravagance or wastefulness in these directions to interfere with the use of our means more directly in what is to us the chief work of life—the proclamation of the Gospel, the good tidings of the Kingdom."

## TAKE NO THOUGHT FOR TO-MORROW

"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on."—Luke 12:22; Matt. 6:25-34.

This should not be understood as encouragement to carelessness or sloth. The Lord does not mean that we should go to bed without having, to the extent our ability, taken thought and made preparation for the morning meal, nor that we should expect clothes to grow upon our backs as feathers do upon sparrows or adornment upon lilies. Other exhortations from the divine Word quite contradict such an interpretation. Is it not written that we should be "Not slothful in business"? and again, "Let him labor, working with his hands, that he may have to give"? and again, that we should "Provide things" (Rom. 12:11-17)? and again, that he that provideth not, denies the Christian faith (1 Tim. 5:8)? And did not our Lord reprove the idlers in the vineyard parable, and does he not call the slothful servant wicked, in the parables of the pounds and talents? and did he not hold up to scorn the *thoughtless* builder who began a tower without taking thought whether he could finish it? All these things, as well as the Creator's method of having a plan and working all things towards its accomplishment, forbid that we should understand our Lord to enjoin upon his followers carelessness, thoughtlessness, improvidence, or anything akin to these.

What, then, does the Lord mean? He means that we should not be anxious in the sense of being fretted and worried about food or clothing. To be so corroded with care for these earthly things would dwarf our spiritual growth, and prevent our interest in, and labor for, the promised kingdom. He would have us absorbed in heavenly things; in obtaining, and using, and giving out to others, spiritual food—truth,—and in keeping our wedding garment of Christ's righteousness unspotted from the world, and in daily inworking upon it the embroidery of good works and self-sacrifices. (Psa. 45:14.) And to do this,—to make this our chief work, he sees that we must be freed from *distress* of mind with reference to earthly things.

First, we should be free from that pride of life, that worldly spirit, which leads on so many to a love of money, fashion, costly apparel, and show, which as a great maelstrom swallows up the time, energy, and love, consecrated to the Lord and the truth. And through the apostle, he tells us that having [needful] food and clothing, we should be content (1 Tim. 6:8), and not seek to compete with the world in a race for the luxuries of the present time, but use that time and energy in the service to which we consecrated it. Secondly, should the Lord see fit to permit us to come down close, to the want of even the merest necessities—if, in spite of our diligence in business, and prudence, and economy, we should find the cellar and the purse growing empty, and the cupboard bare, we should not be as others—as the world, but should remember that our Father *knoweth* that we have need of the necessities, and that it is a part of his promise that bread and water shall be SURE to us. And with this confidence, we should be ready to share our last loaf or last dollar with any more needy than we. The Lord will provide! He may by this means teach us the lesson of trust, or correct us if we were being overcharged with the cares of this life, in an attempt to race with the world for present luxuries and earthly wealth. Yet without doubting his power, we should not expect the Lord to send us the wheat, or flour, or ready-baked bread, any more than we should expect him to put food into our stomachs already masticated. That we may learn to walk by faith, and not by sight and signs and wonders, our Father usually supplies our necessities as he does those of the sparrow which our Lord used as an illustration—namely, in a natural way, as a reward of industry.

Many, however, who know nothing of real, actual want of life's necessities, are much exercised by the loss of luxuries when adversity comes. These they should never have set their hearts upon, and in most instances wealth and luxury are snares which entrap and consume the spirit of love and service toward the Master. As he said, "How *hardly* [with what difficulty, and how rarely] shall they that have riches enter the kingdom of God." (Mark 10:23.) We should remember that luxuries were never guaranteed to us, and if we are parted from them, our only regret should be if the means did not go

to forward the truth and honor of our Lord. Our consolation and rest and trust should be in the fact, that "we *know* that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose," and who are striving to make their calling and election to the Kingdom sure.—Rom. 8:28; 2 Pet. 1:10.

## PROVIDING FOR OUR CHILDREN

But another phase of this subject presents itself. What thought would the Lord have his consecrated ones take for their children? To what extent should they use or appropriate his money, time, etc., to their children?

We answer, that as God's stewards we are authorized to use our Bible-guided judgments upon this as upon other exercises of our stewardship. We are given a natural special supervision over those whom in God's providence we have brought into existence. God would have us consider our children and deal with them as under his care; and our influence over them was part of our "all" consecrated to him. He tells us that he would have us "*provide*" for their necessities which thus come in as part of our own necessities. As with ourselves their clothing should be neat, comfortable and becoming "*decent*" but not "*costly*" (1 Tim. 2:9). And though youth need not always be arrayed in somber shades, we should ever remember to use economy both of time and means in this matter as in all others, lest we waste the Lord's substance and injure our children as well. Children are often injured by overdressing and adornment, making them the subjects of flattery, and cultivating in them a spirit of pride and selfishness, and creating the unchristian class distinctions of society even in childhood. The proper and best provision for our children's future, is a sensible education which should embrace at least the common school branches, as well as the practical lessons of life, whether trade or housekeeping or business. It is our duty to fit them to do something as well as to know something in life. And what is not learned in early life, is learned in later years, if at all, at great cost to themselves and others.

If our stewardship includes money or property, may we set aside a portion of this for the use of our children in the future by will or otherwise? This is a delicate question to answer for another. To his own Master every steward must make his report of his use of the things committed to his trust. We suggest, however, that in the case of maimed, sickly or young children or aged, infirm, indigent parents, duty and privilege would seem more clearly defined, and aside from very pressing necessities for the money in the Lord's special spiritual work, the future, as the present of these, might be understood as being part of our responsibility in the Lord's sight.

Yet, should our cool judgment ever dictate that our trust funds should all be spent in the present, we should not hesitate to trust our dear ones with ourselves, to our Father's care. The writer's observation agrees with that of the prophet who said, I have never seen the righteous *forsaken* nor his seed *begging* bread. And this must be the comfort also of those whose trusts do not include wealth. We can as fully trust our Father's care over our helpless little ones, and his provision for them, as for ourselves. Therefore, take not anxious thought for the morrow, worry and sweat not as the world to amass wealth for the future, but give all the surplus of your time and energy over and above that spent in providing things *needful*, in the accumulating of the heavenly riches, in filling yourself and others with the riches of heavenly favors, that you may abound [be rich] more and more in the knowledge of the Lord, in wisdom and love and joy and peace and in every good word and work. Be *careful* [worried, harassed and overcharged] for nothing [on no account]: the Lord is present, and whatever may be the present, the future of the faithful is glorious, and of the world blessed.

"His providence is kind and large,  
Both man and beast His bounties share;  
The whole creation is His charge,  
But saints are His peculiar care."

## R5896 "MAMMON -- THE IMPERSONATION OF SELFISHNESS..."

Mammon was the name of an ancient Syrian god—the god of riches, of cupidity, the impersonation of worldliness. Today mammon means the spirit of the world, selfishness, with its avarice and love of wealth. Satan is the promoter of this mammon spirit. St. Paul tells us how we may

know which master we are serving. He says, "His servants ye are to whom ye render obedience." (Romans 6:16.) If we are giving time and thought to grasping after riches and worldly honors, if our influence is for war and strife, for selfishness in any form, if our sympathies and affections are tending earthward rather than Heavenward, then we are serving mammon, the worldly spirit, and

are thus serving Satan, whether we realize it or not...

## THE WILL A STRONG DEFENSE AGAINST SATAN

...When the spider perceives that the fly which he has entrapped is struggling and is about to get loose from the web, he instantly hastens to throw additional webs around his victim. So when Satan sees any of his sub-

jects endeavoring to free themselves from his entanglements, he at once sets about throwing stronger coils around them, to prevent if possible their escape.

But Satan cannot overcome a decided human will. God has given every creature this defense; and whoever does not break down this defense by a persistent yielding up of that will to evil influence, can resist the power of sin and of Satan to a considerable degree. But poor humanity need Divine help to free themselves entirely from this great Adversary and his hosts of evil. The position of the Christian is invulnerable so long as he keeps close to the Source of his strength. Greater is He that is on our part than all that can be against us...

When Christians take a decided stand against Satan and his wiles, they are relieved from his attacks.... A moment's hesitation is very dangerous."

2HG616 "THIS ONE THING I DO"

Ah! this was the secret of the Apostle's great success—"This one thing I do." He concentrated his time, his thought, his energy, upon this one object or goal, which proved the brighter and more valuable to his appreciation every hour. True, there were ordinary things of life, such as eating and drinking and resting and, at one time, tent-making, which occupied some of his hours.

But these were not paramount, were not dominating. He aspired, not to be known as the greatest or most expert tent-maker. He aspired not to amass great wealth in that or any other labor or business. He lived not for his belly, nor did he, as a sluggard, waste valuable time in sleep. Every hour, every energy, had been devoted to God and his service—and was so applied, not of compulsion, nor of slavish fear, but out of a faithful heart, appreciating the privileges and anxious to show to the Lord his loving devotion. Is it so with us? If it has not been so with all of us in the past, shall it not be our resolution now for the year just beginning our vow to the Lord renewed? Shall we not cast aside and forget the earthly aims and projects which occupied us and devote our time and energy and strength and thought to the Lord?...

Whoever divides his heart, whoever attempts to serve the interests of several equally, will surely fail. Not only does such a half-way course fail to meet with the Divine approval as worthy of joint-heirship in the Kingdom with Christ, but it fails also to meet the world's approval and to gain the advantages of this present life... If experience and the word of God bring us to the conclusion that only the service of God can bring us truest happiness in the present and the future life, and if we hear the Master's

words to us, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon," then let us determine to serve the Lord..."

R874 "The heart's treasure is that for which we would and do make the greatest sacrifices of time, strength, convenience etc..."

In proportion as we are faithful to our consecration in rendering our sacrifices, denying self and following the Master's steps, we come to realize the heavenly treasure more and more clearly, and our hearts are set more and more upon it. On the contrary the more we handle and spend time and attention upon earthly things, the more they get to fill our hearts and so would crowd out the heavenly. "Set your affections on things above." Where your treasure is your heart will be, and what you sacrifice most for, *becomes* your treasure. That which costs us most and which we give most for, we love most, and thus it is proved to be our treasure."

R3149 "Renew your determination; redouble your diligence; cast aside the weights of unnecessary worldly cares...and, as the Apostle Paul also urges, run with patience the race set before you. Run, not like one who is merely beating the air, but like one who has a purpose in view, and who, in desperate earnest, is *determined* to make his calling and election sure. -- *Heb. 12:1; 1 Cor. 9:26*"

R2259 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2006)

"YE CANNOT SERVE GOD AND MAMMON"

--*FEB. 6.--MATT. 6:24-34.-- "He careth for you."--1 Pet. 5:7*

PROBABLY no other period of the world's history ever had as great need, as our own, for this lesson. The spirit of our times seems to lead directly to the service of Mammon--wealth, earthly advantages and comforts. The attainment of Mammon's reward would appear to be the main object of life, to which every other interest is made subservient, so far as Christendom is concerned. As we look into the far East this is less so; the millions of India and of China know far more contentment in their ignorance, than do the millions of Christendom with their large degree of knowledge. Knowledge evidently is not conducive to peace, happiness, contentment:--"Godliness with contentment is great gain."--1 Tim. 6:6.

What is known as the *progress* of civilization is in many respects good, excellent; but it has a wrong motive power. The motive power of modern progress is selfishness--Mammonism--and increasingly so. Nor can we imagine that the civilized world, intellectually awakened but not in heart regenerated, not possessed of the spirit of Christ, the holy spirit, the spirit of love, could be in its present condition moved by any other spirit than that which possesses it--the spirit of selfishness, the spirit of Mammon. We are not, therefore, surprised to see what we do see on every hand--a mad rush and struggle for wealth, and for position and fame which are wealth of another kind and bring financial wealth. The spirit of selfishness in the millionaire stirs him to activity and to the use of his opportunities, not because he needs more, but because he is possessed of the spirit of avarice, the spirit of Mammon: the same spirit exactly takes hold of the artisan who, with a moderate income, has secured for himself and family a modest little home and a frugal competence. Many of these are now reaching out after wealth, and finding by experience the truth of the Apostle's words, "They that will to be rich [whether they succeed in carrying out their will or not, if they have the will, the Mammon spirit] fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts [desires and habits] which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money [the Mammon spirit] is a root of all evil: which, while some coveted after, they have *erred from the faith* [crowding out the spirit of love and wisdom from above, and losing the spirit of the truth, also the letter of the truth and the faith], and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."--1 Tim. 6:10,11.

It is impossible for us to read each other's hearts and to know positively the mainsprings of activities in each others' lives; and hence the Lord's people are likely to be misunderstood by the world. The child of God is commanded to be "not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;" he is also commanded to provide things needful for those dependent upon him: thus required to labor

for his daily bread, he is brought in contact with others not begotten of the heavenly spirit like himself, but who have as the mainspring of activities the love of money--Mammon. It may be difficult from the world's standpoint to note the difference in the two spirits in the two classes, for both are active, energetic, patient and persevering; and both are paid at the end of the week in the same coin, and both are counted by the world as servants of Mammon. Wherein then lies the difference?--Which are the servants of God? and how can we know them?

"By their fruits ye shall know them," said our Master. What will be done with the proceeds of the labor, is the only outward evidence we could have respecting what was the *motive* of the laborer. If the proceeds of the labor are merely accumulated in property or in banks or in old stockings, or if the proceeds of the labor over and above the necessities of life are merely used in gratification of the flesh, in trinkets, bric-a-brac, or other forms of self-gratification, or for evil purposes, the only reasonable deduction would be that the laborer was inspired to his energy by the spirit of selfishness, and that he is a servant of Mammon. But if on the other hand the proceeds of energetic labor, after appropriating for the necessities of life, are used benevolently in the Lord's service, in the service of the Lord's people, in "distributing to the necessities of the saints," either temporally or spiritually, or to the necessities of "the groaning creation;"--if this be the use to which surplus moneys are put, the reasonable inference is that the laborer was energized not by a spirit of Mammon, a spirit of selfishness, but by the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of love; because the use of the same in the Lord's service would be a proof of the motive and object of the laborer.

This simple rule (by which we may all test ourselves, even if we may not measure others by it too carefully) would seem to show us that the great mass of mankind are servants of selfishness, servants of Mammon, and not servants of God, whose main object in life after providing things decent, and honestly, for themselves and their dependents, would surely be to use it to glorify God and to bless their fellow creatures. Let each one who has named the name of the Lord judge himself very carefully along this line:--scrutinizing his own objects and methods, and determining according to this lesson whose servant he is--a servant of selfishness and of Satan, or the servant of love and of God.

Nothing in what we have said is intended to imply that it would be wrong for any of the Lord's people to own his own home or to enjoy some of the comforts of life; nor to make a reasonable provision for tomorrow, with a view to the necessities of his family, and for such uses as he may consider to be the Lord's will respecting him

and the means entrusted to his stewardship. (2 Cor. 8:21.) But it would be a great mistake for the child of God to make, should he conclude that he must spend no money in the service of the Lord and of humanity until he has attained a certain competency in life. Whoever adopts this theory and plan will almost assuredly find by the time he obtains a competency, that he has gained so much of the spirit of Mammon as to be less satisfied, less contented than ever; and that he has lost so much of the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of love and generosity, that he has little disposition to spend his strength for anything that will not selfishly minister to his personal comfort or the gratification of selfish aims. And if he who earns \$1,000 a year should have the spirit of devotion and is sure to be blessed in its exercise, the same is true of the man who earns but \$100 per year: even if he have difficulty in obtaining the necessities of life, he will be blessed in heart, in mind, in spirit, if he will deny himself, sacrificing something of earthly gratification, in order to render some thankoffering to the Lord.

The great argument which the Adversary uses to enlist servants for Mammon, and to get the servants of God to attempt to serve both God and Mammon, is fear: fear of want, fear of distresses. In our lesson, therefore, the Lord takes up this feature first, urging his followers, not as *verse 34* would represent the matter, to be thoughtless, indifferent and careless in respect to our food and clothing, but, to be without worry—not *anxious* and fearful and troubled about tomorrow and its affairs. The plowman, when he breaks up the land, and the sower, when he scatters the grain, are taking thought for the morrow, in a proper, legitimate manner that has the divine approval: if they are God's children they are to plow in hope, and sow in hope, and wait for the crop in hope; and to trust that, if the Lord should permit some blight or drouth to render their labors unfruitful, he nevertheless will not leave them destitute, but will care for them and provide for them in some way. And they are to exercise their confidence in his goodness and to expect that all the lessons of life are profitable ones in preparation for the eternal life, if they will be rightly exercised by them.

Our Lord's words in this lesson in which he encourages confidence and trust in the Heavenly Father, are not addressed to mankind in general—not addressed to the "children of wrath," but addressed to those who have become "children of God" upon the terms of his Covenant. This point cannot be too strongly urged: it is very necessary that those who have never made a covenant with the Lord should know that the promises and blessings of the divine Word are

R5413 "THE END OF THE AGE A PERILOUS TIME *"In the last days perilous times shall come; men shall be traitors, heady,...lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."*—2 Timothy 3:4...

The only ones who are on trial for life or death are those who have been released from the Adamic condemnation. To these the time described by St. Paul will be one of severe testing. The whole course of the world will be turned aside from the high standard that might have been expected. Men will be traitors. As long as it will be of advantage to them to perform a contract they will do so; when not advantageous they will not fulfil the contract. It will be a time when every man's hand will be lifted against his neighbor. Selfishness will be rampant. Each will do what will be to his own interest, regardless of obligation. There will be manifest headiness and selfishness and self-conceit. Men will be "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." This condition is to be a sign of the end of the Age.

Every thoughtful person must perceive that this condition of things is prevailing now. Whenever a contract is found to be unsatisfactory—whether it be a marriage contract or a business contract... The Lord's people will keep their word and be firm for principle and true to their contracts, even when these prove disadvantageous to them. This attitude is pleasing to the Lord.

#### PREVALENCE OF THESE CONDITIONS UNIVERSAL

...The Higher Critics have been seeking to put away what they have considered the

not theirs and will never become theirs until such times as they come unto God in his appointed way, and take upon them his prepared covenant. All his promises are yea and amen only to those who are *in Christ Jesus*.

This class, while just as busy, just as active, just as fervent in spirit as any of the worldly, have not the fret, have not the worry of the others; because the Lord Almighty has covenanted with them that he will do for them according to heavenly wisdom what would be for their highest welfare. So then, these can rejoice--

"In every condition, in sickness, in health,  
In poverty's vale or abounding in wealth."

The Lord's people, while active in the affairs of life, are not working for the things of this life, but are seeking the Kingdom of God: it is the first thing, the principal thing, the principal object of life and energy. God has promised his people a share in an everlasting Kingdom which shall bless the whole world, and this exceeding great and precious promise fills the heart, fills the mind and constitutes with love and hope the mainspring of every question in life. And in seeking the Kingdom, they are also seeking God's righteousness; because no one who loves unrighteousness will love God's Kingdom which will be the foe of all unrighteousness and sin. And only those who love righteousness and who labor for righteousness are in any proper sense seeking God's Kingdom and its reign. An earnest Christian traveling salesman was once asked the question: "What is your business?" He replied, "I am preaching the Lord Jesus Christ, and selling hardware for \_\_\_\_\_ & Co. to meet my expenses." This is the relationship between God's people and their earthly occupations that should be recognized and fully lived up to by all who win the prize.

<sup>[1]</sup>Our Lord assures us that if the main thought of our hearts is his service and the promotion of righteousness and an attainment of the Kingdom which God has promised to them that love him, then we need carry no anxious cares respecting the future. As his disciples we will have trials and tribulations enough, day by day, and will need daily to lean upon the Bridegroom's arm as we seek to walk the narrow way. Sufficient for each day will be the evil of itself: and thanks be to God also, we have the promise that daily his grace shall be sufficient for us.

[1] Jan. 25 Manna, Mat. 6:34

absurdities of religious thought... Even the reverential fear which once held them is departing, and there is a disposition to doubt everything... They are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

#### WORLDLY SPIRIT IN SOME OF THE CONSECRATED

These conditions of our day make it a perilous time for the Church. Do you ask, Would not the Church, on the contrary, be more than ever led to love God? And would this not guard them and keep them from danger? We answer that some of God's people are becoming more and more immersed in the world. The spirit of the world surges all around them. With great difficulty could these come to realize that the whole world is astray in their ideas and ways. The tendency of all such is to have the mind of the world, even though they be spirit-begotten.

This worldly spirit, the Apostle suggests, would affect the Church to some extent. Consequently some of the Lord's people would thus come into special peril at this time, because of neglecting their Covenant with the Lord. Others would remember that Covenant, and watch and pray, and so make good progress. Those who are living close to the Lord are, for this reason, developing in mind and heart. But these are few.

The Great Company class, while still loving the Lord, are becoming immersed in the spirit of the world. Even those who are living nearest to the Divine standard will be more or less imperiled through this spirit, unless they continue diligent in prayer and

the study of God's Word. What we see going on about us seems natural to our minds. The way in which other people spend time and money is a temptation to the Lord's people which must be *steadfastly resisted*.

#### A SUBTLE TEST

The Lord's people spend and are being spent in His service—by volunteer work, by attending meetings, by holding meetings and in various ways, according to opportunity. They are living separate from the world—distinct lives, lives of consecration. The world now has an eight-hour day. The Lord's faithful people would, on the contrary, make theirs a sixteen-hour day. But all these present-day conditions constitute perils. For us to do what others do, and to devote to the Lord's service only what the world considers a reasonable day's work, would not be fulfilling our Covenant of Sacrifice at all. Those who seek merely to do right, and to put in eight hours or so a day faithfully, after the manner of the world, will be judged from this standpoint; and they will merely obtain a place in the Great Company. They are not fulfilling the conditions of the Covenant of sacrifice.

But the Little Flock will serve the Lord with such delight that they will scarcely know how to cease their efforts. They recognize that their bodies are fully consecrated to the Lord, and they are daily putting them to death in a reasonable, rational manner. In view of these perilous times, let us each ask himself the question, *To which class do I belong?*"