



true disciple- ship

Including

LORD,
BREAK ME

"they must cease to lay up treasure on earth, and that they should devote the whole of a very substantial income . . . to the Lord's service."¹ Groves' convictions on this subject are set forth in his booklet, CHRISTIAN DEVOTEDNESS.²

C. T. Studd "decided to give his entire fortune to Christ, and to take the golden opportunity offered him of doing what the rich young man had failed to do. . . . It was simple obedience to the black and white statements of God's Word."³ After distributing thousands to the work of the Lord, he reserved the equivalent of \$9,588 for his new bride. She was not to be outdone by her husband. "Charlie," she asked, "what did the Lord tell the rich young man to do?"

"Sell all," he replied.

"Well then, we will start clear with the Lord at our wedding." And off went the money to Christian missions.

The same spirit of devotedness animated Jim Elliot. He wrote in his diary:

"Father, let me be weak that I might lose my clutch on everything temporal. My life, my reputation, my possessions, Lord, let me loose the tension of the grasping hand. Even, Father, would I lose the love of *fondling*. How often I have released a grasp only to retain what I prized by "harmless" longing, the fondling touch. Rather, open my hand to receive the nail of Calvary, as Christ's was opened—that I, releasing all, might be released, unleashed from all that binds me now. He thought Heaven, yea, equality with God, not a thing to be clutched at. So let me

¹"Men of His Right Hand," THE WITNESS MAGAZINE, January, 1961.

²Walterick Publishers, Box 2216, KCK 66110

³Grubb, Norman, C. T. STUDD. Lutterworth Press, 1957, p. 64.

release my grasp."⁴

Our infidel hearts tell us that it would be impossible to take the words of the Lord literally. If we forsook all, we would starve. After all, we must make provision for our own future and the future of our loved ones. If every Christian forsook all, then who would finance the work of the Lord? And if there were not some Christians who were wealthy, then how could the higher class of people ever be reached with the gospel? And so the arguments come pouring forth in quick succession—all to prove that the Lord Jesus could not have meant what He said.

The fact of the matter is that obedience to the Lord's command is the most sane and reasonable life and the one that yields the greatest joy. The witness of Scripture and of experience testifies that no one who lives sacrificially for Christ will ever suffer want. When a man obeys God, the Lord takes care of him.

The man who forsakes all to follow Christ is not a shiftless pauper who expects to be supported by his fellow Christians.

1. He is industrious. He works diligently for the supply of his current necessities and those of his family.
2. He is frugal. He lives as economically as possible so that everything above immediate needs can be put into the Lord's work.
3. He is foresighted. Instead of accumulating wealth on earth, he lays up his treasures in heaven.
4. He trusts God for the future. Instead of giving

⁴Elliot, Elisabeth, SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY, Harper and Brothers, 1958, p. 246.

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provide for their children, not vice versa. It is not at all a question of parents' laying up for their children's future. The whole passage has to do with the supply of Paul's present needs, not his possible future necessities.

In I Timothy 5:8, the apostle is discussing the care of poor widows. He insists that their relatives are responsible to care for them. If there are no relatives or if they fail in their responsibility, then the local church should care for Christian widows. But here again the subject is present needs, not future necessities.

God's ideal is that the members of the body of Christ should care for the immediate needs of their fellow believers:

"It is a matter of share and share alike. At present your plenty should supply their need, and then at some future date their plenty may supply your need. In that way we share with each other, as the Scripture says, He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack" (II Corinthians 8:15, Phillips).

A Christian who feels he must provide for future needs faces the difficult problem of knowing how much will be enough. He therefore spends his life in pursuit of a fortune of some indefinite amount and forfeits the privilege of giving his best to the Lord Jesus Christ. He gets to the end of a wasted life and finds out that all his needs would have been provided anyway, if he had just lived wholeheartedly for the Savior.

If all Christians took the words of the Lord Jesus literally, there would be no lack of finances in the Lord's work. The gospel would go out with increased

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power and in increased volume. If any particular disciple faced a need, it would be the joy and privilege of other disciples to share whatever they might have.

To suggest that there must be wealthy Christians to reach the wealthy people of the world is absurd. Paul reached Caesar's household while he was a prisoner (Philippians 4:22). If we obey God, we can trust Him to arrange the details.

The example of the Lord Jesus should be conclusive in the matter. The servant is not above his Master. "It ill becomes the servant to seek to be rich, and great, and honored in this world where his Lord was poor, and mean, and despised"—George Muller.

"The sufferings of Christ included poverty, II Corinthians 8:9. Of course, poverty does not necessitate rags and dirt, but it does involve the lack of reserves and of the means to be luxurious. . . . Some thirty years ago . . . Andrew Murray pointed out that the Lord and His apostles could not have accomplished the work they had to do had they not been actually poor. He who would lift up another must descend, like the Samaritan, and the infinite majority of mankind always have been and still are poor"—A. N. Groves.

People plead that there are certain material possessions that are necessary for home life. That is true.

People plead that Christian businessmen must have a certain amount of capital to carry on a business today. That is true.

People plead that there are other material possessions, such as an automobile, which can be used for God's glory. That too is true.

But beyond these legitimate necessities, the

Mr. Too Slow had a job to accomplish, and he let this job have first place. It was therefore fitting that Jesus should say to him, "Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." We might paraphrase His words as follows: "There are certain things which the spiritually dead can do just as well as believers. But there are other things in life which only a believer can do. See that you do not spend your life doing what an unconverted man could have done just as well. Let the spiritually dead bury the physically dead. But as for you—be indispensable. Let the main thrust of your life be to advance my cause on earth."

It seems that the price was too great for Mr. Too Slow to pay. He passes off the stage of time into a nameless silence.

If the first man illustrated material comforts as a hindrance to discipleship, the second might speak of a job or an occupation taking precedence over the main reason for a Christian's existence. It is not that there is anything wrong in secular employment; God's will is that man should work in order to provide for his needs and those of his family. But the life of true discipleship demands that the kingdom of God and His righteousness be sought first; that a believer should not spend his life doing what the unregenerate could do as well, if not better; and that the function of a job is merely to provide for current necessities while the main vocation of the Christian is to preach the kingdom of God.

Mr. Too Easy

The third man has been called Mr. Too Easy. He

home to follow me? Are you willing to forego the legitimate comforts of life in order to serve me devotedly?"

Apparently the man was not willing, because we hear no more of him in the Sacred Scriptures. His love for earthly conveniences was greater than his dedication to Christ!

Mr. Too Slow

The second man has been called Mr. Too Slow. He did not volunteer, like the first man; rather the Savior called him to be a follower. His reply was not an outright refusal. It was not that he was completely disinterested in the Lord. Rather there was something he wanted to do first. This was his great sin. He put his own claims above the claims of Christ. Notice his reply, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father."

Now it is perfectly legitimate for a son to show common respect to his parents. And if a father has died, it is certainly within the bounds of the Christian faith that he should be given a decent burial.

But the legitimate courtesies of life become positively sinful when they take priority over the interests of the Lord Jesus. The real ambition of this man's life is exposed by his naked request, "Lord, . . . me first. . ." The other words he spoke were mere camouflage to hide his underlying desire to put self first.

Apparently he did not realize that the words "Lord . . . me first" are a moral absurdity and impossibility. If Christ is Lord, then *He* must come first. If the personal pronoun "I" is on the throne, then Christ is no longer in control.

eternity with Christ.

The parable teaches then that the unregenerate are more wise and aggressive in preparing for their future on earth than Christians are for theirs in heaven.

With this background, the Lord Jesus presents the practical application of the lesson:

And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

The mammon of unrighteousness is money or other material possessions. We can use these things for winning souls to Christ. People won through our faithful use of money are here called "friends." A day is coming when we will fail (either die or be taken to heaven by Christ at the Rapture). Friends won through the wise use of our material possessions will then serve as a welcoming committee to receive us into the everlasting dwelling places.

This is the way in which wise stewards plan for the future—not by spending their little lives in a vain quest for security on earth; but in a passionate endeavor to be surrounded in heaven by friends who were won to Christ through their money. Money that was converted into Bibles, Testaments, scripture portions, tracts, and other Christian literature. Money that was used to support missionaries and other Christian workers. Money that helped to finance Christian radio programs and other worthy Christian activities. In short, money that was used for the spread of the gospel in any and every way. "The only way we can lay up our treasures in heaven is to

put them into something that is going to heaven."

When a Christian sees that his material possessions can be used in the salvation of precious souls, he loses his love for "things." Luxury, wealth and material splendor turn sour in his stomach. He longs to see the mammon of unrighteousness converted by divine alchemy into worshippers of the Lamb forever and ever. He is captivated by the possibility of doing a work in human lives that will bring eternal glory to God and eternal blessing to the people themselves. He feels something of the thirst of Rutherford:

O if one soul from Anworth
Meets me at God's right hand,
My heaven will be two heavens
In Immanuel's land.

Anne R. Cousin

To him all the diamonds, rubies and pearls, all the bank deposits, all the insurance policies, all the mansions, pleasure boats and magnificent cars are but mammon of unrighteousness. If used for self, they perish with the using, but if spent for Christ, they reap dividends throughout eternity.

The manner in which we deal with material things, the extent to which we grasp them is a test of our character. The Lord emphasizes this in verse 10:

The man who is dependable in a very small matter is dependable also in a large deal, the man who is dishonest in a very small matter is dishonest also in a large deal (Williams' Translation).

Here the very small matter is the stewardship of material things. Those who are dependable are the

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"Lay not up . . . treasures upon earth . . . lay up . . . treasures in heaven . . . for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:19-21).

The heart is where the treasure is. It can be in a safe-deposit box! Or it can be in heaven! But it cannot be in both places.

Someone has said, "A Christian either leaves his wealth or goes to it!"

The Lord Jesus forbade His followers to lay up treasures on earth. He wanted their hearts to be in heaven.

And yet this teaching of Christ seems radical and extreme to us today. Could He really have meant that? Doesn't common sense teach us that we should make adequate provision for our old age? Doesn't He expect us to be prudent and to set aside reserves for a rainy day? To care for our loved ones?

These are serious questions, which should be faced squarely and honestly by all who profess to be followers of Christ.

What are the answers? What does the Bible teach with regard to wealth in the life of the believer? Is it wrong to build up a personal fortune? What is a Christian standard of living?

DILIGENT IN BUSINESS

First of all, we can all agree that the Bible does not prohibit making money. The Apostle Paul worked as

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become a slave to mammon (Matthew 6:24). It is proper to make money but not to love it (Psalms 62:10).

To summarize, then, a Christian may earn as much as he can as long as he gives God first place, fulfills his family obligations, works constructively, deals honestly, guards his health and avoids covetousness.

TO HAVE BUT NOT TO HOLD

The next question we must face is this: "Is it wrong to hoard money?" As far as the New Testament is concerned the answer is an emphatic *Yes*.

The Bible condemns no one for being rich. A person may receive an inheritance and become rich overnight. But it does have a lot to say about what we do with our riches.

Here is what the Bible teaches.

1. First of all, we are stewards of God (I Corinthians 4:1, 2). That means that all we have belongs to Him, not to ourselves. Our responsibility is to use His money for His glory. The idea that 90% is for us to spend while the other 10% is the Lord's portion is a misconception of New Testament stewardship. It all belongs to the Lord.

2. The second point is that we are to be content with food and clothing. "And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content" (I Timothy 6:8). Here the word for raiment means a covering or roofing. It can refer to any kind of shelter or clothing. So the verse says we should be satisfied with the necessities of life—food, clothing and housing. And

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in making allowance for roofing, the Lord here permits us to have more than He had when He was here; He had no place to lay His head (Matthew 8:20).

The Christian who owns a business will of course need fixed capital and working capital to carry on. He must be able to purchase raw materials, pay his employees, and meet the other financial demands that come to him day by day. Nothing in the Bible prohibits a Christian in business from having the funds necessary to operate.

3. Next we should live as economically as possible, avoiding waste of every kind. After Jesus had fed the five thousand, He told the disciples to gather up the food that was left over (John 6:12). His example teaches us to conserve wherever possible.

We buy so many unnecessary things. Especially at Christmas time, we spend a small fortune on store-room gifts that soon make their way to the attic or store-room where they do no one any good.

We buy expensive things when cheaper items would often do just as well. (It is not always true that the cheaper item is the better buy. We must weigh price, quality, time saved, etc.).

We must discipline ourselves to resist the temptation to buy everything we want. And we must develop the habit of living frugally for the Son of Man's sake.

4. Everything above our necessities is to be put to work for the Lord (I Timothy 6:8). Remember! It all belongs to Him. We are His stewards. Our business is to advance His cause on earth to the best of our ability.

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2. But it is also wrong because it overlooks the vast spiritual need of the world today (Proverbs 24:11, 12). Millions of men and women, boys and girls have never heard the gospel of the grace of God. Millions do not have a Bible, or good gospel literature. Millions are dying without God, without Christ, without hope.

It is a form of spiritual fratricide to have the means of spreading the gospel and not to use them (Ezekiel 33:6).

And it testifies loudly to a singular lack of God's love in the heart of the hoarder. For "whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (I John 3:17).

When two starving lepers in the Old Testament stumbled across a great supply of food, they satisfied their own hunger, then ran to share their find with others (II Kings 7:9). Should Christians under grace show less compassion than lepers under law?

3. Third, it's wrong to stockpile money because it is callous to the enormous physical needs of the world (Proverbs 3:27, 28; 11:26). The rich man in Luke 16 was quite unconcerned about the beggar at his gate. If he had just gone to his window and pulled aside the drape, he would have seen a genuine case of need, a worthy object on which to spend some of his money. But he didn't care.

The world is full of Lazaruses. They are lying at our gates. And Jesus is saying to us, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matthew 22:39).

If we refuse to hear Him now, perhaps one day we will hear Him say to us, "I was an hungered and ye

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gave me no meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me no drink . . . inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me" (Matthew 25:42, 45).

4. It is wrong for a Christian to lay up treasures on earth because it causes the enemies of God to blaspheme (Romans 2:24). It provoked Voltaire to say, "When it comes to money, all men are of the same religion."

Many unsaved people are familiar with the teaching of Jesus. They know He taught that we should love our neighbor. They see the glaring inconsistency when those who profess to follow Jesus indulge in magnificent homes, luxurious cars, epicurean foods, and costly clothes.

It is time the church woke up! Speak to educated young people from all over the world! Hear their criticisms of Christianity! They are not opposed to the ethics of Jesus, but they are violently opposed to the wealth of the church and of Christians in a world of grinding poverty.

Someone once said that when the golden slippers climb the staircase, the hob-nailed boots are not far behind. Let the church listen!

5. But we are not only concerned with the effect on unbelievers. We think of the effect on young Christians as well.

They watch the example of their elders. More important than anything we can say is the way we live. Our sense of values is shown not so much by the stirring missionary message we give on Sunday, but by the goal we pursue on Monday through Friday.

Young people judge the reality of our pilgrimage by the assessed valuation of our "tent." They are not

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God to trust is sufficient to bring on a nervous collapse.

Left in His hands, we do not feel that we should be safe; whereas if we had our fortune in our own hands, and were secured against chances and changes by a few comfortable securities, we should feel safe enough. This feeling is, surely, very general: we are all of us in danger of slipping into this form of unquiet distrust in the fatherly providence of God—Samuel Cox.

God's will is that our lives should be "a perpetual crisis of dependence on Him." We defeat His will in our lives when we lay up treasures on earth.

The life of faith is the only life that pleases God; without faith it is impossible to please Him (Hebrews 11:6).

The life of faith is the only life that has true security. "... It is of faith . . . to the end the promise might be sure" (Romans 4:16).

Because nothing is as sure as the promise of God, it follows that the life of faith is the worry-free life. Nervous and emotional disorders arise from materialism, not from walking with God by faith.

The life of faith is the only life that gives all the glory to God. When we walk by sight, we are glorifying human ingenuity and cleverness.

The life of faith speaks loudly to unbelievers and to other Christians. It testifies to all that there is a God in heaven Who answers prayer.

Faith is the opposite of sight; when you can see, you can't trust.

To hoard wealth makes the life of faith impossible.

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The life of faith does not follow automatically when a person becomes a Christian. It requires deliberate action on his part. This is especially true in an affluent society. The believer must put himself in a position where he is compelled to trust God. He can do this by selling all that he has and giving to the poor. It is only as he gets rid of his reserves and other false supports that he can truly launch out into the deep.

9. Not only so, it is dishonoring to our Lord to reign as kings in a world where He is still rejected and where His servants are being persecuted. Paul pictured the Corinthians as sitting in the most expensive seats at the stadium with crowns on their heads and wearing the finest of clothes. At the same time, he pictured the apostles in the arena, ready to be devoured by the wild beasts.

Oh, I know you are rich and flourishing! You've been living like kings, haven't you, while we've been away? I would to God that you were really kings in God's sight so that we might reign with you.

I sometimes think that God means us, the messengers, to appear last in the procession of mankind, like the men who are to die in the arena. For indeed we are made a public spectacle before the angels of Heaven and the eyes of men. We are looked upon as fools, for Christ's sake, but you are wise in the Christian faith. We are considered weak, but you have become strong: you have found honor, but you but contempt. Up to this very hour we are hungry and thirsty, ill-clad, knocked about and practically homeless. We still have to work for our living by manual labor. Men curse us, but we return a blessing: they make our lives miserable, but we take it patiently.

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for preachers and for others, for missionaries and for
folks at home?

THE CASE FOR FROZEN ASSETS

So much then for the reasons why it is wrong for a Christian to hoard wealth. Now we must turn to the arguments which are commonly used to justify believers who have saved money to provide for their future and the future of their families.

1. The first argument runs something like this: It is only reasonable that we should set aside money for our old age. What is going to happen to us when we are no longer able to work? We should always anticipate the rainy day. God expects us to use common sense.

This reasoning sounds convincing but it is not the language of faith. Reserves are crutches and props which become a substitute for trust in the Lord. We can't trust when we can see.

Once we decide to provide for our future, we run into these problems. How much will be enough? How long will we live? Will there be a depression? Will there be inflation? Will we have heavy medical bills? It is impossible to know how much will be enough.

Therefore we spend our lives amassing wealth to provide for a few short years of retirement. In the meantime, God has been robbed and our own life has been spent in seeking security where it cannot be found.

How much better it is to work diligently for our current necessities, serve the Lord to the maximum extent, put everything above present needs into the

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work of the Lord, and trust Him for the future. To those who put Him first, he has promised

... all these things shall be added unto you (Matthew 6:33).

And to the Philippians who were using the Lord's money for the spread of the truth, Paul wrote:

My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19).

There is unspeakable tragedy in the current philosophy of giving one's life to the acquisition of wealth with the hope of giving one's retirement to the Lord. It means giving the best of our life to a corporation, then giving the fag-end to Jesus. And even then, the fag-end is so uncertain. Often it is finished before we get the Bible dusted off.

It seems like common sense to provide for the rainy day. But the truth of the matter was well stated by Cameron Thompson: "God pours out His choicest blessings on those who are anxious that nothing shall stick to their hands. Individuals who value the rainy day above the present agony of the world will get no blessing from God."

2. A second argument used to justify laying up treasures on earth is based on I Timothy 5:8, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

In this passage, Paul is dealing with the care of widows in the church. He states that the Christian relatives of a widow are responsible to care for her. If

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materialism and pleasure, and spoiled for the service of Christ.

b. Then think of the conflicts that have arisen in otherwise peaceful families as a result of wills and estates. Sister has become jealous of sister, and brother of brother. Bitter quarrels have continued throughout the rest of life.

A family quarrel over an inheritance is recorded in Luke 12:13, 14. Jesus refused to become involved in it; He hadn't come to earth for that kind of work. But He took time to issue a stern warning against covetousness to the unhappy man who wasn't named in the will.

c. Then we have this situation. Parents work hard all their lives to be able to leave something to the children. Later they become aged and infirm, a care to their family. And the ungrateful children can hardly wait for their parents to die in order to get their hands on the money.

d. Money left to unsaved children or to a Christian son or daughter married to an unbeliever has often made its way to a false church and has been used for the suppression of the gospel rather than for its propagation. Think of it! The money of believers used to fight the Truth!

e. And then we must think of the enormous amounts of money that go to the government in inheritance taxes, and to lawyers for legal fees. All this could have been used in the salvation of souls.

f. Some Christians try to avoid some of these griefs by leaving their money to Christian

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organizations. But there is no guarantee that the money will ever get to those organizations. Wills are constantly being contested and broken. And even apart from that, the practice of leaving your money lacks Scriptural support. There is no assurance that the organizations will still be true to the Lord and His Word by the time the will is probated.

Believers will not be rewarded for what they leave in a will. The minute they die, the money ceases to be theirs; it becomes the property of their estate.

Men heap up riches and do not know who will gather them (Psalm 39:6). The only way to be sure that your money is used for the Lord is to give while you live. And this is the only way to obtain a future reward.

We say we believe in the imminent return of the Lord Jesus. Then we should realize that the nearer we approach His coming, the less value our material possessions have. When He does come, our wealth will have no value for us or for the work of God. So the best thing is to put our possessions to work for Jesus NOW.

4. But then this argument arises: "If everyone put everything above a modest living into the work of the Lord, how would we live? Someone must stand by the stuff!"

How would we live? The answer is, "More by faith and less by sight!"

There is no use arguing that it wouldn't work because it did work in the early days of the church.

And all that believed were together, and had all

We would think that imprisonment would be on the ABASED side of the ledger, but Paul put it on the ABOUNDING side. Therefore, it is not right for us to use Philippians 4:12 to justify lives of wealth and luxury. That is not what the verse teaches.

6. Well, then what about the verse that says that God has given us richly all things to enjoy? (1 Timothy 6:17). This is quoted often as Scriptural proof that the believer should enjoy "the good things of life" which means that it is all right for him to indulge in the latest and the best. His slogan is "Nothing too good for the people of God."

But he forgets the context once again. Notice how the verse begins: "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches. . . ." In other words, far from being an excuse for self-indulgence, the words are found in a passage which sounds a solemn charge to the rich.

Well, what does it mean, that God has given us richly all things to enjoy? It means that He has not given us these things to hoard; He wants us to ENJOY them by sharing them with others. This is clear from the two verses that follow:

That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life (1 Timothy 6:18, 19).

Enjoyment of riches is not found in possessing them but in using them for the glory of God and for the good of others.

7. Then we are often reminded that Abraham was a rich man (Genesis 13:2), and yet he was called a friend of God (James 2:23). This is, of course, true, but we must remember that Abraham lived in the Old Testament period where material prosperity was promised to those who obeyed the Lord. Riches were a sign of God's blessing.

Is this true in the dispensation of the grace of God? It would be more accurate to say that adversity is the blessing of this period.

In the parable of Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16:19-31), Old Testament standards were reversed. The rich man was condemned because he failed to use his wealth for others but hoarded it for himself.

8. But then are we not taught to learn lessons from the ant?

Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest (Proverbs 6:6-8).

Does this not show that the ant makes provision for its future, and are we not told to imitate it in this respect? Yes, but the important thing to remember is that while the ant's future is on this earth, the Christian's future is in heaven. The believer is a pilgrim and a stranger here; his home is above. And he *should* be laying up treasure for his future.

But as far as his life here is concerned, he is forbidden to take anxious thought for tomorrow—what he will eat or what he will wear (Matthew 6:25). Rather he is told to imitate the birds,

4. "But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation" (Luke 6:24).

Here the holy Son of God pronounced a woe upon rich people. The word can only be taken literally here. It cannot mean anything but *rich*. Why then do we seek to bless whom God has not blessed?

5. "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Luke 12:33, 34).

These words were spoken to the disciples (see verse 22). We try to avoid them by saying that they were not intended for us. But why not? In resisting such verses, we are only resisting a blessing.

How utterly in keeping with this age of grace it is for us to sell our prized possessions—our diamonds and other jewelry, our original paintings, our antique furniture, our sterling silver, our stamp collections—and put the proceeds to work in the salvation of souls throughout the world.

Where is our heart? Is it in the vault of the local bank? Or is it in heaven?

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

6. "Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich" (Luke 18:22, 23).

We are constantly told that the rich young ruler was a special case, that by no stretch of the imagination

was the command to sell all intended for everyone. Even if that were so, the teaching is not substantially different from what is found in the passage we have just considered (Luke 12:33, 34).

7. "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness" (1 Timothy 6:6-11).

Paul warned that those who covet money pierce themselves through with many sorrows. What are the sorrows that he referred to?

(a.) First is the worry that invariably accompanies wealth. "The abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep" (Ecclesiastes 5:12). The riches that are supposed to bring security actually bring the opposite—constant fear of theft, or declines in the stock market or of inflation, etc.

(b.) Second is the sorrow of seeing one's children ruined spiritually by an over-abundance of material things. Few children of wealthy Christian parents are going on for the Lord.

(c.) Then there is the bitterness of having riches

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come while believers are reigning as kings. Who will arise and call God's people back to lives of faith and of sacrifice?

Who will show people how to lay hold on life that is life indeed (I Timothy 6:19)? "The only real life is to live in the light of eternity—to use all we possess for the promotion of God's glory and with an eye to the everlasting mansions. This, and only this is life in earnest"—C. H. Mackintosh.

9. "But (let) the rich (rejoice), in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof filleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways" (James 1:10, 11).

The rich man is not told to rejoice in his riches, but in anything that brings him low. Why is this? Because riches are perishable as the grass whereas spiritual experiences and lessons are of eternal value.

10. "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned

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and killed the just; and he doth not resist you" (James 5:1-6).

Here the Spirit of God cries out against the hoarding of wealth (verse 3), against making money by failure to pay fair wages (verse 4), against luxurious living (verse 5), and against taking advantage of innocent people who are helpless to resist (verse 6).

It is needless to argue whether these verses were written to believers or unbelievers. If the shoe fits, we should put it on!

11. "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Revelation 3:17-19).

This is the Lord's closing message to the churches. His cutting words to the church of the Laodiceans. They really don't need exposition. We know what they mean. And we know that they have a particular application to ourselves. All they need is our obedience.

A WARNING TO THE LAZY!

There is always a danger that a paper like this might be used as an excuse for indolence. Someone with a decided aversion for work might read it and say,

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love for that expensive home and think of moving to less-pretentious quarters.

When God begins to speak to us about these matters, we will know it. It will be so clear that to refuse will be positive disobedience.

3. The third thing is this: "Whatsoever He saith to you, do it!" (John 2:5). Friends may misunderstand you. Relatives may reproach you. There will be repercussions. Only follow Jesus, and leave the consequences to Him.

4. Put everything above current needs to work for God. Pray for guidance. Ask Him to show you where you should send it. He will!

May the Lord permit us to see in our lives and in our generation a return to this kind of Christian devotedness. As John Wesley once prayed:

Oh that God would give me the thing which I long for! That before I go hence and am no more seen, I may see a people wholly devoted to God, crucified to the world, and the world crucified to them. A people truly given up to God in body, soul and substance! How cheerfully would I then say, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace."