

OVERCHARGED.

"Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

These are the words of Jesus as recorded by Luke 21:34,35,36.

One would suppose that words so full of warning, and of such deep significance, spoken by Jesus to his disciples, for the benefit of those who should be living in the trying time of which he speaks, would be kept constantly in mind and not for a moment forgotten by those who are running for the "prize of the high calling."

One of the strongest evidences which we have of the truth of the prophecies spoken in connection with these words is, that at the very time when they are being fulfilled by rapidly succeeding events, at the very time when his people should be lifting up their heads knowing that their "redemption draweth nigh," at the very point where expectation should be on tip-toe, we find many who have been enlightened, so busied with a multitude of other things that they cannot attend to preparation for the coming kingdom.

They are so overcharged (there is no more fitting word to use) that they have not time to heed the caution and derive benefit from the injunction given in the scripture to which we have referred.

To the lover of Jesus, and who expects to be everlastingly and intimately associated with and united to him, there is, perhaps, no more deeply interesting scriptures than the twenty-fourth chapter of

Matthew, the thirteenth of Mark, and the twenty-first of Luke. The more deeply interesting because they define more particularly, the events which are to immediately precede the coming of him in whom their "soul [R566 : page 5] delighteth," and so mark more clearly the time when the bridegroom and bride shall be united, and introduce the glorious reign of righteousness and truth.

The fact that a deeply trying time is to immediately precede the coming of the bridegroom, should put every expectant soul on the alert. But what are the principle dangers of the hour?

We find they are the liability of being deceived. Four times in the thirteenth of Mark we find Jesus saying, "TAKE HEED!" His first caution is, take heed lest any one deceive you, 5th ver.; next, take heed to yourselves, be careful what you do and say, be circumspect, 9th ver.; again, take heed to what I have told you, 23d ver.; and last, take heed, watch and pray, 33d ver.

While there is a similarity in the general narration, as given in these three chapters, yet each narrator gives some points more prominence than the others; and so we find here, in the text quoted, more explicit directions given regarding ourselves. Take heed lest your hearts be overcharged."

There are three things here mentioned with which the heart is especially liable to become overcharged – surfeiting, drunkenness, and cares of this life. Perhaps some who read these pages may think they are not troubled with the first two. If there are any let them take heed and see if they are among the number spoken of by Isaiah 29:9-14. But many, no doubt, feel the force of the last, and are exerting themselves to overcome; while still many more, who are really "overcharged," are not fully conscious of it; but the words of Jesus are very peculiar if we will notice them. He does not simply say you will have a great deal of worldly care, but says, "Take heed that your HEARTS be not overcharged with the cares of this life." Now, it is

possible for a man to have a great deal of worldly care requiring his attention, and yet not have his heart much affected or influenced by it. He may have just all he can attend to, and yet his heart be quite free from the [R566 : page 6] burden. Why? Because his heart is not in it as much as his head. If he is doing all as unto the Lord, there will not be much danger of his heart being overcharged. We need right here to "take heed" and not delude ourselves with the idea that our hearts are with the Lord, and that we are in full sympathy with him and his work, if we do not find, or make, or take time to commune with him and feast upon his word, and partake of his Spirit. So it is the heart that is in danger. This being the case, what are the methods most likely to be made use of by the enemy to load down our hearts to the extent of being "overcharged"? We may be sure that he will not for a moment think of inducing us to be recreant to our trust. O no, not at all; he would be the last one to suggest anything like unfaithfulness; he would have us "diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving (?) the Lord." If we were likely to forget that passage he would quote it to us, but not with as much stress upon the last part as up on the first.

O yes, we must be diligent in business so that we can provide for our own families, for he who provides not for his own house has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel. (1 Tim. 5:8.)

O yes, provide for your own house, certainly, and see that your family have a good house, and a large one; see that it is full as good as your neighbors; no matter if it is a little better, let no one get the idea that you are not providing well for your own house.

Now, if we were to picture the whole truth to the life, and show to what an extent the enemy is leading many who mean to be the Lord's children, it would look absurd enough. In accord with our desire to be faithful, the adversary is crowding overmuch work upon us, all of which is claimed to be duty, though the demands are so

numerous that we have insufficient time for the accomplishment of them all. This crowding upon us more than we can possibly do, is evidently the enemy, and is intended to keep us from the most important of all work, the study of God's word, through which we are enabled to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth, and by which we are thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work. Are we not, in our over-burdened condition, forgetting to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness"? There is manifestly no work so important as to keep the love of God burning brightly upon the altar of our hearts, and no means so likely to accomplish this as the study of the word of God, and prayer. Of course we do not mean that these shall be done to the exclusion of good works, but we do mean that good works should not be allowed to exclude these.

We verily believe that just now the enemy is more than usually active in his efforts to keep all classes of Christians so busy that they shall not have time to look after the truth and watch for the sign of the presence of the Son of man. (See Matt. 24:3 – Diaglott.)

Some who could not be induced nor pressed into worldliness, he will keep busy looking after the welfare of others, to the exclusion of their own growth in the knowledge of the truth. Some casting out devils; some relieving the distressed, and all engaged more or less in doing "many wonderful works"; but while doing wonderful works they are leaving undone that which is of greater importance, i.e., fitting themselves for union with Christ, and for efficient service in the world's great seed time and harvest in the age to come.

Work done in the Lord's vineyard now and not done according to his plan will be superficial and need doing over again.

So-called revival work has to be repeated. Not that we are opposed to revivals, in the true import of the term, but the work done in the way it is done, has to be done over and over; devils cast out

do not stay out; souls converted have to be re-converted, "reclaimed" as it is called, until the wonderful part of the "wonderful works" is, that there is as much demand for the "shoddy" as there is, though the demand for it is less in proportion as people come to understand God's word.

We do not question the sincerity of those engaged in such work to the neglect of the Lord's work in their own souls, for in their sincerity they will say to the judge, "Have we not prophesied in thy name and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?" But they will find that such works will be no more appreciated then than they are getting to be now.

They will find that their wonders were performed under the influence of a zeal without knowledge. Love of the truth would lead to the exposure and rejection of every religious sham, and there would be no demand for the superficial. Love of the truth would lead us more and more into the truth, would make business cares and anxieties give place and stand aside while we take a sufficient amount of time to study God's word and worship him in spirit and in truth.

When we are in any doubt about the amount of time we should take for the purpose of feeding upon the bread of life, let us put into one scale all our worldly cares and worldly demands upon our time, and into the other these words: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

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