

BUYING AND SELLING.

THE Scriptures instruct God's people to sell or dispose of what they have and to buy something else, – even though at a great cost. The inference is that what we possess naturally is not of lasting value, while that which we may obtain instead is of priceless value and everlasting.

"Buy the truth and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding." – Prov. 23:23.

Sell that which thou hast, and give alms – dispose of your natural abilities and talents, wisely of course, for the benefit of yourself, your family, and all who have need of such service as you can render – and thou shalt have treasure in heaven. Thus should we take up our cross and follow Christ our Redeemer and Pattern. – Luke 12:23; Matt. 19:21.

The "foolish virgins" were instructed to go and buy "oil," – the light, the spirit of the truth. But they were "foolish" in that they did not buy in the proper time to get the greatest blessing in return. Because of tardiness they failed to enter into the Marriage Feast, thus losing a great privilege and blessing.

The value of a share in the Kingdom of God is likened to a choice pearl, to purchase which the dealer who rightly estimates its value will *sell* or *trade* all of his other wares; – realizing that possessing it alone he would be wealthy indeed. – Matt. 13:45.

Again, the value of the Kingdom is likened to a mine of wealth discovered in a field. The real value of the mine is generally unappreciated, but the appreciative discoverer would hasten to purchase the field; and to do so would give all else that he possesses. – Matt. 13:44.

The Lord in symbol points out to the Church, in its present Laodicean period, its really naked and poor and miserable condition; that its own righteousness, in which it trusts, is filthy rags which cannot cover its shame; and that its boasted riches of knowledge is of a spurious sort. He says: "I counsel thee to buy of me gold [heavenly wisdom], tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment [the covering of Christ's righteousness – purity] that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear."

All who have learned that during the present Gospel age God is selecting the little flock, foreknown in his plan, and that all whom he predestinated must possess the characteristics of his firstborn, – must be copies of his only begotten Son, our Lord – have some conception of the great treasure of priceless value which their knowledge puts within their reach. Those who realize the value of the treasure most accurately are gladly selling off all that they have – time, influence, reputation, voice, strength, houses, lands, carriages, ease, comforts, luxuries, – and are investing the proceeds of all in the purchase of this field, which they know contains the treasure mine. Their **[R1656 : page 157]** conduct sometimes seems strange to those who do not know of the mine, or who, knowing something of it, have no real conception of its priceless value.

To one of these a king once said, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." But Paul answered, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." And again he declared, "What things were gain [valuable] to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of [the treasure hid in] Christ Jesus my Lord (Col. 1:26; 2:3), on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them as dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him [a member of his body, one of his joint-heirs in the promised Kingdom]: that I may know him and the power of his resurrection [a resurrection to immortal and spiritual condition] and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if

by any means I might attain unto *the [chief]* resurrection." (Phil. 3:7-11.) "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." (Rom. 8:18.) "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at [and labor not for] the things that are seen, but the things which are not seen [the hidden treasure]: for the things which are seen [and which we are selling off] are temporal, but the things which are not seen [the treasures of God's gracious plan hid in Christ, which we are giving our little all to possess] are eternal." – 2 Cor. 4:17,18. **[R1657 : page 157]**

Beloved, it is appropriate that each of us search his own doings, and his own heart's motives, and see whether we are fully awake to the value of the great wealth of God's love and favor and honor hidden in Christ, of which we are invited to become joint-heirs. God has given to us, and to all, a great *gift* in Christ, in that eternal life is secured for all of Adam's race who will accept it under the terms of the New Covenant, when fully enlightened; but in addition to that *gift* is the present offer to *sell* to us a share in the glorious Millennial Kingdom at a price "not worthy to be compared" to the glories and blessings which, as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, we may receive in exchange.

The *price* is small, but it is *all* that we each have to give – ourselves, our all. Whether our all be more or less than another's all, it is nevertheless our *all*, and God graciously proposes to accept the little all of each, whatever it may be, the sufficiency of Christ's *all* compensating for the deficiency of our *alls*. The chance to buy is now, and very "foolish" are those virgins (pure ones) who neglect or refuse to give the price.

To buy we must consecrate and *give* – time, energy, study, to gain even a *knowledge* of the mystery (the secret mine of wealth) hid in Christ. (1 Cor. 2:7.) Each day will bring to the consecrated opportunities for giving something to the Lord, either directly, or indirectly to his people or others in his name. Each day will bring

opportunities for *giving up* something precious to the selfish, carnal nature.

All such gifts presented to God (by those who have already been reconciled to God, through faith in his precious blood) are acceptable in the Beloved, and are treasures laid up in heaven, of two sorts: (1) the service rendered to God which, although in itself imperfect, he accepts as perfect through Christ; (2) the character thereby developed in our own hearts is a heavenly treasure acceptable to God by Jesus Christ; for every time we *give* anything to the Lord's service or *give up* things highly esteemed among men for the sake of the Lord, or his Word, or his people, or even for humanity's sake, we to that extent overcome the fallen disposition or spirit of selfishness, and cultivate the spirit of love and benevolence, the spirit of God, the spirit of Christ, the holy spirit or disposition, without which none will be acceptable as joint-heirs with Christ in his Kingdom; – for "if any man have not the spirit [disposition] of Christ he is none of his." – Rom. 8:9.

Let us see to it that, having made the contract, we pay over the price in full. – Acts 5:1-11.
