

"WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS"

– *MARCH 1. – LUKE 12:13-34.* –

**"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
– V.34.**

JESUS was surrounded by a multitude of Jews, one of whom, recognizing Him as influential, requested that He admonish his brother to give him a share of the family inheritance. Jesus declined, saying that He was not a judge or a divider. It would be well if the followers of Jesus would follow their Master in this, as well as in other matters. Too many are disposed to be busybodies in other men's matters, and overlook the fact that their commission of the Lord is to preach the Gospel.

Society has provided certain rules, laws and regulations – "the powers that be are ordained of God." Whatever these laws will not accord us we should let drop. We should be content with such things as we have and such things as Divine providence insures us. As Jesus had another work to do, so have His followers. That other work is the preparation for the glorious Messianic Kingdom. The riches which it promises us so far transcend all earthly riches as to make them appear, as St. Paul declared, loss and dross, not worthy to be compared with the blessed things our Lord promises.

Jesus backed up His refusal to intervene with a caution against covetousness. This implies that the estate properly belonged to the brother, and that the one who addressed Jesus desired more than his legal rights. He was coveting that which legally belonged to another. Jesus would have him, and us all, see that the abundance of earthly possessions, wealth, is not the sum of life. A man may be miserable while rolling in wealth, or he may be happy in comparative poverty. The basis of happiness is measured by the soul's relationship to God and hope in Him.

The Jews were a typical people – Natural Israel, in comparison to Spiritual Israel of this Gospel Age. God's promise to Natural Israel was that if they would keep the Law, they would inherit the Promise made to Abraham, and be used by God as His Kingdom to bless the world. Their difficulty was that, being sinners like the remainder of men, they were unable to keep the Divine requirements, hence were not qualified to be used of God as His Kingdom for scattering His blessings to the nations. Nevertheless, the hope of the Kingdom was the thing ever uppermost in their minds, sought for by all of them.

Jesus came into the world to give Himself a "Ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2:6), and to begin the work of calling and drawing "Israelites indeed," to constitute His associates in the Messianic Kingdom. He could, and did, keep the Law perfectly, and additionally, laid down His life sacrificially for Adam and his race. This sacrifice permitted Him to make good for the unintentional shortcomings of all "Israelites indeed," in whom was no hypocrisy. While they could not keep the Law and thus obtain the Kingdom, they could by accepting Christ have the righteousness of the Law imputed to them, and thus be acceptable with God. Hence Jesus' preaching was wholly along the lines of the Kingdom to the people who had for centuries been striving to approve themselves to God as worthy to constitute that Kingdom. The first opportunity for membership in the Kingdom class was granted to the Jewish people; and only in proportion as they rejected the favor did it pass beyond them to the Gentiles. As St. Paul said to some, "It was necessary that the Gospel should first be preached to you; but seeing ye reject the grace of God,...lo, we turn to the Gentiles." (Acts 13:46.) In view of these facts, we see that the teachings of Jesus were not addressed to the world, but to people who claimed to have separated themselves from the world, and to be seeking or desiring to attain a joint-heirship in the Messianic Kingdom.

Indeed, the entire teaching of the New Testament is to such persons. These alone have the hearing ear; and we are instructed that "He that hath an ear, let him hear." Again, we are instructed that the Gospel of the Kingdom is to be preached to the meek, the humble, the broken-hearted; for only these are in any sense of the word prepared to receive the Message. All others are blind and deaf to the Gospel of the Kingdom. All who do not now hear or see will have their eyes and ears opened by and by, during Messiah's Reign, because He tasted death for every man. But such will fail entirely as respects the glorious High Calling of this Gospel Age – the Kingdom.

"SOUL, TAKE THINE EASE"

Our Lord gave a parable illustrating the comparative foolishness of all earthly ambitions. This does not mean that earthly ambitions are the worst things; but rather that they are poor in comparison to the one great possibility, the Kingdom. It is a pearl of great value, to obtain which all other pearls – all other valuables, all other ambitions, and all other hopes – are to be set aside, and counted as dross.

The parable tells of a rich farmer who, instead of using his riches in doing good, was miserly – taking pleasure in accumulations. He built greater barns and storehouses, and consoled himself with the thought that he had plenty and more than enough, and could thenceforth take his ease. The parable points out that ere long he died. We query, What advantage did the man really have through his accumulation of great wealth, which he failed to use? He left it for others to quarrel over, and possibly to be more or less injured by. He was a foolish rich man. Instead of leaving his wealth thus, he should have enjoyed himself in spending it wisely for the good of others and to the glory of God. Thus he would have been rich toward God. But on the other hand, he was

an illustration of those who are not rich toward God; for he laid up his treasure for self.

Many read into this parable things that it does not contain. They infer that the rich man went to eternal torment, but nothing in the Lord's words so intimates. The expression, "this night shall thy soul be required of thee," signifies this night you lose your life – you die in poverty. Earthly riches will be of no account to you in the future if you have not laid up spiritual riches in the heart, in the mind and in good works, which would make you rich in the future.

That rich man, instead of being benefited by the riches which he accumulated, will in the future life be disadvantaged. He might have used his riches sacrificially, or he might have consecrated his entire life to God through Christ and then faithfully laid down time, talent, opportunities, wealth. Thus he would in the same proportion have been laying up treasures in Heaven, so that in the resurrection he would have been received of the Lord as a faithful follower, to share His glory, honor and immortality – to be a member of His Kingdom class, whose commission it will be for a thousand years to scatter the Divine blessings secured by the death of Jesus to all of Adam's race.

That rich man, having missed his opportunities, will nevertheless come forth during Christ's Millennial Kingdom; **[R5396 : page 45]** for we read that all that are in their graves shall hear His voice and come forth. But instead of coming forth approved, to a share in the First Resurrection, he will come forth disapproved of God, and his resurrection opportunities will be those described as the Resurrection of Judgment. (John 5:29, R.V.) He will come forth to shame and contempt, which will continue until he shall, under the judgments of that time, learn his lesson and form a better character; or, refusing so to do, he will be cut off in the Second Death.

SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM

We are not to understand the good Teacher to mean that we are to look amongst the kingdoms of earth hoping to find one of them His Kingdom. On the contrary, He informs us that His Kingdom is future. "My Kingdom is not of this world" – this order of things. (John 18:36.) For His Kingdom, God's Kingdom, we pray, "Thy Kingdom come." We hope, we wait, we prepare, for that Kingdom. We are to seek it in the sense of seeking to do those things which will make us "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." We are to lay up treasures in Heaven. We are to use our pounds and our talents so wisely that at the Second Coming of the Savior, when He calls first for His servants and reckons with them, we may not only be amongst His servants, but hear His "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joys of thy Lord" – the Kingdom joys – "Have thou dominion over two cities" or "five cities."

There is one definite procedure for those who would be heirs of the Kingdom. **(1)** They must recognize themselves as sinners, unworthy of Divine notice. **(2)** They must recognize Jesus as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." **(3)** They should realize that while His sacrifice is the basis for the ultimate cleansing of the world, the reconciliation of all the willing and obedient to God, nevertheless that work has not yet begun. That work is to be accomplished by Him during the thousand years of His Kingdom Reign. **(4)** They are to hear the Lord's Message declaring that He is now seeking the members of the Kingdom class, and that the way to membership is a narrow way. "Whosoever will be My disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me, and where I am there shall My disciple be." They are to realize that the testing of this class is through much tribulation; that God is calling for not only saints, but those whose saintship will endure fiery trials, testings, in respect to their love

for God and for the brethren, and in respect to their loyalty, even unto death.

From the time of making their full consecration to be the Lord's servants, faithful unto death in the service of righteousness, they will regard that Heavenly Kingdom as the great treasure beyond all comparison of value. [R5397 : page 45] They will seek it daily, hourly. Their hearts will be there – with the treasure. It will be the theme of their thoughts by day and of their meditations by night. Earthly occupations will still be necessary to them, in order to provide things needful and honest; but no earthly prize will have any value in comparison to the Heavenly prize, in their estimation. Such will be the successful heirs of the Kingdom which God hath promised to those that love Him more than they love houses or lands, parents or children or self.

