

82. CAPITAL AND LABOUR

1. What is one reason why the last days were to be perilous?

"Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous!" 2 Tim. 3: 2.

2. When, according to prophecy, were men to amass great wealth?

"Go to now, you 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. You have heaped treasure together for the last days." James 5: 1-3.

NOTE - We have reached the age of vast accumulations of wealth, when there seems to be a mad rush for making money quickly, and the millionaire and the multimillionaire are much in evidence. Speaking on this subject, Rev. H. W. Bowman, in his work "War Between Capital and Labor," says: "Such colossal fortunes, such hoarding of treasures, such combinations of wealth, with such rapid increase in poverty, were never witnessed before. Our age alone fits the prophetic mould."

3. Why did Christ, in the parable, reprove the man who hid his talent?

"Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knew that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not sowed: thou ought therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury." Matt. 25: 26, 27.

NOTE - "Servility to wealth," says J. S. Mill, "is a social curse." Vespasian spoke truly when he said, "Riches are well, if gotten well and well spent"; and Peter Cooper likewise uttered a great truth when he said, "A man of wealth is but a steward for the good of mankind." James A. Patten, the retired Chicago millionaire wheat broker, announcing his intention to give away his fortune to charity, said: "I believe a man should give away a good share of his wealth while he is living. He can't take a dollar out of the world with him, although I know some men who seem to believe they can. Personally, I mean to get rid of the most of my fortune. I hope to help many charitable institutions before I die. I doubt the advisability of leaving any great sum of money to one's children. Many lives have been ruined by large bequests. The offspring of a rich man are better off if they are required to hustle for themselves." -Washington Times, November 5, 1910.

4. What did Christ tell the rich young man to do?

"Jesus said unto him ' If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou has, and give to the poor, and thou shall have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me." Matt. 19: 21.

5. What, in the parable, did God say to the rich man who thought to build larger barns in which to store his goods?

"But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou has provided?" Luke 12: 20.

6. How does James say the rich have lived?

"You have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; you have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter." James 5: 5.

NOTE - This indicates that they have lived in luxury and for pleasure, quite heedless of the needs of the poor and of the great world about them. They have lived simply to have a good time themselves, with no thought of their responsibility to God or to their fellow men. Christ was without worldly riches, yet as the Maker of earth and sea, He provided tribute money by bidding Peter to catch a fish, and find the money in its mouth.

7. Who gives men the power to get wealth?

"But thou shall remember the Lord thy God: for it is He that gives thee power to get wealth." Deut 8: 18.

8. How does James say the rich have treated the just?

"You have condemned and killed the just; and he does not resist you." James 5: 6.

NOTE - There is nothing more rapacious and heartless than greed, or covetousness. To obtain its ends, it disregards the rights, the welfare, and even the lives of those affected by its merciless schemes and intrigues. The righteous, or just, however, do not make forcible resistance to this unjust treatment.

9. How have the rich defrauded the laborers?

"Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, cries: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth." Verse 4.

10. Seeking a fair remuneration, what do many laborers do?

Form labor unions, engage in strikes, boycotts, etc.

NOTE - While these means may hold matters in check for a time, and afford temporary relief, they cannot eradicate the evil, and bring about a final solution. The evil is deep-seated; it lies in the heart; and nothing but conversion-a change of the heart and of the affections---can eradicate it. It is the sin of selfishness, or covetousness-a failure to love one's neighbor as oneself. The conflict between capital and labor is an inevitable and an irrepressible conflict as long as sin and selfishness are in the world. And near the end it becomes the most acute and intense, because then sin comes to the full.

11. Do the Scriptures indicate that there will be violence manifested in this conflict?

"Woe to him that increases that which is not his! How long? And to him that ladeth himself with thick clay! Shall they not rise up suddenly that shall bite thee, and awake that shall vex thee, and thou shall be for booties unto them?" Hab. 2: 6, 7,

12. Would God have His people unite in these combinations?

"Say you not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear you their fear, nor be afraid." Isa. 8:12.

13. Whom should we fear and dread?

"Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread." Verse 13.

14. What are God's people told to do at this time?

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be you also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draws nigh." James 5: 7, 8.

15. What commands obeyed would bring about a peaceful solution to this wide-spread and growing conflict?

"Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself." Matt. 22: 39. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." Phil. 2: 4. "Whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you even so to them." Matt. 7: 12.