

## SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM

In the greatest sermon that ever fell on the ears of fast decaying mortality, the teaching of sincere devotion and implicit faith is given by the master teacher of all time. In His monumental "sermon on the mount" Jesus taught, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things (temporal necessities) shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). The Son of God realized that first hand service to His Father was all that was acceptable, and He tried so hard to make others aware of this important fact. The children of Israel were told time and again that the God whom they served was a jealous God. Today we serve the same God. He would not accept second hand service then, and He will not now.

There are those in the world (yea, even in the church), who, if they were asked, would answer in the affirmative that they believe in the promise of Jesus. But some of these very ones offer disgustingly feeble excuses for not seeking first the kingdom of God. Take, for example, the man who forsakes the worship assembly on the Lord's day to do secular work. Then when reminded that the word of God demands that we "not forsake the assembling of ourselves together" (Heb. 10:25), he offers 1 Tim 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 infidel," hoping that he is justified. (It sounds as if he thinks that is the only job in the world in which he can make a living.) I wonder if such a person really believes in the promises of the Lord. The Psalmist David said, I have been young, and now I am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Psa. 37:25). God will never forsake us, nor will we ever have to beg bread, if we seek first His kingdom and His righteousness.

When the God of heaven looked down from the portals of glory upon lost and dying men and women, He was moved with compassion. He knew it was "not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23), and sent the brightest jewel in all of heaven to bleed and die for our sins. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Now then God expects and requires of us that we "present our bodies a living sacrifice" (Rom. 12:1), and to "diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). If we were to live every minute of our lives in service to God, we would never be able to repay Him for His love and mercy.

The apostle Paul says, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ" (Phil. 1:27). The word "only" denotes exclusion. The word "conversation" carries with it the meaning of "manner of life, deeds, actions." Our living is limited to service in that which is right. We have no time to devote to things Satan has to offer, which would mar and scar our souls. "In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works" (Tit. 2:7). "He that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (Jas. 4:17).

Some claim that they do not have time to "seek first the kingdom of God." I do not deny nor dispute this — not as long as they put everything else first in their lives. But is it not frightening to look down the stream of time and see the perilous rapids of life they must face without the guiding and protecting hand of God, and to view the yawning chasm of death that awaits us all; and finally the great and final judgment when the unprepared will be sent into "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41)?

We just have a few short years to live here—at the most. So let us render our very best service to God, who loved us, that in that momentous day we can hear the Judge say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34).