

April 3

The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Romans 13:12

THE works of darkness would be any

Rom 13:11-12 KJV "And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed. (12) The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."

R3830 "It is now high time to awake out of sleep." It is a time for earnest, searching self-examination, for a more diligent feeling after God, for a closer walk and more intimate fellowship with him, for more thorough self-abnegation, more diligent and persevering cross-bearing, and more faithful conformity in every respect to the whole will of God concerning us.

The Apostle says, "Let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light;" and again, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." A careful, prayerful searching of our hearts will make plain wherein we lack of conformity to the perfect will of God. And if we discover in us any perverse way we will want to correct it and the more fully to put on the armor of light—the armor of righteousness and truth. Thus we put on the Lord Jesus Christ—the mind or disposition of Christ, that spirit of love which Paul says "is the fulfilling of the Law"—that love that worketh no ill to its neighbor; that suffereth long and is kind, that envieth not, that vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, that rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; and without which, though we speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have it not, we are only as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal...1 Cor. 13:1-7.

How important, then, in the short time that remains to us here, that we awake fully and apply ourselves most diligently to the cultivation of this God-like and Christ-like disposition of love."

R5339 "We have enlisted with Christ, and we will fight against the enemies of our new nature. We will be worthy children of God and strive earnestly, that we may be associated with the Lord in His Kingdom of Righteousness. And when we have *put off* the darkness, what must we do? We must *put on* the armor of light. What is the armor of light? It is the armor which protects from the darts of the Adversary, and includes the helmet of salvation—the protection of our intellects through a knowledge of the Truth, from the attacks of our great foe.

As the Apostle urges, let us "Stand therefore, having our loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; above all taking the shield of faith, wherewith we shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." (Eph. 6:14-17.) This is the armor with which we are to withstand

works whatsoever that would not stand the fullest investigation; that would not stand approval in the light of the new dispensation, if it were fully ushered in. Let us remember that we belong to the new dispensation, and not to the old, and should, there-

the attacks which appeal to the evil tendencies of the fallen nature, that we may come off "more than conquerors" through Christ, that we may be of that glorious band of overcomers who will be made kings and priests of God in that glorious Day—in the dawning of the Morning."

Eph 6:10-17 KJV "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. (11) Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (12) For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (13) Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. (14) Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; (15) And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; (16) Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. (17) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:"

R2275 "The evil day here referred to is this Day of the Lord, in which we are now living, wherein every man's work shall be tried, so as by fire. These are the "perilous times" of which the Apostle forewarned the Church—times peculiarly perilous to Christian faith, because of the many subtle and delusive forms of error now springing up to intercept the progress of the truth. But God's provision for his saints is equal to the emergency of the perilous hour...The time is shortly coming when it will be impossible to stand without it."

R5799 "WHY GOD HAS PERMITTED SATAN'S LYING DECEPTIONS" *The Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.* "Deut. 13:3..."

New "garments of light" are assumed continually; and every feature of Present Truth sent by God as "meat in due season" for His saints is promptly *counterfeited* to "deceive if possible the Very Elect.".... We have now come to the time when every child of God needs all the panoply of Truth—the armor of God. He who has not on the "whole armor of God" is sure to fall.... All but the "Very Elect" of God will be more or less stumbled by the errors and worldliness of our day. (Mat 24:24-27; 2 Pet 2:3-11.)"

R4930 "Some of the dear friends who read the SCRIPTURE STUDIES years ago, and not recently, imagine that they remember their contents, when in reality they are quite ignorant of many of their teachings. We all have leaky, earthen vessels and the precious treasure of Divine Truth soon exhausts unless we keep replenishing... Such of our readers as have not read the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES this year can scarcely appreciate how much they probably have lost of what they originally learned therein."

fore, live in accordance with our citizenship and our responsibilities toward the Prince of light and in opposition to the prince of darkness, his works and his ways. Z. '03-122 R3181:1

F657-658 *The Girdle of the Loins* represents consecration to service; and the Apostle enjoins that we see to it that we are not consecrated to the service of error, but to the service of the Truth. Let each examine his girdle, see that he has a proper one, gird himself with it, become a servant of the Truth or, at least, have the spirit of service.

The Breastplate of Righteousness (or justification) comes next in order, for the Lord can recognize none as soldiers of the cross who do not discern and acknowledge his standard of justice, or who reject his gracious arrangement of justification (through faith and consecration) by the precious blood of his son.

The Sandals of Peace must not be forgotten; the soldier of the cross who starts in the campaign without the peace of God to assist him over the rough places, will accomplish less, and with greater difficulty, than the one who seeks to follow peace with all men—to live peaceably with all so far as possible, without compromising the Truth. Those who go unshod, go hunting trouble and are sure to find little else.

The Shield of Faith is indispensable to protection from the fiery darts of the Adversary--skepticism, higher criticism, evolution, and demonology. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Heb. 11:6; 1 John 5:4

The Helmet of Salvation represents the intellectual, or philosophical, appreciation or understanding of the divine plan. Apparently, it was less necessary in the past than now: but now, in the "harvest," when the Adversary is furiously attacking the Truth and turning everything scientific and educational into a weapon of destruction--now the helmet is indispensable. And now, and only now, is it provided in such size and shape that the humblest soldier of the cross can put it on. The Lord held back the Attacker within the bounds where the shield of faith would serve as protection; but now the whole armor is supplied, and not too soon for the needs of his faithful.

The Sword of the Spirit--the Word of God--is the only offensive armor of the Lord's little band. The Captain prevailed in his "good fight" against the Adversary, saying, "It is written"; and this is the battle cry of his followers. Others than the true soldiers have fought for the Lord with carnal weapons, and with human philosophies and worldly wisdom and organization, and decrees of councils and synods and presbyteries, but we must depend in the struggle of this "evil day" upon the Word of God--"It is written!" We must use no darts like Satan's--anger, malice, hatred, strife. And "the Sword of the Spirit" can only be possessed by careful study and leading of the Spirit after consecration--after enlistment in this army."

R5770 "We believe there never was a time when so many of the children of the light were wearing the whole Armor of Light. Therefore we have so much the more responsibility to "walk as children of light" and not as of the night."

DANGER TO EVEN THE FULLY CONSECRATED

It is possible that some, even of the fully consecrated children of God, surrounded with the cares of this life, or weary of the struggle against sin and evil, or somewhat beguiled by the present things of time and sense, may have become more or less drowsy, and so stand in special need of the stirring exhortation which the Apostle in this connection gives to the Church--particularly appropriate today: "It is now high time to awake out of sleep!" It is time for earnest, searching self-examination, for a more diligent watching to see that we do not allow the things of this "present evil world" to absorb our thoughts and energies to the imperiling of our Heavenly hopes, so soon to be realized if we remain wholly faithful to the end. It is highly important that we seek for a still closer walk with God, a more intimate fellowship with Him, a more thorough self-abnegation, a more diligent cross-bearing, a more faithful conformity in every respect to the whole will of the Lord concerning us. And this will of the Lord, we know, is not unreasonable, and His grace sufficient is promised for every day, every hour, every moment!

A careful, prayerful searching of our hearts will make plain wherein we lack in conformity to the perfect will of God. And if we discover in ourselves any perverse way, we shall correct it. Thus we more and more "put on the Lord Jesus Christ"--the mind or disposition of Christ, the spirit of love and loyalty which characterized Him. How important it is, in the very short time which yet remains to us, that we fully awake and apply ourselves most diligently to the cultivation of the Godlike, Christlike dispo-

sition of Love, the love which seeks above all else the glory of God, which is kindly-affectioned toward the brethren, which rests in the precious promises, which trusts fully in the dark as well as in the light, and which has no shadow of doubt that all the good things promised in God's Word shall be fulfilled!"

R5638 "The Christian is learning of his own weaknesses and of God's mercy, and growing strong in battling for the right day by day."

R5339 "PUT OFF THE WORKS OF DARKNESS" "In view of this knowledge of the wonderful Day about to dawn, how shall we who are hoping to be of the Kingdom class of that Day deport ourselves now? How shall we live? Ah! says the Apostle, if we are "children of the Day," we are to show it. We are God's representatives and ambassadors. We are to tell the people about the light and knowledge and glory of God that is to come so soon, that will fill the whole earth, by and by. We are to help them to contrast the present with the glorious conditions that will then exist, so that all who love the light may take heed to the Word of God and get ready to be members of that Kingdom class.

What must we do? We must put off the works of darkness, everything that is selfish and sinful--for that which is selfish is sinful, and that which is sinful is selfish. We are to put these off because we belong to the new order of things. The works of darkness would be any works whatsoever that would not stand the fullest investigation; that would not stand approved in the light of the New Dispensation, if it were fully ushered

in. Let us remember that we belong to the New Dispensation, and not to the old, and should, therefore, live in accordance with our citizenship and our responsibilities toward the Prince of Light and in opposition to the Prince of Darkness, his works and his ways.

"PUT ON THE ARMOR OF LIGHT"

We have enlisted with Christ, and we will fight against the enemies of our new nature. We will be worthy children of God and strive earnestly, that we may be associated with the Lord in His Kingdom of Righteousness. And when we have *put off* the darkness, what must we do? We must *put on* the armor of light. What is the armor of light? It is the armor which protects from the darts of the Adversary, and includes the helmet of salvation--the protection of our intellects through a knowledge of the Truth, from the attacks of our great foe...

Those of the Church--those who are hoping to be kings and priests and to reign with Christ and to be judges of the world--their conduct should be as far as possible in accord with God's standard. Everything should be open, honest, subject to the investigation of the Lord or of anybody. In thus living we shall be proving our faithfulness to the Lord. We must demonstrate our loyalty to Him by being willing to suffer rebuffs and adversity. We must strive most earnestly to overcome our human weaknesses and imperfections, and thus manifest our love for righteousness and for God. We see that our Lord Jesus is the embodiment of these glorious principles for which God stands; and we are to be like Him, our Pattern...

Let us walk as the children of the light--the children of the Day, and thus we shall be laying up treasures above..."

R3179 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2006) OBLIGATIONS OF A CHRISTIAN

--ROMANS 13:7-14.--APRIL 19.--

"Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law."

SOME one has well denominated this *13th chapter of Romans* "The Christian Citizen's Chapter." We might consider it remarkable, almost to the extent of amazement, that every feature of Christian life, duty and character is set forth somewhere in the apostolic writings, did we not remember that the apostles, as the stars, or bright ones, of the Church, were specially held in the hand of the Lord; specially guided in their utterances, that they should set forth the whole counsel of God, that the man of God might be thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work.

There is a vast difference between the governmental conditions of the present time and those which prevailed at about the time of the writing of this epistle. Monarchs are no longer absolute; and it is difficult for us to conceive the condition of things in which an emperor had authority not only to set apart culprits as victims for death in public spectacles, but after these had been destroyed, had the authority also to instruct his servants to select further victims from amongst the audience. It is when we get before our minds this view of atrocious government which prevailed in the Apostle's day that we get the full scope of his injunction, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers; for the powers that be are ordained of God." It is comparatively easy to be subject to the higher powers in civilized lands today, for although absolute justice might not be meted out in every instance, there is at least an endeavor to render a show of justice, such as the world has never before known. We should be very thankful that our lot has been favorably cast in this respect. In declaring that "the powers that be are ordained of God," we are not to understand the Apostle to mean that they are endorsed by God, nor that their decisions, rules, etc., are approved by him or are in harmony with his rules and laws. The Apostle's intimation means simply that in divine providence things are as they are, and our God, who knows all the circumstances and conditions, permits them to be as they are, though he could overthrow and overturn and substitute his own Kingdom of righteousness. Nevertheless, this is not his plan; but rather for the time being he permits the kingdoms of this world,

whose rulers are under the prince of this world, and largely blinded by his deceptions, to take much their own course--subject only to certain limitations by which the Lord hinders Satan and any of his misguided dupes from doing real injury to the best interests of the Lord's people or to the thwarting of the divine plan. His divine power overrules the wrath of man and makes it to praise him, and the remainder, which will not accomplish anything of good, but which would be subversive of the divine arrangements, he will restrain.--Psa. 76:10.

"Render, therefore, to all their dues"--to all men as well as to all rulers--in financial as well as political matters. A great mistake, we believe, is being made along these lines today. The general sentiment amongst Christian people is that Christian citizenship implies engaging in political strife--and endeavoring to determine who shall be the rulers, striving to better the laws and have them obeyed, and putting forth efforts to oppose and rebuke bad laws. It will be noticed that the Apostle gives no such advice. On the contrary, he elsewhere declares, "Your citizenship is in heaven." (Phil. 3:20, R.V.) We are strangers and foreigners in the kingdoms of this world. Our Kingdom is yet to come; it is promised, and we are praying for it, "Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth," and we are expecting it; but meantime, as foreigners, "not of this world" (John 18:36), it is our business to render obedience to the laws, customs, usages, of this world, in so far as these do not infringe upon our conscientious obligations to the Lord and the truth; but this does not mean that we are to become partisans in political strifes, and contentions amongst men. Let the world elect its own rulers in whatever way it sees best; we put up with whatever it provides with thankfulness, with gratitude to God for whatever may come, with the realization that he will guide and care for us under all circumstances, and that in any event our highest interests are being conserved. Obedience to the laws of the land might at some time oblige us to bear arms, and in such event it would be our duty to go into the army, if unable in any legal and proper manner to obtain exemption, but it

would not be our duty to volunteer. We are soldiers in another army, which battles not with carnal weapons, and whose contests are from an entirely different standpoint and in an entirely different spirit. There could be nothing against our consciences in going into the army. Wherever we would go we could take the Lord with us, the Captain of our salvation, and wherever we would go we could find opportunities to serve him and his cause. If it came to the point of battling we above all others need have no fear of death, but we, assuredly, would be obliged to draw the line when commanded to fire, and we could not, in harmony with the divine program, fire upon a fellow-creature with the intention of taking his life. If we fired we should be obliged to fire either into the air or into the ground. All this army service would come in under this heading, "Render to all their dues." The governor of the state has the right, under the laws, to call for and to conscript, if necessary, soldiers for the defense of the state and of the nation; and if such requisition be enforced upon us we must render our dues and take our share in the trials and difficulties of the service, whatever they may be. The Apostle, however, stipulates more particularly what he means by dues, showing that he does not mean that we owe it to others to vote, to participate in political strifes. He had particularly in mind the paying of tribute, custom, fear, honor, to whom these are due. Tribute was the tax payable by a subject nation to the principal power, as, for instance, by the Jewish nation to the Roman Empire while its vassal. Custom is a tariff duty, or tax, levied in one form or another for the support of government, by a tax upon imports or exports or by direct taxation. Fear, or reverence, is differentiated from honor, or respect, in the sense that it may be the duty to salute an officer or representative of the government, by baring the head or bowing the knee, or otherwise, thus showing him honor or respect, not necessarily as a man, but as an officer, regardless of his personal character. The fear that is to be rendered is in the sense of obedience, as we elsewhere read, "Fear the judge." The commands of the judge or court are to be obeyed --whatever others might be disposed to do, Christians are never to be found in contempt of court, but are to obey its rules to the very letter, whether they consider them just or unjust, because the judge is the representative of the law, and God permits the law and the judge, and commands us to be subject to whatever he permits. If, therefore, as our Lord explained, some one shall sue us at the law, and take away our coat, or if it include our cloak also, all that we had, we are not to resist; we are to be obedient to the powers that be. This does not mean, however, that we shall willingly submit to the coat or cloak or other articles being taken from us illegally or unjustly without process of law.

Having thus considered the Christian's obligation to the government, the Apostle next passes to the consideration of the Christian's obligation to his neighbors. He is to owe no man anything. This does not necessarily mean that he must not, under any circumstances, borrow, but that if he borrows with a specific understanding respecting the time of return of the money or goods, he shall be prompt to meet the obligation. And unless he is absolutely certain of his ability to meet the obligation, or can give security such as a mortgage, he should not borrow. There is, however, the standing advice of the Word of God that the children of the great King should be lenders, and not borrowers. "Do good and lend." Indeed, we believe that it would be to the advantage of every child of God if he would put in practise the Apostle's words in this lesson in the most absolute sense, and never borrow anything; never owe anything; paying for what he needs at the time of purchase, or else waiting for it until, in the Lord's providence, he is able to pay for it in advance.

There is one thing, however, the Apostle implies we are continually owing to our fellow-creatures, not only to the members of our own family and our own neighborhood, but to all men; viz., love. We owe them this, under the divine law, and it is a part of Christian duty to discharge this obligation daily. A parent or member of the family is to see that he does his part in support of the home and its comforts and privileges and quiet and harmony, that his influence in his neighborhood amongst his friends and acquaintances shall be for good and not for evil, for peace and not for strife. And as the Apostle elsewhere remarks, if he is to do good unto all men, as he has opportunity, and because he loves all and desires their welfare, much more especially is he to have such sentiments and conduct toward those of the household of faith. (Gal. 6:10.)

^[1]He is to be ready to do good at the expense of his own time and convenience, to all men, but he is to be ready to lay down his life for the brethren--he is to seek opportunities for laying down his life day after day, in the sense of giving his time to the communication of the truth, or helping the Lord's brethren in any manner, to put on the whole armor of God, and to stand in the evil day.

The Apostle calls attention to the comprehensive statement of the Law set forth by our Lord; viz., that love is the fulfilling of the law, and that, therefore, love for the neighbor signifies that the law of God is fulfilled toward our neighbor. It will be remembered, however, that the law of love is divided into two parts; first, love to God; second, love to our fellows; and the loving of our neighbor would, therefore, be only a part of the fulfilling of the entire love to God. After loving our neighbor, and even laying down our life for him, we would need to see to it that we do not neglect the first feature of this law; viz., that we should love God more than our neighbor and more than ourselves, so that every human interest and matter would be sacrificed gladly in response to our conviction of the divine will.

Going on to speak of the fulfilment of this second part of the Law of Love--the duty toward the neighbor, --the Apostle enumerates the essence of some of the commandments respecting murder, adultery, false witness, theft, covetousness, and all other commandments that relate to our fellow-creatures--they are all met by the Law of Love to our neighbor. The commandments of the Decalogue were all of a negative character, "Thou shalt not" do this or that which would be injurious to thy neighbor. But the new Law of Love is positive, and declares, upon the other side of the question, "Thou shalt love" thy neighbor. Love, therefore, meets all the requirements of the "shalt nots" of the Ten Commandments and much more. For whosoever, in obedience to this Law of Love, is seeking to do good to his neighbor, will surely not slander him nor murder him nor steal from him nor covet his goods, nor otherwise do, or wish to do him injury, or even to think of him with unkindness.

Having considered these two points; viz., duty to rulers and duty to neighbors, the Apostle next turns to the Christian's duty toward himself, declaring, "Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep." The Christian is to realize that he, and in general the whole world, has been asleep in a sort of stupor, in respect to the highest and best and noblest things. Now having gotten the eyes of his understanding opened, and being, at least, partially awake to righteousness, he begins to weigh and measure matters after a fashion different from his previous course. He begins to estimate rightly the things of this present life, as not worthy to be compared with the glorious things which belong to the eternal life. He begins to realize that the world has now been six days (a thousand years each--2 Pet. 3:8) under the reign of sin and death, and that the morning of the great Sabbath of refreshment and blessing and rest is at hand. As he realizes this he should feel disposed to arouse himself and shake himself thoroughly from the dust of ignorance, superstition, blindness and sordidness, and to live in harmony with the glorious hopes he now entertains--living for the new era, the new dispensation, which he sees is approaching, realizing that day by day since first he believed, his salvation is drawing nearer. Instructed by the Word of God, he will not expect his salvation except in connection with the second coming of our Lord Jesus and the establishment of his Kingdom; as the Apostle in another place declares, "The grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."--1 Pet. 1:13.

The thought of the second coming of the Lord was continually before the Apostles; and our Lord evidently designed that it should be constantly an incentive to all the members of his Church throughout the age. This, undoubtedly, was one reason why he did not particularly explain the length of time that would intervene--it would be a short time, from God's standpoint, and even from the human standpoint it would be a short time to each individual who would have only the few remaining years of life wherein to make ready for the glorious things of the future; since "in death there is no remembrance of thee; in the grave who can give thee thanks?"--Psa. 6:5.

Looking back, and perceiving that about 4178 years had already passed in sin and gross darkness upon the world, the Apostle realized that the night was surely far spent, and the day not far distant. And now we, living eighteen centuries nearer to the day, are highly favored by the Lord in this due time, in that we are permitted to see the particulars that were obscure to some extent in the Apostle's day. We believe that the day is actually at hand; that we are now living in the early dawn of the new dispensation, and that as soon as the harvest of this Gospel age shall be gathered, the work of change, or transformation, by which the kingdoms of this world shall, in a great time of trouble, become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ, is nigh, even at the door.

What is the force of the Apostle's argument to those who see as he did the approaching Kingdom of light, that shall banish all the darkness of sin, ignorance, superstition, etc.? It is expressed in his words, "Let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and let us

^[1] Apr. 2 Manna, Gal. 6:10

put on the armor of light." ⁽²⁾The works of darkness would be any works whatsoever that would not stand the fullest investigation; that would not stand approval in the light of the new dispensation, if it were already fully ushered in. Let us remember that we belong to the new dispensation, and not to the old, and should, therefore, live in accordance with our citizenship and our responsibilities toward the Prince of light and in opposition to the prince of darkness, his works and his ways.

We have elsewhere considered this matter of putting on the armor of light; and the necessity, as expressed in the Apostle's statement, that the particular period of time in which the change from the dominion of the prince of this world to the Kingdom of God's dear Son will be a specially evil day--a day, a period, in which all the children of light will be crucially tested; such a day as will try every man's work and faith what they are; a day and a fiery trial through which only the gold, silver and precious stones will pass unscathed, and in which all the hay, wood and stubble of error and sin and human tradition and falsehood will be entirely destroyed. No wonder, then, that the Apostle repeatedly urges us to put on the armor of light--preparation by the Lord's people for the trials of this particular time, which we perceive is now just upon us--in fact, we are already passing into these very fires of this day of trial. We are already in the time when the wood, hay and stubble is being consumed, and when Higher Criticism, Evolutionary theory, Christian Science, Hypnotism, under its own name and known as Mind Cures, etc., are devouring as a flame all that are not fully devoted to the Lord, and, therefore, specially kept by his power through his Word and providence.

Let us walk honestly, as in the day. We are not yet fully in the day, but we belong to the new era, and are, therefore, to live even in this present time as nearly as possible up to the perfect standards of the future. So to live will signify self-denial--will imply that we will be misunderstood by the world; will imply that we will be thought foolish, and that we will be considered enemies, not only by those who are in gross darkness, but particularly by those who profess to be the Lord's people, children of the light, but who really prefer darkness and error rather than light and truth. We are inclined to lay special stress on this word "honestly," and to believe that the Apostle used it advisedly and in a particular sense.

As we look all about us we find that dishonesty is very prevalent; not merely in the world, where we expect a certain amount of duplicity and misrepresentation and deception, and people passing for what they are not, but we find this kind of dishonesty very prevalent amongst professing Christians; yea, we have known ministers to boast of their dishonesty--to declare that they never did believe the creed which they had professed to believe and vowed they would teach to others. Intelligent ministers are today preaching in all denominations what they do not believe, standing for creeds and theories which misrepresent their true sentiments. They are acting dishonestly; they are searing their own consciences; they are putting themselves into a condition where they cannot make progress into the light of the truth; for surely God does not want dishonest people in his elect Church. Surely, unless they become honest, they will have their portion with the hypocrites, for the hypocrites are the dishonest. "Let us walk honestly," appeals to every true child of God.

⁽³⁾Each one should see to it that he is honest, not only in matters of dollars and cents, but honest in his treatment of his neighbors, in his treatment of the brethren, in the Church, and above all, honest in his confessions respecting his God and his faith. The test is being made along this line, and those who love the favor of men rather than the favor of God, and who dishonestly are willing to confess and profess a lie, will be given up to their lie, will be permitted to blight their eternal interests, will be proving themselves unfit for the Kingdom--whatever else they may ultimately become fit for. This is the very essence of the Apostle's declaration in his letter to the Thessalonians (2 Thess. 2:11), when speaking of this evil day, and the great trial that would come upon the Church, he declares that God will send them strong delusions that they might believe a lie--because they were not honest --because they did not obey the truth in the love of it, but acted deceptively, hypocritically, two-facedly.

Our translators seem to have forgotten that these epistles were written to "the saints" (Rom. 1:8), and not to the world, hence, when speaking of certain sins they used English words, which would be applicable to the most depraved class in describing the crimes and wrong course--instead of using such language as would properly

represent the misdemeanors that might be expected amongst the saints. There is an illustration of this in our lesson (*verse 13*), where the Apostle is represented as saying to the saints that they should not indulge in rioting, drunkenness, chambering and wantonness. It is true that the saints should not indulge in any of those things; but it is true also that no saints would think of indulging in such orgies.

The Apostle's meaning, to our understanding, is a much more refined one than these words would represent. He urges us that in view of the time, and that we are children of the day, that we should not engage in worldly revelries, time-killing pleasures, harmless though they be, and that we should not be intoxicated with the spirit of this world. As, for instance, ⁽⁴⁾some have an intoxication for money, wealth; others an intoxication for business; others for dress; others for music; others for art; but as the Lord's people, who have got a glimpse of the new day, and the great work of God which is to be accomplished in that day, our hearts should be so absorbed in the work of God that these matters, which would be thought proper enough and right enough in others, worldly people--because they are not awake as we are, and because they see not the future as we see it--should be far from our conception and our course.

In urging the saints to avoid chambering and wantonness, we are not to understand the Apostle to mean fornication and adultery, and general lasciviousness, as he might warn the most depraved and most benighted of the children of this world. We are to understand him to address these words to the saints, urging them to continence in their social relations--urging that the thoughts of the Kingdom shall lift their minds and disengage their affections to a large extent, at least, from the earthly affections and the lawful sexual congress. This is a statement to the Romans of the same thing that he mentions to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 7:29); "Brethren, the time is short; it remaineth both that they that have wives be as though they had none, ...and they that use this world as not abusing it." The Apostle, however, puts limitations to this counsel, as expressed in *vss. 5-7* of the same chapter. This interpretation of the Apostle's sentiments is fully corroborated by the concluding words of this *verse (13)*. By the general rules of language he would not begin his argument with the grosser sins, and end with the less, but reversely, conclude with the stronger argument. Here he concludes with the exhortation that the saints, in watching as in the day, shall avoid strife and envy.

The other difficulties would be comparatively their own concern--their participation in revelries might do no harm to others, their being overcharged with a spirit of intoxication for wealth or fashion or art or music, might do no injury to others, their inordinateness in lawful sexual matters might do no injury to the cause in general; but when he comes to strife and envy he notes two qualities which reach out and would not only imply a wrong condition of heart on the part of the transgressor, which indulged would ultimately bar him from the Kingdom, but would represent also elements of character which would be injurious to the whole body of Christ, which is the Church. And be it noticed that these various dispositions, carelessness of life, the overcharged, or drunken condition, as respects earthly affairs (Luke 21:34), and lack of self-restraint in connubial relationship, would be very apt to go hand in hand with a wrong spirit in the Church--a spirit of strife, contention, wilfulness--not submitting to the divine Word and providence, but, on the contrary, the arousing of jealousies, ambitions, on behalf of self or others, for prominence in the body.

To the contrary of all this, the saints are to seek more and more to put on the Lord Jesus Christ--to take each to himself the characteristics of the Lord Jesus --his meekness, his patience, his gentleness, his forbearance, his love, his willingness to be servant of all, his temperateness and moderation in all things, his complete devotion to the Father, his complete submission to the holy spirit in all of his affairs.

In thus seeking to be like the Lord the saints are to "make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." They will find the flesh continually insisting that it be recognized, that it be not mortified, that plans and arrangements shall be made for its comfort, pleasure, gratification. The saints, however, are to make no such provision; they are to ignore the flesh, to the extent they are able; they are to consider its tastes, appetites and preferences, as generally depraved and improper to be gratified. They are to do this so thoroughly that they will make no provision for it, but merely provide for the doing of the will of the Lord in all things, whether the will of the Lord be pleasant or unpleasant, agreeable or disagreeable to the flesh.

⁽²⁾ Apr. 3 Manna, Rom. 13:12

⁽³⁾ Apr. 4 Manna, Rom. 13:13

⁽⁴⁾ Apr. 11 Manna, Rom. 13:13