

HOW MUCH IS A TRINKET WORTH?

~Other Speakers G-L: Allan Halton:

Carrying on with what we were talking about last time, we are so used to thinking that the way our world is... this is the way it will always be. But that is not so. Do we believe this? This world as we know it is just an age... "this present evil age" (Gal. 1.4). And it is an age that is drawing to a close. Another age is coming. Those with vision can already see its glow on the horizon.

And so we read of "the children of this age" (which is darkness) and then of "the children of light" (Lk. 16.8). These are the children of the age to come. Paul called them "the children of the day." What a fascinating thought! The children of the day! The Day has not yet come, that age has not yet come... but its children are here already! For God is impatient for the Day! "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness" (1 Thes. 5.5). In other words, right here in this age, right here in the darkness of this present age, God scatters like seed the children of Light, the children of the Day, like the stars strewn across the heavens. "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the children of God, without blame, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Phil. 2.15). That is what we are supposed to be all about, fellow Christian—lights in the world! Do you know, there is absolutely no light in this world, none at all, none whatever; this world is completely pitch black... apart from the Light of the world—Jesus Christ Himself—shining forth in you and me.

We know that the Day is at hand, inexorably the Sun of Righteousness shall arise; that Day is no more stoppable than the rising of the sun. And so what do we do? We just sleep through the night, we just sleep till morning? No! says Paul. For "we are not of the night, nor of the darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night."

We are not of the night. We are children of Light, of the Day! And so what do we do? We put on the armour of light for a battle! The outcome of the battle is certain, yes—as absolutely certain as the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary. But the battle must be engaged! And it appears that the Prince of darkness and his hosts of darkness are not meeting with much resistance in this present hour. Many of the soldiers of Light are fast asleep on their watch, their armour forgotten on the ground. Let us awaken and take up our armour! We who are children of the day—let us engage the battle! The night is far spent, the Day is at hand! Let us put on the armour of Light and engage the battle!

Let us not be deceived! Let us guard against the temptation to lay down the armour and live for this present evil age—its attractions, its pleasures, its comforts. That is deception. Or, on the other hand—and this too is deception—to end up choked by its cares. Yes, the seed of the word is planted in our lives in this age. But what about the weeds that are growing as well? We are told of two kinds of weeds that choke out the word of truth so that these lives produce only sickly, spindly plants. "And he who among the thorns was sown, this is he who hears the word, and the care of this age and the deceit of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful" (Mt. 13.22). The care of this age—that's how the original Greek reads, gathering together all the cares of this age into one beguiling care.

And so the two classes of weeds: care—the burden and care of life in this world, and then the deceitfulness of riches, both of which can prevent the fruitful harvest of the word God has planted in our lives. We can be beguiled by both.

Paul warns those that are rich in this present age to be mindful not to be deceived by their riches. "Charge them that are rich in this present age that they be not high minded, nor trust in the uncertainty of riches... " (1 Tim. 6.17). This can be a great snare, so much so that Jesus warned that those who are rich enter the kingdom only with great difficulty. They have it easy in this present age, and it becomes a snare to them. It beguiles them. They're inclined to sink their whole lives into what is but fleeting and transitory—as multitudes in our affluent western world are doing. And so Paul goes on, warning them to put their trust not in the uncertainty of riches, but "in the living God, who gives us richly all things for enjoyment... " (so it's not wrong to enjoy in moderation these things from the hand of God; only let them not be a snare to us, and our destruction) "A...to do good, to be rich in good works, liberal in distributing, ready to communicate (to share) treasuring up for themselves a good foundation for the future, that they may lay hold of eternal life."

Here again we see the contrast. Rich in this world... or rich in good works, and in giving, in sharing, and in this way laying a foundation in this life that shall rise a beautiful edifice in the life to come.

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And so that's what this present life and age is for. Let us not be deceived. All that this present age has to offer is but temporal, transitory, and will one day be gone forever—and our lives with it... if that is all we have lived for. "The world passeth away, and the lust (the desire) thereof..." says the apostle John, adding—and let it be this that we sink our whole lives into—he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (1 Jn. 2.17).

Let us be wise, then. Do we believe these things? Only if we are acting on them. If we believe these things, we are sowing the seeds of eternal life while we are in this present world, this present evil age. We are laying the foundation of eternal life in this present life instead of building a magnificent edifice for ourselves in what is but, for us, a camping spot. If we recognize that we are not at home here, we are not putting our roots down too deeply. We live as strangers and sojourners here, pilgrims with no continuing city, who "seek one to come" (Heb. 13.14).

Beloved, let us lay this to heart. "Only one life: 'twill soon be passed..." It is heart rending that so many out there in the world spend their precious lives on the fleeting pleasures and interests of this present world. But how much more tragic when you and I do the same. For where, then, is the Light of the world? How many of us Christians have been blinded by the trinkets of this present life—its pleasures and comforts, its honours and glory. Paul mourned for Demas whom he said had forsaken him, "having loved this present age" (2 Tim. 4.10). What a tragic, tragic loss—not only to himself but to others—when a Christian sells the eternal for the temporary.

I heard of a vision someone had of a vending machine—the kind you put a coin in and turn the handle... and out comes some little item—a trinket, or some peanuts. In the vision, a man was putting his whole life into the slot in the vending machine. And out came a little trinket.

Beloved, whatever this world has to offer—all that it has to offer—let us not be beguiled. It is all but a trinket compared with the true, eternal riches. Let us not pay with our lives for a trinket.