

WHAT WILL IT PROFIT A MAN, IF HE GAINS THE WHOLE WORLD, BUT LOSES HIS SOUL? (Matthew 16:26).

by Call of Hope

Many today fill their minds with scientific knowledge, and are familiar with facts about the world. If you ask, "What is the purpose of your studies?" the answer might be that it is not religion and ethics, but rather technical knowledge and higher degrees that will qualify us for desirable posts. The aim is profit and comfortable living.

Others are busy with buying and selling. Expensive objects attract them. Women take up jobs to add to the family possessions, often neglecting their children. Men boast of the size of their cars and the prestige of their jobs with little time left over for the family.

The present economic order encourages man's greed and ambition to be rich, important and respected. Generally, however, many rich people are unhappy. They fear robbery; their minds are taken up with ways of investing their money to the greatest gain. They think materialistically, and harden their hearts. They ignore the poor and the underprivileged. The rich do not want to give of their money. This is balanced by the envy in the poor. They, too, want to be rich and turn to rebellion and wars. Philosophies are thought up to change the social order.

People fail to see that desire for wealth is the same as fooling one's self. Knowledge and wealth do not make men better. Rich nations soon pass away. The generations that follow become lazy; riches open up opportunities for easy and corrupt living.

Men by nature are fools. They labour, save great amounts of money, and want to be great and respected. Yet everything is temporary. At death man leaves everything behind, his honours and his bank account. Men should seek the Giver before seeking his gifts. Then they would be rich indeed. For to know Him means to enter everlasting life, and to have riches that endure forever. God is love. So if anyone wants to have treasure in heaven, he should comfort the poor, care for the refugees and be concerned with common people. All things will pass away except love, which is eternal.

Arise, draw near to God. Then you will realise your sinfulness. All our works and aims are

based on selfishness. We trust in our wealth and intelligence, rather than in the Lord. We damage ourselves and risk total loss: "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?" (Matthew 16:26).

Neither your prayers, nor your fasting, almsgiving, pilgrimage nor outward confession can justify you. You have lost all by not coming to God. Your lies, corruption, impurity, unfaithfulness will witness against you. When you come to God, you will realise your misery, poverty and helplessness. You will be blessed if you come to know the Holy God and bow down before Him in reverence. Only then will you understand the grace of God and His love, poured into broken hearts.

God, in His mercy, has sent His anointed One - Christ - into the world to show man the truth about God. He lived a life of poverty and humility. He was despised, though all power and truth belong to Him. He overcame all carnal pride and became a servant to all, despising all riches and honour.

He was rich in God, and lived without sin. Christ overturned all social values. If you follow Him, then God's Spirit will come into your life, and renew your hard heart. He will deliver you from a life of greed and jealousy. You will discover that God becomes your Father by forgiving you for Christ's sake. All He has is yours. He loves you. You will love Him and thank Him and surrender your life to Him.

His Spirit will free you from all selfish thoughts, and bring you into fellowship with God in love. You will lose the world to gain heaven. You will let go of the world and its falseness to enter eternal life.

Then it will not matter to you whether you can obtain the earthly things others may have or not, because you have God for a Father. Fine clothes will not be the most important thing to you, because you are clothed with His righteousness. Pride will give place to humility. You will give priority to others. No longer will you seek earthly treasure, but you will be willing to sacrifice your time, energy and money to God and His needy ones. You will do it cheerfully, because God has saved you from material idols. You will regularly give to God for His service and glory.

How wonderful is that service which is in fellowship with Christ, for he who denies himself gains God. God will satisfy him, and he will be contented, spending himself in the service of others. God becomes his true treasure and his eternal possession.