

The whole contrast in the chapter is between earthly, perishing things and eternal things; the glorious Kingdom of Heaven that will never fade away. Reference is made to food and raiment on the earth level, and the exhortation is that we take no thought concerning these things. This needs explicit definition. The Lord is not saying to any who by His help run a home and provide for their husband and family, "Look, you can obliterate all thought of a dietary from your mind." He is not saying you are to forget modest external apparel with suitable clothing, without conformity that is slavish to the world. We are not to ~~neglect~~ neglect our bodies and obliterate all thought from our minds: far from it; it is a matter of priorities of Heaven over earth. What He is saying is, "Look, My child, be more concerned with immortal meat, the Bread and Water of Life, the broken Body and shed blood of the Son of Man. Be more concerned with the Bread and Water of Life than food the Lord provides for the body. Do not be excessive, immodest, over-anxious concerning the things of the body." There is divine, holy priority, so when you prepare a balanced diet for the good of the family you are praying to God that He would feed your soul with the pure provision of His Kingdom.

The other thing is, be more concerned about the immortal clothing of the soul than garments that will be moth-eaten, and things that will be destroyed by rust or lost by thieving. The most beautiful clothes,- and no doubt you have clothing you value,- when you think of it, presently they will all be moth-eaten. What ever it is on earth of metal it will be decayed by rust. All cars will be on the scrap-heap because of rust,

So the Lord says to His dear children, "Be more concerned that your soul may be clothed in raiment of needlework, garments divinely provided and put on."- not to look so attractive in your body, but that your soul should look beautiful in garments of His providing: not to be dilatory and unconcerned, do nothing provident, prudent, comely; there is something more important. When you want to look your best, say, "O that my soul may be clothed in His rich vest!" When you partake of a good meal, with no excesses, and thank God for it, pray for the living Bread from Heaven. This will be acceptable to the people of God. It is honourable and proper that we inculcate the precepts and doctrine of the gospel. It is honourable to live according to the code of precepts in the Bible concerning Christian food and dress. I do not apologise for this. There are those in the earth who put us to shame in our land because of their code of behaviour for female attire and so on, to be very prudent and modest. There is so much conformity to the world; what they wear to copy or take licence from it. The Word of God does not allow women to wear men's clothing. I did not anticipate saying this: it is Scriptural. Other lands put the United Kingdom to shame in their code of dress and conduct. This is an aside observation, and it is highly desirable. We have established the principle concerning the Saviour's teaching here. God has provided food and He will bless it to you to strengthen your body: you need it. There is something that has the ascendancy over that: seek food divine for your souls, and remember when you seek to be presentable and modest in your apparel, it is of infinitely greater importance that your soul be clothed in the rich vest of the Saviour's righteousness. We have expressed to you the mind of God. It is so serious that there is hardly any stand made for the truth of God; things slip and slide. It is therefore highly desirable to seek to stand in doctrine, precept and practice according to the will of God. This is said in a loving, fatherly way, and it will be approved by the spiritual. Thank God for the cook who prepares a good meal with no surfeiting. He says, "Look, go to My House to receive ~~immortal~~ food for your immortal soul. Seek to be modestly clothed, but seek the royal garment the Lord gives to His sons and daughters."

The foundation of this is filial and there is another aspect; as we journey through a waste howling wilderness there is great concern in

many matters; health, strength, providential things, and so on. So what the Lord is teaching us is, (and we have taught it over many years and proved His faithfulness as a Father, and render the glory due to His Name,) "Here is the foundation. I will not leave you as orphans with no one to love or care for you or provide for you. Your heavenly Father knoweth and His wisdom is inscrutable. You can never fathom the infinite depth of His wisdom and goodness. Your Father knoweth before you ask." I use the term by inspiration: the whole subject is full of relief, and as the Lord brings it with grace and unction to your spirit you lose your load. What is so painful is taken from you, and you come to sweet peace instead of apprehension, servile fear and over-anxiety.

We have said the first verse as the foundation: the second flows out of it. I am by His gracious aid to call it over with you. It is a Kingdom of immense delight which is eternal. I refer to the wonderful principal exhortation to His dear sons and daughters. "Come back to Me and say, 'What are we to do, dear Lord?' This is your course. I told you not to be over-anxious concerning food or raiment; no excesses, no over-concentration on things that perish. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." It means 'these things of providence, all your Father sees you need. Has He supplied your providential needs since you have been on the earth? Has He found you a home, nourished, clothed you? He has been a faithful, loving God and will be down to the end. When you yield your spirit to the Lord you will not need a meal or clothing. "Seek ye first," This is your priority and the directive. "Leave it with Me. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." What is annexed to it? "and all these other things shall be added unto you." This is your bonus from your Father. A classical example of it is the case of Solomon. "The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee." His priorities were right by the Holy Ghost: he asked for wisdom, - nothing else. He sought first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. The Lord is our wisdom. He was right before God, made right. All was in harmony with Heaven. His speech pleased the Lord and He gave him a bonus. He said, "I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart." He had not asked long life, riches, or the life of his enemies; just one thing. "Seek ye first,

The Lord said, "I have done it, and I have given what you have not asked for,- riches and honour." It is a bonus: I use the word reverently. Seek ye first, and you can leave the other. So often in my life with anxieties, problems and so on, and my mind disturbed, and alas, diverted, the Lord has corrected, reproved, taught me by giving me a directive. "Look, My child, you serve Me, and you can leave the rest with Me. Do My pleasure and My will and leave the rest with Father." I would endeavour by the grace of God to get this over to the dear younger friends, the Lord help you to put Him first, and all other things will be added to you. It may mean great sacrifice on the earth level: the Lord enable to put Him first and to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. You will have a bonus. "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." So as we have mentioned, many times the Lord has brought us to the vital place; "Serve and honour Me and leave the rest to your Father." and we have proved it. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God."

We mentioned this afternoon, seek that the Kingdom of God may be established in your soul: seek the good and prosperity and peace of His Kingdom, the Church. "O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity." That is seeking first the Kingdom of God, and it is your prayer to the Lord. and, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces." That is seeking first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, that His Kingdom should come and He would grant the advancement of it in the earth and in our land, that we may be prepared for His everlasting Kingdom. What a Kingdom! the sovereign territory of the blessed King of kings and Lord of lords; all relating to the peace, prosperity and advancement and extension of the Kingdom according to the decrees of Heaven. "Seek ye first," that you may receive your treasure in you, and seek that the Lord would bring you under the law of liberty which is the law of the Kingdom, which is love. "Seek ye the first the kingdom of God." We are under the law; it does not condemn us; it liberates us.

I must begin with the contrast and speak concerning raiment, so I refer to His righteousness which must mean the garment of His own providing for the persons of His dear people. We shall sing in the last Hymn how He spent His life to work the robe of righteousness. Because of

the majesty, glory, merit of His divine Person, and the merit of His work from His birth to the time when He said, "It is finished," He was working the robe of righteousness. You cannot think of anything more beautiful. It is an act of God the Father to take and impute it to those washed from their sins in His own blood. He washes them first and arrays them in the rich garment He spent His life to work. The Father imputes it, faith take it and puts it on, and it renders you fit for Heaven, to sit at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. It has been made for you by the Son of God incarnate, and it fits your soul perfectly: it never decays; it is never removed. Think of the glory of His righteousness. As the holy law and Justice views you it can see no spot in you. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," Righteousness is the Lord Himself. "The Lord our righteousness." In all holy perfection He obeyed and honoured the law. It is a word that expresses the divine perfection of Jehovah Jesus: it is synonymous with His faithfulness to His promises. Cast yourself in the hands of your faithful Lord, - this is one of the interpretations of it. "Then trust Me, and fear not; thy life is secure." and all other things shall be added unto you.

"Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient <sup>unto</sup> ~~for~~ the day is the evil thereof." One principle is of alternation or interval. We are to realise by divine teaching that the method of the Lord for us is to seek to live by the day, not into tomorrow: there is always an interval between of rest, and most of you sleep comparatively well. You get to the end of the day and say, "God is faithful. He has been good to me to day. 'So He giveth His beloved sleep'". There is an interval before tomorrow, and it is wonderful and merciful of God. It has been a long, heavy day for your body and you are jaded, you feel withered. You commit soul and body into the hands of the Lord and you are favoured to have a good night and there is resurrection power for another day. You are renewed, revived. How wonderful this is. Alternation is a long period of rest in between. The heart, that courageous organ, begins to operate before the birth of the babe and it goes on to the end of life. After every beat there is a small interval of rest God has provided for it. It pumps blood, and there is rest before the next beat. There is a wealth of teaching in this, "My chi-

live by the day." "Give us this day our daily bread," not enough for a month. "Take therefore no thought/for the morrow." In the fear of God you must plan, whether in a profession or trade. What it means is, Take therefore no excessive, immoderate, unbelieving thought; no over-anxious thought for tomorrow. That springs from unbelief. Why is it He is saying to us, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow?" Because we have a Father and He manages all for us. He uses instruments, but He is in Heaven managing all. Leave it with your Father.

"for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself." It does not mean there is any intrinsic power in tomorrow to take care. If you think of twenty-four hours it is inanimate. "for the morrow shall take thought" - it is in the hand of your Father. He has made all arrangements according to His divine decrees. Wonderful this is. Look up to Heaven and cheerfully sing: your blessed, heavenly Father has tomorrow in His hand. There is another word; "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." How shall I speak to this? Every day has its tribulation to pass through. It is all measured and weighed by the Lord and it is never beyond the degree of what He gives grace to bear. There is always strength and grace commensurate with the needs of every day,- all afflictions, tribulations, trials. 'Sufficient' leads us to the wonderful promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore this is the divine method. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." That is how the Lord brings His people safely through the wilderness and lands them above. Blessed be God.