

neighbor most effectively, he would need to give his wealth to those who needed it most – the poor.

Jesus' command is not to all wealthy persons; some wealthy believers have dedicated their wealth to God and have used it for His glory. But this is God's command to all wealthy persons for whom wealth has become a god, and who are kept from serving God by their bondslavery to the love of money.

However, this illustration regarding poverty leaves us with a paradox. On the one hand we have a divine prediction of what is going to be. On the other hand we have a divine command concerning what we ought to do.

Once again, the Plan of God concerns the entire scope of history: what has been, what is, and what will be. It is not directed to man as a rule of obedience; and therefore man cannot disobey it.

The Law of God concerns what ought to be. It informs human beings what they should and should not be and do, both in their relationship to God and in their relationships to their fellow humans. The Law of God is the will of God directed to man's obedience in any age; and therefore man can disobey it and sin.

The rule of our obedience is not God's revelation of what is going to happen (as part of His Plan), but rather God's revelation of what He wants us to be and to do, as expressed in His Law.

Suppose that Christians were to become very concerned and very dedicated and very busy about relieving the poor. Could they not totally wipe out poverty?

To this we must answer: By the Plan of God, we know that these things will not happen; but by the Law of God, we know that we have a responsibility to attempt to do this.

But does not this paradox cut the vital nerve of motivation? If we cannot succeed, will we even try?

We need to realize that no matter how much effort we put into certain kinds of work for the Lord, we are never going to be so successful that we prove the Lord's predictions to be wrong. Thus our obedience to God's Law will never disprove God's Plan.

God will use obedient servants to alleviate some of the poverty in the world (but never all of it). When Christ returns, He will complete the task we have begun. And eventually all poverty on earth will be gone, and there will no longer be any poor people in the world.

And as Christians struggle with poverty (and famine and war and violence and disease and sickness and pain and sorrow and death), they do not need to concern themselves with ultimate