

The background of the cover is a photograph of an open wooden treasure chest. The chest is made of dark, weathered wood and is filled with numerous gold coins. The coins are scattered across the chest's interior, with some in the foreground and others further back. The lighting is warm, highlighting the metallic sheen of the coins and the texture of the wood. The chest's lid is open, revealing the interior. The overall theme is one of treasure and stewardship.

The Reformation Herald

July–September, 2006

Vol. XLVII, No. 3

Week of Stewardship
July 21–30, 2006

Laying Up
Treasure in Heaven



The Reformation Herald

GENERAL CHURCH PAPER OF THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST REFORM MOVEMENT

JULY–SEPTEMBER, 2006, VOL. XLVII, NO. 3

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A Week of Stewardship

What is a steward? The OXFORD AMERICAN DICTIONARY describes it as "a person employed to manage another's property, especially a large estate." One example from the Bible was Eliezer, the steward of Abraham (Genesis 15:2). Many are familiar with the tremendous confidence which Abraham placed in this steward, even entrusting him with finding a worthy bride for Isaac, the son of promise.

The King of the universe likewise entrusts His chosen remnant on earth with a key position of stewardship. "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14). This is a sacred opportunity and a solemn trust.

As a church we are bidden, "Teach with pen and voice that we must work; that God has made men stewards of means that they may help in carrying forward the various enterprises connected with His cause; that the tithes and offerings are but a small part of what God claims of them; that they must work fast, for probation will soon close. They should follow the example Jesus has given them in His life—deny self, lift the cross, get their treasure laid up in heaven. Thousands are dying spiritually because their treasure is laid up upon the earth, and their heart, their thoughts, their whole being, is buried up with it."¹

In recognition of our serious need at this late hour of history, **July 21–30, 2006**, has been designated as a special week of stewardship. During this time, believers all around the world are encouraged to gather together to study the readings found in this issue of THE REFORMATION HERALD and to pray to God earnestly for guidance on how to put these timely messages into living practice. **Sabbath, July 29, 2006**, is set aside as a special day of prayer with fasting for all who can participate.

May the Holy Spirit deeply impress our heart during this event. May He strengthen our hands to obey our Master's bidding in warm response to however that still, small voice may speak to each conscience.

¹ *The Review and Herald*, December 18, 1883.

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—Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 488.

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Learning to Be Happier

“Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

We are all familiar with the beatitudes—those blessings unveiled on the Sermon on the Mount. Each one translates as a special token of happiness to the receiver. Likewise, the inspired statement, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” brings out a similar token of deep happiness and inner joy to be experienced by the person who gives.

God wants His people to be happy. He educates us in a better way than the world does, guiding us in safe paths that lead to eternal joy. Even in this fleeting, temporal life, His plan provides us with the best and happiest way to live.

Part of our education

The church is a school, teaching principles for souls who seek the vocation of eternal life. As part of the curriculum, “a solemn responsibility rests upon ministers to keep before the churches the needs of the cause of God and to educate them to be liberal. When this is neglected, and the churches fail to give for the necessities of others, not only does the work of the Lord suffer, but the blessing that should come to believers is withheld.”¹

As a minister of the gospel, the apostle Paul invested much time in educating the believers to be liberal in their support of the gospel work. This not only served to expand the cause of God—it actually made them a happier people.

Remember the Macedonians

“Writing to the Corinthian believers, the apostle called their attention to ‘the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; how that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, . . . yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints’ (2 Corinthians 8:1–4).

“The willingness to sacrifice on the part of the Macedonian believers came as a result of wholehearted consecration. Moved by the Spirit of God, they ‘first gave their own selves to the Lord’ (2 Corinthians 8:5), then they were willing to give freely of their means for the support of the gospel. It was not necessary to urge them to give; rather, they rejoiced in the privilege of denying themselves even of necessary things in order to supply the needs of others. When the apostle would have restrained them, they importuned him to accept their offering. In their simplicity and integrity, and in their love for the brethren, they gladly denied self, and thus abounded in the fruit of benevolence.”²

The poor are not exempt

“Even the very poor should bring their offerings to God. They are to be sharers of the grace of

Christ by denying self to help those whose need is more pressing than their own. The poor man’s gift, the fruit of self-denial, comes up before God as fragrant incense. And every act of self-sacrifice strengthens the spirit of beneficence in the giver’s heart, allying him more closely to the One who was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich.”³

A widespread work

“The liberality required of the Hebrews was largely to benefit their own nation; today the work of God extends over all the earth. In the hands of His followers, Christ has placed the treasures of the gospel, and upon them He has laid the responsibility of giving the glad tidings of salvation to the world. Surely our obligations are much greater than were those of ancient Israel.

“As God’s work extends, calls for help will come more and more frequently.”⁴

When these calls “come more and more frequently,” each of us individually should think of two things. First: To thank God for His great sacrifice in giving me all in Christ. Why not respond in turn? Second: Remembering that deeper happiness does come with giving, it looks like He wants to make me happier. Why not let Him? R

References

¹ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 341.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 343, 344.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 341.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 337, 338.

Our Bountiful Benefactor

COMPILED FROM THE WRITINGS OF E. G. WHITE

One omnipotent in power, great in goodness, in mercy, and love, has created the earth, and even in its blighted state it inculcates truths in regard to the skillful Master Artist. In this book of nature opened to us—in the beautiful, scented flowers, with their varied and delicate coloring—God gives to us an unmistakable expression of His love. After the transgression of Adam, God might have destroyed every opening bud and blooming flower, or He might have taken away their fragrance, so grateful to the senses. In the earth, seared and marred by the curse, in the briars, the thistles, the thorns, the tares, we may read the law of condemnation; but in the delicate color and perfume of the flowers, we may learn that God still loves us, that His mercy is not wholly withdrawn from the earth.¹

Through the goodness of God we have been surrounded with innumerable blessings. There are tokens of His love on every hand. Nature seems to be rejoicing before us. The beautiful things in heaven and earth express the love and favor of the Lord of hosts toward the inhabitants of the world. The sunshine and the rain fall on the evil and the good. The hills and seas and plains are all speaking eloquently to the soul of man of the Creator's love. It is God who brings the bud to bloom, the flower to fruit, and it is He who supplies our daily needs. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father's notice. Our

minds should go up in gratitude and adoration to the Giver of every good and perfect gift.²

Our great Exemplar

The words and works of the Lord harmonize. His words are gracious and His works bountiful. "He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man" (Psalm 104:14). How liberally He has provided for us. How wonderfully He has displayed His munificence and power in our behalf. Should our gracious Benefactor treat us as we treat one another, where would we be?

What marvelous condescension the Saviour showed in His work. How graciously, without prejudice or partiality, He received all who came to Him, rich or poor, white or black. With Him there is no caste. "God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34, 35).

Varied were the circumstances and needs of those who besought Christ for aid. One came in behalf of his son, another in behalf of his daughter. A generous, compassionate master came to ask help for his servant, who was stricken with the palsy. He had done all he could for him, but he saw that there was need of a healing power which he did not possess. He came to the Great Physician, saying, "Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented" (Matthew 8:6). Christ did not turn the

earnest petitioner away. His great heart of infinite love responded to the anxious interest and compassion shown by the master. He is always pleased to see that the superior position of the master has not led him to neglect those connected with him in service. He needed no further entreaty, but gladly responded, "I will come and heal him" (Verse 7).³

Jesus left the royal courts of heaven, and suffered and died in a world degraded by sin, that he might teach man how to pass through the trials of life and overcome its temptations. Here is a pattern for us.

As the benefits conferred upon His creatures by our heavenly Father are recounted, do you not feel reproved, dear brethren and sisters, for your ungrateful repining? God hears your murmurings. If there is a cloud in sight, if affliction comes upon you, how often you seem to forget that the sun ever shone. The Lord is merciful, gracious, and true. Do not shut up your hearts against melody and joy, dwelling only on the disagreeable features of your life. Hold thanksgiving services in your home, and recount with rejoicing the blessings that have been bestowed upon you.

The power of the truth should be sufficient to sustain and console in every adversity. It is in enabling its possessor to triumph over affliction that the religion of Christ reveals its true value. It brings the appetites, the passions, and the emotions under the control of reason and conscience, and disciplines

the thoughts to flow in a healthful channel. And then the tongue will not be left to dishonor God by expressions of sinful repining.

Our Creator justly claims the right to do as He chooses with the creatures of His hand. He has a right to govern as He wills and not as man chooses. But He is not a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor. He is the very fountain of love, the giver of blessings innumerable. It should cause you the deepest grief that you have disregarded such love, and have not let gratitude and praise well up in your hearts for the marvelous goodness of God. We do not deserve all His benefits; but they are continued to us, notwithstanding our unworthiness and cruel ingratitude. Then cease to complain as though you were bond-servants under a hard taskmaster. Jesus is good. Praise Him. Praise Him who is the health of your countenance, and your God.⁴

Privileges and priorities

God gave direction to the Israelites to assemble before Him at set periods in the place which He should choose, and observe special days, wherein no unnecessary work was to be done, but the time was to

be devoted to a consideration of the blessings which He had bestowed upon them. At these special seasons the manservant and maidservant, the stranger, the fatherless and widow—all were directed to rejoice that God had by His own wonderful power brought them from servile bondage to the enjoyment of freedom. And they were commanded not to appear before the Lord empty-handed. They were to bring tokens of their gratitude to God for His continual mercies and blessings bestowed upon them; they were to bring gifts, freewill offerings and thank offerings unto the Lord, as He had blessed them. These offerings were varied according to the donor's estimate of the blessings which he was privileged to enjoy. Thus the characters of the people were plainly developed. Those who placed a high value upon the blessings which God bestowed upon them brought offerings in accordance with this appreciation of His blessings. Those whose moral powers were stupefied and benumbed by selfishness and idolatrous love of the favors received, rather than inspired by fervent love for their bountiful Benefactor, brought meager offerings. Thus

their hearts were revealed. Besides these special religious feast days of gladness and rejoicing, the yearly Passover was to be commemorated by the Jewish nation. The Lord covenanted that, if they were faithful in the observance of His requirements, He would bless them in all their increase, and in all the works of their hands.

God requires no less of His people in these last days, in sacrifices and offerings, than He did of the Jewish nation. Those whom He has blessed with a competency, and even the widow and the fatherless, should not be unmindful of His blessings. Especially should those whom He has prospered render to Him the things that are His. They should appear before Him with a spirit of self-sacrifice and bring their offerings in accordance with the blessings He has bestowed upon them. But many whom God prospers manifest base ingratitude to Him. If His blessings rest upon them, and He increases their substance, they use these bounties as cords to bind them to the love of their possessions; they allow worldly business to take possession of their affections and of their entire being, and neglect devo-



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us as we treat one another,
where would we be?*

*The purest joy is not found in riches . . .
but where contentment reigns
and . . . love is the ruling principle.*

tion and religious privileges. They cannot afford to leave their business cares and come before God even once a year. They turn the blessings of God into a curse by serving their own temporal interests to the neglect of His requirements. . . .

Many who profess to be looking for the appearing of our Lord are anxious, burdened seekers for worldly gain. They are blind to their eternal interest. They labor for that which satisfieth not; they spend their money for that which is not bread. They strive to content themselves with the treasures they have laid up upon the earth, which must perish, and they neglect the preparation for eternity, which should be the first and only real work of their lives.⁵

How shall we respond?

One reason why God does not bestow more and larger blessings upon His people is that they would not appreciate them and render to God the things that are God's. Every Christian should often review his past life, and never should he forget the precious deliverances which God has wrought for him, supporting him in trial, consoling him in affliction, opening ways for him when all seemed dark and forbidding, refreshing him when ready to faint under discouragements. And in view of all these innumerable blessings, he should be melted and subdued, grateful and humble. He may well exclaim, 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?' (Psalm 116:12). The rendering to God will not be

merely in words of thankfulness, but in tithes and offerings. The Christian will practice self-denial and self-sacrifice to make returns to God.⁶

The Lord takes care of the flowers of the field, and clothes them with loveliness, and yet He has made it evident that He looks upon man as of greater value than the flowers for which He cares. He has lavished upon us such gifts as human hand could not fashion, and yet the great mass of humanity take His gifts as a matter of course, or as if they came by chance. They offer no grateful thanks; their hearts are not awakened with love toward the gracious Giver.

Suppose that our benevolent Father should grow weary with man's ingratitude, and for a few weeks should withhold His innumerable bounties. Suppose He should become discouraged in seeing His treasures applied to selfish ends, in hearing no response of praise and gratitude for His unmerited mercies, and should forbid the sun to shine, the dew to fall, the earth to yield her increase. What a sensation would be created! What dismay would fall upon the world! What a cry would be raised as to what we should do to supply our tables with food and our bodies with clothing! And yet, dependent as we are upon His bounties, many have taken His gifts as have the beasts of the field, and have never said, "I thank thee, kind Father, for thy daily benefits." If His mercies should be withdrawn, it would be no more than we deserve; for it would be treating us as unworthy of such unrequited love.

God has not only supplied us with temporal benefits, but has provided for our eternal welfare; "for God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water" (John 3:16; 4:10). Oh, if we did but know the gift of God, if we did but appreciate what this gift of God means to us, we would have been earnestly seeking for it with unwavering perseverance! We would have offered such supplication, such appeals to God, that the gift of grace would not have been withheld, and the living water would have come to satisfy our longing, thirsty souls. "If thou knewest the gift of God." Yes, if the gift of God had been known, there would not be prayerless homes, and hearts as unimpressible as stone.

Jesus Christ, the Majesty of heaven, has been offered to the world, has been given to man as his Saviour and Redeemer. Well may the inhabitants of heaven and the unfallen worlds look with astonishment upon man's lack of discernment, upon his ingratitude. Many have hated and spurned the gift of God, although Jesus clothed His divinity with humanity, and for our sake became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich. He left the courts of heaven, and came to the world, all seared and marred and polluted with sin; He practiced self-denial and self-sacrifice, descending lower and lower in the path of humiliation, that we might be enriched and exalted. Rich in houses and lands, in worldly honor? No, but that we might have all heaven's imperishable treasure, an eternal weight of glory.

"If thou knewest the gift of God." Oh, if the deceptive, be-

witching power of Satan were only resisted, blinded eyes would be opened, unbelieving hearts would be made to perceive, and unsaved souls would have a knowledge of the unspeakable gift, and would press to the throne of grace with importunate prayer, entreating that they might drink of the living water. God is willing to impart to men the knowledge of His gift. Jesus is “to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace” (Luke 1:77–79). “If thou knewest the gift of God.” Who is there among those who already know the gift of God, who will fail to make known its preciousness to those who know it not? If you know the gift of God, if you have an experimental knowledge of what the blessings are that Christ came to bestow upon the perishing, will your lips be silent, your heart ungrateful? Will you have no interest in others, and be indifferent as to whether or not they know the way of salvation? Will you not make known to others the precious light of truth, that they also may know, that they also may ask of Him, and receive the living water?

Speaking of Jacob’s well, Jesus said unto the woman: “Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:13, 14). How many are drinking of broken cisterns that can hold no water! Some think that if they could only have a certain salary, that would lift them above temporal want, they would be happy. But when the Lord grants them their heart’s desire, and tests them by a larger measure of favor, they are just as desirous of a larger amount, and so it is with other things. Their hunger and thirst increase in proportion as His gifts increase, and humanity is ever crying, Give me this or that favor, and I will hunger and thirst no more; but when the desire is gratified, there is still a greater need. But there is one gift that God desires to bestow that will be as living water, and he who partakes of Christ will never hunger, never thirst. . . .

Shall we open our hearts to Jesus Christ? Shall we enthrone Him in the temple of the soul? Shall we not cast away our idols, and surrender our all to God? God has had power to make the flowers fair and fragrant, and He has power to give meekness and lowliness to the heart, to impart purity and nobility to

the character, to make us complete in Jesus. We may have loveliness of disposition, a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. Let us consider the precious gifts of God, think upon His tender mercies, yield our all to Him, that He may give us hearts filled with gratitude, lives filled with the fragrance of deeds of love, a disposition to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, seeking to save those that are lost.⁷

The purest joy is not found in riches nor where covetousness is always craving, but where contentment reigns and where self-sacrificing love is the ruling principle. . . .

In proportion as the love of Christ fills our hearts and controls our lives, covetousness, selfishness, and love of ease will be overcome, and it will be our pleasure to do the will of Christ, whose servants we claim to be. Our happiness will then be proportionate to our unselfish works, prompted by the love of Christ.⁸ R

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¹*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 291.

²*That I May Know Him*, p. 145.

³*The Signs of the Times*, May 22, 1901.

⁴*The Review and Herald*, April 21, 1885.

⁵*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 598–600.

⁶*The Signs of the Times*, April 24, 1879.

⁷*Ibid.*, June 19, 1893.

⁸*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 382.



Forget Not All His Benefits

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits” (Psalm 103:2).

BY J. CAMPOS—PERU

The Word of God bids us not to forget all the benefits with which the Lord daily supplies us.

We receive at the hand of our God daily benefits, accompanied by many rich blessings.

“If our senses had not been blunted by sin and by contemplation of the dark pictures that Satan is constantly presenting before us, a fervent and continuous flow of gratitude would go out from our hearts toward Him who daily loads us with benefits of which we are wholly undeserving.”¹

Spiritual blessings

“Those who through the grace of God have received intellectual and spiritual benefits are, as they advance, to draw others with them to a higher excellence. And this work, done to promote the good of others, will have the cooperation of unseen agencies. As we faithfully continue the work, we shall have high aspirations for righteousness, holiness, and a perfect knowledge of God.”²

“Wonderful is the work which God designs to accomplish through His servants, that His name may be glorified. God made Joseph a fountain of life to the Egyptian nation. Through Joseph the life of that whole people was preserved. Through Daniel God saved the life of all the wise men of Babylon. And these deliverances were as object lessons; they illustrated to the peo-



ple the spiritual blessings offered them through connection with the God whom Joseph and Daniel worshiped. So through His people today God desires to bring blessings to the world. Every worker in whose heart Christ abides, everyone who will show forth His love to the world, is a worker together with God for the blessing of humanity. As he receives from the Saviour grace to impart to others, from his whole being flows forth the tide of spiritual life. Christ came as the Great Physician to heal the wounds that sin has made in the human family, and His Spirit, working through His servants, imparts to sin-sick, suffering human beings a mighty healing power that is efficacious for the body and the soul. ‘In that day,’ says the Scripture, ‘there

shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness’ (Zechariah 13:1). The waters of this fountain contain medicinal properties that will heal both physical and spiritual infirmities.”³

“We receive Christ through His word, and the Holy Spirit is given to open the word of God to our understanding, and bring home its truths to our hearts. We are to pray day by day that as we read His word, God will send His Spirit to reveal to us the truth that will strengthen our souls for the day’s need.

“In teaching us to ask every day for what we need—both temporal and spiritual blessings—God has a purpose to accomplish for our good. He would have us realize our

dependence upon His constant care, for He is seeking to draw us into communion with Himself. In this communion with Christ, through prayer and the study of the great and precious truths of His word, we shall as hungry souls be fed; as those that thirst, we shall be refreshed at the fountain of life.”⁴

“All who desire the blessing of God, as did Jacob, and will lay hold of the promises, as he did, and be as earnest and persevering as he was, will succeed as he succeeded. There is so little exercise of true faith and so little of the weight of truth resting upon many professed believers because they are indolent in spiritual things. They are unwilling to make exertions, to deny self, to agonize before God, to pray long and earnestly for the blessing, and therefore they do not obtain it. That faith which will live through the time of trouble must be daily in exercise now. Those who do not make strong efforts now to exercise persevering faith, will be wholly unprepared to exercise that faith which will enable them to stand in the day of trouble.”⁵

Blessings in the home

“Thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given thee.” Thanksgiving and praise should be expressed to God for temporal blessings and for whatever comforts He bestows upon us. God would have every family that He is preparing to inhabit the eternal mansions above give glory to Him for the rich treasures of His grace. Were children, in the home life, educated and trained to be grateful to the Giver of all good things, we would see an element of heavenly grace manifest in our families. Cheerfulness would be seen in the home life, and coming from such homes, the youth would bring a spirit of respect and reverence with them into the schoolroom and into the church. There would be an attendance in the sanctuary

“In teaching us to ask every day for what we need, . . . God has a purpose to accomplish for our good.”

where God meets with His people, a reverence for all the ordinances of His worship, and grateful praise and thanksgiving would be offered for all the gifts of His providence.

“If the word of the Lord were now as strictly carried out as it was when enjoined upon ancient Israel, fathers and mothers would give to their children an example which would be of the highest value. . . . Every temporal blessing would be received with gratitude, and every spiritual blessing become doubly precious because the perception of each member of the household had become sanctified by the Word of truth. The Lord Jesus is very near to those who thus appreciate His gracious gifts, tracing all their good things back to the benevolent, loving, care-taking God, and recognizing Him as the great Fountain of all comfort and consolation, the inexhaustible Source of grace.”⁶

“If we would give more expression to our faith, rejoice more in the blessings that we know we have—the great mercy and love of God—we should have more faith and greater joy. No tongue can express, no finite mind can conceive, the blessing that results from appreciating the goodness and love of God. Even on earth we may have joy as a wellspring, never failing, because [it is] fed by the streams that flow from the throne of God.”⁷

“A well-disciplined family, who love and obey God, will be cheerful and happy. The father, when he returns from his daily labor, will not bring his perplexities to his home. He will feel that home, and the

family circle, are too sacred to be marred with unhappy perplexities. When he left his home, he did not leave his Saviour and his religion behind. Both were his companions. The sweet influence of his home, the blessing of his wife, and love of his children, make his burdens light, and he returns with peace in his heart, and cheerful encouraging words for his wife and children, who are waiting to joyfully welcome his coming. As he bows with his family, at the altar of prayer, to offer up his grateful thanks to God, for his preserving care of himself and loved ones through the day, angels of God hover in the room, and bear the fervent prayers of God-fearing parents to Heaven, as sweet incense, which are answered by returning blessings.”⁸

Blessings at work

“Riches and idleness are thought by some to be blessings indeed; but those who are always busy, and who cheerfully go about their daily tasks, are the most happy and enjoy the best health. . . . The sentence that man must toil for his daily bread, and the promise of future happiness and glory, both came from the same throne, and both are blessings.

“Poverty, in many cases, is a blessing; for it prevents youth and children from being ruined by inaction. The physical as well as the mental powers should be cultivated and properly developed. The first and constant care of parents should be to see that their children have firm constitutions, that they may be

sound men and women. It is impossible to attain this object without physical exercise.”⁹

“It is conscientious attention to what the world terms ‘little things’ that makes life a success. Little deeds of charity, little acts of self-denial, speaking simple words of helpfulness, watching against little sins—this is Christianity. A grateful acknowledgment of daily blessings, a wise improvement of daily opportunities, a diligent cultivation of entrusted talents—this is what the Master calls for.

“He who faithfully performs small duties will be prepared to answer the demands of larger responsibilities. The man who is kind and courteous in the daily life, who is generous and forbearing in his family, whose constant aim it is to make home happy, will be the first to deny self and make sacrifices when the Master calls.”¹⁰

Debtors of His benefits

“The power of God is manifested in the beating of the heart, in the action of the lungs, and in the living currents that circulate through the thousand different channels of the body. We are indebted to Him for every moment of existence, and for all the comforts of life. The powers and abilities that elevate man above the lower creation, are the endowment of the Creator.

“He loads us with His benefits. We are indebted to Him for the food we eat, the water we drink, the clothes we wear, the air we breathe. Without His special providence, the

air would be filled with pestilence and poison. He is a bountiful benefactor and preserver.

“The sun which shines upon the earth, and glorifies all nature, the weird, solemn radiance of the moon, the glories of the firmament, spangled with brilliant stars, the showers that refresh the land, and cause vegetation to flourish, the precious things of nature in all their varied richness, the lofty trees, the shrubs and plants, the waving grain, the blue sky, the green earth,



the changes of day and night, the renewing seasons, all speak to man of his Creator’s love.

“He has linked us to Himself by all these tokens in heaven and in earth. He watches over us with more tenderness than does a mother over an afflicted child. ‘Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him’ (Psalm 103:13).”¹¹

“Every blessing bestowed upon us call[s] for a response to the Author of all our mercies. The Christian should often review his past life and recall with gratitude the precious deliverances that God has wrought for him, supporting him in trial, opening ways before him when all seemed dark and forbid-

ding, refreshing him when ready to faint. He should recognize all of them as evidences of the watchcare of heavenly angels. In view of these innumerable blessings he should often ask, with subdued and grateful heart, ‘What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?’ (Psalm 116:12).

“Our time, our talents, our property, should be sacredly devoted to Him who has given us these blessings in trust. Whenever a special deliverance is wrought in

our behalf, or new and unexpected favors are granted us, we should acknowledge God’s goodness, not only by expressing our gratitude in words, but, like Jacob, by gifts and offerings to His cause. As we are continually receiving the blessings of

God, so we are to be continually giving.”¹²

“As we are continually receiving the blessings of God, so are we to be continually giving. When the heavenly Benefactor ceases to give to us, then we may be excused; for we shall have nothing to bestow. God has never left us without evidence of His love, in that He did us good. . . .

“We are sustained every moment by God’s care, and upheld by His power. He spreads our tables with food. He gives us peaceful and refreshing sleep. Weekly He brings to us the Sabbath, that we may rest from our temporal labors, and worship Him in His own

house. He has given us His word to be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. In its sacred pages we find the counsels of wisdom; and as oft as we lift our hearts to Him in penitence and faith, He grants us the blessings of His grace. Above all else is the infinite gift of God's dear Son, through whom flow all other blessings for this life and for the life to come.

"Surely goodness and mercy attend us at every step. Not till we wish the infinite Father to cease bestowing His gifts on us, should we impatiently exclaim, Is there no end of giving? Not only should we faithfully render to God our tithes, which He claims as His own, but we should bring a tribute to His treasury as an offering of gratitude. Let us with joyful hearts bring to our Creator the first fruits of all His bounties—our choicest possessions, our best and holiest service.

The only way to show gratitude

"The Lord does not need our offerings. We cannot enrich Him by our gifts. Says the psalmist: 'All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee' (1 Chronicles 29:14). Yet God permits us to show our appreciation of His mercies by self-sacrificing efforts to extend the same to others. This is the only way in which it is possible for us to manifest our gratitude and love to God. He has provided no other."¹³

"It is part of your work to teach those whom you bring into the truth to bring the tithe into the storehouse as an acknowledgment of their dependence on God. They should be fully enlightened as to their duty to return to the Lord His

own. The command to pay tithe is so plain that there is no semblance of excuse for disregarding it. If you neglect to give the new converts instruction on this point, you leave undone a most important part of your work. . . .

"All should be taught to do what they can for the Master; to render to Him according as He has prospered them. He claims as His just due a tenth of their income, be it large or small; and those who withhold this, commit robbery toward Him, and cannot expect His prospering hand to be with them. Even if the church is composed mostly of poor brethren, the subject of systematic benevolence should be thoroughly explained, and the plan heartily adopted. God is able to fulfill His promises. His resources are infinite, and He employs them all in accomplishing His will. And when He sees a faithful performance of duty in the payment of the tithes, He often, in His wise providence, opens ways whereby it shall increase. He who follows God's arrangement in the little that has been given him, will receive the same returns as he who bestows of his abundance. . . .

"Let no one neglect to give faithful and plain instruction upon tithing. Let there be instruction as to giving to the Lord that which He claims as His own; for the commendation of the Lord will not rest upon a people who rob Him

in tithes and offerings. There will be need of often setting before the people their duty on this matter that they may render unto God His own. Let the one who first presents the truth be faithful in presenting this matter and let him also who follows up the interest also make plain the requirement of God on tithing, that the people may see that in all points the laborers are teaching the same truth and are of one mind in urging them to yield obedience to all the requirements of God."¹⁴

"Should means flow into the treasury in accordance with this divinely appointed plan—a tenth of all the increase, and liberal offerings—there would be an abundance for the advancement of the Lord's work."¹⁵

May the Lord richly bless us in the faithful disposition of our gratitude toward Him. Amen. R

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The Family Firm

BY M. ESTEVEZ—U.S.A.

The Scriptures describe a beautiful picture of God's plan in the creation of this world: "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:27, 28).

"God created man for His own glory, that after test and trial the human family might become one with the heavenly family. It was God's purpose to repopulate heaven with the human family, if they would show themselves obedient to His every word."¹

Adam became a vicegerent of this first dominion that the Creator granted him in trust. "For by [Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him" (Colossians 1:16). But when our first parents sinned, this dominion was usurped from them, and we had to be bought by a price of Christ's own blood. Thus, we became His both by creation and by redemption. "The Creator of all things, He is the original proprietor. We are His stewards. All that we have is a trust from Him, to be used according to His direction.

"This is an obligation that rests upon every human being. It has to do with the whole sphere of human activity. Whether we recognize it or not, we are stewards, supplied from God with talents and facilities and placed in the world to do a work appointed by Him.

"Money is not ours; houses and grounds, pictures and furniture, garments and luxuries, do not belong to us. We are pilgrims, we are strangers. We have only a grant of those things that are necessary for health and life. . . . Our temporal blessings are given us in trust, to prove whether we can be entrusted with eternal riches. If we endure the proving of God, then we shall receive that purchased possession which is to be our own—glory, honor, and immortality."²

Even our families belong to God. He established the home firm to carry out His purposes.

"The family firm is a sacred, social society, in which each member is to act a part, each helping the other. The work of the household is to move smoothly, like the different parts of well-regulated machinery.

"Every member of the family should realize that a responsibility rests upon him individually to do his part in adding to the comfort, order, and regularity of the family."³

"Our business in this world . . . is to see what virtues we can teach our children and our families to possess, that they shall have an influence upon other families, and thus we can be an educating power although we never enter into the

desk. A well-ordered, a well-disciplined family in the sight of God is more precious than fine gold, even than the golden wedge of Ophir."⁴

The influence of the well-regulated family will be felt upon other families and thus fulfill God's plan. His purpose has never changed—it has just been delayed.

"The mission of the home extends beyond its own members. The Christian home is to be an object lesson, illustrating the excellence of the true principles of life."⁵

Order is the first law of heaven, and the families on earth must continually seek to follow the principles of God's government.

"There is need for constant watching that the principles which lie at the foundation of family government are not disregarded. The Lord designs that the families on earth shall be symbols of the family in heaven. And when earthly families are conducted in right lines, the same sanctification of the Spirit will be brought into the church."⁶

The father

Let us consider the order of God's government for the family firm. The husband and father is the head of the family and ultimately responsible before God as its general manager.

"The home is an institution of God. God designed that the family circle, father, mother, and children, should exist in this world as a firm. . . .

"The husband is the house-band of the home treasures, binding by

his strong, earnest, devoted affection the members of the household, mother and children, together in the strongest bonds of union.

“His name, ‘house-band,’ is the true definition of husband. . . . I saw that but few fathers realize their responsibility.”⁷

The father is also the main provider in the household. “For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table” (Psalm 128:2, 3).

The father is required to develop habits of industry and train his children in usefulness. “He who has a family is under obligation, as a steward of God, to set a right example to his children. He is to educate them to be intelligent and useful, to employ the strength given them by God in advancing His work in the world. By precept and example he is to train them to be faithful stewards. They are to be educated to realize that they hold in trust lent treasures, which are to be used to the very best advantage in God’s service.

“Teach your children that nothing is to be withheld from God, that all their gifts are to be used to promote His glory. Teach them to cherish a sense of their accountability to use wisely their entrusted capabilities, improving and perfecting them by use. They are accountable for the judicious exercise of every faculty.”⁸

The father must take the time to work with his children thus exercising his influence over his children. “The father, as the head of his own household, should understand how to train his children for usefulness and duty. This is his special work, above every other. . . . If he is engaged in business which almost wholly closes the door of usefulness to his family, he should seek other employment which will not prevent him from devoting some time to his children. If he neglects them, he is



“The family firm is a sacred, social society, in which each member is to act a part, each helping the other.”

unfaithful to the trust committed to him of God.”⁹

Habits of industry will naturally develop with the sense of ownership. “The sense of being owners of their own homes would inspire them with a strong desire for improvement. They would soon acquire skill in planning and devising for themselves; their children would be educated to habits of industry and economy, and the intellect would be greatly strengthened.”¹⁰ The father must not excuse himself from providing that which is “necessary for the health as well as the morals of his children . . . and provide conveniences to lighten the labor of his wife.”¹¹

He also must show appreciation to his partner in the firm by sharing with his wife of the means that he has acquired by labor. “Give your wife a share of the money that you receive. Let her have this as her own, and let her use it as she desires.”¹² “You must help each other. Do not look upon it as a virtue to hold fast the purse strings, refusing to give your wife money.

“You should allow your wife a certain sum weekly and should let her do what she please with this money.”¹³

The mother

In the home, the mother’s responsibility is without equal. She is not only a helpmeet to her husband but, more importantly, she is the teacher in the home.

“The mother is the queen of the home, and the children are her subjects. She is to rule her household wisely, in the dignity of her motherhood. Her influence in the home is to be paramount; her word, law. . . .

“The children are to be taught to regard their mother, not as a slave whose work it is to wait on them, but as a queen who is to guide and direct them, teaching them line upon line, precept upon precept.”¹⁴ There is no aspect of the home where her influence is not felt. “The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil” (Proverbs 31:11).

“She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her



The training of children should include the knowledge of home finances.

hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy" (Proverbs 31:15–20).

By practical application the mother will lead her children to learn for themselves habits of economy, industry, and responsibility.

"Teach [your children] to use their minds as much as possible, so to plan their work that they may do it quickly and thoroughly. Teach them to be prompt and energetic in their work, to economize time so that no minutes may be lost in their allotted hours of work. Teach them neatness and order. If possible, teach both boys and girls how to cook and how to make themselves useful in every department of the home work. Encourage neatness and order. It is your duty so to fit them that they will be capable in after years of caring for their own homes.

"All this takes time. It requires patience. The mind of the mother must be clear, not wearied and burdened with many other responsibilities. You cannot afford to so devote your energies to outside work that you are unfitted for the duty of training your little flock at home. Remember that they are Christ's property. Learn of Christ daily, that you may be able to impart the knowledge of Him to your children."¹⁵

The children

The children are stewards in training. They belong to the family

firm, share in its privileges, and are entitled to belong to the family meetings. "God wants the children of all believers to be trained from their earliest years to share the burdens that their parents must bear in caring for them. To them is given a portion of the home for their rooms and the right and privilege of having a place at the family board. God requires parents to feed and clothe their children. But the obligations of parents and children are mutual. On their part children are required to respect and honor their parents."¹⁶ As an integral part of the family we must enlist their cooperation and as far as possible permit them to enter into its plans.

"In the home training of the youth the principle of cooperation is invaluable. From their earliest years children should be led to feel that they are a part of the home firm. Even the little ones should be trained to share in the daily work and should be made to feel that their help is needed and is appreciated. The older ones should be their parents' assistants, entering into their plans and sharing their responsibilities and burdens. Let fathers and mothers take time to teach their children, let them show that they value their help, desire their confidence, and enjoy their companionship, and the children will not be slow to respond. Not only will the parents' burden be lightened, and the children receive a practical training of inestimable worth, but there will be a strength-

ening of the home ties and a deepening of the very foundations of character."¹⁷

For the development of symmetrical characters, the training of children should include the knowledge of home finances. "Money which comes to the young with but little effort on their part will not be valued. Some have to obtain money by hard work and privation, but how much safer are those youth who know just where their spending money comes from, who know what their clothing and food costs, and what it takes to purchase a home!"¹⁸

Under wise supervision, children should learn to manage their own accounts from which they will sacrifice their wants in the benefit of the cause of God and the needy. "Let every youth and every child be taught, not merely to solve imaginary problems, but to keep an accurate account of his own income and outgoes. Let him learn the right use of money by using it. Whether supplied by their parents or by their own earnings, let boys and girls learn to select and purchase their own clothing, their books, and other necessities; and by keeping an account of their expenses they will learn, as they could learn in no other way, the value and the use of money.

"This training will help them to distinguish true economy from niggardliness on the one hand and prodigality on the other. Rightly directed, it will encourage habits of benevolence. It will aid the youth in

learning to give, not from the mere impulse of the moment, as their feelings are stirred, but regularly and systematically.”¹⁹

“The children may learn to show their love for Christ by denying themselves needless trifles, for the purchase of which much money slips through their fingers. In every family this work should be done. It requires tact and method, but it will be the best education the children can receive. And if all the little children would present their offerings to the Lord, their gifts would be as little rivulets which, when united and set flowing, would swell into a river.

“Keep a little money box on the mantel or in some safe place where it can be seen, in which the children can place their offerings for the Lord. . . . Thus they may be trained for God.”²⁰

“There are many ways in which children can earn money themselves and can act their part in bringing thank offerings to Jesus, who gave His own life for them. . . . They should be taught that the money which they earn is not theirs to spend as their inexperienced minds may choose, but to use judiciously and to give to missionary purposes. They should not be satisfied to take money from their father or mother and put it into the treasury as an offering, when it is not theirs. They should say to themselves, ‘Shall I give of that which costs me nothing?’”²¹

Economy

The parents will set the tone of the manner in which money is used in the home. A lack of system and order concerning finances on the part of parents will instill the same defective character in their children. “All should learn how to keep accounts. Some neglect this work as nonessential, but this is wrong. All expenses should be accurately stated.”²² This means that a simple but accurate method of accounting

of income and expenses must be devised. Most importantly it must be kept up to date; otherwise it will not provide the accurate view of the home’s financial standing. This bookkeeping will facilitate economy because most financially draining activities come in the form of incidental purchases that happen to repeat themselves unnoticeably. “Waste not your pennies and your shillings in purchasing unnecessary things. You may think these little sums do not amount to much, but these many littles will prove a great whole. . . .

“The Lord would have His people thoughtful and caretaking. He would have them study economy in everything, and waste nothing.

“The amount daily spent in needless things, with the thought, ‘It is only a nickel,’ ‘It is only a dime,’ seems very little; but multiply these littles by the days of the year, and as the years go by, the array of figures will seem almost incredible.”²³

The use of our earnings must be prioritized. “God’s requirements come first. We are not doing His will if we consecrate to Him what is left of our income after all our imaginary wants have been supplied. Before any part of our earnings is consumed, we should take out and present to Him that portion which He claims. . . . A part of this income is to be devoted to the poor, and a large portion to be applied to the cause of God. When that which God claims is rendered to Him, the remainder will be sanctified and blessed to our own use. But when a man robs God by withholding that which He requires, His curse rests upon the whole.”²⁴ Secondly, save systematically a portion of the income. This can be ten percent as is usually considered adequate or an amount that you designate. “Every week a portion of your wages should be reserved and in no case touched unless suffering actual want, or to render back to the Giver in offerings to God.”²⁵

Conclusion

“After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them” (Matthew 25:19). He asks His servants to give an account of their stewardship. Fathers and mothers will be asked, “Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?” (Jeremiah 13:20, last part). By the grace that God grants us we may answer on that day, “Here am I, and the children whom thou hast given me.”

“It is the privilege of Christian parents today, as it was the privilege of God’s people of old, to bring their children with them to the Promised Land.

“You want a household for God; you want your family for God. You want to take them up to the gates of the city and say, ‘Here am I, Lord, and the children that Thou hast given me.’ They may be men and women that have grown to manhood and womanhood, but they are your children all the same; and your educating, and your watchfulness over them have been blessed of God, till they stand as overcomers. Now you can say, ‘Here am I, Lord, and the children.’”²⁶

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Accountable for Every Talent

“How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship” (Luke 16:2).

BY P. MANGUL—MOLDOVA

Jesus Christ, the greatest Teacher the world has ever known, revealed some of His greatest truths about salvation by the use of parables. In Matthew 25:14–30, through the parable of the talents, Jesus explains how God entrusts every person with a talent or gift that is instrumental in his or her salvation.

“God has lent men talents—an intellect to originate, a heart to be the place of His throne, affection to flow out in blessings to others, a conscience to convict of sin. Each one has received something from the Master, and each one is to do his part in supplying the needs of God’s work.”¹

“The present is our day of trust. To every person is committed some peculiar gift or talent which is to be used to advance the Redeemer’s kingdom. All God’s responsible agents, from the lowliest and most obscure to those in high positions in the church, are entrusted with the Lord’s goods.”²

To each according to his or her ability

“It has come to be understood that talents are given only to a certain favored class, to the exclusion of others who, of course, are not called upon to share in the toils or rewards. But it is not so repre-



sented in the parable. When the Master of the house called His servants, He gave to every man *his* work. The whole family of God are included in the responsibility of using their Lord’s goods.”³

God’s plan in giving talents is different. To one He gives more, to the other less, according to the ability of each. None should complain about the talents received.

“The Lord has a place for everyone in His great plan. Talents that are not needed are not bestowed.”⁴

Everyone receives according to his or her ability. The one who has received more, should not exalt himself or herself above the other who has received less, and the one who has received less should not envy and complain against the one who has more.

“To every man God has given ‘according to his several ability.’

The talents are not apportioned capriciously. He who has ability to use five talents receives five. He who can improve but two, receives two. He who can wisely use only one, receives one. None need lament that they have not received larger gifts; for He who has apportioned to every man is equally honored by the improvement of each trust, whether it be great or small.”⁵

A variety of gifts

“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will” (1 Corinthians 12:4–11).

In His great wisdom Jesus gives the talents so that no one will lack anything, but also that one can complement or “round off” the other. The church is given “diversities of gifts,” all for the glory of God and the salvation of people. Not all have the same talents or the same gifts, but all are called to labor in His vineyard in harmony and oneness.

Only through the Holy Spirit abiding in our heart can we make a wise use of these gifts and see them multiplied in the service for Christ.

There are some gifts that only a few have, but gifts such as speech, time, influence, and health are enjoyed by nearly all.

Time

All, without exception, possess the talent of time. Everyone has it—whether poor, young, old, educated or uneducated. The Spirit of Prophecy tells us:

“Our time belongs to God. Every moment is His, and we are under the most solemn obligation to improve it to His glory. Of no talent He has given will He require a more strict account than of our time.”⁶

Speech

This is one of the most precious talents that God has given to human beings. It needs to be employed in full measure for the proclamation of God’s wisdom and love as a precious treasure of His grace. Sadly, how often we use this talent improperly!

“The right culture and use of the power of speech has to do with every line of Christian work; it enters into the home life, and into all our intercourse with one another. We should accustom ourselves to speak in pleasant tones, to use pure and correct language, and words that are kind and courteous. Sweet, kind words are as dew and gentle showers to the soul. The Scripture says of Christ that grace was poured into His lips that He might ‘know how to

“The whole family of God are included in the responsibility of using their Lord’s goods.”

speak a word in season to him that is weary’ (Psalm 45:2; Isaiah 50:4). And the Lord bids us, ‘Let your speech be alway with grace’ (Colossians 4:6) ‘that it may minister grace unto the hearers’ (Ephesians 4:29). . . .

“Not one word is to be spoken unadvisedly. No evil speaking, no frivolous talk, no fretful repining or impure suggestion, will escape the lips of him who is following Christ. The apostle Paul, writing by the Holy Spirit, says, ‘Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth’ (Ephesians 4:29). A corrupt communication does not mean only words that are vile. It means any expression contrary to holy principles and pure and undefiled religion. It includes impure hints and covert insinuations of evil. Unless instantly resisted, these lead to great sin.”⁷

Will God hold us accountable for this gift? The Lord Jesus has solemnly declared that for “every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matthew 12:36, 37).

Influence

Influence is a talent which everyone has, without exception. But it is important to notice that as with the other talents, this one can end up either as a blessing or as a curse.

“Every soul is surrounded by an atmosphere of its own—an atmosphere, it may be, charged with the life-giving power of faith, courage, and hope, and sweet with the fra-

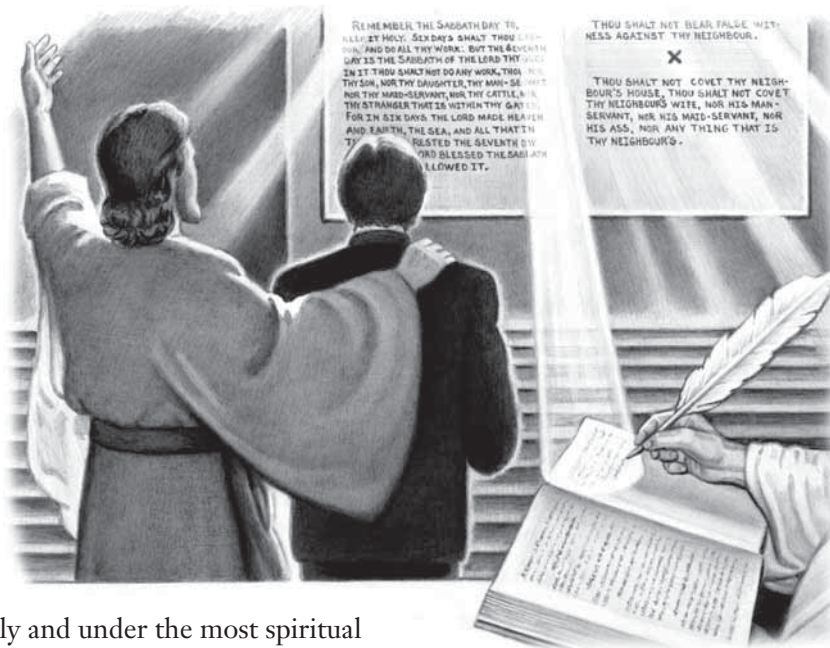
grance of love. Or it may be heavy and chill with the gloom of discontent and selfishness, or poisonous with the deadly taint of cherished sin. By the atmosphere surrounding us, every person with whom we come in contact is consciously or unconsciously affected.

“This is a responsibility from which we cannot free ourselves. Our words, our acts, our dress, our deportment, even the expression of the countenance, has an influence. Upon the impression thus made there hang results for good or evil which no man can measure. Every impulse thus imparted is seed sown which will produce its harvest. It is a link in the long chain of human events, extending we know not whither. If by our example we aid others in the development of good principles, we give them power to do good. In their turn they exert the same influence upon others, and they upon still others. Thus by our unconscious influence thousands may be blessed.”⁸

Health

God wants everyone to be healthy and to keep his or her body in health. Health is one of the talents that is of great importance, which we can use to serve both our God and our neighbors.

“Health is a blessing of which few appreciate the value; yet upon it the efficiency of our mental and physical powers largely depends. Our impulses and passions have their seat in the body, and it must be kept in the best condition phys-



ically and under the most spiritual influences in order that our talents may be put to the highest use. . . .

“The misuse of our physical powers shortens the period of time in which our lives can be used for the glory of God. And it unfits us to accomplish the work God has given us to do. By allowing ourselves to form wrong habits, by keeping late hours, by gratifying appetite at the expense of health, we lay the foundation for feebleness. By neglecting physical exercise, by overworking mind or body, we unbalance the nervous system. Those who thus shorten their lives and unfit themselves for service by disregarding nature’s laws, are guilty of robbery toward God. And they are robbing their fellow men also. The opportunity of blessing others, the very work for which God sent them into the world, has by

their own course of action been cut short.”

The faithful use of talents

“God desires His workers to look to Him as the Giver of all they possess, to remember that all that they have and are comes from Him who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working. The delicate touch of the physician’s hand, his power over nerve and muscle, his knowledge of the delicate organism of the body, are the wisdom of divine power, to be used in behalf of suffering humanity. The skill with which the carpenter uses the hammer, the strength with which the blacksmith makes the anvil ring, come from God. He has entrusted men with talents, and He desires

them to look to Him for counsel. Thus they may use His gifts with unerring aptitude, testifying that they are workers together with God.”¹⁰

Paul confirms this truth with the following words: “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness” (Romans 12:6–8).

Peter also calls the brethren and sisters to faithfulness in God’s service. He shows in what way this service can be successful: “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (1 Peter 4:10, 11).

“If we desire to be acknowledged as good and faithful servants, we must do thorough, consecrated work for the Master. He will reward diligent, honest service. If men will put their trust in Him, if they will recognize His compassion and benevolence, and will walk humbly

“Every individual will be dealt with personally.”

before Him, He will cooperate with them. He will increase their talents.”¹¹

Reward or condemnation—which will it be?

“After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them” (Matthew 25:19).

“Every talent which returns to the Master will be scrutinized. The doings and trusts of God’s servants will not be considered an unimportant matter. Every individual will be dealt with personally and will be required to give an account of the talents entrusted to him, whether he has improved or abused them. The reward bestowed will be proportionate to the improvement of the talents. The punishment awarded will be according as the talents have been abused.”¹²

“Never lose sight of the fact that you belong to God, that He has bought you with a price, and you must render an account to Him for all His entrusted talents.”¹³

Without exception, all of us will be called to give an account of our work and of the talents bestowed upon us. A special responsibility is placed on those who have been entrusted with greater abilities and gifts, “for unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more” (Luke 12:48).

Even the one who has received less cannot be indifferent to the

gift received, because when we are dealing with salvation, nothing is unimportant. In the work of reforming our characters, all things are essential. Even if God has entrusted us with one talent only, He will hold us accountable for the faithful use of it.

Maybe some of the things we need to do are not always easy and pleasant, but we have no right to abandon the duty assigned to us. The reward is promised for our faithfulness. Often this increases the trials and tribulations we must face along the way. Nonetheless, the apostle declared with assurance, “I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18).

We have a commission given to us by Jesus Christ: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations. . . . I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:19, 20). Christ has promised that He will be with everyone who would like to labor for the salvation of souls for the kingdom of God. He will be always beside us to teach, help, and protect us in the difficult situations in our life. He will be always beside us to perfect the abilities of every faithful laborer, and multiply his or her talents for His glory.

“The Master will require each of His stewards to give an account of his stewardship, to show what he has gained with the talents entrusted

to him. Those to whom rewards are given will impute no merit to themselves for their diligent trading; they will give all the glory to God.”¹⁴

Conclusion

Dear brethren and sisters, are we ready to consecrate the rest of our life in service to our God? If we are not going to do this today, tomorrow might be too late. What is to be our choice? Are we going to hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant”; or will we hear the fearful condemnation, “Thou wicked and slothful servant”?

“Now the God of peace . . . make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen” (Hebrews 13:20, 21). R

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⁵*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 328.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 342.

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⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 339, 340.

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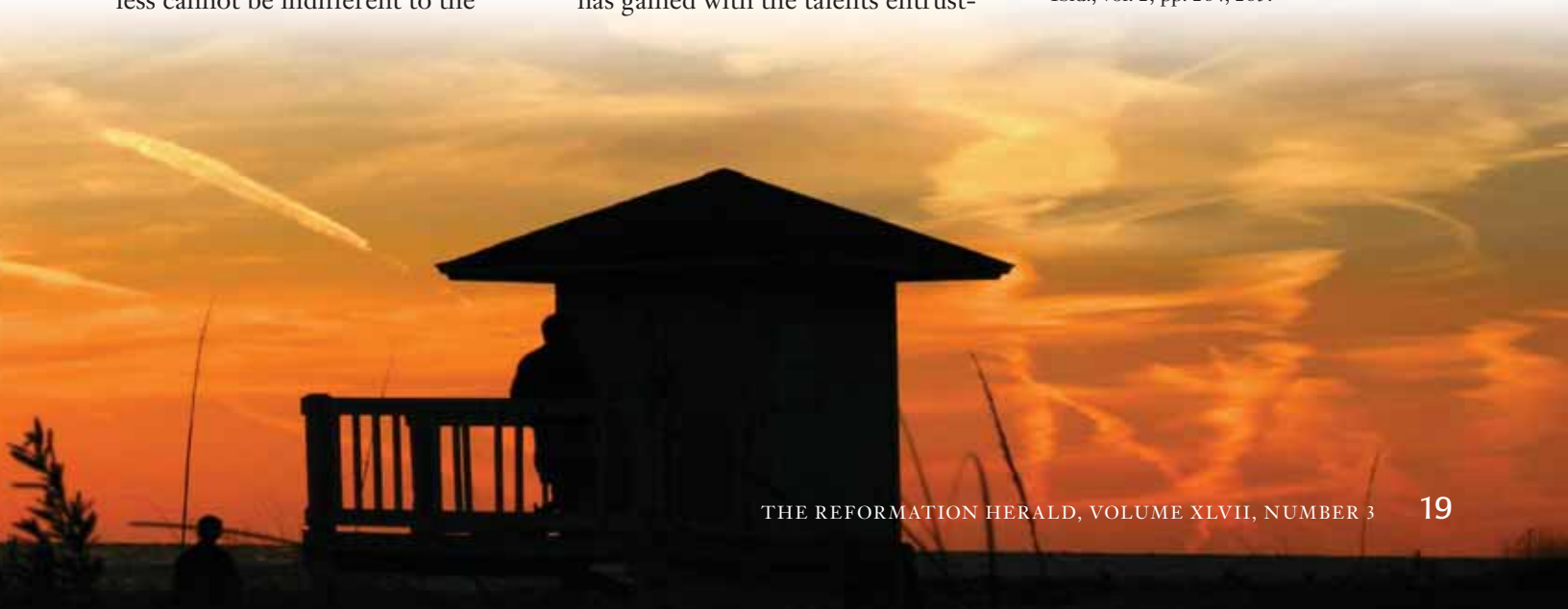
¹⁰*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 114.

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¹³*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 399.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 284, 285.



Our Motive for Service

“I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God” (Romans 15:17).

BY O. A. ANDRADE—HONDURAS

The Web of Humanity

“God that made the world and all things therein . . . hath made of one blood all nations of men” (Acts 17:24, 26).

God has manifested to the human family a deep and infinite love, yet how little it is appreciated. Christ died on the cross of Calvary so that sinners be redeemed from the slavery of sin and be established on vantage ground before God. Let us consider the marvelous love that the Father has demonstrated by this great sacrifice. It is our duty to share this love with those outside the fold, to tell sinners what Christ has done for them, and what they can become as a result of this transforming grace. Because of all that the Lord has done for us, we want to see His name glorified and His cause going forward.

Now as never before, we need a wise strategy. Human prejudice does not come from God. Our tendency to allow ourselves to be guided by impulse is very dangerous. Human impulse is a very poor element that cannot replace sanctified reason.

The Lord Jesus considers each soul with deep interest. He has affirmed the spiritual characteristics that His church must carefully preserve. The church is in the world and must labor for the world, but must not open her doors to worldiness.



He came to serve

As human beings, we all are in the same condition before God: We are sinners. To offer us peace with Him and deliverance from eternal perdition, God stretched out His hand toward us, renouncing all the treasures of heaven for our benefit. He did not withhold anything to redeem our life—He even gave His most precious treasure, His beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

During His earthly life, the Saviour, as part of the plan of redemption, developed lessons of service, that we might learn from Him by following His example. We find this concept summarized in the following words: “I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you” (John 13:15).

“God desires the willing service of our hearts. He has endowed us with reasoning faculties, with talents of ability, and with means and influence, to be exercised for the good of mankind, that we may manifest his Spirit before the world. Precious opportunities and privileges are placed within our reach, and if we neglect them, we rob others, we defraud our own souls, and dishonor our Maker. We shall not want to meet these slighted opportunities and neglected privileges in the day of judgment. Our eternal interests for the future depend on the present diligent performance of duty in improving the talents that God has given into our trust for the salvation of souls. . . .

“True religion works out the principles of God’s law—love to God and love to man. Those who will be accepted of Heaven will have put their talents out to the exchangers for the glory of God and the good of humanity. They will have become laborers together with God, and will receive the approval of the Master when He comes in the clouds of heaven. Religion is something more than a profession, something deeper than an impulsive feeling. It is doing the will of God through faith in Christ.”¹

The reason for service

“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto

you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40).

The Lord has reached us by using all available means, divine and human, and they are at our disposal. They are so numerous that our finite minds cannot fathom or even readily discern them often enough to notice all their positive effects.

With firm assurance we can thank our heavenly Father for all the divine agencies at work—for example, the person who came and brought us the message of salvation through His written word. This messenger came having the love generated by our Creator toward God and his or her neighbor, to share this love with us and to present Jesus Christ, the way to life, that through Him we can be restored and be called children of God. Is not this one of the most powerful reasons to inspire us as children of the Most High to work for our fellow men? To strive for the salvation of those in the region of the shadow of death, from whence we ourselves were taken, so they, too, will have the opportunity to be redeemed for eternal life, just as we were?

Our privilege and responsibility

The Lord invites—and then sends—us to serve humanity. Let us take hold of the desire, together with our spiritual brethren and sisters, to allow the benevolent, just, and merciful character of Christ to be manifested by us toward our fellow beings. Thus they can share in the same blessings as we have. We can thank the Lord that He desires for us to be valiant instruments in the salvation of other souls.

Remember: “Freely ye have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8).

God has established a system to develop the plan of salvation and we are participants, voluntarily com-

mitting ourselves to Him, accepting all the requirements which He presents to us, both for the good of His cause and for our own benefit as well.

For all the members of His fold, He extends privileges to each according to his or her ability—some to preach the gospel personally, others to do medical missionary work, others to teach health reform for the benefit of souls, others to serve in the leadership of the church, and others to serve in the education of His people, ultimately in every aspect of life as touched by the gospel.

The Lord wants us to honor Him by making wise use of our privileges and responsibilities while it is still possible to do so. Those who are called to labor full-time in His vineyard must subsist on this support. Jesus said, “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few” (Matthew 9:37). As members of the church, we should constantly keep in mind that these words of Christ are every bit as valid today as they were when He first uttered them. We each individually have both the privilege and the responsibility to support faithfully the gospel ministry that it may be amply sustained through our tithes and generous freewill offerings.

During the great reformation in Nehemiah’s day, it was expressed like this: “We should bring the firstfruits of our dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and the tithes of

our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage” (Nehemiah 10:37).

And from the time of Paul it is written: “Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel” (1 Corinthians 9:13, 14).

God’s warning given through the prophet Malachi also echoes down to our day: “Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings” (Malachi 3:8).

“The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself” (Proverbs 11:25).

“Liberality is one of the directions of the Holy Spirit, and when the professed people of God withhold from the Lord His own in tithes and offerings, they meet with spiritual loss. The Lord does not reward a stinted liberality. He calls upon the people to honor Him with their substance, and with the firstfruits of all their increase. . . .

“God has made us His almoners, copartners with Him in the great work of advancing His kingdom on the earth. We may pursue the course taken by the unfaithful steward, and by so doing lose the most precious privileges ever granted to men. For thousands of years God has worked through human agencies, but at His will He can drop

*God stretched out His hand toward us,
renouncing all the treasures
of heaven for our benefit.*

“[God] can carry on His work though we act no part in it. But who among us would be pleased to have the Lord do this?”

out the selfish, the money lover, the covetous. He can carry on His work though we act no part in it. But who among us would be pleased to have the Lord do this?”²

Wills

“Money is a constant test of the affections. Whoever acquires more than sufficient for his real needs should seek wisdom and grace to know his own heart and to keep his heart diligently, lest he have imaginary wants and become an unfaithful steward, using with prodigality his Lord’s entrusted capital.”³

“Those who are faithful stewards of the Lord’s means will know just how their business stands, and, like wise men, they will be prepared for any emergency. Should their probation close suddenly, they would not leave such great perplexity upon those who are called to settle their estate.

“Many are not exercised upon the subject of making their wills while they are in apparent health. But this precaution should be taken by our brethren. They should know their financial standing, and should

not allow their business to become entangled. They should arrange their property in such a manner that they may leave it at any time.”⁴

“If [parents] have children who are afflicted or are struggling in poverty, and who will make a judicious use of means, they should be considered. But if they have unbelieving children who have abundance of this world, and who are serving the world, they commit a sin against the Master who has made them His stewards, by placing means in their hands merely because they are their children. God’s claim are not to be lightly regarded.

“And it should be distinctly understood that because parents have made their will, this will not prevent them from giving means to the cause of God while they live. This they should do. They should have the satisfaction here, and the reward hereafter, of disposing of their surplus means while they live. They should do their part to advance the cause of God. They should use the means lent them by the Master to carry on the work which needs to be done in His vineyard.”⁵

Satan is not content to have such order in the homes of God’s children. Rather, “Satan delights to look upon disordered and ill-governed families, for his success depends largely upon the control he can have over the families of earth. . . . He is determined the standard of righteousness shall not be the rule for the formation of character.”⁶

He will work tirelessly to tempt the home firm to relax ever so slightly one of the laws of God’s government and bring many other evils in its train. As he said to Jesus in the desert, “All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me” (Matthew 4:9, last part).

The Distortion of Debt

There are specious temptations adapted to different minds. The love of gain may entrap both the rich and the poor. Men are overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and the cares of this life. Love of fashion and display is rife among all ages and genders.

“There are those who, as soon as they get money, spend it for dainties to eat, or for needless adornments of dress, and when the supply of money becomes reduced, they feel the need of that which they have wasted. If they have an abundant income, they use every dollar of it; if small, it is not sufficient for the habits of extravagance they have acquired, and they borrow to supply the demand. They gather from any source possible to meet their fancied necessities. They become

dishonest and untruthful, and the record that stands against them in the books of heaven is such as they will not care to look upon in the day of judgment. The desire of the eye must be gratified, the craving of the appetite indulged, and they keep themselves poor by their improvident habits, when they might have learned to live within their means.”⁷

The state of affairs among families of believers is as Satan would have it; he needs not fear their influence.

He endeavors to keep the money in his ranks by encouraging debt. “When one voluntarily becomes involved in debt, he is entangling himself in one of Satan’s nets which he sets for souls.”⁸

Debt is an extremely heavy burden to carry. It keeps your mind preoccupied with the financial problems, weakens the faith, and leads to discouragement. Along with its pressures, it leads into other temptations. “The practice of borrowing money to relieve some pressing necessity, and making no calculation for canceling the indebtedness, however common, is demoralizing. The Lord would have all who believe the truth converted from these self-deceiving practices. They should choose rather to suffer want than to commit a dishonest act. No soul can resort to prevarication or dishonesty in handling the Lord’s goods, and stand guiltless before God.”⁹

“The man who has been unfortunate, and finds himself in debt, should not take the Lord’s portion

to cancel his debts to his fellow men. He should consider that in these transactions he is being tested, and that in reserving the Lord’s portion for his own use he is robbing the Giver. He is debtor to God for all that he has, but he becomes a double debtor when he uses the Lord’s reserved fund in paying debts to human beings. ‘Unfaithfulness to God’ is written against his name in the books of heaven. He has an account to settle with God for appropriating the Lord’s means for his own convenience. And the want of principle shown in his misappropriation of God’s means will be revealed in his management of other matters.”¹⁰

The pressure of debt and distress over the financial condition of a home firm affects all within the family. The love, joy, and peace that should exist becomes overshadowed by worry, stress, and bitterness. The Spirit of Prophecy counsels, “Do not falter, be discouraged, or turn back. Deny your taste, deny the indulgence of appetite, save your pence and pay your debts. Work them off as fast as possible. When you can stand forth a free man again, owing no man anything, you will have achieved a great victory.”¹¹

Conclusion

Dear brethren and sisters, today is the day to reconfirm our vows of obedience to God in every aspect of life. We all see and know that the harvest indeed is great and the laborers are few. And in reality, it is only through these hands of ours

that God can pour out the resources necessary for the work to grow. But we must be unselfish—self-denying—that others like us may get a chance to learn the truths of salvation that have touched our life.

By being supportive of the ministry at all times, the lay missionary work, the local church and all its projects, we will not be idle but busy in the salvation of souls, and thus be preparing ourselves to obtain the character of our Teacher and glorify His name. There will be no reason to give place to lukewarmness or spiritual death.

“ ‘My grace is sufficient for you’ is the assurance of the Great Teacher. Catch the inspiration of the words, and never, never talk doubt and unbelief. Be energetic. There is no half-and-half service in pure and undefiled religion. ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength’ (Mark 12:30). The very highest sanctified ambition is demanded of those who believe the word of God.”¹²

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Partnership With God

BY J. VONCINA—AUSTRALIA

A partnership is an agreement. It implies deep trust. None would ever dare to enter into a partnership with another unless a truly profound sense of confidence existed between the two of them.

In the business world, after observing many years of loyal service on the part of a subordinate, the chief executive officer of a company may take him or her aside, place a welcoming arm around the shoulder and, with a warm smile, entrust the junior servant with much greater responsibility. Such a promotion could grant that person access to many trade secrets of the company. It may entitle him or her to become part of key decision-making processes involving millions of dollars. What an honor it all would be for the one thus entrusted! Many people throughout history have eagerly coveted such positions of trust.

Yet how much greater honor—how much more worthy a privilege it is to realize that the Master of the entire universe today places His divine arm around our shoulder and entrusts you and me with His valuable goods. He is calling us into a special partnership with Him. What a tremendous blessing is bestowed upon vessels unworthy as we are!

Jesus says, “Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto

you” (John 15:15). Christ lets us in on some of the trade secrets of that grand corporation—His own magnificent creation. “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!” (Psalm 8:3–9).

According to these verses, all of humanity has been granted dominion over the earth. But in John 15, we also saw a unique trust found on a higher level. It is granted only to the “friends” of Christ. How do we become such worthy friends of His? He says, “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you” (John 15:14).

Partnership is a two-way street. It involves giving-and-taking. Christ initiates this whole process by first giving to each one of us in abundance. “He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matthew 5:45). He “gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful

seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness” (Acts 14:17). Then, we in turn are to respond to His great love. “What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people” (Psalm 116:12–14).

We are His own

“Whether we give ourselves to the Lord or not, we are His. Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price. We are the Lord’s by creation, and we are His by redemption. Therefore we have no right to think that we can do as we please. All we handle is the Lord’s. We have no right of ourselves to anything, not even to an existence. All our money, time, and talents belong to God, and are lent us by Him that we may accomplish the work He has given us to do. He has given us the charge, ‘Occupy till I come’ (Luke 19:13).

“Do not make it a business to serve yourselves and become indifferent in regard to the claims of God upon you. You are His property.”¹

The Creator of the universe declares, “I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor the goats out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the

world is mine, and the fulness thereof" (Psalm 50:9-12).

Everything belongs to God. So when He entrusts us to become His partners, He is counting on us to make wise use of every penny, every talent, every minute, under our control. He grants us amazing freedom of choice, but we must realize that anything which might cater to our own pride would surely bring disappointment to Him. Instead of selfish pleasure-seeking, He wants to see in us the same spirit as Christ maintained when on earth. The apostle makes it clear to us: "Ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

"God has a claim on us and all that we have. His claim is paramount to every other. And in acknowledgment of this claim, He bids us render to Him a fixed proportion of all that He gives us. The tithe is this specified portion."²

The tithe

Again, everything belongs to God and He is only trusting us as His partners to make wise choices in all aspects of life. Yet, as mentioned, He does distinctly refer to one specific portion by name: The tithe.

Tithing has been practiced since earliest times. For example, our first parents were forbidden to eat from one specific tree in the Garden of Eden. That was a type of tithing. Abraham returned tithes to Melchisedec. Jacob fervently pledged to carry on the practice of tithing when, in a moment of great personal crisis, he saw in his dream the ladder connecting heaven and earth, symbolic of his Saviour. The deep gratitude of his heart was expressed in his solemn vow, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall

*"God has a claim on us
and all that we have.
His claim is paramount
to every other."*



the Lord be my God: and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee" (Genesis 28:20-22).

Later, "when God delivered Israel from Egypt to be a special treasure unto Himself, He taught them to devote a tithe of their possessions to the service of the tabernacle. This was a special offering, for a special work. All that remained of their property was God's, and was to be used to His glory. But the tithe was set apart for the support of those who ministered in the sanctuary. It was to be given from the first fruits of all the increase, and, with gifts and offerings, it provided ample means for supporting the ministry of the gospel for that time."³

"It is a heaven-appointed plan that men should return to the Lord His own; and this is so plainly stated that men and women have no excuse for misunderstanding or evading the duties and responsibilities God has laid upon them. Those who claim that they cannot see this to be their duty, reveal to the heavenly universe, to the church, and to the world that they do not want to see this plainly stated requirement. They think that by following the Lord's plan they would detract from their own possessions. In the covetousness of their selfish souls they desire to have the whole capital, both principal and interest, to use for their own benefit."⁴ Dear brethren and sisters, we must beware of such a danger!

Where is our tithe to go?

"The minister should, by precept and example, teach the people to regard the tithe as sacred. He should not feel that he can retain and apply it according to his own judgment because he is a minister. It is not his. He is not at liberty to devote to himself whatever he thinks is his due. He should not give his influence to any plans for diverting from their legitimate use the tithes and offerings dedicated to God. They are to be **placed in His treasury and held sacred for His service as He has appointed.**

"God desires all His stewards to be exact in following divine arrangements. They are not to offset the Lord's plans by performing some deed of charity or giving some gift or some offering when or how they, the human agents, shall see fit. It is a very poor policy for men to seek to improve on God's plan, and invent a makeshift, averaging up their good impulses on this and that occasion, and offsetting them against God's requirements. God calls upon all to give their influence to His own arrangement. He has made His plan known, and all who would cooperate with Him must carry out this plan instead of daring to attempt an improvement on it."⁵

"The tithe is set apart for a special use. It is not to be regarded as a poor fund. It is to be **especially devoted to the support of those who are bearing God's message to the world**, and it should not be diverted from this purpose."⁶



*“The use of the tithe must be looked upon
as a sacred matter by our people.”*

“God lays
His hand
upon all
man’s
possession,
saying: I
am the
owner of
the universe,

and these goods
are Mine. The tithe you have
withheld I reserve **for the support
of My servants in their work of
opening the Scriptures to those
who are in the regions of darkness,
who do not understand My
law.** In using My reserve fund to
gratify your own desires you have
robbed souls of the light which I
made provision for them to receive.
You have had opportunity to show
loyalty to Me, but you have not
done this. You have robbed Me;
you have stolen My reserve fund.
‘Ye are cursed with a curse’ (Malachi
3:9).”⁷

“The curse of God will surely
come upon those who rob Him in
tithes and offerings.”⁸

“A very plain, definite message
has been given to me to give
to our people. I am bidden to tell
them that they are making a mistake
in applying the tithe to various
objects which, though good in
themselves, are not the object to
which the Lord has said the tithe
is to be applied. Those who make
this use of the tithe are departing
from God’s arrangement. God will
judge for these things. One reasons
that the tithe may be appropriated
for school purposes; still another

would reason that canvassers and
colporteurs should be supported
from the tithe, but a great mistake
is made when the tithe is withdrawn
from the object for which it is to be
used—the support of the ministers.
There should today be in the field
one hundred well-qualified laborers
where now there is one. God cannot
look upon the present condition of
things with approval, but with condemnation.
His treasury is deprived of the means
that should be used for the support
of the gospel ministry in fields nigh
and far off. Those who proclaim the
message of truth before great congregations,
and who do house to house work,
are doing double missionary work,
and in no case are their salaries to be
cut down. The use of the tithe must
be looked upon as a sacred matter
by our people. We must guard strictly
against all that is contrary to the
message now given.

“There is a lack of ministers
because ministers have not been
encouraged. Some ministers who
have been sent to foreign lands, to
enter fields never before worked,
have been given the instruction,
‘You must sustain yourselves. We
have not the means with which to
support you.’ This ought not to be
if the tithe, with gifts and offerings,
was brought into the treasury. When
a man enters the ministry, he is to be
paid from the tithe enough to sustain
his family. He is not to feel that he is
a beggar. The impression is becoming
quite common that the sacred disposition
of the tithe no longer exists. Many
have lost their sense of the Lord’s

requirements. **The tithe is sacred,
reserved by God for Himself. It is to
be brought into His treasury to be
used to sustain the gospel laborers in
their work.** For a long time the Lord
has been robbed because there are those
who do not realize that the tithe is God’s
reserved portion. . . .

“Read carefully the third chapter
of Malachi, and see what God says
about the tithe. If our churches will
take their stand upon the Lord’s word,
and be faithful in paying their tithe
into His treasury, His laborers will be
encouraged to take up ministerial work.
More men would give themselves to
the ministry were they not told of the
depleted treasury. There should be an
abundant supply in the Lord’s treasury,
and there would be if selfish hearts
and hands had not made use of the
tithe to support other lines of work.
God’s reserved resources are to be used
in no such haphazard way. The tithe is
the Lord’s and those who meddle with
it will be punished with the loss of their
heavenly treasure unless they repent.
Let the work no longer be hedged up
because the tithe has been diverted into
various channels other than the one to
which the Lord said it should go. Provision
is to be made for these other lines of
work. They are to be sustained, but not
from the tithe. God has not changed.
The tithe is to be used for the support
of the ministry. The opening of new
fields requires more ministerial efficiency
than we now have and there must be
means in the treasury.”⁹

“Some, who do not see the advantage of educating the youth to be physicians both of the mind and of the body, say that the tithe should not be used to support medical missionaries, who devote their time to treating the sick. In response to such statements as these, I am instructed to say that the mind must not become so narrowed down that it cannot take in the truth of the situation. A minister of the gospel who is also a medical missionary, who can cure physical ailments, is a much more efficient worker than one who cannot do this. His work as a minister of the gospel is much more complete.”¹⁰

Many of the writers of the Bible were actually self-supporting workers, including Jeremiah, Daniel, and Paul, to name a few. “In many places self-supporting missionaries can work successfully. It was as a self-supporting missionary that the apostle Paul labored in spreading the knowledge of Christ throughout the world.”¹¹

Yet notwithstanding his personal choice, as Paul states, he was indeed entitled to receive the tithe based on his labors in the gospel work. “Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the

altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel” (1 Corinthians 9:8–14).

“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward” (1 Timothy 5:17, 18).

“The tithe should go to those who labor in word and doctrine, be they men or women.”¹²

First fruits

Many overlook the fact that our financial obligation to God is not limited merely to tithing. He also calls for the first fruits of the blessings with which He entrusts us as His partners.

“The priests the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel: they shall eat the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and his inheritance. Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren: the Lord is their inheritance, as he hath said unto them. And this shall be the priest’s due from the people, from them that offer a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep; and they shall give unto the priest the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw. **The firstfruit also** of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep, **shalt thou give him**” (Deuteronomy 18:1–4). An illustration of this is also found in 2 Kings 4:42–44.

“God requires no less of us than He required of His people anciently. His gifts to us are not less, but greater, than they were to Israel of old. His service requires, and ever will require, means. The great missionary work for the salvation of souls is to be carried forward. In the tithe, with gifts and offerings, God has made ample provision

for this work. He intends that the ministry of the gospel shall be fully sustained. He claims the tithe as His own, and it should ever be regarded as a sacred reserve, to be placed in His treasury for the benefit of His cause, for the advancement of His work, for sending His messengers into ‘regions beyond,’ even to the uttermost parts of the earth.

“God has laid His hand upon all things, both man and his possessions; for all belong to Him. He says, I am the owner of the world; the universe is Mine, and I require you to consecrate to My service the first fruits of all that I, through My blessing, have caused to come into your hands. God’s word declares, ‘Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits’ (Exodus 22:29). ‘Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase’ (Proverbs 3:9). This tribute He demands as a token of our loyalty to Him.”¹³

“Unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come: and thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, **and the firstlings** of your herds and of your flocks” (Deuteronomy 12:5, 6).

A lesson from nature

“God gives to us, that we may give. . . . In the natural world, man must do his part in the work of the earth. He must till and prepare the soil. And God, working through nature, giving sunshine and showers, quickens the seed sown, and causes vegetation to flourish. Thus the sowing is rewarded in the reaping of earth’s treasures in bountiful harvests. The lesson is true in spiritual as in temporal things. Man must work under the guidance of the divine hand; for unless God co-operates with him, there will be no



increase. Human power cannot cause the seed sown to spring into life. But there can be no reaping unless the human hand acts its part in the sowing of the seed.

"The reaping will testify of what the sowing has been."¹⁴

Stinted sowing will result in stinted reaping. This is readily noticeable when one compares a flower garden that has been heavily laden with bulbs with one that has received only a mere haphazard planting. The efforts and sacrifice of the more generous gardener will result in a visible difference. While our tithing may measure the depth of obligation we feel toward God, our offerings measure the depth of our love for Him. Let us not skimp or be stingy, for the precious promise is sure: "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:6–8).

Conclusion

"Voluntary offerings and the tithe constitute the revenue of the gospel. Of the means which is entrusted to man, God claims a certain portion—a tithe; but He leaves all free to say how much the tithe is, and whether or not they will give more than this. They are to give as

they purpose in their hearts. But when the heart is stirred by the influence of the Spirit of God, and a vow is made to give a certain amount, the one who vowed has no longer any right to the consecrated portion. He has given his pledge before men, and they are called to witness to the transaction. At the same time he has incurred an obligation of the most sacred character to cooperate with the Lord in building up His kingdom on earth. Promises of this kind made to men would be considered binding. Are they not more sacred and binding when made to God? Are promises tried in the court of conscience less binding than written agreements with men?

"When the divine light is shining into the heart with unusual clearness and power, habitual selfishness relaxes its grasp, and there is a disposition to give to the cause of God. None need expect that they will be allowed to fulfill the promises then made without a protest on the part of Satan. He is not pleased to see the Redeemer's kingdom on earth built up. He suggests that the pledge made was too much, that it may cripple them in their efforts to acquire property or gratify the desires of their families. The power Satan has over the human mind is wonderful. He labors most earnestly to keep the heart bound up in self.

"The only means which God has ordained to advance His cause is to bless men with property. He gives them the sunshine and the rain; He causes vegetation to flourish; He gives health and ability to acquire means. All our blessings come from His bountiful hand. **In turn He would have men and women show their gratitude by returning Him a portion in tithes and offerings**—in thank offerings, in freewill offerings, in trespass offerings."¹⁵

A precious promise is found in Psalm 50:15, "And call upon me

in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." We all enjoy receiving that kind of help from the Lord just when we need it most. Yet it is important to see that this same promise begins with the word "and" is preceded by an essential condition: "Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High" (verse 14). That point should not be overlooked.

Through His confidence in our potential as partners, Christ has a greater plan for us than we can ever experience in this old, fallen world. He urges, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:19–21).

Brethren, sisters, friends, let it be the prayer and aim of each one of us to prepare our heart and life for that wonderful opportunity to hear the wonderful words of our Senior Partner that will be sweet music to faithful ears, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:23). R

References

- ¹*Our High Calling*, p. 42.
- ²*The Review and Herald*, December 8, 1896.
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- ¹⁰*Medical Ministry*, p. 245.
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- ¹²*Evangelism*, p. 492 [Emphasis supplied].
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- ¹⁵*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 149, 150 [Emphasis supplied].

The Reward of the Faithful Servant

“His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Matthew 25:21).

BY R. DUARTE—U.S.A.

While the disciples were busy aspiring and contending for the highest position in the new kingdom, the Majesty of heaven pointed out their noble mission **to serve**, exemplifying His own life of self-sacrificing ministry. He said to them: “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28).

Serving, ministering, helping, assisting, waiting upon, benefiting, succoring, promoting, satisfying, supporting, administering—these constitute our privilege and opportunity, much more than a duty. We are reminded that stewardship suggests a faithful use of the talents and gifts entrusted to us, both for our own benefit and the benefit of others; it is not limited by the amount of income we may earn at our job.

The very “stones” that would “cry out” (Luke 19:40) have declared this touching message. In 1936, in a conference at the University of Cambridge, A. E. Housman declared that “the greatest truth ever uttered and the most profound moral discovery of all time were these words of Jesus: ‘He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it’ (Matthew 10:39).”¹

Many are plagued with worry and anxiety as they feel that “it is **vain** to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?” (Malachi 3:14).

“Enoch had been troubled in regard to the dead. It had **seemed** to him that the righteous and the wicked would go to the dust together, and that this would be their end. He could not see the life of the just beyond the grave. In prophetic vision he was instructed concerning the death of Christ, and was shown His coming in glory, attended by all the holy angels, to ransom His people from the grave.”²

Shortly before his death, Moses went forth “to resign his life into the hands of his Creator. Moses knew that he was to die alone; no earthly friend would be permitted to minister to him in his last hours. There was a mystery and awfulness about the scene before him, from which his heart shrank. The severest trial was his separation from the people of his care and love. . . .

“Notwithstanding all that God had wrought for them, notwithstanding his own prayers and labors, only two of all the adults in the vast army that left Egypt had been found so faithful that they could enter the

Promised Land. As Moses reviewed **the result** of his labors, his life of trial and sacrifice **seemed** to have been **almost in vain**.”³

The patriarch David also had difficulty reconciling in his mind the apparent prosperity of the wicked in contrast to the struggles and afflictions faced by those seeking to serve God. (See Psalm 73.)

Peter wondered the same as he questioned Jesus, “Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?” (Matthew 19:27). “Parents and teachers lie down in their last sleep, their lifework **seeming** to have been wrought in vain.”⁴

The certainty of the reward

“Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a **rewarder** of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6).

“And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward” (Matthew 10:42). Let us analyze some inspired declarations:

“It is not the fear of punishment, or the hope of everlasting reward, that leads the disciples of Christ

“The Saviour assures us that our work for God is noted in heaven.”

to follow Him. They behold the Saviour’s matchless love, revealed throughout His pilgrimage on earth, from the manger of Bethlehem to Calvary’s cross, and the sight of Him attracts, it softens and subdues the soul. Love awakens in the heart of the beholders.”⁵

“The Saviour presents before us the scene of the last judgment when the reward is given. . . . The righteous are represented as wondering **what they have done** for which they are to be so liberally rewarded. . . . They had been serving Christ in the person of His saints, . . . but they had not had in view the reward they were to receive, and the expectation of it had been no part of the motive that had actuated their service. What they did was done from love to Christ and to their fellow-men, and Christ identifies Himself with suffering humanity. . . .

“In a subordinate sense we should all have respect unto the recompense of the reward. . . .

“There are about us those who have a meek and lowly spirit, the Spirit of Christ, who do many **little things** to help those around them, and who think nothing of it; they will be **astonished** at last to find that Christ has noticed the kind word spoken to the disheartened, and taken account of the smallest gift given for the relief of the poor, that cost the giver some self-denial.”⁶

Moses chose to suffer with the people of God because “he had respect unto the recompense of the reward” (Hebrews 11:26). We can see that the prophecy of Isaiah 53:11 concerning Christ, “He shall see of

the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied,” had its partial fulfillment when the angel Gabriel brought comfort to Him in Gethsemane:

“In this awful crisis, when everything was at stake, when the mysterious cup trembled in the hand of the sufferer, the heavens opened, a light shone forth amid the stormy darkness of the crisis hour, and the mighty angel who stands in God’s presence, occupying the position from which Satan fell, came to the side of Christ. The angel came not to take the cup from Christ’s hand, but to strengthen Him to drink it, with the assurance of the Father’s love. . . . He pointed Him to the open heavens, telling Him of the souls that would be saved **as the result** of His sufferings. . . . He told Him that He would see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied.”⁷

“What sustained the Son of God during His life of toil and sacrifice? He saw the results of the travail of His soul and was satisfied. Looking into eternity, He beheld the happiness of those who through His humiliation had received pardon and everlasting life. His ear caught the shout of the redeemed. He heard the ransomed ones singing the song of Moses and the Lamb.”⁸

Here and now

The joy of service is experienced in the very act of benefiting another. “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine” (Proverbs 17:22). “Divine wisdom has appointed, in the plan of salvation, the **law of action and reaction**, making the work of beneficence, in all its branches,

twice blessed. He that gives to the needy blesses others, and is blessed himself in a still **greater** degree.”⁹

“To Jesus in His agony on the cross there came one gleam of comfort. It was the prayer of the penitent thief. . . .

“Hope is mingled with anguish in his voice as the helpless, dying soul casts himself upon a dying Saviour. ‘Lord, remember me,’ he cries, ‘when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.’

“Quickly the answer came. Soft and melodious the tone, full of love, compassion, and power the words: Verily I say unto thee today, Thou shalt be with Me in paradise. . . .

“How grateful then to the Saviour was the utterance of faith and love from the dying thief!”¹⁰

“The service rendered in sincerity of heart **has** great recompense. . . . The faces of men and women who walk and work with God express the peace of heaven. They are surrounded with the atmosphere of heaven. For these souls the kingdom of God **has begun**. They have Christ’s joy, the joy of being a blessing to humanity.”¹¹

In this life

“Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days” (Ecclesiastes 11:1).

A young medical student was going from door to door, doing colporteur work in a farm community. It was a hot day, and the student knocked on the door of a humble dwelling and waited. . . .

Finally, a little girl cheerfully invited him inside to explain that, unfortunately, her family had no money to buy any books.

Tired, hungry, and thirsty, the colporteur then asked if she might please give him a drink of water. The girl warmly responded by offering not just water, but two cups of fresh milk. Greatly refreshed and thankful for this kindness, the medical student gladly received it, and left with new courage to press on with his work.

Years passed and eventually that young girl ended up with a serious illness which required a delicate emergency surgery in the hospital of that region. A young surgeon was called upon to try to save this precious life. Special attention was given to the case, and the operation proved a success. During her convalescence, the patient was treated with utmost care. Yet a heavy, lingering anxiety burdened her heart—and that was the thought of the enormous medical bill which was sure to come.

Finally the bill arrived with a small, surprising, handwritten inscription: All is paid off by two cups of milk! With deep emotion, the joyful soul could hardly believe the marvelous providence of a merciful God who blesses those who cooperate with Him.

“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom” (Luke 6:38).

In the future life

“And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just” (Luke 14:14). “**Then** shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not” (Malachi 3:18). “With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free” (Ephesians 6:7, 8).

“In this life our work for God often **seems** to be **almost** fruitless. Our efforts to do good may be earnest and persevering, yet we may not be permitted to witness their results. To us the effort may seem to be lost. But the Saviour assures us that our work is noted in heaven, and that the recompense cannot fail.”¹²

“The poor widow who cast her two mites into the Lord’s treasury little knew what she was doing. Her example of self-sacrifice has **acted and reacted upon thousands** of hearts in every land and in every age. It has brought to the treasury of God gifts from the high and the low, the rich and the poor. It has helped to sustain missions, to establish hospitals, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, heal the sick, and preach the gospel to the poor. Multitudes have been blessed through her unselfish deed. And the outworking of all these lines of influence she, in the day of God, **will be permitted to see**. So with Mary’s precious gift to the Saviour. How many have been inspired to loving service by the memory of that broken alabaster box! And how she will rejoice as she beholds all this!”¹³

To those who minister in the home, especially to the mothers in Israel, the word of God comes: “The work of wise parents will never be appreciated by the world, but when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened, their work will appear as God views it and will be rewarded before men and angels. It will be seen that one child who has been brought up in a faithful way has been a light in the world. It cost tears and anxiety and sleepless nights to oversee the character building of this child, but the work was done wisely, and the parents hear the ‘Well done’ of the Master.”¹⁴

“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Galatians 6:9).

“How gratefully will the ransomed and glorified ones remember those who were instrumental in their salvation! No one will **then** regret his self-denying efforts and persevering labors, his patience, forbearance, and earnest heart yearnings for souls that might have been lost had he neglected his duty or become weary in well-doing.”¹⁵

“Let your imagination picture the home of the saved, and remember that it will be more glorious than your brightest imagination can portray.”¹⁶

“Human language is inadequate to describe the reward of the righteous. It will be known only to those who behold it. No finite mind can comprehend the glory of the Paradise of God.”¹⁷

“With unutterable love, Jesus welcomes His faithful ones to the joy of their Lord. The Saviour’s joy is in seeing, in the kingdom of glory, the souls that have been saved by His agony and humiliation. And the redeemed will be sharers in His joy, as they behold, among the blessed, those who have been won to Christ through their prayers, their labors, and their loving sacrifice. As they gather about the great white throne, **gladness unspeakable** will fill their hearts.”¹⁸

“Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward” (Hebrews 10:35).

Beloved brethren and sisters, may the unsearchable depths of the love of Him who came **to serve** constantly inspire and stimulate us to surrender all that we have and are, at all times and all places, to Him and His service forever. Amen! R

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- ⁷*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 693, 694.
- ⁸*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 601.
- ⁹*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 13 [emphasis supplied].
- ¹⁰*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 749, 750.
- ¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 312 [emphasis supplied].
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- ¹³*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 310 [emphasis supplied].
- ¹⁴*The Adventist Home*, p. 536.
- ¹⁵*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 620 [emphasis supplied].
- ¹⁶*Steps to Christ*, p. 86.
- ¹⁷*The Great Controversy*, p. 675.
- ¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 647 [emphasis supplied].

MOVING? Please let us know.

Something for Thee

Something, my God, for Thee,
Something for Thee,
That each day's setting sun may bring
Some penitential offering;
In Thy dear name, some kindness done;
To Thy dear love, some wanderer won—
Some trial meekly borne, for Thee,
Dear Lord, for Thee.

Something, my God, for Thee,
Something for Thee;
That to Thy gracious throne may rise
Sweet incense from some sacrifice—
Uplifted eyes undimmed by tears;
Uplifted faith unstained by fears,
Hailing each joy as light from Thee,
Dear Lord, from Thee.

Something, my God, for Thee,
Something for Thee,
For the great love that Thou hast given,
For the deep hope of Thee and Heaven,
My soul her first allegiance brings,
And upward plumes her heavenward wings
Nearer to Thee.

Selected—from The Signs of the Times, August 17, 1888