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True **WEALTH**

PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL PROSPERITY



ELLEN G. WHITE

True
WEALTH

 **PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL PROSPERITY**

ELLEN G. WHITE

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True Wealth: Principles of Biblical Prosperity

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ATTENTION

This book is a selection of chapters from the *Testimonies for the Church* series by Ellen G. White.

The organization of the material was a partnership between the Stewardship Ministries Department of the South American Division of Seventh-day Adventists and the Brazilian Publishing House.

The reference to the extracted texts is indicated at the end of each chapter. The indicated pages refer to the updated edition.

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Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the King James Version.

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Foreword

This book is a collection of finance-related chapters from the Testimonies for the Church series. It features a selection of letters written by Ellen G. White to individuals who faced financial challenges while striving to live by biblical principles of prosperity. As a result, this work carries a personal tone and speaks to our present reality.

Within these pages, you will discover stories like that of a business-woman who drifted away from God as her business flourished. She received divine guidance and warnings to return to her first love. You will also relate to individuals who remained faithful to God amidst the challenging demands of daily life.

God is deeply interested in providing clear guidelines on handling money and revealing the blessings and dangers associated with wealth. This topic holds significant importance in the Christian life. As you read, you will notice that God does not oppose hard work or material possessions. On the contrary, He desires to teach us how to acquire and utilize financial resources wisely and responsibly, granting us true wealth in accordance with the standards and principles of His Word.

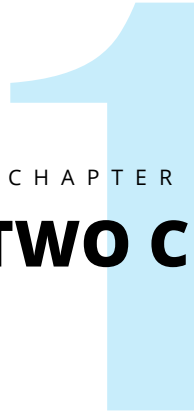
Throughout these 21 chapters of this book, you will realize that God holds ultimate sovereignty over everything we possess and who we are. True wealth is of a spiritual nature, and this book will help you maintain a proper attitude toward possessions. Following the inspired guidance, work and the acquisition of money will not hinder you from developing healthy habits, your devotion to family, family worship, or your active participation in God's cause.

By comprehending and implementing the principles of biblical prosperity, you will grow in love and service towards God and others. This truth is evident in the following statement:

The love of Jesus and of riches cannot dwell in the same heart. The love of God so far surpasses the love of riches that the possessor breaks away from his riches and transfers his affections to God. Through love he is then led to minister to the wants of God's cause. It is his highest pleasure to make a right disposition of his Lord's goods. Love to God and his fellow men predominates, and he holds all that he has as not his own, and faithfully discharges his duty as God's steward (1T, p. 172).

Study each chapter with a prayerful attitude, seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance to live according to the instructions provided. We genuinely hope that as you read this work, it will deeply connect your heart with God's, transforming you into a faithful servant.

The Editors



CHAPTER ONE

THE TWO CROWNS

In the vision given me at Battle Creek, Michigan, October 25, 1861, I was shown this earth, dark and gloomy. Said the angel: “Look carefully!” Then I was shown the people upon the earth. Some were surrounded by angels of God, others were in total darkness, surrounded by evil angels. I saw an arm reached down from heaven, holding a golden scepter. On the top of the scepter was a crown studded with diamonds. Every diamond emitted light, bright, clear, and beautiful. Inscribed upon the crown were these words: “All who win me are happy, and shall have everlasting life.”

Below this crown was another scepter, and upon this also was placed a crown, in the center of which were jewels, gold, and silver, reflecting some light. The inscription upon the crown was: “Earthly treasure. Riches is power. All who win me have honor and fame.” I saw a vast multitude rushing forward to obtain this crown. They were clamorous. Some in their eagerness seemed bereft of reason. They would thrust one another, crowding back those who were

weaker than they, and trampling upon those who in their haste fell. Many eagerly seized hold of the treasures within the crown, and held them fast. The heads of some were as white as silver, and their faces were furrowed with care and anxiety. Their own relatives, bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh, they regarded not; but, as appealing looks were turned to them, they held their treasures more firmly, as though fearful that in an unguarded moment they should lose a little, or be induced to divide with them. Their eager eyes would often fasten upon the earthly crown, and count and recount its treasures. Images of want and wretchedness appeared in that multitude, and looked wishfully at the treasures there, and turned hopelessly away as the stronger overpowered and drove back the weaker. Yet they could not give it up thus, but with a multitude of deformed, sickly, and aged, they sought to press their way to the earthly crown. Some died in seeking to reach it. Others fell just in the act of taking hold of it. Many had but just laid hold of it when they fell. Dead bodies strewed the ground, yet on rushed the multitude, trampling over the fallen and dead bodies of their companions. Everyone who reached the crown possessed a share in it, and was loudly applauded by an interested company standing around it.

A large company of evil angels were very busy. Satan was in the midst of them, and all looked with the most exulting satisfaction upon the company struggling for the crown. He seemed to throw a peculiar charm upon those who eagerly sought it. Many who sought this earthly crown were professed Christians. Some of them seemed to have a little light. They would look wishfully upon the heavenly crown, and would often seem charmed with its beauty, yet they had no true sense of its value and glory. While with one hand they were reaching forth languidly for the heavenly, with the other they reached eagerly for the earthly, determined to possess that; and in their earnest pursuit for the earthly, they lost sight of the heavenly. They were left in darkness, yet were anxiously groping about to secure the earthly crown. Some became disgusted with the company who sought it so eagerly; they seemed to have a sense of their danger, and turned from it, and earnestly sought for the heavenly crown.

The countenances of such soon changed from dark to light, from gloom to cheerfulness and holy joy.

I then saw a company pressing through the crowd with their eyes intently fixed upon the heavenly crown. As they earnestly urged their way through the disorderly crowd, angels attended them, and made room for them to advance. As they neared the heavenly crown, the light emanating from it shone upon them and around them, dispelling their darkness, and growing clearer and brighter, until they seemed to be transformed, and resembled the angels. They cast not one lingering look upon the earthly crown. Those who were in pursuit of the earthly, mocked them, and threw black balls after them. These did them no injury while their eyes were fixed upon the heavenly crown, but those who turned their attention to the black balls were stained with them. The following scripture was presented before me:

Matthew 6:19-24: "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. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

Then that which I had seen was explained to me as follows: The multitude who were so eagerly striving for the earthly crown, were those who love this world's treasure, and are deceived and flattered with its short-lived attractions. Some, I saw, who profess to be the followers of Jesus, are so ambitious to obtain earthly treasures that they lose their love for heaven, act like the world, and are

accounted of God as of the world. They profess to be seeking an immortal crown, a treasure in the heavens; but their interest and principal study is to acquire earthly treasures. Those who have their treasures in this world, and love their riches, cannot love Jesus. They may think that they are right, and, although they cling to their possessions with a miser's grasp, they cannot be made to see it, or to feel that they love money more than the cause of truth or the heavenly treasure.

"If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" There was a point of time in the experience of such, when the light given them was not cherished, and it became darkness. Said the angel: "Ye cannot love and worship the treasures of earth, and have the true riches." When the young man came to Jesus and said to Him, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Jesus gave him his choice, to part with his possessions and have eternal life, or retain them and lose it. His riches were of greater value to him than the heavenly treasure. The condition that he must part with his treasures and give to the poor in order to become a follower of Christ and have eternal life, chilled his desire; and he went away sorrowful.

Those who were shown me as clamorous for the earthly crown, were those who will resort to any means to acquire property. They become insane upon that point. All their thoughts and energies are directed to the acquirement of earthly riches. They trample upon the rights of others, and oppress the poor, and the hireling in his wages. If they can take advantage of those who are poorer and less shrewd than they, and thus manage to increase their riches, they will not hesitate a moment to oppress them, and even see them brought to beggary.

The men whose heads were white with age, and whose faces were furrowed with care, yet who were eagerly grasping the treasures within the crown, were the aged, who have but a few years before them. Yet they were eager to secure their earthly treasures. The nearer they came to the grave, the more anxious they were to cling to them. Their own relatives were not benefited. The members of their own families were permitted to labor beyond their strength to save

a little money. They did not use it for others' good, or for their own. It was enough for them to know that they had it. When their duty to relieve the wants of the poor, and to sustain God's cause are presented before them, they are sorrowful. They would gladly accept the gift of everlasting life, but are not willing that it should cost them anything. The conditions are too hard. But Abraham would not withhold his only son. In obedience to God he could sacrifice this child of promise more easily than many would sacrifice some of their earthly possessions.

It was painful to see those who should have been ripening for glory, and daily fitting for immortality, exerting all their strength to keep their earthly treasures. Such, I saw, could not value the heavenly treasure. Their strong affections for the earthly cause them to show by their works that they do not esteem the heavenly inheritance enough to make any sacrifice for it. The "young man" manifested a willingness to keep the commandments, yet our Lord told him that he lacked one thing. He desired eternal life, but loved his possessions more. Many are self-deceived. They have not sought for truth as for hid treasures. Their powers are not put to the best account. Their minds, which might be illuminated with heaven's light, are perplexed and troubled. "The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful." "Such," said the angel, "are without excuse." I saw the light waning away from them. They did not desire to understand the solemn, important truths for this time, and thought they were well off without understanding them. Their light went out, and they were groping in darkness.

The multitude of deformed and sickly pressing for the earthly crown are those whose interests and treasures are in this world. Although they are disappointed on every side, they will not place their affections on heaven, and secure to themselves a treasure and home there. They fail of the earthly, yet while in pursuit of it, lose the heavenly. Notwithstanding the disappointment and unhappy life and death of those who were wholly bent upon obtaining earthly riches, others follow the same course. They rush madly on, disregarding the miserable end of those whose example they are following.

Those who reached the crown, and possessed a share in it, and were applauded, are those who obtain that which is the whole aim of their life—riches. They receive that honor which the world bestows upon those who are rich. They have influence in the world. Satan and his evil angels are satisfied. They know that such are surely theirs, that while they are living in rebellion against God, they are Satan's powerful agents.

The ones who became disgusted with the company clamoring for the earthly crown are those who have marked the life and end of all who strive for earthly riches. They see that such are never satisfied, but are unhappy, and they become alarmed, and separate themselves from that unhappy class, and seek the true and durable riches.

Those who are urging their way through the crowd for the heavenly crown, attended by holy angels, were shown me to be God's faithful people. Angels lead them on, and they are inspired with zeal to press forward for the heavenly treasure.

The black balls which were thrown after the saints were the reproachful falsehoods put in circulation concerning God's people by those who love and make a lie. We should take the greatest care to live a blameless life, and abstain from all appearance of evil, and then it is our duty to move boldly forward, and pay no regard to the reproachful falsehoods of the wicked. While the eyes of the righteous are fixed upon the heavenly priceless treasure, they will become more and more like Christ, and thus they will be transformed and fitted for translation.

***Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, chpt. 67, "The Two Crowns," pages 347-353.**

TRUE WEALTH

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO OF THE FULL CHAPTER:



This audio link corresponds to Section 8 of the *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1. The audio chapter number may be different.



CHAPTER TWO

DECEITFULNESS OF RICHES

Dear Sister M,
When the Lord showed me your case, I was pointed back many years in the past, when you became a believer in the near coming of Christ. You looked for, and loved, His appearing.

Your husband was naturally an affectionate, noble-minded man; but he relied upon his own strength, which was weakness. He did not feel the need of making God his strength. Intoxicating drink benumbed his brain and finally paralyzed the higher powers of his mind. His godlike manhood was sacrificed to gratify his thirst for strong drink. . . .

I saw you struggling with poverty, seeking to support yourself and your children. Many times you knew not what to do; the future looked dark and uncertain. In your distress you cried unto the Lord, and He comforted and helped you, and hopeful rays of light shone around you. How precious was God to you at such times! how sweet His comforting love! You felt that you had a precious treasure laid up

in heaven. As you viewed the reward of the afflicted children of God, what a consolation to feel that you could claim Him as your Father!

Your case was, in reality, worse than if you had been widowed. Your heart was agonized by the wicked course pursued by your husband. But his persecutions, his threats and violence, did not lead you to trust in your own wisdom, and forget God. Far from this; you sensibly felt your weakness and that you were incapable of carrying your burdens, and in your conscious weakness you were relieved by bringing your heavy burdens to Jesus, the great Burden Bearer. How you cherished every ray of light from His presence! and how strong you often felt in His strength! When a storm of persecution and cruelty unexpectedly burst upon you, the Lord did not suffer you to be overwhelmed; but in those times of trial you realized strength, calmness, and peace, which were a marvel to you.

When railing accusations and taunts more cruel than spears and arrows have fallen upon you, the influence of the Spirit of God upon your heart has led you to speak calmly, dispassionately. It was not in nature to do this. It was the fruit of the Spirit of God. It was the grace of God which strengthened your faith amid all the heartsicknesses of hope deferred. Grace fortified you for the warfare and hardships, and brought you through conqueror. Grace taught you to pray, to love and trust, notwithstanding your unfavorable surroundings. As you repeatedly realized that your prayers were answered in a special manner, you did not feel that it was because of any merit in yourself, but because of your great need. Your necessity was God's opportunity. Your life in those days of trial was to trust in God. And the manifestations of His special deliverance when in most trying places were like the oasis in the desert to the faint and weary traveler. . . .

The Lord suffered you to be schooled in adversity and affliction, that you might obtain an experience which would be valuable to yourself and others. In the days of your poverty and trial you loved the Lord, and you loved religious privileges. The nearness of Christ's coming was your consolation. It was a living hope to you that you would soon find rest from labor, and the end of all your trials; when you would find that you had not labored nor suffered too much; for

the apostle Paul declares: "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

To meet with the people of God seemed to you almost like visiting heaven. Obstacles did not deter you. You could suffer weariness and hunger for temporal food, but you could not be deprived of spiritual food. You earnestly sought for the grace of God, and you did not seek in vain. Communion with the people of God was the richest blessing you could enjoy.

In your Christian experience your soul abhorred vanity, pride, and extravagant show. When you have witnessed the expenditure of means among professed Christians to make a display and to foster pride, your heart and lips have said: "Oh, if I only had the means handled by those who are unfaithful in their stewardship, I would feel it one of the greatest privileges to help the needy and to aid in the advancement of the cause of God!"

You often realized the presence of God while you sought in your humble way to enlighten others in regard to the truth for these last days. You had experienced the truth for yourself. That which you had seen, and heard, and experienced, and testified unto, you knew was no fiction. You delighted to present before others, in private conversation, the wonderful way in which God had led His people. You recounted His dealings with such an assurance as to strike conviction to the hearts of those who listened to you. You talked as though you had a knowledge of the things whereof you affirmed. When speaking to others in regard to the present truth, you longed for greater opportunities and a more extended influence, that you might bring to the notice of many in darkness the light which had lightened your pathway. At times you looked at your poverty, your limited influence, and your best endeavors, frequently misinterpreted by the professed friends of the cause of truth, and you were nearly discouraged. . . .

My attention was called to your desire to possess means. The sentiment of your heart was: "Oh, if I only had means, I would not squander it! I would set an example to those who are close and penurious. I would show them the great blessing there is to be received in doing good." Your soul abhorred covetousness. As you have seen

those who possessed abundance of this world's goods shut their hearts to the cry of the needy you have said: "God will visit them; He will reward them according to their works." As you have seen the wealthy walking in their pride, their hearts girt about with selfishness, as with iron bands, you have felt that they were poorer than yourself, although you were in want and suffering. When you have seen these purse-proud men bearing themselves loftily because money has power, you have felt pity for them, and in no case would you have been induced to change places with them. Yet you desired means that you might so use it as to be a rebuke to the covetous.

The Lord said to His angel who had hitherto ministered unto you: "I have proved her in poverty and affliction, and she has not separated herself from Me, nor rebelled against Me. I will now prove her with prosperity. I will reveal to her a page of the human heart with which she is unacquainted. I will show her that money is the most dangerous foe she has ever met. I will reveal to her the deceitfulness of riches; that they are a snare, even to those who feel that they are secure from selfishness, and proof against exaltation, extravagance, pride, and love of the praise of men."

I was then shown that a way was opened for you to improve your condition in life and at length to obtain the means which you had thought you would use with wisdom and to the glory of God. How anxiously did your ministering angel watch the new trial to see how you would stand the test. As means came into your hands, I saw you gradually and almost imperceptibly separating from God. The means entrusted to you were expended for your own convenience, to surround yourself with the good things of this life. I saw the angels looking upon you with yearning sadness, their faces half averted, loath to leave you. Yet their presence was not perceived by you, and your course was pursued without reference to your angel guard.

The business and cares of your new position claimed your time and attention, and your duty to God was not considered. Jesus had purchased you by His own blood. You were not your own. Your time, your strength, and the means you handled all belonged to your Redeemer. He had been your constant Friend, your strength and sup

port when every other friend had proved a broken reed. You have repaid the love and bounty of God with ingratitude and forgetfulness.

Your only safety was in implicit trust in Christ, your Saviour. There was no safety for you away from the cross. How weak human strength seemed in this instance! Oh, how evident that there is no real strength but that which God imparts to those who trust in Him! One petition offered up to God in faith has more power than a wealth of human intellect.

In your prosperity you did not carry out the resolves you had made in adversity. The deceitfulness of riches turned you from your purposes. Cares increased upon you. Your influence became extended. As the afflicted realized relief from suffering, they glorified you, and you learned to love praise from the lips of poor mortals. You were in a popular city, and thought it necessary for the success of your business, as well as to retain your influence, for your surroundings to be somewhat in accordance with your business. But you carried things too far. You were swayed too much by the opinions and judgment of others. You expended means needlessly, only to gratify the lust of the eye and the pride of life. You forgot that you were handling your Lord's money. When means were expended by you which would only encourage vanity, you did not consider that the recording angel was making a record which you would blush to meet again. Said the angel, pointing to you: "You glorified yourself, but did not magnify God." You even gloried in the fact that it was in your power to purchase these things.

A large sum has been expended in needless things which could only answer for show and encourage vanity and pride that will cause you remorse and shame. If you had borne in mind the claims Heaven has upon you and had made a right disposition of the means entrusted to your care, by helping the needy and advancing the cause of present truth, you would have been laying up treasure in heaven and would have been rich toward God. Consider how much means you have invested where no one has been really benefited, no one fed or clothed, and no one helped to see the error of his ways that he might turn to Christ and live.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, chpt. 39, “Deceitfulness of Riches,”
pages 268–270; 275–279.

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO OF THE FULL CHAPTER:



This audio link corresponds to Section 17 of the *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2. The audio chapter number may be different.



CHAPTER THREE

THE RICH YOUNG MAN

At Monterey, Michigan, October 8, 1857, I was shown in vision that the condition of many Sabbathkeepers was like that of the young man who came to Jesus to know what he should do to inherit eternal life.

“And, behold, one came and said unto Him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And He said unto him, Why callest thou Me good? there is none good but One, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto Him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The young man saith unto Him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and

follow Me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

“Then said Jesus unto His disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When His disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.” Matthew 19:16–26.

Jesus quoted five of the last six commandments to the young man, also the second great commandment, on which the last six commandments hang. Those mentioned he thought he had kept. Jesus did not mention the first four commandments, containing our duty to God. In answer to the inquiry of the young man, “What lack I yet?” Jesus said unto him: “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.”

Here was his lack. He failed to keep the first four commandments, also the last six. He failed to love his neighbor as himself. Said Jesus: “Give to the poor.” Jesus touched his possessions. “Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor.” In this direct reference He pointed out his idol. His love of riches was supreme; therefore it was impossible for him to love God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind. And this supreme love for his riches shut his eyes to the wants of his fellow men. He did not love his neighbor as himself, therefore he failed to keep the last six commandments. His heart was on his treasure. It was swallowed up in his earthly possessions. He loved his possessions better than God, better than the heavenly treasure. He heard the conditions from the mouth of Jesus. If he would sell and give to the poor, he should have treasure in heaven. Here was a test of how much higher he prized eternal life than riches. Did he eagerly lay hold of the prospect of eternal life? Did he earnestly strive to remove the obstacle that was in his way of having a treasure in heaven? Oh, no; “he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.”

I was pointed to these words: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Said Jesus: "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." Said the angel: "Will God permit the rich men to keep their riches, and yet enter into the kingdom of God?" Another angel answered: "No, never."

I saw that it is God's plan that these riches should be used properly, distributed to bless the needy, and to advance the work of God. If men love their riches better than they love their fellow men, better than they love God or the truths of His word, if their hearts are on their riches, they cannot have eternal life. They would rather yield the truth than sell and give to the poor. Here they are proved to see how much they love God, how much they love the truth; and, like the young man in the Bible, many go away sorrowful because they cannot have their riches and a treasure in heaven, too. They cannot have both; and they venture to risk their chance of eternal life for a worldly possession.

"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." With God all things are possible. Truth, set home to the heart by the Spirit of God, will crowd out the love of riches. The love of Jesus and of riches cannot dwell in the same heart. The love of God so far surpasses the love of riches that the possessor breaks away from his riches and transfers his affections to God. Through love he is then led to minister to the wants of God's cause. It is his highest pleasure to make a right disposition of his Lord's goods. Love to God and his fellow men predominates, and he holds all that he has as not his own, and faithfully discharges his duty as God's steward. Then can he keep both the great commandments of the law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." In this way it is possible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. "And everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first." . . .

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The Lord calls them to use their means to advance His cause. Opportunities are presented to them, but they shut their eyes to the wants of the cause, and cling fast to their earthly treasure. Their love for the world is greater than their love for the truth, their love for their fellow men, or their love for God. He calls for their substance, but they selfishly, covetously, retain what they have. They give a little now and then to ease their conscience, but have not overcome their love for this world. They do not sacrifice for God. The Lord has raised up others that prize eternal life, and that can feel and realize something of the value of the soul, and they have freely bestowed their means to advance the cause of God. The work is closing; and soon the means of those who have kept their riches, their large farms, their cattle, etc., will not be wanted. . . .

I was pointed back to a time when there were but few who listened to and embraced the truth. They had not much of this world's goods. The wants of the cause were divided among a very few. Then it was necessary for some to sell their houses and lands, and obtain cheaper to serve them as a shelter, or home, while their means were freely and generously lent to the Lord, to publish the truth, and to otherwise aid in advancing the cause of God. As I beheld these self-sacrificing ones, I saw that they had endured privation for the benefit of the cause. I saw an angel standing by them, pointing them upward, and saying: "Ye have bags in heaven! Ye have bags in heaven that wax not old! Endure unto the end, and great will be your reward."

God has been moving upon many hearts. The truth for which a few sacrificed so much, in order to get it before others, has triumphed, and multitudes have laid hold of it. God in His providence has moved upon those who have means, and has brought them into the truth, that as His work increases, the wants of the cause may be met. Much means has been brought into the ranks of Sabbath-keepers, and I saw that at present God does not call for the houses His people need to live in, unless expensive houses are exchanged for cheaper ones. But if those who have an abundance do not hear His voice, cut loose from the world, and dispose of a portion of their property and lands, and sacrifice for God, He will pass them by, and

call for those who are willing to do anything for Jesus, even to sell their homes to meet the wants of the cause. God will have freewill offerings. Those who give must esteem it a privilege to do so.

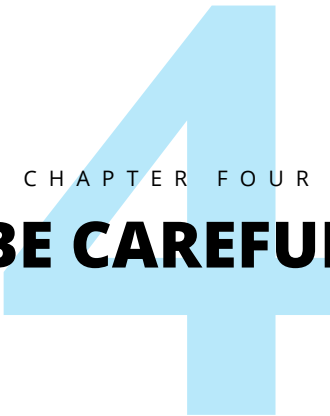
Some give of their abundance, but yet they feel no lack. They do not particularly deny themselves of anything for the cause of Christ. They still have all that heart can wish. They give liberally and heartily. God regards it, and the action and motive are known and strictly marked by Him. They will not lose their reward. You who cannot bestow so liberally must not excuse yourselves because you cannot do as much as some others. Do what you can. Deny yourselves of some article that you can get along without, and sacrifice for the cause of God. Like the widow, cast in your two mites. You will actually give more than all those who give of their abundance; and you will know how sweet it is to deny self, to give to the needy, to sacrifice for the truth, and to lay up treasure in heaven.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, chpt. 30, “The Rich Young Man,” pages 170-174; 176-177.

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO OF THE FULL CHAPTER:



This audio link corresponds to Section 4 of the *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1. The audio chapter number may be different.



CHAPTER FOUR
BE CAREFUL

The following was addressed to two brethren at — —; but being applicable to many, it is here given for the benefit of the church:

Dear Brethren,

In the vision given at your place, I was shown something concerning you both. The angel pointed to you, and repeated these words: “Take heed to yourselves, lest at anytime your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.”

I saw that you both have a great conflict before you; you will have a constant warfare to keep this world out of your hearts, for you love it. The great study with you now must be how to love Jesus and His service better than the world. If you love the world most, your works will testify to the fact. If you love Jesus and His service most, your works will testify to that fact also. I saw that the gaze of many

in this world is upon you. Many would exult in your downfall, others rejoice in your advancement. Satan and evil angels will present to you the glory of the kingdoms of this world. If you will worship him, or worship a worldly treasure, he will hold it up in every light to attract and lead you to love and worship.

Jesus and your guardian angels are pointing you above your farms, your cattle, and your earthly treasure, to the kingdom of heaven, to an immortal inheritance, an eternal substance in the kingdom of glory. Said the angel: "You must die to this world." "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

I saw that if, in the providence of God, wealth has been acquired, there is no sin in possessing it; and if no opportunities present themselves to use this means to advance the cause of God, there is no sin in still possessing it. But if opportunities are presented to the brethren to use their property to the glory of God and the advancement of His cause, and they withhold it, it will be a cause of stumbling to them. In the day of trouble that which was their hoarded treasure will be an offense unto them. Then all opportunities will be past for using their substance to the glory of God, and in anguish of spirit they will cast it from them to the moles and to the bats. Their gold and their silver cannot save them in that day. It falls upon them with crushing weight, that an account must be given of their stewardship, what use they have made of their Lord's money. Self-love made them believe that it was all their own, and that they might want it all; but they then feel, bitterly feel and understand, that their means was only lent them of God, to be freely returned by being used to advance His cause. Their riches deceived them. They felt poor and lived for themselves, and at last they will find that the portion they might have used for God's cause is a terrible burden.

Said the angel of God: "Lay all upon the altar, a living, consuming sacrifice. Bind it with cords, if you cannot keep it there. Give yourselves to prayer. Live at the altar. Strengthen your purposes by the promises of God." "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth."

“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.”

I saw that if God had given you wealth above the plainest and poorest, it should humble you, for it lays you under greater obligations. Where much is given, even of a worldly substance, much will be required. Upon this principle you are bound to possess noble, generous dispositions. Seek for opportunities to do good with what you have. “Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.”

I saw that the least that has been required of Christians in past days, is to possess a spirit of liberality, and to consecrate to the Lord a portion of all their increase. Every true Christian has considered this a privilege, but some who have borne the name only, have considered it a task; the grace and love of God had never wrought in them the good work, or they would gladly have advanced the cause of their Redeemer. But Christians who are living in the last days, and who are waiting for their Lord, are required to do even more than this. God requires them to sacrifice.

Said the angel: “Jesus left a bright track for you to follow. Tread closely in His footsteps. Share His life of self-denial, His self-sacrificing life, and inherit with Him the crown of glory.”

***Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, chpt. 29, “Take Heed,” pages 168-170.**

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO OF THE FULL CHAPTER:



This audio link corresponds to Section 4 of the *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1. The audio chapter number may be different.



CHAPTER FIVE

DECEITFULNESS OF RICHES

Some who profess to believe the truth are lacking in discernment and fail to appreciate moral worth. Persons who boast much of their fidelity to the cause and talk as though they think they know all that is worth knowing, are not humble in heart. They may have money and property, and this is sufficient to give them influence with some; but it will not raise them one jot in favor with God. Money has power and sways a mighty influence. Excellence of character and moral worth are often overlooked if possessed by the poor man. But what does God care for money, for property? The cattle upon a thousand hills are His. The world and all that is therein are His. The inhabitants of the earth are as grasshoppers before Him. Men and property are but as the small dust of the balance. He is no respecter of persons.

Men of property often look upon their wealth and say: By my wisdom have I gotten me this wealth. But who gave them power to get wealth? God has bestowed upon them the ability which they

possess, but instead of giving Him the glory they take it to themselves. He will prove them and try them, and will bring their glorying to the dust; He will remove their strength and scatter their possessions. Instead of a blessing they will realize a curse. An act of wrong or oppression, a deviation from the right way, should no sooner be tolerated in a man who possesses property than in a man who has none. All the riches that the most wealthy ever possessed are not of sufficient value to cover the smallest sin before God; they will not be accepted as a ransom for transgression. Repentance, true humility, a broken heart, and a contrite spirit alone will be accepted of God. And no man can have true humility before God unless the same is exemplified before others. Nothing less than repentance, confession, and forsaking of sin is acceptable to God.

Many rich men have obtained their wealth by close deal, by advantaging themselves and disadvantaging their poorer fellow men or their brethren; and these very men glory in their shrewdness and keenness in a bargain. But the curse of God will rest upon every dollar thus obtained, and upon the increase of it in their hands. As these things were shown me, I could see the force of our Saviour's words: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Those who possess the ability to acquire property need to be constantly on the watch or they will turn their acquisitiveness to bad account and not maintain strict honesty. Thus many fall into temptation, overreach, receive more for a thing than it is worth, and sacrifice the generous, benevolent, noble principles of their manhood for sordid gain.

I was shown that many who profess to be Sabbathkeepers so love the world and the things that are in the world that they have been corrupted by its spirit and influence; the divine has disappeared from their characters and the satanic has crept in, transforming them to serve the purposes of Satan, to be instruments of unrighteousness. Then in contrast with these men I was shown the industrious, honest, poor men who stand ready to help those who need help, who would rather suffer themselves to be disadvantaged by their wealthy brethren than to manifest so close and acquisitive a spirit as they manifest; men who esteem a clear conscience and right, even in

little things, of greater value than riches. They are so ready to help others, so willing to do all the good in their power, that they do not amass wealth; their earthly possessions do not increase. If there is a benevolent object to call forth means or labor, they are the first to be interested in and respond to it, and frequently do far beyond their real ability, and thus deny themselves some needed good, to carry out their benevolent purposes.

Because these men can boast of but little earthly treasure, they may be looked upon as deficient in ability, in judgment, and in wisdom. They may be counted of no special worth, and their influence may not be esteemed by men; yet how does God regard these poor wise men? They are regarded precious in His sight, and, although not increasing their treasure upon earth, they are laying up for themselves an incorruptible treasure in the heavens, and in doing this they manifest a wisdom as far superior to that of the wise, calculating, acquisitive professed Christian as the divine and godlike is superior to the earthly, carnal, and satanic. It is moral worth that God values. A Christian character unblotted with avarice, possessing quietness, meekness, and humility, is more precious in His sight than the most fine gold, even the golden wedge of Ophir.

Wealthy men are to be tested more closely than they ever yet have been. If they stand the test and overcome the blemishes upon their character, and as faithful stewards of Christ render to God the things that are His, it will be said to them: "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou has been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

I was then directed to the parable of the unjust steward: "And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?"

If men fail to render to God that which He has lent them to use to His glory, and thus rob Him, they will make an entire failure. He has lent them means which they can improve upon by losing no opportunity to do good, and thus they may be constantly laying up treasure in heaven. But if, like the man who had one talent, they hide it, fearing that God will get that which their talent gains, they will not only lose the increase which will finally be awarded the faithful steward, but also the principal which God gave them to work upon. Because they have robbed God, they will not have laid up treasure in heaven, and they lose their earthly treasure also. They have no habitation on earth, and no Friend in heaven to receive them into the everlasting habitation of the righteous.

Christ declares: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon"—cannot serve God and your riches, too. "The Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided Him." Mark the words of Christ to them: "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men [which is riches acquired by oppression, by deception, by overreaching, by fraud, or in any other dishonest manner] is abomination in the sight of God." Then Christ presents the two characters, the rich man who was clothed with purple and fine linen, and who fared sumptuously every day, and Lazarus, who was in abject poverty and loathsome to the sight, and who begged the few crumbs which the rich man despised. Our Saviour shows His estimate of the two. Although Lazarus was in so deplorable and mean a condition, he had true faith, true moral worth, which God saw, and which He considered of so great value that He took this poor, despised sufferer and placed him in the most exalted position, while the honored and ease-loving man of wealth was thrust out from the presence of God and plunged into misery and woe unutterable. God did not value the riches of this wealthy man, because he had not true moral worth. His character was worthless. His riches did not recommend him to God nor have any influence to secure His favor.

By this parable Christ would teach His disciples not to judge or value men by their wealth or by the honors which they received of others. Such was the course pursued by the Pharisees, who, while possessing both riches and worldly honor, were valueless in the sight of God and, more than this, were despised and rejected of Him, cast out from His sight as disgusting to Him because there was no moral worth or soundness in them. They were corrupt, sinful, and abominable in His sight. The poor man, despised by his fellow mortals and disgusting to their sight, was valuable in the sight of God because he possessed moral soundness and worth, thus qualifying him to be introduced into the society of refined, holy angels and to be an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ.

In Paul's charge to Timothy he warns him of a class who will not consent to wholesome words and who place a wrong estimate on riches. He says: "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store

for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”

Paul in this letter to Timothy would impress upon his mind the necessity of giving such instruction as should remove the deception which so easily steals upon the rich, that because of their riches they are superior to those who are in poverty, that because of their ability to acquire they are superior in wisdom and judgment—in short, that gain is godliness. Here is a fearful deception. How few heed the charge which Paul commissioned Timothy to make to the rich! How many flatter themselves that their acquisitiveness is godliness! Paul declares, “Godliness with contentment is great gain.” Although rich persons may devote their whole lives to the one object of getting riches, yet as they brought nothing into the world, they can carry nothing out. They must die and leave that which cost them so much labor to obtain. They staked their all, their eternal interest, to obtain this property, and have lost both worlds.

Paul shows what risks men will run to become rich. But many are determined to be rich; this is their study, and in their zeal eternal considerations are overlooked. They are blinded by Satan and make themselves believe that it is for good purposes they desire this gain; they strain their consciences, deceive themselves, and are constantly coveting riches. Such have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. They have sacrificed their noble, elevated principles, given up their faith for riches, and, if not disappointed in their object, they are disappointed in the happiness which they supposed riches would bring. They are entangled, perplexed with care; they have made themselves slaves to their avarice and compelled their families to the same slavery, and the advantages they reap are “many sorrows.” “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.” Men are not to hoard up their riches and take no good of them, depriving themselves of the comforts of life and virtually becoming slaves in order to retain or increase their earthly treasure.

The apostle Paul shows the only true use for riches, and bids Timothy charge the rich to do good, that they be rich in good works,

TRUE WEALTH

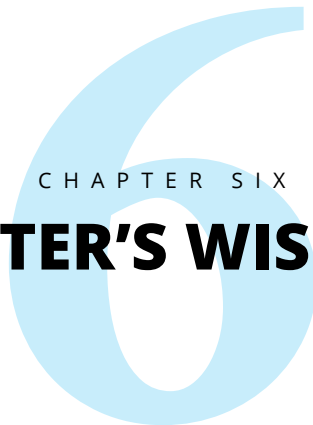
ready to distribute, willing to communicate; for in so doing they are laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come,—referring to the close of time,—that they may lay hold on eternal life. The teachings of Paul harmonize perfectly with the words of Christ: “Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.” Godliness with contentment is great gain. Here is the true secret of happiness, and real prosperity of soul and body.

***Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, chpt. 94, “Deceitfulness of Riches,” pages 536–540.**

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO OF THE FULL CHAPTER:



This audio link corresponds to Section 12 of the *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1. The audio chapter number may be different.



CHAPTER SIX

MASTER'S WISDOM

I was shown that the parable of the talents has not been fully understood. This important lesson was given to the disciples for the benefit of Christians living in the last days. And these talents do not represent merely the ability to preach and instruct from the word of God. The parable applies to the temporal means which God has entrusted to His people. Those to whom the five and the two talents were given, traded and doubled that which was committed to their trust. God requires those who have possessions here, to put their money out to usury for Him—to put it into the cause to spread the truth. And if the truth lives in the heart of the receiver, he also will aid with his substance in sending it to others; and through his efforts, his influence, and his means, other souls will embrace the truth, and begin also to work for God. I saw that some of God's professed people are like the man who hid his talent in the earth. They keep their possessions from doing good in the cause of God. They claim that these are their own, and that they have a right to do

what they please with their own; and souls are not saved by judicious efforts made by them with their Lord's money. Angels keep a faithful record of every man's work, and as judgment passes upon the house of God, the sentence of each is recorded by his name, and the angel is commissioned to spare not the unfaithful servants, but to cut them down at the time of slaughter. And that which was committed to their trust is taken from them. Their earthly treasure is then swept away, and they have lost all. And the crowns they might have worn, had they been faithful, are put upon the heads of those saved by the faithful servants whose means was constantly in use for God. And everyone they have been the means of saving, adds stars to their crown in glory, and increases their eternal reward.

I was also shown that the parable of the unjust steward was to teach us a lesson. "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." If we use our means to God's glory here, we lay up a treasure in heaven; and when earthly possessions are all gone, the faithful steward has Jesus and angels for his friends, to receive him home to everlasting habitations.

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." He that is faithful in his earthly possessions, which are least, making a judicious use of what God has lent him here, will be true to his profession. "He that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." He that will withhold from God that which He has lent him, will be unfaithful in the things of God in every respect. "If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" If we prove unfaithful in the management of what God lends us here, He will never give us the immortal inheritance. "And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" Jesus has purchased redemption for us. It is ours; but we are placed here on probation to see if we will prove worthy of eternal life. God proves us by trusting us with earthly possessions. If we are faithful to impart freely of what He has lent us, to advance His cause, God can entrust to us the immortal inheritance. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

God is displeased with the slack, loose manner in which many of His professed people conduct their worldly business. They seem to have lost all sense of the fact that the property they are using belongs to God, and that they must render to Him an account of their stewardship. Some leave their worldly business in perfect confusion. Satan has his eye on it all, and he strikes at a favorable opportunity, and by his management takes much means out of the ranks of Sabbathkeepers. And this means goes into his ranks. Some who are aged are unwilling to make any settlement of their worldly business, and in an unexpected moment they sicken and die. Their children who have no interest in the truth, take the property. Satan has managed it as suited him. "If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?"

I was shown the awful fact that Satan and his angels have had more to do with the management of the property of God's professed people than the Lord has. Stewards of the last days are unwise. They suffer Satan to control their business matters, and get into his ranks what belongs to, and should be in, the cause of God. God takes notice of you, unfaithful stewards; He will call you to account. I saw that the stewards of God can by faithful, judicious management keep their business in this world square, exact, and straight. And it is especially the privilege and duty of the aged, the feeble, and those who have no children, to place their means where it can be used in the cause of God if they should be suddenly taken away. But I saw that Satan and his angels exult over their success in this matter. And those who should be wise heirs of salvation almost willingly let their Lord's money slip out of their hands into the enemy's ranks. In this way they strengthen Satan's kingdom, and seem to feel very easy about it!

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, chpt. 35, “Lesson from the Parables,” pages 197-199.

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO OF THE FULL CHAPTER:



This audio link corresponds to Section 5 of the *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1. The audio chapter number may be different.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ROBBERY OF GOD

The Lord has made the diffusion of light and truth in the earth dependent on the voluntary efforts and offerings of those who have been partakers of the heavenly gifts. Comparatively few are called to travel as ministers or missionaries, but multitudes are to co-operate in spreading the truth with their means.

The history of Ananias and Sapphira is given us that we may understand the sin of deception in regard to our gifts and offerings. They had voluntarily promised to give a portion of their property for the promotion of the cause of Christ; but when the means was in their hands they declined to fulfill that obligation, at the same time wishing it to appear to others that they had given all. Their punishment was marked in order that it might serve as a perpetual warning to Christians of all ages. The same sin is fearfully prevalent at the present time, yet we hear of no such signal punishment. The Lord shows men once with what abhorrence He regards such an offense

against His sacred claims and dignity, and then they are left to follow the general principles of the divine administration. . . .

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.

The hearts of men become hardened through selfishness, and, like Ananias and Sapphira, they are tempted to withhold part of the price while pretending to come up to the rules of tithing. Will a man rob God? Should means flow into the treasury exactly according to God's plan,—a tenth of all the increase,—there would be abundance to carry forward His work.

Well, says one, the calls keep coming to give to the cause; I am weary of giving. Are you? Then let me ask: Are you weary of receiving from God's beneficent hand? Not until He ceases to bless you will you cease to be under bonds to return to Him the portion He claims. He blesses you that it may be in your power to bless others. When you are weary of receiving, then you may say: I am weary of so many calls to give. God reserves to Himself a portion of all that we receive. When this is returned to Him, the remaining portion is blessed, but when it is withheld, the whole is sooner or later cursed. God's claim is first; every other is secondary. . . .

I have been shown that many of our people are robbing the Lord in tithes and in offerings, and as the result His work is greatly hindered. The curse of God will rest upon those who are living upon God's bounties and yet close their hearts and do nothing or next to nothing to advance His cause. Brethren and sisters, how can the beneficent Father continue to make you His stewards, furnishing you with means to use for Him, when you grasp it all, selfishly claiming that it is yours!

Instead of rendering to God the means He has placed in their hands, many invest it in more land. This evil is growing with our brethren. They had before all they could well care for, but the love of money or a desire to be counted as well off as their neighbors leads them to bury their means in the world and withhold from God His just dues. Can we be surprised if they are not prospered? if God does not bless their crops and they are disappointed? Could our brethren remember that God can bless twenty acres of land and make them as productive as one hundred, they would not continue to bury themselves in lands, but would let their means flow into God's treasury. "Take heed," said Christ, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life." Satan is pleased to have you increase your farms and invest your means in worldly enterprises, for by so doing you not only hinder the cause from advancing, but by anxiety and overwork lessen your prospect for eternal life.

We ought now to be heeding the injunction of our Saviour: "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not." It is now that our brethren should be cutting down their possessions instead of increasing them. We are about to move to a better country, even a heavenly. Then let us not be dwellers upon the earth, but be getting things into as compact a compass as possible.

The time is coming when we cannot sell at any price. The decree will soon go forth prohibiting men to buy or sell of any man save him that hath the mark of the beast. We came near having this realized in California a short time since; but this was only the threatening of the blowing of the four winds. As yet they are held by the four angels.

We are not just ready. There is a work yet to be done, and then the angels will be bidden to let go, that the four winds may blow upon the earth. That will be a decisive time for God's children, a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation. Now is our opportunity to work.

There is among many professing the truth a spirit of unrest. Some want to go to another county or state, buy large lands, and carry on an extensive business; others want to go into the city. Thus little churches are left in weakness and discouragement to die, when, had the ones who left them been content to work on a smaller scale, doing their little with fidelity, they might have made their families comfortable and been free to keep their own souls in the love of God. Many who move are disappointed. They lose what little property they had, lose health, and finally give up the truth.

The Lord is coming. Let everyone show his faith by his works. Faith in Christ's near advent is dying out of the churches, and selfishness is causing them to rob God to serve their own personal interests. When Christ is abiding in us, we shall be self-denying like Him.

...

I saw that many withhold from the cause while they live, quieting their consciences that they will be charitable at death; they hardly dare exercise faith and trust in God to give anything while living. But this deathbed charity is not what Christ requires of His followers; it cannot excuse the selfishness of the living. Those who hold fast their property till the last moment, surrender it to death rather than to the cause. Losses are occurring continually. Banks fail, and property is consumed in very many ways. Many purpose to do something, but they delay the matter, and Satan works to prevent the means from coming into the treasury at all. It is lost before it is returned to God, and Satan exults that it is so.

If you would do good with your means, do it at once lest Satan get it in his hands and thus hinder the work of God. Many times, when the Lord has opened the way for brethren to handle their means to advance His cause, the agents of Satan have presented some enterprise by which they were positive the brethren could dou

ble their means. They take the bait; their money is invested, and the cause, and frequently themselves, never receive a dollar.

Brethren, remember the cause; and when you have means at your command lay up for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that you may lay hold on eternal life. Jesus for your sakes became poor, that you through His poverty might be made rich in heavenly treasure. What will you give for Jesus, who has given all for you?

It will not do for you to depend on making your charity gifts in testamentary bequests at death. You cannot calculate with the least degree of surety that the cause will ever be benefited by them. Satan works with acute skill to stir up the relatives, and every false position is taken to gain to the world that which was solemnly dedicated to the cause of God. Much less than the sum willed is always received. Satan even puts it into the hearts of men and women to protest against their relatives' doing what they wish in the bestowment of their property. They seem to regard everything given to the Lord as robbing the relatives of the deceased. If you want your means to go to the cause, appropriate it, or all that you do not really need for a support, while you live. A few of the brethren are doing this and enjoying the pleasure of being their own executors. Will the covetousness of men make it necessary that they shall be deprived of life in order that the property which God has lent them shall not be useless forever? Let none of you draw upon yourselves the doom of the unprofitable servant who hid his Lord's money in the earth.

Dying charity is a poor substitute for living benevolence. Many will to their friends and relatives all except a very small pittance of their property. This they leave for their supreme Friend, who became poor for their sakes, who suffered insult, mockery, and death, that they might become sons and daughters of God. And yet they expect when the righteous dead shall come forth to immortal life that this Friend will take them into His everlasting habitations.

The cause of Christ is robbed, not by a mere passing thought, not by an unpremeditated act. No. By your own deliberate act you made your will, placing your property at the disposal of unbeliev-

TRUE WEALTH

ers. After having robbed God during your lifetime, you continue to rob Him after your death, and you do this with the full consent of all your powers of mind, in a document called your will. What do you think will be your Master's will toward you for thus appropriating His goods? What will you say when an account is demanded of your stewardship?

***Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, chpt. 13, "Will a Man Rob God," pages 148-155.**

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO OF THE FULL CHAPTER:



This audio link corresponds to Section 31 of the *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5. The audio chapter number may be different.

CHAPTER EIGHT

BUSINESS AND RELIGION

Those employed in our various institutions—our publishing houses, our schools, and our health institutions—should have a living connection with God. Especially is it very important that those who have the management of these great branches of the work be men who make the kingdom of God and His righteousness the first consideration. They are not fit for their positions of trust unless they take counsel of God and bear fruit to His glory. They should pursue a course of life that will honor their Creator, ennoble themselves, and bless their fellow men. All have natural traits which must be cultivated or repressed, as they shall help or hinder in obtaining a growth in grace, a depth of religious experience.

Those engaged in the work of God cannot serve His cause acceptably unless they make the best use possible of the religious privileges they enjoy. We are as trees planted in the garden of the Lord; and He comes to us seeking the fruit He has a right to expect. His eye is upon each of us; He reads our hearts and understands our lives. This

is a solemn search, for it has reference to duty and to destiny; and with what interest is it prosecuted. Let each of those to whom are committed sacred trusts inquire: "How do I meet the inspecting eye of God? Is my heart cleansed from its defilement? or have its temple courts become so desecrated, so occupied with buyers and sellers, that Christ finds no room?" The bustle of business, if continuous, will dry up spirituality and leave the soul Christless. Although they may profess the truth, yet if men pass along day by day with no living connection with God, they will be led to do strange things; decisions will be made not in accordance with the will of God. There is no safety for our leading brethren while they shall go forward according to their own impulses. They will not be yoked up with Christ, and so will not move in harmony with Him. They will be unable to see and realize the wants of the cause, and Satan will move upon them to take positions that will embarrass and hinder.

My brethren, are you cultivating devotion? Is love of religious things prominent? Are you living by faith and overcoming the world? Do you attend the public worship of God? and are your voices heard in the prayer and social meeting? Is the family altar established? Do you gather your children together morning and evening, and present their cases to God? Do you instruct them how to become followers of the Lamb? Your families, if irreligious, testify to your neglect and unfaithfulness. If, while you are connected with the sacred cause of God, your children are careless, irreverent, and have no love for religious meetings or sacred truth, it is a sad thing. Such a family exerts an influence against Christ and against the truth; and "he that is not with Me is against Me," says Christ. The neglect of home religion, the neglect to train your children, is most displeasing to God. If one of your children were in the river, battling with the waves and in imminent danger of drowning, what a stir there would be! What efforts would be made, what prayers offered, what enthusiasm manifested, to save the human life! But here are your children out of Christ, their souls unsaved. Perhaps they are even rude and uncourteous, a reproach to the Adventist name. They are perishing without hope and without God in the world, and you are careless and unconcerned.

What example do you give your children? What order do you have at home? Your children should be educated to be kind, thoughtful of others, gentle, easy to be entreated, and, above everything else, to respect religious things and feel the importance of the claims of God. They should be taught to respect the hour of prayer; they should be required to rise in the morning so as to be present at family worship.

Fathers and mothers who make God first in their households, who teach their children that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, glorify God before angels and before men by presenting to the world a well-ordered, well-disciplined family, a family that love and obey God instead of rebelling against Him. Christ is not a stranger in their homes; His name is a household name, revered and glorified. Angels delight in a home where God reigns supreme, and the children are taught to reverence religion, the Bible, and their Creator. Such families can claim the promise: "Them that honor Me I will honor." As from such a home the father goes forth to his daily duties, it is with a spirit softened and subdued by converse with God. He is a Christian, not only in his profession, but in trade, in all his business relations. He does his work with fidelity, knowing that the eye of God is upon him.

In the church his voice is not silent. He has words of gratitude and encouragement to utter; for he is a growing Christian, with a fresh experience every day. He is a helpful, active worker in the church, laboring for the glory of God and the salvation of his fellow men. He would feel condemned and guilty before God were he to neglect to attend public worship, thus failing to improve the privileges that would enable him to do better and more effective service in the cause of truth.

God is not glorified when influential men make themselves mere businessmen, ignoring their eternal interests, that are so much more enduring, so much more noble and elevated, than the temporal. Where should the greatest tact and skill be exercised, if not upon those things that are imperishable, as enduring as eternity? Brethren, develop your talent in the direction of serving the Lord; manifest as much tact and ability in working for the upbuilding of the cause of Christ as you do in worldly enterprises.

There is, I am sorry to say, a great want of earnestness and interest in spiritual things on the part of the heads of many families. There are some who are seldom found in the house of worship. They make one excuse, then another, and still another, for their absence; but the real reason is that their hearts are not religiously inclined. A spirit of devotion is not cultivated in the family. The children are not brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. These men are not what God would have them. They have no living connection with Him; they are purely businessmen. They have not a conciliatory spirit; there is such a lack of meekness, kindness, and courtesy in their deportment that their motives are misconstrued, and the good they really do possess is evil spoken of. If they could realize how offensive their course is in the sight of God, they would make a change. . . .

Satan makes every effort to lead people away from God; and he is successful in his purpose when the religious life is drowned in business cares, when he can so absorb their minds in business that they will not take time to read their Bibles, to pray in secret, and to keep the offering of praise and thanksgiving burning on the altar of sacrifice morning and evening. How few realize the wiles of the archdeceiver! how many are ignorant of his devices! When our brethren voluntarily absent themselves from religious meetings, when God is not thought of and revered, when He is not chosen as their counselor and their strong tower of defense, how soon secular thoughts and wicked unbelief come in, and vain confidence and philosophy take the place of humble, trusting faith. Often temptations are cherished as the voice of the True Shepherd because men have separated themselves from Jesus. They cannot be safe a moment unless right principles are cherished in the heart and carried into every business transaction. . . .

Whatever position in life we may occupy, whatever our business, we must be humble enough to feel our need of help; we must lean implicitly on the teachings of God's word, acknowledge His providence in all things, and be faithful in pouring out our souls in prayer. Lean to your own understanding, dear brethren, as you make your way through the world, and you will reap sorrow and disappointment. Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and He will guide your

steps in wisdom, and your interests will be safe for this world and for the next. You need light and knowledge. You will take counsel either of God or your own heart; you will walk in the sparks of your own kindling, or will gather to yourself divine light from the Sun of Righteousness. . . .

For the sake of making money, many divorce themselves from God and ignore their eternal interests. They pursue the same course as the scheming, worldly man, but God is not in this; it is an offense to Him. He would have them prompt to devise and execute plans; but all business matters should be transacted in harmony with the great moral law of God. The principles of love to God and our neighbor must be carried out in all the acts of the daily life, the least as well as the greatest. There must be a spirit to do more than pay tithes on mint, anise, and cummin; the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and the love of God, must not be neglected; for the personal character of each one connected with the work leaves its impress upon it.

There are men and women who have left all for Christ's sake. Their own temporal interests, their own enjoyment of society and of family and friends, are made of less importance than the interests of the kingdom of God. They have not made houses and lands, and relatives and friends however dear, first in their affections, and God's cause second. And those who do this, who devote their lives to the advancement of the truth, to bringing many sons and daughters to God, have the promise that they shall have a hundredfold in this life and in the world to come life everlasting. Those who work from a noble standpoint and with unselfish motives will be consecrated to God, body, soul, and spirit. They will not exalt self; they will not feel competent to take responsibilities; but they will not refuse to bear burdens, for they will have a desire to do all that they are capable of doing. These will not study their own convenience; the question with them will be: What is duty?

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, chpt. 48, “Business and Religion,”
pages 76–80; 82–83.

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO OF THE FULL CHAPTER:



This audio link corresponds to Section 32 of the *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5. The audio chapter number may be different.

CHAPTER NINE

SOCIETY WITH CHRIST

The blessing of God will rest upon those in ----- who have the cause of Christ at heart. The freewill offerings of our brethren and sisters, made in faith and love to the crucified Redeemer, will bring back blessings to them; for God marks and remembers every act of liberality on the part of His saints. In preparing a house of worship, there must be a great exercise of faith and trust in God. In business transactions those who venture nothing make but little advancement; why not have faith also in an enterprise for God and invest in His cause?

Some, when in poverty, are generous with their little; but as they acquire property, they become penurious. The reason they have so little faith is that they do not keep moving forward as they prosper, and give to the cause of God even at a sacrifice.

In the Jewish system it was required that beneficence should first be shown to the Lord. At the harvest and the vintage the first fruits of the field—the corn, the wine, and the oil—were to be consecrated

as an offering to the Lord. The gleanings and the corners of the fields were reserved for the poor. Our gracious heavenly Father did not neglect the wants of the poor. The first fruits of the wool when the sheep were shorn, of the grain when the wheat was threshed, were to be offered to the Lord; and it was commanded that the poor, the widows, the orphans, and the strangers, be invited to their feasts. At the close of every year all were required to make solemn oath whether or not they had done according to the command of God.

This arrangement was made by the Lord to impress upon the people that in every matter He must be first. By this system of benevolence they were to bear in mind that their gracious Master was the true proprietor of their fields, their flocks, and their herds; that the God of heaven sent them sunshine and rain for their seedtime and harvest, and that everything they possessed was of His creation. All was the Lord's, and He had made them stewards of His goods.

The liberality of the Jews in the construction of the tabernacle and the erection of the temple illustrates a spirit of benevolence which has not been equaled by Christians of any later date. They had just been freed from their long bondage in Egypt and were wanderers in the wilderness; yet scarcely were they delivered from the armies of the Egyptians who pursued them in their hasty journey, when the word of the Lord came to Moses, saying: "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take My offering."

His people had small possessions and no flattering prospect of adding to them; but an object was before them—to build a tabernacle for God. The Lord had spoken, and they must obey His voice. They withheld nothing. All gave with a willing hand, not a certain amount of their increase, but a large portion of their actual possessions. They devoted it gladly and heartily to the Lord, and pleased Him by so doing. Was it not all His? Had He not given them all they possessed? If He called for it, was it not their duty to give back to the Lender His own?

No urging was needed. The people brought even more than was required, and were told to desist, for there was already more than could be appropriated. Again, in building the temple, the call for

means met with a hearty response. The people did not give reluctantly. They rejoiced in the prospect of a building being erected for the worship of God, and donated more than enough for the purpose. David blessed the Lord before all the congregation, and said: "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee." Again in his prayer David gave thanks in these words: "O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build Thee an house for Thine holy name cometh of Thine hand, and is all Thine own."

David well understood from whom came all his bounties. Would that those of this day who rejoice in a Saviour's love could realize that their silver and gold are the Lord's and should be used to promote His glory, not grudgingly retained to enrich and gratify themselves. He has an indisputable right to all that He has lent His creatures. All that they possess is His. . . .

The spirit of liberality is the spirit of heaven; the spirit of selfishness is the spirit of Satan. Christ's self-sacrificing love is revealed upon the cross. He gave all He had, and then gave Himself, that man might be saved. The cross of Christ appeals to the benevolence of every follower of the blessed Saviour. The principle there illustrated is to give, give. This, carried out in actual benevolence and good works, is the true fruit of the Christian life. The principle of worldlings is to get, get, and thus they expect to secure happiness; but, carried out in all its bearings, the fruit is misery and death.

To carry the truth to the inhabitants of the earth, to rescue them from their guilt and indifference, is the mission of the followers of Christ. Men must have the truth in order to be sanctified through it, and we are the channels of God's light. Our talents, our means, our knowledge, are not merely for our own benefit; they are to be used for the salvation of souls, to elevate man from his life of sin and bring him, through Christ, to the infinite God.

We should be zealous workers in this cause, seeking to lead sinners, repenting and believing, to a divine Redeemer, and to impress them with an exalted sense of God's love to man. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever belie-

venth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” What an incomparable love is this! A theme for the most profound meditation! The amazing love of God for a world that did not love Him! The thought has a subduing power upon the soul and brings the mind into captivity to the will of God. Men who are crazy for gain, and are disappointed and unhappy in their pursuit of the world, need the knowledge of this truth to quiet the restless hungering and thirsting of their souls.

Missionaries for God are wanted in your large city to carry light to those who sit in the shadow of death. Experienced hands are needed, in the meekness of wisdom and the strength of faith, to lift weary souls to the bosom of a compassionate Redeemer. Oh, selfishness! What a curse! It prevents us from engaging in the service of God. It prevents us from perceiving the claims of duty, which should set our hearts aglow with fervent zeal. All our energies should be turned to the obedience of Christ. To divide our interest with the leaders of error is aiding the wrong side and giving advantage to our foes. The truth of God knows no compromise with sin, no connection with artifice, no union with transgression. Soldiers are wanted who will always answer to the roll call and be ready for immediate action, not those who, when needed, are found aiding the enemy. . . .

One marked feature in the teachings of Christ is the frequency and earnestness with which He rebuked the sin of covetousness and pointed out the danger of worldly acquisitions and inordinate love of gain. In the mansions of the rich, in the temple and in the streets, He warned those who inquired after salvation: “Take heed, and beware of covetousness.” “Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

It is this increasing devotion to money getting, the selfishness which the desire for gain begets, that removes the favor of God from the church and deadens its spirituality. When the head and hands are constantly occupied with planning and toiling for the accumulation of riches, the claims of God and humanity are forgotten. If God has blessed us with prosperity, it is not that our time and attention should be diverted from Him and given to that which He has lent us. The giver is greater than the gift. We are not our own; we have been bought with a price. Have we forgotten that infinite price paid for

our redemption? Is gratitude dead in the heart? Does not the cross of Christ put to shame a life of selfish ease and indulgence?

What if Christ, becoming weary of the ingratitude and abuse that met Him on every side, had left His work! What if He had never reached that period when He said: "It is finished." What if He had returned to heaven, discouraged by His reception! What if He had never passed through that soul agony in the garden of Gethsemane that forced from His pores great drops of blood!

Christ was influenced in His labor for the redemption of the race by a love that is without parallel, and a devotion to the Father's will. He toiled for the good of man up to the very hour of His humiliation. He spent His life in poverty and self-denial for the degraded sinner. In a world that was His own He had no place to lay His weary head. We are reaping the fruits of this infinite self-sacrifice; and yet when labor is to be done, when our money is wanted to aid the work of the Redeemer in the salvation of souls, we shrink from duty and pray to be excused. Ignoble sloth, careless indifference, and wicked selfishness seal our senses to the claims of God.

Oh, must Christ, the Majesty of heaven, the King of glory, bear the heavy cross, wear the thorny crown, and drink the bitter cup, while we recline at ease, glorifying ourselves and forgetting the souls He died to redeem by His precious blood? No; let us give while we have the power. Let us do while we have the strength. Let us work while it is day. Let us devote our time and means to the service of God, that we may have His approbation and receive His reward.

***Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, chpt. 7, "Co-Workers with Christ," pages 76-80; 82-83.**

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO OF THE FULL CHAPTER:



This audio link corresponds to Section 26 of the *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4. The audio chapter number may be different.

10

CHAPTER TEN

DISHONESTY IN THE CHURCH

The love of money is the root of all evil.” Some who profess the truth do not withstand temptation on this point. Among worldlings in this generation the greatest crimes are perpetrated through the love of money. If wealth cannot be secured by honest industry, men will resort to fraud, deception, and crime in order to obtain it. The cup of iniquity is nearly filled, and the retributive justice of God is about to descend upon the guilty. Widows are robbed of their scanty pittance by lawyers and professedly interested friends, and poor men are made to suffer for the necessaries of life because of the dishonesty which is practiced in order to gratify extravagance. The terrible record of crime in our world is enough to chill the blood and fill the soul with horror; but the fact that even among those who profess to believe the truth the same evils are creeping in, the same sins indulged to a greater or less degree, calls for deep humiliation of soul.

A man who sincerely fears God would rather toil day and night, suffer privation, and eat the bread of poverty than to indulge a

passion for gain which would oppress the widow and the fatherless or turn the stranger from his right. The crimes that are committed through love of display and love of money constitute this world a den of thieves and robbers, and cause angels to weep. But Christians are professedly not dwellers upon the earth; they are in a strange country, stopping, as it were, only for a night. Our home is in the mansions which Jesus has gone to prepare for us. This life is but a vapor, which passes away. . . .

The unbelief and sins of ancient Israel were presented before me, and I saw that similar wrongs and iniquity exist among modern Israel. The pen of inspiration recorded their crimes for the benefit of those who live in these last days, that we might shun their evil example. Achan coveted and secreted a wedge of gold and a goodly Babylonish garment that were taken as spoil from the enemy. But the Lord had pronounced the city of Jericho accursed and had commanded the people not to take of the spoil of their enemies for their own use. "And ye, in anywise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the Lord: they shall come into the treasury of the Lord."

But Achan, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel. When the armies of Israel went out to fight against the enemy, they were repulsed and driven back, and some of them were slain. This brought great discouragement upon the people. Joshua, their leader, was perplexed and confounded. In the greatest humiliation he fell upon his face and prayed: "Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast Thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan! O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt Thou do unto Thy great name?"

The answer of the Lord to Joshua was: "Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff." Achan had stolen that which was to be reserved for God and placed in His treasury; he had also dissembled in that when he saw the camp of Israel troubled he did not confess his guilt, for he knew that Joshua had repeated the words of the Lord to the people, that if they should appropriate to themselves that which God had reserved, the camp of Israel would be troubled.

While he is rejoicing in his ill-gotten gain, his security is broken in upon; he hears that an investigation is to be made. This makes him uneasy. He repeats over and over to himself: What does it concern them? I am accountable for my acts. He apparently puts on a brave face and in the most demonstrative manner condemns the one guilty. If he had confessed he might have been saved; but sin hardens the heart, and he continues to assert his innocence. Amid so large a crowd he thinks he will escape detection. Lots are cast to search out the offender; the lot falls upon the tribe of Judah. Achan's heart now begins to throb with guilty fear, for he is one of that tribe; but still he flatters himself that he will escape. The lot is again cast, and the family to which he belongs is taken. Now in his pallid face his guilt is read by Joshua. The lot cast again singles out the unhappy man. There he stands, pointed out by the finger of God as the guilty one who has caused all this trouble.

If when Achan yielded to temptation he had been asked if he wished to bring defeat and death into the camp of Israel, he would have answered: "No, no! is thy servant a dog that he should do this great wickedness?" But he lingered over the temptation to gratify his own covetousness; and when the opportunity was presented, he went further than he had purposed in his heart. It is exactly in this way that individual members of the church are imperceptibly led on to grieve the Spirit of God, to defraud their neighbors, and to bring the frown of God upon the church. No man lives to himself. Shame, defeat, and death were brought upon Israel by one man's sin. That

protection which had covered their heads in the time of battle was withdrawn. Various sins that are cherished and practiced by professed Christians bring the frown of God upon the church. In the day when the Ledger of Heaven shall be opened, the Judge will not in words express to man his guilt, but will cast one penetrating, convicting glance, and every deed, every transaction of life, will be vividly impressed upon the memory of the wrongdoer. The person will not, as in Joshua's day, need to be hunted out from tribe to family, but his own lips will confess his shame, his selfishness, covetousness, dishonesty, dissembling, and fraud. His sins, hidden from the knowledge of man, will then be proclaimed, as it were, upon the housetop. . . .

The popular churches are filled with men who, while they make a pretense of serving God, are thieves, murderers, adulterers, and fornicators; but those who profess our lowly faith claim a higher standard. They should be Bible Christians, and they must be diligent in the study of the Chart of life. Carefully and prayerfully should they examine the motives which prompt them to action. Those who would put their trust in Christ should begin to study the beauties of the cross now. If they would be living Christians they must begin to fear and obey God now. If they will they can save their souls from ruin and make a success of winning eternal life.

The custom of overreaching in trade, which exists in the world, is no example for Christians. They should not deviate from perfect integrity, even in small matters. To sell an article for more than it is worth, taking advantage of the ignorance of purchasers, is fraud. Unlawful gains, petty tricks of trade, exaggeration, competition, underselling a brother who is seeking to pursue an honest business—these things are corrupting the purity of the church, and are ruinous to her spirituality.

The business world does not lie outside the limits of God's government. Christianity is not to be merely paraded on the Sabbath and displayed in the sanctuary; it is for every day in the week and for every place. Its claims must be recognized and obeyed in the workshop, at home, and in business transactions with brethren and with the world. With many, an absorbing worldliness eclipses the true sense

of Christian obligation. The religion of Christ will have such an influence upon the heart that it will control the life. Men possessing the genuine article of true religion will in all their business transactions show as clear a perception of right as when offering their supplications at the throne of grace. The life, with all its capabilities, belongs to God, and should be used to promote His glory, instead of being perverted to the service of Satan in defrauding our fellow men.

Satan has been the adviser of some. He tells them that if they would prosper they must hearken to his counsel: "Do not be over-conscientious in regard to honor or honesty; look out sharply for your own interest, and do not be carried away with pity, softness, and generosity. You need not care for the widow and the fatherless. Do not encourage them to look to you and depend on you; leave them to look out for themselves. Do not inquire whether they have food, or if you can bless them with thoughtful, kindly attention. Take care of yourself. Get all into your hands that you can. Rob the widow and the fatherless, and turn away the stranger from his right, and you will have means to supply your various wants." Some have heeded this counsel and despised Him who has said: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

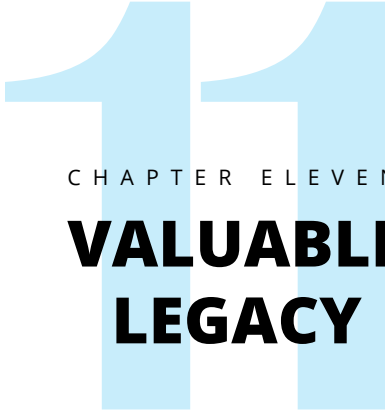
Satan offers to men the kingdoms of the world if they will yield to him the supremacy. Many do this and sacrifice heaven. It is better to die than to sin; better to want than to defraud; better to hunger than to lie. Let all who are tempted meet Satan with these words: "Blessed is everyone that feareth the Lord; that walketh in His ways. For thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee." Here is a condition and a promise which will be unmistakably realized. Happiness and prosperity will be the result of serving the Lord.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 4, chpt. 44, “Dishonesty in the Church,” pages 489-495.

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO OF THE FULL CHAPTER:



This audio link corresponds to Section 29 of the *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4. The audio chapter number may be different.



CHAPTER ELEVEN

VALUABLE LEGACY

At the camp meeting in Vermont, in 1870, I felt urged by the Spirit of God to bear a plain testimony relative to the duty of aged and wealthy parents in the disposition of their property. I had been shown that some men who are shrewd, prudent, and sharp in regard to the transaction of business generally, men who are distinguished for promptness and thoroughness, manifest a want of foresight and promptness in regard to a proper disposal of their property while they are living. They know not how soon their probation may close; yet they pass on from year to year with their business unsettled, and frequently their lives finally close without their having the use of their reason. Or they may die suddenly, without a moment's warning, and their property be disposed of in a manner that they would not have approved. These are guilty of negligence; they are unfaithful stewards.

Christians who believe the present truth should manifest wisdom and foresight. They should not neglect the disposition of their

means, expecting a favorable opportunity to adjust their business during a long illness. They should have their business in such a shape that, were they called at any hour to leave it, and should they have no voice in its arrangement, it might be settled as they would have had it were they alive. Many families have been dishonestly robbed of all their property and have been subjected to poverty because the work that might have been well done in an hour had been neglected. Those who make their wills should not spare pains or expense to obtain legal advice and to have them drawn up in a manner to stand the test. . . .

“Some place their means beyond their control by putting it into the hands of their children. Their secret motive is to place themselves in a position where they will not feel responsible to give of their property to spread the truth. These love in word, but not in deed and in truth. They do not realize that it is the Lord’s money they are handling, not their own.”

“Parents should have great fear in entrusting children with the talents of means that God has placed in their hands, unless they have the surest evidence that their children have greater interest in, love for, and devotion to, the cause of God than they themselves possess, and that these children will be more earnest and zealous in forwarding the work of God, and more benevolent in carrying forward the various enterprises connected with it which call for means. But many place their means in the hands of their children, thus throwing upon them the responsibility of their own stewardship, because Satan prompts them to do it. In so doing they effectually place that means in the enemy’s ranks. Satan works the matter to suit his own purpose and keeps from the cause of God the means which it needs, that it may be abundantly sustained.”

“Many who have made a high profession of faith are deficient in good works. If they should show their faith by their works they could exert a powerful influence on the side of truth. But they do not improve upon the talents of means lent them of God. Those who think to ease their consciences by willing their property to their children, or by withholding from God’s cause and suffering it to pass into the hands of unbelieving, reckless children for them to squander

or hoard up and worship, will have to render an account to God; they are unfaithful stewards of their Lord's money. They allow Satan to outgeneral them through these children, whose minds are under his control. Satan's purposes are accomplished in many ways, while the stewards of God seem stupefied and paralyzed; they do not realize their great responsibility and the reckoning which must shortly come." . . .

Those who have become acquainted with the principles of the truth should closely follow the word of God as their guide. They should render to God the things that are God's. I was shown that several in Vermont were making a great mistake in regard to appropriating the means that God had entrusted to their keeping. They were overlooking the claims of God upon all that they have. Their eyes were blinded by the enemy of righteousness, and they were taking a course which would result disastrously for themselves and their dear children.

Children were influencing their parents to leave their property in their hands for them to appropriate according to their judgment. With the light of God's word, so plain and clear in reference to the money lent to stewards, and with the warnings and reproofs which God has given through the *Testimonies* in regard to the disposition of means—if, with all this light before them, children either directly or indirectly influence their parents to divide their property while living, or to will it mainly to the children to come into their hands after the death of their parents, they take upon themselves fearful responsibilities. Children of aged parents who profess to believe the truth should, in the fear of God, advise and entreat their parents to be true to their profession of faith, and take a course in regard to their means which God can approve. Parents should lay up for themselves treasures in heaven by appropriating their means themselves to the advancement of the cause of God. They should not rob themselves of heavenly treasure by leaving a surplus of means to those who have enough; for by so doing they not only deprive themselves of the precious privilege of laying up a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, but they rob the treasury of God.

I stated at the camp meeting that when property is willed principally to children, while none is appropriated to the cause of God, or, if any, a meager pittance unworthy to be mentioned, this property would frequently prove a curse to the children who inherit it. It would be a source of temptation and would open a door through which they would be in danger of falling into many dangerous and hurtful lusts.

Parents should exercise the right that God has given them. He entrusted to them the talents He would have them use to His glory. The children were not to become responsible for the talents of the father. While they have sound minds and good judgment, parents should, with prayerful consideration, and with the help of proper counselors who have experience in the truth and a knowledge of the divine will, make disposition of their property. If they 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 claims 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.

The love of money lies at the root of nearly all the crimes committed in the world. Fathers who selfishly retain their means to enrich their children, and who do not see the wants of the cause of God and relieve them, make a terrible mistake. The children whom they think to bless with their means are cursed with it.

Money left to children frequently becomes a root of bitterness. They often quarrel over the property left them and in case of a will, are seldom all satisfied with the disposition made by the father. And

instead of the means left exciting gratitude and reverence for his memory, it creates dissatisfaction, murmuring, envy, and disrespect. Brothers and sisters who were at peace with one another are sometimes made at variance, and family dissensions are often the result of inherited means. Riches are desirable only as a means of supplying present wants and of doing good to others. But inherited riches oftener become a snare to the possessor than a blessing. Parents should not seek to have their children encounter the temptations to which they expose them in leaving them means which they themselves have made no effort to earn.

I was shown that some children professing to believe the truth would, in an indirect manner, influence the father to keep his means for his children instead of appropriating it to the cause of God while he lives. Those who have influenced their father to shift his stewardship upon them little know what they are doing. They are gathering upon themselves double responsibility, that of balancing the father's mind so that he did not fulfill the purpose of God in the disposition of the means lent him of God to be used to His glory, and the additional responsibility of becoming stewards of means that should have been put out to the exchangers by the father, that the Master could have received His own with usury.

Many parents make a great mistake in placing their property out of their hands into the hands of their children while they are themselves responsible for the use or abuse of the talent lent them of God. Neither parents nor children are made happier by this transfer of property. And the parents, if they live a few years even, generally regret this action on their part. Parental love in their children is not increased by this course. The children do not feel increased gratitude and obligation to their parents for their liberality. A curse seems to lay at the root of the matter, which only crops out in selfishness on the part of the children and unhappiness and miserable feelings of cramped dependence on the part of the parents.

If parents, while they live, would assist their children to help themselves, it would be better than to leave them a large amount at death. Children who are left to rely principally upon their own exertions make better men and women, and are better fitted for practical

TRUE WEALTH

life than those children who have depended upon their father's estate. The children left to depend upon their own resources generally prize their abilities, improve their privileges, and cultivate and direct their faculties to accomplish a purpose in life. They frequently develop characters of industry, frugality, and moral worth, which lie at the foundation of success in the Christian life. Those children for whom parents do the most, frequently feel under the least obligation toward them. The errors of which we have spoken have existed in ----- . Parents have shifted their stewardship upon their children.

***Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, chpt. 12, "To Wealthy Parents," pages 116-122.**

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO OF THE FULL CHAPTER:



This audio link corresponds to Section 21 of the *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3. The audio chapter number may be different.



CHAPTER TWELVE

TITHES AND OFFERINGS

The mission of the church of Christ is to save perishing sinners. It is to make known the love of God to men and to win them to Christ by the efficacy of that love. The truth for this time must be carried into the dark corners of the earth, and this work may begin at home. The followers of Christ should not live selfish lives; but, imbued with the Spirit of Christ, they should work in harmony with Him.

There are causes for the present coldness and unbelief. The love of the world and the cares of life separate the soul from God. The water of life must be in us, and flowing out from us, springing up into everlasting life. We must work out what God works in. If the Christian would enjoy the light of life, he must increase his efforts to bring others to the knowledge of the truth. His life must be characterized by exertion and sacrifices to do others good; and then there will be no complaints of lack of enjoyment.

Angels are ever engaged in working for the happiness of others. This is their joy. That which selfish hearts would consider humiliating service, ministering to those who are wretched and in every way inferior in character and rank, is the work of the pure, sinless angels in the royal courts of heaven. The spirit of Christ's self-sacrificing love is the spirit which pervades heaven and is the very essence of its bliss.

Those who feel no special pleasure in seeking to be a blessing to others, in working, even at a sacrifice, to do them good, cannot have the spirit of Christ or of heaven; for they have no union with the work of heavenly angels and cannot participate in the bliss that imparts elevated joy to them. Christ has said: "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." If the joy of angels is to see sinners repent, will it not be the joy of sinners, saved by the blood of Christ, to see others repent and turn to Christ through their instrumentality? In working in harmony with Christ and the holy angels we shall experience a joy that cannot be realized aside from this work.

The principle of the cross of Christ brings all who believe under heavy obligations to deny self, to impart light to others, and to give of their means to extend the light. If they are in connection with heaven they will be engaged in the work in harmony with the angels.

The principle of worldlings is to get all they can of the perishable things of this life. Selfish love of gain is the ruling principle in their lives. But 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. There are thousands who are passing their lives in indulgence and whose hearts are filled with repining. They are victims of selfishness and discontent in the vain effort to satisfy their minds with indulgence. But unhappiness is stamped upon their very countenances, and behind them is a desert, because their course is not fruitful in good works.

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 ser-

vants we claim to be. Our happiness will then be proportionate to our unselfish works, prompted by the love of Christ.

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. God could have reached His object in saving sinners without the aid of man; but He knew that man could not be happy without acting a part in the great work in which he would be cultivating self-denial and benevolence. . .

When the love of the world takes possession of the heart and becomes a ruling passion, there is no room left for adoration to God; for the higher powers of the mind submit to the slavery of mammon, and cannot retain thoughts of God and of heaven. The mind loses its remembrance of God and is narrowed and dwarfed to the accumulation of money.

Because of selfishness and love of the world, these men have been passing on with less and less sense of the magnitude of the work for these last days. They have not educated their minds to make a business of serving God. They have not an experience in that direction. Their property has absorbed their affections and eclipsed the magnitude of the plan of salvation. While they are improving and enlarging their worldly plans, they see no necessity for the enlargement and extension of the work of God. They invest their means in temporal but not in eternal things. Their hearts are ambitious for more means. God has made them depositaries of His law, that they might let the light so graciously given them shine forth to others. But they have so increased their cares and anxieties that they have no time to bless others with their influence, to converse with their neighbors, to pray with and for them, and to seek to bring them to the knowledge of the truth.

These men are responsible for the good they might do, but from which they excuse themselves because of worldly cares and burdens, which engross their minds and absorb their affections. Souls for whom Christ died might be saved by their personal effort and godly example. Precious souls are perishing for the light which God

has given to men to be reflected upon the pathway of others. But the precious light is hid under a bushel, and it gives no light to those who are in the house.

Every man is a steward of God. To each the Master has committed His means, but man claims that means as his own. Christ says: "Occupy till I come." A time is coming when Christ will require His own with usury. He will say to each of His stewards: "Give an account of thy stewardship." Those who have hid their Lord's money in a napkin in the earth, instead of putting it out to the exchangers, and those who have squandered their Lord's money by expending it for needless things, instead of putting it out to usury by investing it in His cause, will not receive approval from the Master, but decided condemnation. The unprofitable servant in the parable brought back the one talent to God, and said: "I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed: and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine." His Lord takes up his words: "Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strewed: thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury."

This unprofitable servant was not ignorant of God's plans, but he set himself firmly to thwart the purpose of God, charging Him with unfairness in requiring improvement upon the talents entrusted to him. This very complaint and murmuring is made by a large class of wealthy men professing to believe the truth. Like the unfaithful servant they are afraid that the increase of the talent that God has lent them will be called for to advance the spread of truth; therefore they tie it up by investing it in earthly treasures and burying it in the world, thus making it so fast that they have nothing, or next to nothing, to invest in the cause of God. They have buried it, fearing that God would call for some of the principal or increase. When, at the demand of their Lord, they bring the amount given them, they come with ungrateful excuses for not having put the means lent them by God out to the exchangers, by investing it in His cause to carry on His work.

He who embezzles his Lord's goods not only loses the talent lent him of God, but loses eternal life. Of him it is said: "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness." The faithful servant, who invests his money in the cause of God to save souls, employs his means to the glory of God and will receive the commendation of the Master: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." What will be this joy of our Lord? It will be the joy of seeing souls saved in the kingdom of glory. "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

The idea of stewardship should have a practical bearing upon all the people of God. The parable of the talents, rightly understood, will bar out covetousness, which God calls idolatry. Practical benevolence will give spiritual life to thousands of nominal professors of the truth who now mourn over their darkness. It will transform them from selfish, covetous worshipers of mammon to earnest, faithful co-workers with Christ in the salvation of sinners.

The foundation of the plan of salvation was laid in sacrifice. Jesus left the royal courts and became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. All who share this salvation, purchased for them at such an infinite sacrifice by the Son of God, will follow the example of the true Pattern. Christ was the chief Cornerstone, and we must build upon this Foundation. Each must have a spirit of self-denial and self-sacrifice. The life of Christ upon earth was unselfish; it was marked with humiliation and sacrifice. And shall men, partakers of the great salvation which Jesus came from heaven to bring them, refuse to follow their Lord and to share in His self-denial and sacrifice? Says Christ: "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." The very vital principle, the sap which flows through the vine, nourishes the branches, that they may flourish and bear fruit. Is the servant greater than his Lord? Shall the world's Redeemer practice self-denial and sacrifice on our account, and the members of Christ's body practice self-indulgence? Self-denial is an essential condition of discipleship.

“Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” I lead the way in the path of self-denial. I require nothing of you, My followers, but that of which I, your Lord, give you an example in My own life.

The Saviour of the world conquered Satan in the wilderness of temptation. He overcame to show man how he may overcome. He announced in the synagogue of Nazareth: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”

The great work which Jesus announced that He came to do was entrusted to His followers upon the earth. Christ, as our head, leads out in the great work of salvation and bids us follow His example. He has given us a world-wide message. This truth must be extended to all nations, tongues, and people. Satan’s power was to be contested, and he was to be overcome by Christ and also by His followers. An extensive war was to be maintained against the powers of darkness. And in order to do this work successfully, means were required. God does not propose to send means direct from heaven, but He gives into the hands of His followers talents of means to use for the very purpose of sustaining this warfare.

He has given His people a plan for raising sums sufficient to make the enterprise self-sustaining. God’s plan in the tithing system is beautiful in its simplicity and equality. All may take hold of it in faith and courage, for it is divine in its origin. In it are combined simplicity and utility, and it does not require depth of learning to understand and execute it. All may feel that they can act a part in carrying forward the precious work of salvation. Every man, woman, and youth may become a treasurer for the Lord and may be an agent to meet the demands upon the treasury. Says the apostle: “Let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.”

Great objects are accomplished by this system. If one and all would accept it, each would be made a vigilant and faithful treasur-

er for God, and there would be no want of means with which to carry forward the great work of sounding the last message of warning to the world. The treasury will be full if all adopt this system, and the contributors will not be left the poorer. Through every investment made they will become more wedded to the cause of present truth. They will be "laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."

As the persevering, systematic workers see that the tendency of their benevolent efforts is to nourish love to God and their fellow men, and that their personal efforts are extending their sphere of usefulness, they will realize that it is a great blessing to be co-workers with Christ. The Christian church, as a general thing, are disowning the claims of God upon them to give alms of the things which they possess to support the warfare against the moral darkness which is flooding the world. Never can the work of God advance as it should until the followers of Christ become active, zealous workers.

Every individual in the church should feel that the truth which he professes is a reality, and all should be disinterested workers. Some rich men feel like murmuring because the work of God is extending and there is a demand for money. They say that there is no end to the calls for means. One object after another is continually arising, demanding help. To such we would say that we hope the cause of God will so extend that there will be greater occasion, and more frequent and urgent calls, for supplies from the treasury to prosecute the work.

If the plan of systematic benevolence were adopted by every individual and fully carried out, there would be a constant supply in the treasury. The income would flow in like a steady stream constantly supplied by overflowing springs of benevolence. Almsgiving is a part of gospel religion. Does not the consideration of the infinite price paid for our redemption leave upon us solemn obligations pecuniarily, as well as lay claim upon all our powers to be devoted to the work of the Master?

We shall have a debt to settle with the Master by and by, when He shall say: "Give an account of thy stewardship." If men prefer to set aside the claims of God and to grasp and selfishly retain all that He gives them, He will hold His peace at present and continue frequently

to test them by increasing His bounties by letting His blessings flow on, and these men may pass on receiving honor of men and without censure in the church; but by and by He will say: "Give an account of thy stewardship." Says Christ: "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me." "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price," and are under obligation to glorify God with your means as well as in your body and in your spirit, which are His. "Ye are bought with a price," not "with corruptible things, as silver and gold," "but with the precious blood of Christ." He asks a return of the gifts that He has entrusted to us, to aid in the salvation of souls. He has given His blood; He asks our silver. It is through His poverty that we are made rich; and will we refuse to give back to Him His own gifts?

***Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, chpt. 33, "Tithes and Offerings," pages 381-382; 385-390.**

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO OF THE FULL CHAPTER:



This audio link corresponds to Section 24 of the *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3. The audio chapter number may be different.

13

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

LOVE OF THE WORLD

The temptation that was presented by Satan to our Saviour upon the exceeding high mountain is one of the leading temptations which humanity must meet. The kingdoms of the world in their glory were offered to Christ by Satan as a gift upon condition that Christ would yield to him the honor due to a superior. Our Saviour felt the strength of this temptation, but He met it in our behalf and conquered. He would not have been tested upon this point if man were not to be tried with the same temptation. In His resistance, He gave us an example of the course that we should pursue when Satan should come to us individually to lead us from our integrity.

No man can be a follower of Christ and yet place his affections upon the things of the world. John in his first epistle writes: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Our Redeemer, who met this temptation of Satan in its fullest power, is acquainted with man's danger of yielding to the temptation to love the world.

Christ identified Himself with humanity by bearing the test upon this point and overcoming in man's behalf. He has guarded with warnings those very points where Satan would best succeed in his temptations to man. He knew that Satan would gain the victory over man unless he was especially guarded upon the points of appetite and the love of worldly riches and honor. He says: "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." "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

Here Christ has brought before us two masters, God and the world, and has plainly presented the fact that it is simply impossible for us to serve both. If our interest in, and love for, this world predominate, we shall not appreciate the things, which, above all others, are worthy of our attention. The love of the world will exclude the love of God and make our highest interests subordinate to worldly considerations. Thus God will not hold so exalted a place in our affections and devotions as do the things of the world.

Our works will show the exact extent to which earthly treasures have our affections. The greatest care, anxiety, and labor are devoted to worldly interests, while eternal considerations are made secondary. Here Satan receives of man that homage which he claimed of Christ but failed to obtain. It is the selfish love of the world which corrupts the faith of the professed followers of Christ and makes them weak in moral power. The more they love their earthly riches, the further they depart from God, and the less do they partake of His divine nature that would give them a sense of the corrupting influences in the world and the dangers to which they are exposed.

In Satan's temptations it is his purpose to make the world very attractive. Through love of riches and worldly honor he has a bewitching power to gain the affections of even the professed Christian world. A large class of professedly Christian men will make any

sacrifice to gain riches, and the better they succeed in their object the less love they have for precious truth and the less interest for its advancement. They lose their love for God and act like insane men. The more they are prospered in securing riches the poorer they feel because they have no more, and the less will they invest in the cause of God.

The works of those men who have an insane love for riches show that it is not possible for them to serve two masters, God and mammon. Money is their god. They yield homage to its power. They serve the world to all intents and purposes. Their honor, which is their birthright, is sacrificed for worldly gain. This ruling power controls their minds, and they will violate the law of God to serve personal interests, to increase their earthly treasure.

Many may profess the religion of Christ who love not and heed not the letter or principles of Christ's teachings. They give the best of their strength to worldly pursuits and bow down to mammon. It is alarming that so many are deceived by Satan and their imaginations excited by their brilliant prospects of worldly gain. They become infatuated with the prospect of perfect happiness if they can gain their object in acquiring honor and wealth in the world. Satan tempts them with the alluring bribe, "All this will I give thee," all this power, all this wealth, with which you may do a great amount of good. But when the object for which they have labored is gained, they do not have that connection with the self-denying Redeemer which would make them partakers of the divine nature. They hold to their earthly treasures and despise the self-denial and self-sacrifice required for Christ. They have no desire to part with the dear earthly treasures upon which their hearts are set. They have exchanged masters; they have accepted mammon in the place of Christ. Mammon is their god, and mammon they serve.

Satan has secured to himself the worship of these deceived souls through their love of riches. The change has been so imperceptibly made, and Satan's power is so deceptive, so wily, that they are conformed to the world and perceive not that they have parted with Christ and are no longer His servants except in name.

Satan deals with men more guardedly than he dealt with Christ in the wilderness of temptation, for he is admonished that he there lost his case. He is a conquered foe. He does not come to man directly and demand homage by outward worship. He simply asks men to place their affections upon the good things of this world. If he succeeds in engaging the mind and affections, the heavenly attractions are eclipsed. All he wants of man is for him to fall under the deceitful power of his temptations, to love the world, to love rank and position, to love money, and to place his affections upon earthly treasures. If he secures this, he gains all that he asked of Christ.

The example of Christ shows us that our only hope of victory is in continual resistance of Satan's attacks. He who triumphed over the adversary of souls in the conflict of temptation understands Satan's power over the race and has conquered him in our behalf. As an overcomer He has given us the advantage of His victory, that in our efforts to resist the temptations of Satan we may unite our weakness to His strength, our worthlessness to His merits. And, sustained by His enduring might under strong temptation, we may resist in His all-powerful name and overcome as He overcame.

It was through inexpressible suffering that our Redeemer placed redemption within our reach. In this world He was unhonored and unknown, that through His wonderful condescension and humiliation He might exalt man to receive heavenly honors and immortal joys in His kingly courts. Will fallen man murmur because heaven can be obtained only by conflict, self-abasement, and toil?

The inquiry of many a proud heart is: Why need I go in humiliation and penitence before I can have the assurance of my acceptance with God, and attain the immortal reward? Why is not the path to heaven less difficult and more pleasant and attractive? We refer all these doubting, murmuring ones to our great Exemplar while suffering under the load of man's guilt and enduring the keenest pangs of hunger. He was sinless, and more than this, He was the Prince of heaven; but in man's behalf He became sin for the race. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed."

Christ sacrificed everything for man in order to make it possible for him to gain heaven. Now it is for fallen man to show what he will sacrifice on his own account for Christ's sake, that he may win immortal glory. Those who have any just sense of the magnitude of salvation and of its cost will never murmur that their sowing must be in tears and that conflict and self-denial are the Christian's portion in this life. The conditions of salvation for man are ordained of God. Self-abasement and cross bearing are the provisions made by which the repenting sinner is to find comfort and peace. The thought that Jesus submitted to humiliation and sacrifice that man will never be called to endure, should hush every murmuring voice. The sweetest joy comes to man through his sincere repentance toward God because of the transgression of His law, and faith in Christ as the sinner's Redeemer and Advocate.

Men labor at great cost to secure the treasures of this life. They suffer toil and endure hardships and privations to gain some worldly advantage. Why should the sinner be less willing to endure, to suffer, and to sacrifice in order to secure an imperishable treasure, a life that runs parallel with the life of God, a crown of immortal glory that fadeth not away? The infinite treasures of heaven, the inheritance which passes all estimate in value, which is an eternal weight of glory, must be obtained by us at any cost. We should not murmur at self-denial, for the Lord of life and glory endured it before us. Suffering and deprivation we should not avoid, for the Majesty of heaven accepted these in behalf of sinners. Sacrifice of ease and convenience should not cause one thought of repining, because the world's Redeemer accepted all these in our behalf. Making the largest estimate of all our self-denials, privations, and sacrifices, it costs us far less in every respect than it did the Prince of life. Any sacrifice that we may make sinks into insignificance when compared with that which Christ made in our behalf.

***Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, chpt. 41, "Love of the World," pages 477-481.**

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO OF THE FULL CHAPTER:



This audio link corresponds to Section 25 of the *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3. The audio chapter number may be different.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE SIN OF COVETOUSNESS

Dear Brother P:
I would make one more effort to warn you to be in earnest to gain the kingdom. Warning after warning has been given you, which you have not heeded. But, oh, if you would even now repent of your past wrong course and turn to the Lord, it might not be too late for wrongs to be righted. All the powers of your mind have been devoted to money getting. You have worshiped money. It has been your god. The rod of God is hanging over you. His judgments may overtake you at any moment and you go down to the grave unready, your garments spotted and stained with the corruptions of the world. What is your record in heaven? Every dollar that you have accumulated has been like an extra link in the chain that fastens you to this poor world. Your passion to get gain has been continually strengthening. The burden of your thoughts has been how you could obtain more means. You have had a fearful experience, which should be a warning to those who allow the love of the world to take possession

of their souls. You have become mammon's slave. What will you say when the Master shall demand of you an account of your stewardship? You have allowed the love of money getting to become the ruling passion of your life. You are as much intoxicated with the love of money as is the inebriate with his liquor.

Jesus has pleaded that the unfruitful tree might be spared a little longer; and I make one more plea for you to put forth no faint effort, but a most earnest one, for the kingdom. Rescue yourself from the snare of Satan before the word, "He is joined to idols, let him alone," shall be spoken in regard to you in heaven. All money lovers, like yourself, will one day cry in bitter anguish: "Oh, the deceitfulness of riches! I have sold my soul for money." Your only hope now is to make no feeble move, but to turn square about. Resolutely call to your aid the will power that you have so long exercised in the wrong direction, and now work in the opposite direction. This is the only way for you to overcome covetousness.

God has opened ways in which covetousness can be overcome—by performing benevolent deeds. By your life you are saying that you esteem the treasures of the world more highly than immortal riches. You are saying: "Farewell, heaven; farewell, immortal life; I have chosen this world." You are bartering away the pearl of great price for present gain. While thus admonished of God, while in His providence He has, as it were, already placed your feet in the dark river, will you, dare you, cultivate your money-loving propensities? Will you, as the last act of a misspent life, overreach and retain that which is another's just due? Will you reason yourself into the belief that you are doing justice to your brother? Will you add another act of scheming and overreaching to those already written against you in the records above? Shall the blow of God's retributive judgment fall upon you and you be called without warning to pass through the dark waters? . . .

God has made a law for His people that a tenth of all the increase shall be His. I have given you, says God, nine tenths; I ask one tenth of all the increase. That one tenth the rich man had withheld from God. If he had not done this, if he had loved God supremely instead of loving and serving himself, he would not have accumulated so

great treasures that there would be lack of room to bestow them. Had he bestowed his goods upon his needy brethren to supply their necessities, there would have been no need of tearing down and building greater barns. But he had disregarded the principles of the law of God. He had not loved the Lord with all his heart and his neighbor as himself. Had he used his wealth as a bounty lent him of God with which to do good he would have laid up treasure in heaven and been rich in good works.

The length and usefulness of life do not consist in the amount of our earthly possessions. Those who use their wealth in doing good will see no necessity for large accumulations in this world; for the treasure which is used to advance the cause of God and which is given to the needy in Christ's name is given to Christ, and He lays it up for us in the bank of heaven in bags which wax not old. He who does this is rich toward God, and his heart will be where his treasures are secured. He who humbly uses what God has given for the honor of the Giver, freely giving as he has received, may feel the peace and assurance in all his business that God's hand is over him for good, and he himself will bear the impress of God, having the Father's smile.

Many have pitied the lot of the Israel of God in being compelled to give systematically, besides making liberal offerings yearly. An all-wise God knew best what system of benevolence would be in accordance with His providence, and has given His people directions in regard to it. It has ever proved that nine tenths are worth more to them than ten tenths. Those who have thought to increase their gains by withholding from God, or by bringing Him an inferior offering,—the lame, the blind, or the diseased,—have been sure to suffer loss.

Providence, though unseen, is ever at work in the affairs of men. God's hand can prosper or withhold, and He frequently withholds from one while He seems to prosper another. All this is to test and prove men and to reveal the heart. He lets misfortune overtake one brother while He prospers others to see if those whom He favors have His fear before their eyes and will perform the duty enjoined upon them in His word to love their neighbor as themselves and to help their poorer brother from a love to do good. Acts of generosity and

benevolence were designed by God to keep the hearts of the children of men tender and sympathetic, and to encourage in them an interest and affection for one another in imitation of the Master, who for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. The law of tithing was founded upon an enduring principle and was designed to be a blessing to man. . . .

Brother P, the desire for wealth has been the central idea of your mind. This one passion for money getting has deadened every high and noble consideration, and has made you indifferent to the needs and interests of others. You have made yourself nearly as unimpressible as a piece of iron. Your gold and your silver are cankered, and have become an eating canker to the soul. Had your benevolence grown with your riches, you would have regarded money as a means by which you could do good. Our Redeemer, who knew man's danger in regard to covetousness, has provided a safeguard against this dreadful evil. He has arranged the plan of salvation so that it begins and ends in benevolence. Christ offered Himself, an infinite sacrifice. This, in and of itself, bears directly against covetousness and exalts benevolence.

Constant, self-denying benevolence is God's remedy for the cankering sins of selfishness and covetousness. God has arranged systematic benevolence to sustain His cause and relieve the necessities of the suffering and needy. He has ordained that giving should become a habit, that it may counteract the dangerous and deceitful sin of covetousness. Continual giving starves covetousness to death. Systematic benevolence is designed in the order of God to tear away treasures from the covetous as fast as they are gained and to consecrate them to the Lord, to whom they belong.

This system is so arranged that men may give something from their wages every day and lay by for their Lord a portion of the profits of every investment. The constant practice of God's plan of systematic benevolence weakens covetousness and strengthens benevolence. If riches increase, men, even those professing godliness, set their hearts upon them; and the more they have, the less they give to the treasury of the Lord. Thus riches make men selfish, and hoarding feeds covetousness; and these evils strengthen by active exercise. God

knows our danger and has hedged us about with means to prevent our own ruin. He requires the constant exercise of benevolence, that the force of habit in good works may break the force of habit in an opposite direction. . . .

What provision, Brother P, have you made for eternal life? Have you a good foundation against the time to come, that will secure to yourself eternal joys? Oh, may God arouse you! May you, my dear brother, now, just now, commence to work in earnest to get some of your gain and riches into the treasury of God. Not a dollar of it is yours. All is God's, and you have claimed for your own that which God has lent you to devote to good works. Your time is very short. Work with all your might. By repentance you may now find pardon. You must loosen your grasp of earthly possessions and fasten your affections upon God. You must be a converted man. Agonize with God. Do not be content to perish forever, but make an effort for salvation before it shall be everlastingly too late.

It is not now too late for wrongs to be righted. Show your repentance for past wrongs by redeeming the time. Where you have wronged anyone, make restitution as it comes to your mind. This is your only hope of the pardoning love of God. It will be like taking out the right eye or cutting off the right arm, but there is no other way for you. You have made efforts repeatedly, but have failed because you have loved money, some of which has not been very honestly gained. You would not try to redeem the past by restitution. When you begin to do this, there will be hope for you. If during the few remaining days of your life you choose to go on as you have done, your case will be hopeless; you will lose both worlds; you will see the saints of God glorified in the heavenly city and yourself thrust out; you will have no part in that precious life which was purchased for you at an infinite cost, but which you valued so little as to sell it for earthly riches.

Now there is a little time left you. Will you work? Will you repent? Or will you die all unready, worshiping money, glorying in your riches, and forgetting God and heaven? No faint struggle or feeble efforts will wean your affections from the world. Jesus will help you. In every earnest effort you make, He will be near you and bless your

endeavors. You must make earnest efforts or you will be lost. I warn you not to delay one moment, but commence just now. You have long disgraced the Christian name by your covetousness and small dealing. Now you may honor it by working in an opposite direction and by letting all see that there is a power in the truth of God to transform human nature. You may, in the strength of God, save your soul if you will.

***Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, chpt. 48, “The Sin of Covetousness,” pages 544-550.**

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO OF THE FULL CHAPTER:



This audio link corresponds to Section 25 of the *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3. The audio chapter number may be different.

15

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

GIVING TO GOD HIS OWN

The Lord has given His people a message for this time. It is presented in the third chapter of Malachi. How could the Lord present His requirements in a clearer or more forcible manner than He has done in this chapter?

All should remember that God's claims upon us underlie every other claim. He gives to us bountifully, and the contract which He has made with man is that a tenth of his possessions shall be returned to God. The Lord graciously entrusts to His stewards His treasures, but of the tenth He says: This is Mine. Just in proportion as God has given His property to man, so man is to return to God a faithful tithe of all his substance. This distinct arrangement was made by Jesus Christ Himself.

This work involves solemn and eternal results, and it is too sacred to be left to human impulse. We should not feel free to deal with this matter as we choose. In answer to the claims of God, regular reserves should be set apart as sacred to His work.

The First Fruits

Besides the tithe the Lord demands the first fruits of all our increase. These He has reserved in order that His work in the earth may be amply sustained. The Lord's servants are not to be limited to a meager supply. His messengers should not be handicapped in their work of holding forth the word of life. As they teach the truth they should have means to invest for the advancement of the work, which must be done at the right time in order to have the best and most saving influence. Deeds of mercy must be done; the poor and suffering must be aided. Gifts and offerings should be appropriated for this purpose. Especially in new fields, where the standard of truth has never yet been uplifted, this work must be done. If all the professed people of God, both old and young, would do their duty, there would be no dearth in the treasury. If all would pay a faithful tithe and devote to the Lord the first fruits of their increase, there would be a full supply of funds for His work. But the law of God is not respected or obeyed, and this has brought a pressure of want.

Remember the Poor

Every extravagance should be cut out of our lives, for the time we have for work is short. All around us we see want and suffering. Families are in need of food; little ones are crying for bread. The houses of the poor lack proper furniture and bedding. Many live in mere hovels which are almost destitute of conveniences. The cry of the poor reaches to heaven. God sees; God hears. But many glorify themselves. While their fellow men are poor and hungry, suffering for want of food, they expend much on their tables and eat far more than they require. What an account men will by and by have to render for their selfish use of God's money! Those who disregard the provision God has made for the poor will find not only that they have robbed their fellow men, but that in robbing them they have robbed God and have embezzled His goods.

All Things Belong to God

All the good that man enjoys comes because of the mercy of God. He is the great and bountiful Giver. His love is manifest to all in the

abundant provision made for man. He has given us probationary time in which to form characters for the courts above. And it is not because He needs anything that He asks us to reserve a part of our possessions for Him.

The Lord created every tree in Eden pleasant to the eyes and good for food, and He bade Adam and Eve freely enjoy His bounties. But He made one exception. Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil they were not to eat. This tree God reserved as a constant reminder of His ownership of all. Thus He gave them opportunity to demonstrate their faith and trust in Him by their perfect obedience to His requirements.

So it is with God's claims upon us. He places His treasures in the hands of men, but requires that one tenth shall be faithfully laid aside for His work. He requires this portion to be placed in His treasury. It is to be rendered to Him as His own; it is sacred and is to be used for sacred purposes, for the support of those who carry the message of salvation to all parts of the world. He reserves this portion, that means may ever be flowing into His treasure house and that the light of truth may be carried to those who are nigh and those who are afar off. By faithfully obeying this requirement we acknowledge that all belongs to God.

And has not the Lord a right to demand this of us? Did He not give His only-begotten Son because He loved us and desired to save us from death? And shall not our gratitude offerings flow into His treasury to be drawn therefrom to advance His kingdom in the earth? Since God is the owner of all our goods, shall not gratitude to Him prompt us to make freewill offerings and thank offerings, thus acknowledging His ownership of soul, body, spirit, and property? Had God's plan been followed, means would now be flowing into His treasury; and funds to enable ministers to enter new fields, and workers to unite with ministers in lifting up the standard of truth in the dark places of the earth, would be abundant.

Without Excuse

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.

God lays His hand upon all man's possessions, 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. . .

The Complainers

"Your words have been stout against Me, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against Thee? Ye have said, 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? And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered." Verses 13-15. Those who withhold from God His own make these complaints. The Lord asks them to prove Him by bringing their tithe into His storehouse to see whether He will not pour them out a blessing. But they cherish rebellion in their hearts and complain of God; at the same time they rob Him and embezzle His goods. When their sin is presented before them, they say: I have had adversity; my crops have been poor; but the wicked are prospered; it does not pay to keep the ordinance of the Lord.

But God does not want any to walk mournfully before Him. Those who thus complain of God have brought their adversity on them-

selves. They have robbed God, and His cause has been hindered because the money that should have flowed into His treasury was used for selfish purposes. They showed their disloyalty to God by failing to carry out His prescribed plan. When God prospered them, and they were asked to give Him His portion, they shook their heads and could not see that it was their duty. They closed the eyes of their understanding, that they might not see. They withheld the Lord's money and hindered the work which He designed to have done. God was not honored by the use made of His entrusted goods. Therefore He let the curse fall upon them, permitting the spoiler to destroy their fruits and to bring calamities upon them.

“They That Feared the Lord”

In Malachi 3:16 an opposite class is brought to view, a class that meet together, not to find fault with God, but to speak of His glory and tell of His mercies. These have been faithful in their duty. They have given to the Lord His own. Testimonies are borne by them that make the heavenly angels sing and rejoice. These have no complaints to make against God. Those who walk in the light, who are faithful and true in doing their duty, are not heard complaining and finding fault. They speak words of courage, hope, and faith. It is those who serve themselves, who do not give God His own, that complain.

“They that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not.” Verses 16-18. . . .

The reward of whole-souled liberality is the leading of mind and heart to a closer fellowship with the Spirit.

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. It will be seen in all matters connected with his own business. The man who will rob God is cultivating traits of character that will cut him off from admittance into the family of God above. . . .

A selfish use of riches proves one unfaithful to God, and unfits the steward of means for the higher trust of heaven. . . .

There are channels everywhere through which benevolence may flow. Needs are constantly arising, missions are handicapped for want of means. These must be abandoned unless God's people awake to the true state of things. Wait not until your death to make your will, but dispose of your means while you live.

***Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, chpt. 47, "Giving to God His Own," pages 384-387; 389-391.**

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO OF THE FULL CHAPTER:



This audio link corresponds to Section 6 of the *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6. The audio chapter number may be different.

16

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

HELP FOR MISSION FIELDS

There is a burden upon my soul in regard to the destitute mission fields. There is aggressive work to be done in the missions near us; and there is great need of funds for advancing the work in foreign fields. Our foreign missions are languishing. The missionaries are not sustained as God requires. For want of funds, workers are not able to enter new fields.

All around us are souls perishing in their sins. Every year thousands upon thousands are dying without God and without hope of everlasting life. The plagues and judgments of God are doing their work, and souls are going to ruin because the light of truth has not been flashed upon their pathway. But how few are burdened over the condition of their fellow men. The world is perishing in its misery; but this hardly moves even those who claim to believe the highest and most far-reaching truth ever given to mortals. God requires His people to be His helping hand to reach the perishing, but how many are content to do nothing. There is a lack of that love which led

Christ to leave His heavenly home and take man's nature, that humanity might touch humanity and draw humanity to divinity. There is a stupor, a paralysis, upon the people of God which prevents them from understanding what is needed for this time.

God's people are on trial before the heavenly universe; but the scantiness of their gifts and offerings, and the feebleness of their efforts in God's service, mark them as unfaithful. If the little that is now accomplished were the best they could do, they would not be under condemnation; but with their resources they could do much more. They know, and the world knows, that they have to a great degree lost the spirit of self-denial and cross bearing.

God calls for men to give the warning to the world that is asleep, dead in trespasses and sins. He calls for freewill offerings from those whose hearts are in the work, who have a burden for souls, that they shall not perish, but have everlasting life. Satan is playing the game of life for the souls of men. He is seeking to secure means, that he may bind it up, so that it shall not be used in advancing the missionary enterprises. Shall we be ignorant of his devices? Shall we allow him to stupefy our senses?

I appeal to our brethren everywhere to awake, to consecrate themselves to God, and to seek wisdom from Him. I appeal to the officers of our conferences to make earnest efforts in our churches. Arouse them to give of their means for sustaining foreign missions. Unless your hearts are touched in view of the situation in foreign fields, the last message of mercy to the world will be restricted, and the work which God desires to have done will be left unaccomplished.

. . .

Those who are truly converted are called to do a work that requires money and consecration. The obligation that binds us to place our names on the church roll holds us responsible to work for God to the utmost of our ability. He calls for undivided service, for the entire devotion of heart, soul, mind, and strength. Christ has brought us into church capacity that He may engage and engross all our capabilities in devoted service for the salvation of souls. Anything short of this is opposition to the work. There are only two places in the world where we can deposit our treasures—in God's storehouse or in

Satan's, and all that is not devoted to Christ's service is counted on Satan's side and goes to strengthen his cause.

The Lord designs that the means entrusted to us shall be used in building up His kingdom. His goods are committed to His stewards that they may be carefully traded upon and bring back a revenue to Him in the saving of souls unto eternal life. And these souls in their turn will become stewards of the truth, to co-operate with the great firm in the interests of the kingdom of God.

Wherever there is life, there is increase and growth; in God's kingdom there is a constant interchange—taking in, and giving out; receiving, and returning to the Lord His own. God works with every true believer, and the light and blessings received are given out again in the work which the believer does. Thus the capacity for receiving is increased. As one imparts of the heavenly gifts, he makes room for fresh currents of grace and truth to flow into the soul from the living fountain. Greater light, increased knowledge and blessing, are his. In this work, which devolves upon every church member, is the life and growth of the church. He whose life consists in ever receiving and never giving, soon loses the blessing. If truth does not flow forth from him to others, he loses his capacity to receive. We must impart the goods of heaven if we desire fresh blessings.

This is as true in temporal as in spiritual things. The Lord does not come to this world with gold and silver to advance His work. He supplies men with resources, that by their gifts and offerings they may keep His work advancing. The one purpose above all others for which God's gifts should be used is the sustaining of workers in the great harvest field. And if men, and women as well, will become channels of blessing to other souls, the Lord will keep the channels supplied. It is not returning to God His own that makes men poor; it is withholding that tends to poverty.

The work of imparting that which he has received will constitute every member of the church a laborer together with God. Of yourself you can do nothing; but Christ is the great worker. It is the privilege of every human being who receives Christ to be a worker together with Him. . . .

A flood of light is shining from the word of God, and there must be an awakening to neglected opportunities. When all are faithful in giving back to God His own in tithes and offerings, the way will be opened for the world to hear the message for this time. If the hearts of God's people were filled with love for Christ, if every church member were thoroughly imbued with the spirit of self-sacrifice, if all manifested thorough earnestness, there would be no lack of funds for home or foreign missions. Our resources would be multiplied; a thousand doors of usefulness would be opened, and we should be invited to enter. Had the purpose of God been carried out by His people in giving to the world the message of mercy, Christ would, ere this, have come to the earth, and the saints would have received their welcome into the city of God.

If there was ever a time when sacrifices should be made, it is now. Those who have money should understand that now is the time to use it for God. Let not means be absorbed in multiplying facilities where the work is already established. Do not add building to building where many interests are now centered. Use the means to establish centers in new fields. Thus you may bring in souls who will act their part in producing.

Think of our missions in foreign countries. Some of them are struggling to gain even a foothold; they are destitute of even the most meager facilities. Instead of adding to facilities already abundant, build up the work in these destitute fields. Again and again the Lord has spoken in regard to this. His blessing cannot attend His people in disregarding His instruction.

Practice economy in your homes. By many, idols are cherished and worshiped. Put away your idols. Give up your selfish pleasures. Do not, I entreat you, absorb means in embellishing your houses, for it is God's money, and it will be required of you again. Parents, for Christ's sake do not use the Lord's money in pleasing the fancies of your children. Do not teach them to seek after style and ostentation in order to gain influence in the world. Will this incline them to save the souls for whom Christ died? No; it will create envy, jealousy, and evil surmising. Your children will be led to compete with the show

and extravagance of the world, and to spend the Lord's money for that which is not essential to health or happiness.

Do not educate your children to think that your love for them must be expressed by indulgence of their pride, extravagance, and love of display. There is no time now to invent ways for using up money. Use your inventive faculties in seeking to economize. Instead of gratifying selfish inclination, spending money for those things that destroy the reasoning faculties, study how to deny self, that you may have something to invest in lifting the standard of truth in new fields. The intellect is a talent; use it in studying how best to employ your means for the salvation of souls.

Teach your children that God has a claim upon all they possess, a claim that nothing can ever cancel; whatever they have is theirs only in trust as a test of their obedience. Inspire them with ambition to gain stars for their crown by winning many souls from sin to righteousness.

Money is a needed treasure; let it not be lavished upon those who do not need it. Someone needs your willing gifts. Too often those who have means fail to consider how many in the world are hungry, starving for food. They may say: "I cannot feed them all." But by practicing Christ's lessons on economy you can feed one. It may be that you can feed many who are hungering for temporal food. And you can feed their souls with the bread of life. "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." John 6:12. These words were spoken by Him who had all the resources of the universe at His command; while His miracle-working power supplied thousands with food, He did not disdain to teach a lesson in economy.

Practice economy in the use of your time. This is the Lord's. Your strength is the Lord's. If you have extravagant habits, cut them away from your life. Such habits, indulged, will make you bankrupt for eternity. And habits of economy, industry, and sobriety are, even in this world, a better portion for you and your children than a rich dowry.

We are travelers, pilgrims and strangers, on earth. Let us not spend our means in gratifying desires that God bids us repress. Let us rather set a right example before our associates. Let us fitly repre-

sent our faith by restricting our wants. Let the churches arise as one, and work earnestly as those who are walking in the full light of truth for these last days. Let your influence impress souls with the sacredness of God's requirements.

If in the providence of God you have been given riches, do not settle down with the thought that you need not engage in useful labor, that you have enough, and can eat, drink, and be merry. Do not stand idle while others are struggling to obtain means for the cause. Invest your means in the Lord's work. If you do less than your duty in giving help to the perishing, remember that your indolence is incurring guilt.

It is God who gives men power to get wealth, and He has bestowed this ability, not as a means of gratifying self, but as a means of returning to God His own. With this object it is not a sin to acquire means. Money is to be earned by labor. Every youth should be trained to habits of industry. The Bible condemns no man for being rich if he has acquired his riches honestly. It is the selfish love of money wrongfully employed that is the root of all evil. Wealth will prove a blessing if we regard it as the Lord's, to be received with thankfulness and with thankfulness returned to the Giver.

But of what value is untold wealth if it is hoarded in expensive mansions or in bank stocks? What do these weigh in comparison with the salvation of one soul for whom the Son of the infinite God has died?

To those who have heaped together treasure for the last days the Lord declares: "Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire."

***Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, chpt. 56, "Help for Mission Fields," pages 445-453.**

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO OF THE FULL CHAPTER:



This audio link corresponds to Section 7 of the *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6. The audio chapter number may be different.

17

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

SELF-SACRIFICE

The laws of Christ's kingdom are so simple, and yet so complete, that man-made additions will create confusion. And the more simple our plans for work in God's service, the more we shall accomplish. To adopt worldly policy in the work of God is to invite disaster and defeat. Simplicity and humility must characterize every effective effort for the advancement of His kingdom.

In order that the gospel may go to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples, self-sacrifice must be maintained. Those in positions of trust are in all things to act as faithful stewards, conscientiously guarding the funds that have been created by the people. There must be care to prevent all needless outlay. In erecting buildings and providing facilities for the work, we should be careful not to make our preparation so elaborate as to consume money unnecessarily; for this means in every case inability to provide for the extension of the work in other fields, especially in foreign lands. Means are not to be drawn from the treasury to establish institutions in the home field, at a risk of crippling the advancement of truth in regions beyond.

God's money is to be used not only in your immediate vicinity, but in distant countries, in the islands of the sea. If His people do not engage in this work, God will surely remove the power that is not rightly appropriated.

Many among believers have scarcely food enough to eat, yet in their deep poverty they bring their tithes and offerings to the Lord's treasury. Many who know what it is to sustain the cause of God in hard and trying circumstances have invested means in the publishing houses. They have willingly endured hardship and privation, and have watched and prayed for the success of the work. Their gifts and sacrifices express the fervent gratitude of their hearts to Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. Their prayers and their alms come up as a memorial before God. No incense more fragrant can ascend to heaven.

But the work of God in its wide extent is one, and the same principles should control in all its branches. It must bear the stamp of missionary work. Every department of the cause is related to all parts of the gospel field, and the spirit that controls one department will be felt throughout the entire field. If a portion of the workers receive large wages, there are others, in different branches of the work, who also will call for high wages, and the spirit of self-sacrifice will become feeble. Other institutions will catch the same spirit, and the Lord's favor will be removed from them; for He can never sanction selfishness. Thus our aggressive work would come to an end. It is impossible to carry it forward except by constant sacrifice. From all parts of the world the calls are coming in for men and means to carry forward the work. Shall we be compelled to say: "You must wait; we have no money in the treasury"?

Some of the men of experience and piety, who led out in this work, who denied self and did not hesitate to sacrifice for its success, are now sleeping in the grave. They were God's appointed channels, His representative men, through whom the principles of spiritual life were communicated to the church. They had an experience of the highest value. They could not be bought or sold. Their purity and devotion and self-sacrifice, their living connection with God, were

blessed to the upbuilding of the work. Our institutions were characterized by the spirit of self-sacrifice.

In the days when we were struggling with poverty, those who saw how wondrously God wrought for the cause felt that no greater honor could be bestowed upon them than to be bound up with the interests of the work by sacred links which connected them with God. Would they lay down the burden and make terms with the Lord from a money point of view? No, no. Should every timeserver forsake his post, they would never desert the work.

The believers who in the early history of the cause sacrificed for the upbuilding of the work were imbued with the same spirit. They felt that God demanded of all connected with His cause an unreserved consecration of body, soul, and spirit, of all their energies and capabilities, to make the work a success.

But in some respects the work has deteriorated. While it has grown in extent and facilities, it has waned in piety.

There is a lesson for us in the history of Solomon. The early life of this king of Israel was bright with promise. He chose the wisdom of God, and the glory of his reign excited the wonder of the world. He might have gone from strength to strength, from character to character, even approaching nearer the similitude of the character of God; but how sad his history; he was exalted to most sacred positions of trust, but he proved unfaithful. He grew into self-sufficiency, pride, self-exaltation. The lust for political power and self-aggrandizement led him to form alliances with heathen nations. The silver of Tarshish and the gold of Ophir were procured at a terrible expense, even the sacrifice of integrity, the betrayal of sacred trusts. Association with idolaters corrupted his faith; one false step led to another; there was a breaking down of the barriers which God had erected for the safety of His people; his life was corrupted by polygamy; and at last he gave himself to the worship of false gods. A character that had been firm and pure and elevated became weak, marked with moral inefficiency.

Evil counselors were not wanting, who swayed that once noble, independent mind as they chose, because he did not make God his guide and counselor. His fine sensibilities became blunted; the con-

scientious, considerate spirit of his early reign was changed. Self-indulgence was his god; and, as the result, severe judgment and cruel tyranny marked his course. The extravagance practiced in selfish indulgence necessitated a grinding taxation upon the poor. From the wisest king that ever swayed a scepter, Solomon became a despot. As a king he had been the idol of the nation, and that which he said and did was copied. His example exerted an influence the result of which can be fully known only when the works of all shall come in review before God, and every man shall be judged according to the deeds done in the body.

Oh, how can God bear with the misdeeds of those who have had great light and advantages, and yet follow the course of their own choosing, to their eternal harm! Solomon, who at the dedication of the temple had solemnly charged the people, "Let your heart therefore be perfect with the Lord our God" (1 Kings 8:61), chose his own way, and in his heart separated from God. The mind that was once given to God and inspired of Him to write the most precious words of wisdom (the book of Proverbs),—truths which are immortalized,—that noble mind, through evil associations and yielding to temptation, became inefficient, weak in moral power, and Solomon dishonored himself, dishonored Israel, and dishonored God.

Looking upon this picture, we see what human beings become when they venture to separate from God. One false step prepares the way for another, and every step is taken more easily than the last. Thus souls are found following another leader than Christ. . . .

All who occupy positions in our institutions will be tested. If they will make Christ their pattern, He will give them wisdom and knowledge and understanding; they will grow in grace and aptitude in Christ's way; their characters will be molded after His similitude. If they fail of keeping the way of the Lord, another spirit will control the mind and judgment, and they will plan without the Lord and will take their own course and leave the positions they have occupied. The light has been given them; if they depart from it, let no man present a bribe to induce them to remain. They will be a hindrance and a snare. The time has come when everything is to be shaken that can be shaken, that those things which cannot be shaken may re-

main. Every case is coming in review before God; He is measuring the temple and the worshipers therein.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 7, chpt. 43, “Self-Sacrifice,” pages 215-219.

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO OF THE FULL CHAPTER:



This audio link corresponds to Section 5 of the *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7. The audio chapter number may be different.

18

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

MINISTERS AND BUSINESS MATTERS

I have been instructed in regard to the importance of our ministers' keeping free from responsibilities that should be largely borne by businessmen. In the night season I was in an assembly consisting of a number of our brethren who bear the burden of the work. They were deeply perplexed over financial affairs and were consulting as to how the work could be managed most successfully. Some thought that the number of workers might be limited and yet all the results essential be realized. One of the brethren occupying a position of responsibility was explaining his plans and stating what he desired to see accomplished. Several others presented matters for consideration. Then One of dignity and authority arose, and proceeded to state principles for our guidance.

To several ministers the Speaker said: "Your work is not the management of financial matters. It is not wise for you to undertake this. God has burdens for you to bear, but if you carry lines of work for which you are not adapted, your efforts in presenting the word

will prove unsuccessful. This will bring upon you discouragement that will disqualify you for the very work you should do, a work requiring careful discrimination and sound, unselfish judgment.”

Those who are employed to write and to speak the word should attend fewer committee meetings. They should entrust many minor matters to men of business ability and thus avoid being kept on a constant strain that robs the mind of its natural vigor. They should give far more attention to the preservation of physical health, for vigor of mind depends largely upon vigor of body. Proper periods of sleep and rest and an abundance of physical exercise are essential to health of body and mind. To rob nature of her hours for rest and recuperation by allowing one man to do the work of four, or of three, or even of two, will result in irreparable loss.

Educate Men in Business Lines

Those who think that a man's fitness for a certain position qualifies him to fill several other positions are liable to make mistakes when planning for the advancement of the work. They are liable to place upon one the cares and burdens that should be divided among several.

Experience is of great value. The Lord desires to have men of intelligence connected with His work, men qualified for various positions of trust in our conferences and institutions. Especially are consecrated businessmen needed, men who will carry the principles of truth into every business transaction. Those placed in charge of financial affairs should not assume other burdens, burdens that they are incapable of bearing; nor is the business management to be entrusted to incompetent men. Those in charge of the work have erred sometimes in permitting the appointment of men devoid of tact and ability to manage important financial interests.

Men of promise in business lines should develop and perfect their talents by most thorough study and training. They should be encouraged to place themselves where, as students, they can rapidly gain a knowledge of right business principles and methods. Not one business man now connected with the cause needs to be a novice. If men in any line of work ought to improve their opportunities to

become wise and efficient, it is those who are using their ability in the work of building up the kingdom of God in our world. In view of the fact that we are living so near the close of this earth's history, there should be greater thoroughness in labor, more vigilant waiting, watching, praying, and working. The human agent should strive to attain perfection, that he may be an ideal Christian, complete in Christ Jesus.

Right Principles Essential

Those who labor in business lines should take every precaution against falling into error through wrong principles or methods. Their record may be like that of Daniel in the courts of Babylon. When all his business transactions were subjected to the closest scrutiny, not one faulty item could be found. The record of his business life, incomplete though it is, contains lessons worthy of study. It reveals the fact that a businessman is not necessarily a scheming, policy man. He may be a man instructed of God at every step. Daniel, while prime minister of the kingdom of Babylon, was a prophet of God, receiving the light of heavenly inspiration. His life is an illustration of what every Christian businessman may be.

God does not accept the most splendid service unless self is laid upon the altar, a living, consuming sacrifice. The root must be holy, else there can be no sound, healthy fruit, which alone is acceptable to God. The heart must be converted and consecrated. The motives must be right. The inner lamp must be supplied with the oil that flows from the messengers of heaven through the golden tubes into the golden bowl. The Lord's communication never comes to man in vain.

Truths, precious, vital truths, are bound up with man's eternal well-being both in this life and in the eternity that is opening before us. "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth." John 17:17. The word of God is to be practiced. It will live and endure forever. While worldly ambitions, worldly projects, and the greatest plans and purposes of men will perish like the grass, "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Daniel 12:3. . . .

At this time God's cause is in need of men and women who pos-

sess rare qualifications and good administrative powers; men and women who will make patient, thorough investigation of the needs of the work in various fields; those who have a large capacity for work; those who possess warm, kind hearts, cool heads, sound sense, and unbiased judgment; those who are sanctified by the Spirit of God and can fearlessly say, No, or Yea and Amen, to propositions; those who have strong convictions, clear understanding, and pure, sympathetic hearts; those who practice the words, “All ye are brethren;” those who strive to uplift and restore fallen humanity.

***Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, chpt. 48, “Ministers and Business Matters,” pages 246-249.**

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO OF THE FULL CHAPTER:



This audio link corresponds to Section 6 of the *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7. The audio chapter number may be different.

19

CHAPTER NINETEEN

SERVANTS OF MAMMON

The case of Brother I is fearful. This world is his god; he worships money. He has not heeded the warning given him years ago and overcome his love of the world while in the exercise of all his faculties. The dollars which he has since accumulated have been like so many cords to entangle his soul and bind him to the world. As he has gained in property he has become more greedy for gain. All the powers of his being are devoted to the one object, securing money. This has been the burden of his thoughts, the anxiety of his life. He has turned all the powers of his being in this one direction until, to all intents and purposes, he is a worshiper of mammon¹. Upon this subject he is insane. His example before his family is leading them to think that property is to be valued before heaven and immortality. He has for years been educating his mind to acquire property. He is sacrificing his eternal interest for treasures upon the earth. He believes the truth, he loves the principles of truth, and loves to see others prospering in the truth; but he has made himself so thor-

oughly a slave to mammon that he feels bound to serve this master as long as he shall live. But the longer he lives the more devoted will he become to his love of gain, unless he tears away from this terrible god, money. It will be like tearing out his vitals, but it must be done if he values heaven.

He needs the censure of none, but the pity of all. His life has been a terrible mistake. He has suffered imaginary pecuniary want, while surrounded with plenty. Satan has taken possession of his mind and, exciting his organ of acquisitiveness, has made him insane upon this subject. The higher, nobler powers of his being have been brought very much into subjection to this close, selfish propensity. His only hope is in breaking the bands of Satan and overcoming this evil in his character. He has tried to do this by doing something after his conscience has been wrought upon, but this is not sufficient. This merely making a mighty effort and parting with a little of his mammon, and feeling all the time that he is parting with his soul, is not the fruit of true religion. He must train his mind to good works. He must brace against his propensity to acquire. He must weave good works into all his life. He must cultivate a love for doing good, and get above the little, penurious spirit which he has fostered.

In trading with the merchants at -----, Brother and Sister I do not take a course which is pleasing to God. They will dicker to get things as cheap as they possibly can, and linger over a difference of a few pennies, and talk in regard to it as though money was their all—their god. If they could only be brought back, unobserved, to hear the remarks that are made after they leave, they would get a clearer idea of the influence of penuriousness. Our faith is brought into disrepute, and God is blasphemed by some on account of this close, penny dealing. Angels turn away in disgust. Everything in heaven is noble and elevated. All seek the interest and happiness of others. No one devotes himself to looking out and caring for self. It is the chief joy of all holy beings to witness the joy and happiness of those around them.

When these angels come to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation, and witness the exhibition of selfishness, of covetousness, of overreaching, and benefiting self at others' disadvantage,

they turn away in grief. When they see those who claim to be heirs to an immortal inheritance so penurious in dealing with those who do not profess any higher ambition than to be laying up treasures on earth, they turn away in shame; for holy truth is reproached.

In no way could the Lord be better glorified and the truth more highly honored than for unbelievers to see that the truth has wrought a great and good work upon the lives of naturally covetous and penurious men. If it could be seen that the faith of such had an influence to mold their characters, to change them from close, selfish, over-reaching, money-loving men to men who love to do good, who seek opportunities to use their means to bless those who need to be blessed, who visit the widow and fatherless in their affliction, and who keep themselves unspotted from the world, it would be an evidence that their religion was genuine. Such would let their light so shine that others seeing their good works would be led to glorify their Father which is in heaven. This fruit would be unto holiness, and they would be living representatives of Christ upon the earth. Sinners would be convicted that there is in the truth a power to which they are strangers. Those who profess to be waiting and watching for the appearing of their Lord should not disgrace their profession by bantering in deal and standing for the last penny. Such fruit does not grow upon the Christian tree. . . .

There is danger, Brother I, of your life's being lost, and the gifts which God has bestowed upon you being surrendered to the devil, and you led captive by him at his will. Can you bear the thought? Can you for this short life choose to serve self, and love your money, and then part with it all, and have no title to heaven, no right to the life which is eternal? You have a mighty struggle before you to separate your affections from this earth's treasure. Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Watch, pray, work, are the Christian's watchwords. Arouse yourself, I implore you. Seek for those things which are enduring. The things of this earth must soon pass away. Are you ready to exchange worlds? Are you forming a character for everlasting life? If lost at last, you will know what proved your ruin—the love of money. You will cry in bitter anguish: “Oh, the deceitfulness of riches! I have lost my soul. I sold it for money. My soul

and body I bartered for gain. I sacrificed heaven, fearing that I should have to sacrifice my money to obtain it." From the Master will be heard: Take ye the unprofitable servant, bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness. We hope this will not be your fate. We hope you will remove your treasure to heaven, and transfer your affections, and fasten them upon God and the immortal treasure.

I have seen that the entire family were in danger of partaking, in a degree, of the father's spirit. Sister I, you have already partaken of this spirit. God help you to see it and make an entire change. Cultivate a love for doing good; seek to be rich in good works. In many things you can do more than you do. You have an individual responsibility before God. You have a duty to do, from which you cannot be excused. Maintain a close walk with God; pray without ceasing. You will have close work if you save your soul. Seek to have a counter-acting influence in your family. Take your stand nobly for God. Your organization is unlike your husband's, and you will be condemned of God unless you act for yourself. Make diligent work in saving your own soul, and in exerting an influence to save your family. Let your example show that your treasure is in heaven, that you have invested all in a better home and a better life, which are eternal. Train your mind to value heavenly things, to be elevated, to love God, and to manifest a willing obedience to His will.

You may be tested; you may be proved to see how strong your affection is for the things of this world. You may be made to understand a page of your heart with which you are now unacquainted. God knows your trials as you view the state of your husband and children, who so greatly lack saving faith. Much more depends upon you than you realize. You should put the armor on. Spend not your precious strength in exhaustive labor which another can do. Encourage your daughter to engage in useful employment and to aid you in bearing the burdens of life. She needs discipline. Her mind is vain. She needs to render all to God; then she can be useful and please her Redeemer.

My sister, work less, and pray and meditate more. Eternal interests should be primary with you. God forbid that your children should be molded into money lovers. True refinement and gentleness

of manners can never be found in a home where selfishness reigns. The truly refined always have brains and hearts, always have consideration for others. True refinement does not find satisfaction in the adornment and display of the body. True refinement and nobility of soul will be seen in efforts to bless and elevate others. The weight of eternal things rests very lightly upon your children. May God arouse them before it shall be too late, and they exclaim in anguish: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

Brother J, your case was presented before me. You occupy a responsible position. You are entrusted with talents of money and of influence. To every man is given a work—something to do, not merely to engage his brain, bone, and muscle in common labor; it means more than this. You are acquainted with this work from a worldly point of view, and have some experience in it in a religious capacity. But for a few years past you have been losing time, and now you will have to work fast to redeem the past. To possess talents is not enough; you must so use them as to advantage not merely yourself but Him who bestowed them. All that you have is a loan from your Lord. He will require it again at your hand with interest.

Christ has a right to your services. You have become His servant by grace. You are not to serve your own interest, but the interest of Him who has employed you. As a professed Christian you are under obligations to God. It is not your own property that is entrusted to you for investment. Had it been so, you might have consulted your own pleasure in regard to its use. The capital is the Lord's, and you are responsible for its use or abuse. There are ways in which this capital can be so invested—put out to the exchangers—that it shall be earning the Lord something. If it is allowed to be buried in the earth, neither the Lord nor you will be benefited, and you will lose all that was entrusted to you. May God help you, my brother, to realize your true position as God's hired servant. By His own suffering and death He has paid the wages to secure your willing service and ready obedience.

During the trials of the past few years, you have suffered in mind, and have felt it a relief to turn your attention more fully to the things of the world, to the work of acquiring property. God, in His

great love and mercy to you, has again gathered you into His fold. New duties and responsibilities are now laid upon you. You have a strong love for this world. You have been laying up treasures upon the earth. Jesus now invites you to transfer your treasure to heaven; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. In all your deal with your brethren and with unbelievers, guard yourself. Be true to your profession, and maintain true nobleness of soul, which shall be a credit to the truth which you profess.

You occupy a position where others are looking to you. You possess more than ordinary intellect. You are a man of quick perceptions, and you feel deeply. Some of your brethren have not moved in wisdom. They have watched you, and have felt over your case, and have wished to see you more liberal with your means. They have made themselves unhappy over your case. All this is needless in them. These very ones lack in many things, and if they are faithful in the humble service the Master requires of them they will have all that they can do. They cannot afford to waste their time in anxiously fearing lest their neighbor, who has a larger work entrusted to him, shall fail to do his work well. While they are so interested in the case of another, their own work is neglected, and they are really slothful servants. They were anxious to do their neighbor's work instead of that committed to themselves to do.

They think that if they only had the five talents to handle, they could do much better than the one to whom these talents were entrusted. But the Master knew better than they. None need mourn that they cannot glorify God by talents He never gave them and for which they are not responsible. They need not say: "If I were in another's position in life I would do a great amount of good with my capital." God requires no more of them than to improve upon what they have, as stewards of His grace.

The one talent, the humblest service, if wholly consecrated, and exercised to promote the glory of God, will be as acceptable as the improvement of the weightiest talent. The varied trusts are proportioned to our varied capabilities. To every man is given according to his ability. None should slight his work, considering it so small that he need not be particular to do it well. If he does this he

trifles with his moral responsibilities and despises the day of small things. Heaven apportions to all their work, and it should be their ambition to do this work well, according to their capabilities. God requires that all, the weakest as well as the strongest, fulfill their appointed work. The interest expected will be in proportion to the amount entrusted.

Each should diligently and interestedly attend to his own work, leaving others to their own Master, to stand or fall. There are too many busybodies in -----, too many who are interested in watching their brethren, and for this reason are constantly weak. They will bear testimony in meeting, and because they have not Jesus in their hearts to confess, they will try to impress upon their brethren their duty. These poor souls do not know their own duty, and yet they take the responsibility of enlightening others in regard to their duty. If such would attend to their own work, and obtain the grace of God in their hearts, there would be a power in the church which is now lacking.

Brother J, you can do good. You possess good judgment, and God is leading you out of darkness into the light. Use your talents to the glory of God. Put them out to the exchangers, that when the Master comes He may receive His own with usury. Break your tendrils from the valueless things of earth, and elevate them to entwine about God. The salvation of souls is of greater consequence than the whole world. One soul saved, to live throughout the ages of eternity, to praise God and the Lamb, is of more value than millions in money. Wealth sinks into insignificance when compared with the worth of souls for whom Christ died. You are a cautious man and will not move rashly. Sacrifice for the truth, and become rich toward God. May the Lord help you to move as fast as you should and place the right estimate upon eternal things.

Your children need a deeper work of grace in their hearts. They need to encourage sobriety and solidity of character. If consecrated to God, they can do good and exert an influence which will be saving upon their companions.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, chpt. 35, “Servants of Mammon,”
pages 237-239; 241-246.

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO OF THE FULL CHAPTER:



This audio link corresponds to Section 17 of the *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2. The audio chapter number may be different.



CHAPTER TWENTY

THE RICHNESS OF HEAVEN

Those who are selfishly withholding their means need not be surprised if God's hand scatters. That which should have been devoted to the advancement of the work and cause of God, but which has been withheld, may be entrusted to a reckless son, and he may squander it. A fine horse, the pride of a vain heart, may be found dead in the stable. Occasionally a cow may die. Losses of fruit or other crops may come. God can scatter the means He has lent to His stewards, if they refuse to use it to His glory. Some, I saw, may have none of these losses to remind them of their remissness in duty, but their cases may be the more hopeless.

Jesus warned the people: "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And He spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will

pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." He then addressed His disciples: "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment."

These warnings are given for the benefit of all. Will they improve the warnings given? Will they be benefited? Will they regard these striking illustrations of our Saviour and shun the example of the foolish rich man? He had an abundance; so have many who profess to believe the truth, and they are acting over the case of the poor, foolish rich man. Oh, that they would be wise and feel the obligations resting upon them to use the blessings that God has given them in blessing others, instead of turning them into a curse. God will say to all such, as to the foolish rich man: "Thou fool."

Men act as though they were bereft of their reason. They are buried up in the cares of this life. They have no time to devote to God, no time to serve Him. Work, work, work, is the order of the day. All about them are required to labor upon the high-pressure plan, to take care of large farms. To tear down and build greater is their ambition, that they may have wherewith to bestow their goods. Yet these very men who are weighed down with their riches pass for Christ's followers. They have the name of believing that Christ is soon to come, that the end of all things is at hand; yet they have no spirit of sacrifice. They are plunging deeper and deeper into the world. They allow themselves but little time to study the word of life and to meditate and pray. Neither do they give others in their family, or those who serve them, this privilege. Yet these men profess to believe that this world is not their home, that they are merely pilgrims and strangers upon the earth, preparing to move to a better country. The example and influence of all such is a curse to the cause of God. Hollow hypocrisy characterizes their professed Christian lives. They

love God and the truth just as much as their works show, and no more. A man will act out all the faith he has. "By their fruits ye shall know them." The heart is where the treasure is. Their treasure is upon this earth, and their hearts and interests are also here.

"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." When those who profess the faith show their lives to be consistent with their faith, then we shall see a power attending the presentation of the truth, a power that will convict the sinner and draw souls nigh to Christ.

A consistent faith is rare among rich men. Genuine faith, sustained by works, is seldom found. But all who possess this faith will be men who will not lack influence. They will copy after Christ; they will possess that disinterested benevolence, that interest in the work of saving souls, that He had. The followers of Christ should value souls as He valued them. Their sympathies should be with the work of their dear Redeemer, and they should labor to save the purchase of His blood, at any sacrifice. What are money, houses, and lands in comparison with even one soul?

Christ made a full and complete sacrifice, a sacrifice sufficient to save every son and daughter of Adam who should show repentance toward God for having transgressed His law, and manifest faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet notwithstanding the sacrifice was ample, but few consent to a life of obedience that they may have this great salvation. Few are willing to imitate His amazing privations, to endure His sufferings and persecutions, and to share His exhausting labor to bring others to the light. But few will follow His example in earnest, frequent prayer to God for strength to endure the trials of this life and perform its daily duties. Christ is the Captain of our salvation, and by His own sufferings and sacrifice He has given an example to all His followers that watchfulness and prayer, and persevering effort, were necessary on their part if they would rightly represent the love which dwelt in His bosom for the fallen race.

Men of property are dying spiritually because of their neglect to use the means God has placed in their hands to aid in saving their fellow men. Some become aroused at times and resolve that they will

make to themselves friends with the unrighteous mammon, that they may finally be received into everlasting habitations. But their efforts in this direction are not thorough. They commence, but, not being heartily and thoroughly in earnest in the work, they make a failure. They are not rich in good works. While lingeringly retaining their love and grasp of their earthly treasures, Satan outgenerals them.

A flattering prospect may be presented to invest in patent rights or some other supposed brilliant enterprise around which Satan throws a bewitching enchantment. The prospect of getting more money, fast and easily, allures them. They reason that, although they had resolved to put this money into the treasury of God, they will use it in this instance, and will greatly increase it, and will then give a larger sum to the cause. They can see no possibility of a failure. Away goes the means out of their hands, and they soon learn, to their regret, that they have made a mistake. The brilliant prospects have faded. Their expectations are not realized. They were deceived. Satan outgeneraled them. He was more shrewd than they, and he managed to get their means into his ranks and thus deprive the cause of God of that which should have been used to sustain it in extending the truth and saving souls for whom Christ died. They lost all they had invested, and robbed God of that which they should have rendered to Him.

Some who have been entrusted with only one talent excuse themselves because they have not as large a number of talents as those to whom are entrusted many talents. Like the unfaithful steward they hide the one talent in the earth. They are afraid to render to God that which He has entrusted to them. They engage in worldly enterprises, but invest little, if anything, in the cause of God. They expect that those who have large talents will bear the burden of the work, while they feel that they are not responsible for its advancement and success.

When the master comes to reckon with his servants, the unwise servants will acknowledge with confusion: "I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed; and I was afraid [Afraid of what? That the Lord would claim some portion of the small talent entrusted to them], and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast

that is thine.” His Lord will answer: “Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strewed; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming, I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Many who have but little of this world are represented by the man with one talent. They are afraid to trust God. They are afraid that He will require something which they claim to be their own. They hide their talent in the earth, fearing to invest it anywhere, lest they will be called to give back the improvements to God. Instead of putting the talent out to the exchangers, as God required, they bury it, or hide it, where neither God nor man can be benefited by it. Many who profess to love the truth are doing this very work. They are deceiving their own souls, for Satan has blinded their eyes. In robbing God, they have robbed themselves more. Because of covetousness and an evil heart of unbelief, they have deprived themselves of the heavenly treasure. Because they have but one talent, they are afraid to trust it with God, and so hide it in the earth. They feel relieved of responsibility. They love to see the truth progress, but do not think that they are called upon to practice self-denial and aid the work by their own individual effort and by their means, although they have not a large amount.

All should do something. The case of the widow who cast in her two mites is placed upon record for the benefit of others. Christ commended her for the sacrifice she made and called the attention of His disciples to the act: “Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: for all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.” Christ esteemed her gift more valuable than the large offerings of the most wealthy. They gave of their abundance. They would not feel the least privation because of

their offerings. But the widow had deprived herself of even the necessities of life to make her little offering. She could not see how her future wants were to be supplied. She had no husband to support her in want. She trusted God for the morrow. The value of the gift is not estimated so much by the amount that is given as by the proportion and by the motive which prompts the gift. When Christ shall come, whose reward is with Him, He will give every man according as his work shall be.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, chpt. 78, “The Cause in Vermont,” pages 661–666.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

SAFE INVESTMENT

Dear Brother N,
I have felt very much burdened over your case since we met you at the Tipton camp meeting. I could scarcely refrain from addressing you personally while speaking to the people upon the words of Christ: “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.”

I recollected your countenance as one that had been shown me in vision some time ago. You were thinking you had a duty to preach the word to others; but your example, as you now are, would hinder more from embracing the truth than your preaching would convert to its belief. You profess to believe a most solemn, testing message; yet your faith has not been sustained by works. You have the truth in

theory, but you have not been converted by it. The truth has not fully taken hold of your heart and been carried out in your daily life.

You need to be converted, transformed by the renewing of your mind. When the truth takes hold of your heart, it will work a reformation in the life. The unbelieving world will then be convinced that there is a power in the truth which has wrought so great a change in such a world-loving man as you have been. You love this world. Your treasures are here, and your heart is upon your treasures. And unless the power of the truth shall separate your affections from your god, which is this world, you will perish with your treasures.

You have but little sense of the exalted character of the work for these last days. You have not made sacrifices for the truth. You have a close, penurious spirit, and have closed your eyes to the wants of the distressed and needy. Your compassion has not been stirred to relieve the wants of the oppressed, neither have you had a heart to aid the cause of God with your means or to distribute to the necessities of the suffering. Your heart is on your earthly treasures. Unless you overcome your love of the things of the world you will have no place in the kingdom of heaven.

The lawyer asked Jesus what he should do that he might inherit eternal life. Jesus referred him to the commandments of His Father, telling him that obedience to them was necessary for his salvation. Christ told him that he knew the commandments, and that if he obeyed them, he should have life. Mark his answer: "Master, all these have I observed from my youth." Jesus looks upon this deceived young man with pity and love. He is about to reveal to him that there is a failure upon his part to keep, from the heart, the commandments that he confidently asserted he was obeying. Jesus says unto him: "One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

Jesus calls the attention of this young man directly to the defect in his character. He cites His own self-denying, cross-bearing life. He had left everything for the salvation of man, and He entreated the young man to come and imitate His example, and assured him that he should have treasure in heaven. Did the heart of the young man

leap with joy at this assurance that he should indeed have treasure in heaven? Oh, no! His earthly treasures were his idol; they eclipsed the value of the eternal inheritance. He turns from the cross, turns from the self-sacrificing life of the Redeemer, to this world. He has a lingering desire for the heavenly inheritance, yet he reluctantly turns from the prospect. It cost a struggle to decide which he should choose, but he finally decided to continue his love for his earthly treasures.

This young man had great possessions, and his heart was set upon them. He could not consent to transfer his treasures to heaven by withdrawing his affections from them and doing good with them—blessing the widow and fatherless, and thus being rich in good works. The love of this young man for his earthly treasures was stronger than his love for his fellow men and the immortal inheritance. His choice was made. The inducement presented by Christ, of securing a treasure in heaven, was rejected, for he could not consent to comply with the conditions. The strength of his affection for his earthly riches triumphed, and heaven, with all its attractive glory, was sacrificed for the treasures of the world. The young man was very sorrowful, for he wanted both worlds; but he sacrificed the heavenly for the earthly.

But few realize the strength of their love for riches until the test is brought to bear upon them. Many who profess to be Christ's followers then show that they are unprepared for heaven. Their works testify that they love riches more than their neighbor or their God. Like the rich young man, they inquire the way to life; but when the way is pointed out, and the cost is estimated, and they are convinced that they must sacrifice their earthly riches and become rich in good works, they decide that heaven costs too much. The greater the treasures laid up upon the earth, the more difficult it is for the possessor to realize that they are not his own, but lent him to use to God's glory.

Jesus here improves the opportunity to give His disciples an impressive lesson: "Then said Jesus unto His disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven."

“It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”

Here the strength of riches is seen. The power of the love of riches over the human mind is almost paralyzing. Riches infatuate many, and make them act as though they were bereft of reason. The more they have of this world, the more they desire. Their fears of coming to want, increase with their riches. They have a disposition to hoard up means for the future. They are close and selfish, fearing that God will not provide for their future needs. Such persons are indeed poor toward God. As their riches have accumulated, they have put their trust in them and have not had faith in God or His promises.

The poor man who has faith and confidence in God, who trusts in His love and care, and who abounds in good works, judiciously using the little he has in blessing others with his means, is rich toward God. He feels that his neighbor has claims upon him that he cannot disregard and yet obey the commandment of God: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” The poor who are rich toward God consider the salvation of their fellow men of greater importance than all the gold and silver that the world contains.

Christ points out the way in which those who have worldly riches and yet are not rich toward God may secure the true riches. He says: Sell that ye have, and give alms, and lay up treasure in heaven. The remedy He proposes for the wealthy is a transfer of their affections from earthly riches to the eternal inheritance. By investing their means in the cause of God to aid in the salvation of souls, and by blessing the needy with their means, they become rich in good works and are “laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.” This will prove a safe investment. But many show by their works that they dare not trust in the bank of heaven. They choose to trust their means in the earth rather than send it before them to heaven, that their hearts may be upon their heavenly treasure.

My brother, you have a work before you, to strive to overcome covetousness and love of worldly riches, and especially self-confidence because you have had apparent success in securing the things of this world. Poor rich men, professing to serve God, are objects

of pity. While they profess to know God, in works they deny Him. How great is the darkness of such! They profess faith in the truth, but their works do not correspond with their profession. The love of riches makes men selfish, exacting, and overbearing. Wealth is power; and frequently the love of it depraves and paralyzes all that is noble and godlike in man.

Riches bring with them great responsibilities. To obtain wealth by unjust dealing, by overreaching in trade, by oppressing the widow and the fatherless, or by hoarding up riches and neglecting the wants of the needy, will eventually bring the just retribution described by the inspired apostle: "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth."

The humblest and poorest of the true disciples of Christ, who are rich in good works, are more blessed and more precious in the sight of God than the men who boast of their great riches. They are more honorable in the courts of heaven than the most exalted kings and nobles who are not rich toward God.

The apostle Paul exhorted Timothy to charge the rich: "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." This admonition is applicable to you, Brother N, and to very many who profess to believe the truth for these last days.

Those who hoard up means or invest largely in lands, while they deprive their families of the comforts of life, act like insane men. They do not allow their families to enjoy the things which God has

richly given them. Notwithstanding they have large possessions, their families are frequently compelled to labor far beyond their strength to save still more means to hoard up. Brain, bone, and muscle are taxed to the utmost to accumulate, and religion and Christian duties are neglected. Work, work, work, is the ambition from morning until night.

Many do not manifest an earnest desire to learn the will of God and to understand His claims upon them. Some who attempt to teach the truth to others do not themselves obey the word of God. The more such teachers the cause of God has, the less prosperous will it be.

Many to whom God has entrusted riches do not consider that they are working against their own eternal interest by selfishly retaining their riches. The apostle shows them that by becoming rich in good works they are working for themselves. They are laying up in store for themselves, providing in heaven an enduring treasure, that they may lay hold on eternal life. In distributing to the necessities of the cause, and helping the needy, they are faithfully doing the work that God has assigned them; and the memorial of their self-denial and generous, loving acts will be written in the book of heaven. Every deed of righteousness will be immortalized, although the doer may not feel that he has done anything worthy of notice. If the daily walk of those who profess the truth were a living example of the life of Christ, a light would shine forth from them which would lead others to the Redeemer. In heaven alone will be fully estimated the blessed results, in the salvation of others, of a consistent, harmonious, godly life.

***Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, chpt. 79, "Transferring Earthly Treasurers," pages 678-683.**

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