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MISSIONARY REVIVALIST SELECTIONS

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IN DEBT
By Elbert Dodd

In the sixteenth chapter of Luke we find beginning with the first verse and reading through the fifth verse, the story of a steward that had not been faithful. When he found that he was being checked up on and he must give an account of his stewardship, he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him and said unto the first, "How much owest thou unto my lord?"

We want to ask at this time, "How much owest thou?" We are in debt, friends, to God first of all because of His giving to us the wonderful plan of salvation from sin and fixing us up to live right in this life and to live in the eternal heavens forever. He is preparing for us a mansion eternal in the heavens. So we are eternally in debt to Him. We owe Him our all. We owe him our time, our talent, everything He has placed in our hands. We owe it all to God. We owe the best that we have to Him.

And then we are in debt to the church that has given us a place to worship and to work. We owe the church the best that we have. The church is an organized body of Christian believers, ordained of God, called of God and placed in this world to be a blessing to humanity. We owe the church, which we love and serve, our best.

Laymen, you not only owe the church your best, but you owe the minister, your pastor, your evangelist, your church leader your full cooperation and help in this great battle against sin and the devil. The ministry owes the laymen a debt. You know sometimes, preachers, we feel like we are more or less free moral agents in we can come and go when we get ready to. But really when we accept the pastorate of a church, as the layman owes us cooperation and faithfulness in the services, faithfulness in their tithes and offerings, we in turn owe them many things. We owe them first of all faithfulness. We accept a church and say that we want to serve that church. Then we

should be as faithful to that church as we would have to be to a company or corporation that we might work for. We couldn't leave our job just any time and be gone as long as we wanted to without probably losing our job. I think sometimes since we don't have a boss as preachers, we get careless along this line. We take a two weeks vacation, and every minister ought to have that, then we take off, the pastors do, for revivals. Brethren, it is all right to take off one or two in a year, but when you are gone too much and too long, it is hard on the sheep.

Remember you are a shepherd. You should be as faithful to that group of people as you expect them to be to you. We should be faithful in giving them our time, our talent and our best. God requires us to do this. He has made us shepherd of the sheep. We must be careful and lead them where we can find the good grass and the good water. We must watch our grazing ground and keep the poisoned weeds and the loco weeds all pulled out and we must watch the water and see that it is not contaminated. To do that, it is a 24 hour job for us all. So let's do our best to pay our debt to God, and all of us to pay our debt to the church and we ministers to the laymen in the church and laymen to pay your debt to the ministry and the church and all of us pay our debt to God. We are laborers together with God, so we must do our best to pay this debt that we owe God, the church, humanity and each other.

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LIVING ABOVE WORLDLY AMUSEMENTS

Charles G. Finney

Let these facts be borne in mind when the question of engaging in amusement comes up for decision. And, remember the question in all such cases is not, "What harm is there in this proposed amusement?" but, "What good can it do? Is it the best way in which I can spend my time? Will it be more pleasing to God and more for the interest of His kingdom than anything else possible to me?" If not, it is not an innocent amusement, and I cannot engage in it without sin! The question often arises, "Are we never to seek such amusements?" I answer: It is our privilege and our duty to live above a desire for such amusements.

All that class of desires should be so subdued by living so much in the light of God, and having so deep a communion with Him as to have no relish for such amusements whatever. It certainly is the privilege of every child of God to walk so closely with Him and maintain so divine a communion with Him as not to feel the necessity of worldly excitements, sports, pastimes, and entertainments to make his employment satisfactory. If a Christian avails himself of his privilege of communion with God, he will naturally and by instinct of his new nature repel solicitations to go after worldly amusements. To him such pastime will appear low, unsatisfactory and even repulsive. If he is of heavenly mind, as he ought to be, he will feel as if he could not afford to come down and seek enjoyment in worldly amusements. Surely, a Christian must be fallen from his first love; he must have turned back into the world, before he can feel the necessity or have the desire of seeking enjoyment in worldly sports and pastime. A spiritual mind cannot seek enjoyment in worldly society. To such a mind that society is necessarily repulsive. Worldly society is insincere, hollow, and to a great extent a sham. What relish can a spiritual mind have for the gossip of a worldly party of pleasure? None whatever. To a mind in communion with God their worldly spirit and ways, conversation and folly, is repulsive and painful, as it is so strongly suggestive of the

downward tendency of their souls, and of the destiny that awaits them. I have had so marked an experience of both sides of this question that I think I cannot be mistaken. Probably but few persons enjoyed worldly pleasure more intensely than I did before I was converted; but my conversion, and the spiritual baptism which immediately followed it, completely extinguished all desire for worldly sports and amusements. I was lifted at once into entirely another plane of life and another kind of enjoyment. From that hour to the present the mode of life, the pastimes, sports, amusements, and worldly ways that so much delighted me before, have not only failed to interest me, but I have had a positive aversion to them. I have never felt them necessary to, or even compatible with a true rational enjoyment. I do not speak boastingly; but for the honor of Christ and His religion, I must say that my Christian life has been a happy one. I have had as much enjoyment as is probably best for men to have in this life, and never for an hour have I had the desire to turn back and seek enjoyment from anything the world can give. But some may say: "Suppose we do not find sufficient enjoyment in religion, and really desire to go after worldly amusements. If we have the disposition, is it not well to gratify it? Is there any more sin in seeking amusements than in entertaining a longing for them?" I reply that a longing for them should never be entertained. It is the privilege and therefore the duty of every one to rise, through grace, above a hungering and thirsting for the flesh-pots of Egypt, worldly pastimes and time-wasting amusements. The indulgence of such longings is not innocent. One should not ask whether the longings should be gratified, but whether it should not be displaced by a longing for the glory of God and His Kingdom.

Professed Christians are bound to maintain a life consistent with their profession. For the honor of religion, they ought to deny worldly lusts; and not, be seeking to gratify them, give occasion to the world to scoff and say that Christians love the world as well as they do. If professors of religion are backslidden in heart and entertain a longing for worldly sports and amusements, they are bound by every consideration of duty and decency to abstain from all outward manifestation of such inward lustings. Some maintain that we should conform to the ways of the world somewhat at least, enough to show that we can enjoy the world and religion too, and that we make religion appear repulsive to the unconverted souls by turning our backs upon what they call their innocent amusements. But we should represent religion as it really is as living above the world, as consisting in a heavenly mind, as that which affords an enjoyment so spiritual and heavenly as to render the low pursuits and joys of worldly men disagreeable and repulsive. It is a sad stumblingblock to the unconverted to see professed Christians seeking pleasure or happiness from this world. Such seeking is a misrepresentation of the religion of Jesus. It misleads, bewilders, and confounds the observing outsider. If he ever reads his Bible, he cannot but wonder that souls who are born of God and have communion with Him should have any relish for worldly ways and pleasures. The fact is that thoughtful unconverted men have little or no confidence in that class of professed Christians who seek enjoyment from this world. They may profess to have, and may loosely think of such as being liberal and good Christians. They may flatter them, and commend their religion as being the opposite of fanaticism and bigotry, and as being such a religion as they like to see; but there is no real sincerity in such professions on the part of the impenitent.

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EDITORIAL

By Spencer Johnson

THE DIFFICULTIES OF HOLINESS

"The kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." (Luke 16:16) It has occurred to me as I have watched-the vicissitudes of life, that the road to heaven is an uphill climb all the way. By nature,, man is bent to drift downward with the current, but when God comes into his heart he becomes spiritually alive and starts upward instead of down. God has not promised that the way would be easy. Rather He has said, "Strive to enter in at the straight gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." (Luke 13: 24) Though one has been saved and sanctified, there are yet many difficulties and obstacles which he must overcome. "But God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." (II Cor.. 9:8)

One of the difficulties which must be overcome in the upward course is, what Jesus called, the cares of life and the deceitfulness of riches. Jesus placed them together and there is a very definite relation between the two. In the battle for physical existence, who has not felt the cares of life? The many cares of life would lead one to believe that if only riches were in his grasp, the cares could be relieved. But the fact is, riches are deceitful and the more one has, the greater the demands and responsibilities are, until what once would seem to have brought satisfaction, becomes only a feeder to increased desires and the cares, instead of diminishing, are multiplied. In yielding to this, many have hampered their power as a spiritual force in the world for God. Happy indeed is the man who has learned to keep his requirements small and his desires simple; who has learned to cast all care upon Him and that by seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness all things that he needs shall be added. "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." (I Timothy 6,:6-9)

Then there are the obstacles of unwise comparisons. Too often people are prone to measure their ideals and standards of Christian living by what others think and do rather than by the Bible, which should be their rule of faith and practice. Overcoming the dangerous currents, here, is no small accomplishment on the journey heavenward. The Bible is clearer on all things pertaining to ethical living than many seem to realize. The question should ever be, "What saith the Scriptures?" rather than what do my friends and associates think or even the opinion of the best people I know. On the surface it may appear that people are getting by with things about which there may be questions in one's own mind and heart. It is well to remember that how far a person is going often has: a bearing on the way he travels, and that we are this side of the judgment, and that after all in the sight of God, they may not be making it so well. The Bible is the criterion of truth in this life and it will be the standard of judgment on that great and final day. "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." (II Corinthians 10:12) "For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." (II Corinthians 10:18)

Perhaps the hardest difficulties to master along the road of life are the set backs of human disappointments. They are bound to come and there is no way to evade them; they must be faced and conquered if one is to be successful in living for God. No sense of hurt is keener than to have someone go down in whom great confidence has been placed. Though all men should be trusted until they prove themselves unworthy, yet only God can be trusted in the supremest sense. To be victorious in the hour of disappointment, one must first be clearly in possession of the experiences of justifying and sanctifying grace. Jesus taught that it is not so much the house that determines its stand or fall, but what is under the house. The foundation must be sound. Also a great source of help in finding one's bearings in the befuddled hour of devastating disappointment is to get alone with God and tarry there until He has spoken. "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." (Jude 1:20-21) And then remember ever and forget never to constantly and always look to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. Let nothing draw the soul's attention or affection away from Him. He only "is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." (Jude 1:24-25).

"His strength has upheld us amid toils of the day,
His grace has sustained us o'er all the rough way.
When we have climbed the last mountain,
And o'ercome the last wall,
We will crown Him in glory
Great King of us all."

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CHILDREN'S PAGE

By Mrs. Paul King,
Box 382, Lima, Ohio

"ALL THINGS"

"Dear me!" Margaret moaned. "This is the hardest puzzle I've ever put together. I can't seem to find one single piece," and she sank wearily down into a big soft chair close by.

"Don't give up, dear," Mother encouraged as she worked diligently away sorting pieces. "This has a beautiful winter scene. Let's see who can find the most pieces," and, challenged anew, the children began a diligent search.

"I found a piece," David exclaimed loudly.

"Don't shout about it," Tim said softly, then, giving his small brother a healthy slap on the shoulder, he winked proudly down upon him.

"I found one too," Margaret laughed, "and here's another piece!" and she clapped her hands joyfully. Mother smiled sweetly and worked silently away.

Hour after hour the family worked diligently at the enormous puzzle as the snow whirled and swirled like dizzy cotton balls outside. Occasionally Daddy put aside his desk work to join in the search. Mother brought a big pitcher of cold milk and some warm cinnamon rolls in for the family to enjoy.

"You're sure a wonderful mother," Tim said, beaming down on his five foot dark haired mother, and taking a big, warm roll at the same time.

"She's the best," Daddy said, lovingly placing his big hands on his wife's tiny shoulders and giving her a generous hug as a bonus.

"Mama's blushing," Margaret laughed, running up to her mother and throwing her arms tightly about her waist.

"Mother," Tim began hesitantly after he had eaten a third roll, "you remember I was talking to you about what the school principal said to me."

"Yes, dear," and Mother gave him a worried look. "I have been praying much about it, Tim."

"I've been doing some serious thinking along with my praying," and the dark haired young man worked diligently as he spoke.

"There's nothing like the will of God, Tim. Seek His will -earnestly and faithfully," Daddy said, looking up from his book work. "You'll never regret it, son."

"I know, Father. I'm trying to do just that. But the job Mr. Baker has offered me after graduation surely looks enticing.., and said quite promising too," Tim.

"God's will is the safest place for your life, dear," Mother said softly, "and, if you feel the least check about it, my advice is to consult God more -- through prayer. He'll guide you aright and never lead you wrongly. Obey His voice."

"We're hung up again," David whined after a long time of searching and not one single piece found. "I just know there are some pieces missing," and a sigh escaped his boyish lips.

"I feel the same way," Tim and Margaret said simultaneously. "I think they're all here," Mother said soothingly and encouragingly.

"I don't believe they are," Tim said.

"We'll know after we have it put together," Mother laughed.

The telephone jangled loudly just then, breaking in upon the quiet and peace of the family.

"It's for you, Tim," Father said, handing the receiver over to his son.

"Yes," and Tim spoke into the receiver. "Jim! I'm surely glad to hear your voice. I missed you at school this week. What's the matter? You been sick? Oh, really! What was that?" and he sank weakly into the big easy chair near the telephone.

After Tim hung up he sat for a long time, his face pale and drawn.

"Something happen, dear?" Mother asked quietly.

"Oh! Not much," and Tim came suddenly back to reality. "Not too.., much," and he buried his head in his hands. "Just . . . kind of... a... a shock, I guess."

"A shock?" Father questioned, looking at his son.

"Yes," and for a long time all was silence. "Mr. Baker gave Jim the job he offered me. Said I was too long on deciding. Can you imagine! I told him all I wanted was enough time to pray about it properly."

"Don't feel badly," Mother said, coming over to her boy and, with tears in her eyes, she placed her hands on his shoulders. "All things work together for good to them that love God. I feel this is an answer to your father's, and my prayers," and she wept softly.

"You . . . You . . . mean it?" Tim said, rising to his feet and straightening up tall. "You really mean it, Mom?"

"Of course we do, Tim. We've spent many hours praying about this. We both feel it wasn't God's will. There's something else for you."

"Oh, Mother! You're wonderful! All the time I thought I should take it to help you and Dad out. I always felt a cloud over me when I'd pray," and a relieved look came into his face. "Let's get back to more puzzling," and he started in with new vigor.

"Oh, Mother! Look how beautiful!" Margaret laughed gleefully. "This is beautiful!"

"And worth every tedious moment spent in finding the pieces," Mother said.

"Oh, goody! Goody!" David said, jumping up and down. "I found three pieces that I just knew were missing," and he carefully fitted the pieces into their proper places.

"Me too, pal," Tim said, ruffling David's sandy colored hair.

Things happened fast after David found those three pieces, kind of like a key that unlocks a door and lets you see inside, for in just a little while the puzzle was entirely completed and the whole breathtaking scene unfolded before the family.

"And I just knew some of the pieces were missing!" Tim exclaimed, standing back viewing the finished product.

"Just as you thought some pieces were missing, but actually weren't so it is for each of your lives. God has a plan for each one of you, even what happened to you tonight, Tim. If we constantly seek His guidance and leadership, He'll fit us into the very place He planned for us to be just as each piece of puzzle has its own proper place to be fitted into. God's 'All things' are like this puzzle. If you're God's child, He has a definite and distinct plan for each of your lives. That's why it's so very, very important that you never rush into anything. Always wait patiently upon the Lord. Let Him direct your plans and you'll never be a misfit. The reason Mrs. Corson is so unhappy is because God called her to India when she was just seventeen years old. She went off to college to prepare for her God-called work and fell in love with a man who had no call whatever to India. Instead of telling him about her sacred calling, she let him date her frequently and then, within a half year, they were married. She has been most unhappy ever since all because she's out of the will of God. That's the reason you see so many sad faces and unhappy looking people. Many of them are not what God originally planned they should be. They rushed into things too hastily and failed to consult, and wait upon, the Lord for their directions and their future guidance. Always, God will direct and lead one right who patiently and trustingly leans upon the Lord. God's 'All things' are sometimes mysterious, but after awhile they always 'work together for good' to the child of God."

"Thank you, dear Lord," Tim said tearfully. "I know the Lord will open something else up for me this summer, Lord willing."

"I think we should get on our knees now and thank God for giving Jim the job Mr. Baker wanted you to have. This is God's good providence," and Father knelt by his desk chair as he finished speaking.

As the family knelt in thankfulness to God, the big, heavy teakettle began to whistle a soft, warm, dreamy steam tune of praise and the big grandfather clock, chiming the quarter hour, seemed to be saying, "All things, all things, good things, God's things."

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THE END