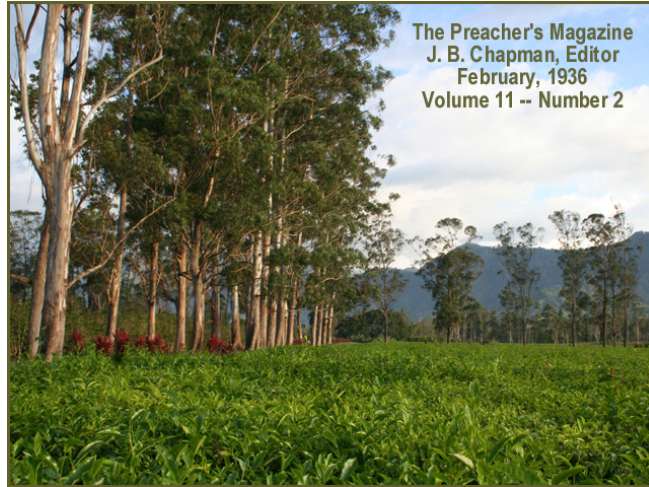


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J. B. Chapman, Editor

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01 -- THE QUESTION OF STEWARDSHIP -- J. B. Chapman

It is a fact, as Dr. J. G. Morrison has shown in his series of addresses on the subject, but stewardship reaches out into all the ramifications of the Christian life. Time, talent, prayer, faith, service -- every capability and every possibility is in the way of being a heritage over which God: has made us stewards.

But, in spite of all, money must loom large in the Christian life and thinking, and therefore the preacher, like hi,divine Lord, must himself think clearly and express himself frequently and forcefully upon the dangers of covetousness and the obligation to make money and goods effective means for the enlargement of the kingdom of God.

Preachers are often inclined to want to dismiss the financial phases of the work of the church. But this is neither possible nor desirable. A man is certainly not preaching the whole truth unless he preaches on money. And it is not enough to simply get money to operate the church. Besides this we must help the people to worship God with their money and by this means turn their perishable things into gold that will endure.

The central thought in it all is that the Christian is a steward and not an owner. And this is the most difficult part of the proposition to make clear. Some professing Christians claim ownership over all they have and even speak of "giving" their tithe -- whereas the Bible always calls it "paying" tithes. And even some careful tithers consider what is left their own to use or dispose of according to their own plans and will. If any considerable number of church members should become actually convinced and convicted that all they have belongs to God and that they have no claim except as a steward to hold and dispose, all else would be easy,

Even tithing is but a method of carrying out the demands of the stewardship of the whole. And if a faithful steward ever grasps the thought that all he has to do with one-tenth of his income is to deposit it in the Lord's treasury he will be glad. There is no further worry about that much of his trust. Then the use of the other nine-tenths will have for its guiding principle that it must be used for the glory of God. And instead of feeling that whoever appeals to him with the work of God is trying to get his money away from him, the Christian should feel that everyone who

presents to him the interests of God's kingdom is helping him find a way to discharge the obligations of his trust.

It is all dodging the point to say that if the people are spiritual they will be liberal. You might as well state it the other way and say that if they are liberal they will be spiritual. But the fact is that God has given preachers a stewardship of truth and one very important phase of that truth bears upon the money question. And just as one must preach repentance with much emphasis and repetition, so he must preach on the money question urgently and frequently.

But this is not a dull, dry theme. Rather it is a live theme out of which both the preacher and the listener should receive much blessing. And I think we might extend the ancient saying regarding doctrinal preaching to this subject also and say that the test of real preaching ability is the demand that the preacher shall be able to get happy while preaching on the money question. Then I think one of the tests that a church is spiritual should be the requirement to answer the following question, "Do they get happy while their pastor is preaching on the money question?"

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02 -- EDITORIAL NOTES -- J. B. Chapman

The danger of professionalism is ever present. It is even a temptation to the preacher to read his Bible in search of texts rather than to look in it for messages from God to his own soul. One way to avoid falling into this trap is to fall in with the movement among laymen for reading the Bible through every year and do this as a matter of personal devotion as a Christian, and not as a professional searcher for material to use in preaching to others.

* * *

Perhaps there is no test upon which we would all make a lower grade than on the prayer test. I know there are more important things regarding prayer than simply the time one spends in prayer, but I also know that praying requires time. "Praying in a hurry is like shooting without taking aim."

* * *

One of the most valuable and effective points in the sermon on tithing is the one the preacher makes when he gives his testimony. Especially if he is able to say, "I have been a careful, systematic storehouse tither now for ____ years, and I have found great blessing in it. I am glad that when poverty stalks and sickness comes into the home we are able to say, 'Thank God, we have paid our tithes and remembered God with our offerings.' I would not be uncertain in times like that for anything in the world. Oh, what a joy to be a tither!"

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03 -- EXPOSITORY MESSAGES ON CHRISTIAN PURITY -- Olive M. Winchester

Essentials In Christian Experience

But the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned (1 Tim. 1:5).

In the Christian life, as in other forms of experience, the question often arises as to what are the fundamental elements and what are the accidentals, that is, what are those elements without which the Christian experience could not be a complete experience true to its being and what are the resultant effects of that nature or being as expressing themselves in life? Often much misunderstanding arises from confusing these two, the essence and the effects arising. Many times people take an effect for the essence, and then when such an effect is simulated, they feel that the essence is present, only to see some soul go down in a crash and wonder what was the trouble. For our own sakes and for help rendered to others it is necessary that we have a clear understanding of the fundamental groundwork of Christian experience, and we believe that the text under consideration gives this to us.

Love The Primary Essential

The Scriptures are very explicit on the fundamental nature of love in relation to Christian experience. This was set forth by Jesus when a lawyer asked him one day, "tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

The same emphasis is continued by the Apostle Paul when he sets forth the primacy of love in the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians. The thought that he so fully elucidates here is expressed elsewhere in brief when he states that love is the fulfilling of the law, but it is in Corinthians where he brings out the pre-eminence of love for he places it as superior to prophecy and to faith, two very essential phases of Christian experience; then in this same passage he delineates the qualities of love, and as we view these qualities we can but acknowledge that any virtue in Christian experience that possesses all of these must have a superior rank among Christian virtues.

This love thus emphasized is not simply human sentiment, but is imbued with a divine dynamic. In the Greek there are two words for love, one which belongs to the realm of the human and that alone, then there is another word which carries the thought of that love which is begotten of divine life in the soul, and it is this kind of love that constitutes the end of the commandment. No form of human love could

satisfy the demands; it would break like brittle withes, but the divine love implanted in the soul has an ever supply of increase, for its source is from God who is love. Love, then, is the image of God within the soul, radiating back unto God himself and sending forth its blessing upon mankind until man feels the warmth of the love pouring forth from a heart that has been in touch with this heavenly dynamic.

The thought thus expressed leads on very definitely to the one we have to add and that is that this love must come forth from a pure heart. It has been said by some that there is an expulsive power in the new affection of love that comes into the soul, but we feel that while this may have a relative truth, it is not the essential fact of heart purity. It is true that the mind cannot contain too many conflicting elements at one time and when one emotion is dominant, others recede, but that this purifies fundamentally the nature, we do not see; it would seem that it functions as an overpowering force. Such teaching would appear to us to savor more of suppression, at least it borders there. It may have more of Christian grace than teaching that ignores the uniting of the heart about one supreme, dominating element, but it does not wrestle with the defiling element of sin in the heart which perverts all the nature. There must be the cleansing from this impurity before there can be the infilling of love. Then will love come forth out of a pure heart.

If the heart is not purified, then the nature will be diverted in its affections and thus the choice of motives may be misdirected and a wrong spirit and action result. But when the heart is made clean, and the affectional nature is vitalized with love for God, then the strongest motivating power possible inspires the will and the whole life is brought into alignment.

A Good Conscience Concomitant

Often in the consideration of religion there has been a divorcement from morals; this has constituted a problem down through the ages. It was a problem with which Amos and Isaiah wrestled with the Hebrew people. It occurs in our own day. Oftentimes people excuse themselves for deficiencies in moral shortcomings because of some religious afflatus they experience or they stress some particular element of belief as essential over against the operation of a good conscience in the relations between themselves and their fellowman.

"Conscience" as one has defined it, "is the activity of consciousness toward the ethical aspect of things." No higher system of ethics is found in the catalogs of moral thought than is found in the Scriptures. Let each age answer for itself and its own time, and the standards of Scripture have a higher relativity to those of its age. We cannot measure Old Testament morality by New; we must measure Old Testament morality by its own times. When we measure New Testament morality by its own times, and all the ages that have followed, we find that it stands as the supreme guiding star in the firmament of all moral thought.

That this activity may function within our being, it must be awakened or quickened and must be kept awake. As says Excell, "The conscience must be enlightened. In itself it is not an infallible guide. Its province is not to teach men truth, not to correct erroneous principles, but simply to show a man when his conduct is, or is not, at variance with his knowledge and convictions of what is right. That knowledge must be obtained elsewhere; and then conscience will dictate the course of rectitude and consistency. If the judgment be under the influence of false principles, the conclusions of conscience will also be false. Some of the vilest things that have ever been done in this world have been done in its name and under its authority. It is evident, therefore, that a conscience, to be rightly directed, must have light; so far as it is instructed it invariably conducts a man in the right way. Therefore seek illumination. Be concerned to have correct principles, and labor after proper views of divine truth; for if the clouds of ignorance and error hang over the mind, not the greatest firmness of character, not the utmost integrity of purpose, no, not even the most decided sincerity of conviction, can preserve the vessel of the soul from pursuing a false track till, finally driven upon the quicksands or dashing against the rocks, it makes shipwreck of faith and of good conscience, and thus through ignorance is forever cast away."

The enlightenment of the conscience is a process of education. The purifying of the heart is an instantaneous work. The content of what constitutes Christian ethics must be acquired by a gradual process through the understanding of the mind illuminated by the Holy Spirit centered in the precepts found in the Word of God. We do not receive with our experience of entire sanctification an infallible understanding of ethics; herein must be "study to show yourselves approved unto God." Our objective in living should be to keep our "conscience void of offence" both toward God and man. In keeping our conscience void of offense toward God there will be the maintaining of the spirit unsullied and untainted with sin, but toward man there must be the exercise of principles of justice, mercy and love.

In speaking of the value of a good conscience within the heart, Excell says, "Consider how great and how solid is the peace which a good conscience is capable of conveying to the soul. It is an inestimable treasure, a constant and an unchangeable witness to our sincerity. There may be disquietudes without, there may be losses, afflictions and persecutions, but amidst the wildest storms it maintains inward serenity. Consider what strength and spirit a good conscience imparts through all the journey of life. Without it the hands become weak in duty, the feet weary in travel, and the heart languid and depressed in religious engagements. You cannot approach the mercy seat with confidence, for, while you do not approve yourselves, what hope can you have of acceptance with God? Give me an unclouded conscience; let it bear witness in the Holy Ghost: then shall I stand upright in the presence of the enemy. My arm will be strong to wield the sword of the Spirit. There will be an inward vigor and elasticity that shall rise in proportion to opposition."

We have considered, the value of a good conscience, we will follow Excell again as he tells how to keep a good conscience. "Be anxiously vigilant against all evil, and watchful as to all opportunities of good. The conscience of a saint is like the eye of the body, extremely sensitive, requiring to be guarded with most jealous care. The least note that enters into it makes it smart and agonize. Let it be your constant concern to live and act as under the eye of your great Master, to whom all things are naked and open, before whom the heart is anatomized as it were, and all its secrets are perfectly known. Realize the presence of Christ with you, and carry it into all the engagements of life, striving to do nothing which you would not be willing that He should behold. Be diligent and habitual in the work of self-examination, without which it is certain that no one can be satisfied as to the reality of his condition. What a shame it is to some men, that they know everything but their own hearts and characters!"

An Unfeigned Faith A Resultant

As the last essential in Christian experience as noted in this particular passage of Scripture we have mentioned an unfeigned faith. The Greek reads without hypocrisy. In the days when Jesus was calling His disciples we remember that He characterized Nathanael as an Israelite indeed in whom there was no guile, and this would seem to be the quality of character that is indicated here. When the heart is purified and the conscience bears a good testimony, then there will be no guile in our faith.

In our Christian profession as in other walks of life there comes the temptation to professionalism or to a standard maintained before men which is not a reality in the heart. This sometimes creeps slowly upon one without a realization that such is the state. Perhaps if there had been more careful self-examination, such a state would have been revealed, but so often we take our religious experience for granted and feel confident that all is well, and we go on without coming to an understanding that we have failed to keep the vital touch which would eliminate from our souls all that would tend to savor of insincerity or guile.

Then sometimes in the Christian walk of life people are ensnared to think that the end justifies the means, and if the ultimate objective that they have in mind is the kingdom of God, they may use guile and subtlety in its attainment, in fact there creeps into the mind the thought that shrewdness and cunning may be classed as meritorious. Open sincerity and reliance upon God, faith in His promises and complete trust in His faithfulness to His children is the only condition that will keep the heart in its right relationship toward God. This will exclude all ratiocination or seeking to reason out a justification for one's attitude instead of acknowledging that one was wrong in one's position. An unfeigned faith is clear, undefiled without any self-seeking, but desirous only of the glory of God.

Thus we have the primary essentials in the Christian experience. We notice that they savor not of the spectacular; they are simple, unassuming graces of the

spirit, but they go to the very heart of Christian living. They comprehend relationships both toward God and man, and keep the spirit of man unsullied in its purified nature, vital with love. They cause the individual to rest in peace as he looks within and finds that from the inner recesses of his being there comes a response born of a good conscience, and as he expresses his faith toward God, he can feel that it is reinforced with absolute sincerity and that there is no alloy in it. While such graces may not shine forth before the world without as striking, yet within they give a sense of security and confidence.

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04 -- PENTECOSTAL ACTUALITIES -- I. L. Flynn

Post-Pentecostal Tragedy (Acts 5:1-11)

Our lesson records one of those sad tragedies of Pentecost days. There came with Pentecost the greatest display of spirituality the ages had ever known. The whole city and country was stirred. The Holy Ghost had been given. A genuine revival had just struck this old world. The people rejoiced with the flaming fire of the divine effusion. They had started to go through at any cost. They had consecrated their all, they were willing to give their all, and when the need arose they proved this true by selling their earthly possessions and laying the money down at the apostles' feet. All classes did this, the rich and the poor, the laity and the priest. This was not socialism, or communism. It was Christian liberality. There were possibly three reasons for their selling and giving: (1) The extreme need of the people who had come to Jerusalem to the Feast of Pentecost, and had tarried longer than they had planned. (2) They expected the soon return of Jesus to earth again. (3) The city was soon to be destroyed, as foretold by the Lord Jesus.

Among those who sold their land were two members of the Jerusalem congregation, Ananias and Sapphira, his wife. If Bible names have a spiritual significance, then this man and woman were splendid Christians up to the time of their selling their land. Ananias -- "The Lord has been gracious," Sapphira -- "Beautiful." But their once being Christians availed nothing -- except to bring greater condemnation and punishment when they sinned. Dr. S. D. Gordon calls the sin of this man and wife "the first capital sin after Pentecost." And yet it was no black sin -- as the world classes crime -- against this pair. They were not blasphemers, were not murderers, they were not highway robbers. If they had been guilty of infraction of the moral laws, it is doubtful if Peter would have taken cognizance of the matter, but would have left them for the civil courts to deal with. Their sin was a spiritual sin -- sinning against the Spirit of God. It was an inner sin, a hardening of the heart, a rebellion against what they supposed they were required to give up. "Coveteousness which is idolatry." The sin of Ahab, who murdered Naboth for his possessions. The inordinate desire for this world's goods has wrecked and ruined many a splendid, promising Christian. The lurking sin within the bosom of the unsanctified has caused the downfall of multitudes. And yet how

few heed the warning of the examples held up to our view of the tragedy of such a life.

Unbelief, covetousness and pride, went to make up the causes of the tragedy of Ananias and his wife. They were fearful of what people would say if they did not make a show of "giving up all." Wanting to "stand well" in society has been the rock on which many a family has floundered. The love of fine things -- the inordinate desire -- is the creeping paralysis that is benumbing the spirit of large numbers of people of this day. Many today go to the altar and with uplifted hands say and sing, "I'll go through," but in a short time you find them cooled off, staying away from the house of God, and making many excuses why they do not attend. With Ananias and wife, they say, "It might not go through, we'll wait and see if it does, then we are in it full fledged." The best way to have a thing "go through," is to get in behind it and put it over.

This man and wife talked the matter over. "There is too much excitement about this revival. The people are all excited and it will not last long, and then they will be sorry for the steps they have taken in selling their homes and lands. I think the best thing we can do is to not give all the price of the land, at this time, at least. There will be plenty of time later to 'put in,' if it continues to go on. Nobody will know about the amount we got for our land, anyway." So they talked it over -- agreed!

They thought nobody knew -- would ever know, but God knew and told Peter all about it before the deceivers went to church. You think nobody knows about your deals, your sins, they may be ever so secret, but they are known, and God will bring them to light some day -- it may be soon!

They "kept back part of the price." With great pretension Ananias sang in the choir that morning, and when the offering was taken walked down and put his money at the apostles' feet, and said, "Here is our offering, what we got for our farm." But with piercing, searching eyes, the man of God looked him through and said, "You have lied -- lied to God!"

How thoughtless men are. They seem to have no thought that God is omnipresent -- everywhere, and that He is omniscient -- knows all things. If men were conscious of the fact that God knows all that is going on, and is everywhere all the time, there would be less sinning. This generation has almost lost the consciousness of God. The people sin with impudence.

Ananias and Sapphira sinned against light-against the knowledge they had of God. They knew better, but presumed on the mercy of God: "He'll overlook this 'little' matter." But did He? It is true that God did not instantly kill Annas and Caiaphas, the high priests, with their co-murderers in killing the Son of God. This post-Pentecost sin was a different sin. The high priests and their crowd were in

spiritual darkness, while this man and wife were in the noonday of pentecostal light. They were trifling with holy things.

The sons of Aaron, the first high priest, Nadab and. Abihu, were stricken down before the Lord for offering strange fire upon His altar. They had more light than other folks. These two priests had been in the mountain with the Lord and had eaten and drunk in His presence, therefore their sin was greater than other people's sin.

I knew a man once, a member of my church, who made the statement that he got rid of the preachers who disagreed with him. He had been the instrument in running off four preachers from that work. He was fractious, envious and aspired to complete leadership of the local church. One day while sitting in his store conversing with a member of his church, he was stricken with paralysis and died as he had lived.

It is not God's usual plan to strike people down who commit such sins as Ananias, but they do die -- spiritually. This is evidenced by the large number of persons over the land who are only skeletons of their former selves.

Few realize the enormity of sinning against so much light. Adam on the morning of the world's day brought wreck and ruin to the entire human race by his sin against God, and then failed to confess that sin, but tried to hide and cover it up, as Job said, "If I covered my transgression as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom." Achan on the threshold of Canaan brought down the wrath of God on himself and family, and death to many of the people by his sin of sacrilege. Achan's sin was for appropriating consecrated things to himself. The sin of Ananias and Sapphira was for failing to deliver that which had been consecrated to God's cause. It was during the rejoicing and shouting the praises of God in the high tide of Pentecost that this sin was committed. They kept back part of the offering, and the curse of God descended upon them. They died the death of a backslider. They sold out to the devil, they paid the price of their sin. I am afraid this sin is a common sin among us today.

The sacred writer tells us as the pallbearers' feet sounded at the door of the church, Sapphira fell dead and was carried out to the cemetery and laid beside her dead husband to await the resurrection and the great assize.

Who knows but the undertaker's feet are now near at hand, ready to carry some of us to the graveyard, while the devil's imps drag our poor souls down to hell! We need to be awakened, to become alarmed, yes, very much aroused to the frightful conditions around us!

Let me bring this message to a close tonight by calling your attention to another man who enters into the records along with Ananias and wife. He also had possessions and sold them, but put all the proceeds at the apostles' feet. He kept

nothing back. The historian then wrote of Barnabas: "He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord." What a biography! what a contrast! This good man gave his all freely, ungrudgingly, and became a blessing to thousands of people. There is no end -- unless it will be the end of time -- to the influence of a good man, or a good woman. When the final records are made up, when we stand face to face with the redeemed of the ages and know fully our influence over others for good-or bad, we shall be able to judge more accurately our usefulness down here. When the books are opened and we are judged from those things written therein," then we shall know, even as we are known.

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05 -- MAKING A MINISTER -- Paul S. Hill

Words

Recently I have had the privilege of listening to a few very able ministers. As I listened to them I fell to wondering just how much of what they were trying to say was really registering with me. The words they were using were the vehicles of thought, and all of them were understandable. None of them were so big that I could not understand them, and yet as I listened I wondered just how much of what the preacher thought and felt was being conveyed to me through the medium of the words he was using. I tried to imagine how I would feel if I were preaching those same words. How much of a message is lost to a congregation of listeners through words? How much is carried over to a place of permanent settlement in the listener's mind?

It is a foregone conclusion with me that a minister must feel the message he is going to deliver. And feeling is sometimes the father of thought, at least it always accompanies it in the preparation of a sermon. To carry over to a listening congregation some of the feeling and thought of a message through the medium of words is the minister's task. To make men think as he thinks, to make them feel as he feels, to bring them to a state of harmony with the message that burns in the minister's heart, that is the preacher's task, and words are his strongest force of battle. Gestures. facial expressions, movements of the body and general appearance of the minister greatly supplement his words, but after all they are only supplements, and he must depend for the most part on words to get his message into the hearts of the listeners.

Spoken words have some advantage over written ones in that they can be emphasized individually, and aided by gestures of some kind. But they also have some disadvantages. Once spoken they cannot be recalled by the speaker, and frequently they cannot be remembered by the listeners. The written word has the advantage of permanency, and can be reread at will. But do written words really

carry to the reader the thought of the writer any better than the spoken word conveys a meaning to a crowd of listeners?

In either case, whether the word is spoken or written, there is need of attention, and concentration on the part of the listener, if any major part of a message is received. Even words fitly spoken and carefully chosen and properly emphasized will avail but little unless attention is given to them. A minister once said to a noisy and boisterous congregation at a campmeeting, "If it is God's will for me to preach to you then it is God's will for you to listen." Good listeners help a great deal in making a good sermon because they can aid faulty words and diction by interpreting the message much in the spirit in which it is given. They listen not only to words but also to all those hundreds of other unexplained things that accompany every sermon that is preached with a burning heart.

To have a message of salvation to preach, and to clothe it in suitable words supplemented by suitable gestures, and to preach it to an attentive congregation is about the best that can be hoped for, humanly speaking, but after all we greatly need the presence of the Holy Spirit. His presence changes many otherwise failures into good victories. Even at that we believe He will bless us more if we will try hard in preparation in order that we may have something for Him to bless.

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06 -- MY WASTE BASKET -- Writer Not Shown

Recently I have been thinking of the contents of my waste basket. It is not only what is in it tonight, or what it has contained this last week, but what has been in it during the past years since I have used it.

It is placed at my right hand as I write. It is nearly full again. How many times I have filled it and emptied it. It has a record of its own. It has contained some of my failures. Not all of them, but many. Some sermon outlines that were never finished have gone into that basket; some thoughts that started to find expression died a-borning and went into the basket. Clippings, and cuttings, sayings and communications have followed each other into the basket. I am wondering if my study could really hold all that has gone into the waste basket.

Sometimes I have rescued a little something that went in. I thought it might be worth saving but threw it away again. Some I saved that has only cluttered up the room. I would like to pass it through the waste basket, but lack the courage. It has lain around so long that though it probably is useless it seems like a valued old friend. I hope Mrs. Hill will throw it away, only I don't want her to do so.

I wish that I could have all the odds and ends that have gone into discard by way of my waste basket collected and put in classified order so that I could check up on them. I think there might some good material show up. Probably it was

considered useless because it was so disconnected, like the bones that were in the dry valley. Maybe if I could get them all together they would make a fine array of good, usable material.

As I think of it there has been a lot of waste. Only a little of all that has come to me has really stayed with me. I have been a great waster and spender. But I have saved some. If I had to choose between what I have wasted and what I have saved I could do the same all over again. Doubtless much has been lost, but I am thankful that some has been saved.*

My waste basket discourages me, but is an old friend, just the same.

[*This minister, who wrote this article published in the February, 1936 "Preacher's Magazine" (about 74 ½ years ago, from today, July 30, 2010), might well have made use of the modern computer for storing his many disjointed thoughts in a folder for future reference -- a computer folder capable of holding years and years of such "scraps" of thought for possible future use. Present-day minister of 2010 (or whatever future year you may read this, through the use of modern electronics YOU HAVE that advantage. Are you using it? -- DVM]

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07 -- THE TEACHING OF STEWARDSHIP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH -- N. B. Herrell

There is no question but that the systematic teaching of the obligation of the Christian stewardship upon each member of the local church has been so neglected, being only general and occasional, that the resulting weakness and indifference in this matter is apparent to all. A survey in almost any local church will reveal the sad fact that not more than one-fourth to one-half of the membership ever enter effectively into the vital issues of an active and practical Christianity. The remainder of the membership is but little less than frozen assets to the church and the spiritual interests of the community.

If the membership of the local church was half as well informed on stewardship obligations as the general public is on which brand of cigarettes and liquors to use, due to the aggressive and persistent advertising of these instruments of sin, there would be no need for disgraceful retrenchments in the work of evangelizing the world. If a local church is to continue to be a living, vitalizing, evangelizing organism as well as an organization, the obligation of stewardship must find a ready response from at least two-thirds or four-fifths of its membership. The inactive members must be kept to the minimum by the law of assimilation and transmutation by the active majority.

In every well ordered home the care and provision for the expected child is planned. God in His mercy has amply provided for the care and the training of His

beloved children in the art of living a victorious and consistent Christian life that will fully co-operate with His will and accomplish His purpose in Christ.

Through Hosea, the prophet, He said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I also will reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children" (Hosea 4:6). The truth of this scripture is being demonstrated before our eyes, and let him who dares to do so, accept this challenge. Both the preaching and teaching ministry of the average local church is weak and halting in the practice of what it preaches and teaches. This same prophet also declares, "And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them for their doings" (Hosea 4:9).

Do you suppose that the teaching of stewardship in the local church was ignored by Paul in the following scripture? "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4:11-16).

Can one become a full grown man in the things of God without the recognition of one's material obligation to God? Is it possible for the church to prosper, and the cause of Christ flourish, and the believer prosper in his own soul, without recognizing this obligation? Someone has said, "All life must have law." Stewardship, as given in the Holy Scripture, is the law or pattern of life in Christ Jesus that His followers are to live day by day. True, we are saved by grace through faith as far as Christian experience is concerned, but we are to pattern our attitudes and conduct according to the knowledge set forth in God's Word for His children.

Stewardship is a necessary part of Christian character building. In the majority of the local churches, too little responsibility is taken concerning the necessity for acquired knowledge in the technique of living in order to present forceful and dynamic lives as witnesses unto the gospel. The influence of the local church is largely measured by the deportment of its membership. There is no substitute for practical Christianity. The building of Christian character upon the foundation of a vital experience of grace is to be accomplished in detail, and it is tedious, requiring time, patience, and stickability that is as imperative as difficult; but the harvest is gathered by the faithful tillers of the soil.

The teaching of the obligations of stewardship in the local churches necessarily begins with the pastors, and must be reinforced and relayed by responsive church boards, department heads, and teaching staffs. The curriculum, with the Bible as the chief textbook, is of primary importance as we have it in our present program. More elaborate equipment may be acquired in time, only if we succeed with what we have. The fact remains that an inadequate equipment wisely used, is better than a more elaborate equipment poorly used for lack of dynamic power. We must keep in mind that stewardship is one of the fine arts of Christian living. At this point the local church can locate the secret of her success or failure.

In all of our endeavor to find the right way to do the right thing, and if possible, at the right time, we must ever keep in mind that the radiation of the divine presence through the purified personality is to be the major purpose in the teaching and practice of Christian stewardship. Without this vital factor all our efforts are but human and earthy. We must be Christ centered in our life and manner of living; first, transformed by Christian experience, and then conformed by Christian stewardship which will make and build a strong local church.

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08 -- THE STEWARDSHIP OF ALL OF LIFE -- Melza H. Brown

Life is a stewardship. God has committed to man great possibilities and privileges, but these bring like responsibilities. The individual who recognizes the relationship which his life holds to eternity cannot take life as a joke. Life is indeed serious.

The Gospel of Luke, in the sixteenth chapter, verses ten to twelve, states very definitely the relationship between this life and its stewardship in the light of eternity. We are trusted with a little that we might be tried as to our qualities of stewardship. Our faithfulness or unfaithfulness in the use of this little determines whether or not we shall possess much. Man at best does not possess much in this life. We have little ability and but few talents, however enough to determine what use we will make of talents or ability. We do not need great wisdom to prove what use we would make of wisdom. We have but small possessions materially but it takes little to prove our attitude toward possessions and whether or not we will recognize our stewardship. Our life here is brief at the best and yet life is sufficient that the Giver of life can determine of what use we would make of life. For, "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."

The next relationship expressed is between the unrighteous mammon and true riches. That which is possessed here is but temporal and will soon pass away. The possessions of this life are unrighteous in the sense of being corruptible and decaying. However in handling these corruptible possessions, man has an opportunity of proving his faithfulness which determines whether or not he dare be

trusted with true riches which are not corruptible but eternal. "If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?"

Then the Word very definitely states that the relationship is that of a steward to his Lord or Master. That which is committed is only possessed and not owned. This is invariably true in all of life here. That which is possessed by man is possessed as a steward for which stewardship he must give an account. Talent or ability is only entrusted and can be taken away at the disposal of the one who made the trust. Wisdom and power are not ours but from Him who is wisdom and power. Material possessions belong to the one who created, and while the use of the same has been entrusted to man, the title is, even still as always, the Creator's. Even life itself is not owned but is only a trust. I cannot keep this life but must release the hold of the same and must then give an account of the use I have made of the possession. Life is God-given and cannot be duplicated by man. The extremities of life are set by the Giver and woe be to the man who refuses to appreciate the gracious entrustment and hurls back at Deity the very breath of God, human life.

While man does possess as a steward he proves whether or not he can be entrusted with ownership. "And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?"

The summing up of the teachings of these verses gives us some very serious facts. Man's stewardship is with a little of that which is corruptible and belonging to another. The result of this stewardship is, if proved faithful, the possession, yea, ownership of true riches which are not corruptible and that ownership in abundance. But if unfaithful, then the steward dare not be entrusted with ownership in abundance. The stewardship of all this life therefore determines the ownership of all eternity. The standard of excellence in this stewardship is faithfulness.

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09 -- STEWARDSHIP CULTIVATION -- E. J. Fleming

A newborn soul, whether five years of age or sixty, is a babe in Christ. In order that he may not remain in a state of perpetual spiritual infancy, wise provision has been made for him to grow in knowledge and develop in experience. We recognize that the greatest hindrance to that growth is inbred sin. We also recognize that the plan of salvation provides for that "greatest hindrance" to be removed by the work of entire sanctification. We insist, however, that entire sanctification, whether accomplished in a five year old or a sixty year old convert, will not lift him out of infancy. He may still be a spiritual infant though enjoying the grace of heart cleansing. His advancement from spiritual infancy or childhood to spiritual adulthood is a progressive process that may require years of patient and painstaking instruction in truth. The progress of our convert from spiritual

childhood to spiritual manhood will very largely depend upon the faithfulness of our ministers, particularly pastors.

If there is a weak place in our church economy it is in the crying lack of spiritual instruction in the art of holy living. We are too prone to conclude that if we succeed in getting our people regenerated and sanctified they will be able to make the grade to the celestial city by their own wisdom and efforts. A few may do so. But the majority of them will make a sorry pathway and many will fall by the way, too beaten out to rally and stagger forward. Our converts must be taught how to pray, how to believe God, how to resist temptation, how to distinguish outward temptation from inward movements of carnality, how to discern between innocent impulses not governed by the will and sinful desires under volitional control, how to appropriate God's promises, how to overcome natural weaknesses that are merely human, how to discriminate between the ceremonial parts of the law and its moral implications, how to make use of the gifts and powers placed in our possession by an all-provident Father, how to discover the difference between the urgings of the Holy Spirit and the accusations of Satan. And thousands would be saved from discouragement and defeat, and kept in the church if they could be kindly, wisely and sympathetically taught how to recover their spiritual balance and "their fellowship with God when by any change they had been overcome and lost their spiritual balance on the highway of life. Watch that mother with her child. How kind, how patient, how solicitous, how encouraging, how careful to reach a hand now and then to the child which is learning to walk. But some day that mother-care will be rewarded when she sees her "baby" running like a deer all over the place. Oh, for more preachers (pastors) with a "mother-heart" for their converts!

Take any phase of Christian stewardship -- prayer, or fasting, or time, or talents, or opportunity, or whatever it may be -- that phase may be comprehended by a few on hearing one sermon on it. But most of us mortals have needed almost "a barrel" of sermons to get light to shine through our dull intellects. Many pastors wonder why their lack of success in getting their people to tithe. "Didn't I preach a sermon on tithing last year?" says one. Let me ask, "Was it an apologetic 'effort' along tithing lines, or maybe a 'tithe or go to hell' effort?" Nobody ever got enthused to tithe when the preacher was hesitant, apologetic, fearful of offending his "best givers," the "church pillars." Psychiatrists tell us that the threat of hell would drive the average human being to dare that threat. Did you ever know of anyone going to hell because he didn't tithe? But multitudes have gone over the precipice of eternal despair because they refused to walk in the light and obey God. Turn on the light! Turn on some more light! ! Turn on the floodlights! It Give the people light -- kindly, wisely, persistently, repeatedly, convincingly, encouragingly, Scripturally. Preach on the "History of Kingdom Support," "Acceptable Worship," "The Joy of Co-operating with God," "The Danger of Covetousness," and -- and -- the field is without bounds. Quote God's promises, put windows in your sermons, pass around a dish of freshly extracted honey, use some bouquets of Bible flowers rich with Canaan odors.

A farmer, to raise a crop of corn, first plows his ground, then harrows it lengthwise, then cornerwise, then disks it and finally plants his seed in well-pulverized soil. He carefully cultivates the rows just showing across the field, later he plows it a little deeper, and maybe a third or fourth time he goes, back and forth, back and forth, through that corn -- until, finally, the ears of corn, heavy weighted, hang in mute testimony to his faithful cultivation. Go to the farmer, thou preacher; consider his ways, and be wise.

Years ago I heard that veteran of God's army, C. E. Cornell, say that a local congregation must be trained (mind you, trained) by its pastor to cooperate with and back up his efforts, to preach the Word of truth; that it was absolutely necessary to repeat truth repeatedly so that newcomers and novitiates might be instructed. The same applied to stewardship cultivation. Those who already know and practice the truths of stewardship must not only be willing to hear these truths repeated but must learn to enjoy their repetition, and to delight in "amening" these truths as they come from the faithful pastor's lips.

Does preaching on "missions" once a year satisfy the average need in any congregation? No. Today it is "Foreign Evangelism," tomorrow "Native Workers," then "The Ripened Field," and again "Our Medical Work." "But," one says, "isn't it too much to ask the pastor to do all that?" We answer "No, if he is not too lazy and indolent and somnolent to dig and read and study and make" the subject under different heads intensely interesting."

Now, apply that to Christian stewardship. Cut down dead trees, grub out the underbrush, roll up the logs, blast out the stumps, set fire to the heaps, clear the ground. Then jump-shovel the new ground, hetchel* [*as spelled] it right and left, pick stones, gather old roots, cut weeds, drag the soil, plant the seed, believe God, and see the spiritual babes, the children, and youths, and adults, lay those stewardship truths to heart and develop into real Bible stewards of the manifold possessions that God has committed to them.

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10 -- A TITHING TESTIMONY -- Mae Budd

About twenty years ago I was a choir leader in another denomination. The time came when the church needed some new song books. I suggested that we have a chicken dinner and serve Chinese food. To make it a little more impressive I requested that the choir serve the dinner dressed in Chinese costumes.

At first the choir agreed to this but after considering the matter some of the girls who were "pretty" came to me and said, "Mrs. Budd, we do not want to dress like Chinese, they are so homely." Desiring to please them I said, "All right, dress as Japanese, they are pretty little folk and we will serve dinner just the same." Which they did. Chickens were solicited, the hall secured, booths made and dinner

was served cafeteria style. During this procedure God began to talk to me about doing a thing like this to raise money to carry on His work. The farther we went in preparation for this occasion the deeper under conviction I became. Finally one day the climax came when one of the girls came to have me help her with her costume. I was so miserable I could not do it so sent her to another girl to receive the instructions that she wanted. When she left I returned to washing dishes. Conviction fell so heavily that I left my dish washing and went to pray. I fell upon my knees, sobbed it out before God, made a covenant with God that has never been broken. I said, "Lord, if Thou wilt forgive me I will never do a thing like this again as long as I live if there is nothing left to the song books but the back and the fly leaf."

I have had a chance as pastor here in Halfway, Oregon, to prove good. Our song books were so ragged and many of the front and back leaves were gone. I was impressed one morning to mention to the church that we needed some new song books. There was an immediate response and 53 Nazarene Hymnals were ordered and in less than two weeks they were all paid for with tithes and offerings. We were all blessed by using God's financial plan.

Some say that they are too poor to tithe. We have never had as much money as some and have always had a limited allowance to live on. But we have always given God the tenth. It seems He can make the nine-tenths go farther than we do the ten-tenths. Since we have become tithers we always have something to give. His promise is true when He said, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be meat in mine house and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it. One time in Illinois while in revival meetings we were reminded that we were \$500 in debt, which accumulated through sickness and other unavoidable causes. We began to pray, we told God that we were giving Him the tithe and offerings and now we wanted Him to help us out. The first thing we knew He began to answer prayer and in a short time the entire amount was paid. The first money that I had to tithe was one dollar. I put away ten cents, but it looked very small indeed. It seemed I could hear Satan laugh and make fun of me. But I kept at it and on one occasion was able to put away \$200 and then I laughed at Satan. I am going to present the plan of "Storehouse Tithing" to our church for this coming year as I believe it to be God's financial plan for His work and if properly handled all financial obligations will be met in full. I am through robbing God.

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THE END