

FULLY FURNISHED

or

THE CHRISTIAN WORKER'S EQUIPMENT

by

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CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

THE WORKER'S REWARD

THERE are two main tracks of truth, which, while they run alongside of each other, must never be allowed, in our thoughts, to run into each other.

These are eternal life, and reward.

The former is *given* to those who have faith in Christ (John 3:36; I John 5:11; Romans 6:23); but the latter is obtained by those who are faithful to Christ (Matthew 25:21,23; Luke 19:17, 19).

Our being in the realm of God's grace is the outcome of His infinite act of love (John 3:15); but our place in Christ's kingdom will be determined by our faithful devotion to Him since we believed in Him (Revelation 3:12; I Corinthians 3:13, 14).

The failure to distinguish these things which differ, has caused a good deal of confusion of thought, and bondage of soul in those who have mixed up what God does for His people, and what He is willing to do in, and through them.

He has "**perfected for ever them that are sanctified**" (Hebrews 10:14). Let us not confuse the "**perfected for ever,**" which is based upon the perfect offering of Christ, and reminds us of what God does for His sake, with the perfection which the apostle says, "**I follow after**" (Philippians 3:12).

The former speaks of the believer's salvation, standing, and sanctification, but the latter has reference to "**the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus**" (Philippians 3:14). Paul was "**apprehended of Christ Jesus**" as to his salvation, but he had not apprehended the prize; hence, he was pressing forward to get it (Philippians 3:14). He had obtained mercy (I Timothy 1:13), but he had not obtained the crown (I Corinthians 9:24-27).

Let us, therefore, direct our minds to the rewards which Christ will give to His own, when they are manifested in their glorified bodies at His judgment seat.

There are some rewards which come to God's children in this present life.

In keeping God's Word "**there is great reward**" (Psalm 19:11), for it gives:

- Light in darkness,
- Joy in sorrow,
- Guidance in difficulty,
- Assurance in doubt,
- Calmness in trouble,
- Protection in conflict,
- Power in testimony.

There is reward in being faithful to the Lord by keeping from the world, and in refusing to accept what it offers, for then the Lord comes and manifests Himself in some new and satisfying relation.

Abram found it to be so, for it was after he had refused to accept any favors from the king of Sodom, that the Lord appeared to him, and said, "**I am thy Shield, and thy exceeding great Reward**" (Genesis 15:1).

A reward is found by God's people when they unite together in God's work, for more is accomplished when two saints work together, than when they work apart, as the wise man said, "**Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour**" (Ecclesiastes 4:9).

Reward is bestowed upon the one who is righteous in his actions, for he that is right in his dealings with others, ever has the reward of a good conscience, as the Word of God says, "**to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward**" (Proverbs 11:18).

The Christian worker who serves Christ without fee has a special reward, in that he is independent of wages, and is not open to the accusation that he works for money's sake. But with or without charge, the worker who willingly works for Christ, because he has been called to do so, has the reward of the Lord's approval in being in the line of His will (I Corinthians 9:17, 18).

The secret prayer has the reward of the manifest blessing.

Those who know how to feed the inner life in secret, will have the open blessing of unmistakable and benign influence (Matthew 6:6, 18).

We should not, and we dare not do anything for reward's sake, for that would bring against us the rebuke of the Lord's displeasure (Micah 3:11).

We should be like the Lord's servant, of whom it is said,

"He shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Isaiah 45:13).

On the other hand, while we work for the Lord's sake, He has promised to give us reward, as we may see if we ponder the promise of His Word (Jeremiah 31:16), the injunction of His truth (II John 8), the encouragement of His love (II Chronicles 15:7), and the announcement of Christ's return (Revelation 22:12).

Having said so much, let us dwell upon the passages of Scripture where reward is specially mentioned, and mark the characters of those to whom recompense is promised.

I - The reward to the faith-adder.

Twice the Greek word occurs in II Peter 1. In the first instance, we are told what to “**add to our faith**” (verse 5), and in the second instance we are told what God will “**minister**” (*add*) to those who do so, namely, an abundant entrance into the kingdom of the Lord Jesus (verse 11). The word “**add**” is a striking metaphor. Literally, it means *a chorus*.

As there are many parts which make the harmony of a perfect chorus; so there are many graces which make the Christian character a harmony of perfect melody to the Lord.

- The strong voice of courage,
- The true voice of knowledge,
- The trained voice of temperance,
- The skilful voice of patience,
- The rich voice of godliness,
- The tender voice of brotherly kindness,
- The mellow voice of love, and
- The leading voice of faith.

As they sing in unison in the life of the believer, peal forth a Hallelujah Chorus which no Mendelssohn of earth could ever compose or sing. What is the reward as we thus chorus to God?

He says He will add (chorus to us) an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of the Lord Jesus.

There is all the difference between an Atlantic liner which has weathered the storm, through the ability of the captain, the alacrity of all under him, and the perfect make and working of her machinery, coming triumphantly into port; and the liner which has lost her cargo, which has her deck broken and torn, and her machinery out of order, because of her unseaworthiness and the unskillful action of the captain, and which has to be towed into port by an insignificant tug.

They both get in, but what a difference!

Similarly, there is all the difference between an out-and-out believer, who has chorused to God's praise in an all round consecrated behavior, and who has the abundant entrance like Paul the apostle; and one who has only the end of his life, like the dying thief, or the half-heartedness of a Christian life, to give to the Lord.

There may be entrance for such, but abundant entrance for the latter there can never be.

II - The reward to the self-denier.

“He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour” (John 12:25, 26).

The Lord Jesus, as in everything, is the great Example as to the denial of self.

He lost His life to benefit us, and His reward has been, and will be, the “much fruit of redemptive spoil,” in the many whom He will bring to glory.

A like spirit will characterize us if we are following in His steps, and the reward will be, that special honour will be placed upon us by the Father, and an occupancy of place, in a peculiar sense, beside the Lord Jesus.

“Just after the close of the civil war in America, the army that had marched in triumph through Georgia under General Sherman, was to be reviewed in one of the great cities and march in triumphant parade.

The night before the parade, General Sherman called General Howard to him and said: ‘You know, General, you were at the head of one of the divisions that marched with me through Georgia, and you ought rightfully to ride at the head of your division in the parade to-morrow. But I find that through political influence, a plan is being pressed to have the general who preceded you in the command represent the division, and as political pulls are sometimes stronger than personal rights, I hardly know how to meet the case.’ Very naturally General Howard replied, ‘I think I am entitled to represent my division, as it was I who led them to victory.’ ‘Yes,’ said General Sherman, ‘you are, but I believe you are a Christian, are you not? And I was wondering if Christian considerations might not lead you to make an exception, and even to yield your rights for the sake of peace.’ ‘Oh,’ said good General Howard, ‘If it is a matter of Christian consideration, of course I yield, and he can have the place.’ ‘All right,’ said General Sherman, ‘I will so arrange, and will you please report to me to-morrow morning at nine o’clock and you shall ride with me at the head of the army.’ “

General Howard denied himself in giving up the place which was rightfully his, but he did not lose by so doing-, nay, he was the gainer. So shall it be with those disciples of Christ, who out of love to Him will allow others to elbow them out of their rightful place, for He will see they are not losers, but that they shall have greater reward because of their self-effacement.

III - The reward of the patient sufferer.

Tribulation is what the Lord has told us to expect from the world (John 16:33), but even in the suffering there may be unspeakable joy.

Pastor Homel, of the French Protestant Church, had all his bones so broken on the wheel that he only survived forty hours. But when in his dying agony he said, "Though my bones are broken to shivers, my soul is filled with inexpressible joy." From the rough rock of persecution comes the gold of joy.

The flail of tribulation knocks away the husk of impatience, and makes the grain of God's enduring visible.

The world may rub the plate of our character, thinking to mar it, but they only make it shine the brighter, when God's grace rests upon us. Persecution places us in good company, even in the fellowship of the Lord Jesus. To be hated with Him, turns the hatred into a halo of glory (John 17:14, 22).

Not to be known, because of our association with Him, makes the scorn of the world a mere figment: while to be known by Heaven (I John 3:2), lights up the darkest dungeon (Acts 16:25), makes every lion's den a gateway to Heaven (Daniel 6:22), and every fiery furnace a means of grace (Daniel 3:25).

The persecutions of earth are but the piercings in the crown of glory, which are requisite for the placing of the gems of reward (Matthew 5:12; Luke 6:22, 23).

Twice the words "**counted worthy**" occur in the New Testament in association with suffering.

The early Christians rejoiced "**that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name**" (Acts 5:41); and the apostle cheers the suffering saints at Thessalonica, by telling them that their persecutions and tribulations which they had endured so manfully were but making them to be "**counted worthy of the kingdom of God**" for which they had suffered (II Thessalonians 1:5).

May we not say the reward for patient suffering for Christ now, means a place in His kingdom, even as David's mighty men who shared with him when he was rejected (I Samuel 22:4), afterwards were found with him in his exaltation (I Chronicles 11:16).

Of one thing we may be sure, and that is, suffering and glory are always found together (Luke 24:46; Romans 8:17; II Timothy 2:12; I Peter 2:20; 4:16). Therefore, the logical conclusion is, that if we do not have the suffering we shall not have the glory; and further, the proportion of suffering here will determine the proportion of glory in Christ's kingdom.

IV - The reward for the trial-endurer.

"The trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 1:7).

The reference in these words is to the testing of faith, and the reward which is bestowed upon the one who endures.

Every anchor which leaves the British Isles is required to pass the test of the Board of Trade before it is stamped as fit for use. A severe hydraulic strain is put upon it, up to a given point, and if the anchor stands this, it is then passed as fit for service.

There is that which corresponds to this, in the trial of the believer's faith the "**manifold temptations**" which come to us are over-ruled for our blessing, in that God makes them opportunities to trust Him, and as we endure, He lays up for us that which we shall have at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

The reward is said to be "**praise and honour and glory.**"

- The "**praise**" refers to' the commendation of the Lord,
- The "**honour**" to the bestowment of the reward, and
- The "**glory**" that which accrues to the receiver as a consequence of the "**praise**" and "**honour**" already given: just as when the brave soldier receives the Victoria Cross.

The V.C. is the "**honour**" conferred upon him, the King's word of commendation as he pins it upon his coat is the "**praise,**" and the loud hurrah as he joins his comrades with proud step is the "**glory.**"

V - The reward for the alert watcher.

The Lord's charge to His servants during the time of His absence is "**watch;**" and we are to watch with girded loins and with lamps burning (Luke 12:35, 36).

- The girded loins indicate readiness for action (I Kings 18:46), preparedness for service (John 13:4), and alertness of mind (I Peter 1:13).
- The burning lamps suggest consistency of life (Matthew 5:16), faithfulness in testimony (John 5:35), and reflection of Christ's character (Philippians 2:15; Ephesians 5:8).

Of the servants whom the Lord shall so find when He returns, He says, "**Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them**" (Luke 12:37).

The servants are waiting to serve their Lord, and have prepared a feast for Him, but when He finds the attitude they are in, He girds Himself and makes them take His place, and honors them in serving them, as a reward for their fidelity.

Such an action reminds us of what Ahasuerus did for Mordecai, when he caused him to be arrayed in the royal apparel, to ride upon the royal horse, and to have on the crown royal (Esther 6:8). Mordecai was treated as the king was accustomed to be honoured, as a reward for the service he had rendered to him (Esther 6:3, 11). So shall the ever alert watcher be honoured when the Lord Jesus comes back. He shall honour the servant, as he wished to honour Him. What an honour that will be for the servant to be served by His Lord!

VI - The reward to the talent-user.

The talents represent the use of opportunities possessed by us.

These are not possessed to the same extent by all. One servant had five talents, another had two, and the third had only one. They were given according to each one's "**several ability.**"

The Lord did not expect so much from the one who had only one talent, as He did from the servant who possessed five, but He did expect every man to use what he had got. The man who did not use his talent, received no reward, while the other two were rewarded according to the use they had made of their talents.

This parable reminds us of our individual responsibility to use what powers we have, in the Lord's service.

Scripture will serve us to illustrate what talents are, if we note the natural traits in the lives of some of its characters.

- Daniel used his skilful mind in the apt manner in which he filled the office of legislator in the kingdom of Babylon.
- David, the sweet singer of Israel, used his voice and pen in singing and setting forth the grace and glory of God to His praise.
- The keeper of the Egyptian prison recognized the natural ability which Joseph had in giving him the oversight of all the prisons under his care.
- That talent was further manifested in the rule which Joseph exercised under Pharaoh.
- Elijah evidently recognized by the way in which Elisha handled the plough, he would make a fit successor to himself; for he who could make such straight furrows, would be sure to go about the Lord's business with equal rectitude.

There will be many who will say, I have not the talents of Daniel, the abilities of Joseph, the qualifications of Paul, the astuteness of Gladstone, the art of Raphael, the poetry of Longfellow, the expressiveness of Ruskin, or the eloquence of Bright. That may be. The Lord does not expect from us what we have not got, but He does expect us to use what we have, and if we do so, we can have no greater commendation and wish no greater reward, than the woman received from the Lord Jesus, "**She hath done what she could;**" for after all, "The highest life consists not in doing magnificent things, but rather in doing common things in a magnificent way."

VII - The reward to the pound-employer.

The parables of the talents and pounds are sometimes thought to be one and the same, but one general observation is sufficient to prove they are not.

In the parable of the talents there is a diversity of bestowment, one man has five talents and the other only has one; but in the parable of the pounds, each man receives alike; we read, the nobleman "**And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come**" (Luke 19:13).

That each servant got a pound is evidenced, for in the reckoning day each servant says to his Lord, "**Thy pound.**"

The question naturally arises, "What is represented by the pound?" I think it is the Gospel.

Every child of God is a servant, and to each of us is committed "**the word of reconciliation**" (II Corinthians 5:18), with which we are to trade till our Lord returns. Then the question will be asked, "What use have you made of the Gospel I gave you?" The use of the pound does not mean preaching the Gospel, although that is included, but each of us in our several spheres bearing testimony to its power.

- The mother can do this with the children,
- The mistress with the maid, and
- The maid with the mistress,
- The employer with his employee, and
- The employee with his employer,
- The merchant with the customer, and
- The customer with the merchant,
- The friend with friend, and so on.

By kindly word, by consistent action, by sympathetic look, by timely help, by generous self-denial, by loving letter, by unflinching faith, by buoyant hope, by intense zeal, by ardent love, and by patient endurance, we can trade with the Gospel, and thus increase what we have, by passing the seedlings on to others, which shall grow up into trees of blessing.

The reward for faithfully trading with the Gospel will be in proportion to the use we make of the pound.

What the rule over the ten cities may mean, we cannot say, but something real, tangible, and enduring is evidently represented. Some position of rule and authority is unmistakably meant, for nothing else but this would answer to the "**authority over ten cities**" and "**five cities**" (Luke 19:17, 19).

VIII - The reward to the faithful steward.

The office of a steward is repeatedly referred to in the New Testament. The Lord's servants are stewards "**of the mysteries of God**" (I Corinthians 4:1), and of "**the manifold grace of God**" (I Peter 4:10). As such we are to be "**blameless**" in life (Titus 1:7), and "**faithful**" in service (I Corinthians 4:2).

Faithfulness is the one thing which is "**required**" in stewards, and where it is found it will meet with the Master's "**Well done.**"

One of the most touching incidents of faithfulness, is found in the following story of how a faithful dog lost its life in serving its master:

“One night in the Scottish highlands, when the snow was deep upon the mountain side, a shepherd found that two of his flock were still out in the storm. Calling his faithful collie, or shepherd’s dog, he roused her from her warm kennel where she was lying with her young, and pointing through the open door he held up two fingers and said, ‘Go.’ Well she understood his meaning, and gave one pitiful look at her little pups, and then one appealing glance at him, but there was no relenting in his look. Quietly and promptly she passed out through the open door in the dark and wintry night. It was late in the night when the shepherd was roused by a scratching on the door, and as he opened it, there was one of the lost sheep, and the tired dog dragged herself through the door and lay down once more in her kennel with her young. He carefully nursed the tired sheep, and then again he called the faithful dog, and pointing his finger through the open door, he called, ‘One is still lost, Go.’

“Tenderly she gazed once more at her young. Longingly she clung to her little brood, pleadingly she gazed into the shepherd’s eyes and seemed to say, ‘Must I go again?’ But still there was no reprieve in that glance. There was but one message and that was, ‘Go.’ And slowly she dragged herself again to the door and went forth into the darkness. The dawn had come before the shepherd was again awakened to find the lost sheep there, and the poor dog scarcely able to drag herself to her corner, lay down to die. As she pressed her little ones to her breast and gasped out her last breath, he gently patted her head, and tried his best to say, ‘Good and gentle servant, you did your best.’ She was but a dog. For her there was no Heaven, no crown of bright reward, no higher motive than obedience. Beloved, with so much more for us in the future shall we be less faithful than a shepherd’s dog?”

IX - The reward for the true worker.

“If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward” (I Corinthians 3:14).

“Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward” (Colossians 3:23, 24).

The first passage is found in connection with the quality of material which the builder puts upon the foundation; and the second Scripture has reference to work generally. As we have already seen in *The worker’s Judgment*, the material specified denotes the doctrines of grace, or otherwise. The **“whatsoever”** of Colossians 3:23, reminds us that all our actions may be service for the Lord.

A little boy was lying in the hospital. His hand had been amputated. The nurse, in response to his request, brought the amputated hand to him. As he felt it with his other hand, it was cold and lifeless, but the wee laddie felt he could not part with the member which had been so useful to him without a parting greeting. As he handed it back to the nurse, he said, “Good-bye, I shall get you back at the resurrection.” Ah! There are a good many things which we shall get back at the resurrection, and among the many will be the works - The deeds done in the body (II Corinthians 5:10) - for these will determine the kind of reward we shall receive.

X - *The reward for the considerate helper.*

The Word of God abounds with promises of reward to those who minister to the need of others, especially those who help those who are not able to make any return (Matthew 6:4; Matthew 25:35-40; Mark 9:41; Luke 14:12-14).

There is no greater joy than to give joy to others. He who feeds others feeds himself. He who helps others helps himself. Those who help others for the sake of Christ, never think of the pains it gives them, but of the pleasures it bestows upon those who are helped for His sake. The highest good, next to being good, is to do good, for this goes up to God as a sweet-smelling savour (Hebrews 13:16).

It is said that Ivan, of Russia, used sometimes to disguise himself, and go out among his people to find out their true character. One night he went, dressed as a beggar, into the suburbs of Moscow, and asked for a night's lodging, but he was refused admittance at every house, until at last his heart sank with discouragement to think of the selfishness of his people. At length, however, he knocked at a door where he was gladly admitted. The poor man invited him in, offered him a crust of bread, a cup of water, and a bed of straw, and then said, "I am sorry I cannot do more for you, but my wife is ill, a babe has just been given her, and my attention is needed for them."

The Emperor lay down and slept the sleep of a contented mind. He had found a true heart.

In the morning he took his leave with many thanks.

The poor man forgot all about it, until a few days later, the royal chariot drove up to the door, and attended by his retinue, the Emperor stopped at his humble abode.

The poor man was alarmed, and throwing himself at the Emperor's feet, asked, "What have I done?"

Ivan lifted him up, and taking him by both his hands, said, "Done! You've done nothing but entertain your Emperor. It was I who lay upon that bed of straw, it was I who received your humble but hearty hospitality, and now I have come to reward you. You received me in disguise, but now I come in my true character to recompense your love. Bring hither your new-born babe."

And as he brought him, he said, "You shall call him after me, and when he is old enough, I will educate him and give him a place in my court and service."

Giving him a bag of gold, he said, "Use this for your wife, and if ever you have need of anything, don't forget to call upon the poor tramp that slept the other night in that corner."

Something similar will happen when our Lord returns. For every cup of water given in His name, for every kindly word spoken for His sake, for every meal given out of love to Him, for every encouragement given to others, for every self-denying act to our brethren, there will be recognition and recompense from our Lord Jesus Christ.

XI - The reward for the resolute endurer.

There are many things the child of God is called to endure.

We are called:

- To endure hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ (II Timothy 2:3);
- Chastening, as God's children (Hebrews 12:7);
- Afflictions, as workers for Christ (II Timothy 4:5);
- Grief, as Christians (I Peter 2:19);
- Contradictions, as partners with Christ in His sufferings (Hebrews 12:3);
- Temptation, as tried believers (James 1:12).

Yea, we are called to endure all things for the elect's sake (II Timothy 2:10).

The reward for those who endure is the victor's crown. There are some seven references to the victor's crown, all of which are associated with endurance.

- Endurance under temptation meets with the reward of the "**crown of life**" (James 1:12).
- Endurance in the heavenly race of progress in the Divine life, meets with the reward of the "**incorruptible crown**" (I Corinthians 9:25).
- Endurance in faithful service, meets with the reward of "**the crown of righteousness**" (II Timothy 4:8).
- Endurance in shepherding the flock, meets with the reward of "**the crown of glory**" (I Peter 5:4).
- Endurance under persecution, meets with the reward of "**the crown of life**" (Revelation 2:10).
- Endurance in keeping God's Word, preserves us from losing the victor's crown (Revelation 3:11); and
- The endurance of those who have received the truth through others, means that they have a "**crown of rejoicing**" in the day of awards at the judgment seat of Christ (Philippians 4:1; I Thessalonians 2:19).

XII - The reward to the willing loser.

There are two ways in which we may lose things in this life.

We may lose what we have actually got, as the Hebrew Christians, who "**took joyfully the spoiling of their goods;**" and there is a losing of riches which would surely come if a given course of action was followed, but the course is abandoned in faithfulness to Christ.

- Why did Moses give up the "**riches of Egypt**"? Because "he had respect unto the recompence of the reward" (Hebrews 11:26).
- What made the saints take the spoiling of their goods with such good heart? Because they had "**in Heaven a better and an enduring substance**" (Hebrews 10:34).

The glamors of earth were eclipsed by the glories of Heaven. The sun of God's love made the lights of earth to be of little moment. For everything lost in this life for the Lord's sake, there shall be a corresponding and compensating blessing in the life to come.

As Christina G. Rossetti has said,

“For the books we now forbear to read, we shall one day be endued with wisdom and knowledge. For the music we will not listen to, we shall join in the song of the redeemed. For the pictures from which we turn, we shall gaze unabashed on the beatific vision. For the companionship we shun, we shall be welcomed into angelic society, and the companionship of triumphant saints. For the pleasure we miss, we shall abide, and evermore abide, in the rapture of Heaven. It cannot be much of a hardship to dress modestly, and at a small cost, rather than richly and fashionably, if, with a vivid conviction, we are awaiting the white robes of the redeemed.”

Further, we have the promises of the Lord Jesus, that there is compensation for loss.

Peter, on one occasion, reminded Christ that he and his fellow disciples had left all to follow Him. He in answer to the question said, **“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 eternal life”** (Matthew 19:29).

Whatever the reward may be, the Lord assures us that we are to receive ten thousand per cent., for the hundred-fold does not refer to a hundred per cent, that is, one for everyone given, but a hundred for everyone.

Some true-hearted believer will say, as a lady once said to me in Maine, “I don't want to serve Christ for what I can get!”

“Certainly not,” I replied, “we give up, we serve Him and others, for His name's sake, and not for the reward's sake; but none the less, He assures us we shall be compensated.”

XIII - The *reward to the offering-giver.*

Some of the most precious of God's pronouncements and promises flow out of the giving of the Lord's people, and the exhortations to the **“grace”** (II Corinthians 8:9).

To give but three examples.

The attention is drawn to the *great Example of giving right* in the midst of a series of exhortations upon ministering to the need of God's saints, in the words, **“Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich”** (II Corinthians 8:9). *The spiritual blessing of giving* is sandwiched between the words, **“God loveth a cheerful giver,”** and, **“It is written, he hath disperseth abroad: he hath given to the poor; his righteousness remaineth for ever.”**

The words between are,

“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work. [As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor; his righteousness remaineth forever]” (II Corinthians 9:7-9).

In this verse of spiritual blessing - The verse of the five alls, if we make the word “**every**” read “all” - we have:

**ALL GRACE
FOR
ALL TIMES
FOR
ALL EMERGENCIES
FOR
ALL THINGS
FOR
ALL WORK**

The third example reminds us of the *counterpart of giving*.

Giving to the Lord always brings its own reward (Luke 6:38), this is brought out, in what the apostle said, after he received the gift from the saints at Philippi. He said in so many words, “You have supplied my need, and now **‘my God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus’**” (Philippians 4:19).

There are seven ways of giving, somebody has said.

First is the careless way, giving something to everything that comes along, giving to get rid of the nuisance of the appeal.

Second way is the impulsive way of giving, giving when you feel like it, when your emotions are stirred.

Third, there is the lazy way of giving. Get somebody to get up a fair, or festival, or an ice cream social, or a broom drill. That is the lazy way of giving, and it is the most expensive in the end.

Fourth, there is the selfish way of giving, giving for your organ, for your Sunday School, for your preacher, for something that you are to receive from it. Fifth, there is the systematic way, setting aside a certain per cent of our means, and I am glad to say that this is growing among intelligent Christians.

Sixth, there is what we might call the fair way of giving, giving as much for the Lord as we use upon ourselves.

And Seventh, there is the heroic way, the self-sacrificing way, giving more than you can, giving until it hurts, and then giving until it does not hurt.

The difference between giving in a heroic, and in a careless way, was aptly put by a friend, at a Convention held at Asbury Park, New York. Or as he put it, the difference between “a collection” and “an offering.”

A little boy, who evidently had had the difference explained to him, while sitting at the dinner table was about to give the dog Fido the leg of a chicken, which had been placed upon his plate.

“My boy,” said the father, “you must not do that. Eat the meat, and then give Fido the bone. The boy did as he was told, and then handed Fido the bone, but as he was doing so, he said, “Fido, I intended to give you an offering, but you have only got a collection.”

The reason why God’s people give so little is because they get so little.

When the grace of God lives in the heart, it will loosen the hand. There would be more open hands to give to others, if there were more open hearts to receive God’s grace. If we stint and starve our hearts of God’s grace, no wonder there is stinginess in our giving. There are too many like the man, who rented a farm on the condition of giving one-third of what he raised to the owner. The harvest passed, and the owner did not receive anything. He called upon the tenant, and reminded him of the arrangement into which they had entered. He said, “How is this? You were to give one-third of what you raised to me, and keep two-thirds yourself!”

“Yes,” replied the tenant, “that is so, but there were only two-thirds. When I came to gather up the harvest, I ‘lowed there would be three loads, and there were only two!”

We call the man “a wily schemer,” but are there not some like him? Those who give to the Lord the mere pittance out of their plenty are to be pitied, for they have no joy in it, and certainly they will have no reward in the hereafter.

What is the reward?

Christ indicates it in His application of the parable of the unjust steward.

He says, “**Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations**” (Luke 16:9). Christ does not mean us to make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that is, to love money; but He does desire we should “make friends by means” of it. Then we shall have a welcome from those we have helped. They shall accord us such an ovation in the next life, as shall more than compensate for what we did for them here.

XIV - The *reward to the victory-gainer.*

Eight times in the book of the Revelation is the promise of Christ given to the overcomer, and in many instances what is to be overcome is indicated by the promised reward.

The reward promised to the overcomer of the Church in Ephesus is to “**eat of the tree of life**” (Revelation 2:7). To eat of the tree of life suggests the thoughts of abiding fellowship and enduring vitality. For as the cherubim and the flaming sword were placed at the garden of Eden to prevent man from eating of the tree of life after he had fallen, because if he had eaten in his sinful state, he would have been fixed in that state for ever; so the redeemed overcomer eating of the tree of life is in a state of holy bliss from which it is impossible to fall. The Church at Ephesus had left their first love, hence they had lost vitality, and were out of fellowship, and they were exhorted to get back into the position from whence they had fallen, that the means of vitality might be restored; and the incentive to this is the reward promised to the overcomer.

The reward to the overcomer of the Church in Smyrna is this, that he is assured he “**shall not be hurt of the second death**”. No believer can ever come under the power of the second death, for Christ assures those who believe in Him that they shall not come under condemnation, but are passed from death unto life (John 5:24). Further, all believers evidence their faith in Christ in some degree by overcoming the world (I John 5:5). But all believers may not be overcomers while passing through the fiery ordeal of persecution, and with death staring them in the face. Those who are faithful unto death are assured by Christ that they shall not be hurt of the second death, thus all fear of their souls’ salvation is removed. This is grandly illustrated in the words which fell from the lips of Polycarp, the bishop of this Church, when he was called upon by his judges to recant. He said,

“Fourscore and six years have I served the Lord, and He never wronged me;
how then can I blaspheme my King and Saviour.”

The timid believer who denies his Lord has good ground to fear, but he who is faithful is fearless.

The reward to the overcomer of the Church in Pergamos is the “**hidden manna**” and the “**white stone**”. The thought here is secrecy, for the “**manna**” is said to be “**hidden**,” and the new name - inscribed on the white stone is only known to the receiver (Revelation 2:17). The hidden manna and the white stone take our thoughts back to the Aaronic priesthood. Some of the manna which fell in the wilderness was placed in a pot, which was put in the ark of the covenant (Exodus 16:33; Hebrews 9:4); and the white stone may have reference to the Urim and Thummim which were in the breastplate of the high priest, and by means of which the Lord gave secret directions to him (Exodus 28:30; Numbers 27:21).

Fausset says, upon the promise of Christ to the Church in Pergamos:- “The new name is Christ’s (Revelation 3:12). Some new revelation of Himself hereafter to be imparted to His people, which they alone are capable of receiving. The connection with the ‘**hidden manna**’ is thus clear, as the high priest alone had access to the manna hidden in the sanctuary. What believers had to contend against at Pergamos were idol meats and fornication, put in their way by Balaamites. As Phinehas was rewarded with an ‘**everlasting priesthood**’ for his zeal against these sins, so the heavenly high priesthood is the reward promised to those who are zealous against the New Testament Balaamites.”

The reward to the overcomer of the Church in Thyatira is “**authority over the nations**”, and “**the morning star**”.

The morning star gives the thought of kingly glory (Numbers 24:17; Matthew 2:2; Revelation 22:16), and the “**authority**” of kingly power. These rewards were to be bestowed for faithful rule in God’s assembly by repudiating the evil of Jezebel’s false doctrine, and the necessary false practice which accompanied it; and the holding fast to Christ’s word and works “**unto the end.**”

The reward to the overcomer of the Church in Sardis is to “**be clothed in white raiment**”, an assurance that his name shall not be blotted out of the book of life, and confession of him before the Father and the angels (Revelation 3:5). The not defiling the garments, i.e., *being clean in life and right in action* (Revelation 19:8) meets the reward of being “**clothed in white raiment,**” the not having the name blotted out of the book of life, * shows they had got spiritual life and not merely a name to live (Revelation 3:1), and the confession by Christ is in recognition of the watching and holding fast.

* “A register of citizens was kept in ancient states; the names of the dead were erased, So those who have a name that they live and are dead, are blotted out of God’s roll of the heavenly citizens; not that in God’s decree they ever were there Many are enrolled among the *called to salvation*. who shall not be among the church at last” - Fausset.

The reward to the overcomer of the Church in Philadelphia is the being “**a pillar in the temple of God**”, and the new inscribed name upon him (Revelation 3:12). The Church in Philadelphia had proved themselves stable in their faith, sterling in their love, and faithful in their testimony, and now the Lord promised them a permanent place in His glory. They had not “**denied His name,**” and in appreciation He promises to write upon them His new name. A monumental arch and a number of pillars were erected in the city of New York, when Admiral Dewey returned from the Spanish-American war. Upon these are words of American appreciation, and emblems of the victories gained. These monuments are already showing signs of decay, for they are comparatively flimsy erections, made of wood and plaster, but those which Christ shall make will be enduring in nature, and eternal in character.

The reward to the overcomer of the Church in Laodicea is “**to sit with Christ on His throne**” (Revelation 3:21). The one who overcomes amid the worst condition of things has the highest reward.

“So you intend to be a reformer of men’s morals, young man,” said an aged peer to Wilberforce. “That,” and he pointed to a picture of the crucifixion, “that is the end of reformers.”

“Is it,” replied Wilberforce? “I have read in an old Book this: ‘**I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death.**’ That is the end - not death, but dominion. And if we are faithful, doing our duty, the end shall not be exhaustion, but ‘**sit with Me on My throne.**’ “

The promises to the overcomers reach their apex when the Lord promises those who overcome, that they “**shall inherit all things**” (Revelation 21:7).

What the sweep of this promise includes no pen can write, no tongue can tell, but something real, tangible, and enduring is evidently meant. “**All things**” refer to the absence of everything that frets, such as pain, sorrow, and death. These shall be “**no more**,” and on the positive side “**all things**” denote the glory of the new Jerusalem, the companionship of the Lord, and the peculiar relationships which He shall hold with regard to His people which shall satisfy His heart and theirs (Revelation 21:1-6).

There is one fact we would briefly note in concluding these promises to the overcomer, and that is, the counterpart of the promise is found in the Book of the Revelation.

- The promise of the “**tree of life**” to the Ephesian overcomer is referred to in chapter 22:2, where the properties of “**the tree of life**” are stated.
- The promise to the Smyrnan overcomer of the not being “**hurt of the second death**” is explained in chapter 20:14, where we are told the second death is “**the lake of fire.**”
- The promise to the Pergamos overcomer of the “**new name**” finds a counterpart in 14:1, where the 144,000 have the “**name of the Father**” written on their foreheads.
- The promise to the Thyatiran overcomer of “**power over the nations,**” finds its correspondence in chapter 20:4, where a company are described who “**live and reign with Christ for a thousand years.**”
- The promise to the Sardian overcomer of the “**white raiment,**” meets its resemblance in chapter 4:4, where the four and twenty elders are seen “**clothed in white raiment;**” and the “**name in the book of life,**” has its resemblance in chapter 13:8, where we read of those who worship the beast have not their names in the Lamb’s book of life.
- The promise to the Philadelphian overcomer is the permanent place in God’s temple, which has its answering feature in the New Jerusalem and its citizenship as described in chapter 21:10-27;
- The promise to the Laodicean overcomer of sitting on Christ’s throne, finds its counterpart in the throne-sitters who are mentioned in Revelation 4:4; 20:4.

Let us remember that not a single action done out of love to Christ shall miss His commendation and reward in the day of His reckoning. Everything done for “**His name’s sake**” is recorded for our reward. He records:

- The ardent faith of a clinging soul (Matthew 15:28);
- The generous heart which gives its all, although it be but two mites (Luke 21:3);
- The grateful thanks of a cleansed man are noticed by Him (Luke 17:18, 19);
- The true confession of Himself is music in His ears, and calls forth His approbation (Matthew 16:17);
- He appreciates the breaking of the costly box of ointment over His person, and makes a lasting memorial of it (Matthew 26:13);
- He commends the earnest desire of David to build Him a temple, and puts the building down to His account, although he never placed a stone in it (II Samuel 7:2-7; I Chronicles 28:2);
- He is careful to give as much reward to the prophet’s host, as He gives to the prophet himself (Matthew 10:41), and
- The cup of water given to one of His own is accepted as done to Himself (Mark 9:41).

“Our labour and our pleasure,
Be this, to do His will,
To use our little measure,
In loving service still.
The cup of water given.
For Him, will find reward
Both now, and soon in Heaven,
Remembered by the Lord.

“Lord, may Thy love constrain us,
Through all the ‘little while;’
Nor fear of man restrain us,
Nor love of praise beguile;
Thus, till Thy glorious coming,
Enough, O Lord, if we
Then hear Thy voice approving
Aught we have done for Thee.”

~ end of book ~

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