

## 2 CORINTHIANS 8:10-15

### GIVING THAT PLEASES GOD

“In this matter I give my judgment: this benefits you, who a year ago started not only to do this work but also to desire to do it. So now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have. For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness. As it is written, ‘Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack.’”<sup>1</sup>

**A**ny Christian wants to please the Heavenly Father. Our desire to please the Father flows from filial devotion. God is our Father and as His children, we want always to do that which is pleasing to Him. We want to be wise administrators of all that He has entrusted to our care. Certainly, we are responsible to administer wisely the spiritual gifts He has entrusted to us. We are equally responsible to demonstrate wisdom in administering the earthly wealth He has entrusted to us. The wisdom we are to demonstrate in administering earthly goods begins with understanding that possessions are entrusted to us by God. This neither denies nor depreciates individual resourcefulness, personal integrity, intelligence or other positive character traits we associate with successful individuals. The Word of the Lord recorded by the Teacher in **ECCLESIASTES 10:10** is yet true:

“If the iron is blunt, and one does not sharpen the edge,  
he must use more strength,  
but wisdom helps one to succeed.”

In saying that we are to recognise God as the ultimate source of possessions I mean to refocus attention on the foundational issue, the understanding that it is the Lord God who distributes gifts—whether intelligence, strength or whatever abilities contribute to individual success. “What do you have that you did not receive” [**1 CORINTHIANS 4:7**]? This is the thought provoking biblical summary statement.

Paul, in his second letter to the Corinthian congregation, spoke of wise administration of possessions, and in particular instructed his readers in wise giving—giving that pleases God. Join me in examination of the biblical instruction that we may embrace those characteristics that are pleasing to Him who gives freely to all who call upon Him.

**ZEAL** — “In this matter I give my judgment: this benefits you, who a year ago started not only to do this work but also to desire to do it. So now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have.” Paul commends the Corinthians’ desire. They were eager to give and their eagerness is seen as a desirable trait. Lacklustre giving and grudging response to need in no way honours the Lord God. The congregation which will excel in the grace of giving is eager to give.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from **The Holy Bible: English Standard Version**. Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers, 2001. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Zeal should mark every Christian endeavour. The ardent Christian is a comely Christian. Perhaps one of the darker blots on the churches of this day is that we Christians so long for acceptance by the world that we become casual and cool in the performance of our ministries. If the congregation expects that the preacher should blaze with fervour in the preaching of the Word, then does it not follow that the remainder of the assembly ought also to be zealous in every aspect of worship? The people of God should reveal zeal for the Lord in all that they do. Even in the act of giving we should rejoice and eagerly come before the Lord with our gifts.

Have you ever noticed the worship of the Hebrews as described in the Old Testament? Listen to one call to worship recorded in the Psalms.

“Praise the LORD!  
Praise God in his sanctuary;  
    praise him in his mighty heavens!  
Praise him for his mighty deeds;  
    praise him according to his excellent greatness!

“Praise him with trumpet sound;  
    praise him with lute and harp!  
Praise him with tambourine and dance;  
    praise him with strings and pipe!  
Praise him with sounding cymbals;  
    praise him with loud clashing cymbals!  
Let everything that has breath praise the LORD!  
Praise the LORD!”

[PSALM 150:1-6]

When Solomon dedicated the Temple of the Lord the nation united in worship. Listen to a description of that worship found in **2 CHRONICLES 5:4-6, 11-14**. “All the elders of Israel came, and the Levites took up the ark. And they brought up the ark, the tent of meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the tent; the Levitical priests brought them up. And King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel, who had assembled before him, were before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and oxen that they could not be counted or numbered... When the priests came out of the Holy Place (for all the priests who were present had consecrated themselves, without regard to their divisions, and all the Levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, their sons and kinsmen, arrayed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps, and lyres, stood east of the altar with 120 priests who were trumpeters; and it was the duty of the trumpeters and singers to make themselves heard in unison in praise and thanksgiving to the LORD), and when the song was raised, with trumpets and cymbals and other musical instruments, in praise to the LORD,

‘For he is good,  
    for his steadfast love endures forever,’

the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.”

I cite one other passage from the Old Testament which speaks of the worship at the time the wall was dedicated in the days of Nehemiah. You will recall that this is worship offered after Babylonian captivity and in a day when the people had been divinely chastised for their sin. Nehemiah describes the worship that accompanied dedication of the wall around Jerusalem. “I brought the leaders of Judah up onto the wall and appointed two great choirs that gave thanks. One went to the south on the wall to the Dung Gate. And after them went Hoshaiiah and half of the leaders of Judah, and Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, and Jeremiah, and certain of the priests’ sons with trumpets: Zechariah the son of Jonathan, son of Shemaiah, son of Mattaniah, son of Micaiah, son of Zaccur, son of Asaph; and his relatives, Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah, and Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man of God. And Ezra the scribe went before them. At the Fountain Gate they went up straight before them by the stairs of the city of David, at the ascent of the wall, above the house of David, to the Water Gate on the east.

“The other choir of those who gave thanks went to the north, and I followed them with half of the people, on the wall, above the Tower of the Ovens, to the Broad Wall, and above the Gate of Ephraim, and by the Gate of Yeshanah, and by the Fish Gate and the Tower of Hananel and the Tower of the Hundred, to the Sheep Gate; and they came to a halt at the Gate of the Guard. So both choirs of those who gave thanks stood in the house of God, and I and half of the officials with me; and the priests Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Micaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah and Hananiah, with trumpets; and Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malchijah, Elam, and Ezer. And the singers sang with Jezrahiah as their leader. And they offered great sacrifices that day and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and children also rejoiced. And the joy of Jerusalem was heard far away.

“On that day men were appointed over the storerooms, the contributions, the firstfruits, and the tithes, to gather into them the portions required by the Law for the priests and for the Levites according to the fields of the towns, for Judah rejoiced over the priests and the Levites who ministered. And they performed the service of their God and the service of purification, as did the singers and the gatekeepers, according to the command of David and his son Solomon. For long ago in the days of David and Asaph there were directors of the singers, and there were songs of praise and thanksgiving to God. And all Israel in the days of Zerubbabel and in the days of Nehemiah gave the daily portions for the singers and the gatekeepers; and they set apart that which was for the Levites; and the Levites set apart that which was for the sons of Aaron” [NEHEMIAH 12:31-47].

From these excerpts we gain insight into the worship of our spiritual forebears. The worship as described was noisy and vibrant, filled with musical instrumentation, loud singing and shouts of joy. On occasion people even stood to dance before the Lord. I am not suggesting that it was chaotic, but it drew observers in as the worshippers exulted in the goodness of God. I believe it fair to say that above all else, Hebrew worship was exciting.

It is interesting, even tragic, to note that when the excitement of meeting in the presence of the Living God ceased, worship degenerated into mere rite and ritual. Whether we anticipate meeting with the Living God or merely attending the services of the Lord out of duty depends in no small measure on our view of God. Expectation reveals that we know God to be exciting.

In the New Testament, there was likewise eagerness to worship, so much so that Paul was compelled to comment on the alternate problem of too many trying to participate at the same time! “When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up” [1 CORINTHIANS 14:26]. While he continued to insure that chaos did not prevail and that the Body was built up, he did not rebuke the people because each one participated in worship. New Testament worship is likewise exciting.

I have spoken of days in which I worshipped in the New Birth Baptist Church in the South Oak Cliff section of Dallas. On the first occasion I participated in Sunday morning worship, I had no idea what to expect. Lynda was with me; Rochelle was but a new-born and Susan was not quite five years of age. Before ever the preaching began, we had been at church for over an hour. The message was not as extended as you might think, but the words of the pastor were punctuated with exclamations of praise and agreement from the congregation.

“Amen!” “Glory!” “Tell it!” “Preach it, brother!” “Preach on!” “Oh, my Lord!” “Yes! Yes!” “Right on!” and similar exclamations greeted Scriptural truths for the whole of the hour that the message continued. On occasion, a young man might stand, rushing to the vicinity of the preacher where he waved his hanky while loudly exclaiming on some spiritual truth just stated. The people rejoiced in the presence of the Lord; the entire service was marked by great joy.

I suppose in that entire congregation of about three hundred people, only my Susan slept. Lynda found it necessary to retreat to the foyer with Rochelle who had become restless and required a diaper change. The pastor’s wife assured her that she would look after Susan, so Lynda left just as the invitation was beginning. At the invitation, which would continue for more than an hour, the people stood and swayed in time to the rhythm of the choir. Cries of joy broke forth from many within the congregation mixed with cries of sorrow escaping the lips of others. A woman began to dance in the aisle and almost everyone was clapping and loudly praising God. With the eruption of joyful praise, Lynda was startled and surprised. Not knowing the source of the noise, she was concerned for Susan’s welfare. I could see what Lynda could not see, however. Susan had awakened at the sound of shouting and was standing on the pew swaying with the congregation, clapping her little hands and loudly praising God as that good woman beside her simply put her arms around her and moved with her. The overriding memory from those days was the sincerity of the worship, the spontaneity with which the worshippers expressed their joy, and the fact that it was real.

Some years ago, I attended a mission conference at which a film showing a service of worship in Angola. That film made a great impression as I witnessed the offering that was received for missionary work. The people were poor; they had no great wealth. They brought chickens and eggs and beans and what little moneys they might have. They danced to the front to give each gift, and their dance was punctuated with shouts and loud singing.

I am not suggesting that Canadian worshippers should adopt a particular practise simply because others do so; I only relate these experiences to demonstrate that worship, when God attends that worship, cannot help but be joyful; and the joyful soul cannot long be silent. There was an eagerness to give which apparently flowed from an eagerness to honour God, and Paul commended this zeal. Just so, if we will please God in our worship, and if our giving is an act of worship, we will be fervent in the act of giving.

**COMMITMENT** — “Now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have.” Zeal is worthless if it does not lead to completion of the contemplated deed. The great debilitating malaise of the churches in these dawning days of the Twenty-first Century is the lack of commitment witnessed among the professed saints of the Lord God. The symptoms of the illness are seen in expressions such as open membership (which is but tacit refusal to enter into covenant with one another), in failure to participate in ongoing ministries of the churches (which is but tacit refusal to share with others the gifts God has graciously entrusted to His saint) and in failure to share the material goods entrusted to our oversight to the same extent that we squander the entrusted goods on ourselves.

As an aside which should be shameful to us as Christians, it is reported that we spend more on pet foods than on human relief efforts. It is reported that we spend more on cosmetics than on missionary advance. It is reliably reported that we spend more on entertainment than on provision of evangelistic literature and Bibles. We must confess that our spending testifies to our lack of commitment.

Modern Christians appear suspicious of commitment or to any call for an expression of long-term commitment. It seems somehow easier simply to set up housekeeping with one another than to make a public vow of commitment to love through every vicissitude of life. It seems easier to move from church to church than to work out whatever difficulties we may encounter in interpersonal relationships. While it may make some of us uncomfortable to be confronted with such demands, I am compelled to challenge you as the Apostle challenged the Galatian saints: “Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth” [GALATIANS 4:16]? Shall I reveal my love for you through expecting less of you than you are capable of providing? Does God Who created us and Who knows us ask too much of His people? The answer to such questions is self-evident and only one bent on rebellion would resist such a call.

Dear people, I am convinced that New Beginnings Baptist Church is a people called by God to glorify His Name, and I am committed to declaring His truth so that we may fulfil that calling. Will we honour Christ in the conduct of our life as a community of faith? We must determine to commit ourselves to His great cause. Will we perform those deeds which make an eternal difference? We must commit ourselves to Him alone. Will we fulfil the ministry He has assigned us? We must commit ourselves to serve His people. Though disparaged by the world about us, commitment to a great cause results in great demonstrations of power and in glory to the Lord!

**WILLINGNESS** — “Now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have. For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.” Zeal and commitment underpin willingness. You know that I discourage participation in this act of worship by those believers who have no joy in their life. We encourage heavy-hearted individuals to reflect on the goodness of God. This is not to excuse anyone from worship; it is but to set aside the specific act until such time that we can honour God. Neither is this to discourage anyone from participating in worship nor from entering into the work of those whom God has appointed to such tasks as require our participation through giving. It is but to ask those who sorrow and who grieve to wait, perhaps holding their gifts and refraining from giving until such time that they can again view the giving as an act of worship.

Just as the believer with an improper motive ought not to approach the Lord's Table, so the believer with bitterness of heart ought not to attempt to worship through giving. Just as the injunction to examine ourselves before the Lord's Table does not permanently exclude us from worship but is rather a temporary expedient to assist us to return at another time with proper motives, so the injunction against giving while angry or while ungrateful is not to permanently excuse us; it is a temporary expedient to assist us to recover our ability to worship.

The pledge system of planning church finances is somewhat common, especially among larger congregations. I trust we never institute such a system here. One reason I cannot bring myself to institute a pledge system is this issue of willingness. I do not question that those who pledge what they intend to give in a given year can complete that pledge with willing hearts, but I also recognise the subtle shift from a condition of personal freedom to a promissory system. A pledge is in effect a promissory note, and God would have us worship willingly.

In a wonderful church, one which blessed my family and me greatly, it was the custom for all the membership to make a pledge each year. I recall that it was a continuing source of conflict between me and others on the staff. My immediate supervisor, a godly man whom I deeply respect as a man of God, asked on one occasion, "Mike, are you going to co-operate, or do you still have a constitutional prohibition against pledging?" Laughing, I simply told that good man, "Methodists pledge. Baptists give. I'm a Baptist." That good man held the opinion that an individual who would not pledge would not give. I did not agree then, and I do not agree now. It is love for the Lord which leads us to participate in the worship of giving, and that must always be a willing participation.

Since every individual enrolled in Sunday School and every member of the congregation were encouraged to sign a pledge card, the Business Administrator on one occasion phoned my home and asked if Stephen, at the time a mere toddler, was going to pledge. I responded to Charlie's query, "I don't know. I'll put him on the phone and you can talk to him."

What is interesting is that privately many conceded that I was correct; nevertheless, they felt it was not expedient to trust such a large number of people. Dear people, I do believe in worship through giving. I also believe in mutual trust. If you trust the administrators who receive your gifts, you will give. I also trust the people of God to do more than I could ever anticipate when they are first submitted to the Lord—zealous for His work and committed to His church and to His people. Then, the people of God will give willingly and the gifts will be sufficient to meet the expectations of God and thus exceed every human expectation.

**RESPONSIBILITY** — "[The gift] is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have." Are you surprised that a message on the act of worship through giving begins with exploration of zeal and commitment and willingness? The prevailing attitude seems to be that people must be put under constraints if they will do what is right. Such attitudes demonstrate a desire to control the will and actions of others, enforcing conformity instead of expressing trust in the operation of God's Holy Spirit.

Throughout the instruction on the exercise of spiritual gifts and the whole of the teaching on worship emphasises mutual respect and mutual trust. If we will please God, we will endeavour to recapture trust and respect for one another as God's Spirit leads us individually. The Baptist genius lies in this concept and is seen in the unity of the Spirit as individuals express oneness, the Spirit working personally to unite openly.

Without the desire to participate in the advance of the church, we cannot please God. Without determination to continue to serve God, we will not long stay at the task. Without willing hearts, our gifts cannot please God. If we are zealous for God—committed to His work and willing to participate in that work—we shall act responsibly. The biblical language is that of **VERSE TWELVE**: “If the readiness is there, [the gift] is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.” The focus of giving is on attitude and not on ability.

Two thoughts predominate in any consideration of this verse. First, ***we are responsible for that which God entrusts to us***. Second, ***we honour God through responsible administration of our goods***. Consider these two concepts with me. First, remember that I stated that ***we are responsible for that which God entrusts to us***. This statement is recognition that God is the source of what we have. We may argue that we *want* more, but realistically we are hard pressed to argue that we deserve more. Throughout the Word of God are a number of statements which speak of God as the giver of our goods.

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change” [**JAMES 1:17**]. Most of us will agree that God does give what is good and perfect. We are quick to acknowledge that He gives freely to all in need. However, even what we may consider the negative side of His giving is yet by His will, and not by ours. Writing the Corinthians, Paul asked: “Who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it” [**1 CORINTHIANS 4:7**]? Any possession and all possessions are ultimately derived from God.

Concluding **HEBREWS CHAPTER ELEVEN** the chapter, the author writes: “What more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

“And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised” [**HEBREWS 11:32-39**].

These great men and women administered what they possessed. Because their lives were demanding, they did not consider God unfair. The reason they are considered heroes is because they honoured God through wise use of what they did possess, beginning with their very lives! We conclude that ***we honour God through responsible administration of our goods***.

The widow at Zarapath to whom Elijah was sent possessed nothing but some flour and a small cruse of oil, yet she was willing to use that to the glory of God by feeding His servant. Thus, she was blessed. The widow who put into the treasury all that she possessed—two small copper coins, two lepta—was blessed by Christ Himself because she sought to honour God [**LUKE 21:1-4**]. What you possess is of no consequence to the Living God; how you administer what you have matters greatly.

The Master told a parable that is related in **MATTHEW 25:14-30**. The parable speaks of a wealthy man who entrusted his wealth to several bondservants. I am not recounting the entire parable, but asking only that we weigh the master's commendation to the first two servants. The master is represented as saying to either of these servants, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master" [**MATTHEW 25:21, 23**]!

One who is faithful over small matters—the administration of goods of this world—will be blessed with responsibility over great matters. The principle is an axiom of the Faith and is pointedly stated in **LUKE 12:48**. "Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more." The issue is stated equally forcefully in **LUKE 16:10**. "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much."

We are responsible to administer wisely all that God has entrusted to us—beginning with our lives and extending to the goods of this earth. We are to honour God through wise administration of those goods, but we are not to assume responsibility for what we do not have. Do not fall into the trap of comparing yourself to someone else, gauging worth by ability to give. Instead, realise that your worth rests in your relationship to God through the Lord Jesus Christ and that because you are His you can glorify His Name through employing what you do possess.

**PROPORTIONALITY** — "I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness. As it is written, 'Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack.'" The principle stated here has sometimes been given the title of *proportionate giving*. The concept is that believers are to give in proportion to their income. Those with smaller resources bear little burden and those with greater resources bear proportionately greater burden. Greater ability calls for greater responsibility; greater resources anticipate greater capacity to give.

I frequently pray for God's people, asking that God will bless them with earthly goods. I do not particularly seek ease for God's people nor do I wish that we could each live in luxury, although such is not wrong in itself. My purpose in so praying is that I seek greater blessing for the Body of Christ because in the wisdom of God, as He blesses us materially we are able to employ those goods to His glory. The dangers, on the one hand, are quite real. Listen again to the familiar warnings of **1 TIMOTHY 6:6-10**. "Godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs."

The potential blessings are tremendous if we can but discipline ourselves to honour God in our giving. Paul's appeal to the Corinthians was for a generous offering to relieve the physical suffering of the saints in Jerusalem. The gifts of the Corinthians would relieve the Jewish believers until such time the Jewish believers were able to provide relief for the Corinthian believers. The principle flows from the sayings of the wise man recorded in **PROVERBS 11:24-26**.

“One gives freely, yet grows all the richer;  
another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want.  
Whoever brings blessing will be enriched,  
and one who waters will himself be watered.  
The people curse him who holds back grain,  
but a blessing is on the head of him who sells it.”

Regardless of what we possess, the plea is for generosity in giving; however, it is a plea for generosity directed by the principle of proportionality.

This principle is neglected and/or misunderstood by the most of God’s professed people. An individual cannot necessarily give a small gift with regularity and claim to honour God. Neither can we set a dollar amount and say that such represents the will of God for everyone. The words of the Apostle bar the concept of a tithe, or the concept of any other ratio of giving. The principle teaches that participants in the worship of God through giving are to be viewed as individuals having worth and dignity, and also possessing the ability to judge for themselves what is appropriate.

In short, giving is guided by ability to give—the greater one’s holdings, the greater one’s responsibility; the less one’s possessions, the less one’s responsibility. Whatever I possess, I am unhindered in distributing the gifts with a generous spirit; and God is the final arbiter of the size of my gift relative to what I have received as a sacred trust. Underscore this truth in your mind. Whatever I possess, I am unhindered through distributing my gifts with a generous spirit. Moreover, God is the final arbiter of the size of my gift relative to what He entrusted to me as a sacred trust.

Review your possessions. In honesty, do you spend more on cosmetics than on advance of the Kingdom of God? Can you justify your giving? Do you spend more on personal entertainment and personal enjoyment than on missionary enterprise? Can you continue to justify such giving? Before God, would you say that you are a generous giver? Perhaps you are in a straitened situation and wish you were able to give more. Have you prayed, asking God to entrust to you a larger gift so that you can do more than you are now doing?

A dear friend to our family died a matter of months after I had come to Dawson Creek. He lived on the funds provided by the Canada Pension Plan stipend and a GAIN cheque, being confined to a nursing home. When this dear man received an increase in the cost of care, an increase in the cost of oxygen (which he required to continue life), an increase in the cost of medications, he bemoaned to me his inability to continue to give a generous offering to his church. He longed to do more, but he could only afford twenty dollars a month from his cheque, all the remainder being attached by room, board, oxygen and medications.

How can you comfort such a one? What can you say to encourage such a person? I pointed out the story of the widow’s gift which moved Jesus to praise and exclamation. I pointed out the words of the Apostle. Just so, to any such who have the desire to give but lack the means, I point you to the words of the Apostle and remind you that if you hold the desire to be generous, God who maintains accurate accounts will set the record straight and you shall receive a reward in due time. Keep the desire, and God may soon provide you the means to fulfil the longing. Even if Christ should fail to entrust earthly riches to you, your desire shall assuredly serve to encourage others and enable them to administer wisely what they do have.

Let us each aspire to obtain all the goods of this earth that we can accumulate; but let us aspire to gather these goods that we may serve God in a powerful fashion. Let none of us think that either our value in the eyes of God or that our value in the advance of the Kingdom of God is determined by what we hold of the goods of this dying world. Let us each remember that our worth lies in the fact that we are citizens of the eternal home, that we are called by the Name of Christ the Lord and that we have access to the throne of the Father through the merits of Christ. Amen.